

***HALLYU* POWER: CULTURAL POLICIES
OF THE SOUTH KOREAN
GOVERNMENT**

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Executive Summary

1. The success of the Korean Wave has been unprecedented as it has outshone its regional competitors, the Japanese and Taiwanese popular cultures, to manifest itself within and beyond the region since the late 1990s.
2. The Korean government's financial support as well as favourable policies in promoting the growth of the cultural industry has been effective and imperative in driving the Korean Wave.
3. The overseas expansion of the South Korean audiovisual industry, including television dramas and films, is due in large part to the government's regulations and promotional measures for the cultural industries.
4. Before the 1980s, restrictive measures were imposed on foreign cultural products, especially those of the Japanese culture and the Western culture, to rejuvenate national spirit and enhance cultural identity after World War II and the Korean War.
5. In 1994, a report was submitted to the president suggesting that the government promote media production as the national strategic industry in view of the overall revenue of the Hollywood blockbuster, Jurassic Park, which was worth the foreign sales of 1.5 million Hyundai cars.
6. It was however only after the 1997 Asian financial crisis that the Korean government has begun to target the export of Korean popular culture as a new economic initiative.
7. In the late 1990s, the Korean government promoted cultural industries vigorously by earmarking one per cent of its national budget to subsidies and low-interest loans for its cultural industries, launching agencies to promote and expand K-Pop exports and setting up more cultural departments in the universities.

8. The policy of developing the cultural industries was implemented in conjunction with government investment in other strategic industries, such as the information and communication technology industries.
9. A plethora of organisations and mechanisms are involved in cultural diplomacy and international exchange. Chief among these are the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA).
10. While MCST is a central government agency responsible for tourism, culture, art, religion and sports, MOFA uses the Korea Foundation and its network as its chief agent to promote South Korea through cultural, education and intellectual exchange.
11. Against the backdrop of an increasingly competitive cultural landscape in times of globalisation, without genuine and ongoing innovation, the Korean Wave may end up a passing fad like the Japanese pop culture boom in the 1990s.
12. In the future, the Korean government's role is likely to remain important especially in providing stronger institutional support through copyright legislation.