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## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOUTH KOREAN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY TOWARD TÜRKİYE AND HALLYU: A MEDIA ANALYSIS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE 2023 TÜRKİYE EARTHQUAKE

Following the February 2023 earthquake in southeastern Türkiye, South Korea provided comprehensive disaster relief. This study examines whether Hallyu (Korean Wave) amplified South Korea's disaster support in the context of public diplomacy by influencing foreign publics. As South Korean cultural content enjoys substantial popularity in Türkiye, this research investigates media coverage patterns of South Korea's earthquake response. The study employs media analysis methodology using Textom big data analysis software and digital text analysis tools for data collection and word frequency analysis. Both legacy media (39 Turkish newspapers, 143 articles) and new media (36 YouTube videos, 307 text units) were analyzed from February 6 to April 5, 2023. N-gram analysis and textual content analysis identified distinct coverage patterns: legacy media emphasized government-led disaster support, while new media prioritized private sector contributions, particularly donations made by the entertainment industry. The cultural sector emerged as a mediating factor between South Korean and Turkish societies. Word frequency analysis revealed that cultural diplomacy—using culture to positively influence foreign publics—functioned effectively alongside traditional diplomatic efforts. The findings demonstrate that Hallyu amplified South Korea's disaster assistance effects in Türkiye, confirming its utility as a cultural public diplomacy instrument. The study concludes that diversified Korea-Türkiye collaborative content beyond conventional entertainment could enhance South Korea's public diplomacy effectiveness.

**Keywords:** public diplomacy, Korean Wave, Hallyu, Korea-Turkey relations, media analysis, disaster response, cultural diplomacy, soft power, digital text analysis.

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### Түркияға қатысты Оңтүстік Кореяның қоғамдық дипломатиясы мен Корей толқыны арасындағы өзара байланыс: 2023 жылы Түркияда болған жер сілкінісінен кейінгі медиа талдауы

2023 жылдың ақпан айында Түркияның оңтүстік-шығысында болған жер сілкінісінен кейін Оңтүстік Корея жан-жақты апат жәрдемін ұсынды. Бұл зерттеу Корей толқыны (Халлю) шетелдік қоғамға әсер ету арқылы қоғамдық дипломатия контекстінде Оңтүстік Кореяның апат көмегін күшейте алғанын зерттейді. Оңтүстік Корея мәдени контентінің Түркияда айтарлықтай танымалдыққа ие болуына орай, бұл зерттеу Оңтүстік Кореяның жер сілкінісіне деген реакциясының медиада көрсетілу үлгілерін зерделейді. Зерттеуде деректерді жинау және сөз жиілігін талдау үшін Textom үлкен деректерді талдау бағдарламалық жасақтамасы мен цифрлық мәтін талдау құралдары қолданылып, медиа-талдау әдіснамасы пайдаланылды. 2023 жылдың 6 ақпанынан 5 сәуіріне дейін дәстүрлі медиа (39 түрік газеті, 143 мақала) және жаңа медиа (36 YouTube бейнесі, 307 мәтіндік бірлік) талданды. N-грамм талдау әдісі және мәтіндік мазмұн талдауы ерекше көрсетілу үлгілерін анықтады: дәстүрлі медиа үкімет басшылығындағы апат көмегін баса айтса, жаңа медиа жеке сектордың, атап айтқанда ойын-сауық индустриясының қайырымдылық көмегіне басымдық берді. Мәдени сектор Оңтүстік Корея мен Түркия қоғамдары арасындағы байланыстырушы фактор ретінде пайда болды. Сөз жиілігінің талдауы мәдени дипломатия – шетелдік қоғамға оң әсер ету үшін мәдениетті пайдалану – дәстүрлі дипломатиялық күш-жігермен қатар тиімді жұмыс істегенін көрсетті. Нәтижелер Халлю Түркияда Оңтүстік Кореяның апат көмегінің әсерін күшейтіп, оның мәдени қоғамдық дипломатия құралы ретіндегі пайдалылығын растайтынын көрсетеді. Зерттеу дәстүрлі ойын-сауықтан тыс көп салалы Корея-

контентін дамыту Оңтүстік Кореяның қоғамдық дипломатия тиімділігін арттыра алатынын қорытындылайды.

**Түйін сөздер:** қоғамдық дипломатия, Корей толқыны, Халлю, Корея-Түркия қатынастары, медиа-талдау, апатқа жауап беру, мәдени дипломатия, жұмсақ күш, цифрлық мәтін талдау.

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### **Взаимосвязь между южнокорейской публичной дипломатией в отношении Турции и корейской волной: медиа-анализ после землетрясения 2023 года в Турции**

После землетрясения в юго-восточной Турции в феврале 2023 года Южная Корея предоставила всестороннюю помощь в ликвидации последствий стихийного бедствия. Данное исследование изучает, усилила ли Корейская волна (Халлю) южнокорейскую поддержку при стихийном бедствии в контексте публичной дипломатии посредством воздействия на зарубежную общественность. Поскольку южнокорейские культурные контенты пользуются значительной популярностью в Турции, данное исследование анализирует особенности освещения в СМИ южнокорейской реакции на землетрясение. В исследовании применяется методология медиа-анализа с использованием программного обеспечения для анализа больших данных Textom и инструментов цифрового анализа текста для сбора данных и анализа частотности слов. Были проанализированы как традиционные медиа (39 турецких газет, 143 статьи), так и новые медиа (36 видеороликов YouTube, 307 текстовых единиц) с 6 февраля по 5 апреля 2023 года. N-граммовый анализ и анализ текстового содержания выявили различные особенности освещения: традиционные медиа акцентировали внимание на государственной поддержке при ликвидации последствий стихийного бедствия, в то время как новые медиа уделяли приоритетное внимание вкладу частного сектора, особенно пожертвованиям со стороны индустрии развлечений. Культурный сектор выступил в качестве посреднического фактора между южнокорейским и турецким обществами. Анализ частотности слов показал, что культурная дипломатия – использование культуры для позитивного воздействия на зарубежную общественность – функционировала эффективно наряду с традиционными дипломатическими усилиями. Результаты демонстрируют, что Корейская волна усилила эффекты южнокорейской помощи при стихийном бедствии в Турции, подтверждая её полезность как инструмента культурной публичной дипломатии. Исследование заключает, что разнообразный корейско-турецкий совместный контент, выходящий за рамки традиционных развлечений, мог бы повысить эффективность южнокорейской публичной дипломатии.

**Ключевые слова:** публичная дипломатия, Корейская волна, Халлю, корейско-турецкие отношения, медиа-анализ, реагирование на стихийные бедствия, культурная дипломатия, мягкая сила, цифровой анализ текста.

## **Introduction**

Public diplomacy extends the targets of foreign policy from beyond respective governments to include the citizens of those countries as well. The goal of public diplomacy is to enable foreign citizens to understand another country's policies, institutions, culture, and values better and harbor trust toward said country. This reflects on global changes, including the worldwide spread of democracy, the increased influence of public opinion, accelerated globalization due to the development of information and communication technology, and deepened interdependence between states at various levels. This represents a diplomatic strategy that appeals to foreign public perceptions and emotions in response to this reality. In this sense, unlike traditional diplo-

matic approaches that primarily utilize hard power as national assets, public diplomacy actively employs soft power to capture the hearts of foreign citizens. This case study examines the role of Hal-lyu (Korean Wave) in amplifying South Korea's disaster assistance to Türkiye following the February 2023 earthquake, investigating whether cultural diplomacy can effectively enhance public diplomacy outcomes through media coverage analysis.

The February 6, 2023 earthquake (magnitude 7.7) in southeastern Türkiye provides a significant case study for examining public diplomacy effectiveness in crisis contexts. This humanitarian crisis prompted extensive international disaster relief operations, creating an empirical opportunity to analyze how cultural soft power influences the reception and perception of foreign assistance. The incident

serves as a natural experiment for investigating the intersection between humanitarian diplomacy and cultural public diplomacy, particularly in examining how pre-existing cultural connections may amplify traditional diplomatic efforts.

South Korea's response to this crisis offers a compelling analytical framework for understanding contemporary public diplomacy mechanisms. The country deployed comprehensive disaster relief operations, including emergency rescue teams, medical personnel, and substantial financial assistance, representing the largest emergency relief mission in South Korean diplomatic history. This response occurred within a context where South Korean cultural content (Hallyu) had already established significant popularity in Türkiye, creating conditions conducive to examining cultural diplomacy's role in enhancing traditional diplomatic initiatives. The case demonstrates how humanitarian assistance functions as both immediate crisis response and strategic public diplomacy opportunity.

The Republic of Korea (hereafter, Korea) responded with unprecedented swiftness, just two days after the seismic event. Korea deployed the Korea Disaster Relief Team (KDRT) alongside \$5 million in humanitarian financial assistance on February 8.<sup>1</sup> A second team delivered joint public-private relief supplies and discussed fundamental directions for future relief and reconstruction projects with the Turkish government. Then, the third relief team, dispatched following the second group, conducted field assessments and consultations with relevant Turkish institutions to develop detailed plans for a \$10 million temporary housing village construction project for disaster victims (Dong-A Ilbo, 2023).

On April 5, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Korea announced the official conclusion of emergency relief team activities, which had been conducted over two months. The Ministry indicated its commitment to focus on constructing temporary housing villages for disaster victims over 14 months based on \$10 million in resources, which was es-

tablished through public-private cooperation. Also, it added the comment "the successive deployment of relief teams represents a significant example of humanitarian assistance-development-peace nexus, providing continuous support from rescue and relief operations to temporary disaster response and recovery through public-private collaboration" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023). Korean emergency relief activities achieved notable outcomes, establishing a new precedent in humanitarian diplomacy.

This case represented a moment when the forms and achievements of public diplomacy became concretized. It is an exemplary case in the public diplomacy domain that the Korean government has prioritized since 2010. This perspective is supported by several factors: the implementation as a long-term project spanning from on-site rescue operations to disaster victim relief and reconstruction projects, the collaborative approach between private and public sectors, and its function as a catalyst for strengthening amicable relations between the two countries and their peoples.

Türkiye reported international support in real-time, confirming international solidarity and expressing gratitude. This dissemination was not limited to traditional media, such as newspapers and broadcasting, but spread more rapidly through various channels such as social networks.

The researchers observed that news of disaster assistance from Korea was shared across legacy media and new media simultaneously. Especially, the news about Korea was being shared more rapidly and extensively compared to news regarding other countries that provided disaster assistance. Social media channels dedicated to Korean culture shared news of donations by Korean celebrities, while a Korean artist's illustration gained positive responses and was subsequently featured on television broadcasts. The Korean Wave (Hereafter Hallyu) appeared to play a specific role in news dissemination and expressions of gratitude, suggesting that the cultural phenomenon that had bridged the distance between Turkish citizens and Korean culture served as an influential keyword for the Turkish public and media.

Within this context, this study originated from the question: "Did Hallyu substantially amplify the effects of Korea's disaster assistance to Türkiye?" If the effects of disaster assistance indicated positive responses from the recipient country's citizens, this effect aligns with the primary goals of public diplomacy.

This has led to the derivation of the research question: "Can Hallyu effectively contribute to pub-

<sup>1</sup> This relief operation involved 118 personnel, coordinated through efforts among the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Fire Agency, the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), and the Ministry of National Defense. This deployment represented the largest single emergency relief mission in Korean history and ranked as the largest relief team among all countries responding to Türkiye's earthquake crisis. Following the initial search and rescue team, a second relief team, which was predominantly composed of medical personnel was dispatched. This second group incorporated not only government personnel but also private emergency relief organizations such as Good Neighbors Korea and World Vision.

lic diplomacy strategically by amplifying the effects of Korea's disaster assistance?" The purpose of this study, which addresses the aforementioned research question, is to examine whether Hallyu can be a factor that amplified the effects of Korea's disaster assistance to Türkiye.

To assess the responsiveness of the recipient country's citizens and determine the practical utility of Hallyu within Türkiye, the researchers established the temporal framework extending until April 5, 2023, the official relief period set by the Korean government. Within this temporal framework, the study examined patterns in Turkish legacy media and new media. Following Chapter 2, we will conduct a theoretical review of the correlation between public diplomacy and Hallyu to establish the theoretical foundation for examining media patterns.

### ***Theoretical Review of Korean Public Diplomacy and Hallyu***

Public diplomacy extends the targets of foreign policy beyond respective governments to include the citizens of those countries as well. The goal of public diplomacy is to enable foreign citizens to understand another country's policies, institutions, culture, and values better and harbor trust toward said country. Unlike traditional diplomatic approaches that rely on hard power, public diplomacy employs soft power to influence foreign publics. Soft power is effective in public diplomacy, and countries who have strong soft power are motivated to focus more on public diplomacy.

Korea, corresponding to a middle power with limited hard power, has devoted efforts to public diplomacy that can enhance its soft power. Korea officially declared 2010 as the "inaugural year of public diplomacy." The first Public Diplomacy Ambassador was appointed in 2011, and the Public Diplomacy Policy Division was established within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Cultural Diplomacy Bureau in 2012, solidifying Korea's public diplomacy infrastructure. In 2013, budget allocation for public diplomacy capacity enhancement projects created opportunities for not only government departments but also affiliated institutions, local governments, and private organizations to collaborate in conducting public diplomacy activities. The Public Diplomacy Act was enacted in 2016, establishing public diplomacy as a systematized, long-term national diplomatic strategy.

The Public Diplomacy Act stipulates the establishment of five-year basic plans for public diplomacy, outlining policy directions and implementation

goals. Accordingly, the First Basic Plan for Public Diplomacy (2017-2022) was formulated, establishing the vision, goals, and implementation strategies for public diplomacy, clarifying the definition of public diplomacy, and aiming to enhance awareness of the field. It subdivided public diplomacy fields into culture, knowledge, and policy, and established the basic definition specifying the target of public diplomacy as "foreign citizens" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022, pp. 1-2).

In 2017, when the First Basic Plan for Public Diplomacy was established, the "Public Diplomacy Committee," a pan-government integrated coordination body for public diplomacy was launched, and the Korea Foundation (KF) was designated as the implementing agency for public diplomacy. In 2020, the "Public Diplomacy Comprehensive Information System" was established. However, due to the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic, the First Basic Plan for Public Diplomacy was extended until December 2022.

The Second Basic Plan (2023-2027) was formulated in 2023. The Second Basic Plan builds upon and supplements the major achievements of the First Basic Plan, presenting new visions and goals that reflect the changed domestic and external environments, and proposes key tasks to achieve these objectives. Additionally, the Second Basic Plan, evaluating the First Basic Plan as being centered on cultural diplomacy, proposes diversifying public diplomacy domains to include climate change, science and technology, health, gender equality, and human rights (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022, p. 5).

However, this development should not be interpreted as a reduction in the importance of cultural diplomacy. Instead, cultural diplomacy is being actively pursued due to its essential characteristics that utilize soft power. Cultural diplomacy utilizing culture, Korea's primary asset, may be the most effective means for achieving the "basic goal of public diplomacy" of introducing Korea to foreign citizens and gaining their favor. Joo (2016, p. 62) defined cultural diplomacy as "a sub-domain of public diplomacy that communicates to positively influence foreign publics through culture as a medium." Based on this background, the Korean government is focusing on expanding the number of foreign citizens who understand Korea well by advertising Korean culture, the Korean language, and Korean studies through Korean Cultural Centers and King Sejong Institutes.

From the perspective of dissemination, Hallyu can be considered the most effective cultural content



that Korea can utilize in cultural diplomacy. The criticism that Korea is pursuing a narrowly defined public diplomacy, focused on cultural diplomacy and relying on the private sector as producers of cultural content, also stems from Hallyu's significant role in shaping Korea's national image and soft power (Nam, 2017, p. 202).

Hallyu refers to the phenomenon of the transnational flow of Korean popular culture. Hallyu, which emerged phenomenologically in the 2000s, cultivating influence from its neighboring countries that Korea shares cultural proximity with, expanded beyond Asia to the entire world by the 2010s. It is spreading through various domains including film, drama, music, webtoons, and digital games (Kim, 2022, pp. 1, 22).

Kim (2022) defined Hallyu as a "transnational cultural flow phenomenon" by focusing on its transnational nature. From this perspective, Hallyu encompasses three elements: supply, distribution, and reception. First, the supply of Hallyu content is a collaborative work between the Korean government and the private sector. While the production and creation of Hallyu content, the pre-supply stage, occurs in the private sector, government support for cultural industries is linked to the supply stage. Next stage "distribution" in which digital technology and platforms, including social media and online streaming, play decisive roles, enabling the distribution and dissemination of Hallyu. In terms of reception, Hallyu is characterized by user participation, including digital fandom and fan activity, rather than simple consumption tendencies and behaviors (Kim, 2022, p. 3). Therefore, the three elements inherent in Hallyu can be considered characteristics that transcend cultural nationalism and self-centered public diplomacy that cultural diplomacy should be wary of.

Active mutual communication is emphasized not only in cultural diplomacy but also in public diplomacy, leading to the emergence of the term "cultural public diplomacy." This results from the gradual fading of the term "cultural diplomacy" and its absorption into the broader domain of public diplomacy. Lee (2018, p. 79) defines the characteristics that distinguish cultural public diplomacy from cultural diplomacy as "moving beyond unilateral cultural promotion to presuppose bidirectional communication along with general public participation," reflecting the developed reality of digital technology advancement and widespread social media platforms. Therefore, Hallyu exhibits characteristics that make it suitable for effectively practicing public diplomacy in response to this changed society.

Another point that cultural public diplomacy emphasizes is establishing diplomatic strategies centered on target countries rather than one's own country. Since culture, values, and soft power can vary in effectiveness depending on recipients, long-term and comprehensive approaches should be discussed to ensure that target countries and their citizens do not have repulsion (Nam, 2017, p. 206). Particularly in the Middle Eastern and Islamic regions, where cultural conflicts are acutely pronounced, understanding local culture is crucial, necessitating careful and sophisticated, region-specific public diplomacy strategies (Kim & Lee, 2023, p. 4).

Türkiye, the subject of this study, can be said to occupy considerable significance in Korean public diplomacy. Both King Sejong Institutes and Korean Cultural Centers, core institutions of Korea's cultural public diplomacy, have been established in Türkiye. Only three countries in the Middle East region have established Korean Cultural Centers. Türkiye being one of them, the other two countries are Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates (Kim & Lee, 2023, p. 13).

The Korean Cultural Center was established in Ankara in October 2011, and King Sejong Institutes operate in various cities in Türkiye. Additionally, since the Yunus Emre Institute, Türkiye's cultural institution, was included as a member of the Global Public Diplomacy Network (GPDNet) launched by the Korea Foundation in 2014, cultural exchange and cooperation between the two countries continues (Kim & Lee, 2023, p. 18).

Relations between Türkiye and Korea are amicable in many aspects. They refer to each other as "brotherly countries." The roots of the two peoples originated in the Central Asia-Mongolia region. The Korean War is a shared history between the two countries. Due to the existence of historical ties shared by both countries, Korea is perceived positively by Türkiye, and Hallyu is also extremely popular (Korea Creative Content Agency, 2021, pp. 48-51).

The introduction and popularity of Korean dramas on Turkish national broadcasting in 2005 is evaluated as the beginning of Hallyu in Türkiye. Hallyu expanded to include Korean food, beauty, K-pop, films, and animation, leading to the formation of a Hallyu fandom and a surge in Korean language learning (Korea Creative Content Agency, 2021, p. 53).

For example, "Korea-Fans," Türkiye's largest online Korean popular culture community, was created in 2007. This website, created to share infor-

mation about Korean drama actors and soundtracks, became the most comprehensive online community providing contents about Korea in general, beyond Korean popular culture. In the early 2010s, it had approximately 41,000 members. It also held offline activities where members met monthly to share the latest news and Korean popular culture contents (Oh & Chae, 2013, p. 87). Additionally, thousands of online communities sharing news, content, translations, and commentary on individual topics increased after Korea-Fans. Reflecting this, Türkiye's Hallyu psychological index shows a steady increase, and it is anticipated that it will join the ranks of the "high growth" group from the current "moderate Hallyu growth" group (Kim & Lee, 2023, p. 18).

Korea's public diplomacy toward Türkiye, which has historically been amicable and where Hallyu is popular, has reached a significant stage. Korea has completed the work of introducing Korea and establishing core public diplomacy institutions in Türkiye, the initial goals of public diplomacy. Therefore, Türkiye can function as an interesting experimental field for the diversification of Korean public diplomacy project domains that Korea will pursue in the future.

Meanwhile, Korea's swift and active support during the major earthquake disaster that occurred in Türkiye in 2023 also played an important role in the context of public diplomacy. Following Türkiye's assistance to Korea during the Korean War and Korea's assistance to Türkiye during the 1999 İzmit earthquake (also known as the Marmara earthquake), this became another opportunity for both countries to reaffirm their solidarity. The effects of this aid were not limited to the governmental level but also deeply impressed Turkish citizens. News about Korea's disaster assistance was reported daily in Turkish domestic media, showing quite comprehensive characteristics by including not only Korean government support activities but also donations and support cases from the private sector. Particularly on social media, Korea's disaster assistance was shared in real-time, mainly through multiple accounts introducing Hallyu. This was a phenomenon difficult to capture without the existence of amicable views toward Korea within Türkiye and without Hallyu's popularity. This serves as phenomenological evidence for the amplification of Korea's public diplomacy effects toward Türkiye through Hallyu, while also being a research case worthy of discussion.

## Methodology

This study will empirically examine social reactions following Türkiye's 2023 earthquake. The goal of public diplomacy is to appeal to foreign citizens and win their support, and the fact that Korea's disaster assistance activities, carried out at both government and private levels, were mentioned multiple times in Turkish society highlights the awareness that motivated this study.

The research method selected to examine Türkiye's social reactions is media analysis methodology. It is planned to analyze the contexts in which Korea's support activities following the Türkiye earthquake were disseminated in Turkish legacy and new media. Specifically, textual content analysis and subsequent word frequency analysis are applied to legacy media, represented by newspapers and news broadcasting, and text mining analysis methods is applied to new media, to examine the correlation between Hallyu and public diplomacy.

The reason for dividing the analysis subjects into legacy media and new media is due to the low credibility of Turkish media and the changing media environment. According to the Digital News Report by country published by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism in June 2023, the credibility of Turkish media is 33.97 points, ranking 165th out of 180 countries. Also, new media enables individual transmission and reception, making targeted reporting or false reporting possible (Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2023). Therefore, researchers concluded that analyzing both media together is a reasonable approach to minimizing potential errors in samples.

The boundaries between legacy media and new media are also breaking down in Türkiye as like in other countries. However, legacy media still differs from new media in that it delivers pre-reviewed content in a relatively refined language, often associated with established groups. In contrast, new media based on participatory social media platforms is characterized by reflecting society's dynamic voices, the tendency for articles and broadcasts tailored to major target audiences due to real-time checking of viewer counts, and the ability to post information not covered by legacy media while sharing information considered important by legacy media, thus reflecting public opinion more diversely. Since legacy media and new media show inherent differences, the content of media should be examined by distinguishing between the two media when analyzing media content.

This study is a case study focusing on the specific case of Korea's disaster assistance for the Türkiye earthquake, requiring a definition of the case's spatiotemporal boundaries. The temporal boundary of this study is approximately two months, set from February 6, 2023, when the earthquake occurred in southeastern Türkiye, to April 5, 2023, when the Korean government terminated overseas emergency relief team activities<sup>2</sup> The two-month period of overseas emergency relief activities was when disaster assistance was most actively conducted at both government and private levels immediately following the earthquake. Therefore, it can be considered the most appropriate temporal boundary for examining Turkish society's reactions to Korea's disaster assistance.

The spatial boundary is Turkish media including legacy media and new media. However, people of all nationalities worldwide can access online media regardless of origin country. Therefore, researchers conducted comprehensive preliminary check of research materials followed by multiple content review procedures to limit the research scope to content produced and written by Turkish citizens within Türkiye.

### Data Collection and Classification Analysis

As preliminary work for conducting word frequency analysis on selected content from Turkish legacy media and new media, data was collected, and basic analysis was performed. The content analyzed was limited to materials generated between February 6, 2023, and April 5, 2023, as mentioned above. Since data collection includes online search platforms, there may be issues of duplication. Therefore, to improve data reliability, the researchers used big data analysis tools and cross-checked the data among three researchers.

#### 1. Legacy Media Data Collection and Classification Analysis

For legacy media, online articles from 39 major Turkish newspaper companies were chosen for analysis. The selection criteria were based on daily

newspapers registered with the Press Advertisement Institution (Basın İlan Kurumu in Turkish), an agency under the Turkish Presidency, and both offline and online newspaper and broadcasting companies that were part of media-related surveys by the Reuters Institute.

After creating a list of related articles that included both keywords "Kore" (Korea) and "Deprem" (earthquake) in Turkish through Google News search, the researchers cross-checked articles that were missed or duplicated by researching the same keywords on the homepages of 39 newspaper companies to complete the analysis article list. A total of 143 articles were collected as analysis subjects through Google News search.

However, among articles containing multiple keywords "Korea" and "earthquake," simple information delivery articles such as news presenting lists of relief team dispatch countries or conveying only the number of people rescued by relief teams were not included.

**Table 1** – Article Classification by Topic

Article Topic	Number of Articles
1. Overseas Emergency Relief Team	34
2. Monetary Donations	32
3. Korean Government Activities	31
4. Private Relief Activities	19
5. Illustrator Myeong Min Ho's Illustration	11
6. Emphasis on Mutual Relationship	7
7. Comprehensive Articles on Korean Assistance	5
8. Turkish Government Activities toward Korea	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>

When classified by topic, the most frequently reported one is activities of the overseas emergency relief team dispatched by the Korean government. News mainly consisted of the scale and activities of emergency relief teams that Korea dispatched twice. There were also five articles covering the story of Tori, a rescue dog who continued rescue activities with bandaged feet after being injured during operations. After the conclusion of missing person searches, articles covering the service of Korean medical volunteer teams followed. These were reported alongside the stories containing gratitude for the as-

<sup>2</sup> The Korean government's disaster assistance continued beyond April 5. In July, the government set up temporary housing for disaster victims using 440 containers in the İskenderun area of Hatay province, calling it «Korea Village (Kore Mahallesi).» In October, additional temporary housing with 1,010 containers named «Türkiye-Korea Friendship Village (Türkiye-Kore Dostluk Köyü)» is established in the Pazarcık area of Kahramanmaraş province (Uysal & Zerenli, 2023).

sistance Türkiye provided during the Korean War 73 years ago (SonDakika.com, 2023). Additionally, news about material support conducted simultaneously with personnel support and housing subsidy support amounting to \$10 million was also covered. The touching news that the Korean emergency relief team left friendship messages in their tents when returning was reported in Türkiye as it had become a topic in Korea. These articles did not merely convey Korea's emergency relief team support activities but emphasized the Korean emergency relief team's courtesy and dedication to disaster victims in rescue activities, conveying a positive image.

The second most reported topic was content about relief fund donations from various sectors of Korean society. The most notable aspect here is that 13 articles covered donation news from Korean entertainers leading Hallyu. While some articles simply had titles as "donations of K-pop singers", some articles explicitly mentioning names of famous entertainers like Kim Go Eun and Park Jin Young in their titles also existed. This would not have appeared without Hallyu's popularity in Türkiye (Akşam, 2023). Meanwhile, in February 2023, the members of parliament adopted a resolution to contribute 3% of general allowances as donations for Türkiye-Syria earthquake disaster victims (Cho, 2023). This news was also reported in nine articles in Türkiye. Additionally, donation news from sports stars who played in Türkiye, volleyball player Kim Yeon-kyung, and soccer player Kim Min-jae, was also conveyed.

The third most reported topic, articles about Korean government activities, is related to President Yoon Suk-yeol's actions. Immediately after

the earthquake, President Yoon instructed relevant departments to provide active and swift support, which was significantly reported in 22 articles. President Yoon's emphasis on the "brother country" was also reported as news. Additionally, President Yoon's condolence visit to the Turkish Embassy in Korea was covered as well. On February 20-21, Jang Seong-min, Senior Presidential Secretary for Future Strategy and Planning, visited Türkiye as a presidential special envoy and delivered President Yoon's condolence letter which was also reported across multiple newspapers.

While the first and third topics are related to government support activities, the fourth most reported topic deals with private sector support activities. Content about volunteer work, donations, and deliveries of messages of encouragement in earthquake-affected areas conducted by Korea's volunteer groups, civic organizations, and private companies was also reported in Turkish media.

The fifth topic, the illustration by illustrator Myeong Min Ho also falls under the scope of activities conducted in private sector. Myeong Min Ho posted an illustration that placed images depicting a Turkish veteran caring for a Korean orphan during the Korean War in parallel with images of Korean emergency relief teams helping an earthquake victim. Turkish articles reporting this used positive modifiers such as "meaningful" and "touching." Although this was a creative activity by an individual illustrator, it was perceived by the public as content showing that Korea had not forgotten the help received from Türkiye and was working harder on disaster assistance with a spirit of reciprocity, functioning like a symbol of bilateral relations.



**Figure 1** – Illustration by Illustrator Myeong Min Ho

Note: From Myeong, M. H. [@93.minho]. (n.d.). Posts [Instagram profile].  
Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/93.minho/>



Additionally, the movie “Ayla,” depicting the story of a Turkish soldier who participated in the Korean War and a war orphan whom he named Ayla, was released in Türkiye in 2017 and gained great popularity. Articles reporting Myeong Min Ho’s illustration reported that the illustration reminded them of Ayla. This means that the amicable bilateral relationship between Korea and Türkiye is being reproduced through culture as a medium, which can be considered a positive phenomenon from a public diplomacy perspective.

## 2. New Media (YouTube) Data Collection and Classification Analysis

This study attempted an analysis of new media in addition to legacy media. New media has the advantage of allowing more direct examination of social reactions since ordinary individuals can also create posts. Representative new media platforms are social network platforms such as YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), and Instagram.

YouTube was utilized in this study among new media platforms. According to the Reuters Institute’s 2023 Digital News Report, YouTube news usage rate is 45%, showing the highest usage rate compared to other new media platforms (Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2023).<sup>3</sup>

First, YouTube links were collected using Textom, a big data analysis solution. YouTube links that expressed multiple keywords “Korea (Kore)” and “earthquake (Deprem)” during the same period as legacy media (February 6, 2023 – April 5, 2023) were collected. Subsequently, through secondary comprehensive check, videos with insignificant content and simple information delivery videos without commentary were excluded from analysis subjects. Researchers conducted tertiary cross-checks to re-confirm content and comments. Through this process, a total of 36 YouTube videos were collected, with video titles and the top 10 comments from each video as analysis subjects. The total number of analysis text pieces is 307. Comments from each post were sorted by popularity to collect the top 10 comments, but since posts with fewer than 10 comments existed, the total text count became 307 rather than 360.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Additionally, as of October 2023, there was also a technical limitation due to X’s new operational policy, which required subscribing to a plan costing \$5,000 to access all past tweets on X.

<sup>4</sup> The comments for each post were sorted by popularity, and the top 10 comments were collected. However, since some posts had fewer than 10 comments, the total number of texts was 307 rather than 360.

Table 2 classifies 36 YouTube posts by topic. Using the same classification as for legacy media in Table 1, they were categorized into eight topics, with the addition of videos showing Korea’s coverage of Türkiye’s earthquake situation as new content not previously featured in legacy media.

Table 3 classifies 36 YouTube posts by type. Regular videos comprised 25% of all videos, while Shorts (15 or 60-second short videos) comprised 75%, showing a high proportion of Shorts.

The most notable aspect of new media compared to legacy media is that while Myeong Min Ho’s illustration was the fifth most reported topic in legacy media, it was the most frequently mentioned topic on YouTube.

**Table 2 – Post Classification by Topic**

Post Topic	Number of Posts	Legacy Media (Article) Frequency Ranking
1. Illustrator Myeong Min Ho’s Illustration	14	5
2. Overseas Emergency Relief Team	9	1
3. Emphasis on Mutual Relationship	8	6
4. Monetary Donations	3	2
5. Private Relief Activities	1	4
6. Korean Media Coverage of the Türkiye Situation	1	-
7. Korean Government Activities	-	3
8. Comprehensive Articles on Korean Assistance	-	7
9. Turkish Government Activities toward Korea	-	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>-</b>

**Table 3 – Post Classification by Format**

Regular Videos	Shorts (15 or 60-second short videos)	Total
9	27	36

Additionally, videos emphasizing the shared history between Korea and Türkiye and their mutual relationships were produced as third most frequently on YouTube but were mentioned relatively less in

legacy media. Monetary donations were mentioned in similar rankings in legacy media and new media, but a notable difference was that while legacy media significantly covered legislators' donation resolutions, new media only covered donation news from famous entertainers such as members of the K-pop boy band BTS. Excluding videos about overseas emergency relief teams dispatched by the Korean government, only videos about private rather than governmental were produced.

### *Significance of Analysis Results in the Context of Korea-Türkiye Relations*

This chapter conducts word frequency analysis on texts collected from Turkish legacy media and new media domains to extract meaningful high-frequency words. Separate analysis was conducted for legacy media and new media. For legacy media, all texts included in 143 articles within analysis subject criteria were targeted. For new media, 307 titles and comments collected from 36 YouTube videos were targeted. Since YouTube titles and comments, unlike online articles contained texts that did not construct complete sentences, N-gram analysis results that could derive from context were utilized to minimize interpretation errors.<sup>5</sup>

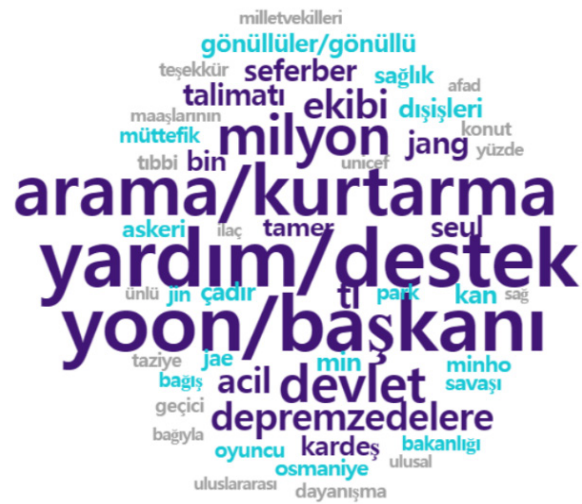
#### *1. Legacy Media Text-Word Frequency Analysis Results and Interpretation*

Figure 2 below visualizes high-frequency words extracted from texts in legacy media data in their original language expressions.

The words appearing largest at the center of the word cloud are “President Yoon,” “help/support,” and “search/rescue,” were frequently mentioned in content from legacy media. Around them, words frequently used during disaster assistance such as “diplomacy,” “mobilization,” “government,” “team/unit,” “earthquake victims,” and “solidarity” appear. Additionally, words meaning bilateral relations between Korea and Türkiye such as “brother,” “alliance,” “relationship/connection,” and “blood” appear.

Other notable elements are words used in Kore-

an names: “Min Ho,” “Jang,” “Park,” “Min,” “Jae,” and “Jin.” These were extracted from government officials like Special Envoy Seong-min Jang and Foreign Minister Jin Park, as well as from Myeong Min Ho and soccer player Min-jae Kim who was active in Türkiye. Finally, words related to donations such as “lira,” “thousand,” “actor,” “famous/celebrity,” “will,” “salary,” and “member of parliament” also appeared.



**Figure 2** – High-Frequency Words in Legacy Media (Turkish)

Based on high-frequency words from legacy media, Korea's disaster assistance was the most frequently mentioned topic. In particular, reports focused heavily on President Yoon's support instructions. The special bilateral relationship between Korea and Türkiye was also frequently highlighted. Lastly, the appearance of Myeong Min Ho's name and the word “actor” indicates that support efforts from Korea's private sector, especially the cultural sector, were prominently communicated in Turkish media.

#### *2. New Media Text-Word Frequency Analysis Results and Interpretation*

Figure 3 below visualizes high-frequency words in new media data texts in their original language expressions as a word cloud, allowing for comparison with legacy media to highlight visual differences.

<sup>5</sup> N-gram is a statistical natural language processing method that analyzes input strings by dividing them based on n number of words. When analyzing YouTube comments, the criterion for the number of strings was 2, which is the minimum number required for understanding context.



**Figure 3 – High-Frequency Words in New Media (Turkish)**

According to Figure 3, unlike legacy media online articles that convey information and facts, YouTube comments, where due to the characteristics of new media, individual netizens freely write their opinions, reveal words with considerably different patterns from those extracted from legacy media.

Since these are comments on posts covering Korea's disaster assistance news, texts containing gratitude such as "proud," "thank you," "thank you very much," "very beautiful," and "excellent" were frequently mentioned. Additionally, words mentioning bilateral relations such as "Korea Türkiye" and "history repeats" were extracted. While Myeong Min Ho's illustration was frequently used as a topic, unlike legacy media, the artist's name was not mentioned in comments, and the phrase "history repeats," meaning the mutually supportive relationship between the two countries in the 1950 Korean War and the 2023 Türkiye earthquake that the illustration contains, was frequently written. As examined in the previous chapter's post topic review, there were no mentions of the Korean government and government officials in comments, but mentions of BTS and other, famous entertainers, appeared with considerable frequency.

### 3. Comparison and Interpretation of Analysis Results within the Context of Korea-Türkiye Relations

Summarizing the characteristics revealed through textual analysis of legacy media and new media, legacy media focuses more on government-led disaster assistance, while new media pays more attention to the private sector. The amicable bilat-

eral relationship between Korea and Türkiye is mentioned considerably in both legacy media and new media. A clear difference between them is that while legacy media focused on the emergency relief team dispatched by the government and President Yoon, new media paid more attention to private sector activities, as shown in the post topic classification. Meanwhile, Myeong Min Ho's illustration, which was mentioned more actively in new media than the government-level emergency relief team, was also included in articles in the legacy media domain, and both sides reported significantly on donation news from famous entertainers, indicating that the cultural sector is functioning as a mediator connecting Korean and Turkish societies.

This result aligns with Korea's strategy of utilizing culture as a primary means of public diplomacy in order to further achieve and maintain status as a cultural powerhouse. The same strategy is utilized in Korea's public diplomacy toward Türkiye. Both Korean Cultural Centers and King Sejong Institutes, major institutions of Korea's cultural public diplomacy, operate in Türkiye, and since Hallyu enjoys high popularity in Türkiye, various programs and events utilizing Korean culture are being prepared. The practice of employing and utilizing culture can positively influence introducing Korea to Turkish citizens and forming favorable images of Korea, constituting behavior that aligns with public diplomacy objectives.

Particularly, Korea and Türkiye share a special relationship defined as “brotherly countries” bound as blood allies during the Korean War. Subsequently, Korea actively showed support during the 1999 Marmara earthquake (İzmit earthquake). Also, the 2002 Korea-Japan World Cup third-place match between Korea and Türkiye, showcased a touching scene by which the national soccer teams of both countries held each other’s flags and hands during the celebration after the match which gave encouragement to both sides. In 2017, “Ayla,” a film co-produced by Korea and Türkiye commemorating the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries while also telling the emotional story of a Turkish soldier who participated in the Korean War and a Korean orphan, was released in Türkiye and gained great popularity. These scenes remain as historical milestones in bilateral relations, playing an important role in deepening amicable mutual relationships. Similarly, Korea’s active support during

the 2023 Türkiye earthquake situation will function as an important scene in the history of bilateral relations.

This study, based on the research question “Can Hallyu effectively contribute to public diplomacy from the perspective of strategic direction by amplifying the effects of Korea’s disaster assistance?” examined Turkish society’s reactions to aid provided by both the government and private levels following the 2023 earthquake through analyzing legacy media and new media texts. The results of the analysis confirmed that Hallyu was mentioned simultaneously in Turkish legacy media and new media, influencing how mentions of Korea’s disaster assistance activities were disseminated. This not only provides insights that Hallyu is shaping and producing positive national images of Korea as a factor that amplified Korea’s disaster assistance effects in Türkiye, but also empirically supports the importance of leveraging Korean culture and Hallyu as an effective strategy in Korea’s future public diplomacy initiatives toward Türkiye.

## Conclusion

Following the major earthquake in southeastern Türkiye in 2023, helping hands emerged from all sectors of Korean society to assist the “brother country.” The government, with the president taking the lead, emphasized swift and comprehensive support from relevant departments. Accordingly, the largest-scale emergency relief team ever was deployed, and the emergency relief team’s activities created touching stories. They miraculously rescued survivors, expressed sincere condolences for victims, and rescue dogs continued their missions despite injuries. On their return journey, they exchanged messages of support and encouragement with Turkish local relief workers and even shed tears at a gratitude video prepared by Turkish civilian organizations on the return flight. These stories were covered not only in Korean media but also in Turkish media. These so-called helping hands also emerged from the private sector. The private sector provided disaster assistance through donations. Various civic organizations collected relief supplies and donations, and famous entertainers also joined the donation procession. Additionally, illustrator Myeong Min Ho created a meaningful illustration that explores solidarity in the contemporary history

shared by both countries, providing comfort and emotional support to the Turkish people. As touching scenes awaken humanity and sentiment were disseminated to Turkish society, an opportunity was also created for further deepening the relations between Korea and Türkiye. Therefore, Korea’s current disaster assistance activities can be considered as a case where through implementation of public diplomacy strategies, the hearts of Turkish citizens were captured.

Accordingly, this study conducted frequency analysis on multiple texts collected from Turkish legacy media and new media domains regarding the public diplomatic significance of disaster assistance activities. The researchers extracted frequently appearing meaningful words and interpreted them within the context of Korea-Türkiye relations. Analysis results showed that legacy media tended to focus on government-led disaster assistance, while new media focused on private sector assistance. While government-led disaster assistance was rarely mentioned in new media, private sector support was mentioned considerably even in legacy media. This confirmed that private sector support had considerable importance in creating viral effects.

Among the private sectors, support from the cultural sector particularly attracted attention. In a situation where Hallyu’s popularity in Türkiye was established, news of donations from famous entertainers spread rapidly and added positive images to Hallyu and therefore Korea. Although Myeong Min Ho was not a celebrity with fame comparable to that of famous entertainers, new media text analysis revealed that he evoked the emotions of Turkish people through his touching illustrations. This implies that Korean culture at the public level in Türkiye can expand beyond K-pop and K-dramas, and such expansion can help form positive images of Korea.

Meanwhile, there is a content that received accompanying attention related to Myeong Min Ho’s illustration, which garnered significant attention in both legacy and new media. The movie “Ayla,” which was released in Türkiye in 2017 and gained much popularity at the time, is a film based on the true story of a Turkish soldier who found and cared for an orphaned girl in the battlefield during the Korean War, naming her “Ayla.” The movie Ayla was simultaneously mentioned in several articles reporting Myeong Min Ho’s illustration.





Figure 4 – Movie Poster of Ayla

Note: From “Ayla (film)” by Wikipedia, n.d. ([https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayla\\_%28film%29](https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayla_%28film%29)) and “Ayla” by IMDb, n.d. (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6316138/>)

The researchers propose more active bilateral collaborative work at the public diplomacy level, noting that the movie *Ayla* was produced and screened in Türkiye, the supporting country, rather than in Korea, the recipient country, and that Korean culture is actively consumed in Türkiye. Since Korea and Türkiye’s amicable relationship began with the Korean War as a starting point, and the film emphasized the image of “brave and kind Turkish people,” *Ayla*’s box office success in the Turkish film market would have been a predictable result.

However, subsequent work is absent. Even if not blockbuster-level films, international marriages between Turkish and Korean people and daily lives of Turkish students in Korea, which are rapidly being displayed through new media recently, are materials that can attract many people’s interests. Over time, this disaster assistance work may also become film material. However, as can be seen from Myeong Min Ho’s case, effectiveness does not require massive resources. As illustrated by the webtoons that are currently popular in Türkiye, dramas and novels that always enjoy high popularity in Turkish society, children’s books, and even bilateral cooperative researches.<sup>6</sup>

The production of joint creative work involving both countries in the content itself can become another symbol of developing bilateral relations and

may be expected to further maximize Korean culture and Korea’s positive image within Türkiye. Therefore, based on this study’s analysis, currently, while Korean culture receives much attention in Turkish society, expanding such joint creative content can be an efficient method for Korea’s public diplomacy strategy toward Türkiye.

The significance of this study lies in analyzing from what perspectives and through which channels Turkish society paid attention to Korea in a situation where Korea-Türkiye bilateral relations were emphasized more than ever such as during Korea’s disaster assistance process following the Türkiye earthquake. Nevertheless, collecting samples limited to YouTube in the new media domain is a methodological limitation. If methodological limitations are supplemented in follow-up research, this study’s content can be usefully utilized in performance analysis and strategic establishment of Korea’s public diplomacy toward Türkiye. Additionally, since earthquake damage and disaster victims’ suffering continue and the Korean government’s long-term support projects are also ongoing, follow-up research analyzing Turkish society’s reactions from a long-term perspective will also be necessary.

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<sup>6</sup> According to the Turkey Publishers Association’s 2022 annual publishing market report, the second most sold books after educational books were academic books for adults (Türkiye Yayıncılar Birliği, 2023).

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