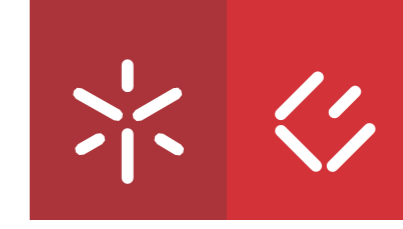




Soft Power and Country Image: a study about the influence of South Korean Popular Culture on consumer behaviour

Gilda Mariana Santos Costa

UMinho | 2023



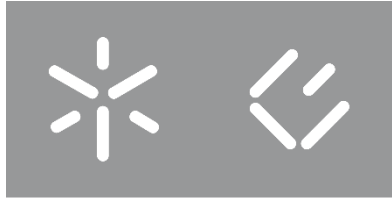
Universidade do Minho  
Escola de Economia e Gestão

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**Soft Power and Country Image: a study about  
the influence of South Korean Popular Culture  
on consumer behaviour**

Dissertação de Mestrado  
Mestrado em Marketing e Estratégia

Trabalho efetuado sob a orientação da  
**Professora Doutora Ana Maria Soares**

Abril 2023

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Many others have made a positive impact in my life, from those contacting me at work and putting a smile on my face, to the incredible people that I volunteer with, who showed me that it is never too late.

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A journey has come to an end with feelings of gratefulness. Finally, I have landed at a new stage of my life.

“Help me, I just go, we can all go up  
I just hope to arrive safely on this night flight  
I shine on my own, people will call that  
A star, so we are just shining  
Passion, young, fever”

(Ateez, 2022)

## **STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY**

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I further declare that I have fully acknowledged the Code of Ethical Conduct of the University of Minho.

## Abstract

### **Soft Power and Country Image: a study about the influence of South Korean Popular Culture on consumer behaviour**

Interest in South Korean Popular Culture has witnessed an exponential growth globally, especially in the last decade. Collecting dedicated admirers globally, popular culture has a role in the perception foreigners have of South Korea. This study builds upon the literature about power and country of origin effect aiming at identifying the impact that the involvement with South Korean popular culture has on the perception of the country and consumer behaviour.

Thus, this study aimed to answer the question: “Does the involvement with South Korean popular culture influence positively the country’s image and soft power, leading to a better product image and, consequently, a greater willingness to purchase Korean products?”. A quantitative methodology was used to test the proposed research model, entailing involvement with Korean popular culture, soft power, country image, product- country image and willingness to buy. An online survey was applied constituted of items from previously validated scales and sociodemographic questions.

The results show that the involvement with South Korean Popular Culture positively affects both the country’s Soft Power and Image, especially the first. Additionally, it was demonstrated that those dimensions have a positive impact on the Product Image of the country, which, in turn affects the Willingness to Buy South Korean products.

Thereby, this study recognizes the involvement with South Korean popular culture as a positive influence for the improvement of the perceptions people have of the country – conceptualized through Soft Power and Country Image. The usage of the *Hallyu* (Korean Wave) by the country and its brands may lead to better results. Overall, the attitudes towards South Korea as a country and its products are positive, and it positively affects the willingness to buy items from the land.

These results provide valuable recommendations for producers, distributors and sellers of Korean products.

**Key Words:** South Korea; South Korean Popular Culture; *Hallyu*, Korean Wave; Soft Power; Country Image; Product Image; Willingness to Buy

## Resumo

### ***Soft Power* e Imagem do País: um estudo sobre a influência da Cultura Popular Sul Coreana no comportamento do consumidor**

O interesse pela Cultura Popular Sul Coreana tem vindo a sofrer um crescimento exponente, principalmente na última década. Reunindo admiradores interessados e dedicados mundialmente, a cultura popular tem um papel na perceção que os estrangeiros têm da Coreia do Sul. Este estudo constrói-se sobre a literatura sobre poder e o efeito do país de origem, com o objetivo de identificar o impacto que o envolvimento com a cultura popular sul coreana tem na perceção do país e no comportamento do consumidor.

Assim, o objetivo deste estudo era responder à questão: “O envolvimento com a cultura popular sul coreana influencia positivamente a Imagem do país e o seu *soft power*, levando a uma melhor imagem do produto e, conseqüentemente, uma maior vontade de comprar produtos coreanos?”. Foi usada uma metodologia quantitativa para testar o modelo de pesquisa proposto, que inclui o envolvimento com a cultura popular sul coreana, *soft power*, imagem do país, imagem do produto e vontade de comprar. Foi aplicado um questionário online constituído por escalas previamente validadas e questões sociodemográficas.

Os resultados mostraram que o envolvimento com a cultura popular sul coreana afeta positivamente o *soft power* e a imagem do país, especialmente o primeiro. Adicionalmente, foi demonstrado que essas dimensões têm um impacto positivo na Imagem do Produto do país que, por sua vez, afeta a vontade de comprar produtos coreanos.

Desta forma, o estudo reconhece o envolvimento com a cultura popular sul coreana como uma influência positiva no melhoramento das perceções que as pessoas têm sobre o país – conceptualizadas através do *Soft Power* e da Imagem do País. O uso da *Hallyu* (Onda Coreana) pelo país e as suas marcas pode levar a melhores resultados. Em geral, a atitude relativamente à Coreia do Sul enquanto país e perante os seus produtos é positiva, e afeta positivamente a vontade de os comprar.

Estes resultados fornecem valiosas recomendações para produtores, distribuidores e vendedores de produtos coreanos.

**Palavras-Chave:** Coreia do Sul; Cultura Popular Sul Coreana; *Hallyu*, Onda Coreana; *Soft Power*, Imagem do País; Imagem do País; Vontade de Comprar



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## 1. Introduction

Popular culture reflects the times being lived; the multiple periods that humankind has gone through have changed the way people express themselves and the longitude and spacious that could be accomplished by such expressions. A globalized century certainly saw a change in the spread of cultural content. Howbeit, there are walls built on preconceptions, as well as economic and social barriers. Even though there is some dominance of popular culture by the most powerful nation, new waves of popular culture emerge. Current forms of globalization have led to the expansion of various cultures, notably South Korean popular culture. In recent years we are witnessing the growing importance of Korean popular culture, known as the *Hallyu*, or Korean Wave (Jin & Yoon, 2017). This phenomenon has changed not only the perspective of Korean cultural products, as well as the insights regarding its country of origin.

South Korea is the home of the *hangeul* (alphabet), *kimchi*, and *soju*. Nevertheless, the 21<sup>st</sup> century has brought recognition to the country for its “K-wave”: from K-pop to K-dramas. South Korea has become a nation recognized worldwide for its entertainment industry and that has had an impact on how the homeland of this recent artistic phenomenon is perceived worldwide. Additionally, other aspects of its culture have been lifted upon their spreading through other forms of culture. As a whole, South Korean popular culture has worked together to achieve its goal of globally spreading the foremost of Korea’s gist.

The Korean Wave started in the late '90s (Jin & Yoon, 2017). Although South Korea has been a country dedicated to the production of cultural services, for instance, radiophonic soap operas, in the '80s, its government realized that the majority of cultural products consumed were from foreign lands and the international perception of its cultural goods was not positive (Jin & Yoon, 2017). Although after the Korean War, the country became a growing economy, with brands such as Samsung and Hyundai becoming a national pride, it was noted that foreign films, for instance, were generating a huge economic impact (Shim, 2006). This has implied a series of changes in the country’s economy and investment in cultural goods, as “a government report awakened the Korean people to the cultural industry’s potential contribution to the national economy” (Shim, 2006, p.32).

As cultural goods and services in the country were imported, incentives were given to the culture and entertainment industry so that the situation could change. Soon after, Korean dramas were making success not only in their country of origin but also in neighbour countries such as China and Japan. From the gigantic success in Chinese land, the term *Hallyu* has been born. As time went by, the Korean

entertainment industry has grown and extended its public globally. Lately, music groups such as *BTS* have been on internationally recognized charts and winning prizes outside of Korea, as well as filling venues.

The last years of the 2010s have seen a progression in this phenomenon. The beginning of the following decade was characterized by the unprecedented Academy win for the film “Parasite”, a South Korean production. Previously, group BTS achieved the “top social award” from Billboard, in 2017, and has grown in the number of international prizes and reputation ever since. In the same year, the group partnered with UNICEF, releasing the “Love Myself” campaign (UNICEF, 2021). Although the West has only gotten generally aware of the potential of Korean popular culture in the last decade, it has been long recognized in neighbour Asian countries, namely China, Taiwan, and Japan.

More than artists, BTS has been one of Korea’s points of pride in supporting values related to human rights, mental health, and the end of any kind of discrimination. If those values may be hard to pass on through other means, it is Korean popular culture that has the biggest potential to transform the image of a harmed and destroyed country, because of the war, into a valuable and artistic nation. Clearly, the group BTS has been the major leader in transmitting those messages, as they have discoursed in both the United Nations General Assembly and the White House, making political statements in favour of human rights.

As the White House press secretary, Karine Jean-Pierre, stated, “While many of you may know BTS as Grammy-nominated international icons they also play an important role as youth ambassadors promoting a message of respect and positivity” (Klein, et al., 2022). The importance of an artist suppresses the artists themselves when they create a political impact, directly or indirectly, whether desired or not. This is an example of how South Korean popular culture is being used directly as a means of improving relationships and stating the values and ideals of Korea as a whole.

Recently, the series *Squid Game* is another example of the recognition given to the industry by specialists and the general public.

### **1.1. Problem definition**

As Korean Popular culture becomes a trend abroad, the interest in Korean culture, in its most traditional form, or other kinds of popular culture, as well as for Korean products, is on the growth. In practical terms, the ascendance of popular culture from Korea may lead to an increase in exported

Korean services and goods in every sector (Lee, 2011). This becomes more visible as Korean brands choose Korean artists as their ambassadors, using their image even abroad.

Contrasting to the difficulty of spreading South Korean popular culture in the 1990s, the internet and the consequent creation of social media and streaming services have broadened the possibilities of the internationalization of multiple products. Aspects such as linguistic differences and difficulties to access Korean popular culture became less relevant, as there are new and easier forms of communication between communities. The technological advances also allow for the development of new virtual groups and communities.

Although the economic power accentuated by the *Hallyu* phenomenon is strong - it is stated that group BTS has an annual impact of 5 billion dollars alone on the country's economy (Smith, 2021) - the effect on the country's perceived image and soft power may be greater. The growth of the number of individuals learning the language (Pickles, 2018) and the image passed of Koreans as artistic are examples of facets that were passed through entertainment content and that create an image, usually a positive one, of that land.

This phenomenon has also wider implications. The new century has seen a change in priorities and relations between nations, reflecting and being reflected on culture. Globalization, economic relations between countries, and military contracts are all aspects that are crucial in defining the success of a country's cultural goods. Despite that, those aspects of the most traditional form of power – hard power – have been minimized with the growth in the importance of soft power (Nye, 1990).

The real consequences of the decline of certain aspects of hard power, especially the use of military forces, are related to the crescent importance given to soft power practices. Instead of creating a hostile environment, nations recognize the importance of developing relationships with other countries, forming alliances, and developing bilateral exchanges in multiple aspects. The importance of both hard and soft power practices has led researchers to the conclusion that smart power, the combination of hard and soft power means, is the wisest way of exerting and acting in regard to power (Armitage & Nye, 2007; Nye, 2008; Nye, 2009; Wilson III, 2008).

For countries such as South Korea, which have suffered from an economic and social crisis after the Korean War, relationships with other countries are crucial. After the end of the war, which counted the United States of America's (USA) army on South Korea's side, the exchange between the two countries did not cease; in fact, it only grew bigger. Although it was a matter of hard power means (the use of

military force) and related to the Cold War (in which the USA and the Soviet Union were the protagonists), South Korea and the USA have developed their connection in other aspects. In spite of the importance of the bilateral economic exchanges between the two countries, soft power has strengthened the connection more, through the life of their civilians. As the U.S. Department of State recognized: “People-to-people ties between the United States and the ROK are a central pillar of our multifaceted relationship” (2022). It is highlighted the exchanges for educational purposes between students of both countries, as well as the opportunities for young people through the WEST (Work, English, Study, and Travel) program (U.S. Department of State, 2022).

Relating to soft power, South Korea’s country image has also been shaped by its popular culture. As it was stated before, the elements of South Korea’s popular culture have worked towards promoting a positive message regarding its country-of-origin. Not only resulting in a better-perceived image of the country by foreigners, popular culture is, as well, an agent of growing interest in the nation’s products. Especially as a result of an affective country image, cultural waves generate affection, appreciation, and interest in other products from the same land (Lita & Cho, 2012; Ma, et al., 2022). The Korean Wave is, thus, an example of a driving factor for the purchase of Korean products by foreigners, as it “causes the increased consumption of products of, increasing interests in the culture of, and an increase in travel to the country of origin, as shown in the media” (Lita & Cho, 2012, p. 1435).

Even though *Hallyu* may still be perceived solely as a social phenomenon by some researchers, its impact on economic and political matters has changed that idea. Art has always been also a form of political expression, a sign of the times, a form for people to express their contemporary problems, worries, and feelings. The separation of social phenomena from economic ones creates a barrier that may be regarded as nonsensical since one depends on and influences the other. Therefore, there has been a shift in attitude and ideas about the importance of cultural products in a country. Culture, especially popular culture, is not purely seen as an entertainment agent, but as a phenomenon that changes and impacts an entire nation.

Hence, because of this paradigm change, this study intends to understand the real impact of South Korean popular culture on the country’s image and the contributions to its soft power. Because of the short time span of this paradigm shift, there is a lack of studies analysing the growth and improvement of South Korea’s soft power and country image concerning the popularization of certain entertainment aspects of Korean culture. Thus, it is necessary to understand if and to what extent the Korean Wave has changed the general perception of Korea as a country if the openness to Korean products and services



has increased upon contact with any form of Korean popular culture, and, consequently, if the attitude towards and intention to buy Korean products has improved.

## **1.2. Research question and objectives**

According to the paradigm change presented previously, the present study intends to answer the following question: “Does the involvement with South Korean popular culture influence positively the country’s image and soft power, leading to a better product image and, consequently, a greater willingness to purchase Korean products?”.

As the research question proposed suggests, the main objective of this study is to understand if the involvement with South Korean cultural products positively impacts the general country image and soft power of South Korea, creating a better product image, and leading to a greater willingness to buy those products.

More specifically, this research has as its objectives:

- To understand the impact of the involvement with South Korean popular culture on the country image and soft power.
- To comprehend if the country image and the soft power influence the product image.
- Analyse the implications of the product image of the country on the willingness to buy Korean products.

## **1.3. Structure of the dissertation**

This dissertation will be divided into five chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction and problem definition. The present chapter made a brief introduction to the problem that serves as a motif for the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Development of the Hypotheses and Conceptual Model. The chapter includes the literature review for the concepts mentioned in the research question, as well as other concepts that are connected to them and important for the full understanding of the ideas. According to the literature review, there is a section presenting the hypotheses to be tested and the conceptual model elaborated.

Chapter 3: Methodology. The chapter is constituted by the methods used for the literature review and the research methodology. Also, it is presented the scales to be used on the questionnaire.

Chapter 4: Results. Following the collection of the data, this chapter is constituted by the analyses of the results. There is the analysis of sociodemographic data and of each variable; the internal consistency and normality tests; the Pearson Correlation test and the linear regression. To conclude, there is the validation of the hypotheses.

Chapter 5: Discussion of the results and Conclusion. To conclude this research, the main findings will be mentioned, as well as their implications. Also, we acknowledge the limitations of the research, accompanied by suggestions for future studies.

## 2. Literature Review and Development of the Hypotheses and Conceptual Model

### 2.1. Popular culture

The concept of popular culture is not clear in its origins nor consensual in its meaning. There are debates on the origin of mass culture dating to the construction of societies, with such things as bread being considered a part of popular culture, contrary to the perception that popular culture was born within society's construction of the market (Strinati, 2004). Additionally, it is defended by some authors that the construct of popular culture, as it is understood nowadays, has its origin prior to the beginning of the 19th century, and was related to the understanding of national values. Thus, it is suggested by Burke (2009) that the correlation is the outcome of the metamorphosis between popular and national culture, sought by the intellectuals.

Commonly, the definition accentuates that "popular culture is the set of practices, beliefs, and objects that embody the most broadly shared meanings of a social system" (Kidd, 2017), which embrace, among many, aspects of the media (such as film, television, music, games, and others), fashion, entertainment, language, and linguistic conventions (Kidd, 2017). Although its connotation relates to the majority of the individuals of a group or society's taste, interest, and consumption, popular culture was, and perhaps still is, considered inferior in comparison to the culture of the elite. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that such pejorative connotation applied to the construct is not as common, since popular culture is commonly seen purely as the culture enjoyed by the majority (Strinati, 2004).

The origin of popular culture, as it is known nowadays, dates to the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, having folklore culture as its base (Strinati, 2004; Burke, 2009). For that reason, on one hand, the association between folk culture and popular culture is common, as well as with mass culture. On the other hand, popular culture is highly dissociated with institutional culture, be it political, institutional, or other, and high culture.

Popular culture, if simply defined, is the culture enjoyed by the greater part of people, thus being related to the concept of mass culture, it is common for the literature to question the reasons behind its emersion. On one hand, popular culture may be the result of the ascension of a certain cultural aspect or creation, upon being appreciated by the majority. On the other hand, it may be the consumption of a previously considered elite culture by the larger part. Additionally, it may be added that it can be "an interaction between the two" (Strinati, 2004, p. 3).

Although folklore had an important role in the birth of popular culture, its association with it changed as the Industrial Revolution brought new forms of culture and ideas (Strinati, 2004). Regarding the link with mass culture, it is made mainly because of the capitalist association made with the forms of production of the new elements of culture. Even though such an association is realistic, authors such as Fiske (1984) suggest that popular culture should be seen as the creative ways of producing culture, born within the desire to resist and innovate the dominant ways.

The birth of the radio, cinema, and other forms of mass creation and consumption of culture, dating to the decades of the 1920s and 1930s, however, uphold the fact that popular culture does not always come from organic growth in enjoyers within communities, as well as their production process being changed. For example, films have been mass-produced ever since, with exponential growth due to access to developing technology. The political regimes also have an impact on the cultural products being consumed; fascism, for instance, imposed limits and controlled what would be consumed by the people, so it goes against the previously stated hypothesis that popular culture products were the selection of those appreciated by the mass (Strinati, 2004).

Popular culture, if seen through an objective of creative processes and folk culture, becomes connected with subcultural groups. Being it by age or ethnicity, popular culture is highly associated and integrated within different groups, with different cultures. Nevertheless, “popular culture is seen as a set of practices by artists or other kinds of culture makers that result in performances and objects that are received and interpreted by audiences, both within and beyond the subcultural group” (Kidd, 2017).

The literature suggests that popular culture is a junction of both implied practices of the capitalist forces and the expression of individuals and groups - “popular culture is neither an ‘authentic’ folk, working-class nor subculture, nor a culture simply imposed by the capitalist culture industries, but a ‘compromise equilibrium’ (Gramsci, 1971) between the two” (Storey, 2003, p.12). However, it is suggested that popular culture's birth comes from creative processes within subcultural groups, from which it is seized by market organizations (Kidd, 2017). Popular culture has developed into a mixture of “both ‘commercial’ and ‘authentic’, marked by both ‘resistance’ and ‘incorporation’” (Storey, 2003).

In conclusion, recent views on popular culture, and its development over the centuries, have defined it as both a form of expression of the inner creativity of subcultural groups, characterized by factors that have to do with, for instance, age or ethnic background (Kidd, 2017), and the market system and its appropriation of the creations.

### 2.1.1. Mass culture and mass society theory

Mass culture and popular culture are frequently seen as synonyms since they both refer to the majority of society, this is, mass society, and their consumption of a cultural product. Such a view is, however, debated and non-consensual.

In order to understand and define mass culture, it is necessary to pass through the ideas behind the theory of mass society. Industrialization is seen as the main cause of the societal change, as it brought a new way into production, directly influencing urbanization and the movement of the masses from rural to urban areas, leading to a decrease in almost self-sufficient communities, the communal agrarian work and even the religious and moral activities, beliefs and practices that brought people together. Advanced science has also had an impact on people's ways of living; the modern mechanisms and mass production created an environment, not as propene to tightening personal connections as the rural ways of living (Strinati, 2004).

Mass society theory, contrary to what the term may suggest, suggests anonymity and solitude. The connections are said to be more professional and contractual than personal. The need to live in communities is highly decreased, as there is no real dependence on others, contrary to the previous communities built around the cities, which worked together to fulfil their needs. "Organisations, such as the village, the family and the church" (Strinati, 2004, p. 6) were the basis for the morality that conducted the lives of those within it; contrary to that, science or urban life do not bring any psychological or moral identity to the individual, according to the theory of mass culture.

According to the theory, these means of living (by not creating truthful relationships or having a society in which people share beliefs, and morals and do not create a link in which it is possible to develop such ideals), create a society that has no true values or morals. Since there is no sincerity in their connections, humans develop a superficial and inconsequential community. This may lead to a population vulnerable to the more powerful corporations and institutions, to which popular culture may be added (Strinati, 2004).

The mass society theory may be extended to the point of theorists seeing and regarding education and democracy as harmful since they "entail the breakdown of cultural distinctions between art and folk culture" (Strinati, 2004, p. 7). Education and democracy allow the majority of people to have an opinion and attitude towards culture and politics, for instance. Ordinary individuals have now more access to certain forms of art in museums, also. These are direct reflections of the alphabetization of communities,

for instance, and the democratic values that look upon equal access between humans, who have the possibility to consume certain cultural goods, such as literature, as well as to create those. Such changes in society, namely in expanded education, the implantation of democratic values in a series of countries, or other forms of generalizing matters that were exclusive to the elites, may be seen by mass culture theorists as responsible for the phenomenon (Atabek & Nurnazar, 2021; Strinati, 2004).

Clearly, equal rights fights are connected to the changes applied in the construction of art. Unfortunately, the rising of mass culture is still seen negatively by several theorists, who believe that “real” or “authentic” art is being marginalised and forgotten. Still, the concept of art is not defined properly, with theorists and philosophers still arguing on what may be the methods used to characterise something as art. Graham (1997) comments on the distinct views of many authors on the theme, and on how there is not and, possibly, will never be a definition of the term that is accepted by the whole lot. Thus, part of the criticism of mass culture is based on elitist thoughts and opinions regarding art, one that discriminates against what comes from and is appreciated by the common people (Atabek & Nurnazar, 2021).

On the contrary, some authors suggest a more positivist view on the changes in culture through the phenomenon of mass culture, considering it a natural circumstance and, consequently, not as artificial as their fellow theorists suggest (Atabek & Nurnazar, 2021; Strinati, 2004). Overall, culture is not stagnated, it changes according to the means of living of societies: their beliefs, their connections with other societies, their policies, and others.

Although there are mixed opinions on mass culture, it is possible to affirm that individuals that are part of a mass society, being confronted with the culture of the masses, are vulnerable to the usage of cultural products, especially mass media, as a way of “systematic and pervasively cajole, persuade, manipulate and exploit the people” (Strinati, 2004, p. 8) by the elites. Therefore, it may be concluded that mass culture influences many political aspects of a country and its relationships with others.

Even though popular culture and mass culture seem to be synonyms, some authors suggest that the first is more open to different kinds of cultural expressions (Atabek & Nurnazar, 2021), contrary to mass culture which is imposed on individuals as they are spread through powerful means of communication (Strinati, 2004). Contrary to that, it is also stated that popular culture shares with mass culture the fact that they are simply consumer goods created to occupy any given free time (Atabek & Nurnazar, 2021).

Regardless of the different opinions about mass and popular culture, it cannot be denied that it is a part of society and contributes to it physically and intellectually. The capitalist influence that many mass culture theorists criticize is natural and a fundamental part of modern economies (Atabek & Nurnazar, 2021). The nature of popular culture is, fundamentally, to be enjoyed by the masses, so it is composed of a wide range of cultural goods that do not discriminate between taste and status. In a capitalist environment, in a century that gives special emphasis on economic power, profiting from popular culture is unavoidable and legitimate (Atabek & Nurnazar, 2021).

### 2.1.2. *Hallyu*. The Korean Wave

The emergence of South Korean popular culture started in the 1990s, as it gained popularity in neighbouring nations, namely China and Japan (Shim, 2006). The phenomenon of internationalization of Korean popular culture was named *Hallyu* (or the Korean Wave) (Jin & Yoon, 2017), for the greatness of its expansion. Although East Asia has been aware of Korea's popular culture for some decades, the conquering of the West happened only recently, and its growth does not see an end in the near future. South Korea is passing through the highest phase of exportation of its popular culture ever (Kim, 2013).

In spite of the fact that the Korean government has had an important and beneficial relationship with the United States of America, there was poor reciprocity in terms of cultural exchanges. In fact, American popular culture may be seen as a mass culture since its products are promoted worldwide through multiple forms of media. Korea suffered from the same status of anonymity as other countries in what relates to the spreading of its culture. Thus, there were no explicit profits from Korean popular culture, being it monetary speaking, nor in terms of emotional, mental, or creative gains.

The expression *Hallyu* was created in 1999 by Chinese journalists, as their country saw a growth in interest and increased consumption of Korean culture and its entertainment industry, in particular, soap operas and pop music (K-pop) were the starting point for Chinese passion for Korean culture (Kim, 2007). Soon after, other East Asian countries, such as Japan and Singapore, gained interest in the matter (Kim, 2013). In the list of cultural products that have a huge influence overseas are the music industry, especially the pop genre, commonly referred to as K-pop; films, series, and animations; fashion items and beauty products, with great prevalence on skincare, as well as Korean food (Kim, 2013).

Even though there has been an openness to international cultural products through globalization, the growth of Korean popular culture was highly influenced by its government. There was an investment

made in the industry in the decades of the '80s and '90s, as there was the awareness that, not only Koreans were consuming cultural products from abroad unnecessarily, as well as Korea itself could be an exporter (Shim, 2006). Resulting in a growth of 553%, from 2001 to 2011, the exportation of Korean cultural products reached 4.3 billion US Dollars (Kwon & Kim, 2014). Also, the consumption of cultural products nationally has increased in Korea, improving its productivity and self-sufficiency.

The Korean Ministry of Culture became a successful and crucial part of the Korean economy, and the funding for popular culture products has not ceased ever since. The model used to propagate Korean cultural products was highly inspired by the Americans, more specifically, the Hollywood way. After the Korean war, the United States of America was a very present and friendly ally of South Korea, and like most of the globe, Korea saw itself under the influence of the biggest popular culture-producing nation: the United States. However, the innovative Korean way of producing resulted from that influence added to the more traditional forms of Korean culture. Thus, the country created a type of culture that was a mix between the foreign and what was the most native, resulting in specific kinds of cultural products (Kim, 2013; Shim, 2006).

The biggest Korean act to break through in the West was singer and dancer Psy, who conquered the world with his song *Gangnam Style* – which was a direct reference to the Gangnam district, located in Seoul, South Korea, known for its richness and the high-cost living, such as rent, thus being associated and inhabited, generally, by the upper-class. The song and its choreography were successful internationally, leading to Psy having the video with the most views on Youtube in the year of its release (Kim, 2013; Kwon & Kim, 2014). The success of Psy's *Gangnam Style* was followed by the hit *Gentleman*, which held the position of the fastest music video to achieve 100 million views on YouTube. The record belongs, as of the year 2022, to another Korean act – *Butter*, by BTS, that in less than a day accomplished such a number, beating the previous record by the same group, with *Dynamite* (that needed one day to reach 100 million views). South Korean artists are the creators of half music videos which most quickly went viral, with special emphasis on BTS, Psy, Blackpink, Twice, and Exo (Ceci, 2022).

Youna Kim, in her edition of “The Korean Wave” released in 2013, mentions that “there are an estimated 460,000 fans of the Korean Wave across Europe” (2013, p. 2). In 2019, six years later, it was reported that Europe has surpassed 6.5 million Hallyu fans in Europe, and has 89 million followers worldwide, with countries in the Asia-Pacific area leading the charts (Kwak, 2019). One of the biggest factors for that growing number is social media and digital platforms, which allow international fans, all



over the world, to have access not only to the cultural products that may be distributed digitally, such as music and series but also boost the awareness towards other cultural products.

The technological advances seen in the last decades are great allies to the expansion of Korean popular culture: from satellite TV broadcasting that allowed for the transmission of certain cultural goods in other countries, namely soap operas, to the internet that gives access to several cultural products' distribution platforms, such as Youtube (Kwak, 2019). Not only many cultural products are distributed online, but they are also accessible: there are subtitles in different languages (that sometimes are done by fans that wish to help, even in real-time, for instance, when artists do live streams) and many cultural products are distributed in free platforms (such as Youtube and other social media) (Kwak, 2019; Lee, 2011), and are until these days, great consumers of Korean entertainment products.

The rise of entertainment exports coming from South Korea has influenced the curiosity related to other cultural aspects of the land, as "Korean cultural products have become a catalyst for curiosity about Korean culture and Korea itself" (Lee, 2011, p.86). Popular and traditional culture end up merging (Lee & Nornes, 2015) through the ones experiencing it, as even if they may be separated by concept, they cannot be separated from the ordinary Korean person, nor the entertainment creations. Being it soap operas, commonly known as K-dramas, films, TV shows, or music, aspects of Korean culture are passed to pop culture. Thus, the influence of popular culture may affect the views on the nation's culture, and its fashion and trends induce change in other countries, as it becomes "all things Korean - from food and music to eyebrow-shaping and shoe styles" (Visser, 2002).

Even though many aspects of South Korea are seen as positive, namely their technological and automotive industries, there was a time when Korea was poorly seen by foreigners. On account of the Korean war and the political issues that took over in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the country did not have the most positive image. For some time and, arguably, nowadays, the political and military instability of the peninsula of Korea was seen as the main image of the countries: North Korea was the most closed country in the world, and South Korea was unstable and in jeopardy country (Kim, 2013). Even though the North has not made any improvement in regards to its image, the South worked towards the construction of a more positive and enjoyable country image (a concept to be analysed posteriorly in this work).

Moreover, the success of South Korea's exportation of its popular culture means that, even though the country has gone through hard times, including colonization, it has the power, the potential, and the strength to open its cultural borders. Thus, the Western cultural influence, which has been

present all over the globe, as well as the Japanese culture, which had a great weightage in Asia, are now threatened by Korean popular culture (Kim, 2013). Korean popular culture is not regarded solely as a part of the country's daily life, but also as an economic and political enhancer. South Korea is being represented throughout the planet through its popular culture as a means of creating a more appealing image to be associated with said country and, also, as a way of influencing positively, to lure or appeal, creating a stronger soft power (the concept of soft power will be expanded after) (Kim, 2013).

A characteristic of Korean popular culture is the association and integration of various aspects of Korean culture in general. Variety programs, for instance, represent a great deal of Korean entertainment, with actors, singers, and other entertainers exchanging their culture with the audiences. It is, for this reason, common to see Korean idols, a term that refers to the artist from the K-pop genre, cooking and eating typical Korean food or wearing traditional clothes (*Hanbok*). Every aspect of the culture is integrated within their work, and so passed on to their audiences. Even in TV and films, because of their differences in techniques, which provide more realistic views of the characters, make certain aspects of Korean culture, such as food, seem interesting items.

Although culture may sometimes be disassociated with governments, the potential of Korean entertainment was potentiated by strong investments in the sector. These investments were based not only on the direct economic advantages of the export of pop cultural goods but also as it was important in creating and demystifying the image of the nation, as it was not properly seen by its neighbouring lands (Shim, 2006), namely because of associations with poverty, political issues, and the Korean War, which has ended in the 1950s.

The growth of social media was key in expanding the *Hallyu* in the Western, for people around the world created communities to engage and appreciate different aspects of the culture (Kim, 2013). If the beginning of the Korean Wave was brought up by soap operas, the *Hallyu* stayed and is taking over the pop culture scenarios with its music – K-pop, with names such as Psy, BTS, and BlackPink -, dramas – with global phenomena “Kingdom”, “Crash Landing on you” and “Squid Game” -, films – Oscar winner “Parasite” and “Train to Busan” -, and the growth of the digital gaming community – with the creation of games such as *Battlegrounds* and *Ragnarok* (Jin & Yoon, 2017; KOFICE, 2021).

Nowadays, K-pop is the main image associated with South Korea, followed by Korean food. According to a report made by the Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange (created by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism), in 2020 16,8% of people saw the popular music genre as the “image most commonly associated with Korea” (KOFICE, 2021, p. 10), leading for the fourth year. In

the same report (KOFICE, 2021, p. 11), it was stated that 58,8% of the respondents changed their perception of Korea after their contact with the Korean Wave, while only 4,9% mentioned the contrary effect (the rest of the inquired claim that there was no change upon contact with *Hallyu*).

Moreover, not only has the Korean Wave influenced positively the image of the country worldwide, but it also was according to the liking of the majority. Being considered as part of the *Hallyu*: dramas, entertainment programs, movies, music, animations, publications, games, fashion, beauty, and food, all were enjoyed by at least 70% of people, while many others had a neutral position, neither stating appreciation nor dissatisfaction with the cultural products (KOFICE, 2021, p. 12).

The effects of the Korean Wave are multiple and, sometimes, hard to measure. Reports mention a growth in the popularity and enjoyment of Korean popular culture and the effect it has on the economy of the country, either directly or indirectly. Exportation of culture content goods increased by more than 10% from 2019 to 2020, resulting in 6.554 billion dollars; adding to that, the *Hallyu* was responsible for 3.621 billion dollars in the export of consumer goods associated with the phenomenon. In total, 10.175 billion dollars were generated through the export of products associated with or part of the Korean culture in 2020 (KOFICE, 2021).

In the midst of a pandemic and the need for social distancing, the tourism industry was greatly affected and did not participate in the studies regarding the influence of the Korean Wave. Regardless, the mentioned industry is important and highly associated with cultural content, meaning that, in ordinary conditions, it would be an important economic source (KOFICE, 2021; MediaRoll, 2016). The Korean Tourism Organization concluded that, prior to the pandemic, 55,3% of foreign tourists had a major influence, on the Korean wave (from elements such as its music to more traditional cultural aspects like the food) (Bae et al., 2017; MediaRoll, 2016).

## **2.2. Power**

### **2.2.1. Hard Power**

From early societies into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, humans have evolved and created crafts and forms of living that changed communities' ways of living. Since the beginning of humankind, and prior to that, every form of life had to find a way to survive and adapt to constant change. Humans have seen materials and

weaponry from a very early age, and that has developed into the capitalist and technological society that is seen nowadays.

Power *per se* may be synthesized as being able to pressure or coax others to operate in a way that would not be preferred by the subject, nor they would act in that manner if not being persuaded. Nevertheless, the forms to exert power are not always the same, as persuasion is not limited to a certain action. Hard power comes from an end of the power spectrum in which coercion is the fundamental cornerstone.

The main tools of hard power are related to more materialistic strategies, mainly “military intervention, coercive diplomacy, and economic sanctions” (Wilson III, 2008, p. 5). These are the means of power more visibly used upon the need to assert power over others and the ones more acknowledged in politics. There is a direct relationship made by society between power and owning determined resources (Smith-Windsor, 2000).

Thus, hard power requires a certain level of ability to have an applicable structure that allows the development of the military forces, the economic strength, an imposing dialogue that allows for compelling diplomacy, and a level of relevance that allows for the country to be recognized by those strengths. Such a position is unreachable for some nations, as it requires a structured economy, allies, and economic growth that allows the development of the economy itself and the military forces.

Beyond that, a hard power-focused strategy may result in unwanted diplomatic interventions and the feeling of needing to get involved in matters there are not beneficial for the land (Wagner, 2005). Furthermore, the level of hard power fundamentals the desire of certain nations to discriminate and assault those who hold less hard power. Facing economic difficulties or weaker military power, it is rather natural for a country to back up while facing a stronger nation, in terms of hard power (Rothman, 2011).

Even though military force is an easily understood matter in terms of power, economic strength presents deeper layers of power execution. Economic resources may be applied through sanctions, which hold back or occlude the other land’s economy, or, on the contrary, by rewarding the nations because they comply and adhere to what is imposed by the most powerful country. A country’s capital defines its position worldwide, and sanctions are examples of economic losses that can unsettle the whole structure of the country. Through its capital resources, a country may obtain other resources that are essential for its survival, such as “security, food, and other resources necessary to maintain their position in the

international system” (Rothman, 2011, p. 52). Also, economic power is important to obtain military forces, meaning that they are tools that are dependent on each other.

### 2.2.2. Soft Power

Although there is no clear distinction between soft and hard power, as they are a continuous way of employing power and influencing each other, the concept of soft power is used as its opposite. Hard power means “are thought to speak for themselves as coercive resources and thus to work most effectively” (Mattern, 2005). Hard power thus based itself on materialist matters, but especially on the “emphasis put on expressions of power as compulsion through direct interaction” (Bilgin & Elis, 2008, p.9). The integration of both forms of power culminates in a scenario described by Lukes (2005): “A may exercise power over B by getting him to do what he does not want to do, but he also exercises power over him by influencing, shaping, or determining his very want”.

“Soft power” was a concept brought up by Joseph Nye, an American political scientist, in the 1980s (Lee, 2009) and further deepened in his book “Bound to Lead”, in which it was defined as “getting others to want what you want” (Nye, 1990, p.167). Although the expression is recent, and there still is controversy on the meaning and use of it, the term has been gaining more visibility over the years, as it has become more relevant over some circumstances related to its meaning.

Nye had an important role in the understanding of the changes occurring after the Cold War. In his first publication on the matter, Professor Nye explains how hard power has lost a part of its significance with the rise of soft power, and how it may contradict successful hard power practices. As an example, Nye (1990) suggests that even though hard power operations may be a success for themselves, not always those are reflected in soft power aspects. This is, for instance, a successful military intervention may lead to people being discontent.

By no means soft power must be seen as a grander and stronger element of power, but rather as an important part of decision-making processes, and with a role of opening minds towards the concept of power. Nye has put forward the understanding that “In the traditional view, states are the only significant actors in world politics and only a few large states really matter. But today other actors are becoming increasingly important” (Nye, 1990, p.156). As time passes, the number of variables used to analyse and judge a country rises. From the political aspects of a country to its education, technology, environmental attitudes, and economic growth, the international view on power has shifted - “National

security has become more complicated as threats shift from the military (that is, threats against territorial integrity) to the economic and ecological” (Nye, 1990, p.154).

Soft power strategies are more related to the view one has of the country, as it is associated with influence via communication and the mastery of organizations and institutions (Nye, 1990). Thus, this aspect of power has an important humanistic side to it because, one, military force has declined in popularization (as people became socially more aware), and two, modern times brought new and easier forms of communication leading to the diffusion of power “from government to private actors” (Nye, 1990, p.162).

In order to completely understand soft power, it is necessary to be aware that soft power may be seen as a type of way to exert power, but there are multiple mechanisms used in order to exert them. On one hand, soft power may be seen as a kind of power, in pair with hard power. On the other hand, it may not be forgotten that soft power does not act for itself; rather, there are multiple mechanisms through which it is possible to practice soft power (Vuving, 2009; Rothman, 2011).

According to Nye (2009), there are mainly three ways of exerting power, being: coercion, payment, and attraction. The first two are usually related to practices of what is considered the “hard power”, that prosecute power through agents such as economic and military matters. Attraction, thus, is considered a mechanism of soft power. Obviously, these distinctions may fall short on certain occasions since, for instance, money and military forces may be seen as ways to attract. That is the main reason Nye (2009) explains further his definition of soft power; it is not solely to make others do what is wished, but it also implies the notion of free will. Exerting soft power would mean making other people’s instinct to do what is wanted, by not forcing an idea, wish, or desire (Nye, 2009; Vuving, 2009).

Even though hard power was seen as the main delegate of power in the past, the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought new visions on the concept of power and the ways it is possible to establish it. One of the innovative concepts delivered was soft power, which, then, led to the concept of smart power. Nye (2009) defends that, even though soft power may not have a huge impact in changing dominant and prevailing problems (namely political issues, such as dictatorships), it is a democratic agent, helping society get a bigger picture and protecting them from other mechanisms of power that may be prejudicial for them, such as the abuse of military force.

Shortly put, “the major elements of a country’s soft power include its culture (when it is pleasing to others), its values (when they are attractive and consistently practiced), and its policies (when they are

seen as inclusive and legitimate)” (Nye, 2009, p. 161). However, that definition still causes misunderstandings, and very often soft power is solely associated with culture. On other occasions, soft power becomes associated with a wider range of mechanisms, such as economic force. Although common, soft power must not be regarded as purely cultural, nor as omnibus as to bear culture and economy as its mechanisms (Vuving, 2009).

Globalization has changed the way the world is perceived, and the era of the internet has given power to private actors. The attractiveness of a country flows better in times when human interactions become easier in spite of geographic distances. Using the culture of a country, especially when it has great potential abroad, is a form of positioning for a nation, as the perception one has is influenced by their knowledge of it. As Nye (1990, p.167) mentions, “If a state can make its power legitimate in the eyes of others, it will encounter less resistance to its wishes. If its culture and ideology are attractive, others will more willingly follow”.

The main difference between hard and soft power lies in the fact that hard power uses coercion as a means of practicing power and reaching its aims; soft power is based on the ability to persuade others to do what they wish or to make others have a better perception of one’s ideas, mainly through institutions and the media (Rothman, 2011). Culture is a great means of soft power, as it contains a number of aspects, from language to food (Kidd, 2017), that have a high probability of attracting and influencing others. Nevertheless, culture itself may be improved and passed on in an enhanced way.

Being a kind of power related to attraction, soft power must be associated with a series of attitudes that attract. Such attitudes may be referred to as mechanisms through which soft power may be developed and constructed. However, not only the tools to construct soft power are important to understand; the construction of the concept itself, the causes, and the goals of further creation are part of the reasons for a country to have a certain level of soft power. Vuving (2009, p.8) suggests that “beauty, brilliance, and benignity” are the main aspects that constitute the attraction a country has.

Firstly, benignity refers to the relationships between countries that are created through soft power. The treatment received and the attitude towards a certain country define their relationship and their thoughts and visions of a country. Pleasing attitudes will, most likely, generate positive feelings towards the country. Examples of ways to be benign are to act in a caring and peaceful manner, creating an image of a harmless country. By making the country seem sympathetic and creating a feeling of gratitude, it is generated attraction, since it is enjoyable to be well-treated. Also, when a community is pampered and esteemed, it will, most likely, act the same toward others. Therefore, improved manners

towards other countries will create, not only a positive image associated with it but also a desire to be reciprocal (Nye, 2009; Rothman, 2011; Vuving, 2009).

Secondly, brilliance relates to the ability to make others admire the country. It usually associates with high performance from the country, which is wished to be replicated. To give an instance, brilliance may be acquired through being excellent in the fields of technology, economy, or even by well-applied societal rules. The key factor of brilliance is to portray the image that the country is capable and successful, making others respect the country and wish to be somewhat like it. Yet, brilliance may create a status that constructs the image of a threatening country if it is not admired. Therefore, soft power relies on multiple factors, that complement each other into creating an environment prone to the admiration of the country.

Lastly, beauty is caused by great “ideals, values, causes, or visions” (Vuving, 2009, p. 9). Such inspirational attitudes are strong generators of soft power. Similar to other interpersonal relationships, a country’s morals or the causes it fights for are important to the creation of a bond and affection. If those morals accompany the vision of a group, the chances of the creation of deeper contact are higher, since there is the feeling of walking in the same direction, collaborating to achieve a common goal. In order to have beauty, a country must be truthful and focused on the values, morals, visions, and other ideals that were shared and presented. An attitude that does not resonate with what may have been stated previously will not cooperate with the credibility of the country or its expressed morals (Rothman, 2011; Vuving, 2009).

Beneficial to its image and its recollection, a country with a strong and impactful “personality” will be remembered for its precision and conviction in a certain manner of thinking. This creates a sense of trust since the country is ruled by decisive morals and ideas. Clearly, such a statement would only be true for those countries which agree with those ideas; however, the solidity and coherence stand as better than the flexibility of ideals in this case, as it will create a solid base of supporters and admirers. Multiple changes in morals or a country’s switch of vision may create the opposite of what is desired to improve its soft power: rather than feeling trust, other countries may mistrust and question their actions (Vuving, 2009).

The three elements explained previously may be considered as the personality or the character of the country. They generate assumptions and feelings towards a country, so the better the brilliance, beauty, and benignity recognized by other nations, the superior will be its soft power. Functioning cooperatively, these bases of soft power have the capability of increasing it if they work in syntony. Soft



power, for this reason, shows itself as a complex form of power, grounded by a spectrum between rationality and emotions, knowledge, and morals.

Understanding the basis of smart power and how it may be effective are reasonable for any nation that looks forward to improving its international influence, by using resources or tools that are not coercive, such as military forces and direct economic exchanges. Unlike hard power which has two main resources as means of exerting power, soft power is not as limited: it goes from culture to policies.

However, many soft power agents suffer from the fact that they are frequently not seen as means of power, being underestimated and with insufficient resources for it to progress (Wilson III, 2008). Notwithstanding that soft power is seen as a legitimate form of power by many countries, it still is not distinguished and invested formally in general.

Rather, nations invest in soft power tools as if they acted independently from their function as a soft power resource (Wilson III, 2008). For instance, investments in cultural products and tourism or the enforcement of public policies with positive moral intentions are examples of resource allocations by governments not directly connected with the strengthening of their nation's soft power, yet that may be its leading goal. The disguised preoccupation or the underestimation of soft power are matters that concern the defenders of another way of exerting power: the junction of hard and soft to create "smart power".

### **2.2.3. Smart Power**

The evolution of humankind brought knowledge regarding the interactions of communities and the best manners to construct healthy relationships. Regardless, many countries still find themselves on a limb, trying to manage and balance their moral policies, economic stability, and international alliances. On account of the high impact of hard power, very frequently associated with and directly influenced by powerful institutions and political images, soft power practices are disregarded. Opposing that, soft power apologists tend to romanticise or create a utopian discourse in regard to that power. Concluding, neither extremity of power tendency seems viable to accompany the changes in power, and the balance of both hard and soft compose the most suitable power practice (Nye, *Get smart: combining hard and soft power*, 2009; Wilson III, 2008).

In spite of the fact that hard power is associated with coercion and soft power with attraction by the majority of literature, it is also considered that neither definition is precise nor acts solely as such. This

means that there are tools of hard power that may be used to attract, which is considered the core meaning behind soft power, and vice versa. Having into consideration the fluidity of power exertion tools, it is necessary to have a wider view of how and in what fields to apply resources into developing a country's power (Nye, *Get smart: combining hard and soft power*, 2009).

Multiple tools of power had decreased in popularity and use; the military force has, perhaps, been the mechanism to lose its impact. Although military power is used as a means to coerce others, and to actually cause loss, there have been other manners to coerce others, namely, to decrease the use of military forces. The application of sanctions and economic hostility towards a country are common mechanisms that aim to decrease the use of soldiery. Also, the threats to humankind have changed and the attention has spread to other, non-human, menaces, for instance, "ecological breakdowns such as pandemics and negative climate change" (Nye, 2008, p. 1355).

Smart power manifests itself as the incorporation of hard and soft power techniques in, as the term itself proposes, a smart and clever manner (Cross, 2011). Thus, there is no formula for the perfect way to improve a nation's power (Wilson III, 2008). Every country has its own specificities, needs, and relationships, along with other factors that must be taken into account to decide the best strategy to strengthen the country. Furthermore, such specificities of a country are ever-changing, resulting in a need for continuity of switches. Global politics are not stable, and the instability and continuous change may be a menace even for the most powerful lands (Nye, *Get smart: combining hard and soft power*, 2009; Wilson III, 2008).

Applying smart power strategies requires a solid base of knowledge of global politics, the existing and possible future conflicts, the economic tendencies, as well as the values and ideas people are instigating, and the cultural changes worldwide, among others. Needless to say, self-acquaintance is the leading factor in the success of any power-related strategy. Detailed analysis of the country and foreign lands generates the needed knowledge to create a smart power strategy.

Even so, smart power requires the ability to understand the current situation deeply and to apply changes that are suitable (Armitage & Nye, 2007). The glue that connects hard and soft power mechanics into a meaningful approach to power is contextual intelligence: "the intuitive diagnostic skill that helps policymakers align tactics with objectives to create smart strategies" (Nye, *Get smart: combining hard and soft power*, 2009, p. 161).

As much as some investments may seem the more obvious in order to increase a country's power, policymakers must take into account the real situation taking place and how it affects the policies in practice. Smart power calls for a modern view of power, disregarding the option of only applying one strategy, being it hard or soft power (Nye, *Get smart: combining hard and soft power*, 2009; Wilson III, 2008).

### **2.3. Country Image and related concepts**

Country image is a concept often related to the perception regarding a nation, having as its foundation the country's "representative products but also by the degree of economic and political maturity, historical events and relationships, culture and traditions, and the degree of technological virtuosity and industrialization" (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009, p. 727). Country image may be summarized as "the total of all descriptive, inferential and informational beliefs one has about a particular country" (Martin and Eroglu, 1993, p.193).

#### **2.3.1. Country-of-origin Effect**

The country-of-origin effect has been one of the most studied subjects concerning international business and the global market. The growth of globalization and the global market was the ignition for the research regarding the impact of the origin of products (Yang, et al., 2016). Denoting "the country that manufactures, designs or assembles a product or brand with which it is associated" (Rezvani, et al., 2012, p. 205), country-of-origin is commonly abridged to "COO".

Companies and institutions looking for internationalization or entering a new market need to take into account factors such as the acceptability of products from a certain country. Also, the brand name is analysed, both in order to comprehend if it is acceptable abroad, and to be certain it will be as appealing as it originally was. Brand names are, in many cases, direct references to the product's nationality, or suggest a certain country-of-origin, which may be used as a marketing technique to disguise a not-so-favourable country of origin for a determined market. Generally, the country-of-origin is important for consumers, especially when the quality of the product is at stake (Rezvani, et al., 2021; Yang, et al., 2016).

It may be debated that the country of origin does not have a direct influence over purchase decisions, but rather that it is indirectly affecting it. So, it is through the country image, the product category image, and the brand image, among others, that the country-of-origin effect appears. There are multiple conductors of COO, such as national stereotypes, animosity, ethnocentrism, and country image (Yang, et al., 2016).

Ethnocentrism refers to the predisposition individuals have to consider their communities or groups as being above others, leading to the refusal and rejection of communities different from theirs. Contrary to that, there is a tendency to accept and integrate groups that resemble their own, as cultural differences are less obvious. Nevertheless, ethnocentrism may not have an effect depending on the product in consideration. This is, a group of people may consider their national products better in certain categories, but still see certain foreign products as better (Bandyopadhyay, et al., 2006; Yang, et al., 2016).

Relating to ethnocentrism, animosity is defined as a negative thought towards a nation. It does not necessarily refer to an unenthusiastic view of a country's products, but rather a rejection or a denial of the nation itself. Consumer animosity often comes from previous or present negative encounters with a country, such as military, economic, or political quarrels. Even though those may not be directly involved with the products or their perceived quality, disputes and arguments are unwelcomed influences on consumers' decisions (Yang, et al., 2016).

Regarding country image and national stereotypes, they reflect what other populations understand and perceive of another country. They can be divided into knowledge-related areas, and more sentimental ones; the stereotypes created around each dimension will reflect on the thoughts people have around the country and, consequently, its products and brands. Those stereotypes will be the key to inducing the COO effect, by joining them with other dimensions, "which include 'product type', 'consumer expertise', 'culture', 'product involvement' and 'consumer ethnocentrism'" (Yang, et al., 2016, p. 99).

Numerous other COO dimensions are important for consumer decisions, including their involvement in the purchase, since the more involved, the more they will study about a certain product. Also, the consumer's familiarity with a product can be taken into account, as their experience with a product from a certain place has the power to influence their beliefs towards that country's products. If, for instance, an individual buys a product made in a certain country and it has great quality, they may create a positive image of the COO.

Important for a country's status and economy, the effect a nation's COO causes on foreigners implies a series of decisions that may improve the nation's economy, and its relationships, among others. Notwithstanding, the COO effect is not linear in its importance, as there are multiple groups of consumers that do not have the COO as an important factor for the purchase (Rezvani, et al., 2012). Still, the Country-of-Origin remains an important subject in terms of purchase decisions and the perception consumers have of different countries, meaning its country image.

### **2.3.2. Nation Branding**

The distinction between the terms "country" and "nation" may be regarded as the first connoting more of a physical place within borders, while the second denominates a community that usually has the same language and race. Although both concepts are often used as synonyms, some authors defend that their difference makes an impact on the literature related to marketing and management: while the term "country" is often associated with the products, nation carries a wider range of facets through which the nation is seen worldwide (Fan, 2006; Hao, et al., 2021). On the contrary, other literature uses both terms interchangeably (Fan, 2006; Fetscherin, 2010).

Non-consensual thoughts regarding nation branding may question the last declarations, as some authors consider it to be a synonym of the Country-of-origin effect or product image (both concepts mentioned in this work) (Fan, 2006). Nation branding is associated with and formed upon the structure of some marketing concepts, namely the Country-of-origin effect, country image, destination branding, and country identity (Fetscherin, 2010).

Although generally non-consensual, the definition of nation branding leans towards the techniques and means for a nation to promote itself, or the way it is perceived, especially having into account the marketing techniques used by the country (Fan, 2006; Hao, et al., 2021). Thus, nation branding, country image, and country-of-origin effect are concepts that share multiple similarities in their definitions. Furthermore, nation branding is not a controlled phenomenon by the nation itself, but rather a construction made by elements of the nation, that desire and seek a means of utilizing the nation as a brand, resulting in commercial benefits (Fan, 2006).

The main goal of nation branding could be stated as being the improvement of the nation's overall image, "covering political, economic, historical and cultural dimensions" (Fan, 2006, p. 8). Such a view on the issue suggests that the main distinction between nation branding and country-of-origin effect or

country image is the fact that it relates to other fields of study, namely international relations (Fetscherin, 2010; Hao, et al., 2021), with the possibility of it being associated with the notion of soft power.

Considering the different perspectives on the matter, it can be concluded that nation branding must be perceived as a complex dialogue between, mainly, the areas of marketing and international relations, which the main goals could be summed as “to stimulate exports, attract tourism, investments, and immigration, and create positive international perceptions and attitudes” (Fetscherin, 2010, p. 468).

As stated previously, the nation itself may have poor control over the nation's branding. “As the nation has no natural monopoly on the precise qualities it is seeking to promote” (Fan, 2006, p. 8), both the development of such qualities and their protection over the appropriation of others are lacking. Furthermore, the enhancement of a nation's branding implies an international campaign that acts upon the issues regarded by others, or the improvement of specific things related to the country, as perceived globally (Fetscherin, 2010; Hao, et al., 2021).

Nation branding is, overall, still lacking a consensus in the literature. The complexity of dimensions that touch on the topic creates difficulty in understanding how nation branding may be executed and who should be responsible for it. Nevertheless, the concept is a natural bridge between concepts such as soft power and country image, by relating the understanding and perception of a country through different views – being it more concerned with the impact a country has politically speaking, or in terms of economic interest.

### **2.3.3. Country Image**

Compared to other aspects of a country, namely the brand and the price, the country's image has a similar influence on consumer choices. Thus, the ideas or images consumers create of a country influence their purchases as much as other important factors in commerce, such as the ones referred to above. Being so important for purchase decisions, country image has been studied and analysed over the years. Different studies suggest multiple ways of measuring the country image, but the most common are “economic conditions, conflict, political structure, vocational training, work culture, environment, and labor” (Lala, et al., 2008, p. 53).

The concept is, perhaps, one of the most studied in the country-of-origin (COO) literature, since it gives a perspective on how a country is perceived. A positive, negative, or neutral country image will reflect on people's attitudes toward the country and, consequently, their consumer decisions (Ma, et al.,

2022). It is suggested by the literature that the country image precedes the country-of-origin effect, as it is the basis of knowledge and thoughts one has on a certain country that will determine its behaviour as a consumer (Ma, et al., 2022; Rezvani, et al., 2021).

The country-of-origin effect refers to the influence that the country of production of an item may have on the perception and behaviour towards that product. Choosing a product over other because of its country-of-origin or creating the expectation that an item has poor quality based on its origin are examples of the country-of-origin effect and a negative country image. These ideas, which are based on the image individuals have of a certain nation will dictate the consumer's decision, leading to either a positive or negative outcome for the country (Bandyopadhyay, et al., 2006; Rezvani, et al., 2012).

Authors such as Verlegh (2001) and Askegaard and Ger (1998) define country image by relating it directly with affective matters related to the country, namely feelings, and emotions towards a certain nation. This association is one that was made on the birth of the concept, as Boulding, in 1956, made a correlation between affective structures and cognitive ones in terms of countries' image.

The definition of country image is, for this reason, broad and englobes different dimensions, as cognitive and affective aspects of perception may be seen as part of the construct (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2008; Wang et al, 2012). Thus, a country's image relies on beliefs that are constructed upon the perception and realizations people make of certain land, and so it is "the sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about places" (Kotler et al, 1993).

Country image may not be regarded as one component, as it is the junction of various aspects that create a determined perception of the country. Thus, studies suggest the division of the country image concept into two dimensions: cognitive country image (CCI) and affective country image (ACI). Although both dimensions have been discussed in the literature, it still is considered a new idea, lacking more discussion and studies on which dimension of a country's image affects people's lives to the point of dictating their behaviour as consumers, among others (Ma, et al., 2022).

Studies in the field of country image and the country-of-origin effect tend to look at society as homogenous. Nonetheless, cognitive and affective country image affect people's lives differently, creating a greater difficulty in understanding which of those dimensions has a bigger impact. Furthermore, cognition and affective country image may be ambivalent – meaning that the cognitive and affective image are different from each other-, or univalent – when both are either positive or negative. This means

that, for example, a person may have a positive view of a country's culture (positive ACI) and still know that it is underdeveloped (negative CCI), or vice versa.

Cognitive country image refers to "the performance-related cognition individuals hold of another country, including consumer beliefs such as the country's level of economic development, the standard of living, industrialization and technological advancement" (Ma, et al., 2022, p. 3). This dimension was the most associated with consumer behaviour and purchase intentions, as it relates to quality, trust, and high levels of development perceived by the consumer.

Affective country image concerns other aspects of a country that are not connected with its performance (being it economic, technological, industrial, etc.). They express people's "emotional reactions to a country, which can stem from an individual's direct and/or indirect experiences with the country and its citizens through travel, art, education, and mass media" (Ma, et al., 2022, p.3). Moreover, any relationship or exchange between the motherland and the foreign country, be it a cultural or a historic event, may influence the perceived country image (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009).

A study by Ma et al (2022) intended to understand which dimension of the country image has a bigger impact on consumer decisions, concluded that there was no generic answer. In the case of a univalent country image perception, cognitive seemed more important for the purchase of utilitarian goods, as the effect varied depending on the type of product. On the contrary, in the same situation, but regarding hedonic products, affective country image affects the consumer's decision. In ambivalent situations, affective country image is the dominant dimension, with the type of product not being of great influence. These results show that whenever there is a neutral attitude or perception or a balance between cognitive-affective image towards a country (ambivalent situations), an affective country image has more impact.

Furthermore, the concept of country image is, as mentioned, related to the overall image made of a country, as well as the image of the country's products and their relationship with the image of the country (product-country image) (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2008). It is common for the inexistence of disassociation between the general country image and the image created through the perceived depiction of the nation's products. When there is a lack of information regarding a certain country, it is common for it to be based on the perceived image of known products from the country or the contrary, this is, the product image is based on its country-of-origin perception (Lala et al, 2008).



## 2.4. Product Image of a Country

The product Image of a country is a concept related to the perceptions or prejudices (positive or negative) consumers have towards the products of a certain country. This means that people usually create a stereotypical view of the products of each country, leading to an imagery that may or may not, correspond to reality. Possessing similarities with the notion of country image, both concepts are often mentioned together. Even though they present different definitions, they actually are connected, as one influences the other (Dagger & Raciti, 2011; Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009; Wang, et al., 2012).

While country image offers a broader/general view of a country, having into account different characteristics of a country, namely its technological advances or the level of education, the product image is more precise in its focus. So, whilst country image refers to the perception of a certain nation, that may lead to conclusions regarding, for instance, its products, product image concentrates solely on the stereotypes regarding characteristics of or associated with the products (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009; Wang, et al., 2012).

The knowledge or perception one has of the products of a country creates a unique path of attitude toward it. By knowing the origin of a determined good, a consumer can have a bias or create presuppositions based on a single source of information. Thus, the country-of-origin (COO) of a product can be an important leading factor for their willingness to buy it, as people create an opinion on an item based on preconceptions constructed on stereotypes. There is a mental path of stereotypes relating to each country-of-origin which people, consciously or unconsciously, go through in order to form a hierarchy of biases arising from consumers' perceptions of country image and their assumptions about the products produced in that country" (Dagger & Raciti, 2011, p. 201).

Even though product image may be as embracing as to account for "the general perceptions that consumers have of a particular country's products" (Wang, et al., 2012, p. 1042), the literature also suggests product image could refer to certain attributes associated with the products of a nation, such as workmanship, durability or the design. Often, the product image is associated with quality, or with variants that can influence it, such as the level of technological advances (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009; Wang, et al., 2012).

A famous example of a positive product image is the electronic products from Japan, highly recognized for their technological and innovative attributes. The creation of the stereotype that electronic goods made in Japan have high quality, based on some perceived characteristics of the country, this

particular category of products has a favourable image (Dagger & Raciti, 2011). However, the positive view only applies to that specific category of products; other categories of goods may have a different product image, depending on the preconceptions relating to each product.

On one hand, the product image of a country can be the result of the country image and the stigmas or preconceptions made of a country. On the other hand, the knowledge about the products of a region may lead to a certain perception of the nation as a whole. Since the relationship of both concepts seems to be inseparable, they commonly are studied conjoined and referred to in the literature as a product-country image (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009).

Moreover, country image, more precisely, cognitive country image is not referred to in the literature as a direct cause for purchase intention; rather, it is through product image that it has an effect on purchase behaviours. This knowledge relates to the halo effect, which assumes that when consumers are more aware of the product itself, they most likely will not consider other information, such as its country of origin. Nevertheless, as people get acquainted with an item, they may use country-of-origin information, "(...) as they feel at ease with such information cues" (Wang, et al., 2012, p. 1043).

Even though the halo effect is a theory of psychology that intends to comprehend cognitive bias, it has been used in other fields of research to understand similar phenomena. In the first instance, the halo effect lies in the idea that the first judgment people make about a certain object is then reflected in the appraisal of other characteristics of the product that were unfamiliar. Thus, this theory is often used to investigate "(...) people's over-generalizations and misjudgements" (Woo, 2019, p. 775).

Applied to country-of-origin research, the halo effect is used to clarify how a country's image impacts its product image. The halo effect would function by gliding from the country image, this is, the global view of a certain country, to its product image, which denotes the stereotypes put on the items or an exact category of products from a determined nation. As the concept of country image developed, so did the views on the halo effect. Nowadays, researchers tend to focus on a dimension of country image, being cognitive or affective, for instance, as well as they consider the "(...) the general product image of a country and the particular product category image of a country" (Woo, 2019, p. 775) as distinct variables to be studied.

Albeit product image may have been discussed as a part of the country image, the recent literature suggests that, although they are connected, they are unequal. Product image is stated to buy influence the purchase intentions of consumers, leading to the conclusion that the stereotypes and

preconceptions the general public have for a certain country's products can have a noticeable impact on the intention to buy goods from a nation (Wang, et al., 2012; Woo, 2019).

## **2.5. Willingness to Buy**

Willingness to buy refers to the will or desirability of purchasing a certain product, or the "consumer's desire to buy foreign products due to the fulfillment of an expectation of a product" (Halim & Zulkarnain, 2017, p. 16). Applied to the purchase of foreign products, willingness to buy is often connected with a gap the consumer found between local products and the ones from abroad.

Willingness to buy, thus, is often associated with the concept of country-of-origin, country image, and product image. According to Lee & Chen (2008), there is a chain of influence from the country image to the product image, leading to the willingness to buy. This is, if there is a positive image of a certain nation, it may influence the reliance on the products, or the product image, that will impact positively the willingness to buy goods from said land.

Although many studies have suggested that Cognitive Country Image has a strong impact on different categories of products' perceived image, which reflects on the disposition to purchase, there is also a not-so-rational dimension that affects willingness to buy. Consumer affinity firmly impacts consumers' decisions, as the connection felt by them relies on a strong connection with the country. This may result in a purchase behaviour based on emotional feelings, rather than a cognitive approach to the acquisitions (Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011).

Willingness to buy is related to a series of dimensions, such as consumer affinity, country image, product image, perceived quality, consumer ethnocentrism, perceived risk, and perceived product value among others (Beneke, et al., 2013; Lee & Chen, 2008; Oberecker, et al., 2008; Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011). Also, the dimensions that influence willingness to purchase may be distinguished according to different categories of products (Sweeney, et al., 1999).

## **2.6. Development of hypotheses and research model**

The Hallyu has brought Korea to the spotlight, and there has been a continuous growth, acceptance, and interest, that has been more recent in western countries. Allied with the positive relationship between

South Korea and Western countries, the popular culture may contribute to a positive widening of the Hallyu.

Since soft power relies on the transmission of positive values and cultural exchanges, the Korean Wave could be regarded as a powerful pillar of Korean soft power. In a climate of constant tension with the northern neighbour, Korean hard power is precious and necessary. However, its soft power is an ally in the conquer of a union with other strong hard powerful nations.

Also, the *Hallyu* is, in itself, the embodiment of what may be considered the best of Korea: its culture, and its evolution. From the traditional *Hanbok* (clothing) incorporated into modern fashion to the globalization of traditional Korean cuisine, the Korean Wave carries dimensions of culture that are appreciated and lead to curiosity. Although xenophobia applies a negative spell on the spread of Korean popular culture, globalization brought up a segment constituted by an enlightened community that does not tolerate mass attacks based on someone's nationality. Thus, *Hallyu* is part of the positive outcome of societal development and the integration of new technological advances that allowed for an intellectually and spiritually compact world.

Considering the importance of the *Hallyu*, both directly and indirectly, economically and in global mentality, it is possible to conclude that the internationalization of popular culture may lead to changes in how that same country is perceived and the actions towards that country. As *Hallyu* has been growing in the last decade, the assumption made is that Korean popular culture is appreciated and has a positive influence on the consciousness and feelings towards its country-of-origin. So, South Korea country image and soft power can be lifted by the foreign appreciation of Korean popular culture.

Country Image has an impact on the decision-making process of consumers and their attitudes toward the products and attributes of a certain nation. The influence of Country Image on willingness to buy is channeled through consumers' perceptions of the attributes of a particular product. The relationship between country image, product image, and purchase-related behaviours is mentioned vastly in literature, with Roth and Diamantopoulos (2009), Wang, et al. (2012), and Woo (2019) being examples of it.

Based on the previously presented literature review, we present the research model to be followed and the development of the hypothesis. This research is a case study about South Korea, so the hypotheses shall be adapted to the case.

As it is suggested by the literature, one of the dimensions that generate positive feelings toward a country is its culture (Nye, 2009; Vuving, 2009). Thus, one aspect that affects the soft power of a country is the enjoyment others have of it. Being popular culture a notorious part of what consists of the culture of a whole nation, a positive perception towards it can lead to a greater soft power. Thus, the first hypothesis created is:

**Hypothesis 1:** The involvement with South Korean Popular Culture positively affects the perception of South Korea's Soft Power.

Similar to its relation with soft power, a nation's popular culture also has implications on its country image. The literature suggests several commonalities between the notions of soft power and country image, thus suggesting that both constructs perform a distinctive role in a country, but that they may be affected by the same variables, namely popular culture (Jhee & Lee, 2011; Lala, et al., 2008). As a matter of fact, culture is one of the dimensions to build a country image (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009). For that reason, the second hypothesis to be tested is:

**Hypothesis 2:** The Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture positively affects South Korea's Country Image.

As previously stated, both country image and soft power portray a distinct role in the view of the country, one more related to the area of marketing and consumer behaviour (Ma, et al., 2022) and the other to international relations. In common, both constructs are associated with the imagery created for the general public of a certain country, and the consequent feelings and attitudes towards that same nation (Ma, et al., 2022; Nye, 2009; Rezvani, et al., 2012; Rothman, 2011; Vuving, 2009). A direct consequence of stereotypes and certain ideas related to a nation is the creation of the product image of a country (Dagger & Raciti, 2011; Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009; Wang, et al., 2012). Considering the influence that the general image of a country (depicted through its country image and soft power) has on the view of the country's products, it is proposed that:

**Hypothesis 3:** South Korea's Soft Power positively influences its Product Image.

**Hypothesis 4:** South Korea's Country Image positively influences its Product Image.

On the chain of events from the country-of-origin effect to the product image, the following step would be associated with purchase behaviour. Studies suggest that willingness to buy is associated with prior positive country and product image (Lee & Chen, 2008; Wang, et al., 2012). Logically, if the overall product image of a nation is positive, consumers' willingness to buy items from that same land would be also positive. According to this stream of thought, it is proposed that:

**Hypothesis 5:** South Korea's Product Image positively influences the Willingness to Buy products from the country.

These hypotheses are graphically depicted in the following research model:

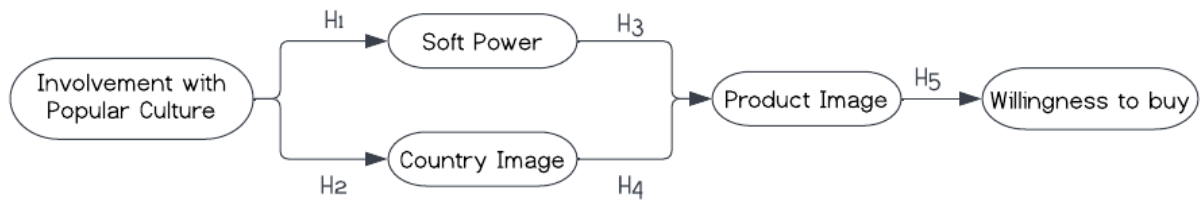


Figure 1: Research model

### 3. Methodology

This chapter will be dedicated to the methods used in this research. First, there will be a quick reference to the method used in the literature review. Secondly, a summary of the different dimensions of the paradigms and research paradigms is presented, as well as the justification for the selection of the paradigm for this study.

#### 3.1. Methodology for the literature review

The literature review is a significant summary of the existing knowledge that is relevant to the study and that works as a “theoretical foundation for the proposed study” (Paré & Kitsiou, 2017), upholding the defined research problem, identifying a gap in knowledge and supporting the chosen methods for the research. Moreover, the literary review may be the initial state of research or work as a sort of report (Knopf, 2006).

As previously presented, the literature review of this study was developed using databases such as *Google Scholar* and *Science Direct*. The selection of the articles was based on their year of publication, the Journal it was published in, and the noticed relevance of the theme, among others. Some of the articles were the result of cross-referencing.

In order to fulfill the goals of the study, the literature review was conducted using the following keywords:

- Popular culture; mass culture
- Soft power; hard power; smart power
- Country Image; country-of-origin effect
- Product Image (of a country); product-country image
- Willingness to buy

Further research suggested the association of these concepts with others; namely, the understanding of soft power requires a general knowledge of hard power, and recent studies suggest a more sophisticated form of power, smart power, that includes both. Another example is the concept of the country image which is vastly associated with the Country-of-origin effect, leading to the integration of that definition in the literary review. Finally, this study intends to study the particular case of South Korea,

so it was important to conceptualise the contemporary South Korean Popular Culture or the Hallu phenomenon.

### **3.2. The different research paradigms**

The election of the paradigm being used for research manifests the researcher's views of the world and the beliefs and principles that mold that view and lead to action (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). By choosing a paradigm, it is implied that the researcher will follow “the assumptions, beliefs, norms, and values of the chosen paradigm” (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017), as the research paradigm acts as a lens for the choice of methods used and the data analysis.

Even though perspectives echo into paradigms, the latter is more solidified and unified (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). A paradigm, nevertheless, is a human construction (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017), that deals with “first principles and ultimates” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). A paradigm includes four dimensions, which reflect the understanding of reality by an individual and its study (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016): axiology or ethics, ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

#### **Dimensions of the paradigms**

Ontology refers to the assumptions regarding reality, its existence, and what is possible to know about it (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). It is a way of conceptualizing reality within its form and nature and what of it is believed to be able to be known. Ontology is crucial for a researcher as it “helps to provide an understanding of the things that constitute the world, as it is known” (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p.27; Sobh & Perry, 2006).

Epistemology refers to the study of the process of acquisition of knowledge and its validation (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). It focuses on the possible knowledge that may be acquired and developed by the researcher (Sobh & Perry, 2006). According to Slavin (1984), knowledge has as its basis, three sources: intuitive knowledge (based on beliefs and faiths, for instance), authoritative knowledge (coming from leaders and books, mainly), logical knowledge (reason at its core), and empirical knowledge (coming from facts and demonstrable experiences) (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

In order to understand the data required for a certain study, the methods of research must be competently chosen. The correct obtainment of data is essential for the veracity of the study and its



appropriateness (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). The methodology integrates the research design, approaches, methods, and procedures (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

While in the process of making research, and especially while obtaining data, ethics are important to be considered. It evolved with philosophy and the right behavioural actions regarding human values in the research. Questions of morality and deontology are anchors to good conduct and ethical studies. Information and the dignity of every human related to the study must be preserved by the researcher. Thus, axiology integrates principles of privacy, accuracy, property, and accessibility (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

### **3.2.1. The paradigms**

Despite the multiple different paradigms, it is stated by the literature that they may be grouped into three paradigms: the Positivist Paradigm, the Interpretivist Paradigm/ Constructive Paradigm, and the Pragmatic Paradigm (Candy, 1989; Sobh & Perry, 2006).

#### **3.2.1.1. Positivist Paradigm**

Reality does not depend on humans: that is the ground of positivism. The ontology of this research is based on the fact that reality exists, does not depend on humans, and so it can be measured and perfectly understandable. Positivist paradigms are usually associated with hard sciences since it is a means of understanding reality (Sobh & Perry, 2006).

A positivist epistemology creates a difference between the one that knows, or the “knower”, from the object of the research, meaning, the object that it is intended to know. So, this dimension of the positivist paradigm defends that the world can be understood. Hence, this paradigm usually tends to rely on quantitative forms of measuring (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016).

This paradigm also tries to forecast behaviours, test hypotheses, and theories, and intends to create laws or hard rules, this is, it intends to find universal trues and absolute laws. Therefore, this paradigm has a high level of logic applied to it, as well as neutrality (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). It ultimately affirms that there are events that may be found and understood through a scientific method, which are objectively true.

### **3.2.1.2. Interpretivist Paradigm**

The interpretive paradigm sees reality as a social construction, created by humans. It relies on the interpretation of the significance people add to their actions. So, the human mind in this paradigm works as a means of gaining knowledge.

As the name suggests, interpretivism requires the interpretation of the object being studied, which is dependent on the researcher, and their way of interpreting the data. Instead of aiming at the creation of universal truth, interpretivism allows for different knowledge on the same topic, “with the acknowledgment that different researchers bring different perspectives to the same issue” (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016, p.55).

The greatest criticism of this paradigm is the fact that the knowledge produced does not create theories, so it does not enable generalizations, apart from the subjectivity of the research. Associated with qualitative research, when using the interpretivist paradigm, the researchers must have great levels of rigor and care for the validity of the results (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

### **3.2.1.3. Pragmatic Paradigm**

The pragmatic paradigm is highly associated with practice and the interaction the researcher has with the world. Reality is seen through understandings or thoughts that are justified by experimentation. For that reason, the pragmatic paradigm is highly active and associated with doing active research and experiments (Frey, 2018).

This study follows a positivist paradigm, as the main objective is to test the hypothesis presented in the theoretical model presented in the previous section. The positivist paradigm allows us to, not only test the proposed hypothesis but as well as it uses an objective lens on the study. This research is intended to measure and confirm whether there is a relationship between different variables (Involvement with Popular Culture, Soft Power and Country Image, Product Image, and Willingness to Buy).

Since the literature gives clues on the relationship between these variables, it is necessary to actually confirm that presupposition. Quantitative research usually allows for reaching objective findings that may be generalized, helping understand reality, being the most suitable paradigm for this research in particular.

### 3.3. Data collection method

The method used in order to collect data was an online survey, which was compounded by a series of questions and measuring scales. Questionnaires have advantages such as being a relatively time and cost-effective method for data collection, that is easily widely spread among the population, and allowing for both anonymity and freedom of responding anywhere and anytime (Lefever, et al., 2007; Wright, 2005). More importantly, it is also adequate for our theme and the nature of our research question, as several of the constructs have been previously studied and there are validated scales in the literature.

For this research, the survey included an introduction, where it was explained the aim of the research and further details. In regards to the main body of the questionnaire, it was divided into five parts, the questions were dedicated to each concept that is intended to be studied and applied to the situation of South Korea. Thus, there is a section dedicated to the involvement with *South Korean Popular Culture*, another to *South Korea's Soft Power*, the next was reserved for the *South Korean Country Image*, followed by the scale for *South Korea's Product Image* and finishing with the *Willingness to Buy South Korean products*.

The scales used in the survey were sourced from the literature and adapted to this study. The next section will present the operationalisation of the variables and the source for each scale.

The last section pertained to the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents: gender, age, nationality, level of education, and occupation of the participants. This information, as well as every other answer, is anonymous, as it is stated in the introduction of the survey.

Since the survey was distributed in Portuguese, as it was concluded prior that the questionnaire would, most likely, reach mainly Portuguese people, there was the need to translate the scales. In order to ensure equivalence, we followed the back-translation method (Buil, et al., 2012), i.e. translating into another language the items by a bilingual translator, and then another person translating back to the original idiom. The result should be similar to the original scale; "If discrepancies are noted in this process, corrections are made" (Buil, et al., 2012, p. 228). This process was made until all items from the scales were in coherence with the original scales.

Additionally, the survey was tested before being widely spread, in order to test if the items were understandable and to detect any other errors. The issues detected during the pre-test were grammar-related problems and the exchange of a word for a, more understandable, synonym. Upon not having

other problems detected, the survey, developed in the *Google Forms* platform, was shared online, mainly through e-mail and other social media platforms.

The survey was distributed from the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 2023 until the 28<sup>th</sup> of February of the same year. There was a total of 149 responses.

### 3.4. Operationalisation of the variables

The scales used to create the survey will be presented in this section. As it was stated previously, this research has the purpose of comprehending the relationship between the involvement with South Korean Popular Culture and the country image and soft power of the country. Thus, the conceptual model presented in the last chapter will be used regarding South Korea as a study case.

As a consequence of this, the scales used in this study were adapted to suit the theme. On occasions that there was no direct reference to a specific country, as is the case for the *Soft Power*, *Product Image*, and *Willingness to Buy* scales, it was made a simple adaptation by adding the named country, either at the introduction for the section of items or on the items themselves. The *Country Image* scale also suffered a minor adjustment, by only changing the country stated on the items to the one being studied. As for the variable *Involvement with Popular Culture*, there was no need for adaptation, as the reference was already focused on South Korea.

Lastly, some of the scales - *Involvement with Popular Culture*; *Soft Power*, and *Country Image* – presented a differentiation between the dimensions of those variables. Such distinctions were not made in the present study, and all items were regarded as a whole. As the aim is to study the relationships between different variables, it was stipulated that the different dimensions of the variables would not be studied in particular.

The next sections will present the original scales that were adapted for the questionnaire used in this study, as well as their Portuguese translation used in the survey. All constructs were measured using a Likert scale of 7 points, where 1 means “Totally disagree” and 7 “Totally agree”.

### 3.4.1. Involvement with Popular Culture

Table 1 - Items for "Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture"

Original items	Items in Portuguese	Reference
I recognize South Korean popular culture related products.	Reconheço produtos associados à cultura popular coreana.	(Whang, et al., 2015)
I have a favorable impression of South Korean popular culture related products.	Tenho uma impressão favorável em relação a produtos culturais coreanos (ex.: séries – K-dramas, música – K-pop, videogogos, etc.).	
I recognize South Korean popular culture related products by the influence of the Korean wave.	Identifico a cultura pop coreana devido à influência da "Hallyu" (onda coreana, isto é, a expansão da cultura pop coreana globalmente).	
The Korean wave influence makes me willing to travel to Korea.	Eu gostaria de visitar a Coreia do Sul devido à "Hallyu" (onda coreana).	
I love and enjoy Korean pop culture.	Adoro a cultura popular coreana.	
I am a fan of Korean pop culture.	Sou fã de cultura pop coreana.	
I am concerned about Korean pop culture.	Estou atento/a à cultura pop coreana.	
I am interested in Korean pop culture.	Tenho interesse na cultura pop coreana.	
I feel close to Korean pop culture.	Sinto-me próximo/a da cultura pop coreana.	

### 3.4.2. Soft Power

Table 2 - Items for "South Korean Soft Power"

Original items	Items in Portuguese	Reference
The country has a political system that serves the needs of its people.	O seu Sistema político serve as necessidades da população.	(Jhee & Lee, 2011)
The country has an internationally competitive economy.	Tem uma economia internacionalmente competitiva.	
The country has a highly educated population.	Tem uma população altamente instruída.	
The country has high-quality universities.	Possui universidades de alta qualidade.	
The country possesses advanced science and technology.	Possui ciência e tecnologia avançadas.	
The country has an appealing popular culture.	A cultura popular é apelativa.	
The country has a rich cultural heritage.	É um destino atrativo para o turismo internacional.	
The country is an attractive destination for international tourism.	Tem um património cultural rico.	
The country respects the sovereignty of other countries.	Respeita a soberania de outros países.	
The country helps other countries develop their economies.	Ajuda outros países a desenvolverem a sua economia.	
The country builds trust and cooperation among countries.	Contribui para a confiança e cooperação entre países.	

The country provides assistance in the event of humanitarian crises.	Presta assistência em crises humanitárias.	
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### 3.4.3. Country Image

Table 3 - Items for "South Korean Country Image"

Original items	Items in Portuguese	Reference
South Korea is technologically very advanced.	É um país tecnologicamente muito avançado.	(Lala, et al., 2008)
South Korea's economy is mostly industrial (not agricultural).	A sua economia é, principalmente, industrial (não agrícola).	
South Korea's economy is very modern.	A sua economia é muito moderna.	
South Korea's government is very cooperative with ours.	O governo sul coreano coopera muito com o do meu país.	
South Korea's trade practices with other countries are very fair.	As políticas de cooperação com outros países são muito justas.	
I like South Korea very much.	Eu gosto muito da Coreia do Sul.	
South Korea's government/political system is very democratic.	O governo/ sistema político sul coreano é muito democrático.	
South Korea is a very peaceful country.	A Coreia do Sul é um país muito pacífico.	
South Korean citizens have a great deal of freedom (many rights).	Os cidadãos sul coreanos têm muita liberdade (têm muitos direitos).	
South Korean workers are generally very admired.	Os trabalhadores sul coreanos são, geralmente, muito admirados.	
South Korean workers are generally very well educated.	Os trabalhadores sul coreanos têm, geralmente, altos níveis de educação.	
South Korean workers are generally very well trained.	Os trabalhadores sul coreanos são, geralmente, muito bem treinados.	
South Korean workers are generally very hard working.	Os trabalhadores sul coreanos são, geralmente, muito trabalhadores.	

South Korean workers are generally very reliable.	Os trabalhadores sul coreanos são, geralmente, muito confiáveis.	
South Korean workers generally pay very close attention to detail.	Os trabalhadores sul coreanos prestam, geralmente, muita atenção nos detalhes.	
South Korea makes an aggressive effort to protect the environment.	A Coreia do Sul faz um grande esforço para proteger o ambiente.	
South Korea maintains very high standards for pollution control.	A Coreia do Sul mantém padrões elevados no controlo da poluição.	
South Korea is very concerned about the environment.	A Coreia do Sul preocupa-se muito com o ambiente.	
Workplace conditions in South Korea are generally very safe.	As condições de trabalho na Coreia do Sul são, geralmente, muito seguras.	
South Korea is very considerate to its workers.	A Coreia do Sul é muito atenta para com os seus trabalhadores.	
South Korean workers are generally very well treated.	Os trabalhadores sul coreanos são, geralmente, muito bem tratados.	

#### 3.4.4. Product Image

Table 4 - Items for "South Korean Product Image"

Original items	Items in Portuguese	Reference
South Korean products have high quality.	Os produtos sul coreanos têm alta qualidade.	(Wang, et al., 2012)
South Korean products have a global brand presence.	Os produtos sul coreanos têm uma presença de marca global.	
South Korean products have high workmanship.	Os produtos sul coreanos têm bons acabamentos.	



South Korean products are reliable.	Os produtos sul coreanos são confiáveis.	
South Korean products are well-designed.	Os produtos sul coreanos são bem concebidos.	

### 3.4.5. Willingness to Buy

Table 5 - Items for "Willingness to Buy South Korean Products"

Original items	Items in Portuguese	Reference
It is very likely that I will buy products from South Korea.	É muito provável que eu venha a comprar produtos da Coreia do Sul.	(Halim & Zulkarnain, 2017)
I will purchase products from South Korea the next time I need products.	Eu vou comprar produtos da Coreia do Sul da próxima vez que precisar de algum artigo.	
I will definitely try products from South Korea.	De certeza que eu vou experimentar produtos da Coreia do Sul.	

### 3.5. The sampling

For the purpose of this study, it was chosen a non-probabilistic sample, more specifically, a sample by convenience. As the name suggests, convenience sampling is a technique that leads to the creation of a sample based on the convenience it presents for the researcher. For that reason, it is also one of the most widely used techniques. Additionally, it presents advantages such as the fact it presents no need to catalogue every population element, as well as being an inexpensive method. Nonetheless, it limits the research by not allowing for the generalisation of the results (Acharya, et al., 2013; Schreuder, et al., 2001).

## 4. Results

This chapter will present the analysis of the results of the survey. Starting with the description of the sample and of each studied variable, there will also be a section focused on the internal consistency of the scales. Furthermore, the normality and the type of distribution that resulted from the sample will be tested. The hypothesis mentioned previously will be tested.

IBM SPSS Statistics software was used for the data analysis.

### 4.1. The sample

The sociodemographic data of the sample will be presented in this section. The distribution of the survey ended with a sample of 149 individuals. All answers were valid.

#### 4.1.1. Gender

Even though the survey presented options for other gender identities (“non-binary” or “other”), the sample counts only self-identifying females and males: 84,56% of the respondents were female.

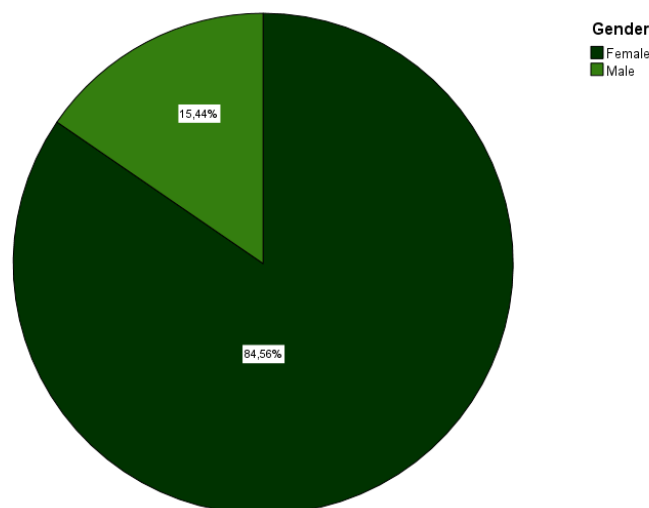


Figure 2 - Gender

#### 4.1.2. Age

Although asked in an open-answer format, the respondents' ages were grouped in order to ease the analysis of the answers. Most of the respondents were aged 25 or under, with the youngest respondent being 17 years old. From the 75,17% of the total sample which that group represents, 23,5%

were 22 years old. Respondents aged 26 to 35 years old counted for 22,15% of the sample, while those older than 36 represent 2,68% of the total. The oldest respondent was 45 years old.

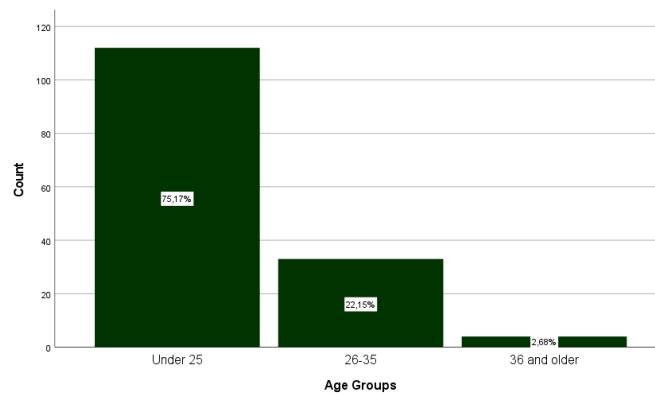


Figure 3 – Age

#### 4.1.3. Nationality

As mentioned previously, the survey was distributed in Portuguese, thus most of the respondents are from Portuguese-speaking nations. The majority of respondents are Portuguese, 93,96% of the sample, followed by Brazilians (2,68%).

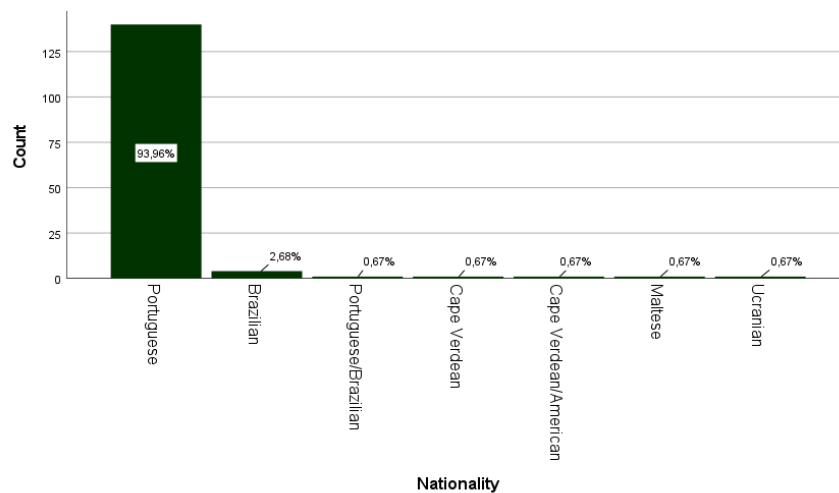


Figure 4 - Nationality

#### 4.1.4. Education level

The data shows that most of those inquired have gone through a college education: 46,31%, have concluded a bachelor's degree and 23,49% have a Master. Those who have concluded high school represent 19,46% of the respondents, and the percentage for the individuals holding a post-graduation degree is 8,72%. Of the remainder of the sample, 2,01% have a Ph.D.

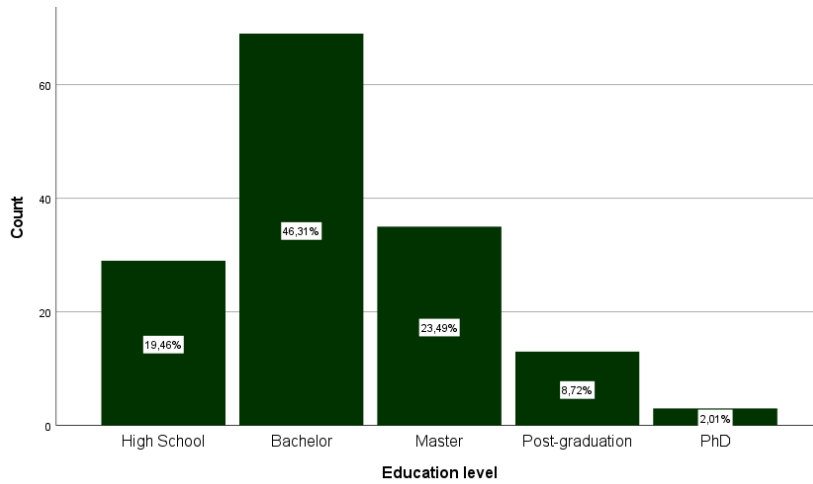


Figure 5 - Education level

#### 4.1.5. Occupation

Most of the sample is composed of full-time students, representing 75,17% of the total inquired. Respondents who are studying and working simultaneously, being as self-employed or for others, account for 12,75% of the study population, whereas 9,40% are employees.

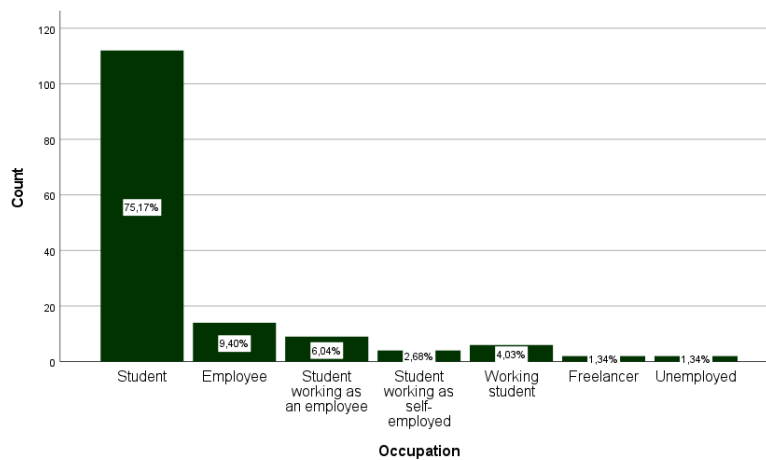


Figure 6 - Occupation

#### 4.2. Descriptive analysis of the variables

The variables of the conceptual model will be analysed in this section – Involvement with Popular Culture, Soft Power, Country Image, Product Image, and Willingness to Buy.

To measure the variables, it was used a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 represents “strongly disagree” and 7 “strongly agree”. Thus, a mean value around 3,5 could represent a neutral answer or the lack of knowledge by the respondent.

#### 4.2.1. Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture

The means from items of this variable vary, with the highest being 5,14 and the lowest 2,94. This means that, although most people “have a favourable impression of South Korean popular culture related products” (with a mean of 5,14), they do not feel a great level of closeness to the Korean popular culture (an item with a mean of 2,94).

Other items, with means close to 4, seem to not have a strong positive influence on the involvement with South Korean popular culture. Although the sample recognizes and has a favourable impression of Korean popular culture, it does not have an impact to the point of making them fans or stating that they “love and enjoy” it.

In terms of the standard deviation, the values vary between 1,602 and 2,152. These results show that the item with the highest value (“The Korean wave influence makes me willing to travel to Korea”) had results widely spread, meaning that the respondents’ answers were not clustered around the mean. The item with the lowest standard deviation (“I have a favorable impression of South Korean popular culture related products”), on the contrary, had the sample answering in a more homogenous way.

Table 6 - Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture

	Mean	Std. Deviation
I recognize South Korean popular culture related products.	5,00	1,907
I have a favorable impression of South Korean popular culture related products.	5,14	1,602
I recognize South Korean popular culture related products by the influence of the Korean wave.	4,38	2,123
The Korean wave influence makes me willing to travel to Korea.	3,53	2,152
I love and enjoy Korean pop culture.	3,98	1,858
I am a fan of Korean pop culture.	3,91	2,050
I am concerned about Korean pop culture.	3,50	2,094
I am interested in Korean pop culture.	3,97	2,066
I feel close to Korean pop culture.	2,94	1,748

#### 4.2.2. South Korea's Soft Power

The analysis of this variable suggests that respondents see South Korea as a country with “advanced science and technology”. With a mean of 5,52, the item of the scale was the most positive viewed by the sample, followed by their opinion on the country's “rich cultural heritage” and it being “an attractive destination for international tourism” (with means of 5,30 and 5,20 accordingly).

On the other hand, the item “the country has a political system that serves the needs of its people” has the lowest mean of the scale (3,68), implying there is a neutral or negative perception on how the political system provides for its people.

The values of the standard deviation are not significantly different among the items, varying from 1,161 and 1,546. So, the answers are not widely spread and stand fairly close to the mean. It is possible to conclude that the sample shared similar views on the topic.

*Table 7 - South Korea's Soft Power*

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The country has a political system that serves the needs of its people.	3,68	1,361
The country has an internationally competitive economy.	4,80	1,366
The country has a highly educated population.	4,80	1,325
The country has high-quality universities.	4,99	1,400
The country possesses advanced science and technology.	5,52	1,266
The country has an appealing popular culture.	4,87	1,517
The country has a rich cultural heritage.	5,30	1,459
The country is an attractive destination for international tourism	5,20	1,546
The country respects the sovereignty of other countries.	4,76	1,393
The country helps other countries develop their economies.	4,10	1,161
The country builds trust and cooperation among countries.	4,28	1,186
The country provides assistance in the event of humanitarian crises.	4,06	1,237

#### 4.2.3. South Korea's Country Image

The results of the variable “South Korea's Country Image” suggest that the perception of the government's cooperation is not the most beneficial. The sample, constituted mainly of Portuguese individuals mostly disagreed with the affirmation that “South Korea's government is cooperative with ours”, which is expressed by the lowest mean of the total scale (3,27). Other items with lower means are related to the treatment of its workers. This includes the items” South Korea is very considerate to

its workers” and “South Korean workers are generally very well treated”, which means stand below 4 (3,81 and 3,66 respectively).

Conversely, and it was observed prior, the technological advances of the country have a more positive evaluation. The item “South Korea is technologically very advanced” has the highest mean (5,74). Also, the Korean economy is considered very modern and industrial (item “South Korea’s economy is very modern” has a mean of 5,15, and the item “South Korea’s economy is mostly industrial” of 5,08). Additionally, even though the way workers are treated does not have a high mean, they are regarded as very hard working (the item “South Korean workers are generally very hard working” has a mean of 5,23).

Concerning the standard deviation, the situation for this variable is similar to South Korea’s Soft Power variable. The values of standard deviation do not vary much from item to item, with a range going from 1,090 and 1,621. Concluding, the answers were not widely spread, but they tend to be closer to the mean.

*Table 8 - South Korea’s Country Image*

	Mean	Std. Deviation
South Korea is technologically very advanced.	5,74	1,158
South Korea’s economy is mostly industrial (not agricultural).	5,08	1,233
South Korea’s economy is very modern.	5,15	1,227
South Korea’s government is very cooperative with ours.	3,27	1,282
South Korea’s trade practices with other countries are very fair.	4,04	1,090
I like South Korea very much.	4,09	1,621
South Korea’s government/political system is very democratic.	4,06	1,275
South Korea is a very peaceful country.	4,28	1,356
South Korean citizens have a great deal of freedom (many rights).	4,09	1,337
South Korean workers are generally very admired.	4,33	1,249
South Korean workers are generally very well educated.	4,77	1,346
South Korean workers are generally very well trained.	4,87	1,264
South Korean workers are generally very hard working.	5,23	1,290
South Korean workers are generally very reliable.	4,79	1,194
South Korean workers generally pay very close attention to detail.	4,91	1,182
South Korea makes an aggressive effort to protect the environment.	4,15	1,384
South Korea maintains very high standards for pollution control.	4,17	1,291
South Korea is very concerned about the environment.	4,09	1,360
Workplace conditions in South Korea are generally very safe.	4,07	1,272
South Korea is very considerate to its workers.	3,81	1,245
South Korean workers are generally very well treated.	3,66	1,334

#### 4.2.4. South Korea's Product Image

The general view of South Korean products is positive, as there are no items with a mean lower than 4. With the highest mean (5,16), the item related to South Korean products having a global brand presence is the one that has the most positive perception. It is also worth mentioning another: "South Korean products are well-designed", which has a mean of 5,07.

The standard deviation of the items has similar values, from 1,197 and 1,443. Thus, the answers to each item were gathered around the mean, not being too scattered.

Table 9 - South Korea's Product Image

	Mean	Std. Deviation
South Korean products have high quality.	4,97	1,289
South Korean products have a global brand presence.	5,16	1,443
South Korean products have high workmanship.	4,99	1,315
South Korean products are reliable.	5,00	1,236
South Korean products are well-designed.	5,07	1,197

#### 4.2.5. Willingness to buy South Korean Products

Results show that there is a positive likelihood for people to buy South Korean products (the item "It is very likely that I will buy products from South Korea" has a mean of 4,93). Also, it showed an interest in trying products from said country, as the item "I will definitely try products from South Korea" resulted in a mean of 4,79.

Contrary to that, the sample disagreed, in their majority, with the item "I will purchase products from South Korea next time I need products", which has a mean of 3,44, standing close to a neutral position regarding the affirmation. This may suggest that either Korean products are not widely distributed and accessible or that the willingness to buy Korean products refers to specific categories of products.

Lastly, the standard deviation values are close from item to item, varying from 1,625 to 1,833. Compared to the mean of the items, it is possible to conclude that the sample gave answers that were huddled around the mean. So, the answers were rather uniform.

Table 10 - Willingness to buy South Korean Products

	Mean	Std. Deviation
It is very likely that I will buy products from South Korea.	4,93	1,833
I will purchase products from South Korea the next time I need products.	3,44	1,625
I will definitely try products from South Korea.	4,79	1,802



### 4.3. Internal consistency – Cronbach’s Alpha

As this study utilizes multiple-item scales in order to measure different constructs and the fact that those were modified and adjusted to better suit the main goal of the research, it is important to investigate their reliability before creating a composite variable. One of the most commonly used coefficients to test the reliability of a scale is Cronbach’s Alpha, which will be used (Bland & Altman, 1997, p. 572). The result of  $\alpha$  (Alpha) varies between 0 (zero) and 1 (one); the highest the value, the more consistent the scale. According to Taber (2018), the literature is not consistent in the labelling of the coefficient values, even though an  $\alpha$  value of 0,7 seems to be the minimum required by most authors. We will follow the guidelines of Ponterotto & Ruckdeschel (2007) for the interpretation of Cronbach Alpha values.

Table 11 - Rating of the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. Font: Ponterotto and Ruckdeschel (2007)

Items Per Subscale	Rating	Sample Size		
		N < 100	N = 100–300	N > 300
≤ 6	Excellent	.75	.80	.85
	Good	.70	.75	.80
	Moderate	.65	.70	.75
	Fair	.60	.65	.70
7–11	Excellent	.80	.85	.90
	Good	.75	.80	.85
	Moderate	.70	.75	.80
	Fair	.65	.70	.75
≥ 12	Excellent	.85	.90	.90
	Good	.80	.85	.85
	Moderate	.75	.80	.85
	Fair	.70	.75	.80

*Note.*—An internal consistency coefficient falling below the “Fair” rating for its particular cell would be deemed “Unsatisfactory.”

According to this information, and the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients presented next, it is possible to conclude that the scales were consistent. Firstly, the scale for “Involvement with Popular Culture” is rated “excellent”, having into account the sample size (149) and the number of items (9). Both the “Soft power” and “Country Image” scales present the same rating – since they have 12 or more items on their scales.

The scale for “Product Image” had the highest coefficient – 0,957 – which is considered excellent. On the contrary, the scale for measuring the “Willingness to buy” had the lowest value (0.861) but still achieve the rating of “excellent”. As was mentioned above, there is no consensus, so some authors could consider this last rating as solely “good” (Taber, 2018).

The following table presents the value of the alpha coefficient for each scale, the total mean of the items from the scale, and the number of items per scale, as well as the total population of this study (N).

Table 12 - Cronbach's Alpha coefficients

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha coefficient	Total mean of the items from the scale	Number of items	N
Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture	0,954	4,0395	9	149
South Korea's Soft Power	0,928	4,6963	12	
South Korea's Country Image	0,953	4,4120	21	
South Korea's Product Image	0,957	5,0389	5	
Willingness to buy South Korean Products	0,861	4,3870	3	

#### 4.4. Normality test

The normality test allows for the determination of whether a variable follows a normal distribution or not. Simply put, the normality tests perform a comparison between the sample of the research and a normally distributed sample. Thus, it leads to the conclusion that the variables are (probably) normally distributed or not.

In the case that the normality test has a result of  $p\text{-value} > 0,05$  then the sample is "not significantly different from a normal distribution" (Field, 2009, p. 144). If  $p < 0,05$ , then the variables are distributed in a significantly different way from a normal distribution. For normally distributed variables, the hypotheses are tested by applying parametric tests; when the variables do not have a normal distribution, it is used non-parametric tests.

As the kind of distribution is fundamental to know the statistical test to be performed, this step is extremely important. The two major normality tests mentioned in the literature are the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and the Shapiro-Wilk. For samples with a population bigger than 50 elements, it is recommended to use the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which is the case of this study (Mishra, et al., 2019). The test presents the following hypotheses to be tested:

H0: "The variables follow a normal distribution."

H1: "The variables do not follow a normal distribution."

By performing the normality test on the IBM SPSS Statistics software, the results of significance were higher than 0,05 for two variables: South Korea's Soft Power and South Korea's Country Image.

Thus, the null hypothesis (“The variables follow a normal distribution.”) is not rejected and, as the p-value is higher than 0,05, the proposed hypotheses will be tested using parametric tests.

Table 13 - Normality test: Kolmogorov-Smirnov

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture	,087	149	,008
South Korea's Soft Power	,061	149	,200 <sup>*</sup>
South Korea's Country Image	,073	149	,052
South Korea's Product Image	,120	149	<,001
Willingness to buy South Korean Products	,078	149	,028

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

#### 4.5. Correlation

Correlation allows to analyse of the relationship between two or more variables. This could be a parametric or non-parametric test, which depends on the normality of the variables data, the size of the sample, and others. For this study, which includes variables with a normal distribution, a parametric test will be used, specifically the Pearson correlation test. This is a preliminary analysis to understand the relationships of the variables, before proceeding to test the hypothesis.

Therefore, it will be performed bilateral tests in order to test each of the relations mentioned above. It may be proposed the following hypotheses for this test:

H0: “There is no relation between the variables”.

H1: “There is a relation between the variables”.

The significance value for this test is 0,05, meaning that a lower value of significance will lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Since the Pearson correlation tests performed presented a significance lower than 0,05 (results shown in Table 14), it is concluded that there is a relation between the variables. Later it will be analysed the intensity of the relations based on the Pearson correlation coefficients.

For this test the results may vary from -1 to 1; which means a perfect negative relation and a perfect positive relation correspondently (with 0 meaning no existent correlation). if the result is zero, it can be

concluded that there is no correlation between the variables. When the coefficient has a value lower than 0, this is, a negative one, then there is a negative correlation (Nettleton, 2014). So, the variables change in opposing ways. On the contrary, if the Pearson correlation coefficient is greater than 0 then the change in a variable would lead to the other changing in the same direction (Bryman & Cramer, 2005). The coefficients can be interpreted as follows:

- Coefficients values going from 0 to 0,2 or 0 to -0,2 represent a very weak to no relation.
- Coefficients values going from 0,2 to 0,4 or -0,2 to -0,4 represent a weak relation.
- Coefficients values going from 0,4 to 0,6 or -0,4 to -0,6 represent a moderate relation.
- Coefficients values going from 0,6 to 0,8 or -0,6 to -0,8 represent a strong relation.
- Coefficients values going from 0,8 to 1 or -0,8 to -1 represent a very strong relation.

(Bryman & Cramer, 2005)

As it was concluded above, with a significance lower than 0,05, it is possible to conclude that there is a relation between the variables (table X). The highlighted values refer to the coefficient of correlation as well as the significance level of the variables of the proposed hypotheses.

Table 14 - Pearson correlation test

		Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture	South Korea's Soft Power	South Korea's Country Image	South Korea's Product Image	Willingness to buy South Korean Products
Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture	Pearson Correlation	1	,607	,434		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001		
South Korea's Soft Power	Pearson Correlation	,607	1	,844	,727	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		<,001	<,001	
South Korea's Country Image	Pearson Correlation	,434	,844	1	,701	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001		<,001	
South Korea's Product Image	Pearson Correlation	,553	,727	,701	1	,741
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001
Willingness to buy South Korean Products	Pearson Correlation	,646	,561	,541	,741	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	

The outcome of the test is that all correlations are positive, thus if one of the variables changes, the other will follow the same direction. Regarding the intensity of the relation, the lower value for the coefficient (0,434) represents a moderate relation, while the highest (0,741) is a strong relation.

Firstly, there is an association between the Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture and the country's Soft Power as the Pearson correlation coefficient for these variables (0,607) shows a moderate correlation. This means that the greatest involvement with South Korean popular culture, the

highest will be the soft power of the nation. The same happens for the country's country image, as the coefficient between the variables "Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture" and "South Korea's Country Image" is also moderate (0,434). Even though this coefficient is lower, it still shows that there is a moderate influence of the involvement with Korean popular culture and the country image.

Secondly, both South Korea's Soft Power and South Korea's Country Image are positively and strongly related to South Korea's Product Image. Still, the relation between the country's soft power and its product image has a higher coefficient (0,727), even though the country image and product image present a relation coefficient of 0,701. Both variables have a strong relationship with the variable South Korea's Product Image, meaning that the highest those two are, the greatest will be the product image.

Lastly, the strongest relation is between the variables South Korea's Product Image and Willingness to buy South Korean Products, as the coefficient presents the value of 0,741.

#### **4.6. Regression and the Validation of the research hypotheses**

Regression allows for the prediction of a variable based on the other. This is the result of  $R^2$ , which is the square of the correlation coefficient presented previously ( $r$ ), which informs how much one variable is accountable for the other. It measures "the amount of variability in one variable that is shared by the other" (Field, 2009, p. 179). Thus, the linear regression analysis is a good method to test the hypotheses of this study.

Also, linear regression with bootstrapping was used, a technique in which "the sample data are treated as a population from which smaller samples (called bootstrap samples) are taken (putting the data back before a new sample is drawn)" (Field, 2009, p. 163). Although it is a very common technique for non-normal distributions, it will be used in this study as well. The bootstrap method is widely used and accepted in statistical studies (Wehrens, et al., 2000).

This section presents the results of the linear regression and the conclusions those results convey. In accordance with the conceptual model, the following results refer only to the relation between the variables that are presupposed to be related.

#### 4.6.1. Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture and South Korea's Soft Power

**Hypothesis 1** - The Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture positively affects the perception of South Korea's Soft Power.

The regression coefficient resulted in an  $R^2$  of 0,368, meaning that the variable Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture accounts for 36,8% of the variation in South Korea's Soft Power. As Sig. <0,001 (meaning it is lower than 0,05), then it is possible to conclude that involvement with popular culture has a significant impact on the country's soft power. Also, the value of  $B$  (Unstandardized Coefficients) acquaints us with the fact that if the involvement with the popular culture increases by one, then the soft power of the land increases by 0,368. Thus, it is concluded that **Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture** affects positively **South Korea's Soft Power**.

Table 15 - Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture and South Korea's Soft Power

Dependent variable: South Korea's Soft Power						
	$R^2$	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	0,368	3,220	0,203		18,643	<0,001
<b>Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture</b>		0,365	0,044	0,607	9,253	<0,001

#### 4.6.2. Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture and South Korea's Country Image

**Hypothesis 2:** The Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture positively affects South Korea's Country Image.

With a value of 0,189, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) may be interpreted as the variable Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture being accountable for 18,9% of South Korea's Country Image. The correlation is significant as the Sig. value is lower than 0,05 (in this case <0,001). The unstandardized coefficient shows that the country image increases by 0,239 times as the involvement with the popular culture grows by one time. Therefore, **Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture** positively affects **South Korea's Country Image**.

Table 16 - Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture and South Korea's Country Image

Dependent variable: South Korea's Country Image						
	R <sup>2</sup>	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	0,189	3,448	0,204		10,309	<0,001
Involvement with South Korean Popular Culture		0,239	0,046	0,434	5,847	<0,001

#### 4.6.3. South Korea's Soft Power and South Korea's Product Image

**Hypothesis 3:** South Korea's Soft Power positively influences its Product Image.

Results show that South Korea's Soft Power explains 52,8% (as the R<sup>2</sup> coefficient is 0,528) of the variance in South Korea's Product Image. That correlation is significant as the Sig. value is lower than 0,05 (in this case <0,01). Additionally, if the soft power rises by one unit, then the product image will enhance by 0,861. Concluding, **South Korea's Soft Power** positively affects **South Korea's Product Image**.

Table 17 - South Korea's Soft Power and South Korea's Product Image

Dependent variable: South Korea's Product Image						
	R <sup>2</sup>	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	0,528	0,995	0,338		3,089	0,004
South Korea's Soft Power		0,861	0,066	0,727	12,835	<0,001

#### 4.6.4. South Korea's Country Image and South Korea's Product Image

**Hypothesis 4:** South Korea's Country Image positively influences its Product Image.

South Korea's Country Image justifies 49,1% of the variance in South Korea's Product Image (as R<sup>2</sup> is 0,481). As Sig.<0,05, then the country image significantly contributes to the product image. The unstandardized coefficient (B) also shows that the product image increases by 0,910 times, as the country image increases 1 time. Consequently, it is inferred that **South Korea's Product Image** is positively influenced by **South Korea's Country Image**.

Table 18 - South Korea's Country Image and South Korea's Product Image

Dependent variable: South Korea's Product Image						
	R <sup>2</sup>	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	0,491	1,204	0,356		2,976	0,008
<b>South Korea's Country Image</b>		0,910	0,074	0,701	11,915	<0,001

#### 4.6.5. South Korea's Product Image and Willingness to Buy South Korean Products

**Hypothesis 5:** South Korea's Product Image positively influences the Willingness to Buy products from the country.

According to the results, 54,9% of the Willingness to Buy South Korean Products is due to South Korea's Product Image, as the squared coefficient presents a value of 0,549. With a Sig value lower than 0,05, the product image significantly influences the willingness to buy. Furthermore, the unstandardized coefficient of 0,960 reveals that as the product image enhances by 1 time, the willingness to buy rises by 0,960 times. Thus, there is a statistically significant positive effect on **Willingness to Buy South Korean Products** as a result of **South Korea's Product Image** influence.

Table 19 - South Korea's Product Image and Willingness to Buy South Korean Products

Dependent variable: Willingness to Buy South Korean Products						
	R <sup>2</sup>	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	0,549	-0,449	0,361		-1,209	0,208
<b>South Korea's Product Image</b>		0,960	0,067	0,741	13,377	<0,001



#### 4.7. Validation of the research hypotheses

In accordance with the data analysed in the previous section, and the conclusions made, the following table presents a summary of the results for each hypothesis.

*Table 20 - Validation of the research hypotheses*

Hypothesis	Result
<b>Hypothesis 1:</b> The involvement with South Korean popular culture positively affects the perception of South Korea's soft power.	Supported
<b>Hypothesis 2:</b> The involvement with South Korean popular culture positively affects South Korea's country image.	Supported
<b>Hypothesis 3:</b> South Korea's soft power positively influences its product image.	Supported
<b>Hypothesis 4:</b> South Korea's country image positively influences its product image.	Supported
<b>Hypothesis 5:</b> South Korea's product image positively influences the willingness to buy products from the country.	Supported

## 5. Discussion of the results and Conclusion

The present chapter will address the conclusions arising from the literature review and from the analysis of the collected data. As a final chapter, it will be discussed the implications the knowledge gathered in this research may have both for the literature and for management decisions. To conclude, new research topics based on the limitations and the insights resulting from the study will be suggested.

### 5.1. Discussion of the results

The question which leads the path for this research was: “Does the involvement with South Korean popular culture influence positively the country’s image and soft power, leading to a better product image and, consequently, a greater willingness to purchase Korean products?”. In this section, the knowledge gathered through this study will be synthesised in order to answer that question.

The final section of the second chapter, which is dedicated to the literature review, the development of the hypotheses, and the conceptual model, presents a summary of the literature being developed throughout that chapter, briefly explaining the connections made between the variables. The hypotheses were tested by using the responses to a questionnaire and applying static procedures and were all supported.

Combining the knowledge and suggestions taken from the literature and the data gathered through the questionnaire, it is now possible to discuss the results, comparing them with the content of the literature review. This section intends to conjoint the knowledge assembled through the research and develop the ideas that resulted from statistically analysing the data. Thus, not only the research question must be recalled, as well as the goals:

- To understand the impact of the involvement with South Korean popular culture on the country image and soft power.
- To comprehend if the country image and the soft power influence the product image.
- Analyse the implications of the product image of the country on the willingness to buy Korean products.

Firstly, the literature review shows that culture is an essential dimension of both soft power and country image. Popular culture was defined previously as a part of the culture that is enjoyed by the widest part of the population. Literature also suggested that culture affects the perception people have

about the country of origin of products, either having a positive mindset about the country, as well as the products from there (Jhee & Lee, 2011; Lala et al, 2008).

This study marked aimed to understand the impact of the involvement with South Korean popular culture on the country's image and soft power. Nye (2009) has argued that one of the most important dimensions of a country's soft power is the culture, alongside its values and policies. Our results show that involvement with popular culture has an actual impact on those two variables. For instance, the involvement with south Korean popular culture was accountable for 36,8% of the variation of the country's perceived soft power. Although the percentage is lower in what concerns the impact on the country image, it is still responsible for 18,9% of its variation. Still, it is concluded that the involvement with the popular culture of South Korea has a direct impact on the perception people have of the country, being it in a more political view – through its soft power – or in the commercial value of the country and its image.

These findings suggest that the biggest the involvement with popular culture, the most positive will be the perception of the country. This study is in line with what was previously stated in literature and the reports that show that the *Hallyu* lead to having a positive perspective of the nation (KOFICE, 2021).

Secondly, the Product image is concentrated solely on stereotypes regarding the characteristics of or associated with the products. Often, the product image relates to the perceived quality, or dimensions that can influence it, such as the level of technological advances. The dimensions that affect are interconnected with the perceived image of the country. Thus, it is common to use the term product-country image. Those dimensions are inter-related (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009).

Even if the literature regarding the relationship between product and country image is vast, there is not so much emphasis on the connection between soft power and product image. Still, soft power is regarded as a means to “moderate the preference for certain products” (Neto & Lima, 2022, p. 105), through its cultural dimensions. If soft power influences the way people think and deem the country it will impact the perception regarding the products of the country.

Results show that soft power seems to have an important role in product image. In fact, South Korea's soft power accounted for 52,8% of the variance of the nation's product image. Hence, this positive impact is evidence that soft power is very much related and a font of influence for the country's product image.

In the same way, and as the literature suggests, the South Korean country image affects the product image, explaining 49,1% of the variance in the last variable. The country image reflects the perceptions of the products from the country, meaning that it has the power to increase the wish to purchase or diminish them. Hence, it happens a chain of events where a positive country image will most likely generate an appreciation for its products, which will lead to a better purchase attitude (Ma et al, 2022; Rezvani, et al., 2012; Wang et al, 2012 ). In this case, willingness to buy, referring to the disposition or wish an individual has to purchase a product, is often affected by expectations about it (Halim & Zulkarnain, 2017), including product image (Lee & Chen, 2008).

In like manner, the results from this research show that product image accounts for 54,9% of the variance of the willingness to buy South Korean products. This means that more than half of the variance seen in the willingness to buy is explained by the product image of the country, so the better the product image, the greater will be its outcome in terms of willingness to purchase.

To conclude, the research question may be answered positively based on both the literature and the results of this study. As all the hypotheses were supported, and the research goals were met, as the results were in line with prior research. Thereby, the knowledge gathered through this section will be transformed into hints or implications on how the insights may be put into practice.

## 5.2. Contributions to the Literature and Implications for Management

Combining extant knowledge regarding multiple variables, this study contributes to the literature as it gathered information from different areas and dimensions of marketing, international relationships, and culture. In particular, the study adds to the literature by considering the contribution of soft power to the product image of the country.

In terms of recommendations to practice, this research may inspire change in management.

Firstly, this study concluded that the involvement with South Korean popular culture had an impact on both the country's soft power and country image. The majority of the sample had a favourable impression of the popular culture related products that originated in South Korea, and the literature suggests that the *Hallyu* is on growth (Kim, 2013).

Thus, there is interest in South Korean cultural products. Korean companies may benefit from this by improving the distribution and availability of their products abroad. Being it physical products, services, or virtually distributed goods, this moment seems to be appropriate to invest in the expansion of cultural products and create partnerships around the globe.

The South Korean government has an important role in supporting the improvement of cultural products, having invested over the years in them (Shim, 2006). With the potential the South Korean popular culture has to enhance the nation's soft power and country image, it is important to continue the investments in it. Not only the popular culture produces products important to the economy and the cultural wealth of the country, but it is also responsible for the globalization of the country's values and ideals and for shaping people's perceptions and insights of it.

Along with that, the favourable views of South Korean popular culture show that the popular culture agents could also generate positive feelings towards other products from the country. Although that already happens, it would be interesting that South Korean brands could lead the ranking in being advocated by popular culture acts from the same nation. Therefore, it should be encouraged the promotion of South Korean products by their fellow countryfolk popular culture acts.

Also, the results show that involvement with South Korean popular culture positively affects the country's soft power and country image. In practical terms, this means that as the *Hallyu* grows, there is the opportunity for South Korea to create alliances and benefit from a positive perception of the general public.

In order to achieve that, the relations between South Korea and other countries must improve. As stated previously, the responses of the sample demonstrate how the cooperation between South Korea and their own countries was not the most expressive. After the questionnaire was applied the Prime Minister of Portugal, the motherland of most of the sample, had a diplomatic visit to South Korea, which was reported by the media. Such actions could lead to a more favourable judgment of the relationship between the two countries, and so could be more frequent.

Cultural products may be seen as a good way to reveal the values of the country and, perhaps, better its image in terms of cooperation with other countries. It is key to broaden the list of countries South Korea cooperates with and to make those relationships known to the general population. The involvement with popular culture is responsible for roughly a third of the variance of the land's soft power, so the government must regard the cultural products as means of improving the perception of the country and the will to follow its wishes.

Additionally, South Korean companies may proudly state their country of origin, especially those operating in the technological and scientific fields, as they are the ones more positively seen by respondents. South Korean products, according to the data, are well regarded, especially because of their design, reliability, and high workmanship. This shows that South Korean companies may use their country of origin to improve the impression people have of their products.

Even though the workmanship is highly appreciated, respondents consider South Korea as a country that is not as attentive to its workers, as well as the population in general. The values and the behaviour towards people of a country are important for people's understanding of it (Lala et al, 2008; Nye, 2009; Vuving, 2009). The country needs to seek policies that are more suitable to help the needs of its population and enhance its image abroad by showing the positive results of its system.

Lastly, findings show that respondents are willing to purchase South Korean products. Considering that likelihood, the consumer's path must be facilitated by bettering the means of attention, enhancing the attraction, and, especially, improving the availability of the products, so that the "action" – the actual purchasing of the products - may be concluded (Kotler et al, 2017).

To sum up, none of the variables was overall negatively evaluated, so the thoughts on them are at least, neutral with a tendency to be positive. That means that there is a favourable attitude towards South Korea as a country and its products. By taking action using the most favourable aspects of the country and products, and acting by improving the items that are poorly viewed, there is the possibility to increase

each variable. Of course, as this study intended to understand, it must be taken action regarding the involvement with the popular culture, so that all the other variables may improve as well, in a chain of events.

### **5.3. Limitations and suggestions for future research**

Even though there was an effort to make the study rigorous in the quality of the information, there are some limitations and other ways of approaching the theme, which may serve as suggestions for future research.

Firstly, the sample could be more extensive, and, especially, it should be less homogeneous. This fact leads to the suggestion of applying the same questionnaire to a representative sample and also replicating this study with a sample from different nationalities. Such results could give interesting insights into the perceptions of people from other nationalities, different age groups, and with different education levels and occupations.

Secondly, popular culture embraces multiple forms of culture, which were not differentiated in this study. For future research, it is suggested to study the dimensions of popular culture separately, for instance, music, films, literature, and video games, in order to conclude if a form of popular culture exerts a greater influence on the other variables than others.

Also, South Korea's country image could be studied considering the different dimensions – affective and cognitive (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009; Wang et al, 2012) – as to understand if the involvement with popular culture is more connected to either one.

Finally, our study shows the product image of South Korea is positive, so the next step could be to understand whether and how this image varies by product category. That approach may lead to insights on which products would be more successful in an export attempt, and which should suffer changes, either in the products themselves or in the way they are promoted.

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## 7. Appendix

# Soft Power e Imagem do País: um estudo sobre a influência da Cultura Popular Sul Coreana

Solicito a sua participação neste inquérito sobre a Coreia do Sul, a sua cultura popular e produtos, no âmbito da dissertação do Mestrado em Marketing e Estratégia, na Universidade do Minho.

O objetivo do questionário é avaliar a influência da cultura pop sul coreana (exemplos: música – K-pop, séries – K-dramas, filmes, videojogos, etc.) na perceção do país e dos seus produtos.

A resposta a este questionário demora menos de 10 minutos. Este é anónimo, individual e confidencial, pelo que as respostas não terão informações que o/a identifiquem, nem serão partilhadas com terceiros. Todos os dados serão tratados de forma agregada.

Em caso de alguma dúvida ou se desejar mais informações sobre o estudo, pode entrar em contacto através do e-mail: [pg46272@alunos.uminho.pt](mailto:pg46272@alunos.uminho.pt).

Obrigada pela colaboração!

\* Indica uma pergunta obrigatória



## Envolvimento com a cultura popular sul coreana

As afirmações seguintes referem-se à cultura popular sul coreana (exemplos: música – K-pop, séries – K-dramas, filmes, videojogos, etc.). Numa escala de **1 (discordo totalmente)** a **7 (concordo totalmente)**, indique o seu nível de concordância com cada uma das afirmações:

Reconheço produtos associados à cultura popular sul coreana. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Tenho uma impressão favorável em relação a produtos culturais sul coreanos (ex.: séries – K-dramas, música – K-pop, videojogos, etc.). \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Identifico a cultura pop coreana devido à influência da *Hallyu* (onda coreana, isto é, a expansão da cultura sul popular coreana globalmente). \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Eu gostaria de visitar a Coreia do Sul devido à *Hallyu* (onda coreana). \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Adoro a cultura popular sul coreana. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Sou fã de cultura popular sul coreana. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Estou atento/a à cultura popular sul coreana. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Tenho interesse na cultura popular sul coreana. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Sinto-me próximo/a da cultura popular sul coreana. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

### Soft Power Sul Coreano

Numa escala de **1 (discordo totalmente)** a **7 (concordo totalmente)**, como considera que as próximas declarações descrevem a Coreia do Sul?

O sistema político sul coreano serve as necessidades da população. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Tem uma economia internacionalmente competitiva. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Tem uma população altamente instruída. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Possui universidades de alta qualidade. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Possui ciência e tecnologia avançadas. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

A sua cultura popular é apelativa. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Tem um património cultural rico. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

É um destino atrativo para o turismo internacional. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Respeita a soberania de outros países. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Ajuda outros países a desenvolverem a sua economia. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Contribui para a confiança e cooperação entre países. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Presta assistência em crises humanitárias. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

### Imagem do país da Coreia do Sul

Numa escala de **1 (discordo totalmente)** a **7 (concordo totalmente)**, como considera que as próximas declarações descrevem a Coreia do Sul?

É um país tecnologicamente muito avançado. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

A sua economia é, principalmente, industrial (não agrícola). \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

A sua economia é muito moderna. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

O governo sul coreano coopera muito com o do meu país. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

As políticas de cooperação com outros países são muito justas. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Eu gosto muito da Coreia do Sul. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

O governo/ sistema político sul coreano é muito democrático. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

A Coreia do Sul é um país muito pacífico. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Os cidadãos sul coreanos têm muita liberdade (têm muitos direitos). \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente



Os trabalhadores sul coreanos são, geralmente, muito admirados. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Os trabalhadores sul coreanos têm, geralmente, altos níveis de educação. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Os trabalhadores sul coreanos são, geralmente, muito bem treinados. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Os trabalhadores sul coreanos são, geralmente, muito trabalhadores. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Os trabalhadores sul coreanos são, geralmente, muito confiáveis. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Os trabalhadores sul coreanos prestam, geralmente, muita atenção aos detalhes. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

A Coreia do Sul faz um grande esforço para proteger o meio ambiente. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

A Coreia do Sul mantém padrões elevados no controlo da poluição. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

A Coreia do Sul preocupa-se muito com o ambiente. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

As condições de trabalho na Coreia do Sul são, geralmente, muito seguras. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

A Coreia do Sul é muito atenta para com os seus trabalhadores. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Os trabalhadores sul coreanos são, geralmente, muito bem tratados. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

## Imagem dos produtos da Coreia do Sul

As afirmações seguintes referem-se à percepção da imagem dos produtos sul coreanos. Numa escala de **1 (discordo totalmente)** a **7 (concordo totalmente)**, indique o seu nível de concordância com cada uma das afirmações:

Os produtos sul coreanos têm alta qualidade. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Os produtos sul coreanos têm uma presença de marca global. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Os produtos sul coreanos têm bons acabamentos. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Os produtos sul coreanos são confiáveis. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Os produtos sul coreanos são bem concebidos. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

### Vontade de comprar produtos sul coreanos

As afirmações seguintes referem-se à vontade de comprar produtos sul coreanos. Numa escala de **1 (discordo totalmente)** a **7 (concordo totalmente)**, indique o seu nível de concordância com cada uma das afirmações:

É muito provável que eu venha a comprar produtos da Coreia do Sul. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

Vou comprar produtos da Coreia do Sul da próxima vez que precisar de algum artigo. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

De certeza que vou experimentar produtos da Coreia do Sul. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discordo totalmente        Concordo totalmente

### Dados sociodemográficos

Género \*

Feminino

Masculino

Não-binário

Outra: \_\_\_\_\_

Idade \*

A sua resposta \_\_\_\_\_

Nacionalidade \*

A sua resposta \_\_\_\_\_

Grau de escolaridade \*

- Ensino Básico
- Ensino Secundário
- Licenciatura
- Pós-Graduação
- Mestrado
- Doutoramento

Ocupação \*

- Estudante
- A trabalhar por conta própria
- A trabalhar por conta de outrem
- No desemprego
- Na reforma
- Outra: \_\_\_\_\_