

UDC 327(4/9); 930.22(4/9)

\*Kudaibergenova R., Beisuyenbayeva A.

Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

\*E-mail: Renata.Kudaibergenova@kaznu.kz

## Korean Soft Power and National Image of South Korea in Kazakhstan

**Abstract.** To date, the structure of the foreign policy has been undergoing big changes, and sometimes culture, education, ideology, values become more effective tool for influencing one country to another. Globalization, the rapid development of information technology and the ever-changing nature of the political situation in the international arena are pushing the world in the new environment, where no place for the old forms of diplomacy. South Korea demonstrates us an example of successful development of soft power, which can be called a forced, taking into account the speed of the spread and impact of the efforts made by the Government. The states of Central Asia, and Kazakhstan in particular, remain the focus of the foreign policy of South Korea since independence. Implementation of soft-power strategy of South Korea in Kazakhstan requires further study. However, in this paper on the basis of primary sources we analyzed the efficiency of South Korean soft instruments of influence, as well as how Soft power affects the creation of a national image.

**Key words:** South Korea, Soft Power, Kazakhstan, foreign policy, strategy.

### Introduction

The power of the state had been determined by its military power for many centuries, and the main instrument for achieving a credible position on the world stage was war, and the entire foreign policy was based on this concept. Turn of the XX century considered to be the turning point. The age of globalization began to dictate the values, based on equality, unity and peace. The concepts of force has been revised. The new concept was formulated and developed by Joseph Nye. It was firstly presented in his works “Bound to lead: the changing nature of American power” [1] and “Soft Power” in the 1990s. Later, in 2005, the “Soft Power” as a phenomenon in international relations has been presented in the book “The new public diplomacy: soft power in international relations” by Jan Melissen [2].

Joseph Nye defines two kinds of antagonistic forces in his concept: “hard power” and “soft power.” These two concepts are rather similar, as in the first and in the second case, the main task is to achieve the desired effect by other actors of international relations. The difference is in resources and mechanisms the government used.

Soft power is “...the ability to influence and to attract, and not to force” [3, 6]. In contrast, Hard power is based on the desire to achieve military

and economic supremacy, by threats and pressure. That is to say, “hard” means of influence, such as military intervention or economic pressure. In addition, contemporary forms of Hard power also include information war and aggressive advertising [4, 2]. Unlike “hard” methods of influencing the government from the outside, the policy of Soft power, which mechanisms operate from inside, gives the country the right of free choice. Soft power is characterized by the ability to establish communications, based on such intangible components as personal attractiveness, culture, political values and institutions, political policy.

It is clear that each country is interested in forming their own national strategy of Soft power, which is determined by historical background and contemporary conditions of relations with other countries, and in addition to this so-called country’s resources, i.e. competent domestic and foreign policy, the spiritual and cultural values etc. Joseph Nye has defined two types of strategies: traditional and modern. The traditional one includes the strategy of the USA and the EU. They are based on three components: popular culture, foreign policy and political ideology. Moreover, the second one is the strategy of China and Japan. A feature of modern strategy is to create new sources of Soft power. [1]

### Methods

The research was based on quantitative data obtained because of the survey (opinion poll). The survey was conducted online via *Survio*. One hundred respondents have been involved under the survey.

### Main body

In South Korean political discourse, the concept of Soft power was used relatively recently, despite the obvious appeal of this instrument of foreign policy. Lee Geun argues that, despite the identification of new positive aspects of international relations, the definition given by Joseph Nye is descriptive and requires the theoretical design. Nye noted that there were differences between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ power, but did not offer any theoretical framework for understanding the mechanism of transformation of what he called “soft” resources into Soft power. The lack of theoretical development leads to the fact that it is very difficult to identify the discourses of Soft power beyond its resources. The basis of his theory is the distinction of Nye’s Soft power and resources of Soft power. Lee argues that “...to be «soft» does not mean soft power...» Therefore, such resources as culture, values, ideology, know-how, etc. should be converted to Soft power. In this regards, he identifies three main stages of transformation: 1) the use of “soft” resources; 2) cognitive processes of the recipients; 3) production of “soft power”.

In addition, in his article «A Theory of Soft Power and Korea’s Soft Power Strategy», Lee Geun classifies five different types of soft power in accordance to the specific objectives of soft power. Lee identifies the following five categories of Soft power:

1. The Soft power, aimed at improving the safety of the world, projecting a policy of peace and attractive political values;
2. The Soft power to mobilize the support of other countries in its foreign and security policy;
3. The Soft power, which affects the way of thinking and preferences of other countries;
4. The Soft power, contributing to keep the unity of the international community and countries;

5. The Soft power, which goal is to improve the status of the country’s political leaders and internal policy of the country. [5]

All of these categories of Soft power have the same kind of common denominator, namely, soft resources of the five categories used to influence others. As Lee noted, the link between the Soft power and soft resources is very important. He criticizes Nye’s theory because of the ambiguity of “hard” and “soft”. In some cases, strict resources can be used to enhance attractiveness to the other and vice versa. For example, the Allied Powers feel safe and sympathy, when the Allies destroy the enemies with the help of high-tech weapons. In order to dispel the confusion of Nye’s original theory of Soft power, Lee gives his own definition: “when the impact on other uses intangible “soft resources”, as a result, we are dealing with the “soft power”, and when material, “hard”, resources are used, the result is “hard power respectively. Therefore, Soft power might be attracting and forcing as «hard power» is.

This theory demonstrates us the importance of understanding the difference between Soft power’ resources and Soft power. The existence of resources does not mean the existence of Soft power, until they are not modified into influence. As “soft” resources, Lee determines ideas, images, theories, know-how, education, discourse, culture, traditions, national or global symbols. In addition, the role of Soft power in the security policy, and particularly in addressing the North Korean problem, is obvious. [6]

The Table demonstrates the ranking of Soft power of China and Korea, published in the reports on the results of the “measurement” of Soft power of certain countries within the framework of research conducted by the Institute of Public Administration (Institute for Government) and the *Monocle Magazine* (The New Persuaders III. A 2012 Global Ranking of Soft Power, United Kingdom) [7], as well as Portland Agency (THE SOFT POWER 30 by Portland Agency) in 2015. [8] For comparison also shows information about the positions occupied by China, one of the main rivals for influence in East Asia and beyond.

**Table 1** – Global Rankings of Soft Power

Ranking	The New Persuaders III. A 2012 Global Ranking of Soft Power	THE SOFT POWER 30by Portland Agency, 2015
Number	40	30
Leading countries	UK USA Germany	UK Germany USA

South Korea	11	20
China	22	30

There are some components of Korea’ Soft power.

1. The experience of overcoming economic crisis, as well as the rapid democratization and modernization of society. According to the Democracy index, South Korea ranked with an index of 8.13, ahead of the US and many European countries [9].

2. Korean business, i.e. multinational corporations In particular, the presence of the so-called “Chaebols” – Samsung, Kia, Hyundai, Daewoo, LG, which are well known for manufacturing high-tech, have promoted the image of the leader in the fields of technology and engineering.

3. The traditions of Korean art, crafts, cuisine, as well as Korean popular culture, have spread throughout the world. Being affected by fast-growing popularity of Korean entertainment industry in China, Beijing reportes have created the term “Korean Wave”, or “Hallyu”. Korean pop singer PSY’ hit, “Gangnam Style”, became the first video to bit 2 billion views on Youtube and this is a clear example how Korean Soft power works.

4. Education undoubtedly should be noted as one of the main components of Korean Soft power.

The effectiveness of South Korean “soft” foreign policy model is increasingly felt in Central

Asia, particularly in Kazakhstan. Therefore, a positive image of South Korea, formed in Kazakhstan, is one of the main indicators of the effectiveness of the Korean model of Soft power. Spheres of influence of Korean Soft power in Kazakhstan are considered to be the business, medical tourism, education, traditional and popular culture.

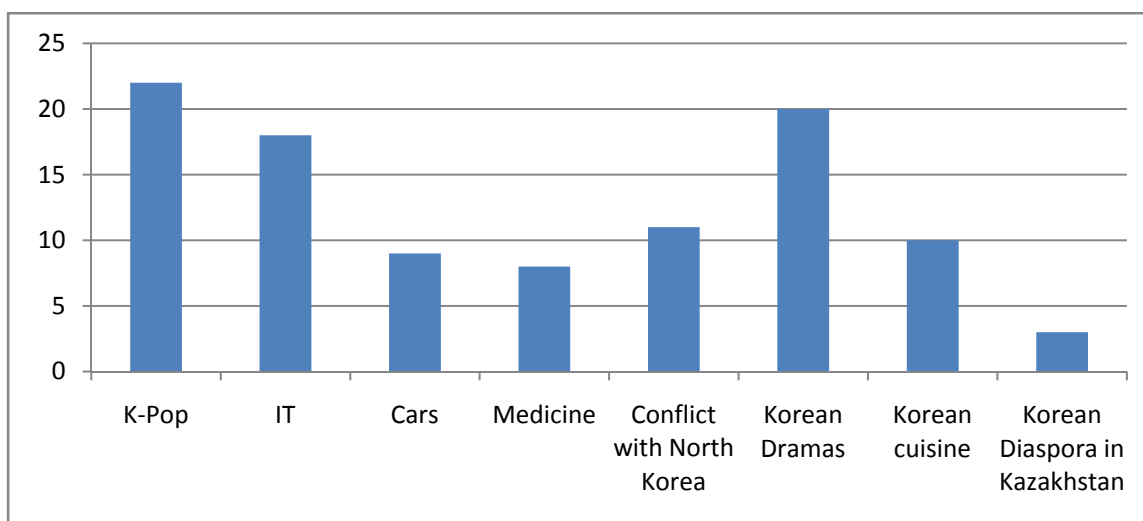
This research was conducted to estimate whether Korean Soft power strategy is successful in Kazakhstan or not. The research was based on quantitative data obtained as a result of the survey (opinion poll).

The survey involved 100 respondents, of which 41% were males and 59% females, the overwhelming majority (90%) are 16-28-year olds. The respondents mostly represented Almaty region (60%), Karaganda region (20%) and Akmola region (13%).

The questionnaire consists of three blocks. The first block includes general issues, namely gender and age information.

The next block includes such questions, as: “What do you associate with South Korea?”, “Is the image of South Korea in Kazakhstan positive or negative?”. South Korea is associated with the K-pop – 22%; Korean dramas – 20%; IT-technology – 18%; as well as food, medicine, cars.

**Chart 1. Question 7: What do you associate with South Korea?(%)**

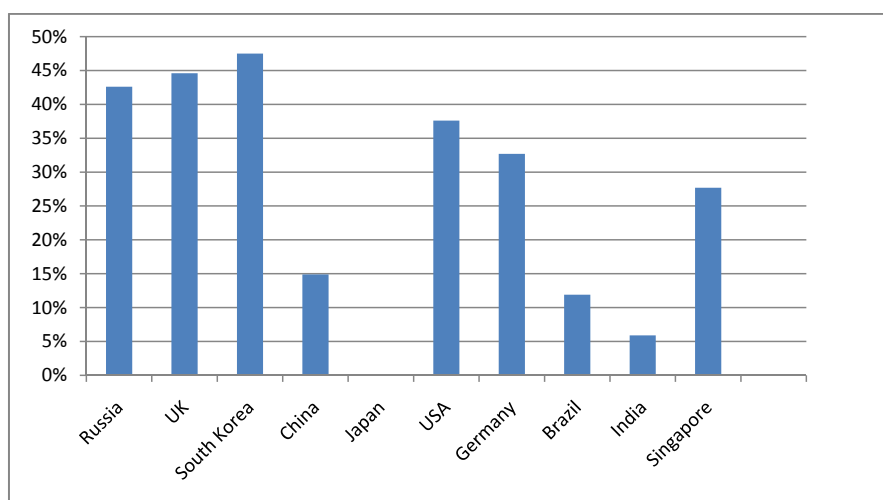


In general, respondents have positive view of South Korea and characterized its image as positive.

The results show us that the vast majority of respondents find Korean contemporary culture and high technology rather attractive. Most of the re-

spondents are attracted with Korean music and Korean dramas. Only 34% (older people mainly) said that they had never been listened to Korean pop-music; listen often – 13%, listen sometimes – 26% and listen rarely – 27%.

**Chart 2. Question 5: Which three countries you have positive view of?(%)**



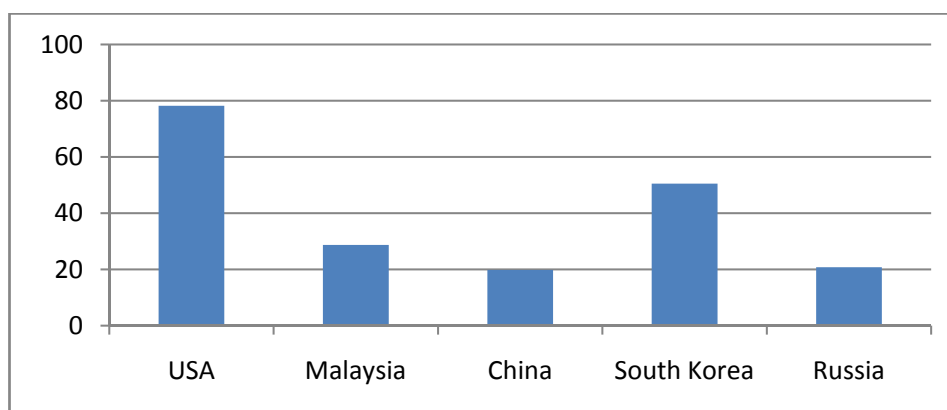
As for the dramas, there is a little ahead of the USA (28%). South Korean dramas are preferred by 27% of respondents. Despite the obvious sympathy for the Korean culture, the majority of respondents have not heard about the phenomenon of «Korean wave» («Hallyu») (68%).

The third block includes questions about the recognition and preference of the respondents in such socially important spheres as education and medicine.

1. Respondents were asked to choose only two

from five countries (Russia, China, the USA, South Korea, and Malaysia) where they would prefer to get an education. The USA and South Korea lead by a large margin (79% and 50% respectively). It is noteworthy that the older age category has preferred Russia, possibly in addition to the advantages in the field of education, it is also dictated by the territorial proximity and common history. It was surprising that most of them had not been informed about the educational programs in South Korea, and even expressed regret about this.

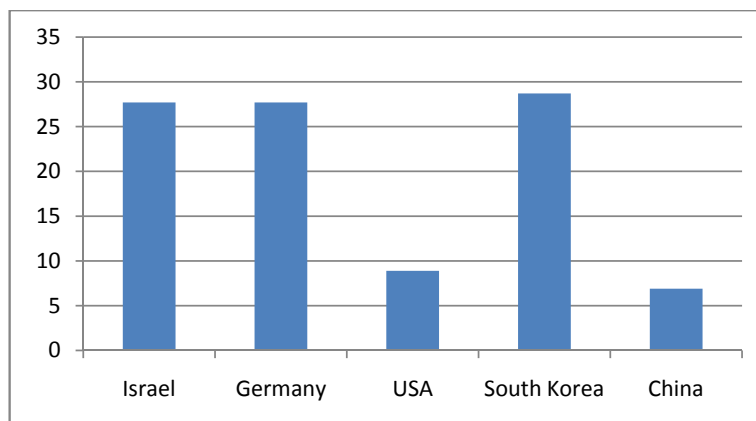
**Chart 3. Question 10: Where would you prefer to get an education? You can choose only two countries. (%)**



2. According to the survey, South Korea has a slight advantage over other countries in terms of healthcare services the respondents would like to use (South Korea – 28,7%, Germany – 27,7%, Israel –

27,7%). In that case, the respondents' choice is indicative, due to the fact that, in compared to other two countries, it has not been a long time since Korea entered the Kazakhstani market of healthcare services.

**Chart 4. Question 11: Healthcare services of which country would you prefer to use? (%)**



Thus, culture (35%), business (19%), medicine (16%) and education (7%) were selected as the spheres where South Korean presence is strongly felt.

However, 19% of the respondents answered that they did not feel the Korean presence in Kazakhstan. It is noteworthy that more than half of them were residents of Karaganda and Akmola region, and that is the result of Korean business concentration mainly in South and East of Kazakhstan.

#### **Conclusion**

Thus, the concept of South Korea's Soft power has a modern character. The Government of the Republic of Korea plays a decisive role in the implementation of foreign policy strategy aimed at raising the status of the state, relying on the resources of the Soft power. The main instruments of the state in the

formation of Soft power are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, the Ministry of Culture and their affiliated organizations KOICA, KOCCA, KOCIS.

According to the research findings, one of the main factors of efficiency of Korean model of Soft power in our country is Kazakh people's positive view of South Korea. Thus, South Korea was able to create a productive model of soft power, which is able to compete with the leading countries in this field, such as the US, UK, China and Germany. We believe that the experience of South Korea in the development and implementation of soft power strategy deserves further detailed examination and adaptation in the context of the formation of image policy of Kazakhstan.

#### **References**

1. Nye J. Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power. – N. Y.: Basic Books, 1990. – 336 p.
2. Mellisen J. The New Public Diplomacy. Soft Power in International Relation. – Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2005. – 221 p.
3. Nye, J. Soft Power. The Means to Success in World Politics. – N.Y.: Public Affairs, 2004. – 193 p.
4. Rusakova O.F. Soft power kak strategicheskij resurs i instrument formirovaniya gosudarstvennogo brenda: opyt stran Azii // Izvestija UrFU. – 2013. – Vol. 3. – № 2. – P. 52-56.
5. Lee G.A. Theory of Soft Power and Korea's Soft Power Strategy // Korea Journal of Defense Analysis. – 2009. – Vol.21. – Issue 2. – P. 205-214
6. Chun C.S. Soft Power and South Korea's Foreign Policy: Security Policy and North Korea Strategy // Korea Journal of Defense Analysis. – 2010. – № 3. – P.20-34
7. MacClory J. The New Persuaders III. A 2012 Global Ranking of Soft Power. URL: [http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/The%20new%20persuaders%20III\\_0.pdf](http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/The%20new%20persuaders%20III_0.pdf) retrieved 15.05.2016
8. The Soft Power 30. Ranking of Global Soft Power 2015. <http://softpower30.portland-communications.com> retrieved 15.05.2016
9. Olivia I.-P., Bondaz A. South Korea trying to improve its nation brand // Central Asia. – 5.07.2014. URL: <http://www.centrasia.eu/sites/default/files/publication> retrieved: 10.05.2016