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INDONESIA'S SOFT POWER IN TURKEY THROUGH DANCE ARTS: EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN BILATERAL RELATIONS (2021-2025)

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze Indonesia's cultural diplomacy strategy through traditional dance in strengthening bilateral relations with Türkiye during the 2021–2025 period. The research employs a qualitative descriptive approach using secondary data collected from academic literature, official government documents, journal articles and other relevant publications. The analysis is grounded in Joseph Nye's Soft Power theory and the Multi-Track Diplomacy framework developed by Louise Diamond and John W. McDonald to examine the contributions of both state and non-state actors in Indonesia's cultural diplomacy. The findings demonstrate that traditional dance functions as an effective instrument of soft power by enhancing Indonesia's national image, fostering mutual understanding and strengthening diplomatic, economic, educational and socio-cultural cooperation between Indonesia and Türkiye. Cultural activities organized by the Indonesian Embassy, the Indonesian diaspora, universities, cultural communities and media platforms created sustainable people-to-people engagement and broadened Indonesia's cultural presence in Türkiye. The synergy among government institutions, business actors, educational institutions, diaspora communities and the media significantly contributed to the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy. This study concludes that traditional dance has become a strategic component of Indonesia's foreign policy and recommends strengthening multi-stakeholder collaboration to further enhance bilateral relations with Türkiye through cultural diplomacy.

Keywords: Cultural Diplomacy; Traditional Dance; Soft Power; Bilateral Relations; Multi-Track Diplomacy.

INTRODUCTION

The development of international relations in the era of globalization has transformed diplomatic practice beyond its traditional orientation toward political, military and economic interests. Today's diplomacy increasingly emphasizes the creation of long-term relationships through cooperation, public engagement and mutual understanding among societies. Due to this, cultural diplomacy has emerged as an important instrument of foreign policy because it enables states to promote their national interests through cultural exchange rather than coercive measures. As argued by Cummings (2003), cultural diplomacy encompasses the exchange of ideas, values, traditions and artistic expressions intended to foster mutual understanding between nations, while digitalization and globalization have further expanded the role of diplomacy beyond formal state institutions (Bjola & Holmes, 2015).

If seen from the angle of Soft Power, cultural diplomacy represents one of the principal sources through which states can influence international audiences by generating attraction, credibility and legitimacy rather than relying upon military or economic pressure (Nye, 2004). Within this understanding, cultural diplomacy is seen not only as cultural promotion but as a strategic instrument capable of projecting a positive national image, strengthening international trust and supporting broader foreign policy objectives. This perspective is consistent with Indonesia's *Bebas dan Aktif* foreign policy doctrine, which encourages constructive international engagement while maintaining strategic independence.

Indonesia possesses extensive cultural resources that support this diplomatic approach, particularly its rich tradition dance arts. Traditional dances embody Indonesia's cultural diversity, historical experiences and philosophical values while simultaneously representing a distinctive element of national identity. International recognition of several Indonesian cultural traditions through UNESCO has further enhanced Indonesia's cultural credibility in international forums, providing additional legitimacy for employing traditional arts as instruments of diplomacy. Such cultural assets are especially relevant within the Indonesian–Turkish context because both countries place considerable importance on preserving cultural heritage as part of their national identity as evident in their 500-year-old history dating back to the Ottoman Empire (Ali Murat, 2021).

The period from 2021 to 2025 represents a particularly important phase in Indonesia–Türkiye bilateral relations. During this period, cultural diplomacy became increasingly institutionalized alongside broader developments in bilateral cooperation. Government-led initiatives were complemented by diaspora activities and university-based cultural programs, reflecting the growing involvement of non-state actors in diplomatic practice.

At the same time, bilateral relations reached an important milestone through the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of diplomatic relations and the establishment of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSC), illustrating the broader strategic partnership within which cultural diplomacy was implemented (KBRI Anakara, 2025). Against this background, this study seeks to answer the following research question: How did Indonesia's cultural diplomacy strategy through traditional dance contribute to strengthening bilateral relations with Türkiye during the period 2021–2025?

This article argues that traditional dance functioned as an effective instrument of Indonesian soft power by enhancing the country's cultural visibility, fostering sustainable people-to-people engagement and supporting the development of Indonesia–Türkiye bilateral relations. Furthermore, the effectiveness of this diplomatic strategy resulted not only from government initiatives but also from the complementary roles played by diplomatic missions, diaspora communities, student organizations, cultural institutions, media and other non-state actors. Their collaborative engagement transformed traditional dance from a cultural performance into a practical instrument of Indonesia's foreign policy during the period under study.

LITERATUR REVIEW

Studies on Indonesia's cultural diplomacy has increasingly highlighted the role of digital media as an instrument of public diplomacy. Afriyanti, Dermawan and Sari (2024) arguedd that Indonesia has utilized the YouTube platform *Endonezya Evi* to introduce Indonesian culture, language and tourism to Turkish audiences as part of its public diplomacy strategy. Their study demonstrates that digital platforms enable governments to disseminate cultural narratives efficiently while fostering two-way communication with foreign publics. Drawing upon the concept of public diplomacy,

the authors contend that digital media has become an effective alternative to conventional diplomatic institutions due to its relatively low cost and broad audience reach.

Although the study successfully illustrates how digital communication contributes to Indonesia–Türkiye relations, it primarily focuses on online media as the vehicle of diplomacy and pays limited attention to cultural performances and other actors as an independent source of diplomatic influence (Afriyanti, Dermawan, & Sari, 2024). The significance of cultural festivals as diplomatic instruments was further explored by Lativa (2024), who examined Indonesia's cultural diplomacy through the *Rhapsody of the Archipelago* festival. The study explained that festivals functioned as platforms for showcasing Indonesian identity by integrating traditional dances, music, exhibitions and conferences into a single diplomatic event. Employing a qualitative approach, the research concludes that cultural festivals enhance Indonesia's international image and strengthen mutual understanding among participating countries by promoting national heritage through peaceful cultural interaction.

Nevertheless, because the analysis concentrates on one international festival, it provides limited discussion regarding how cultural diplomacy contributes to long-term bilateral relations or how different diplomatic actors coordinate cultural activities beyond a single event (Lativa, 2024). The use of traditional performing arts as instruments of cultural diplomacy was also examined by Fattah and Dina (2025) through their analysis of the participation of Reak Juarta Putra in the Roskilde Festival in Denmark.

Their research demonstrated that traditional performances serve not only as cultural exhibitions but also as diplomatic resources capable of strengthening Indonesia's cultural identity in the international arena. The authors argued that preserving traditional arts through international festivals contributes to the projection of Indonesia's soft power by creating positive perceptions among foreign audiences. While the study effectively illustrates the diplomatic value of traditional performances, its analysis remains limited to a single cultural group and a specific festival, without considering broader diplomatic networks or institutional collaboration, especially amongst governmental and non-governmental actors (Fattah & Dina, 2025).

Another important perspective was presented by Zalikha (2026), who investigated Indonesia's cultural diplomacy in Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study argued that the pandemic transformed cultural diplomacy from predominantly face-to-face interaction into digital engagement through virtual cultural events and online collaboration. According to the author, this digital adaptation enabled Indonesia to maintain cultural exchanges despite global mobility restrictions while simultaneously expanding audience participation beyond geographical boundaries. The research further concludes that cultural diplomacy remained an effective form of soft power capable of sustaining bilateral relations during periods of international crisis.

However, the study primarily examines diplomatic adaptation under extraordinary circumstances and therefore provides limited explanation regarding the implementation of cultural diplomacy under normal diplomatic conditions or within the context of Indonesia–Türkiye relations (Zalikha, 2026).

Finally, Nabila (2024) broadens the discussion of Indonesia's external engagement by analysing public diplomacy through the co-branding strategy of *Wonderful Indonesia* in Australia. The study demonstrates that collaboration between government institutions and private-sector partners such as Traveloka and Sendok Garpu enhances Indonesia's international image by promoting tourism through branding and marketing strategies. The findings indicate that soft power can be generated not only through cultural performances but also through strategic communication and partnerships with non-state actors.

Although the study contributes to understanding the role of collaboration in diplomacy, its primary emphasis is public diplomacy and tourism promotion rather than cultural diplomacy through traditional performing arts. Collectively, these previous studies confirm the importance of culture as a diplomatic resource but reveal a gap concerning how traditional dance functions as an instrument of Indonesia's cultural diplomacy toward Türkiye through the interaction of both state and non-state actors. This gap provides the analytical foundation for the present study, which integrates the concepts of Soft Power and Multi-Track Diplomacy to examine Indonesia's cultural diplomacy strategy in Türkiye during 2021–2025 (Nabila, 2024).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Multi-Track Diplomacy (MTD) framework, developed by Louise Diamond and John W. McDonald (1996), argues that diplomacy is not conducted solely by governments. Instead, achieving sustainable peace and international cooperation requires the participation of multiple actors across society. The framework expands the traditional concept of diplomacy beyond official negotiations (Track 1) to include businesses, academics, civil society, religious organizations, the media, donors, and ordinary citizens. Each of the nine tracks contributes unique resources, expertise and influence, and together they form an interconnected system for conflict resolution and peacebuilding as seen in Table 1. below:

Tabel 1. Multitrack Diplomacy framework.

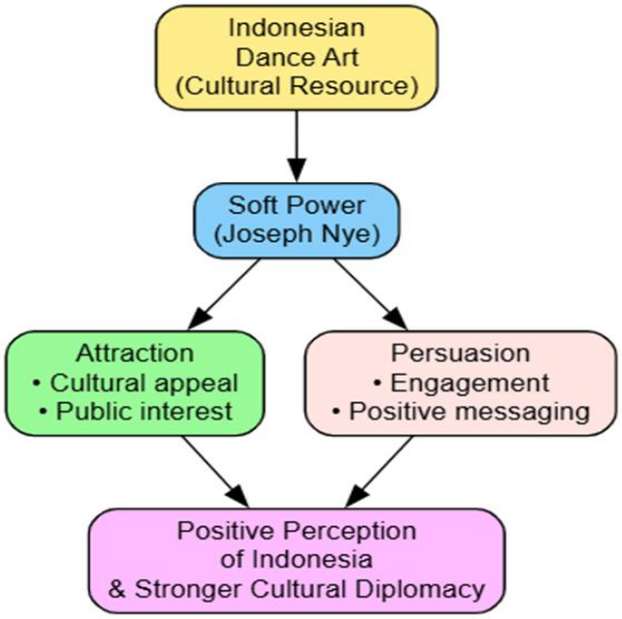
Track	Name	Actors	Function
1	Government	National governments, ministries of foreign affairs, diplomats, heads of state	Official diplomacy and policymaking
2	Nongovernment / Professional	NGOs, conflict resolution specialists, mediators, think tanks	Professional conflict resolution outside formal government channels
3	Business	Private companies, chambers of commerce, investors, multinational corporations	Promote peace through economic cooperation and commerce
4	Private Citizen	Individuals, community leaders, diaspora	Build trust through personal relationships and citizen engagement
5	Research, Training and Education	Universities, research institutes, educators, trainers	Generate knowledge and develop peacebuilding skills
6	Activism	Advocacy groups, civil society organizations, human rights organizations	Promote social justice and policy change through advocacy

Track	Name	Actors	Function
7	Religion	Religious leaders, faith-based organizations, interfaith councils	Encourage reconciliation through shared moral and spiritual values
8	Funding	Philanthropic foundations, donors, development agencies, charitable organizations	Provide financial resources for peacebuilding activities
9	Communications and the Media	Journalists, broadcasters, publishers, social media, communication professionals	Shape public opinion and disseminate information

Source: Diamond & McDonalds (1996)

On the other hand, the Soft Power concept introduced by Joseph S. Nye Jr. in 1990 in his book "*Bound to Lead"*, defines soft power as the ability of a country to achieve its objectives through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion (military force) or payment (economic incentives). Instead of forcing other states to comply, soft power shapes the preferences and behavior of others by making them admire or willingly support a country's values, culture, institutions and policies. The central mechanisms of soft power are attraction and persuasion. Attraction occurs when a country's culture, values, or institutions inspire admiration, encouraging other states or societies to voluntarily emulate or cooperate with it. For instance, many international students choose to study in the United States because of the reputation of its universities, while the global popularity of South Korean entertainment has increased the country's international influence. Persuasion involves convincing others that a country's preferences or policies are desirable through diplomacy, communication, public engagement, and credibility rather than threats or financial inducements.

Figure 1. Conceptual aspects of Soft Power. Source: Authors



Source: Authors

Governments employ public diplomacy, cultural exchanges, educational scholarships, international broadcasting, and development cooperation to shape perceptions and build support for their foreign policy objectives (see Figure 1 above). Unlike hard power, which relies on military force or economic sanctions, soft power works because other actors choose to cooperate. In practice, states often combine both approaches into what Nye later described as smart power, using attraction alongside coercive or economic instruments when appropriate.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design using a literature review approach to examine Indonesia's cultural diplomacy strategy in strengthening bilateral relations with Türkiye through traditional dance during the 2021–2025 period. Qualitative research is appropriate because the study seeks to understand diplomatic practices, cultural interactions and the roles of multiple actors through interpretative analysis rather than statistical measurement. The literature review approach enables the researcher to synthesize and critically analyse existing scholarly works, official government publications, policy documents, diplomatic reports and media publications relevant to Indonesia's cultural diplomacy (Susanto et al., 2024). The study also

employs the theoretical frameworks of Soft Power developed by Joseph Nye (1990) and Multitrack Diplomacy by Diamond and McDonald (1996).

This approach is particularly suitable for examining cultural diplomacy as a multidimensional phenomenon involving both state and non-state actors. The data was analysed using a descriptive analytical approach. The secondary data gathered were systematically reviewed, categorized into tracks using the Multitrack Diplomacy framework by and interpreted according to the analytical aspects of Soft Power being attraction and persuasion. Analysis was conducted by identifying patterns of Indonesia's cultural diplomacy activities through the implementation of Soft Power via traditional dances as well as analysing the interaction between governmental and non-governmental actors based on the multi-track approach (Susanto et al., 2024). The findings were then interpreted to explain how traditional dance contributes to enhancing Indonesia's bilateral relations with Türkiye during the period of 2021–2025.

RESULTS

The Role of Traditional Indonesian Dance as a Soft Power Instrument in Turkey: Cultural Attraction and Cultural Legitimacy

Indonesia's traditional dance emerged as a progressively effective instrument of soft power in Türkiye due to its ability generate cultural attraction and cultural legitimacy through sustained public engagement and institutional collaboration. Traditional dance became an avenue through which Turkish audiences experienced Indonesian identity directly in diplomatic receptions, public festivals, university programmes and community-based cultural exchanges. The findings demonstrated a clear expansion in the scale, diversity and sophistication of these initiatives throughout the study period. Beginning with the Indonesian Night *(Swara Bhinneka)* diplomatic reception in Ankara in 2021, Indonesian cultural diplomacy primarily targeted diplomatic elites through performances involving the Indonesian Embassy, Turkish cultural organization Aksat Sanat and members of the Indonesian Student Association (PPI). Although relatively limited in public reach, the event conveyed symbolic meaning for cultural diplomacy initiatives.

During, the event, the Indonesian Ambassador, Lalu Muhammad Iqbal in his speech acknowledged the 500-year-old historical engagement of between the two

countries in through the Ottoman Empire and their engagement with the Sultan of Aceh (Ali Murat Alhas, 2021). In this case, am attempt at persuasion can be observed in His Excellency's speech aimed towards the Indonesian delegation and participants gathered at the Ambassador's residence. By attracting the attention of the Turkish dignitaries through the combined performances of PPI and Aksat Sanat paired with the awarding of the Turkish participants by the Indonesian Embassy in Ankara, Indonesia is positioned to attract and build a positive image through people-to-people engagement, in turn convincing Ankara to likely increase its engagement with Jakarta (Nye. J.S., 1990).

Further observation indicate that Indonesian cultural attraction strengthened considerably in the following years. most significantly being the implementation of Pasar Senggol Türkiye in 2022 and 2023, which saw the integration of traditional dances with culinary exhibitions, regional cultural displays and Indonesian MSME promotion. The 2022 festival attracted approximately 3,000–3,500 visitors, consisting of around 70% Indonesian diaspora and 30% Turkish citizens, academics, tourists and other international visitors, while involving 73 exhibitors, including 41 diaspora businesses, 24 Indonesian MSMEs and eight state-supported institutional booths.

Beyond cultural exposure, the event generated direct commercial transactions exceeding IDR 500 million, indicating that cultural attraction translated into measurable public participation and economic engagement. Rather than reducing dance to entertainment, these figures demonstrate that traditional performances functioned as entry points through which audiences became interested in broader aspects of Indonesian society, products and regional identities. The participation of Gelar Gian Crismeril in introducing Ken Kadiri, a traditional costume from Kediri, further expanded Turkish audiences' understanding of Indonesian diversity beyond internationally recognized cultural symbols such as Bali or Java.

Such findings reinforce previous studies arguing that cultural diplomacy becomes more persuasive when audiences experience culture through multiple sensory and social interactions rather than passive observation (Ang et al., 2015; Cull, 2008; Nye, 2004). The attraction generated through Indonesian dance subsequently evolved into cultural legitimacy, reflected by increasing institutional participation and repeated collaboration with Turkish partners. Aside from attraction, which is often indicated by

audience attendance, legitimacy can be observed through the willingness of foreign institutions and communities to repeatedly engage with Indonesian cultural initiatives. This pattern became increasingly visible throughout the study period (see Table.2 below). The 2023 edition of Pasar Senggol expanded its international reach by attracting more than 3,200 visitors, with participants originating not only from Türkiye but also from Malaysia, Thailand, Russia, Arab countries and African countries, while hosting 58 operational booths, including over 40 diaspora culinary tenants and products from more than 70 government-assisted Indonesian MSMEs (Adit, 2023).

Likewise, Endonezya Kültür Sahnesi (EKUSI) in Konya attracted more than 300 Turkish and international participants, introducing traditional dances such as Saman, Zapin and Sajojo, alongside demonstrations of Pencak Silat and the collaborative Batik × Ebru workshop. Rather than merely showcasing Indonesian culture, the Batik–Ebru programme enabled Turkish participants to co-create artistic works by integrating Indonesian batik techniques with the traditional Turkish art of paper marbling. This collaborative process transformed audiences from observers into active participants, thereby strengthening intercultural trust and reinforcing Indonesia's cultural legitimacy through reciprocal engagement instead of one-way cultural promotion. Such collaborative cultural production reflects what Melissen (2005) describes as contemporary public diplomacy, in which dialogue and participation generate stronger international relationships than unilateral cultural projection.

The maturation of Indonesia's cultural legitimacy became even more evident during Muhteşem Endonezya 2025, which represented the culmination of Indonesia's cultural diplomacy during the observation period. Organised at Sakarya University to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Indonesia–Türkiye diplomatic relations, the programme attracted more than 500 participants, while involving over 90 Indonesian students serving as performers, musicians, production staff and cultural ambassadors after nearly two years of preparation. The programme combined five regional dances, Pencak Silat, Batik × Ebru collaboration, theatrical storytelling and a mass Angklung performance in which hundreds of audience members participated directly.

These findings suggest that Indonesian dance had evolved beyond symbolic representation into immersive intercultural experiences capable of fostering emotional attachment and voluntary participation. Importantly, the repeated involvement of

Turkish universities, cultural organisations, diplomatic representatives and local communities indicates that Indonesian cultural diplomacy had acquired institutional credibility rather than depending solely on embassy-led initiatives. As Nye (2008) argues, soft power becomes sustainable when attraction develops into long-term credibility.

Tabel 2. Annual case data expressed according to Soft Power aspects.

Case	Attraction	Persuasion
Indonesian Night 2021	Dance performances, diplomatic audiences, cultural recognition	Ambassador Iqbal's Speech
Market Senggol 2022	3,500 visitors, 73 exhibitors, sales of IDR 500 million	Organizer/Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia
Market Senggol 2023	3,200 visitors, international audience, 70+ MSME	Foundation/Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia
Ekusi 2024	300+ participants, Batik x Ebru, dance performance	Statement by Arin Yufa Irtag
Muhteşem Endonezya 2025	500+ spectators, 90 players, Angklung participation	Ambassador Reisyaff's statement

Source: Authors

Combined, these activities demonstrate that Indonesian traditional dance indeed carried forth Indonesia's successful attempts at utilizing its soft power, particularly through the use of traditional dance arts. Due to this, a gradual transformation from cultural attraction to cultural legitimacy can be observed as Turkish societies tend to not only recognize the unique of Indonesian culture but also become somewhat susceptible to it. Audience growth, from diplomatic receptions in 2021 to public festivals attracting 3,000–3,500 visitors, educational programmes involving 300 participants and large-scale university festivals engaging over 500 participants—illustrates an expanding capacity to attract increasingly diverse audiences (Konsulat Jenderal Republik Indonesia di Istanbul, 2023).

However, the effectiveness of Indonesian dance diplomacy cannot be explained solely by attendance figures. Equally significant was the repeated participation of

Turkish universities, cultural organisations, diaspora networks, students and community groups that continuously reproduced and disseminated Indonesian cultural narratives across multiple settings. This means that Indonesia's soft power in Türkiye was not generated simply because traditional dance was culturally attractive, but because repeated interaction transformed artistic performances into legitimate platforms for intercultural dialogue, institutional cooperation and people-to-people engagement.

Multi-Track Diplomacy in Promoting Indonesian Traditional Dance in Turkey: Actors, Strategies and Interactions

The empirical data indicated that Indonesia's cultural diplomacy in Türkiye between 2021 and 2025 was not implemented solely through formal state diplomacy but rather through the coordinated involvement of multiple governmental and non-governmental actors (see Table 3. below). Using the Multi-Track Diplomacy framework developed by Diamond and McDonald (1996), this study demonstrates that the promotion of Indonesian traditional dance evolved into a collaborative diplomatic practice involving five principal tracks: government, education, diaspora, media and business out of the nine (9) tracks. Rather than operating independently, these actors fulfilled complementary functions that collectively expanded Indonesia's cultural presence within Turkish society.

These collaborative efforts reveal a gradual transformation, whereby cultural diplomacy shifted from the usual government-centred ceremonial diplomacy in 2021 toward a more decentralized network characterized by sustained participation from universities, diaspora organizations, businesses and communication platforms by 2025. Indeed, such an evolution supports Diamond and McDonald's (1996) proposition that contemporary diplomacy increasingly depends upon cooperation among multiple societal actors rather than relying exclusively on intergovernmental relations. The government (track 1) provided the institutional legitimacy that enabled Indonesia's cultural diplomacy to develop beyond symbolic representation. During the Indonesian Night (Swara Bhinneka) diplomatic reception in 2021, the Indonesian Embassy in Ankara employed traditional dance as a formal diplomatic instrument aimed primarily at government officials, diplomats, academics and invited Turkish guests (Ali Murat

Alhas, 2021). Beyond organizing ceremonial performances, the Embassy also initiated dance training programmes for Turkish citizens under Indonesian choreographer Agung Gunawan, resulting in the establishment of the Turkish dance group Armonia and performances at symbolic locations such as Anıtkabir and Cappadocia.

As Indonesian cultural diplomacy expanded geographically through cultural programmes in Trabzon and Rize, the government's role increasingly shifted from direct implementation toward coordination, enabling universities, student organizations and diaspora communities to assume operational responsibilities. Such an approach refines existing public diplomacy scholarship by suggesting that governmental institutions contribute most effectively when they create enabling environments for non-state participation rather than monopolizing cultural diplomacy (Cull, 2008; Melissen, 2005). Significantly, education (track 5) emerged as the principal operational actor responsible for sustaining Indonesian dance diplomacy throughout the observation period. The Indonesian Student Association (PPI Türkiye), representing approximately 5,000 Indonesian students across 22 regional branches, transformed universities into platforms for public diplomacy.

This role became increasingly evident during Pasar Senggol Türkiye 2023, Endonezya Kültür Sahnesi (EKUSI) 2024 and Muhteşem Endonezya 2025, where students were responsible not only for artistic performances but also for programme management, intercultural communication and logistical coordination. EKUSI attracted more than 300 Turkish and international participants, while Muhteşem Endonezya mobilized over 90 Indonesian students after nearly two years of preparation to organize performances attended by more than 500 participants, including diplomats and university leaders. These reinforces previous studies emphasizing universities as increasingly important actors within contemporary public diplomacy because they facilitate long-term interpersonal relationships that extend beyond formal diplomatic interactions (Wilson, 2008).

Equally significant was the contribution of the Indoesian diaspora (track 4), which functioned as the bridge connecting formal diplomatic institutions with Turkish society. Aside from state actors, diaspora communities have the ability to maintain the continuity of Indonesian cultural engagement between both contemporary societies. Members of Indonesian communities, including entrepreneurs, artists, volunteers,

professionals and mixed-nationality families actively participated in organizing Pasar Senggol, EKUSI and Muhteşem Endonezya through voluntary cultural performances, exhibition management, visitor engagement and intercultural interpretation. The formalization of diaspora during Pasar Senggol 2023, involving PPI Türkiye, Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI), marked a significant level of engagement that also indicated the long-term potential of this particular track in maintaining and sustaining the cultural legitimacy (Ho & McConnell, 2019).

Table 3. Actor contribution in activities and festivals per year

Year	Government	Bussiness	Diaspora	Education	Media	Bilateral Contributions
2021	Diplomatic legitimacy through embassy-led cultural initiatives.	No meaningful engagement	Limited support participation in cultural presentations	No structured roles	Minimal external dissemination, mainly no structured role of internal diplomatic visibility	Strengthening elite-level diplomatic goodwill through official cultural representation
2022	Enabling the participation of Indonesian cultural actors and MSMEs in public cultural diplomacy	Introducing exposure to MSME-based cultural trade (food, handicrafts, cultural	Acting as the main organizer and executor of cultural event and	Supporting the implementation of events through student participatio	Increasing public visibility of Indonesian culture in	Strengthening relations between Indonesian people in Turkey

		goods) to Turkish audiences	staging operations	n in logistics and performanc es	Turkey through exposure	
2023	Supporting the internationaliz ation of MSMEs through a structured economic-cultural diplomacy mechanism	Expanding the representati on of Indonesian products, strengthenin g commercial -cultural familiarity	Governan ce of events institution alized through formal diaspora organizati ons and foundation s	Strengtheni ng structured student diplomacy through the involvemen t of PPI Turkey	Expand internati onal visibility through a larger and more diverse audience reach	Strengtheni ng institutional ized cultural-economic engagement and repeated bilateral ninteractios
2024	Minimal operational roles, limited to a symbolic diplomatic presence	Limited contribution s	Expanding Indonesia' s cultural presence to the Anatolia region	Strong contribution through intercultural workshops	Local visibility through outreach and niche audience s	Strengtheni ng geographica l diffusion and education-culture of Indonesia
2025	Providing symbolic support through ambassadors' participation in	No significant structural role	Serves as a core production force for cultural narrative	Providing institutional retainercies through cultural	High visibility through large-scale cultural	Strengtheni ng the symbolic, emotional, and institutional

large-scale cultural performances	performances	diplomacy platforms	performances and audience amplification	recognition of Indonesian culture

Source: Authors

The business (track 3) and media (track 9) were observed as complementary actors that substantially broadened the reach and impact of Indonesian dance diplomacy. Business actors integrated traditional dance with Indonesian culinary products, handicrafts, batik and MSME exhibitions, thereby transforming cultural festivals into multidimensional platforms combining diplomacy, tourism promotion and economic cooperation. During Pasar Senggol Türkiye 2022, the participation of 73 exhibitors, including 41 diaspora businesses, 24 Indonesian MSMEs and eight state-supported institutional booths, generated direct transactions exceeding IDR 500 million, demonstrating that cultural diplomacy simultaneously created cultural and commercial engagement.

This integration was observed again in 2023 through 58 exhibition booths, including more than 40 diaspora culinary tenants and products representing over 70 government-assisted MSMEs, supported by major Indonesian state-owned enterprises such as Pertamina, Bank Syariah Indonesia, PLN, MIND ID, Jamkrindo and Askrindo. Meanwhile, the media track amplified these initiatives through digital reporting, particularly through social media further extending Indonesia's cultural visibility beyond physical audiences. As Diamond and McDonald (1996) suggest, the effectiveness of multi-track diplomacy depends not on the dominance of individual actors but on the interaction among complementary tracks that collectively reinforce diplomatic objectives. In this case being Indonesia’s soft power efforts.

Synergistic Effect of Multi-Track Diplomacy in Enhancing Indonesia's Cultural Soft Power through Traditional Dance in Türkiye

While Diamond and McDonald (1996) conceptualize Multi-Track Diplomacy as a system in which diverse societal actors collectively contribute to peacebuilding and

international engagement, the present findings suggest that such collaboration also serves as the operational mechanism through which cultural soft power is generated. The five tracks formed an integrated ecosystem in which the effectiveness of each actor depended increasingly on the participation of the others. Evidently, Indonesia's cultural diplomacy derived its influence not solely from the attractiveness of traditional dance itself but from the cumulative interaction among institutions, communities, and communication networks that consistently reproduced Indonesian cultural narratives within Turkish society indicating that contemporary soft power increasingly depends on networks of governmental and non-governmental actors that co-produce a national image instead of relying exclusively on state institutions (Pamment, 2016; Zaharna, 2020; Surowiec & Long, 2020).

This collaborative system operated through a sequential process in which each diplomatic track fulfilled a distinct yet mutually reinforcing role. Government institutions established diplomatic legitimacy by facilitating official partnerships and providing access, thereby creating opportunities for educational institutions, diaspora communities and civil society actors to sustain cultural engagement beyond formal diplomatic events. Educational institutions transformed these opportunities into continuous intercultural exchange by exposing Turkish students and academics to Indonesian traditions through repeated participation rather than one-off ceremonial performances. Diaspora communities further extended these relationships into everyday social settings, where interpersonal interaction enhanced the authenticity and credibility of Indonesia's projected national image.

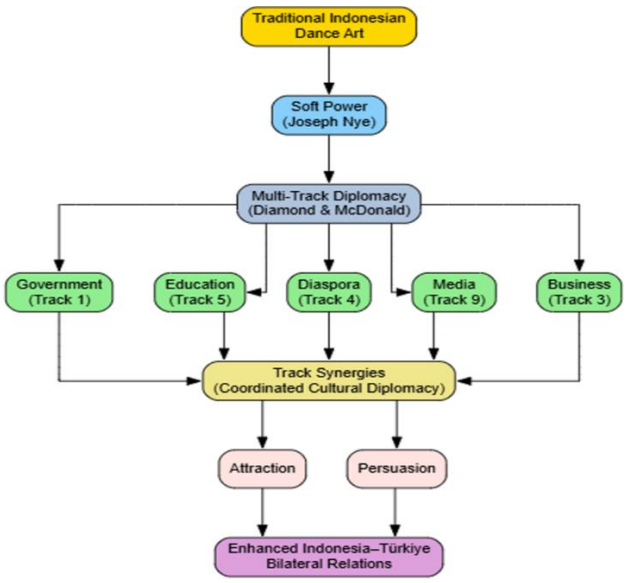
Meanwhile, business actors integrated cultural performances with Indonesian cuisine, handicrafts and creative industries, while media organizations expanded the reach of these interactions by continuously disseminating them through digital platforms. Instead of operating independently, each track amplified the effectiveness of the others, creating a self-reinforcing process (see Figure 2 below) in which the cultural attraction generated by one actor was continually strengthened through the activities of the rest (Gregory, 2019; Fitzpatrick, 2009). The dynamics of this collaborative process can be further understood through Joseph Nye's distinction between attraction and persuasion. Attraction represented the initial stage of Indonesia's soft power, generated

by the aesthetic appeal of traditional dance, music and cultural performances that stimulated curiosity among Turkish audiences.

However, attraction alone rarely produces lasting influence because aesthetic appreciation remains temporary unless reinforced through sustained social engagement. Persuasion therefore emerged only after audiences encountered Indonesian culture repeatedly across multiple institutional and interpersonal settings facilitated by the five diplomatic tracks. Indonesia's cultural diplomacy fostered voluntary preference by enabling audiences to gradually internalize positive perceptions through repeated cultural experiences. Such closely reflects Nye's (2004) argument that soft power is most effective when individuals willingly adopt favourable attitudes instead of responding to coercion or material incentives (Cull, 2008; Zaharna, 2022).

The synergistic relationship among the five diplomatic tracks also helps explain why Indonesia's cultural diplomacy proved particularly compatible with Turkish society. Turkish social life is characterized by strong communal interaction, active civil society participation and a high value placed on interpersonal trust, hospitality and shared cultural experiences. Due to this, a model of cultural diplomacy that emphasizes participation rather than passive observation aligns closely with prevailing patterns of social engagement. Indonesian traditional dance, particularly when accompanied by collaborative artistic activities, educational exchanges and community participation, resonated with Turkish audiences because it encouraged direct interpersonal interaction instead of one-directional cultural presentation. Türkiye's public diplomacy also similarly suggest that Turkish society is more receptive to foreign cultural initiatives emphasizing dialogue, reciprocity and community participation than to unilateral forms of national promotion (Akgün & Özkan, 2020).

Figure 2. A Synergistic Model of Multi-Track Diplomacy Supporting Soft Power through Indonesian Traditional Dance for Turkey.



Source: Authors

Importantly, this receptiveness should not be interpreted as an automatic consequence of Indonesia and Türkiye sharing Muslim-majority populations, although religion undoubtedly provided an important foundation for mutual understanding. Such an interpretation would oversimplify the mechanisms through which soft power operates. Instead, shared religious and historical affinities reduced the initial psychological distance bet ween Indonesian and Turkish participants, thereby lowering barriers to cultural engagement. Sustained interaction across the five diplomatic tracks subsequently transformed this initial familiarity into interpersonal trust and institutional cooperation. In other words, shared identity created favourable conditions for attraction, whereas persuasion emerged through repeated social interaction. This distinction refines Nye's conceptualization by demonstrating that attraction and persuasion are neither simultaneous nor interchangeable processes. (Nye, 2008; Pamment, 2016).

CONCLUSION

The findings demonstrate that Indonesia's cultural diplomacy through traditional dance strengthened bilateral relations with Türkiye by integrating soft power with the synergistic implementation of Multi-Track Diplomacy. Aside from government-led cultural promotion, other actors from the educational institutions, diaspora communities, business actors, and media organizations to establish a sustainable diplomatic ecosystem that extended cultural engagement beyond formal diplomatic settings. Within this ecosystem, the diplomatic function of traditional dance expanded from generating initial cultural attraction among Turkish audiences to fostering cultural legitimacy, as repeated intercultural interactions cultivated institutional trust, credibility and enduring people-to-people relationships.

Through this process, attraction gradually developed into persuasion, reinforcing Indonesia's soft power beyond symbolic cultural representation. Accordingly, this study argues that the effectiveness of Indonesia's cultural diplomacy between 2021 and 2025 was determined not simply by the attractiveness of its traditional dance, but by the coordinated interaction of state and non-state actors that transformed cultural attraction into enduring cultural legitimacy. In doing so, the study extends Nye's conception of soft power by demonstrating that attraction becomes persuasive only when it is sustained through collaborative engagement across multiple diplomatic tracks, thereby strengthening Indonesia's soft power while contributing to deeper Indonesia–Türkiye bilateral relations.

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