

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL POLICY IN KAZAKHSTAN AND SOUTH KOREA: STRATEGIES, PRIORITIES AND TOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This article examines how Kazakhstan and South Korea shape their cultural trajectories through differently structured systems of cultural policy, emphasizing the roles of cultural governance, institutional design, and strategic cultural development. The study is guided by several research questions: How do the two countries conceptualize cultural policy as a mechanism of cultural growth? Which institutional arrangements support cultural ecosystems? How do cultural strategies influence creative production, heritage transformation, and global cultural presence? The purpose of the article is to compare the cultural-policy frameworks of the two countries in order to identify their underlying cultural logics and evaluate which elements of international experience may enhance Kazakhstan's cultural development. Methodologically, the research relies on comparative analysis, discourse analysis, and content analysis of strategic cultural documents, supplemented by the international datasets on cultural industries and creative-sector dynamics.

The study demonstrates that Kazakhstan prioritizes cultural continuity, symbolic heritage, and identity preservation, forming a model in which cultural policy primarily safeguards traditional meanings. South Korea, meanwhile, has developed a culturally productive model based on digital creativity, content export, and globally oriented cultural initiatives supported by specialized institutions such as KOCCA and KOCIS. These approaches differ in institutional autonomy, technological integration, and the capacity to translate cultural resources into international cultural presence. The article argues that Kazakhstan could strengthen its cultural policy by combining heritage-focused strategies with innovation-driven mechanisms, thereby fostering a more adaptive and outward-looking cultural ecosystem. The study contributes to comparative research on cultural policy by offering a structured understanding of how different cultural models evolve in response to global cultural transformations.

Keywords: Cultural Policy, Cultural Policy Model, Creative Industries, Cultural Industry, National Identity, Cultural Diplomacy, Cultural Export.

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Қазақстанның және Оңтүстік Кореяның мәдени саясатын салыстырмалы талдау: стратегиялары, басымдықтары және құралдары

Аңдатпа. Мақалада Қазақстан мен Оңтүстік Кореяның мәдени басқару, институционалдық жобалау және стратегиялық мәдени даму рөліне басымдылық бере отырып, әртүрлі құрылымдалған мәдени саясат жүйелері арқылы өздерінің мәдени траекторияларын қалай қалыптастыратыны қарастырылады. Зерттеу екі ел мәдени саясатты мәдени өсу механизмі ретінде қалай тұжырымдайды? Мәдени экожүйелерді қандай институционалдық құрылымдар қамтамасыз етеді? Мәдени стратегиялар креативті өнімге, мұраның трансформациялануына және жаһандық мәдени кеңістіктегі орнына қалай әсер етеді? деген сұрақтарға негізделеді. Мақаланың мақсаты – екі елдің мәдени саясат мәселелерін салыстыру арқылы олардың ішкі мәдени логикасын анықтау және халықаралық тәжірибенің қандай элементтері Қазақстанның мәдени дамуын ілгерілетуге көмектесетінін бағалау. Әдістемелік тұрғыдан зерттеу салыстырмалы талдауға, дискурс талдауға және стратегиялық мәдени құжаттардың контент-талдауына негізделген, сондай-ақ мәдени индустриялар мен креативті сектор динамикасы туралы халықаралық деректер базасымен толықтырылды.

Зерттеу нәтижесі көрсеткендей, Қазақстанның мәдени саясаты дәстүрлі мағыналарды сақтауды көздейтін модельді қалыптастырып, мәдени сабақтастыққа, символдық мұраға және бірегейлікті сақтауға басымдық береді. Ал Оңтүстік Корея, керісінше, KOCCA және KOCIS сияқты мамандандырылған институттардың қолдауымен цифрлық креативтілікке, контент экспортына және жаһанға бағытталған мәдени бастамаларға

негізделген мәдени-өнімді модельді дамытады. Бұл тәсілдер институционалдық автономия, технологиялық интеграция және мәдени ресурстарды халықаралық деңгейдегі ықпалға айналдыру қабілеті бойынша ерекшеленеді. Мақалада Қазақстан өзінің мәдени саясатын мұраға бағытталған стратегияларды инновациялық тетіктермен ұштастыру арқылы нығайта алатыны, сол арқылы бейімделгіш әрі ашық мәдени экожүйені қалыптастыруға болатыны дәлелденеді. Бұл зерттеу әртүрлі мәдени модельдердің жаһандық мәдени трансформацияларға жауап ретінде қалай дамитыны туралы жүйелі түсінік бере отырып, мәдени саясат саласындағы салыстырмалы зерттеулерге үлес қосады.

Түйін сөздер: мәдени саясат, мәдени саясат модельдері, креативті индустрия, мәдени индустрия, ұлттық бірегейлік, мәдени дипломатия, мәдени экспорт.

Сравнительный анализ культурной политики Казахстана и Южной Кореи: стратегии, приоритеты, инструменты

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается, как Казахстан и Южная Корея формируют свои культурные траектории посредством различных систем культурной политики, с акцентом на роль управления культурой, институционального проектирования и стратегического культурного развития. Исследование руководствуется несколькими исследовательскими вопросами: как обе страны концептуализируют культурную политику как механизм культурного роста? Какие институциональные механизмы поддерживают культурные экосистемы? Как культурные стратегии влияют на творческие производство, трансформацию наследия и глобальное культурное присутствие? Цель статьи – сравнить рамки культурной политики двух стран, чтобы выявить лежащие в основе культурные логики и оценить, какие элементы международного опыта могут способствовать культурному развитию Казахстана. Методологически исследование опирается на сравнительный анализ, дискурсивный анализ и контент-анализ стратегических документов, дополненные международными базами данных о культурных индустриях и динамике креативного сектора.

Исследование показывает, что Казахстан отдает приоритет культурной преемственности, символическому наследию и сохранению идентичности, формируя модель, в которой культурная политика в первую очередь защищает традиционные смыслы. Южная Корея, тем временем, разработала культурно-продуктивную модель, основанную на цифровом творчестве, экспорте контента и глобально ориентированных культурных инициативах, поддерживаемых специализированными институтами, такими как КОССА и КОСИС. Эти подходы различаются по институциональной автономии, технологической интеграции и способности преобразовывать культурные ресурсы в международное культурное присутствие. В статье утверждается, что Казахстан мог бы укрепить свою культурную политику, сочетая стратегии, ориентированные на сохранение наследия, с механизмами, основанными на инновациях, тем самым способствуя созданию более адаптивной и ориентированной на внешний мир культурной экосистемы. Исследование вносит вклад в сравнительные исследования культурной политики, предлагая структурированное понимание того, как различные культурные модели развиваются в ответ на глобальные культурные трансформации.

Ключевые слова: культурная политика, модель культурной политики, креативная индустрия, культурная индустрия, национальная идентичность, культурная дипломатия, культурный экспорт.

Introduction

In today's world, where globalization and digital technologies rapidly reshape cultural production, cultural policy is gaining new meaning and weight. States no longer view culture solely as a sphere of values and traditions. Instead, it increasingly becomes a practical tool for strengthening national identity, supporting human potential, and enhancing a country's visibility in the international arena. As creative industries grow and digital platforms blur borders, the question of how countries build and manage their cultural strategies becomes especially relevant.

Kazakhstan's cultural policy is largely focused on preserving cultural diversity and renewing national consciousness. These goals are reflected in major state initiatives such as Ulttyq Rukhani Zhangyru [1], the Concept for the Development of Creative Industries [2], and the national strategy

for safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage [3]. Researchers including A. Adibayeva [4], K. Tuleuova, K. Sheriyazdanova, A. Alpeisov [5], and A. Khasbulatov [6] note that Kazakhstan is still shaped by elements of post-Soviet centralization, although the country is gradually moving toward a more open, digital, and adaptive cultural environment.

South Korea offers a very different example. Over the past two decades, culture has become one of its strongest national assets. Through consistent state support and close cooperation between government and business, Korea has turned cultural production – from K-pop and cinema to design, webtoons, and digital media – into a global export industry. Scholars such as Y. Kim [7], H. Lee [8], and S. Kwon and J. Kim [9] highlight the country's ability to combine strategic vision with institutional flexibility, making cultural policy an effective engine of soft power.

Despite the active development of cultural policy in both countries, academic literature rarely brings these two cases together. Existing studies tend to examine Kazakhstan and South Korea separately, without comparing their cultural strategies, governance systems, or the underlying values guiding policy development. As a result, we still lack a clear understanding of how these models differ, where they intersect, and what lessons they may offer for one another. This gap defines both the relevance and the novelty of the present study.

The aim of this article is to provide a comparative analysis of the cultural policies of Kazakhstan and South Korea, focusing on their strategic goals, institutional mechanisms, priority areas, and practical tools. The article also seeks to outline which aspects of the South Korean experience might be meaningfully adapted to the Kazakhstani context without losing the unique cultural identity that Kazakhstan seeks to preserve.

Literature Review

The growing scholarly interest in cultural policy reflects its expanding role in national development. Research shows that cultural policy today operates at the intersection of cultural studies, political science, economics, and media research. With globalization, digital transformation, and the rise of creative industries, cultural policy is increasingly regarded not only as a mechanism for preservation but also as a strategic instrument for identity formation, international visibility, and soft power. Comparative studies in East Asia and the post-Soviet region highlight the need to understand different national models within broader global cultural shifts.

In academic discourse, cultural policy is generally defined as the systematic activity of the state regulating the production, distribution, and consumption of cultural values. Foundational typologies of cultural policy models were proposed by K. Mulcahy [10] and J. Kim [11], who identify preservation-oriented, liberal, and export-driven models. More recent scholarship argues that these models increasingly intersect and are influenced by hybrid governance systems, digital ecosystems, and cultural industries.

The South Korean model has attracted significant scholarly attention. It is widely described as

a form of new cultural nationalism, where cultural production is strategically integrated into global branding and export policy. Researchers such as X. Zhang [12] and M. Shim [13] emphasize the pivotal role of state institutions, including KOCCA [14], KOCIS, and the Cultural Heritage Administration, in shaping Korea's cultural ecosystem. Recent studies highlight the growing impact of digital sectors-webtoons, OTT platforms, XR-content, and AI-driven creative production – on contemporary Korean cultural policy [15]. Hallyu, in this context, is viewed as a long-term result of strategic planning and investment rather than a spontaneous phenomenon [16].

Research on Kazakhstan's cultural policy has traditionally emphasized issues of heritage preservation, national identity formation, and the maintenance of cultural continuity. Scholars such as A. Khasbulatov [6], B. Tulemisov [17], and K. Yermagambetova [18] analyze cultural development through humanitarian and socio-cultural lenses. Many researchers underline that Kazakhstan's cultural governance still retains features of post-Soviet centralization and administrative control [19].

A more modern conceptualization of Kazakhstan's cultural policy began to take shape after the adoption of the Cultural Policy Concept for 2023–2029. This strategic document prioritizes digitalization, cultural tourism, creative economy development, and strengthening cultural diplomacy. Empirical analyses presented in the creative.kz report [20] point to challenges such as weak interagency coordination, insufficient cultural infrastructure, and limited funding tools.

Institutional and regulatory reforms within the cultural sphere have been reflected in national projects and reports issued by the Ministry of Culture and Information. Key topics include museum digitalization, expansion of online access to archives, and the creation of a national film distribution monitoring system. However, these lines of development remain insufficiently explored in academic research, indicating a widening gap between policy discourse and scholarly analysis [20].

To date, Kazakhstan lacks comprehensive comparative studies on cultural policy models. There are no integrated analyses comparing institutional structures, governance mechanisms, funding approaches, or international strategies of Kazakhstan and South Korea. Methodological foundations for

policy transfer between East Asia and Central Asia also remain underexamined. This article therefore represents an early attempt to systematically connect South Korean and Kazakhstani cultural policy models within a unified analytical framework.

The empirical basis for this analysis of contemporary cultural policy in Kazakhstan includes the following key sources:

- An overview of the current state of affairs as presented in the Cultural Policy Concept of Kazakhstan for 2023–2029 [20];
- The report creative.kz, which provides both quantitative and qualitative assessments of the creative economy, identifying key barriers and growth potential [19];
- Analytical reports by the British Council Kazakhstan, offering qualitative evaluations of cultural initiatives and industries from the perspective of institutional development and international cooperation [21]. Although the British Council report “Cultural Industries in Kazakhstan” (2016) remains one of the earliest and most systematic assessments of the country’s creative sector, the present study does not rely on this source alone. In order to reflect the rapidly changing nature of creative industries, the analysis is supplemented with recent strategic and analytical materials adopted between 2021 and 2025, including the Concept for the Development of Creative Industries for 2021–2025, the Cultural Policy Concept of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023–2029, contemporary reports by creative.kz and AIFC, as well as updated international discussions on digital cultural transformation and creative economies [19; 20; 21].

These sources form the foundation for identifying both strengths and structural constraints in Kazakhstan’s cultural policy landscape.

Methodology

This study relies on a broad interdisciplinary approach that combines classical tools of comparative analysis with more flexible methods of discourse and content analysis. Such a combination allows not only to compare formal structures of cultural policy but also to understand how these policies are justified, narrated, and embedded in wider social and cultural contexts. In other words, the methodology makes it possible to move from simple description to a deeper

interpretation of how cultural policy functions in Kazakhstan and South Korea.

The core of the research is a structured comparative analysis. It makes it possible to trace both convergences and divergences in strategic priorities, institutional design, policy instruments, and cultural visions adopted by the two countries. This analytical framework draws on the cultural policy models outlined by H. Lee [8] and K. Mulcahy [10], whose typologies help interpret preservation-oriented, liberal, and export-driven policy approaches. To systematize this comparison, the study includes a set of comparative tables that visually summarize key dimensions and enhance the clarity of the analysis.

Content analysis serves as the primary empirical method. For Kazakhstan, the study examines several major policy documents, including the Cultural Policy Concept 2023–2029, Ulttyq Rukhani Zhangyru [1], the Creative Industries Concept [2], and the Concept for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage [3]. For South Korea, the analysis covers Culture Vision 2030 [15], strategic reports of KOCCA [15], and cultural export initiatives developed within the Hallyu framework [22]. Content analysis allowed the study to identify core values, regulatory priorities, and recurring motifs within each country’s policy discourse.

To complement this, discourse analysis was used to explore how governments frame culture as identity, heritage, innovation, or soft power, and how these narratives legitimize particular policy decisions. This helped reveal deeper ideological layers behind official documents and to understand how cultural missions are constructed in both national contexts.

The methodological design is further strengthened by the use of comparative and statistical data from international databases, including the Global Soft Power Index, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, World Bank Creative Economy Reports, KOSIS, and the Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan. These materials make it possible to evaluate whether the declared ambitions of cultural policy correspond to observable, measurable outcomes.

Main part

The study has revealed not only substantive differences in the cultural policies of the Republic

lic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Korea, but also broader institutional and value-based divergences shaped by distinct historical, political, and economic contexts. The key thematic areas of discussion are outlined below.

Cultural Policy Models: an institutional and value-based typology

The study has revealed not only substantive differences in the cultural policies of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Korea, but also broader institutional and value-based divergences shaped by distinct historical, political, and economic contexts. These divergences largely confirm the typological distinctions discussed in comparative cultural policy research by Mulcahy [10] and scholarship on the Korean Wave [7; 8]. The key thematic areas of discussion are outlined below.

A comparative analysis of cultural policies in Kazakhstan and South Korea using an institutional and value-based typology sheds light on differences not only in goals and strategies but also in the deeper ideological foundations that inform cultural governance.

Kazakhstan’s model, as noted in several domestic studies, is rooted in a paradigm of safeguarding and strengthening cultural identity. Its institutional framework is shaped by the concepts of “spiritual renewal” [4, p. 267] and national revival [5, p. 670]. This approach reflects a trajectory typical of postcolonial and post-Soviet societies, where cultural policy has been largely driven by the restoration of historical memory, cultural identity and spiritual values. The state’s

protective role is reflected in key strategic initiatives such as Ul’tyq Rukhani Zhandyru, the Concept of the Creative Industries, and the Cultural Policy Concept of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023-2029. In contrast, the South Korean model follows a logic of cultural export and global positioning, where culture functions as a tool for economic diversification and soft power diplomacy. The Culture Vision 2030 strategy [15], the Cultural Industry Promotion Act [22], and the work of KOCCA [14] and KOCIS exemplify a systemic and multilayered approach in which culture is framed as an industry requiring investment, innovation, competitiveness, and international branding [23].

This model corresponds to an expansive and productive cultural policy that promotes the export of cultural products (K-pop, K-dramas, webtoons), fosters creative industries, supports the development of digital platforms, and encourages public-private partnerships. Within the framework proposed by Kwon and Kim [9] and further developed by Zhang and Lee [12], this can be interpreted as a form of “transnational cultural nationalism” [9, p. 423], in which identity is constructed not retrospectively, but through transforming culture into a global asset and neoliberalized media ecosystem.

In comparative perspective, the Kazakhstani model continues to emphasize cultural preservation and national identity, remaining rooted in a values-oriented, protective approach (see Table 1). This confirms the argument of Tulemisov [17] and Yermagambetova [18] that Kazakhstan’s cultural policy is still primarily focused on safeguarding the national code rather than projecting it outward.

Table 1 - Comparative Analysis of Cultural Policy Models

Aspects	Kazakhstan’s Cultural Policy Model	South Korea’s Cultural Policy Model
Type of cultural policy model	inward-looking, preservation-oriented	outward-facing, export-driven, branding-oriented, creative
Strategic objectives	Preservation of identity, spiritual renewal	Global branding, cultural industry
Institutional governance	Ministry of Culture, centralized governance	Ministry of Culture + KOCCA, autonomous agencies
Key policy documents	“Ul’tyq Rukhani Zhandyru”, Cultural Policy Concept for 2023-2029, Creative Industries Development Concept for 2021-2025	Culture Vision 2030, Act on Creative Industries (1999/2021)
Programmatic focus	Historical and cultural heritage, sacred sites, emerging creative industries	Content (K-pop, K-dramas, webtoons), innovation
Implementation tools	State programs, museification, fragmented implementation of the Creative Industries Concept	State Acts, Institutional financial support, coordination through KOCCA and KOCIS

Approach to digitalization	Limited digitalization, focus on traditional forms	Active digitalization, multimedia export
International orientation	Limited and passive engagement in cultural diplomacy	Global cultural diplomacy and promotion of Hallyu

Source: Table compiled by the authors based on comparative analyses.

The central distinction between the two approaches lies in their conceptualization of culture as a policy tool: Kazakhstan prioritizes its symbolic and value-oriented meaning, whereas South Korea highlights its market potential and diplomatic utility, in line with the export-oriented model described by Kim and Nye [7] and Kim J. O. [11]. In today's digital era, however, a hybrid approach that blends preservation with innovation appears especially promising. For Kazakhstan, this implies building a strategic balance between cultural identity and fostering innovation by refreshing traditional forms through digital platforms, emerging media, and creative entrepreneurship. One of the key challenges for Kazakhstan lies in identifying practical mechanisms through which traditional culture can be integrated into contemporary digital and global media environments without losing its symbolic depth and authenticity. In this regard, digitalization should not be understood merely as the technical transfer of heritage into online formats, but rather as the reinterpretation of cultural meanings through new media languages [11; 12].

A promising direction involves the development of digital storytelling based on nomadic history, Turkic mythology, epic traditions, and oral heritage. Historical narratives and cultural symbols can be transformed into serialized streaming content, animation, gaming projects, VR reconstructions, and multimedia educational platforms capable of reaching younger audiences. Such formats allow traditional cultural meanings to exist not only within museums and archives but also within contemporary cultural consumption. Another important mechanism concerns collaboration between historians, ethnographers, media producers, designers, and digital creators. Without such interdisciplinary cooperation, there is a risk that traditional culture will be reduced to decorative folklore or commercial exoticism detached from its historical and philosophical context. Ethical digitalization therefore requires not only technological adaptation but also the preservation of cultural meanings and interpretative depth.

Certain tendencies toward this transformation are already visible in Kazakhstan's independent media sector. Projects produced by Salem Social Media and BAS Production, including "5:32," "Sheker," and "Dastur," demonstrate that local cultural narratives can successfully function within modern digital formats while attracting mass audiences. However, these initiatives remain largely market-driven and insufficiently integrated into state cultural policy frameworks. Institutional support for such projects could become an important step toward the formation of a hybrid cultural model combining heritage preservation with contemporary creative production.

Strategic Goals of Cultural Policy

An analysis of the strategic priorities of Kazakhstan and South Korea reveals a fundamental difference in the way each country defines the objectives of its cultural policy. Kazakhstan's Cultural Policy Concept for 2023-2029 emphasizes the preservation of the national cultural code, spiritual revival, and the promotion of moral values through the support of traditional and sacred cultural forms [20]. According to Adibayev and Melich, this approach corresponds to an introspective cultural policy model focused on internal consolidation, stability, and intergenerational continuity [4; 5], which is consistent with the preservation-focused logic described by Mulcahy [10].

By contrast, South Korea's Culture Vision 2030 presents culture as a strategic resource of economic and political influence [15]. In this document, culture is positioned as one of the driving forces of the creative economy, digital innovation, and soft power on the global stage. Lee and Shim argue that this trajectory is fully consistent with "an export and branding oriented cultural policy model [8; 13], while Kim and Zhang underscore the importance of building a national cultural brand under conditions of global competition [11; 12].

In international academic literature, this difference is often described as a distinction between a "preservationist" model [10] and an "innovation-driven, expansive" model [11]. In Kazakhstan,

culture primarily serves an identity-building and moral function. In South Korea, it operates as a tool for economic development, nation branding, and foreign policy. This difference clearly appears in institutional implementation. In Kazakhstan, policymakers prioritize traditional cultural forms, sacred sites, language, and intangible heritage, as formalized in the Concept of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the Safeguarding and Development of Intangible Cultural Heritage [3].

South Korea, by contrast, invests heavily in content industries, global distribution, cultural clusters and digital platforms. Major initiatives such as K-Expo, the Korea Brand & Entertainment Expo, Hallyu promotion campaigns, and the government-backed export of K-pop and K-dramas illustrate how South Korea actively uses culture as a soft power resource [7].

For Kazakhstan, such an approach is still limited. Although the Creative Industries Development Concept for 2021-2025 exists [2; 17], the overall trajectory of Kazakhstan's cultural policy remains inward-facing. Reports by creative.kz [19] and the British Council Kazakhstan [21] confirm that most cultural initiatives continue to focus on strengthening national identity rather than positioning Kazakh culture globally.

A comparison of the two countries' strategic documents (*Kazakhstan's Cultural Policy Concept for 2023-2029 and South Korea's Culture Vision 2030*) highlights fundamental differences in how each country defines the tasks and functions of cultural policy.

The Cultural Policy Concept of Kazakhstan for 2023-2029 defines culture as a foundation for building a morally oriented society, reinforcing the national spirit, safeguarding ethnocultural diversity, and promoting social cohesion. Its priorities include:

- Strengthening moral and spiritual values;
- Supporting traditional arts and historical heritage;

- Expanding public participation in cultural life;
- Treating digitalization as a secondary task;
- Promoting cultural education and patriotism [20].

The document strongly reflects a preservationist model where culture is seen as a carrier and transmitter of traditional values intended to reinforce internal unity in society.

By contrast, South Korea conceptualizes culture as a driver of innovation, export and global recognition. In the Culture Vision 2030 strategy culture plays a central role in improving everyday quality of life, advancing the creative economy and expanding international influence [15; 22]. Key priorities include:

- Ensuring daily cultural access for all citizens;
- Integrating culture with digital technologies, AI, and XR;
- Expanding the global reach of Korean cultural exports (Hallyu);
- Globalizing content and joining international cultural networks;
- Embracing inclusivity and diversity as pillars of national identity [15; 22; 23].

South Korea promotes a productive cultural policy model where culture functions not only as a marker of identity but also as a tool for economic modernization, global branding, and diplomatic outreach.

In essence, Kazakhstan pursues a domestically oriented strategy focused on heritage preservation and identity consolidation. Meanwhile, South Korea implements an expansive, tech-driven and economically focused model in which culture serves simultaneously as both a resource and a product. This gives South Korea sustained visibility in the international arena and positions culture as a national development asset (see Table 2).

Table 2 - Comparative Overview: Key Differences in Strategic Policy Documents

Categories	Cultural Policy Concept of Kazakhstan for 2023-2029	Culture Vision 2030
Main Focus	Tradition, Identity, Morality	Globalization, Innovation, Export
Function of Culture	Educational and Protective	Economic and Diplomatic
Role of the State	Centralized regulator, customer	Coordinator and Investor in Cultural Ecosystems,
Culture and Technology	Mentioned as secondary (digitization of libraries and archives)	Leading role of digital transformation (XR, AI, Metaverse)

Cultural Diversity	Emphasis on internal ethnocultural harmony	Emphasis on inclusion and diversity as global values
Cultural Diplomacy	Not articulated as a strategic priority	clearly articulated: support for Hallyu and overseas cultural centers

Source: Table compiled by the authors based on comparative analyses.

The strategic goals of cultural policy in the two countries reflect differences not only in administrative models but also in their civilizational self-perception and the scope of cultural imagination. While South Korea seeks to project power through culture, Kazakhstan aims to preserve through culture. This contrast opens up a space for discussion of a hybrid model that combines preservation with innovation and outward-oriented strategies, especially in the context of digitalization and the globalization of cultural practices.

Institutional Mechanisms

The institutional framework of cultural policy serves as a key indicator of its effectiveness, resilience, and adaptability to contemporary challenges. A comparison between the Republic of Korea and the Republic of Kazakhstan reveals two fundamentally different institutional models.

In South Korea, while the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism oversees overall policy coordination, operational responsibilities are delegated to specialized autonomous agencies. Among the most prominent is the Korea Creative Content Agency [14], which acts as a strategic regulator and investor in creative industries including music, film, gaming, animation, and XR technologies [21]. KOCCA administers direct funding and grants to startups, export subsidies, infrastructure development (such as cultural hubs, accelerators, and clusters), as well as education and incubation programs like Content Academy and Content Korea Lab.

One notable case is the K-Startup Grand Challenge, supported by KOCCA and the Ministry of SMEs and Startups, which integrates creative and tech-oriented startups into the cultural economy. KOCCA also coordinates South Korea's participation in major global events such as MIPCOM, SXSW, and Cannes, thus contributing to the international visibility of Korean cultural products [22].

In addition to KOCCA, other key institutions include the Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange (KOFICE), the Korean Culture

and Information Service (KOCIS), responsible for cultural diplomacy and international programming, and the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA), tasked with the preservation and digitalization of heritage. These agencies operate with significant financial, administrative, and operational autonomy, enabling South Korea to implement a flexible, systematic, and innovation-driven cultural policy. In 2023, KOCCA's budget exceeded \$500 million, functioning as an incubator for national content production with hundreds of projects annually, many of which have international reach [14].

In contrast, Kazakhstan's institutional landscape is more centralized. The Ministry of Culture and Information retains authority over culture, archives, information, and creative industries. Unlike Korea, Kazakhstan lacks autonomous agencies similar to KOCCA. As a result:

- There is no sustained institutional support for cultural projects;
- Targeted grant mechanisms and digital platforms for cultural promotion remain underdeveloped;
- The implementation of the Creative Industries Development Concept for 2021-2025 remains fragmented [2].

Existing institutions such as the National Museum of Kazakhstan, the National Library, Kazakhfilm, regional cultural centers, etc. primarily fulfill archival and executive roles rather than strategic, innovative, or market-oriented functions. An additional structural limitation of Kazakhstan's cultural policy lies in the predominance of administrative and budgetary management mechanisms over long-term ecosystem development. Most cultural institutions remain dependent on centralized state financing and annual budget allocations, which restricts institutional flexibility, strategic experimentation, and sustainable innovation.

Unlike South Korea's diversified system of grants, incubators, export programs, and public-private partnerships, Kazakhstan's cultural sector still lacks stable mechanisms for supporting independent creative initiatives and digital

cultural entrepreneurship. Financial support is frequently project-based and episodic rather than systematic. This creates conditions in which many innovative cultural initiatives remain concentrated in large urban centers such as Astana and Almaty, while regional creative infrastructure continues to be weakly developed [19].

The example of Kazakhfilm illustrates these institutional limitations particularly clearly. Although the studio continues to receive state support and plays an important symbolic role in national cinema, its integration into global streaming ecosystems and international content distribution remains limited [20]. The absence of strong marketing strategies, international co-production networks, and sustainable digital distribution mechanisms constrains the global visibility of Kazakhstani film production.

Furthermore, interagency coordination between cultural institutions, media industries, educational organizations, tourism structures, and digital sectors remains insufficiently developed [19]. As a result, many cultural initiatives operate in isolation from one another and do not form an integrated national creative ecosystem. The creation of autonomous institutions focused specifically on creative industries, cultural export, and digital innovation could therefore become a key

direction for the modernization of Kazakhstan’s cultural governance model.

Initiatives like the national project “Ulttyq Rukhani Zhangyru” [1] are largely implemented top-down through direct state control and funding. However, these efforts lack structured grant support, investment incentives, and mechanisms for decentralizing cultural initiatives at regional or private-sector levels.

As noted in the analytical report by creative.kz, Kazakhstan’s institutional system is marked by overlapping functions, unclear mandates, and limited inter-agency coordination [19]. Even successful events (cultural festivals, state funding for films) tend to be one-off efforts rather than components of an integrated support ecosystem.

The comparative analysis supports Mulcahy’s statement [10] that the sustainability of cultural policy depends not only on regulatory frameworks but also on institutional design, specifically, the ability to foster cross-sectoral alliances, stable funding models, and continuous evaluation mechanisms. In Kazakhstan, there is a clear need to develop a second-level institutional architecture that would facilitate flexibility, professionalization and the digital transformation of cultural governance (Table 3).

Table 3 - Institutional Differences

Parameters	South Korea	Kazakhstan
Type of governance	Diversified agency-based model	Centralized ministerial governance
Specialized agencies	KOCCA, KOFICE, KOCIS, Arts Council Korea	Absent (no autonomous structures for creative industries development)
Financial model	Grants, subsidies, public procurement, partnerships with businesses	Predominantly budgetary funding
Case examples	KOCCA Content Academy, K-Start-up Grand Challenge, Hallyu Export Programs	“Ulttyq Rukhani Zhangyru” program, digitization of cultural assets
Flexibility & innovation	High level of institutional adaptability	Limited opportunities for innovation and private capital engagement

Source: Table compiled by the authors based on comparative analyses.

Thus, differences in institutional mechanisms reflect the relative sophistication of cultural policy models. South Korea demonstrates a framework in which the ministry defines strategic goals, while implementation is carried out by agile, functionally autonomous agencies. This model of “guided autonomy” allows agencies to act as strategic operators, transforming cultural policy into innovative and export-ready content. Kazakhstan, by contrast, remains in a centralized

administrative phase with no fully developed second-level instruments. Its top-down structure focuses on preservation and heritage management but struggles with dynamic adaptation. This limits the effectiveness of even the most well-designed policy documents. Establishing a national agency dedicated to creative industries could serve as a key step toward institutional reform in Kazakhstan’s cultural policy.

Priority Areas of Cultural Policy

The selection of priority areas in cultural policy reflects not only the substantive direction of the state's efforts but also its capacity to respond to the challenges of the digital age. A comparative analysis reveals that South Korea and Kazakhstan pursue fundamentally different approaches in setting these priorities.

South Korea places a strategic emphasis on digitalization and the development of multimedia industries as an approach embedded both in official policy documents and institutional practices. The main focal areas include:

- the music industry (K-pop, indie scene);
- web comics (webtoons);
- digital cinema (OTT platforms and streaming content);
- gamification and VR content;
- digital-platform-based cultural entrepreneurship [23].

This policy has led to the emergence of South Korea's global cultural brand *Hallyu* which functions not only as a soft power tool but also as an economic engine. According to KOFICE, South Korea's export of cultural content exceeded \$ 12 billion in 2022 [23]. These figures affirm that South Korea conceptualizes culture both as a value and as an economic asset.

In contrast, Kazakhstan continues to prioritize:

- the protection of historical and cultural heritage;
- the sacralization of traditional forms (yurts, ornamentation, epic poetry);
- and ethno-cultural and spiritual projects such as "The Land of the Great Steppe" and "The

Seven Facets of the Great Steppe" [2, 18]

As noted in the creative.kz report, Kazakhstan's cultural policy remains grounded in a conservationist and museum-oriented paradigm, offering limited support to new forms of artistic expression or digital creativity. In the context of digital transformation, this creates a risk of what might be called the "museumification" of culture where resources are largely directed toward restoration and preservation, rather than reinterpretation and modernization of cultural meanings.

This imbalance is also noted in reports by the British Council Kazakhstan, which observe that "the overwhelming majority of cultural initiatives focus on traditional forms and are not adapted to new media environments or audiences" [21].

It is critical to recognize that young people as the primary producers and consumers of contemporary cultural content interact increasingly with digital, multimedia, and interactive formats. The lack of institutional support in these areas makes worse the generational cultural divide and weakens the global appeal of Kazakhstani culture.

A promising example of new cultural production can be seen in the work of independent studios such as BAS Production and Salem Social Media, creators of the series "5:32", "Sheker", "Patrul" and "Dastur". However, as creative.kz highlights, these initiatives are market-driven and self-organized, lacking formal integration into national cultural policy frameworks.

Based on this comparison, the following table outlines key indicators distinguishing the strategic priorities of cultural policy in South Korea and Kazakhstan (Table 4):

Table 4 - Priority Directions in Cultural Policy

Criteria	South Korea	Kazakhstan
Primary Focus	Digital exports, creative industries	Heritage preservation, ethno-cultural projects
Promoting Institutions	KOCCA, MCST, KOCIS	Ministry of Culture and Information of Kazakhstan
Digital Industries	K-pop, webtoons, gaming, OTT platforms	Ad hoc projects, weak institutionalization
State Support Mechanisms	Incubators, grants, tax incentives	Budget funding, occasional competitions
Youth-Oriented Content	Dramas, TikTok, YouTube, fan culture	Educational-patriotic projects
Examples of Digital Projects	BTS Universe, Webtoon Naver, K-Cinema	AITUBE, BeeTV, QSANDYQ
Integration into Global Platforms	Netflix, Disney+, Spotify, TikTok	YouTube, local platforms without state support

Risks and Constraints	Cultural homogenization, reliance on fan economy	Museumification, lack of innovative content
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Source: Table compiled by the authors based on comparative analyses.

South Korea demonstrates a strategic model of prioritizing digital and multimedia cultural forms, effectively transforming its cultural domain into a hybrid digital ecosystem. Kazakhstan, by contrast, maintains a focus on traditional and often archaized forms of cultural expression, which limits its cultural dynamism, adaptability, and global competitiveness. To remain relevant in a digital world, Kazakhstan must shift toward a balanced approach one that treats creative and digital formats not as peripheral or experimental, but as integral components of national cultural policy.

Risks and Limitations of the South Korean Cultural Export Model

While South Korea is widely recognized as one of the most successful examples of contemporary cultural export policy, its model also demonstrates several structural and ideological limitations that increasingly attract critical scholarly attention. The rapid global expansion of Hallyu has strengthened South Korea’s cultural influence; however, it has simultaneously produced new forms of dependency, standardization, and commercialization within the cultural sphere [7; 12].

One of the most discussed risks concerns cultural homogenization. The globalization of Korean cultural products has encouraged the formation of standardized aesthetics and commercially optimized cultural formats designed primarily for global consumption. As Zhang and Lee argue, contemporary Korean cultural production increasingly operates within a neoliberal media environment where market competitiveness shapes cultural expression [12]. As a result, local and regional cultural diversity within Korea may become less visible, while globally marketable formats dominate cultural production.

Another important limitation is platform dependency. Korean cultural exports are now deeply integrated into global digital ecosystems controlled by multinational platforms such as Netflix, YouTube, Spotify, TikTok, and Disney+. Although these platforms significantly increase the international visibility of Korean content, they also create

forms of algorithmic dependence in which visibility, profitability, and audience reach are increasingly determined by external digital infrastructures rather than national cultural institutions [11; 13]. This makes cultural exports vulnerable to changing platform policies, global market fluctuations, and algorithmic prioritization.

The Korean model is also characterized by a high level of dependence on fandom-based economies. K-pop and digital entertainment industries rely heavily on emotionally engaged fan communities that actively participate in promotion, content circulation, and symbolic consumption [7; 13]. While this model has proven economically effective, it has also generated criticism concerning the commercialization of emotional labor, intensive production cycles, and growing pressure on performers within highly competitive entertainment structures [12].

In addition, the success of export-oriented cultural industries may lead to the over-commercialization of culture itself. Under such conditions, culture increasingly functions as a commodity optimized for global markets rather than as a symbolic system connected to historical memory, local meanings, and cultural diversity [11; 12]. This creates tensions between economic profitability and cultural authenticity.

For Kazakhstan, the South Korean experience therefore represents not a model for mechanical imitation but rather a source of selective institutional adaptation. Kazakhstan can benefit from Korea’s strategic coordination mechanisms, creative-industry infrastructure, and digital promotion strategies while simultaneously preserving its own cultural specificity, linguistic diversity, and historical heritage. A balanced cultural policy should avoid reducing culture exclusively to commercial export and instead maintain equilibrium between economic innovation and cultural authenticity.

International Positioning and Cultural Diplomacy

One of the most striking differences between the cultural policies of South Korea and Kazakh-

stan lies in the degree of institutionalization and strategic orientation of their cultural diplomacy and international positioning. South Korea systematically deploys culture as an instrument of foreign policy, aligning with the “soft power” paradigm described by Kim and Nye [7], and further elaborated through the concept of Hallyu. Its cultural diplomacy operates as a coherent system of measures, including:

- funding cultural centers in more than 30 countries;
- organizing international festivals and exhibitions of Korean culture (K-Festival, Korean Cinema Week);
- investing in global media platforms such as Netflix and Spotify to disseminate content;
- the work of agencies like KOCIS (Korean Culture and Information Service) and KOFICE, which coordinate international cultural exchange programs;
- creating universal cultural symbols such as K-pop, dramas, cuisine, design, and the Korean language [22; 23].

In contrast, Kazakhstan has long prioritized internal cultural development through restoring historical memory, reinforcing national identity, and promoting spiritual and moral values. These priorities are reflected in national programs that frame culture primarily as a guardian of tradition. However, the new Cultural Policy Concept of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023-2029 outlines intentions to strengthen the country’s interna-

tional cultural presence through:

- the development of national cultural brands;
- participation in international fairs and festivals;
- the promotion of Kazakh films, music, and literature on foreign platforms;
- the creation of new formats for cultural representation, including virtual museums and international residencies [19; 20].

Nevertheless, as noted by British Council Kazakhstan and in the creative.kz research, these initiatives remain sporadic and fragmented. Kazakhstan still lacks:

- a dedicated institution similar to KOCIS or KOFICE to coordinate cultural diplomacy;
- a cohesive cultural branding strategy (aside from the phenomenon of Dimash Kudaibergen, who has become an informal cultural ambassador);
- targeted strategies to engage the private sector and the diaspora in cultural promotion efforts.

Isolated projects such as the international festival screenings of films like “Tomiris”, “Almas Qylysh”, and “Koshpendiler” demonstrate significant potential but currently fall outside the scope of institutional support.

The comparative analysis of cultural diplomacy tools in the two countries reveals substantial differences in institutional frameworks, promotional mechanisms, and the maturity of national cultural branding (Table 5).

Table 5 - Tools for International Positioning and Cultural Diplomacy

Parameters	South Korea	Kazakhstan
Institutions of cultural diplomacy	KOCIS, KOFICE, MCST	Divisions within the Ministry of Culture & Information and diplomatic missions of Kazakhstan
Forms of promotion	K-pop, K-drama, cinema, webtoons, cultural centers	Historical films, music, cuisine
Geographic reach	>30 countries (centers, festivals, Netflix)	>10 countries (via embassies, exhibitions, film festivals - fragmented image)
National cultural brand	Hallyu, K-Culture, K-Design	Dimash, Kazakh yurt, qobyz (fragmented image)
Challenges	Dependence on pop culture	Lack of consistent branding, weak institutional support

Source: Table compiled by the authors based on comparative analyses.

Kazakhstan requires a strategic shift in its approach to cultural diplomacy from representing the past to promoting a modern and diverse cultural image. Key steps include establishing a specialized agency, enhancing cross-sectoral cooperation (with media, tourism, and education), institutionalizing cultural branding, and embrac-

ing digital platforms. These efforts are vital not only for strengthening Kazakhstan’s soft power but also for leveraging culture as a resource for international dialogue and economic development, as exemplified by South Korea’s experience.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis of the cultural policies of South Korea and Kazakhstan has made it possible to identify fundamental differences in institutional approaches, strategic priorities, and implementation tools for cultural objectives. Although both countries recognize culture as an integral part of sustainable development, their models of cultural policy are shaped by different historical, political, and economic factors.

South Korea demonstrates the successful implementation of an export-oriented model in which culture functions as a strategic resource of state soft power, economic growth, and global positioning. Clear institutionalization (KOCCA, KOCIS, CHA), a legal framework (Cultural Industry Promotion Act), and comprehensive strategies (Culture Vision 2030) have enabled the country to achieve leadership in the field of creative industries and cultural diplomacy. Everyday practices such as gastronomy, music, and the film industry have been transformed into powerful cultural brands integrated into pop culture and the digital environment.

Kazakhstan, by contrast, builds its cultural policy on the basis of an introspective model focused on the restoration of historical memory, the sacralization of heritage, and the strengthening of national identity. Government programs in the field of culture reflect the state's intention to rethink the cultural past and transform it into symbolic capital. However, the potential of culture as an export resource and a component of the creative economy is being realized to a limited extent.

The comparison between Kazakhstan and South Korea demonstrates that contemporary cultural policy can no longer be limited either to heritage preservation or to market-oriented cultural export alone. Under conditions of globalization and digital transformation, sustainable cultural development increasingly depends on the ability to construct hybrid cultural ecosystems in which identity, innovation, digitalization, creative industries, and international visibility coexist within a flexible institutional framework [10; 11].

South Korea illustrates the effectiveness of a strategically coordinated export-oriented model supported by autonomous institutions, digital infrastructures, and global cultural branding [7; 15]. Kazakhstan, meanwhile, possesses signifi-

cant symbolic and historical resources capable of forming the basis for a distinctive cultural model rooted in nomadic heritage, intercultural dialogue, and regional identity. However, the transformation of these cultural resources into globally visible and technologically adaptive cultural products requires deeper institutional reforms, diversified funding mechanisms, and stronger integration between culture, media, education, and digital technologies [19; 20].

For Kazakhstan, the most productive path does not lie in copying the Korean model mechanically, but in selectively adapting those institutional and strategic mechanisms that correspond to its own historical experience and cultural specificity. A balanced combination of heritage preservation, creative innovation, and digital transformation may become the foundation for a more sustainable and internationally competitive cultural policy in the future.

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