



## The 2023 League of Legends World Championship (LoL Worlds) As a Strategic Instrument of South Korea's Public Diplomacy

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### Abstrak

Semakin berkembang dan banyaknya perhatian tertuju kepada industri video game mendorong dibentuknya berbagai pergelaran turnamen e-sport (electronic sport) Internasional. Salah satunya turnamen League of Legends World Championship (LoL Worlds) bentukan perusahaan developer game Riot Games yang telah mendapatkan perhatian signifikan sebagai ajang e-sport internasional. Pada tahun 2023, Korea Selatan ditunjuk sebagai negara tuan rumah pada pergelaran turnamen e-sport internasional tersebut. Dengan besarnya perhatian masyarakat internasional pada ajang kompetisi ini tentunya menciptakan peluang bagi negara tuan rumah, yaitu Korea Selatan untuk melaksanakan diplomasi publiknya. Maka dari itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penyelenggaraan turnamen LoL Worlds 2023 sebagai bentuk diplomasi publik Korea Selatan. Penulis menggunakan teori upaya diplomasi publik oleh Nicholas J. Cull beserta lima elemen yang dijelaskan, yaitu listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy, dan international broadcasting dalam mengkaji penelitian ini. Adapun penulis menggunakan tipe penelitian deskriptif dengan metode kualitatif, serta teknik pengumpulan data sekunder berupa studi kepustakaan. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian ini ditemukan bahwa Korea Selatan telah mampu mengimplementasikan ke lima elemen diplomasi publik dari cull dalam penyelenggaraan LoL Worlds 2023 di Korea Selatan.

### Abstract

*The development of the video game industry has led to the establishment of various international e-sport tournaments. One of them is the League of Legends World Championship (LoL Worlds) tournament formed by the game developer company Riot Games which has received significant attention as an international e-sport event. In 2023 South Korea was appointed as the host of the international e-sport tournament. With the great attention of the international community to this competition, it certainly creates opportunities for the host country, South Korea in carrying out its public diplomacy. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the organization of the LoL Worlds 2023 tournament as a form of South Korea public diplomacy. The author uses Nicholas J. Cull's theory of public diplomacy efforts and the five elements described by Cull, namely listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy, and international broadcasting, in examining this research. The author uses descriptive research with qualitative methods and secondary data collection techniques in the form of literature studies. Based on the results of*

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*this study, it was found that South Korea has been able to use Cull's five elements of public diplomacy in organizing LoL Worlds 2023 in South Korea.*

## **Introduction**

The efforts and interactions between state actors in achieving their interests are inseparable from international relations. These national interests can be realized, among other ways, through diplomatic efforts. As a soft power, diplomacy is a strategy where a country can interact and spread its influence to other countries to achieve national interests without involving the military (Utomo & Muhammad, 2025). The implementation of public diplomacy is not limited to economic or military aspects, but also involves means such as film, culture, art, cuisine, or other media as a soft power strategy to gain support from the global community (Cull, 2008).

In the current digital era, the increasing use of the internet has spurred the development of the entertainment industry across various new media platforms. One of them is video games, which are played using audio-visual devices and based on fictional stories (Dharmawan & Roos, 2023). The great interest of the international community and rapid advancements in information technology encouraged this industry to create a video game competition known as e-sports or electronic sports. The first e-sports competition was held in 1972 at Stanford University, called the Intergalactic Spacewar Olympic for the game named Spacewar (Kurniawan, 2019). Although video games were initially considered just a hobby, the e-sports industry has now rapidly developed on the global stage. A statistical data from Zeezoo shows that in 2023, the number of consumers in the e-sports industry worldwide reached 3.381 billion, with a global revenue of US 49.6 billion (Rahayu, 2023). This report shows that the significant global public attention toward e-sports can make this industry a soft power instrument for a country to carry out its public diplomacy to enhance its positive image.

South Korea is one of the countries that uses international e-sports competitions for public diplomacy. In 2023, South Korea had the opportunity to host the prestigious international e-sports tournament, the League of Legends World Championship (LoL Worlds). LoL Worlds itself is the largest annual e-sports competition for the video game League of Legends (LoL), developed by the American video game developer Riot Games. LoL Worlds is one of the largest international e-sports events, with the success of its organization also benefiting the host country. In 2017, China successfully filled the Beijing National Stadium

during the LoL Worlds finals, attracting a total of 80,000 spectators and achieving the highest viewership of 2.1 million viewers (Esports Charts, 2017). Thus, the e-sport event LoL Worlds 2023 can provide South Korea with a significant opportunity to promote itself to the global community through positive impact and international public attention. Therefore, this paper aims to analyze the efforts of South Korea in implementing public diplomacy through the hosting of the international e-sport event LoL Worlds in 2023.

In previous research, there is literature by (Timbuleng & Hanan, 2023) explaining the Korean Wave or K-pop, as an instrument of South Korea's public diplomacy, which subsequently impacts the increasing level of international public trust in South Korea's positive image. Next, (Rakasiwi, 2024) focuses on Qatar's efforts to utilize the 2022 World Cup as a tool for its public diplomacy, thereby encouraging many foreign tourists to visit Qatar. In addition, (Syahrin, 2023) explains China's public diplomacy efforts through the international e-sport tournament Defense of The Ancient 2 (DOTA 2) by introducing its culture, such as musical instruments, dances, cuisine, and characters in the game.

Based on several previous studies, it has been found that public diplomacy efforts utilizing international sports and e-sports competitions as host countries have been employed by countries around the world. Additionally, other countries including South Korea have also employed soft power, such as traditional and popular culture as instruments in their public diplomacy efforts. However, no research has yet examined South Korea's efforts in public diplomacy by utilizing the organization of the 2023 League of Legends World Championship (LoL Worlds) e-sports competition as a form of its soft power. Therefore, the research question found in this research is how South Korea carries out its public diplomacy through the organization of the League of Legends World Championship (LoL Worlds) 2023. The explanation from the background to the research question in this research then emphasizes that the purpose of the study is to understand the public diplomacy strategies employed by South Korea as the host country for the LoL Worlds 2023 to promote and introduce its culture to the international public. Thus, this effort allows South Korea to create a positive image among the international community through the dissemination of its culture.

### **Public Diplomacy Strategy**

The public diplomacy approach by Cull (2008) is used in this study. Nicholas J. Cull defines public diplomacy as a method in the efforts made by global actors toward the citizens of other countries to address issues within the international scope (Cull, 2009). In the literature

titled "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories," Cull also explains the efforts in public diplomacy practice, which are divided into five components: listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy, and international broadcasting. The use of these five public diplomacy efforts can be carried out without a specific order (Cull, 2008).

TABLE 1  
BASIC TAXONOMY OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

| Type of Public Diplomacy      | Sample Activities                              | State in Which This Form of Public Diplomacy Has Been Salient |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| 1. Listening                  | Targeted polling                               | Switzerland   |
| 2. Advocacy                   | Embassy press relations                        | United States   |
| 3. Cultural diplomacy         | State-funded international art tour            | France  |
| 4. Exchange diplomacy         | Two-way academic exchange                      | Japan   |
| 5. International broadcasting | Foreign-language short-wave radio broadcasting | Britain   |

Figure 1. Basic Taxonomy of Public Diplomacy

Source: (Cull, Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories, 2008)

### 1. Listening

Listening is the foundation of all effective public diplomacy efforts. Listening is not just passive hearing but an active process that precedes all other activities so that public diplomacy is responsive and credible. Listening is an effort by actors to manage the international environment by gathering and organizing opinions and data from the society itself. Then, the data will be used to formulate a government policy in broader public diplomacy. In its implementation, state actors are required to engage with and only listen to the global public (Cull, 2008). A systematic assessment is then conducted on this global public opinion to understand the thoughts of the population in order to create a mutual understanding. In the digital era, listening also includes monitoring social media and conducting real-time opinion research so that actors can bridge the gap between policy and global public perception. This step represents the initial foundation for the implementation of effective public diplomacy. A systematic evaluation of international public perception has become a contemporary innovation that serves to understand the viewpoints of people in other countries. This indicates that a country needs to increasingly open up space to listen to global public opinion as an effort to build mutual understanding.



## 2. Advocacy

Advocacy is an effort undertaken by international actors to regulate the international environment through communication activities. This advocacy includes public relations activities conducted by relevant government agencies to expand the dissemination of information. This informational aspect also tends to be flexible and not always oriented toward conveying specific policy objectives, which can lead to ambiguity in the messages received by the international community. The international community conducts these communication activities to promote a policy, idea, or the country's general interests to the international population (Cull, 2008). This element is persuasive in nature and often short-term, encompassing embassy press relations, information campaigns, and specific policy explanations. Advocacy is most effective when supported by credibility, alignment with policy realities, and not appearing merely as propaganda. However, if it is not in line with the facts on the ground, advocacy can actually damage the image of the organization or government involved, leading to a loss of trust among stakeholders and the public. Moreover, advocacy practices can be found in various realms of public diplomacy.

## 3. Cultural Diplomacy

According to Nicholas J. Cull, cultural diplomacy is one of the most important elements in public diplomacy. Historically, cultural diplomacy refers to the policies of state actors that promote their culture to the international public. Cultural diplomacy is an effort by an international actor to manage the international environment by introducing knowledge related to local culture and its achievements to the international community (Cull, 2008). In other words, cultural diplomacy is a state's strategy to "introduce" its culture to foreign societies in order to create better understanding, sympathy, and long-term positive influence. Activities included in it encompass art exhibitions, music and dance performances, language teaching, dissemination of films and literature, as well as cooperation between cultural institutions.

## 4. Exchange Diplomacy

Exchange diplomacy, or diplomacy of exchange, is an effort to manage the international environment of an actor through the exchange of citizens for the purposes of study or acculturation. The existence of the reciprocity element in this public diplomacy serves as a bastion for the concept of "mutualism," which refers to mutually beneficial learning experiences and transformation. This element emphasizes reciprocity and mutuality, thereby creating long-term relationships, attitude transformations, and personal networks among future

generations of leaders. Unlike cultural diplomacy, which is more about "cultural export," exchange diplomacy is interactive and involves an inward-outward flow. Exchange diplomacy is often used for political purposes because it is mutually beneficial, fostering collaboration and understanding between nations while also enhancing their cultural ties. Furthermore, the two-way communication that occurs through the exchange process is also intended to convey a country's culture (Cull, 2008).

### 5. International News Broadcasting

International news broadcasting is an effort by international actors to manage the international environment through the use of information technology, such as the internet, television, and radio, as a means of interacting with the international public (Cull, 2008). State actors can carry out international broadcasting alongside the implementation of other public diplomacy efforts. In this regard, efforts include listening to or researching the audience, advocating for or supporting policies, obtaining policy information, and engaging in diplomacy with broadcasters or other programs. In history, the use of news has become the most successful method of international broadcasting. This effort can be a very effective way to expand an actor's influence in the international environment if the media chosen by the actor is well-curated. Moreover, this effort can be carried out not only by government media but also by commercial media. This is because commercial media also play a role in influencing public opinion and perception about a country, often shaping narratives that can enhance or diminish the country's image on the global stage.

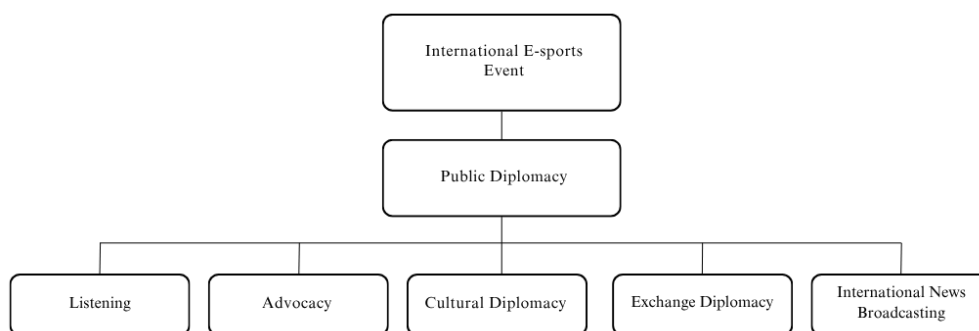


Figure 2. Synthesis

Source: Processed by the author

Based on the synthesis in the above, this is the framework that the author uses to examine this research. The synthesis framework illustrates that a country can utilize the

organization of an international e-sports competition event with many fans around the world as a public diplomacy effort toward the global community. With this framework, the author seeks to examine the five elements of public diplomacy strategy by Cull in the context of South Korea's public diplomacy efforts at the international e-sport event LoL Worlds 2023. These five elements include listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy, and international news broadcasting. Based on the background explanation, problem formulation, and research framework, the author develops the main argument. In this study, the author found that South Korea has successfully implemented its public diplomacy efforts in organizing the LoL Worlds 2023 competition. This public diplomacy was carried out through efforts in managing locations and venues for the event, various official government publications related to LoL Worlds 2023, performances by K-pop musicians at LoL Worlds 2023, cultural festival activities, and the dissemination of information by both local and international media during the event

## **Methods**

The author uses a descriptive research type in examining this study. Descriptive research aims to describe phenomena occurring within a group of individuals in the present. Descriptive research is also a research method used to describe the characteristics of a population or phenomenon factually and systematically without attempting to explain cause-and-effect relationships or test hypotheses (Manjunatha, 2019). Data in this study were collected using secondary data collection techniques, namely document study or literature review. A literature review is a process of systematically collecting data by synthesizing findings from previous research transparently and structurally (Snyder, 2019). Meanwhile, document study is a data collection technique conducted through in-depth analysis of various types of documents, whether written documents, images, artworks, or electronic documents, carried out systematically and objectively and presented in written form.

Qualitative methods are used in data analysis in this research. The qualitative data analysis technique is a systematic process to identify, categorize, and interpret patterns and themes that emerge from non-numerical data, such as interviews, observations, and documents, in order to generate a deep understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Bingham, 2023). Data analysis in this study was also conducted using the theory-driven thematic analysis technique. Where data is categorized and interpreted into main themes based on Cull's public diplomacy framework, to see how LoL Worlds 2023 can represent South Korea's diplomacy

strategy in shaping a positive international image and cross-cultural relations. This research focuses on South Korea's public diplomacy strategy through the hosting of the international e-sports event LoL Worlds 2023. The scope of this research is in the year 2023, during the holding of LoL Worlds 2023 in South Korea. This research method was chosen because it aligns with the need to analyze the research topic within the cultural scope of socio-political phenomena, particularly how public diplomacy can be influenced by international events like LoL Worlds 2023 and their impact on promoting national identity and culture.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Implementation of Listening by South Korea in LoL Worlds 2023**

The listening component of public diplomacy, according to Cull, emphasizes two-way communication in terms of receiving input to improve and adjust approaches in diplomacy (Varadilla et al., 2025). LoL Worlds 2023 successfully implemented this principle by receiving input from the public to adjust the mechanisms of the international e-sport event. The input came from criticism by fan communities on social media and e-sport industry observers, as well as various local media, stating that the organization of major e-sport tournaments has always been in Seoul, South Korea. This criticism stems from the fact that, although the government has made efforts to build special e-sports facilities outside of Seoul, the concentration of e-sports tournaments remains too centralized in the capital. Busan is the first city outside the capital area to receive a dedicated e-sports arena, the Busan Esports Arena (BRENA). Although the government has made efforts to build dedicated e-sports facilities outside the capital to expand the reach of e-sports fans beyond Seoul, the e-sports stadium is more often used for activities apart from e-sports competitions. According to ETnews, data from the Korea Creative Content Agency (KCCA) shows that since starting operations in 2020, the Busan Esports Arena (BRENA) has hosted only 24 e-sports tournaments along with 60 other non-e-sports events (ETnews, 2022). The capacity of BRENA, which can only accommodate 330 seats, presents a major obstacle for the regional e-sport stadium to host large-scale e-sport tournaments.

This criticism then encouraged South Korea and Riot Games to accommodate a wider range of locations for hosting e-sports tournaments. The organization of the LoL Worlds 2023 competition was held in two cities simultaneously, in Seoul and Busan, marking the implementation of the listening element in public diplomacy by Cull at this international event. In its execution, the tournament then involved collaboration with the respective governments

of Seoul and Busan. The Play-In, Swiss, and Final stages were held in Seoul City, while the quarter-finals and semi-finals took place in Busan City. Although the quarterfinals and semifinals were held at the Sajik Indoor Gymnasium instead of BRENA, it shows how South Korea and Riot Games "listen" to and accommodate the aspirations of the local community. However, they also strive to meet public expectations and needs in terms of tournament management, which includes ensuring accessibility, providing adequate facilities, and engaging with fans to enhance their overall experience. Thus, in LoL Worlds 2023, a two-way reciprocal communication has been established between the government and the public, as explained by Cull in the listening component within the context of public diplomacy. The Sajik Indoor Gymnasium venue was chosen for the competition because it is one of the largest multifunctional indoor facilities in South Korea, capable of accommodating around 14,000 spectators.

Therefore, this critical action demonstrates that South Korea has successfully implemented the element of listening in the organization of LoL Worlds 2023, utilizing reciprocal communication as explained by Cull. The reciprocal communication in the LoL Worlds 2023 case study is reflected through public input and the direct implementation by the South Korean government regarding the management of the location and venue where the e-sport tournament was held. This case also directly affirms that in its public diplomacy efforts, South Korea places the element of listening as the main foundation. Thus, international e-sport events are not only viewed as competitions but also serve as a medium for public diplomacy in shaping South Korea's image as a hub of innovation, technology, and global gaming and e-sports.

### **Implementation of Advocacy by South Korea in LoL Worlds 2023**

Cull explains advocacy as the foundation of public diplomacy, where international actors actively engage in communication activities aimed at promoting specific policies, ideas, or public interests to the international community (Cull, 2008). The element of advocacy emphasizes communication, explanation, and the presentation of a country's position, values, or goals to attract global attention (Ephram S et al., 2025). Advocacy can be conducted through various methods, such as press conferences, official speeches, media campaigns, and official publications to shape views and gain international support.



Figure 3. Signing of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Korean Tourism Organization (KTO) and Riot Games for LoL Worlds 2023  
Source: (Korean Tourism Organization (KTO), 2023)

In the momentum of the LoL Worlds 2023 event, South Korea, as the host country, is undertaking advocacy efforts by issuing various official publications to welcome the international e-sport event. Through a press release, the Korean Tourism Organization (KTO) announced a collaboration with Riot Games to promote tourism in order to attract foreign tourists to visit South Korea during the LoL Worlds 2023 tournament (KTO, 2023). This press release was officially issued by the KTO on July 13, 2023. Through this collaboration, Riot Games and the KTO temporarily transformed the Seoul Center HiKR Ground building into a "Worlds Playground" featuring various LoL-themed exhibition facilities. Lee Jae Hwan, the KTO vice president, conveyed a message that with the global popularity of LoL and its involvement in the Hangzhou Asian Games, South Korea hopes for the arrival of international fans and will strive to maximize a pleasant tourism experience in South Korea for fans (KTO, 2023). The official publication regarding the dissemination of information about the LoL Worlds-themed exhibition in the South Korean government building underscores the government's strong advocacy efforts in its public diplomacy. With this, the government is striving to convey its message to the global public to demonstrate South Korea's readiness to host the LoL Worlds 2023, while also attracting foreign tourists to visit South Korea during the tournament.



Figure 4. Seoul Mayor Oh Se-hoon Visits Worlds Fan Fest 2023

Source: (econovill, 2023)

On the other hand, through an official press release, the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) is trying to disseminate information to the foreign public regarding other LoL Worlds-themed activities in the city of Seoul. In welcoming the international e-sports tournament, the SMG collaborated with Riot Games to use Gwanghwamun Square as the location for the "Worlds Fan Fest" festival to celebrate the final tournament. Through the Worlds Fan Fest, the SMG aims to attract international fans to visit South Korea to watch LoL Worlds 2023. In his message, Seoul Mayor Oh Se-hoon stated that Gwanghwamun Square is a historic place where citizens watch and support South Korean teams in sports competitions such as the World Cup and the Olympics. With LoL Worlds 2023, Gwanghwamun Square is expected to become a space that showcases the charm of Seoul to the world (SMG, 2023). This press release proves that the advocacy efforts to disseminate information regarding the government's readiness to welcome the competition are not only carried out by the central government officials. But it was also implemented through the city government where LoL Worlds 2023 is held by organizing a festival themed LoL Worlds 2023 to attract foreign tourists to visit South Korea, especially the city of Seoul.

The two government publications then demonstrate how South Korea successfully applied the advocacy element of Cull's public diplomacy theory, which focuses on promoting a country's interests and values to foreign audiences, to disseminate information and persuade e-sports fans worldwide to visit South Korea to celebrate LoL Worlds 2023. Through advocacy in the form of official publications, South Korea also seeks to build international legitimacy regarding its image as a global center for technology, gaming, and e-sports by showcasing its

readiness to host the tournament. The readiness for this event is realized through the collaboration of the national government with industry actors to showcase South Korea's advanced e-sports ecosystem. Its readiness as the host country for LoL Worlds 2023 is also demonstrated by South Korea through various exhibitions and festivals to celebrate this international tournament. These advocacy efforts not only enhance the national image on the global stage but also boost the tourism sector, investment in the digital industry, and South Korea's public diplomacy through modern gaming culture, by attracting international visitors and fostering global partnerships in the gaming community.

### **Implementation of Cultural Diplomacy by South Korea in LoL Worlds 2023**

Cull explains that in public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy focuses on the efforts made by an actor to manage the international environment by showcasing cultural resources and achievements to the international public (Cull, 2008). The hosting of international e-sports competitions like LoL Worlds 2023 is an international stage that not only highlights the tournament's progress but also serves as a medium for the host country to showcase its national identity through soft power strategies. In this case, South Korea presented the world class Korean Pop (K-pop) idol group New Jeans at the opening ceremony of the final match as a form of cultural diplomacy strategy, as explained by Cull, to showcase its local culture to the global audience.



Figure 5. NewJeans' performance at the Opening Ceremony of the LoL Worlds 2023 Final

Source: (Youtube LoL, 2023)

Through NewJeans' performances, South Korea strives to showcase its modern cultural identity to the global community by using elements of popular culture to create a positive image. NewJeans, as a cultural representative, is also one of South Korea's steps in introducing



national creativity through its art industry, particularly by blending traditional Korean elements with contemporary music styles to appeal to a global audience. In this final peak performance, NewJeans performed the official theme song of the LoL Worlds tournament, titled "GODS" (Zuwei, 2023). This song is inspired by the underdog story of the South Korean LoL e-sports athlete "Deft" or Kim Hyuk-Kyu, highlighting the theme of unwavering struggle to defeat opponents and become a champion (Affatigato, 2023). The meaning of this song shows how the competitive ethos has become ingrained and rooted in South Korea's e-sport culture. This competitive culture has consistently brought its e-sport teams to the top positions in international tournaments, placing South Korea in a hegemonic position in the global e-sport landscape.

As the host of the LoL Worlds 2023, the South Korean government utilizes K-pop popular culture not only as entertainment. But it also serves as an instrument of cultural diplomacy that represents modern South Korean culture to the global public. This aligns with the explanation of the cultural diplomacy aspect in Cull's public diplomacy theory, which emphasizes the state's efforts to showcase its culture to the international public. Meanwhile, in the context of LoL Worlds 2023, South Korea is successfully striving to spread its popular culture through the performance of K-pop star NewJeans to audiences around the world on the tournament's final night. The selection of New Jeans as a world-class K-pop music group aimed to broadly target foreign audiences for cultural promotion. The song "GODS," which narratively tells the story of South Korean e-sport athletes, was chosen to represent the values of struggle in South Korea's e-sport culture to e-sport fans worldwide. Therefore, this aspect shows that LoL Worlds 2023 does not only function as an e-sports tournament and entertainment event. And the South Korean government has successfully used LoL Worlds 2023 as a means of cultural diplomacy to introduce and spread its contemporary cultural identity and values to the global community. This also helps create the image of South Korea as a leader in the global digital creative industry and pop culture, aligning with the efforts of cultural diplomacy explained by Nicolas J. Cull, which is a key aspect of a country's public diplomacy strategy.

### **Implementasi *Exchange Diplomacy* Korea Selatan dalam LoL Worlds 2023**

Exchange diplomacy is an exchange program that involves mutually beneficial interactions between individuals and groups from other countries (Cull, 2008). In this case, the author explains that exchange diplomacy occurs not only through student exchanges in formal

education but also through other forms of interaction. Exchange diplomacy can also be understood as interactions through cultural exchanges conducted by many parties, such as an international event, which facilitate a two-way exchange of various individuals and groups from many countries around the world.



Figure 6. Worlds Fan Fest 2023

Source: (LCK, 2023)

In the implementation of LoL Worlds 2023, the practice of exchange diplomacy elements was based on the creation of cross-cultural interactions between South Korea and the global public. More specifically, the cross-cultural interactions were realized through various events held during the tournament. One of them is the Worlds Fan Fest (November 16-19, 2023) at Gwanghwamun Square, Seoul, which combines music concerts, interactive gaming areas, cultural booths, and viewing parties (Riot Games, 2023). The organization of the festival by Riot Games and the Seoul Metropolitan Government is not only meant to entertain fans but also to serve as a meeting ground for fans from around the world to experience the excitement of the tournament. This allows e-sports fans from various countries to connect and interact directly. This interaction can then create an exchange diplomacy as proposed by Cull in the theory of public diplomacy. The exchange diplomacy occurs thru social and cultural exchange dialogs among international fans related to gaming culture, as well as the local culture of their home countries. The music concert at this festival which features performances by various South Korean and international musicians also help to facilitate the practice of exchange diplomacy at the LoL Worlds 2023 event. These musicians facilitate the exchange diplomacy through world-class performances that bridge South Korean local culture and global culture.

Thus, foreign tourists can become acquainted with to know South Korean popular culture, and conversely, local Koreans can understand international popular culture. The K-pop musicians involved include (G)I-DLE, FT Island, and rapper MUSHVENOM, as well as international musicians Alan Walker and Nick Taylor (Riot Games, 2023). Additionally, the booth from the Seoul City government, which offers visitors the opportunity to try on traditional Korean clothing "hanbok" and play the traditional game "ddakji," also contributes to creating exchange diplomacy for foreign tourists at the festival within the cultural scope (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2023)

With this, the author can analyze that LoL Worlds 2023 has successfully created exchange diplomacy as described by Cull. This approach represents a two-way exchange aimed at effective public diplomacy, which is not limited to formal interactions between state institutions but is also applicable through cultural exchanges between individuals and groups from various countries. This exchange diplomacy is realized by creating cultural exchange facilities, the World Fan Fest, which includes elements of local and global culture for fans from around the world who come to celebrate LoL Worlds 2023 in South Korea. The local culture includes performances of popular and traditional culture in the festival concert and booths. Meanwhile, the global culture encompasses thousands of international visitors who attend the festival for LoL Worlds 2023 and various performances by global musicians. Thus, this festival can create a two-way acculturation space, where foreign fans directly experience the cultural values, creativity, and e-sports culture of South Korean society. Meanwhile, the Korean society, besides being active hosts interacting with international guests, can also get to know international popular culture. Therefore, the World Fan Fest successfully built long-term personal networks among the global youth generation with a total of more than 130,000 visitors (Jang, 2023). This also demonstrates how the South Korean government utilizes e-sports platforms as a modern public diplomacy instrument to create authentic cultural exchanges, strengthen Korea's image as a center of digital cultural innovation, and build sustainable cross-border relationships.

### **Implementasi *International Broadcasting* Korea Selatan dalam LoL Worlds 2023**

In public diplomacy, international broadcasting refers to the use of information technology such as television, radio, and online news in conveying information and messages to the international public (Cull, 2008). In this case, LoL Worlds 2023 also implements efforts

in public diplomacy through international broadcasting regularly and gradually. Starting with the provision of information regarding the selection of South Korea by Riot Game as the host country for LoL Worlds 2023 and the preparations for welcoming the event, up to information about the ongoing organization of the LoL Worlds 2023 event. The provision of this information was carried out through digital media, both on official government websites and international media.

### **Media Digital Lokal Korea Selatan**

In an effort to disseminate information related to the international e-sport event League of Legends World Championship 2023 for both domestic and international audiences, South Korea is using official digital media as an instrument. In this digital era, the use of online media is the most appropriate method for information dissemination employed by the South Korean government. This way, the dissemination of information regarding the organization of the international e-sport competition LoL Worlds 2023 held in South Korea can target both local and international audiences. South Korea utilizes the official websites of the local governments of Seoul and Busan to provide information. This approach is intended so that the information provided can reach the public accurately and more broadly. The Seoul City government website at [seoul.go.kr](http://seoul.go.kr) provides information regarding the organization of LoL Worlds 2023, which was held in Seoul. Meanwhile, the official website of the Busan City government at [busan.go.kr](http://busan.go.kr) also presents information about organizing LoL Worlds 2023, which also was took place in Busan. Both official city government websites provide various information related to the implementation of the international competition LoL Worlds 2023, including the schedule, location, and information about various events and activities organized to welcome this international tournament.

By using the official government website as a medium for disseminating information related to LoL Worlds 2023, it can be shown that the South Korean government has successfully implemented the component of international news broadcasting in its public diplomacy efforts. Through this massive dissemination of information, the South Korean government is not only implementing the international news broadcasting aspect of public diplomacy by spreading news about the event. But also effectively building the country's positive image as a center of digital cultural innovation, a leader in the e-sports industry, and a modern tourist destination friendly to the global youth. This strategy strengthens South Korea's

soft power by delivering a public diplomacy narrative that enhances the country's positive image through the hosting of the international e-sports competition LoL Worlds 2023..

### **Media Digital Internasional**

As one of the e-sports competitions with the greatest enthusiasm in the world. The dissemination of information related to LoL Worlds 2023 is not only done thru local media but also through international digital platforms. LoL Worlds is an e-sport competition with fans spread all over the world, so the use of digital media is the right choice for providing information that can reach a global audience due to its fast and wide dissemination. In addition, this digital media can also serve as a means of spreading a positive image of South Korea by hosting the international e-sports competition LoL Worlds 2023 for the international audience. As the initiator of the LoL Worlds e-sport competition, Riot Games also helps South Korea succeed in hosting this international e-sports competition. This is done by Riot Games participating in promoting LoL Worlds 2023 in South Korea through news articles on its official website. The dissemination of information is carried out through the official e-sports website of the game League of Legends (LoL), namely lolesports.com.

Furthermore, the provision of information related to LoL Worlds 2023 is also carried out through various official League of Legends social media platforms, including Instagram, X, TikTok, and YouTube. Through social media, the dissemination of information related to this international event targets young audiences worldwide by presenting various visual content, promotions, and documentation related to the organization of the competition. On the other hand, social media also serves as a platform where fans can show their enthusiasm by leaving comments on every post related to LoL Worlds 2023. The enthusiasm of the fans is also manifested by the many local and foreign tourists who visit the cities of Seoul and Busan in South Korea for LoL Worlds 2023 and mention the official LoL account in their posts. Therefore, it can be concluded that the practice of international news broadcasting for public diplomacy during LoL Worlds 2023 has been carried out by disseminating information about tournament activities to the international audience through various official local media of the South Korean government, as well as through social media and international media outlets of Riot Games, the developer company of the League of Legends game.

### **Conclusion**

LoL Worlds 2023 is an international e-sports competition event organized by Riot Games and held in South Korea. The LoL Worlds 2023 competition serves as a momentum for

South Korea as the host country to carry out its public diplomacy efforts, utilizing the international e-sports competition to enhance its international image. South Korea conducts its public diplomacy efforts in LoL Worlds 2023 through listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy, and international broadcasting. The listening effort is implemented through reciprocal communication between the public and the government about the management of the locations and venues for LoL Worlds 2023, which are held in the cities of Seoul and Busan. The advocacy effort is reflected in the delivery of messages regarding the South Korean government's readiness to host the festival in the form of official government publications. Then, the exchange diplomacy efforts were implemented by South Korea through the performance of the K-pop group NewJeans at the peak event of LoL Worlds 2023 as a form of spreading South Korean popular culture.

On the other hand, exchange diplomacy aspects are implemented by the World Fan Fest event to celebrate LoL Worlds 2023, which facilitates social and cultural exchanges among e-sports fans on a global scale. Meanwhile, South Korea's efforts in international broadcasting were carried out by using the official government digital media, Riot Games, and social media to present a positive image and disseminate information related to the LoL Worlds 2023. Therefore, it can be concluded that this international e-sports event has been successfully utilized by the South Korean government as a means of public diplomacy to create a positive image of South Korea as a global center of technology and e-sports. Additionally, the LoL Worlds 2023 also serves to promote South Korea's image as a cultured nation, while remaining open to modernization reflected in its popular cultural products. This international e-sports competition has become a communication space between South Korea and the global public, making LoL Worlds 2023 an effective tool for public diplomacy for South Korea.

From the research conducted, the limitation found by the author is the minimal availability of data due to the secondary source format of the data sources in the study. As a result, the author could only obtain data from digital media, social media, and publications from the official Riot Games website and the South Korean government. Therefore, the suggestion for future research is to conduct the study with more comprehensive and accurate sources through primary sources, including direct interviews with the South Korean government as the host country, as well as Riot Games as the developer of the League of Legends game in the international e-sport tournament LoL Worlds 2023.

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