

GLOBAL MEDIA FRAMING OF JUNGKOOK'S 2022 FIFA WORLD CUP PERFORMANCE: CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AND NATION BRANDING

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how international media framed Jungkook's performance at the opening ceremony of the 2022 FIFA World Cup within the broader context of South Korea's cultural diplomacy and soft power. In this study, cultural diplomacy is understood as the strategic use of popular culture and global cultural figures to promote national image and influence international perceptions. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this research employs content analysis supported by NVivo 15 to analyze 52 online news articles drawn from five regional clusters: South Korea, ASEAN, the Middle East, South Asia, and Western countries. The analysis is guided by Entman's framing theory (1993), focusing on four key dimensions: problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. Each article was thematically coded to identify both manifest and latent meanings related to cultural diplomacy and nation branding, while sentiment analysis was used to assess the tone of media coverage. The findings indicate that positive framing predominates across all regions, frequently portraying Jungkook as a global cultural representative and symbol of South Korea's soft power. Most media coverage emphasizes his role in promoting Korean culture and enhancing the country's international image. A smaller proportion of coverage, particularly in ASEAN and Western media, raises critical perspectives related to cultural dominance and commercialization. These findings suggest that global media narratives contribute to the construction of national image and the projection of cultural influence through popular culture in international mega-events. The study highlights the intersection between media representation, entertainment, and diplomacy in shaping contemporary global cultural discourse.

Keywords: media framing; cultural diplomacy; nation branding; soft power; FIFA world cup

FRAMING MEDIA GLOBAL PENAMPILAN JUNGKOOK PADA PIALA DUNIA FIFA 2022: DIPLOMASI BUDAYA DAN NATION BRANDING

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana media internasional membingkai penampilan Jungkook pada upacara pembukaan Piala Dunia FIFA 2022 dalam konteks yang lebih luas mengenai diplomasi budaya dan soft power Korea Selatan. Dalam penelitian ini, diplomasi budaya dipahami sebagai pemanfaatan strategis budaya populer dan tokoh-tokoh budaya global untuk mempromosikan citra nasional dan memengaruhi persepsi internasional. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini menerapkan analisis konten yang didukung oleh NVivo 15 untuk menganalisis 52 artikel berita daring yang diambil dari lima kelompok regional: Korea Selatan, ASEAN, Timur Tengah, Asia Selatan, dan negara-negara Barat. Analisis ini dipandu oleh teori framing Entman (1993), dengan fokus pada empat dimensi utama: definisi masalah, interpretasi kausal, evaluasi moral, dan rekomendasi penanganan. Setiap artikel dikodekan secara tematis untuk mengidentifikasi makna yang tampak dan tersembunyi terkait diplomasi budaya dan branding negara, sementara analisis sentimen digunakan untuk menilai nada liputan media. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa framing positif mendominasi di seluruh wilayah, sering menggambarkan Jungkook sebagai perwakilan budaya global dan simbol kekuatan lunak Korea Selatan. Sebagian besar liputan media menekankan perannya dalam mempromosikan budaya Korea dan meningkatkan citra internasional negara tersebut. Sebagian kecil liputan, terutama di media ASEAN dan Barat, mengangkat perspektif kritis terkait dominasi budaya dan komersialisasi. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa narasi media global berkontribusi pada pembentukan citra nasional dan proyeksi pengaruh budaya melalui budaya populer dalam acara-acara besar internasional. Studi ini menyoroti persimpangan antara representasi media, hiburan, dan diplomasi dalam membentuk wacana budaya global kontemporer.

Kata kunci: media framing; diplomasi budaya; nation branding; soft power; FIFA world cup

INTRODUCTION

South Korea conducts cultural diplomacy through the Korean Wave, digital diplomacy through social media, and economic diplomacy through FTAs and global industry support. The country is also active in multilateral forums, secu-

city diplomacy related to North Korea, and development assistance through KOICA (Siswoyo, 2015). Although South Korea's digital infrastructure is developing rapidly, its digital diplomacy remains limited due to a conservative bureaucratic culture and a greater focus on domestic audiences (Robertson, 2018). South Korea utilizes the Korean

Wave as a soft power strategy to strengthen its national image, but tends to be one-sided and focused on branding rather than dialogue. Although many institutions are involved, its policies are fragmented and reflect the tension between national interests and the idealism of cultural exchange (Ang et al., 2015). In addition, South Korea also utilizes celebrities who act as non-state actors to strengthen diplomacy through cultural influence and global visibility. Celebrities are used as diplomatic tools because they have mass appeal, emotional influence, and global visibility that can help countries shape strategic narratives and strengthen their diplomatic campaigns, especially through digital media. Celebrities act as non-state actors who help promote the country's image and national values in a global context (Rosamond & Wright, 2023). This study applies framing theory developed by Robert Entman to analyze how global media framed the performance of Jungkook at the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

BTS is a non-governmental actor from South Korea that plays an important role in public diplomacy through music, social campaigns, and global engagement. They promote Korean culture widely, participate in international forums such as the United Nations, and support UNICEF campaigns such as Love Myself. Although not part of the government, BTS effectively shapes South Korea's positive image in the eyes of the world and has become a key symbol of the country's soft power (Jayaratne, 2023). Despite their busy music schedule, BTS members also partnered with UNICEF to promote the Love Myself anti-violence campaign and spoke at the 73rd and 75th UN General Assemblies. South Korean President Moon Jae-in appointed BTS as "Special Envoys of the President for Future Generations and Culture." This appointment is part of public diplomacy aimed at expanding the horizons of diplomacy by harnessing diplomatic capabilities (Ranasinghe, 2023). This is demonstrated by BTS's achievements: they have won the Billboard Music Award in the United States for the Top Social Artist category five times in a row, and BTS has been nominated twice for a Grammy Award (Putri & Zulfiningrum, 2022).

In 2022, Qatar was selected to host the FIFA World Cup. The World Cup is one of the most watched sporting events in the world, surpassing even the Olympics, with an estimated 715.1 million viewers worldwide. The opening ceremony of the 2022 World Cup will feature a number of big stars (Syam & Fuadi, 2023). In the same year, BTS attracted attention with its plans to participate in the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. Specifically, BTS

member Jeon Jungkook was invited to sing the song "Dreamers" at the opening ceremony of the FIFA World Cup on November 20, 2022. The music video for "Dreamers" by Jungkook BTS and Fahad Al Kubaisi for the 2022 World Cup symbolically represents environmental issues (Juwita et al., 2023).

This study uses the approaches of framing and public diplomacy. Framing is understood as the process of selecting and emphasizing certain elements in the news in order to shape the audience's understanding of an issue (Oelrich & Siebold, 2024). Framing is a multi-paradigm research program that encompasses various approaches, theories, and analytical techniques to study the effects of media from various perspectives. They argue that when framing an issue, emphasizing certain aspects can influence people's perceptions by making the highlighted elements appear more important (Oo et al., 2024). According to Robert Entman (1993), framing theory encompasses four main elements, namely problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and suggested solutions (Entman, 1993; Harkins & Lugo-Ocando, 2025). Framing organizes participants' experiences of reality within the context of social life. A frame organizes participants' experiences of reality within the context of social life. For an organization, demonstrating indifference to a policy issue is a form of framing that contributes to creating compliance with organizational strategies and bonds with stakeholders (Viret & Ohl, 2024). Framing theory refers to the process of presenting information by highlighting certain aspects of reality, such as benefits or disadvantages, to shape how individuals understand, evaluate, and respond to an issue or policy (Horn, 2024).

Framing is a technique that draws attention to important information in communication by increasing its appeal. This can be achieved through placement, repetition, or association with culturally familiar symbols. However, framing is not limited to meaning, as it also encompasses engagement. Framing has normative expectations about how deeply and thoroughly individuals need to engage with framed activities (Sahide et al., 2023). Framing is the process of selecting, emphasizing, and organizing certain aspects of reality in communication to shape how people understand and interpret an issue. It involves highlighting particular elements such as problems, causes, moral values, or solutions to make them more noticeable and meaningful to the audience. Through framing, media construct narratives that emphasize some perspectives while minimizing others, influencing how

events, policies, or actors are perceived. Framing is not only about what information is presented but also how it is delivered, through language, tone, and emphasis, to guide public attention and interpretation. Therefore, framing serves as both a communicative and cognitive tool that directs the audience's perception, evaluation, and emotional engagement with an issue (Jin, 2024; Makaanise, 2025; Omoera, 2023).

Meanwhile, cultural diplomacy is a form of public diplomacy that aims to influence foreign parties and enhance a country's soft power by utilizing its culture (Solmoe, 2024). Cultural diplomacy is used as a soft power tool to support national interests through the utilization of cultural resources (Yang, 2019). However, in a broader sense, cultural diplomacy is also understood as an independent policy that promotes art, economy, social cohesion, and cross-border participation in order to improve the quality of life together (Isar & Triandafyllidou, 2021). Currently, cultural diplomacy as a discourse and practice has become very important in the study of cultural policy and international relations. In fact, the term "cultural diplomacy" has been widely used to the point that it has become a keyword frequently used by the arts and culture sector and foreign policy institutions (Ang et al., 2015). John Lenczowski emphasizes that cultural diplomacy aims to change the way people think through cultural elements such as art, education, language, literature, and religion, in order to positively support the pursuit of national interests (Lenczowski, 2011). In general, cultural diplomacy refers to the exchange of ideas, arts, and information between nations to build mutual understanding and reciprocal relationships (Rosyidiani et al., 2026). The concept of soft power refers to the ability of a country to influence international actors through attraction rather than coercion or payment. In the context of South Korea, the global spread of the Korean Wave (Hallyu), including K-pop and global celebrities, has become an important instrument of cultural diplomacy and international image-building.

The study "Cultural Diplomacy Beyond the National Interest" explores the concept of cultural diplomacy in a broader context than national interests alone. Its aim is to expand the understanding of cultural diplomacy as a tool for more inclusive and long-term intercultural dialogue, rather than merely as an instrument of national promotion. This article offers a classification of various approaches to cultural diplomacy and emphasizes the importance of building relationships based on reciprocity and trust. While theoretical and comprehensive, its limitation lies in the scarcity of empirical case studies

that could illustrate the practical implementation of the proposed concept, leaving its application in the digital age still largely conceptual (Ang et al., 2015). The journal article "Jungkook BTS in the FIFA World Cup 2022 Opening Ceremony: Between National Branding and Cultural Diplomacy" highlights Jungkook BTS's role as a symbol of South Korea's cultural diplomacy in the opening ceremony of the Qatar World Cup. Using critical discourse analysis, this study examines how Korean and international media frame his performance as a form of soft power and nation branding. Key findings indicate that Jungkook's presence reinforces South Korea's positive image in the eyes of the world. However, the study's limitations include a narrow media focus (primarily Korean and Western media) and a lack of exploration into broader responses from recipient nations (Kim et al., 2022). Meanwhile, the article titled "*Ujaran Kebencian terhadap Artis K-Pop dalam Opening Ceremony FIFA World Cup 2022*" aims to identify forms of hate speech against Jungkook BTS on social media, particularly from Indonesian netizens. Using a qualitative descriptive approach and analysis of comments on Instagram and Twitter, this study found hate speech based on stereotypes of masculinity and cultural xenophobia. The limitations of this study lie in its restricted geographical scope and the lack of broader public opinion representation beyond social media (Annisa, 2023).

Since the popularity of the Korean Wave on the international stage, numerous researchers around the world have produced scientific articles analyzing this phenomenon from various perspectives. At least 57 articles indexed by Scopus are openly accessible (open access) and can be processed using VosViewer. The analysis results indicate that the most frequently used keywords are "Korean Wave," "popular culture," "social media," "public diplomacy," "celebrity," "tourism," and "globalization." The absence of keywords such as "Jungkook," "FIFA World Cup," or "Qatar" indicates that the involvement of Korean celebrities in non-cultural international events like sports remains understudied. The absence of keywords like "Jungkook" or "FIFA World Cup" indicates a lack of studies examining the involvement of Korean celebrities in international sports events as part of cultural diplomacy. Although numerous studies have explored the Korean Wave and K-pop as tools of cultural diplomacy, few have examined the intersection between popular culture and international sporting events. Previous research has primarily focused on government-led diplomacy or fan communities, while the role of individual K-pop idols,

particularly in global events like the FIFA World Cup, remains underexplored. Therefore, this study fills the gap by analyzing how Jungkook's participation in the World Cup was framed by global media as part of South Korea's public diplomacy narrative.

Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on K-pop diplomacy or fan communities, this study examines how global media across multiple regions frame the participation of a K-pop idol in a major international sporting event. By combining cross-regional media analysis with framing theory, this research highlights how cultural diplomacy narratives emerge in global news discourse.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using content analysis techniques based on thematic coding with the assistance of NVIVO 15 software (Silva et al., 2025). This approach was chosen to explore how media framed the appearance of Jungkook BTS within the context of South Korea's cultural diplomacy. Content analysis was used to examine the latent and manifest meaning in the texts, particularly focusing on how narratives are constructed around Jungkook as a representative of Korean culture. Data were collected from national and international online media articles published in the context of Jungkook's performance at the FIFA World Cup. The unit of analysis consisted of sentences or paragraphs that contained specific framing elements within the news coverage. To ensure consistency and depth, framing patterns and sentiments in each article were analyzed using predefined keywords such as "positive," "negative," "cultural diplomacy," and "nation branding." These categories served as a reference point to guide the thematic coding and to identify trends in media representation. NVIVO 15 software was utilized to systematically process, code, and visualize the data.

The data in this study comprised a total of 52 news articles sourced from five distinct media regions, selected to represent different geopolitical and cultural perspectives. The distribution of articles was as follows: ASEAN media (12 articles), Middle Eastern media (9 articles), South Asian media (8 articles), South Korean media (14 articles), and Western media (9 articles). These five regions were selected to represent diverse geopolitical and cultural perspectives on the Korean Wave, allowing comparison between regions with varying levels of exposure to South Korean popular culture. Articles were selected based on their relevance to the topic,

particularly those mentioning Jungkook in relation to the Korean Wave, K-pop, national identity, or international events such as the World Cup. The inclusion criteria also considered the prominence of Jungkook's portrayal in the article and the presence of interpretative framing cues.

Using NVIVO, each article was coded based on emerging themes and sentiment indicators, allowing researchers to track how different regions framed Jungkook's appearance and to what extent they contributed to South Korea's nation branding and cultural diplomacy efforts. The coding process involved categorizing content by sentiment (positive or negative) and by thematic framing (nation branding or cultural diplomacy). The final results from NVIVO were then interpreted to understand the strategic function of media in constructing the image of non-state actors like Jungkook and their role in promoting the cultural values and global identity of South Korea. This methodological framework enables a nuanced understanding of media dynamics in international cultural representation.

The coding process was conducted by a single researcher, which may introduce subjective interpretation. However, the use of predefined coding categories and NVivo-assisted analysis helped maintain consistency in the coding process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the data analysis reveal a clear trend of positive framing and sentiment toward Jungkook in South Korean media coverage of his performance at the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Approximately 43% of the news articles expressed positive sentiment, highlighting Jungkook's global influence, musical performance, and cultural significance. Around 29% of the news framing reflected elements of cultural diplomacy, understood in this study as the use of cultural figures and cultural products to promote national culture and strengthen a country's international image. In this context, Jungkook was frequently portrayed as a global cultural representative who contributes to the international promotion of Korean culture through popular music. Furthermore, 28% of the news content emphasized nation branding, linking Jungkook's performance to South Korea's national image and cultural prestige. Conversely, no significant negative sentiment was identified in South Korean media coverage. South Korean media such as *The Korea Times* described Jungkook's performance as "a proud moment for Korean culture on the global stage," emphasizing his role in promoting K-cul-

and ASEAN to the Middle East, South Asia, and the West, constructed narratives that extend far beyond the performance itself (Entman, 1993). Entman's four framing elements such as problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation, reveal that media did more than just report an event; they actively shaped how audiences understood its significance within the broader framework of global cultural politics (Harkins & Lugo-Ocando, 2025).

The framing process defined the "problem" as the rise of non-Western cultural power, identifying Jungkook as a symbol of Asia's growing visibility and legitimacy in the international entertainment industry (Horn, 2024). Causally, his performance was interpreted as the result of South Korea's deliberate cultural policies and the institutionalization of Hallyu as a soft power strategy. Media narratives often linked Jungkook's global recognition to the success of Korea's creative industries, showing how cultural diplomacy can effectively enhance a nation's image. In moral terms, Jungkook was framed as an ambassador of humility, discipline, and global unity, qualities that resonate with Korea's desired international persona.

Finally, the "treatment recommendation" embedded in these frames emphasized the need to promote cultural exchange and creative diplomacy as tools for fostering international cooperation. Thus, the framing of Jungkook's performance not only celebrated a musical achievement but also symbolized South Korea's success in transforming entertainment into a powerful diplomatic instrument, shaping global perceptions and advancing its soft power narrative (Shafie, 2025).

Problem Definition

The media's problem definition surrounding Jungkook's performance at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 emphasized the event as a symbol of Asia's cultural rise in the global entertainment sphere. Rather than focusing solely on the artistic aspect of his performance, media coverage, particularly from South Korea and ASEAN, defined the event as a manifestation of how non-Western culture had attained global visibility and legitimacy. This framing positioned Jungkook as a representative of a new global order in cultural production, where Asian talent could command international recognition on par with Western performers (Ayu et al., 2024).

South Korean media specifically framed Jungkook's appearance as a moment of national pride and proof of South Korea's successful cul-

tural policy. The data processed through NVivo revealed that **approximately 29%** of South Korean news content employed a "cultural diplomacy" frame, while **28%** used "nation branding." These findings suggest that local outlets defined the issue not as a single celebrity event but as part of South Korea's national project to assert its global cultural influence. The repeated emphasis on terms like "*K-culture*," "*soft power*," and "*global image*" in the South Korean word cloud demonstrates this problem framing clearly.

Similarly, in ASEAN and Middle Eastern media, Jungkook's appearance was defined as a moment of shared Asian identity and collective pride. Around **47%** of ASEAN articles expressed positive sentiment, identifying Jungkook's performance as a victory for Asian representation in global sports culture. Middle Eastern outlets, with **49% positive sentiment**, framed it as a unifying global event that transcended nationality. The common thread among these frames is the recognition that the performance symbolized something much larger than entertainment, it was a geopolitical and cultural statement about Korea's growing role in the global symbolic economy (Entman, 1993; Oelrich & Siebold, 2024; Sahide et al., 2023).

Causal Interpretation

The causal interpretation in Entman's framework involves explaining why an issue has occurred and identifying the forces behind it. In Jungkook's case, global media attributed his performance to South Korea's sustained efforts in developing its cultural industries as tools of diplomacy. South Korean outlets linked Jungkook's global reach to the government's investment in Hallyu promotion, the synergy between entertainment companies and the Ministry of Culture, and the country's strategic use of *soft power*. In this sense, Jungkook was not framed merely as an artist but as the direct outcome of a deliberate national agenda (Bettine & Ozdemir, 2024).

ASEAN and South Asian media echoed this interpretation but localized it within the regional aspiration to follow Korea's cultural diplomacy model. Around 33% of South Asian media applied a *nation branding* frame, connecting Jungkook's success with Korea's strategic storytelling and international cooperation. The positive sentiment (48%) across South Asia also underscored admiration toward Korea's systematic approach to exporting culture. By identifying the causes in Korea's institutional framework, these media narratives implicitly posi-

tioned Korea as a role model for cultural innovation and regional influence (Azizah & Dwiyantri, 2021).

In contrast, a small portion of Western media (about 7%) employed a critical causal frame, attributing Jungkook's success to the commercialization of K-pop and the political use of culture. These narratives questioned whether Korea's cultural diplomacy was purely organic or state-orchestrated. However, even within this criticism, the framing remained largely respectful, acknowledging Jungkook's talent and professionalism. This balance shows how global media, while recognizing Korea's intentional efforts, still debated the boundaries between genuine artistry and strategic diplomacy, reaffirming Entman's notion that framing always embeds ideological interpretation (Oo et al., 2024).

Moral Evaluation

Moral evaluation frames provide value judgments about the actors or events being reported (Oelrich & Siebold, 2024). Across nearly all regions, Jungkook was morally framed as an embodiment of hard work, humility, and unity. In South Korean media (43% positive sentiment), these moral attributes were emphasized as representative of the nation's values—discipline, dedication, and global-mindedness. This moral framing transformed Jungkook's individual success into a collective reflection of the Korean spirit, thereby linking moral virtue with national image (Jin, 2024).

ASEAN and Middle Eastern outlets strengthened this moral discourse by portraying Jungkook as a symbol of intercultural harmony. In the Middle East, 34% of content adopted a *cultural diplomacy* frame, highlighting how Jungkook bridged linguistic, cultural, and religious divides through music. ASEAN media similarly described him as the "pride of Asia," a moral recognition that extends beyond national boundaries. This transnational moral framing underscores how positive values, such as inclusivity and creativity, are instrumentalized in public diplomacy narratives (Entman, 1993; Sahide et al., 2023).

In Western coverage, although 47% of articles expressed positive sentiment, a small but significant 7% questioned the moral sincerity behind Korea's cultural messaging. These critiques argued that the blending of entertainment and diplomacy risked commodifying culture for political gain. Yet even this moral ambivalence served to reinforce Jungkook's centrality in discussions of ethics and representation in global culture. Rather than damaging his image, it broadened the conversation

about authenticity and cultural legitimacy, proving the moral complexity of global framing processes (Bettine & Ozdemir, 2024; Makananise, 2025; Omoera, 2023).

Treatment Recommendation

Treatment recommendation refers to the solutions or courses of action implied by the media's framing. In Jungkook's case, the dominant recommendation across most regions was the promotion of culture as a means of fostering diplomacy and global understanding. South Korean and ASEAN media suggested that the success of Jungkook's performance validated cultural diplomacy as an effective instrument of *soft power*. These outlets implicitly encouraged continued state support for cultural industries, interpreting Jungkook's achievement as evidence of policy success (Kunkunrat, 2024).

Middle Eastern and South Asian media expanded this recommendation into a global framework. 49% of Middle Eastern coverage and 48% of South Asian articles proposed, either explicitly or implicitly, that music and cultural exchange can transcend political divisions. Jungkook's performance was described as an example of *cultural bridge-building*, which could inspire other nations to adopt similar strategies in their international communication efforts. This reinforces Entman's idea that framing can shape not only perceptions but also policy directions and social behaviors (KBS World, 2022).

Finally, Western media, despite containing minor critical tones, still echoed the recommendation that cultural diplomacy can be a legitimate form of global engagement when executed transparently. The framing of Jungkook as an "electrifying" performer contributed to the perception that art and diplomacy are compatible in advancing international dialogue. The overall cross-regional framing, dominated by positive sentiment and reinforced through NVivo crosstab analysis, indicates that Jungkook's performance was globally constructed as a model for how cultural products can serve as diplomatic instruments, thereby affirming the power of media framing in shaping soft power narratives (Safaat et al., 2022; Samosir & Wee, 2023).

Research Significance

This study contributes to the fields of communication and international relations by examining how media framing shapes public understanding of cultural diplomacy, which refers to the strategic use

of cultural resources and popular culture to promote national values and international image. By applying framing analysis (Entman, 1993; Sahide et al., 2023). By applying framing analysis (Entman, 1993), this research demonstrates how international media narratives surrounding the performance of Jungkook at the 2022 FIFA World Cup contribute to the construction of South Korea's cultural diplomacy and global image. The findings highlight that media play a crucial role in constructing meanings around global cultural icons, transforming artistic performances into diplomatic narratives that influence international perception of a nation's image and values.

The second contribution lies in the integration of qualitative framing analysis with quantitative NVivo data, which provides an empirical foundation for understanding sentiment distribution and frame patterns across different media regions. This methodological combination offers a model for future studies seeking to analyze media framing in a comparative, cross-cultural context. The inclusion of regional perspectives such as South Korean, ASEAN, Middle Eastern, South Asian, and Western media, extends the academic discourse on cultural diplomacy by emphasizing how framing varies according to geopolitical and cultural proximity (Farooqui & Kaushik, 2022; Sahide et al., 2023; Silva et al., 2025).

Finally, this research provides practical implications for policymakers, cultural strategists, and media practitioners. By uncovering the dominance of positive framing and sentiment toward Jungkook's performance, the study underscores the effectiveness of popular culture as a diplomatic tool. It encourages governments and cultural industries to view global entertainment platforms as opportunities for nation branding and intercultural communication. Moreover, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how cultural narratives can foster mutual respect and dialogue among diverse societies, reinforcing the role of media as a bridge in global diplomacy (Juwita et al., 2023; Safaat et al., 2022; Sun-hwa, 2022).

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that international media largely framed the performance of Jungkook at the 2022 FIFA World Cup as a positive representation of South Korea's cultural diplomacy and nation branding. Across different media regions including South Korea, ASEAN, the Middle East, South Asia, and Western countries, positive framing dominated the coverage, portraying Jungkook

as a global cultural ambassador and a symbol of South Korea's soft power. Media narratives frequently emphasized the fusion of entertainment and diplomacy, positioning his performance as a vehicle for promoting Korean culture and enhancing the country's international image. Although a small proportion of ASEAN and Western coverage expressed concerns regarding cultural dominance and the commercialization of K-pop, these perspectives remained limited and did not significantly challenge the overall positive framing.

The findings highlight the growing role of non-state actors in shaping a nation's global image through mediated cultural representation. Jungkook's appearance on a highly visible global stage illustrates how popular culture can function as an instrument of cultural diplomacy, extending diplomatic narratives beyond formal state institutions. From a theoretical perspective, this study demonstrates that media framing plays an important role in constructing diplomatic meaning, as media outlets actively interpret cultural performances and embed them within broader narratives of national identity and global influence.

Furthermore, the global visibility of Jungkook's performance represents a hybrid form of diplomacy that connects culture, media, and sport to foster cross-cultural engagement. His collaboration with Qatari artist Fahad Al Kubaisi in the "Dreamers" performance further reflects the intercultural dimension of contemporary public diplomacy. The predominance of cultural diplomacy and nation branding frames in international media coverage indicates that popular culture can serve as an effective channel for projecting national values and strengthening a country's symbolic presence in global discourse. Future research may explore audience reception of such media narratives across digital platforms or compare celebrity diplomacy practices in other national contexts to further understand the evolving relationship between popular culture, media, and international diplomacy.

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