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## THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES SOFT POWER IN THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS CONTEXT

Ahmed Mohamed Saeed Jber Al Suwaidi

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United Arab Emirates University

College of Humanities and Social Sciences

THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES SOFT POWER IN THE  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS CONTEXT

Ahmed Mohamed Saeed Jber Al Suwaidi

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy

Under the Supervision of Professor Badreya Al-Jenaibi

April 2021

### Declaration of Original Work

I, Ahmed Mohamed Saeed Jber Al Suwaidi, the undersigned, a graduate student at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), and the author of this dissertation entitled “*The UAE Soft Power in the International Relations Context*”, hereby, solemnly declare that this dissertation is my own original research work that has been done and prepared by me under the supervision of Professor Badreya Al-Jenaibi, in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at UAEU. This work has not previously been presented or published, or formed the basis for the award of any academic degree, diploma or a similar title at this or any other university. Any materials borrowed from other sources (whether published or unpublished) and relied upon or included in my dissertation have been properly cited and acknowledged in accordance with appropriate academic conventions. I further declare that there is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, data collection, authorship, presentation and/or publication of this dissertation.

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ 

Date: 06/05/2021

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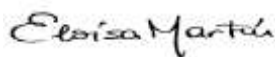
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## Abstract

In the modern world, soft power is a significant concept referring to nations' ability to influence others without the need to use force or threats. Developed nations have made a great effort to enhance their soft power practices in order to utilize this power to influence fellow nations. The United Arab Emirates' soft power is still considered a relatively new area of practical academic discipline. Nonetheless, the UAE's soft power practices remain essential in determining its position on the global scale. To develop a soft-power strategy, objectives and needs must be outlined. To address these objectives and needs, mixed-method research was conducted to (1) determine the UAE's citizens' perception of the effect of soft-power practices (humanitarian aid, economic diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, academic diplomacy) and media framing on international relations, and (2) explore the best soft-power practices to improve the UAE's image internationally from the point of view of UAE's diplomats and citizens. First, a quantitative survey of 300 citizens stratified from seven Emirates from the UAE was administered online using SurveyMonkey. Data analysis for the main hypothesis was tested using the Spearman's Rho correlation and indicated that citizens perceived that a higher level of soft power practices will promote the UAE internationally and that media framing increases the level of soft power. However, the relationship between cultural diplomacy and international relations, as well as framing and cultural diplomacy, were higher than the other factors examined. At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to suggest the best soft power policies to strengthen the UAE's image internationally. The responses were analyzed thematically using ATLAS.ti. The following factors were ranked based on effectiveness: (1) cultural diplomacy, (2) media mediation effect, (3) foreign diplomacy, (4) nation branding, (5) economic diplomacy, (6) educational diplomacy, (7) humanitarian aids, and (8) sports diplomacy were explored using a thematic analysis of citizens' point of view. Second, a qualitative study was conducted through an interview with twenty diplomats to rate the generated factors. Applying thematic analysis using the ATLAS.ti, shows that all diplomats agreed that cultural diplomacy is one of the most effective forms of soft power, which confirms the citizens' point of view. The diplomats were also asked to rate the effectiveness of the eight factors of soft power extracted from the survey, of which the results show that all were rated as highly effective. However, among the



eight factors, the foreign diplomacy initiatives were rated as most effective, and the media mediation factors were rated as least effective. In conclusion, the UAE must continuously measure its citizens' perception to continuously stay informed about which areas require focus with regard to its soft-power strategy.

**Keywords:** Soft power, framing theory, international relations, humanitarian aid, cultural, economic, and academic diplomacies.

## Title and Abstract (in Arabic)

### القوى الناعمة لدولة الامارات العربية المتحدة في سياق العلاقات الدولية

#### الملخص

لا يختلف إثنان على أن القوة الناعمة شغلت حيزاً هاماً في سياسات الدول الحديثة وأصبحت ظاهرة لا يستهان بها وذلك لقدرتها على التأثير على الآخرين دونما الحاجة إلى استخدام القوة أو التهديد، وهو ما دفع العديد من الدول المتقدمة لبذل الجهود من أجل تعزيز ممارسات القوة الناعمة لديها والعمل على توظيفها في التأثير على الدول الأخرى دونما الحاجة إلى استخدام الوسائل العسكرية أو الضغوط الاقتصادية أو سياسات التهديد والوعيد. وتعتبر القوة الناعمة بدولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة حديثة العهد نوعاً ما باعتبارها مجالاً جديداً نسبياً. ومع ذلك، تظل ممارسات القوة الناعمة في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة ضرورية في تحديد موقعها بين الدول المتقدمة كونها أصبحت قوة لا يستهان بها. ومن أجل الوصول إلى تطوير استراتيجية فاعلة لمفهوم القوة الناعمة، يتوجب أولاً تحديد الأهداف وتلبية الاحتياجات. وفي ضوء ما سبق، تم إجراء بحث بهدف (١) تحديد تأثير ممارسات القوة الناعمة (المساعدات الإنسانية، الدبلوماسية الاقتصادية، الدبلوماسية الثقافية، الدبلوماسية الأكاديمية) على العلاقات الدولية بوساطة التأطير الإعلامي من منظور المواطنين، و(٢) تقييم الوضع الحالي للقوة الناعمة لدولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة واقتراح أفضل السبل للمضي قدماً. أجريت دراسة كمية ونوعية، كانت الأولى عبارة عن مسح كمي، مع ثماني فرضيات محددة تم اختبارها وذلك عن طريق استخدام نتيجة الاستطلاع. ثم تم اختيار مجموعة من ٣٠٠ مشارك من الامارات السبع لدولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة للرد على الاستبيان. وأظهرت النتائج أن العلاقة بين المتغيرات كلها ذات دلالة إيجابية وأن الوصول إلى مستوى أعلى من ممارسات القوة الناعمة سيؤدي بدوره إلى تعزيز تنافسية دولة الإمارات على الصعيد الدولي. كما بينت نتائج هذا الاستفتاء أن نظرية التأطير قابلة للتطبيق بغرض زيادة مستوى تأثير القوى الناعمة. كذلك أظهرت النتائج بأن العلاقة بين الدبلوماسية الثقافية وكذلك التأطير الإعلامي أعلى من العوامل الأخرى. وفي نهاية الاستطلاع، طُلب من المشاركين اقتراح أفضل مبادرات القوة الناعمة لتعزيز صورة الإمارات على المستوى الدولي كما تم تصنيف العوامل التالية بناءً على مدى فعاليتها (١) الدبلوماسية الثقافية، (٢) تأثير الوساطة الإعلامية، (٣) الدبلوماسية الخارجية، (٤) الهوية الإعلامية الوطنية، (٥) الدبلوماسية الاقتصادية، (٦) الدبلوماسية الأكاديمية، (٧) المساعدات الإنسانية، (٨) الدبلوماسية الرياضية. تم وضع الدراسة

النوعية بناءً على مقابلات أجريت مع عشرين دبلوماسي لاختبار صحة مخرجات الدراسة الأولى. تظهر النتائج أن جميع الدبلوماسيين اتفقوا على أن الدبلوماسية الثقافية هي من أكثر القوى الناعمة فاعلية، الأمر الذي يؤكد وجهة نظر المواطنين المشاركين في الدراسة الأولى. كما طُلب من الدبلوماسيين تقييم فعالية ثمانية عوامل من القوة الناعمة التي تم استخلاصها من الاستطلاع والتي تظهر النتائج أنهم صنّفوا جميع العوامل الثمانية على أنها فعالة للغاية. ومع ذلك ، من بين العوامل الثمانية ، تم تصنيف عامل الهوية الإعلامية الوطنية الأكثر فاعلية وعامل الوساطة الإعلامية على أنه الأقل فعالية. في الختام ، يجب على دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة قياس تصور مواطنيها باستمرار لمعرفة المجالات التي تتطلب التركيز في استراتيجيتها للقوى الناعمة.

**مفاهيم البحث الرئيسية:** ١: القوى الناعمة ، علاقات دولية ، تبادل ثقافي، نظرية التأطير، الدبلوماسية الأكاديمية، الدبلوماسية الاقتصادية، الدبلوماسية الأكاديمية.

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## Dedication

*(Solomon) said: "Disguise her throne for her, we will see whether she follows the right way or she is one of those who do not go aright."*

*So when she came, she was asked: "Is your throne like this?" She said: "It is as it were the same. And we were given the knowledge before it, and we were submitting".*

*Surat An-Naml Qur'an 27:41-42*

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Overview**

When analyzing the most significant power positions on a global scale, it can be concluded that hard power is not always a promising foreign policy to sustain dominance. Hard power is not always adequate to advance national interests. Advocates of soft power and public diplomacy stress its impact on international affairs. In modern international relations, it is known as the ability to influence others to achieve outcomes through attraction rather than strict political policies.

The rapid transformation of UAE's internal and external dynamics establishes a wide range of fields that need consideration. UAE holds the top rank in the Middle East and 18<sup>th</sup> globally according to the Global Soft-Power Index 2020; this accomplishment brings hopes and consideration. UAE's newly emerging international position demands a unifying direction for various policy sectors. UAE continues to develop its global strategy following international indices; however, how the citizens perceive the soft-power strategies and how they position the media to frame and boost the soft-power practices is yet undefined. Therefore, this study looked at citizens' perspectives regarding the practices of soft power to help international relations be more effectively farmed by the media.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The concept of soft power has emerged as a significant aspect of research in scholarly and public debates regarding international relations over the last few years, which is why soft power remains pivotal to academic research (Beydoun & Zahawi,

2016; Dinnie, 2010). Confirmation of this point is evident in the visibility of soft power in scholarly papers, newspapers, and news websites on international relations. Soft power is winning the attention of academic discussions and leading the way as a strategic-leadership tool. Its importance continues to grow. Public diplomacy has a long tradition for fostering the soft power of a government and was crucial to winning the Cold War.

Soft power remains a significant factor in facilitating the direction of international relations, thus determining the place of a nation in the world (Banks, 2011; Liu & Turner, 2018). While much research on the topic has analyzed several developing countries, there has been relatively little work done on the UAE as a brand (Saad, 2020). Therefore, despite the UAE's healthy resource supply in knowledge, skills, and finance, to demonstrate successful soft power, it still needs to optimize and realize this energy in its foreign policy practice, and this is not easy (Cho & Jeong, 2008). Understanding the impact soft power has on international relations challenges the UAE's current soft power model and hints at a lack of sustainability.

UAE has been ranked as the Middle East's highest soft-power nation in Brand Finance's Global Soft Power Index 2020. Along with the soft-power strategy instituted by the Emirates Soft Power Council and other authorities to increase the country's global reputation abroad by highlighting its identity, heritage, culture, and the contributions of the UAE to the world, many studies have been conducted to explore the UAE's soft-power strategies and challenges (AlKetbi, 2017; Bagersh, 2011; Government, 2020; Saad, 2020). Not much research has been found about citizens' perspectives on what constitutes best soft-power practices, even though people are the

main key to successful soft-power practices. How it is perceived and evaluated is the key factor of Nye's theory of soft power. In fact, examining average citizens' views reveals that they have a “realistic” perception of power as hard power, and they do not perceive a conflict between hard and soft factors. Moreover, the citizen viewpoint is clearly socially based and fed only by certain sectors in society (Noya, 2006). Citizens’ perception about the country’s soft-power practice shows its success on citizen diplomacy as a soft power core (Magu, 2013).

This study strives to address the impact of the soft-power challenge for the UAE by designing a sustainable national-context framework model for soft power and an accompanying plan of execution. By conducting a survey structured around applying the best practices used in other nations, this study will help determine the best features of such a framework, supporting the international aspirations and soft-power practices of the UAE. A survey was conducted among UAE citizens. After the data was obtained from the survey, the researcher interviewed 20 diplomats to rate the generated soft-power model from the citizens’ survey.

A country can create a competitive advantage by collaborating with the public and appealing to them in non-economic ways to gain support and attention. By promoting their social responsibility, countries can gain goodwill and win public attention and global support. However, the existing literature emphasizes country branding to outsiders with little attention given to country branding to its citizens. To be a successful brand, a country should be both competitive in retaining and enhancing resources and viewed by its citizens as a place full of opportunities to exercise their skills and interests (Che-Ha et al., 2016).

This study aims to deliver recommendations that provide a way to move forward and emphasize the role of key stakeholders in fostering the success of the shared framework.

### **1.3 Importance of the Study**

This research includes an examination of the current situation in the UAE regarding this nation's soft power, followed by a recommendation on ways to move forward. Finally, the research will identify critical media strategies to enhance overall soft-power standing. The result of this study will help to the extent of soft power's significance in the competitiveness of UAE. Reviewing the best practices of soft power used globally and comparing them with the tactics employed in the UAE will benefit in developing the best context-suited plans for soft-power enhancement, deployment, and sustainability.

In the UAE, the foundation of this nation's soft power is in its ambitious leadership position. On the other hand, the UAE's infrastructure investment is often described as one of the world's leading examples of cultural initiatives. The UAE has leveraged its soft power to attain a reputation as a metropolis and a critical hub in the MENA region. Besides, soft power is perceived as a necessary element for the development of many other nations in the world.

The government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has not been left behind in the endeavor of building the brand of its nation and its soft power as a result. Researchers investigated the elements involved in country branding and discussed future opportunities for the UAE to improve its nation branding (Saad, 2020). Bagersh

(2011) asserts that the UAE's soft power has been essential in placing the nation on the world stage. With the help of soft power, this Arab state has improved its global reputation while also sharing its heritage, culture, and identity. In this case, soft-power tactics serve in defining the world's perception of the UAE as a global leader. The nation believes that soft power will be critical in assisting the UAE to achieve its goals and ambitions for the economy and national development.

In people's perception, soft power is one of the main factors that help the government build its reputation. Citizens' perception of how they view their role in interacting with foreigners and international visitors as tourists or investors or via online interaction globally could support their country's soft-power practices and efforts. By focusing on citizen perceptions and communicative actions, this research expands the work that has been done around nation branding, which usually foregrounds the response of foreign publics. Internal/citizen publics are largely overlooked and bear great importance from a communication, public-relations, and public diplomacy standpoint. A survey among 426 Italian citizens indicates that citizens who placed high importance on their interactions with foreigners reported significantly higher scores on attitudes toward hosting the World Exposition (Expo), positive behaviors about Italy hosting the Expo, and perceived themselves as ambassadors during the mega-event. The findings highlight the critical role citizens can play as ambassadors. Their megaphoning behavior and perception of the importance of interacting with foreign visitors have the potential to magnify the positive impact of hosting mega-events both internally and abroad (Vibber & Lovari, 2021).

To summarize, this study is theoretically important as the framework contributes to understanding whether media framing is applicable to explain successful soft-power strategies. The study will contribute to the knowledge of the media's strength to boost the UAE's place from an international perspective. Drawing on media-framing researchers, this study shows if media framing defines the traits of a news frame as a unique contextualization elaboration to understand soft-power dynamics and use them wisely.

Given the diversity of the soft power indices, this study introduces the modified context version of soft-power policies from the perspectives of UAE's citizens and diplomats. Reconceptualizing soft power in terms of objects controlled by media provides more useful analytical variables to understand international relations and the reason behind citizens' views, since, in branding, the citizens of the country need to have a good impression about their global status.

This study will help UAE scholars build on the results and initiate new dimensional research, whether asking foreigners living in the UAE or an international audience. It will also pave the way for further studies on UAE nationals' social behavior toward national branding.

#### **1.4 Research Aims and Objectives**

This study aims to design a practical framework for the development of a sustainable soft-power model and an execution plan. Accordingly, this framework will support the improvement of the soft-power approach of the UAE in a way that will lead to the country gaining influence over other states. To develop such a framework,

it is essential to gain perspectives on the aspect of soft power and how other prosperous nations have managed to develop this concept and utilize it to their benefit. Consequently, the proposed study is developed with the following objectives:

RO1: To identify UAE's citizens' perception of the relationship between soft power and the UAE's international relations

RO2: To identify UAE's citizens' perception of the relationship between media framing and UAE's soft power

RO3: To explore the best soft-power practices to improve the UAE's image internationally from UAE's diplomats' and citizens' point of view

Global power is shifting, and older practices are no longer applicable to foreign policy and diplomatic relations. Exploring leading nations' practices in soft power from a historical and current perspective with a focus on foreign policy, culture, values, and how these nations run their country is a primary focus. Collectively, analyzing literature where nations have successfully implemented soft-power strategies, and the applied elements and practices have caused a downfall of these countries or governments.

Assessing the UAE's position will primarily focus on values, culture, foreign policy, and diplomatic relations. While all nations have strategies in place, not all nations have the same industries, cultures, and values. Alketbi (2017) discusses UAE's new initiative, its new soft-power council, and the establishment of ministries of tolerance and happiness. The soft-power council is an institutional work system that promotes the UAE regionally and internationally. McClory (2019) stated there is an



economic power shift from the West to the East. In 2020 Brand Finance ranked the United Arab Emirates as number 18 among the top 60 soft-power nations.

AlKetbi (2017) states that the UAE follows civilized values, and it is the world's capital for humanity and a top humanitarian provider. Core values and innovative systems and strategies that are successfully growing require different media consortiums to publicize and present information regionally and globally (AlKetbi, 2017). Subsequently, the following research questions are proposed.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

In pursuit of a practical approach to soft power in the UAE, there are some key questions to address. Accordingly, the research questions for this study are:

RQ1 Is there any relationship between soft-power practices and the UAE's international relations perceived by UAE's citizens?

RQ2 Is there any relationship between media framing and the soft power of the UAE?  
Is there any relationship between soft-power practices and the UAE's international relations from UAE's citizens' perception?

RQ3 What are the best soft-power practices to improve the UAE's image internationally from UAE's diplomats' and citizens' points of view?

## 1.6 Research Hypothesis and Framework

The research aimed to confirm if nationals assess their soft power and media outreach effectiveness locally and internationally. Accordingly, the main hypothesis is stated, followed by the conceptual framework of this study.

H1. Soft-power practices influence UAE's international relations from UAE's citizens perception (Figure 1.1).

H1a Humanitarian aid in the form of soft-power practices influences UAE's international relations from UAE's citizens perception.

H1b Cultural diplomacy in the form of soft-power practices influences UAE's international relations from UAE's citizens perception.

H1c Economic aid in the form of soft-power practices influences UAE's international relations from UAE's citizens perception.

H1d Academic diplomacy in the form of soft-power practices influences UAE's international relations from UAE's citizens perception.

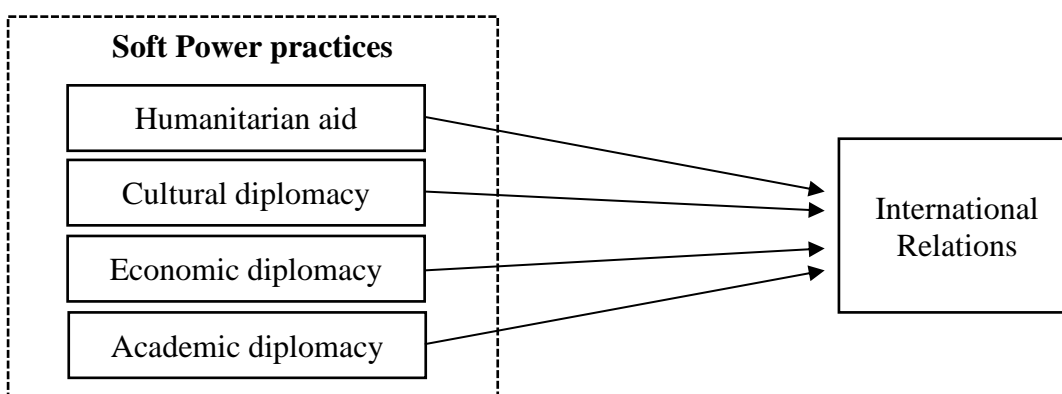


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework for the First General Hypothesis

H2. Media framing affects UAE's soft-power practices from UAE's citizens perception (Figure 1.2)

H2a Media framing affects humanitarian aid as soft-power practices from UAE's citizens perception

H2b Media framing affects economic diplomacy as soft-power practices from UAE's citizens perception

H2c Media framing affects cultural diplomacy as soft-power practices from UAE's citizens perception

H2d Media framing affects academic diplomacy aid as soft-power practices from UAE's citizens perception

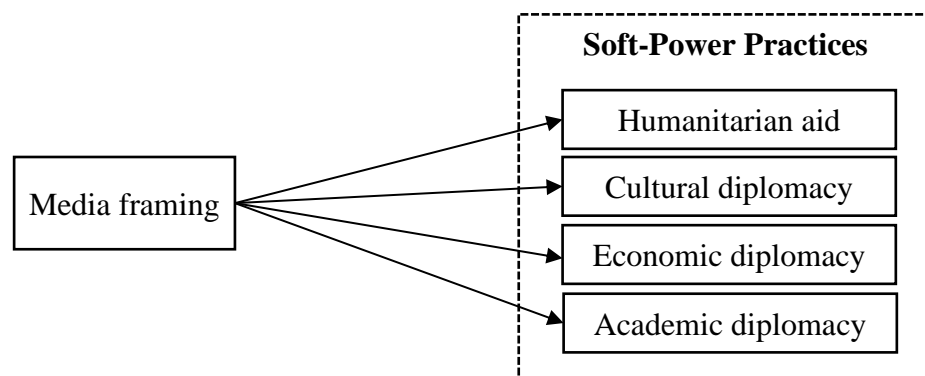


Figure 1.2: Conceptual Framework for the Second General Hypothesis

### 1.7 Definitions of Variables

1. International relations: Drawing on theoretical and methodological traditions from diverse fields, international relations are highly interdisciplinary. International relations serve as fundamental structures and processes of globalization and diplomatic relations. Related literature shows that most studies measure

international relations by effective foreign policy and a soft power (McClory, 2019; Walt, 2019). Therefore, for this study, international relations are measured by six items/indicators (refer to Table 3.3 for original items and modification process and Table 3.4 for modified items).

2. The independent variable is soft power. The concept of soft power was developed by Joseph Nye and is defined as the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment (Nye, 2008). To measure this variable, four factors of soft-power scales were generated from reviewing the related studies, namely: (1) humanitarian aid, (2) economic diplomacy, (3) cultural diplomacy, (4) academic diplomacy (refer to Table 3.3 for original items and modification process, and Table 3.4 for modified items).
  - A. Humanitarian aid is defined as material and logistic assistance to people in need, like children, the homeless, refugees, victims of natural disasters, war survivors/victims, and famine-struck communities. The aids cover a wide range of activities, including providing food aid, shelter, education, healthcare, or protection. The United Nations define humanitarianism as "international co-operation in solving international problems of a humanitarian character." To measure humanitarian aid for this study, the four sub-scales presented by the United Nations were used (United Nations, 2018).
  - B. Cultural diplomacy, defined as a field of diplomacy concerned with establishing, developing, and sustaining relations with foreign states through culture, art, and education, refers to how cultural relations operate in different national contexts (Villanueva, 2007). Cultural diplomacy is a public strategy

that aims to export data reflecting the national culture and facilitate cultural exchanges with other countries within the context of foreign policy. As the term "community" is ambiguous and its vectors have diversified, particularly with audiovisual media, the press, the Internet, and social networks, the spectrum of possible interventions is considerable (Kessler, 2020). Cultural diplomacy refers to how a nation represents its own stories to the world while being capable of understanding what others have to express about themselves. The field of cultural diplomacy as a soft-power practice is examined by cultural disciplines. The notion of "soft power" in cultural diplomacy represents the existing discourses of cultural diplomacy and/or how cultural relations operate in different national contexts (Villanueva, 2007). Cultural diplomacy is defined as a diplomacy domain concerned with establishing, developing, and sustaining relations with foreign states through culture, art, and education. It is also a proactive process of external projection in which a nation's institutions, value system, and unique cultural personality are promoted at a bilateral and multilateral level. This concept of cultural diplomacy encompasses what could be defined as the "expressive life" of a country, but it also covers the sharing of values and overall ideas. Historically, cultural diplomacy has also been used as a branch of "public diplomacy," an interaction system that covers literature, culture, and innovations, which often involves initiatives outside the cultural domain. A broad approach to cultural diplomacy must acknowledge: (1) the actions of diplomats within the cultural sphere, (2) the shaping of media content by the government to influence international public opinion, (3) long-term efforts to harmonize the values and

goals of disparate cultures (“mutuality”), and (4) intervention in informal cultural relations (trade, immigration, and tourism) (Ivey & Cleggett, 2008). For this study, three indicators suggested by different studies were adopted.

- C. Economic diplomacy is a foreign-policy activity and adopts approaches focused on the idea that economic/commercial preferences and political interests are mutually reinforcing and can thus be seen in tandem (Chin, 2013). Economic diplomacy is defined as a measurement tool. The seven indicators of economic aid were adopted and adapted from the related studies. Three indicators were adopted from the Asian Soft-Power Practices by S.J. Lee (2009), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Statistics, and the World Bank Economic Policy: (1) competitive economy, (2) economic opportunities for the workforce, (5) leading multinational corporations/foreign direct investment.
- D. Academic diplomacy: according to the metrics in the Global Ranking of Soft Power Index, academic diplomacy includes the number of international students in a region, the relative quality of its universities, and the academic performance of higher education institutions. Three indicators were adopted from the Global Ranking of Soft Power Sub-Indices to measure academic diplomacy, which was introduced by Soft Power 30 (McClory, 2019).

Media framing: The framing by media was adopted from framing theory. The factor adopted from media theory is one of the effective factors to frame the citizens' perspective about their country. Framing by media is defined as the media's efficacy to promote international relations from a global perspective. To measure the UAE

media-framing perception, seven items/indicators were adopted from the related literature (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Entman, 1993; Gilboa, 2008) (refer to Table 3.3 for original items and modification process and Table 3.4 for modified items). The media-framing perception in this study refers to the media's efficacy to promote international relations from a global perspective. In this paper, framing theory is conceptually applied as an approach to determine if the media could change the image of the UAE within the context of soft-power techniques. To measure this concept, the researcher conceptually adopted items from previous studies, which indicated that the media shapes a country's image, thus influencing its economic, cultural, and political standing in the international context (Ospina Estupinan, 2017). Since media and communication technology have greatly lowered the cost of information processing, a substantial portion of the population now has access to soft power (Nye, 2008).

### **1.8 Organization of the Study**

The study includes five chapters. The first chapter starts with an introduction that explains the research aims and objectives, together with the research questions. The related literature on soft power, media framing, and international relations policies is then reviewed. Chapter 2 deals with the theoretical framework of the study by providing theory explanations and theoretical perspectives. Chapter 3 presents the technique of research design applied to tackle the discussed problem. The section describes the sampling method followed by the development of instruments. Next, the validity and reliability of the collected data and information for assessment and processes are explained. The statistical method employed to analyze the data by

marking the type of approach is also discussed in detail. Lastly, a summary of the section is presented in the last section of this chapter. Chapter 4 focuses on the study's findings, including descriptive assessment, the interpretation of participants' demographic information, preliminary data analysis, and statistical analysis. The descriptive analysis for the respondents' characteristics and variables and normality tests are conducted. Spearman's rho correlation coefficient is used to test the hypothesis, and the results are interpreted. Key findings are presented and evaluated in light of the literature in the following chapter. First, descriptive statistics are presented, which describe the principal demographical characteristics of the respondents. A cross-tabulation is then used to investigate participants' perceptions from a different perspective on how they perceive the UAE's efforts to market its cultural and political values abroad. Finally, the hypotheses are examined. SPSS is utilized for analysis. Thematic analysis was employed for the open-ended questions related to the survey. Furthermore, the survey results were verified by interviewing 20 diplomats and conducting thematic analysis and using ATLAS.ti V8 to analyze their responses. Chapter 5 covers a discussion on the study findings, along with its conclusions.

## **1.9 Conclusion**

The analysis of the soft-power strategy, the current progress in the field of soft power, and the reputation promotion in the UAE have demonstrated that the government and other stakeholders have developed a complex and effective approach for strengthening the country's international positions. The current progress in the



international promotion of the UAE can be considered as a basis for the successful long-term development of the state as a regional leader.

### **1.10 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, the main idea to conduct this research was briefly explained based on statements of the research problem: citizens' perspective regarding the practices of soft power to help international relations be more effectively framed by the media. Next, under the importance of the study unit— the reason as to why the problem proposed is interesting practically and theoretically—questions were discussed. Research questions, objectives, and hypotheses were then listed and the chapter ended with a definition of terms including soft power, international relations, and framing by the media.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Discussion**

### **2.1 International Relations and Soft-Power Practices**

One of the most critical characteristics of international relations is soft power in today's world. Although hard power has long remained at the forefront of intellectual debate, soft power has arisen as an approach to understanding the dynamic relationships between states and how states use multiple sources of non-coercive means to persuade global actors (Karki & Dhungana, 2020).

Soft power is a persuasive foreign-policy approach to international relations. In the modern world, soft power is considered a significant concept in determining the character of nations. According to Schneider (2009), soft power refers to the ability to influence others without the need to use force or threats. Consequently, governments of the world have made efforts to develop their soft power with the hope of utilizing this power to influence fellow nations. Nye Jr (2008) defines soft power as the ability to achieve outcomes through attraction rather than coercion and payment.

Nye Jr (2008) stated that for a country to obtain tangible and positive outcomes from political leaders, one must understand that the power comes from attraction. Governmental and political attraction is associated with political values, institutions, policies, moral authority, and leadership without hard force. Skillful leaders will understand the power to attract without force and legitimacy. Gallarotti (2011) addresses the increase in soft power, where decision-makers propose modern world politics and credible diplomatic strategies. Patalakh (2016) discusses the modification of "soft power" and how it allows the analysis of the foreign policy of any state in a

time where even weak military conditions are influential, and soft power is implemented.

One of the critical reasons for the rising popularity of this approach has been the difficulty associated with exercising hard power in military confrontations. For example, Hall (2012) stated that hard power tends to make a nation weaker in the international arena and can result in adverse effects. For example, it will undermine the country's ability to attract visitors and investments from abroad. Consequently, soft power turned out to be the preferable choice.

Soft power has encouraged nations to influence each other with the help of strategic diplomacy, culture, ideas, and lifestyles, as well as various forms of shared interests (Banks, 2011). Banks' assertion aligns with Nye's definition of soft power, emphasizing nations' ability to influence others by becoming attractive to them, as cited by Liu and Turner (2018). Nye asserts that the concept of the attractive nation largely relies on the utility of intangible resources. In this case, culture, lifestyle, and diplomacy work together to legitimize the state's power and policies in the eyes of others (Hall, 2012). Even though hard power may enable nations to influence others easily, this influence is short-term in nature. Koch (2016) asserts that nations that are influenced by hard power will only capitulate temporarily. Conversely, they will either set themselves free from the bondage of oppressive countries with the help of their culture or be attracted to other nations that will offer them more than dictatorship or foreign occupation. Soft power, therefore, is preferred by a nation's intent on creating long-term influence and popularity.

Soft power is still considered a relatively new area in academic research. The lack of agreement over what the notion means and whether nations can brand themselves as advocates of this power (Sun, 2013) are still points of contention. Nonetheless, soft power remains essential in determining the position of nations in the world. Countries need to work toward advancing soft power as a vital way to connect with the countries they compete with on different levels. It is instrumental in enhancing both tourism and investment. A key motivator for nations pursuing soft power is that soft power supports tourism and investment because it creates fertile ground for effective and successful negotiations. As a result, soft power can influence a country's attractiveness for both visitors and investors.

Soft power as a form of meta-power refers to situations involving power relations embedded within a more remarkable constellation, thus encompassing social relations (Valeri, 2018). Thus, it influences these relations, and therefore the expected outcomes caused by the interacting actors. The meta-power aspect of soft power is all about shaping social relationships and situations.

Within the context of international relations, soft power is an innovative development that is vital in facilitating awareness of critical political dimensions in several ways (Lopez-Guzman & Gonzalez Santa-Cruz, 2016). One way of doing so is through cultural actions. The soft power of a nation is developed based on a country's need to express a relationship with its other counterparts. Exercising soft power as a tool for international relations enables nations to effectively represent and protect their foreign policy's interests.

In developing soft power, nations tend to perceive the world as a giant stage, on which they compete against each other to win the affection and attention of other players. According to Schneider (2009), this mentality has turned the race for soft power into a beauty contest between nations. Despite Schneider's simplification, the soft power of a nation is still of utmost importance. Beydoun and Zahawi (2016) explain that the very creation of a favorable image for the international audience demonstrates and advertises the positive face of a nation.

Exercising soft power should be achieved in the most natural way possible. Cho and Jeong (2008) actively assert that a natural approach is a significant aspect that determines the effectiveness of soft power. However, in applying Cho and Jeong's theory, care should be taken in selecting the right mix of individual components to develop the soft power of a state. Accordingly, soft power is the ability of a nation to influence others on the international stage and create a positive image in the minds of international stakeholders (Koch, 2016). The idea of a positive national image is why governments worldwide dedicate campaigns to sharing the stories of their nations with targeted international audiences. According to Dinnie (2010), rather than considering the campaign approach as simplistic propaganda, it should be recognized as a holistic program based on a sense of sensitivity and subtlety. Historically, this practice is not new; yet the interest it attracted among researchers is considered recent.

The promotion of ideas using the soft power of states should be based on a clear understanding of the general model that shapes this practice and the intentions of the parties engaged in this process. In modern conditions, it is important to consider the definition of "nation branding" as one of the core objectives of soft power. Nation

branding is the practice of cooperation between governments and public relations (PR) consultants in an attempt to improve the presentation of a country's image to the target audience inside or outside the country. Research by Bolin and Miazhevich (2018) demonstrates the development of "commercial nationalism." According to this theory, a state's government should act as a marketing group, oriented towards the increase of public interest in the state as an object of sale. It is important for the state agencies to "sell" their model of the country, ideology, and worldview to the public actors in foreign states. Commercial nationalism occurs when the public image of a state becomes a product that is "sold" to a foreign audience; this is a sign of the active development of culture. Understanding the concept of commercial nationalism provides context for the significant changes in the sphere of public policy. This theory explains the integration of government and business, their cooperation, and the similarity of their ideas.

Globally, the approach to international relations is dynamic, varied, and exists in different forms. In terms of shaping the global agenda for international relationships, cultural values are central (Lopez-Guzman & Gonzalez Santa-Cruz, 2016). While the effect of culture on international relationships is not always immediate, it becomes significant once cultures intersect at a point of global interest. Specifically, Banks (2011) states that cultural diplomacy subtly works to manage the cultural expression and establishment of goals that boost economic, social, and political interactions among individuals. Therefore, cultural diplomacy leads to the establishment of good international relationships. Most countries in Asia have incorporated a cultural aspect in their approaches to soft power, especially with the need to have quality relationships

with their neighbors. It is worth noting that social and cultural elements have been extensively used in the UAE to advance the state's relationships with other countries.

## **2.2 Theoretical Discussion**

The main theoretical structure of this study is the soft power theory. Media framing theory was also conceptually applied to identify how media could promote the UAE's soft-power strategies from citizens' perspectives.

The described mechanism of persuasion is the actual nature of the soft-power approach in international policy and diplomacy. All the actions in the sphere of political relations of the states are oriented towards realizing one state's desire to reach a result. The application of hard-power principles supposes the usage of means of enforcement to reach this goal—military aggression, threats, and conflict. Usually, hard-power instruments are often pointless since an object of influence understands that the actual decision has been made under pressure, against its interests, and will aim to change its position as soon as the aggressor removes said pressure (Melissen, 2005).

A comparison between soft-power techniques allows the state's political elites to impact the decision-making process in the targeted country by presenting an attractive alternative to its current model of action. The new model corresponds to the needs of the subject of influence, but the object may not even understand this impact and its benefits. As a result, the object of influence is more likely to agree with the offered decisions, and the sustainability of the influence would be higher than that of a hard-power solution.

### 2.3 Soft Power Theory

Joseph Nye coined the concept of "soft power" in his book "Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power" at the end of the Cold War period (Nye, 1990). Later, soft power was continuously used and gained a conceptual quality, thus becoming a popular term applied to the perceived rise in global and regional influence (Yukaruc, 2017). Soft power refers to a form of national power based on nations' attractiveness in terms of different strategies, such as cultural, educational, political, economic exchange, and interactions. When other countries are persuaded that a nation's ideals or policies are legitimate or indeed desirable, then the "soft power" of that nation is expanded.

As a theoretical term, soft power means taking on growing significance and validity. Many countries have understood the importance of using soft-power instruments and resources to participate in strategic politics of attractiveness, prestige, and reputation. This is because harmony with the ideals and desires of other nations can be as important as exercising hard power to accomplish the country's desired goals (S. Lee, 2011).

Since Nye's definition of soft power is the ability to attract and persuade, many scholars have redefined the concepts of soft power. Geun Lee suggested making a distinction between hard and soft resources, instead of differentiating between coercive and cooperative power as Joseph Nye did. Lee divides soft power into five different categories according to its goals and defines it according to the resources used: (1) soft power to improve the external security environment by projecting peaceful and attractive images of a country; (2) soft power to mobilize other countries' support for foreign and security policies; (3) soft power to manipulate other countries' styles of thinking and preferences; (4) soft power to maintain unity within a community or community of



countries; and (5) soft power to increase the approval ratings of a leader or domestic support for a government (G. Lee, 2009). Lee has proposed his way of differentiating soft and hard powers by developing his soft-power theoretical framework. His conceptual framework is a kind of extension of Nye's soft power theory in terms of definition and categorization, but, differently from Nye, Lee attached the nature of power to its sources, thus solving the problem of distinguishing hard and soft powers. This article aims to analyze the theoretical approach of soft power theory proposed by Geun Lee (Vasilevskytè, 2013).

### 2.3.1 Soft Power Indices

To Nye's soft power is based on emphasizing culture first, followed by politics (Nye, 1990) (Figure 2.1). However, since the book was published, many different dimensions were initiated to measure soft power. Some of the indices are briefly presented in the following section. The figure below shows Nye's very first classification of soft power.

Power Types	Behaviors	Basic Tools	Government Policies
Military power	* Coercion * Deterrence * Protection	* Threat * Force	*Coercive Diplomacy * War * Alliance
Economic Power	* Encouragement * Coercion * Admirableness	* Money-Making * Investment * Values, Culture	* Help * Bribery * Public Diplomacy
Soft Power	* Creating Agenda	* Policies * Institutions	* Bilateral and Multilateral Diplomacy

Figure 2.1: Nye's Classification of Power in the International Order (Yavuzaslan & Cetin, 2016)

In 2010, the Institute for Government and the media group Monocle developed and released the first attempt to quantify soft power by a composite index. The Monocle Soft Power Index integrated several mathematical metrics and subjective panel ratings to measure the soft power capabilities of 26 countries. The indicators were grouped under five sub-indices: society, diplomacy, education, business/innovation, and government. Since then, Monocle has continued to produce an annual Soft Power Report. The list is estimated to use about 50 factors as of 2016/17 that signify the use of soft power, including the number of cultural missions (primarily language schools), Olympic medals, the standard of the architecture of a nation, and business brands.

The Soft Power 30, which followed Joseph Nye's framework, is a soft power ranking list created and released in 2015 by the Portland Media Group. The ranking is based on the consistency of the political institutions of a nation, the degree of its cultural attractiveness, the power of its diplomatic network, the global prestige of its higher education system, the attractiveness of its economic model, and the digital interaction of a country with the world. Soft Power 30 indices (refer to Figure 2.2) work by assessing the countries based on six categories, including enterprise, culture, digital, government, engagement, and education. Soft Power 30 also provides an in-depth assessment of countries' soft-power resources in relation to each other and unparalleled insights and analysis from leading practitioners around the world. Based on the sixth report of Portland Soft Power 30 published in 2020, the countries with the highest rate of soft power in terms of the mentioned six categories are presented in the Table 2.1. Table 2.2 represent the metric for soft power index and Table 2.3 displays the IFG soft power index score.

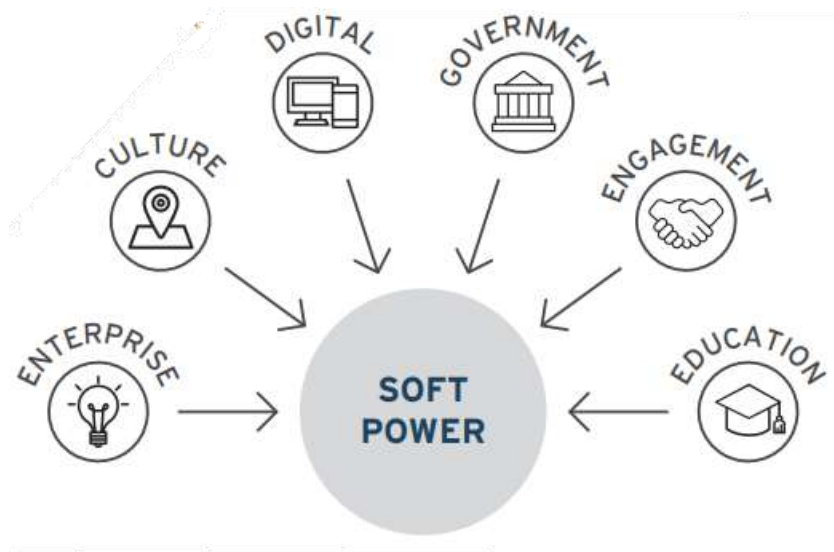


Figure 2.2: Soft Power 30 Sub-Indices

In the Soft Power index prepared by McClory (2019) with the support of the Institute for Government under the leadership of the UK's independent charitable organization, by examining 30 countries determined as the strategic partners of the UK, it was aimed to compare the UK's soft-power situation with the other 30 countries.

Table 2.1: Portland Soft Power 30's Ranking Report 2020

	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Country</b>		<b>Rank</b>	<b>Country</b>
<b>PORTLAND SOFT POWER 30</b>	<b>1</b>	UK	<b>ANHOLT- GFK ROPER NATION BRAND INDEX</b>	<b>1</b>	Germany
	<b>2</b>	Germany		<b>2</b>	USA
	<b>3</b>	USA		<b>3</b>	UK
	<b>4</b>	France		<b>4</b>	France
	<b>5</b>	Canada		<b>5</b>	Canada
	<b>6</b>	Australia		<b>6</b>	Japan
	<b>7</b>	Switzerland		<b>7</b>	Italy
	<b>8</b>	Japan		<b>8</b>	Switzerland
	<b>9</b>	Sweden		<b>9</b>	Australia
	<b>10</b>	Netherlands		<b>10</b>	Sweden

Table 2.2: Soft Power index metric (McClory, 2019, pp. 49-50)

<b>Digital</b>		<b>Culture</b>	
Web Index Value The Web Index Access Number of Internet Users per 100 Inhabitants Mobile Broadband Monthly Subscription per GDPC Government Online Services Index E-participation Index Facebook Followers for Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Outside Country) Facebook Followers for Heads of State (Outside Country) Facebook Engagement Score for Ministry of Foreign Affairs Facebook Engagement Score Head of State/Government (Outside Country)		Total Number of International Tourists Average Spend per Tourist (total tourism receipts/ # of tourists) Number of Films Appearing in Major Film Festivals Number of Foreign Correspondents in the Country Number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites Language Index Score Annual Attendance at the Global Top 100 Museums Number of Top 5 Albums in Foreign Countries Creative Goods Exports Olympics: gold medals (Summer 2012/Winter2014) FIFA Ranking (Men's)	
<b>Enterprise</b>		<b>Engagement</b>	
Global Patents Filed/ GDP WEF Competitiveness Index Score FDI as a Percentage of Gross Domestic Product Heritage Foundation Index of Economic Freedom Transparency International Corruption Index score R&D Spending as a Percentage of Gross Domestic Product Global Innovation Index score Number of SMEs (Percentage of Labour Force Working in SMEs) World Bank Doing Business Index Score FDI as a Percentage of Gross Domestic Product Heritage Foundation Index of Economic Freedom Transparency International Corruption Index score R&D Spending as a Percentage of Gross Domestic Product		ODA from DAC Countries to Multilateral Organizations ODA/GNI Number of Embassies Abroad Number of Embassies in Country Number of Permanent Missions to Multilateral Organizations Membership of International Organizations Number of International Environmental Treaties Signed/ Enforced Asylum Seekers per 1000 People Number of Cultural Missions Abroad (e.g., British Council) Number of Countries a Citizen Can Visit Visa-Free	
<b>Education</b>	<b>Government</b>		<b>Global Polling</b>
Number of Think Tanks in a country Tertiary Educational Attainment Number of Universities in QS Global Top 200 Number of Academic Science Journal Articles Published Number of International Students in Country Literary Rates Spending on Education as a Percentage of GDP	HDI Score Freedom House Index Score Gender Equality Index Score Economist Democracy Index Score Size of Shadow Economy (as % of GDP) Homicide Rates World Bank Voice and Accountability Index Use of Capital Punishment Income Inequality (Gini Coefficient) WEF Trust in Government Index Score Press Freedom Government Effectiveness - World Bank Good Governance Indicators		Cuisine How Welcoming? Tech Products Luxury Goods Trust to do the right thing Visit, work, or study?

Table 2.3: Indicators Classification for the IFG Soft Power Index Score

<b>Diplomacy</b>	<b>Government</b>	<b>Culture</b>	<b>Business Innovation</b>
Foreign Aid	The United Nations	Tourism	International Patents
Visa Freedom	Human Development Indicators	Tourism Expenditures	Commercial Competition
National Brand Power	Government Effectiveness	Foreign Correspondents	Level of Corruption
Number of Cultural Mission	Individual Freedom	Language	Innovation
Online Structure	Democratic Institutions	Olympic Profile	International Investment
Global Diplomatic Structure	Thought Centers	Music	Internet Addiction
Diplomatic Resources for Multilateral Organizations	Activities	Art Gallery	
Global Connectivity Structure	Informal Economy	World Heritage	
Environmental Awareness and Actions	Social Violence	International Football Status	
Openness to Refugees	Government Responsibility		
	Death Penalty		
	Government Trust		
	Income Distribution		

With over 55,000 respondents in 100 countries, the Global Soft Power Index is the product of a pioneering fieldwork survey, the most inclusive of its kind. It shows how the world sees the top soft-power countries in general. These results are crucial for policymakers looking to properly control their national brands and maximize their impact on soft power in particular countries. Based on the latest Global Soft Power Index 2020, the USA tops the ranking despite reputation damage. Germany is admired for governance and Angela Merkel's international leadership; Britain remains undented by Brexit, ranking as the world's third soft-power nation; Japan ranked first for business and trade; China and Russia rank high on influence; Nordic countries are among the most reputable; Greta Thunberg helps earn Sweden the top spot for climate action; Canada ranks in the top 3 for more soft-power disciplines than any other nation; Spain ranked as the world's friendliest nation but lagged on governance; and the UAE

ranked as the Middle East's top scorer, with high familiarity following the nation brand launch.

The researchers reviewed different national cases and demonstrated issues that countries urgently need to manage and address to achieve their goal for global recognition and fulfill their objectives. Statistics of the Global Soft Power ranking (refer to Figure 2.3) for the year 2019 show the 30 countries with the highest levels of soft power globally. The ranking compiles scores based on objective measures as well as worldwide polling data. In 2019, France topped the ranking with a score of 80.28 (Duffin, 2020).

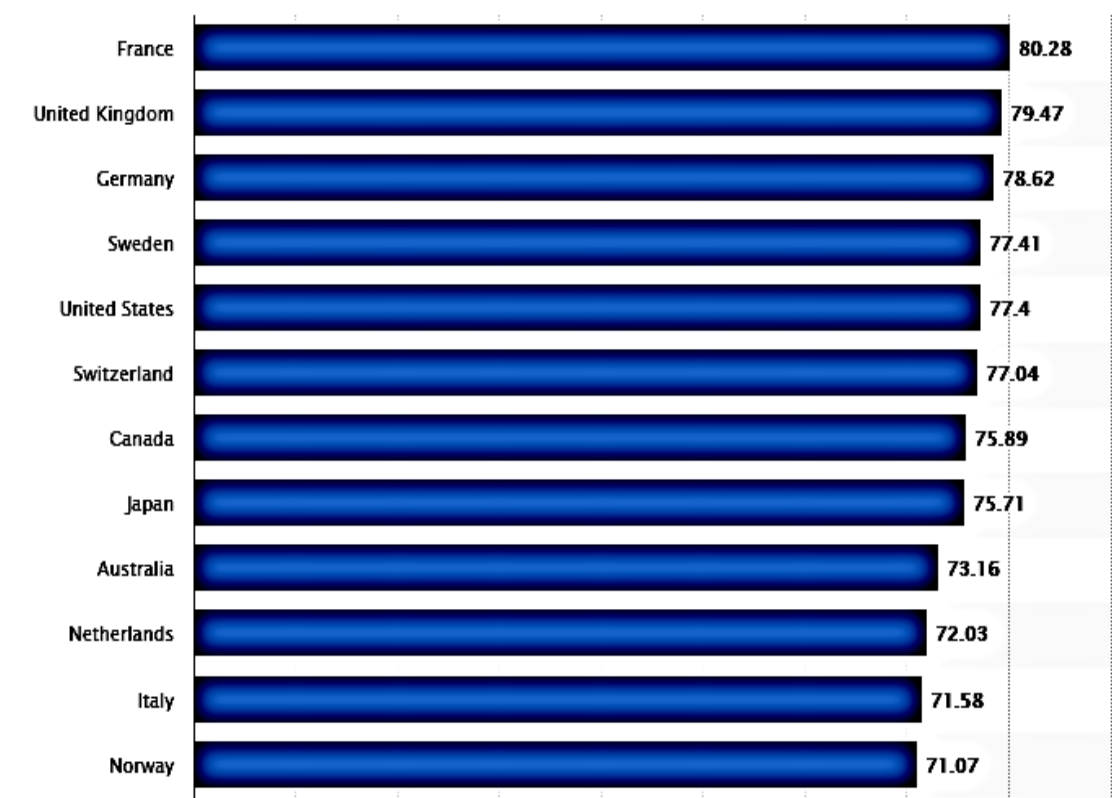


Figure 2.3: Global Soft Power Ranking 2019 (Duffin, 2020)

The Brand Finance Index interviewed over 55,000 respondents from more than 100 countries and asked for their views on 60 nations to see how the world views a

particular nation. The Global Soft Power Index builds upon the Brand Finance Nation Brands study, which has been published for over 15 years. Brand Finance started small and has grown at a gradual and steady pace. Until today over 5,000 commercial brands in 40 countries and 40 industrial sectors were valued by them (Haigh, 2020).

Brand Finance's Global Soft Power Index data has been included in the Brand Strength Index for the first time, meaning original research on global and domestic perceptions of nation brands is now part of Brand Finance's evaluation methodology.

In 2020, the US and China remained a cut above the rest but dropped in 2021. Belgium ranked as the world's 24<sup>th</sup> most valuable nation brand; China continues to close the gap behind long-standing leader the US; Japan claims 3<sup>rd</sup> position as it emerges relatively unscathed from the COVID-19 pandemic; Ireland is the only national brand in top 20 to record brand-value growth; Vietnam defies global trends, with its brand value up an impressive 29% as a Southeast Asian haven for manufacturing; Argentina is fastest falling nation brand, its brand value dropping 57%, as COVID-19 cases pass 1 million; and Germany is admired for its stable leadership as the world's strongest nation brand. The figure below shows the top 10 brands in terms of soft power.

Germany is ranked first in Brand Finance's Global Soft Power Index 2021, while the United States is the fastest-dropping country, falling to the sixth position. In reaction to COVID-19, New Zealand has been hailed as a global success story, rising to 16th place. Nations of good governance rise to the top 20. Japan is the best-performing Asian country and the second-best overall, behind only Germany. Traditional powerhouses—the United Kingdom (3rd), France (7th), China (8th),

Russia (13th), Italy (19th), and Spain (22nd) have mixed feelings about pandemic responses. The Global Soft Power Index 2021 has grown to 100 countries, with Iceland (30th) and Luxembourg (32nd) ranking as the top-rated new entrants. The overall headline results of Brand Finance's Soft Power Ranking in 2020 and 2021 are shown in Figure 2.4.



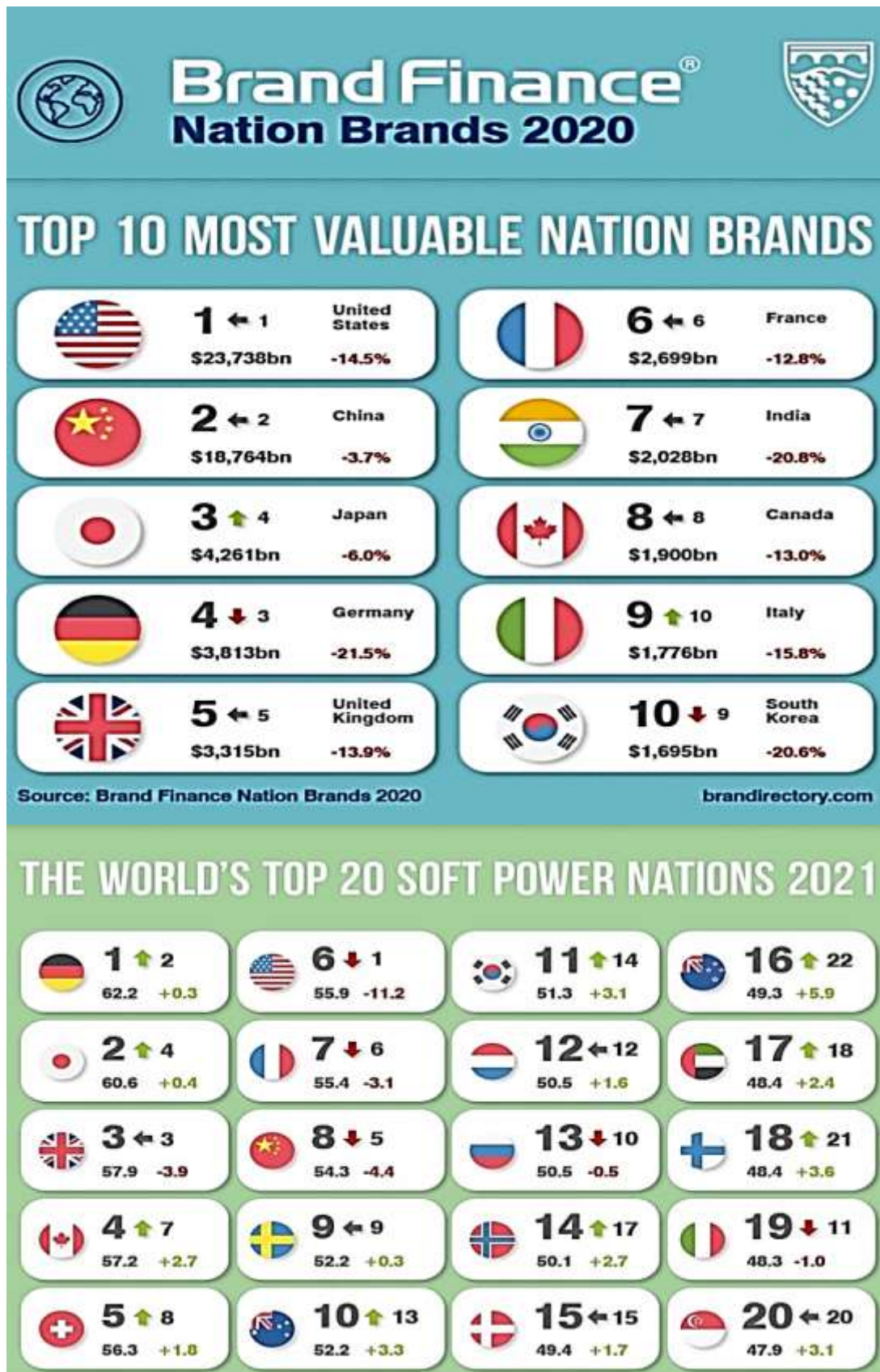


Figure 2.4: Top Ten National Brands (Brand Finance Nations, 2020, 2021)

### **2.3.2 Soft Power Strategies**

A country's soft power is based on its culture, values, and policies (Nye, 2008). As the most effective soft power diplomacy, cultural diplomacy has a long history as a means of promoting a country's soft power. According to Banks (2011), culture has always been a source of interaction with individuals sharing differences in lifestyles and beliefs. Culture brings about an opportunity for individuals to share different views that affect them and examine the best ways of improving their own lives. Cultural exchange is stronger than cultural diplomacy because it creates possibilities for effective international relationships among individuals. Through cultural exchange, individuals get the chance to listen to each other, talk, build dignity, and engage in teamwork. This is foundational to the attainment of the peaceful co-existence of different nations. Since cultural interactions have a common focus, individuals will likely come together and work toward achieving common goals derived through cultural initiatives.

Similarly, Schneider (2009) states that the potential of cultural diplomacy is yet to be realized even as the Internet becomes a vital tool for connecting people and boosting international relationships. In the contemporary world, cultural knowledge and understanding are shaping foreign policy because the world has become a global village, in which ideas spread easily and quickly. Emerging technology and cultural connections among people, especially the youth, via social media have changed how people view the world. For instance, cultural aspects like music and film have transformed how people see America, allowing the country to increase its international presence in countries like Iraq. For example, Banks (2011) emphasizes the challenge caused by the limitless role of culture in shaping foreign policy across the globe. The

government does not have to develop specific policies for international relationships; instead, it has to leave the whole process to cultural interactions.

Another study holds a different viewpoint with a focus on reviewing Hofstede's previously proposed cultural elements (Minkov et al., 2017). Said research was conducted in 56 countries (developed and developing), taking into account the countries undergoing cultural transformations and the idea that some countries have different terms for cultural understanding. People from other countries following either individualism or collectivism can come together and transform how they see the world. The only difference between the ideas of Minkov et al. (2017) and Schneider (2009) is that the former focuses on only two elements of individualism and collectivism within the society. Developed and developing countries experience challenges in terms of working toward the attainment of their goals. Despite this challenging reality, individuals who come from these countries and share their experiences of individualism or collectivism help build a robust global culture that boosts the relationships between these countries. As cultural interactions happen naturally, international relationships also gradually develop in their countries.

Scholars are interested to know how their nation's diplomacy leads to the growth towards the top. For example, a book chapter by Nair, Janenova, and Serikbayeva (2020) examines how Kazakhstan manages its global reputation and soft power as the country aims to be among the top thirty countries in the world by 2050 in terms of various rankings and ratings. The researchers reviewed different national cases and demonstrated issues that Kazakhstan urgently needs to address to achieve its global recognition goal and fulfill its objectives.

According to Uberoi (2018), national identity from a multicultural point of view is significant. His research focuses on the importance of promoting national identity in Britain, an idea that has been actively encouraged since the 1970s. Different practices and methods of promoting national identity were not known by the citizens. Nevertheless, Uberoi concludes that national identity happens within the broader scope of multiculturalism, which plays an instrumental role in allowing individuals to share standard views regardless of their religious and cultural perspectives. When individuals assume that they are a group irrespective of their differences, they build a solid national identity.

Inclusiveness, in terms of varying cultures, is a reliable way of achieving national goals. It is used to promote an international view of the existing multiculturalism. Governments should focus on educating children about the global acceptance of differences that exist among individuals. By building a national identity, a country's citizens can take the same ideas to other countries, thus improving co-existence and developing international friendships (Dinnie, 2010). For instance, an individual moving from Britain to America would be more aware of the advantages of multiculturalism if s/he has been educated enough about the importance of the said concept. Developing an understanding of multiculturalism begins from an early stage in life and continues with promoting the same idea toward the attainment of national identity.

Liu and Turner (2018) advocate and explain the same approach to establishing the national identity from a slightly different perspective than Uberoi (2018). They state that society is currently shifting because of many cultural forces, and the national identity of nations is a critical aspect in transforming how national identity is

established. The recent international mobility of Chinese students has prepared the ground for the growth of national identity and the gradual change of the Chinese nation to a modern country. According to the perspective offered by Liu and Turner (2018), sending Chinese youth to the United States and Europe is a turning point in the country's cultural growth and the establishment of a new China. The majority of the returning students have brought new cultural identities that have been significant in developing a progressive culture in the country. The international mobility of students has also ensured that they make new friends in those countries and have the opportunity to bring them to China to experience what their country has to offer. In this form of exchange, Chinese students have brought their culture abroad and imported the culture of other countries to China. This norm helped in bridging the global cultural gap of differences. Liu and Turner (2018) indicate that China is gradually building its culture of soft power by using various policy projects, including Chinese Wisdom, Chinese Rules, Chinese Theories, the Chinese System, and the Chinese Road. Thanks to China's cultural soft power, there is an increasingly better relationship between China and the rest of the world.

While Russia and the US have a long history and experience of ideological confrontation, China is a considerably new player in this field. The actual isolation of China until the 1970s required the political elites to develop new solutions in the sphere of soft-power application. The Chinese model is, in some ways, even more effective when compared to the Russian and US approaches (Cai et al., 2009; Liu & Turner, 2018).

China's national identity has not always been this strong; soft power had lost relevance in contemporary East Asia because aggression has become the channel of

choice for international relationships (Sun, 2013). Soft power was popular in Asia when powerful countries like Japan promoted its peaceful rise. Japan's cultural drive gave rise to the Cool Japan campaign, and the promotion of creativity helped attract global attention and grow international relationships. Despite some success, soft power has struggled to maintain a foothold in East Asia because of the aggression between countries. As Sun (2013) explains, China has been strict with border control with countries like Japan. The Philippines have also faced China over territorial interference. These aggressive episodes have made it difficult for soft power in East Asia to survive. Increasing tensions among countries and an almost continent-wide focus on the desire to demonstrate might have watered down efforts to sustain the soft-power approach.

Reviewing “The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone” by (Nye Jr, 2003), and “The Ideas That Conquered the World: Peace, Democracy, and Free Markets in the Twenty-First Century” by Mandelbaum (2002) confirm this lack of harmony, pointing to the view that soft power in Asia has been affected by rising tensions among different countries in the region. Problems such as the Indo-Pakistani conflict and the China and Taiwan conflict have presented a significant paradox regarding the success of the soft-power strategy. Cho and Jeong (2008) offer a counter-argument, stating that China is loyal to a soft-power strategy. They explain that China’s growing position in both the Asian region and internationally is a result of their ability to apply a soft-power strategy to their global activities. The applied key strategies include advertising Chinese values besides publicizing their culture. The export of Chinese culture and values have made China a

serious competitor to the United States, and China continues to have a global influence.

As much as peaceful coexistence is needed when approaching the relationships between different countries, individual differences between them pose a challenge that undoubtedly affects their dynamics. With the increasing American interest in the existing conflicts, it is not always easy to practice and deliver soft power in international relationships. Taking a unique perspective, Hall (2012) focuses on the new shape that diplomacy has taken in India. India's approach to soft power has been transforming since 2010. The country focused on using technology 2.0 to promote its soft-power approach and ensure that it is developing quality relationships with other countries across the globe. India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has facilitated the soft-power strategy through the Indian Public Diplomacy portal. This has created an opportunity for international policy growth and an understanding of how to best deal with other countries. This approach means both neighbors and other countries out of Asia benefit from India's approach to international policy. India has also focused on cultural exchange as a part of its international relations soft-power strategy. Not only has it concentrated on boosting its image in Asia, but also across continents like Africa. Adopting emerging technologies and culture-sharing to facilitate soft power has presented an opportunity for India to leverage both its economic and political positions across the world. These points indicate that India is an active user of the soft-power approach to international relations.

In the Middle East, as opposed to East Asia, sectarian tension between Iran and the GCC members led to its isolation from the rest of the region. According to the study by Beydoun and Zahawi (2016), sanctions applied to Iran created an absence of

investment opportunities from countries that are friendly to the US as a consequence of sectarian tensions. Despite the tensions, America's influence instigated a positive change from other countries, such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia, in their dealings with Iran, leading to an eventual lift of sanctions. The US involvement in Iran is a powerful example of its soft-power influence. In helping address the conflict between Iran and other nations, it has played a crucial role in boosting Iran's position in terms of economic development and the realization of its goals as a country. There is hope for the restoration of peace in the GCC region, with the rest of the countries lifting their bans on Iran. In this case, strained relationships, including the Iranian relationship with other nations, witnessed interventions in terms of soft-power strategy, leading to the gradual restoration of peace.

As stated earlier, the main objective of a state's soft-power policies is to increase influence over public-sphere processes in the target country. It is important to gain support among the local population and public communities using different sets of economic, political, social, and cultural instruments. The application of different instruments in soft-power policies can be understood through examples of infrastructural projects, like China's efforts (Lee, 2009), providing investments for targeted countries to make the local population and political elites more loyal to their needs.

The variety of solutions applied in the soft-power sphere also include the country's national culture as a means of targeted population persuasion. In this context, researchers agree that national governments should pay close attention to promoting national culture abroad as a means of influence in the public sphere. The discussion of the existing cultural policies of the United States abroad demonstrated that the



government should promote an intercultural dialogue using a variety of existing strategies, providing resources for local activists (Schneider, 2009, p. 263). To summarize, representatives of national cultural elites of the state abroad should serve as actors of cultural diplomacy, delivering information about the key values of their society to the foreign community-

Regarding the discussion of American society in Russia, equality, openness, transparency, and a fair attitude are important (Schneider, 2009, p. 263). It is evident that in this situation, the American position on culture appeared to the community as a more attractive prospect when compared to the Russian approach. To this end, cultural policies as a means of soft power should be applied to demonstrate that the approaches used in the country's culture adopting soft power are considerably more effective and useful than the culture of a target country (Schneider, 2009). As a result of such decisions, the target country's population becomes more supportive of the actions and decisions of the state, with the more developed culture seeking its support and guidance. The country that applies soft-power instruments in cultural policies should seek opportunities to become the cultural authority for the target country's population (Schneider, 2009).

By strengthening a state's position as a cultural authority abroad, its actual influence in global affairs keeps growing. There is a definite logic in the US government's decision to position itself as a protector of democratic values globally. By taking this stance, the state acts as a supreme owner of all democratic cultural values, and any state that aims to become more democratic should listen to its recommendations and seek its support. Assuming an advisor's position is a strategic

insight that allows the US to realize its foreign policy objectives without actual pressure on its opponents abroad.

When discussing cultural strategies realization, culture is as essential to soft power as brand identity is to marketing. Businesses develop brand identity with the same purpose as countries that develop cultural strategies: to gain public popularity and support for their products. In this context, the core element of brand identity development is brand mythology (Cayla & Arnould, 2008). Countries should be able to offer an attractive myth that is based on their cultural codes and can be shared with other countries. If this is the aim, then the challenge is to orient cultural specifics and needs for each concrete foreign state.

The main characteristic of cultural policies in the context of the soft-power strategy of the state is the orientation of the population as the main object of changes in the target country. To understand the role of cultural policies as a factor of impact on the population, it is important to present the concept of national identity. According to Uberoi (2018), national identity is a complex of features that can be utilized to describe the personality of a modern citizen or his/her cultural code, which defines a citizen's attitude to the events and aspects of life. Based on Uberoi's theory, national identity is affected by the traditions and culture of his/her native country. The traditions are delivered to each individual through family and society during the period of his/her growth.

As a result, focusing on enhancing educational projects that can impact the development of a person's identity is one of the most effective solutions in the context of a state's cultural strategy and soft-power model. The main objective of such a

strategy is to form an improved identity of a person, which would change his/her preferences and perception of the state's national culture. Therefore, the culture of a state that adopts soft power would be more attractive compared to the native country. A person affected by such policies is less likely to support his/her national interests, instead moving towards the strategies and recommendations offered by the country that applied soft-power solutions. This situation can serve as a source of risk for the state's national sovereignty, which should force all countries to protect their educational policies with significant motivation.

Where cultural policies inform soft-power solutions, the role of emotion is vital. Cultural policies that focus on improving the brand reputation of the state's national culture abroad constitute a cynical strategy based on the emotional influence on the local population's preferences. Cultural strategies should impact the target population's emotions, leading to positive associations with the cultural norms of a foreign state (Serazio, 2017, p. 239). Governmental agencies should implement policies based on the positive emotional presentation of the state and its culture. The government should attract scientists, artists, actors, and other representatives of the cultural elite to encourage the audience to take an interest in cultural heritage. In this way, cultural diplomacy should be considered as an analog to a marketing strategy in business, based on the development of myths about the brand and its promotion among the audience (Serazio, 2017).

The question of the sustainability of states' cultural strategies should be considered in the context of a concrete state's conditions. First, it is important to define the nature of the term "sustainability." In the context of cultural policies, it is the ability of government agencies to effectively implement and integrate similar cultural

strategies in foreign states for an extended period, adapting to necessary changes and succeeding in competition against other actors (Billard & Moran, 2019). Today, countries become zones of cultural competition between world leaders. States with the most active soft-power policies enter foreign countries and challenge each other on the effectiveness of their cultural policies. As a result, a state's government agencies should monitor the changes in their competitors' actions and adapt to them for a winning strategy.

Another factor of states' sustainability in cultural policies is the ability to adapt to the cultural code of the target country. Ensuring the communication of the national culture of the targeted community should be one of the most important factors of cultural policy (Kavaratzis & Kalandides, 2015). When a country applies a cultural strategy that confronts the national culture of the target state, this action will receive confrontation and aggression. The target country's population would likely consider such a cultural policy an insult, and the relations between the states may suffer. As a result, the objective of sustainable cultural policy is to analyze the national culture of the target country in the most detail to offer a solution that would improve the state's position.

The final issue for consideration within the context of a cultural policy's sustainability is represented by the political changes in the country that employs soft-power strategies. The realization of the cultural policy is a long-lasting and complex task, which cannot guarantee a fast result (Dinnie, 2010). The development of cultural connections between states usually requires decades of dialogue and cooperation. In this context, "the frequent change of political elites in caused by a democratic voting

system can create significant risks for the longevity of sustainable cultural policies” (Dinnie, 2010, p. 200).

“UNESCO is an international organization that works on the basis of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage” (Lowe, 2013, p. 18). The organization's objective is to protect the national cultural heritage of states for future generations. This activity can also be applied to the development of soft-power strategies. While UNESCO focuses on preserving monuments of cultural heritage, the states can attract attention to the signs of national culture and historical heritage on their territory to retain the attention of the global community. The demonstration of existing heritage signs should make the global community aware of the state’s precious historical baggage and attract additional attention to the study and analysis of this heritage (Blake, 2008). People worldwide should be interested in observing these signs of heritage, which in return would increase the tourists' inflow to the state. In this way, countries can create a brand image of a developed nation worthy of international attention (Lowe, 2013).

Where a lack of interest in developing cultural policies occurs, the lack of cultural positioning is due to resource expenses connected with this investment. The need to develop cultural projects and invest in cooperation requires the states to obtain significant resource reserves. Only a limited number of global players can afford such expenses. Nevertheless, the discussion of the best examples of cultural policies in Russia, China, and the U.S. demonstrates that the active pursuit of cultural policies is followed through by players who can afford strategic moves.

The comparison of the three major countries analyzed, namely Russia, China, and the United States, provides a unique insight into cultural strategy. The comparison of the solutions offered by all three states can improve knowledge about cultural policies in general. Soft power is growing exponentially, and new literature and findings are released each year.

According to McClory (2019), the top five soft-power countries in 2019 were: France, United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, and the United States. France's soft-power strength is focused on global engagement, diplomatic networks and cultural missions, food, art, sports, and tourism. In addition, UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is a specialized agency of the United Nations based in Paris) has recognized French cuisine and France as the country with the world's highest number of Michelin-styled restaurants in the world. Unlike the UK, France has been politically stable in recent years; the UK has had a tumultuous few years with Brexit, and headlines have dominated the media. Despite the media frenzy over Brexit, UK universities have remained part of the global elite, and in 2020 (QS rankings), four of the top ten universities in the world were British. Globally, British-based academics and researchers contribute significantly to journals, published papers, and academic research. Although regression in internal British politics contributed to the possible drop in ranking from first to second, the UK remains ahead in academic contribution. In 2019, regression was also noted in UK enterprise, with many companies deciding to outsource in other countries, as far back as 2014 (W. W. Chin, 2013; McClory, 2019). McFall (2007) highlighted the increasing demand for offshoring to low-cost locations such as China and India and what the impact had been on the UK economy. Besides, newspapers have been reporting significantly on the

increase in offshoring. The impact this has on the UK as soft power is yet to be fully understood; however, as an economy that has been strong for decades, the demand for UK manufactured goods is still desirable globally. For consumers, the low manufacturing prices translate to lower cost prices; however, the downside is an impact on UK employment.

In the 2019 report, the stated offshoring has increased, and UK firms have started to move business abroad in anticipation of Brexit. There was a 12% increase in the UK investment in the EU's 27 countries and an 11% decline the EU's 27 countries investing in the UK (Breinlich, Leromain, Novy, & Sampson, 2019, p. 1). Political changes within a government can resonate deeply in the global soft-power position. The political stance a country takes can also affect the economic drive. The two are not intangible (Breinlich et al., 2019, 2020).

As discussed previously, the US is a major soft-power actor. However, in 2019, the United States' soft power was ranked 5<sup>th</sup>. Some political and academic elites have highlighted the negative consequences of a leader by utilizing media to propagate to the world what goes against humanitarian efforts, such as the Mexico-US border, which can work against the said leader (Hearn, 2019). Moreover, Nye (2018) claims that Donald Trump's presidency has eroded America's soft power.

According to Anguelov (2017), soft power is the ability to coerce and lead without payment. After the Cold War, America and its allies used soft power to dominate and magnify their soft power politically. However, in recent years there has been a geopolitical shift from the West to the East and the rise of traditional media communication from non-government elites to ordinary citizens. Social media has

become a platform for all voices to be heard and seen, and this has consolidated the media dynamics that have potentially resulted in political discourse.

To summarize, political, economic, and cultural changes within a country can directly affect the country's soft power. In recent years, media has played a significant role in informing the global public about various political changes. The UAE aspires to create a regional and global standing and has actively developed and employed policies that create a positive brand image, which has attracted foreign investments, international interest, and foreign tourists. For example, Dubai and Abu Dhabi have created a diverse range of economic free zones that have attracted local and international investments, focusing on economic strategies and diversification. Most of UAE's revenues are generated from oil and gas; however, many globally recognized brands have also been established.

This recognition is imperative in international affairs and foreign policy, economic diversity, and development (Sun, 2013). The figure below shows the different factors that influence soft-power strength.

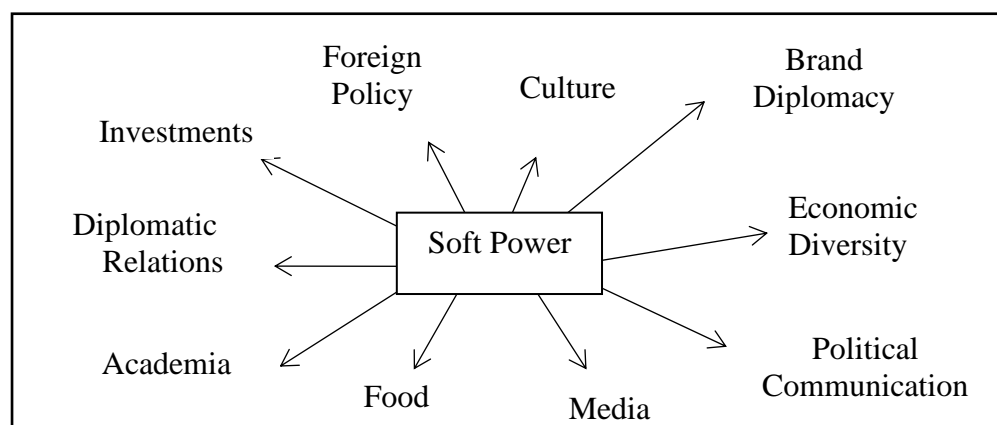


Figure 2.5: Different Factors That Influence Soft-Power Strength



The Emirates brand is a feature on many global platforms. The globally known Arsenal football club is infamously linked to its Emirates stadium, the Emirates airline cable car that runs over the River Thames, and the Emirates airline that operates in over 161 destinations. Emirates, as a brand, has witnessed exponential growth, which is not limited to reliability, hospitality, efficiency, and innovation. As discussed previously, soft-power branding and culture are linked. Football in the UK and globally is a diverse sport, bringing together different countries and nationalities. In 2019, the Scottish Financial News reported that football brought 8 bn. to the UK economy, and with Arsenal being in the top 5, the name “Emirates” is synonymous with British culture. The UAE is not limited to foreign investments; ADNOC (Abu Dhabi National Oil Company) is one of the world’s leading energy producers. Since 1971, they have created thousands of jobs and contributed to the socio-economic development of the UAE. ADNOC facilitated the development of hospitals, bridges, schools, universities, world-class communication, and infrastructure (Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed, 2019). In 2019, the ADNOC Campaign of Energy for Life was launched. According to Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed:

*“As a reliable supplier to the global economy and our commitment to responsible production of energy, the UAE will continue to use its energy resources to promote prosperity and strengthen bridges with our friends and partners in the international community”* (The National, 2019, November 17).

Many further examples showcase the UAE's diverse soft-power and socio-economic developments, where nation branding is powerful. It is evident from published articles that the UAE invests in projects that serve humanity. Through its diverse vision, the economy is booming (Burweila & Nomikos, 2019).

The UAE can learn from its other global leaders in soft power, where they constantly publicize strengths through social media. It will be interesting to see if the UAE population has noticed media use to publicize the country's excellence in diverse fields that contribute to soft power.

As recently as 2018, H. E. Anwar Mohammed Gargash (Gulf News) highlighted that the soft-power strategy aims to “propel the country's global reputation abroad by highlighting its identity, heritage, culture and contributions of the UAE to the world” (EE online, 2019, September 3) in terms of renewable energy and experience in solar power.

What is evident is that soft power can be successful and requires commitment. The different areas that contribute to soft power, such as economic diversity or diplomatic relations, can affect a country's global soft-power image and reputation. In addition, through the discussed research, it has been evident that adverse decisions can impact an economy while its perception by the media plays a pivotal role.

Leeper and Slothuus (2018) define framing theory as a type of media effect that encompasses persuasion, agenda-setting, priming, and demonstrating different ways through which the media can influence the public. In this regard, the varied forms of media influence indicate a number of alternatives through which the media can influence public opinion and behavior.

Some literature indicates that the media can influence public opinion and behavior through pervasive, profound, and indeed “hypodermic” influence on citizens' thinking and their particular opinions on objects within the social and political world (ibid). Conversely, skeptics assert that media only temporarily, shallowly, and partially

influences people. The dispute regarding the core belief that the media can influence public views, behaviors, and opinions is ongoing. However, a definition of the framing theory is also presented by Scheufele (1999), who goes on to describe the concept of framing as embedded within the broader context of media effects.

### **2.3.2.1 Top Soft-power Countries**

This section of the study includes a discussion of the best practices utilized by modern states in the process of soft-power policy realization. Ideally, each modern state should be capable of implementing soft-power initiatives to succeed in a time of rising global competition for resources, markets, and influence. At the same time, the format of this study does not allow the researcher to perform a detailed analysis of the whole variety of approaches utilized by different countries. Given these limitations, it is sensible to select and assess a few practices of interest within the sphere of national branding, which are utilized by the leading states.

The first top-ranked country in the Brand Finance Index of 2021 is Germany for its stability, steadiness, and accountability. Although Germany's rank increased by 0.3 points in government and international relations, the nation's most significant leap forward came in education and science, which increased by 0.8 points year on year. Low illness and death rates supported Germany's COVID-19 response score, with the country rating 5.7 out of 10 overall, a performance that corresponds to Germany's gains in governance and education and science. When it comes to best practices, German brands are known as the gold standard. Education and science is a significant field of the Global Soft Power Index. Germany has also advanced to the top of this metric. In 2012, the minister of economy launched an awareness initiative to promote

German companies by introducing a brand logo branded as “The German Mittelstand,” which became a certification label for creative German businesses. It is undeniably beneficial as the government helps in operations by means of innovative programs, which eventually leads to better outcomes. The initiative had a major effect on improving the reputation of German companies and creating emerging growth prospects in the future (Drechsel, 2021).

The other top-rated country in the soft-power context is the United Kingdom, which has retained its 3<sup>rd</sup> position in the Global Soft Power Index 2021 (Brand Finance, 2021). In 2021, the UK fell by 3.9 points to a total index score of 57.9 out of 100. This drop in score is partially attributable to expectations of the country's response to the pandemic, of which the country rates a dismal 34<sup>th</sup> internationally. This follows from the unclear approach of Boris Johnson, the current UK prime minister, to the COVID-19 pandemic and refusal to enforce lockdowns, which has resulted in exceptionally high death rates across the United Kingdom. However, with the country moving full speed ahead with vaccinations and a straightforward road map to rehabilitation presented, views are expected to change. Surprisingly, this confusion has had little effect on the UK's scores in the international relations and governance pillars; in reality, the UK has risen in rank and ranking to second and ninth. The United Kingdom remains committed to internationalism, becoming the world's second-largest provider of humanitarian aid by the general public. David Haigh, CEO of Brand Finance, stated: “Despite its economy being dwarfed by the rising dominance of the Eastern giants, China and Japan, the UK continues to be a force to be reckoned with in the soft power arena. Throughout the nation's long history, it has reaped the rewards of the English language, as the most widely spoken and written language in the world,

and the popularity of the British Monarchy – with the Queen still head of state to 16 nations globally. The soft power prowess the nation has banked will certainly stand the test of time, regardless of any short-term hurdles” (Brand Finance, 2021).

Although the U.S rank has dropped in some soft-power indexes over the past few years, a discussion of the different combinations of soft-power practices and methods the U.S had used to remain a successful nation and build its national reputation is valuable and essential for the definition of the study findings. The United States' application of soft power as a method of commercial nationalism is studied with interest since it has realized the most extensive list of instruments in its policy. The concept of “commercial nationalism” is related to the political ideology of neoliberalism (Bolin & Miazhevich, 2018, p. 529). The US was known to be one of the leading neoliberal states in the modern world.

The promotion of the US image to the rest of the world is conveyed through the media and news agencies. This occurs in combination with the US active operation within the segment of mass media and public culture (Castillo, 2019). The most important instrument is Hollywood, which develops mass-culture products delivered to most modern countries. The role of Hollywood as a promoter of the American lifestyle model is not to be underestimated. The cinema products of this organization are supposed to present a positive image of the US to the world community, motivating other societies to follow the American ideological and political model. For developing countries, the idea of an American-lifestyle model can represent a factor of serious social conflict and change in their states (Gundle, 2020). While the existing literature stipulates that it is the media that promotes the US image, some aspects of cultural and social capital, including the American networks considering the strength of national

attachment, are transferred through other social actions, such as migration (Marrow & Klekowski von Koppenfels, 2020).

Together with this, the United States' soft-power policies are digitally realized online. In this context, it is important to mention the role of the American influence on social-media platforms. "A recent study demonstrated the fact that the US government has developed a set of cyber troop teams, engaged in issues of social network monitoring and the combat of misinformation" (Bradshaw & Howard, 2018, p. 16). United States officials were the first to use social media to promote American interests abroad effectively. Other states later applied this practice, but the US founded this ideology and the practice of social media usage.

The promotion of the US image is not limited to media. The United States is a global leader in the sphere of cultural policy realization, and this is supported by the results of its global-presence ranking assessment. This indicator estimates the global presence and effective positioning of countries in the world. According to the assessment, the US is the top-ranking country, coming in first with 2,494.1. The second world leader in this domain is China, with just 840.7 points. Russia appears in the seventh position, with 380.3 points (Olivie & Gracia, 2018). This comparison shows that the US holds a considerable lead over its key competitors, making it more interesting to analyze the factors that led to its significant success.

Historically, the US has occupied a leading position in the global media environment. The US companies are the top producers of content for the media industry. News agencies and Hollywood have significantly contributed to the US's recognition in the modern world, and their products primarily deliver American

cultural values to the audience, meeting no opposition in the target markets. Other media giants like Marvel, Disney, and DC also contribute to the success of American culture on the global scale. The global success of the Marvel film, “Avengers: Endgame,” which won the competition against “Avatar” by James Cameron, are examples to support this point. Considering the movie's cultural code, it delivered the main elements of the American culture to the audience, with a focus on impacting children. The development of new authorities among the main characters of these movies creates significant support for the US culture abroad (Dubois & Dubois, 2019).

Another cornerstone of the US cultural policy abroad is the expansion of US business giants like Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Google, and Microsoft (USC Center of Public Diplomacy, 2019). All of these tech companies are American, and their success abroad is directly associated with the success of the American culture, economy, and politics. When customers worldwide use the products of US companies, they associate their utility and effectiveness with the American social model. The US has demonstrated to the global community that its societal model can generate successful businesses, as well as unique and attractive products. The activities of US businesses abroad are an instrument of cultural policy, which may not even include the actions of state agencies (McClory, 2019).

Other sectors touched by the success of US cultural policies include “education and digital. The US had created the most extensive list of educational programs for international students and student exchange programs” (USC Center of Public Diplomacy, 2019). The international student-exchange program is an essential cultural policy instrument (Liu & Turner, 2018). As a result of the exchange, international students can travel to other countries and share opinions about the existing situation in

their native states. American students deliver information about the benefits of the American system abroad, which, in turn, motivates foreign young people to share their values and love for the United States.

Young people who participate in exchanges hold the future of the target country's society. Therefore, the US heavily invests in the promotion of its influence in this realm. Simultaneously, the opportunity for international students to visit the US while in education allows them to see the benefits of the American system themselves (Liu & Turner, 2018). Unfortunately, the policies of the current US President, Donald Trump, promote the isolation of the US and a budget reduction in the cultural policies of the US State Department (USC Center of Public Diplomacy, 2019). Given this political climate, the US is likely to lose global recognition and support in the near future. This fact is related to the economic and political issues inside the United States. While negative for the US, the removal of the US from its position as a global cultural leader provides opportunities for other players, mainly China.

A benefit and result of the US commercial nationalism is the global delivery of a culture of consumerism and Western democracy and a broad range of technical decisions that support the fulfillment of this objective (Trentmann, 2004). At the same time, the US was the most effective actor in discrediting its opponents in the field of public opinion; this strategy is best recognized in the confrontation between the US and USSR and its later confrontation with Russia. While the USSR aimed to present the US as an evil system using traditional propaganda instruments, the US managed to integrate the idea of the USSR and Russia as an "Evil Empire" using the instruments of mass media. The "Evil Empire" speech was delivered by Ronald Reagan, who served as the 40<sup>th</sup> US President, to the National Association of Evangelicals in 1983



(Rowland & Jones, 2016, p. 26). The film industry and news agencies edited their work to present only negative images of the USSR and Russia and create negative associations for their audience. Today, the US applies the same policy against China and the Middle East (Leyda, 1983).

Compared to the other mentioned states, Russia is the object of a study that is least understood from the position of its national branding policy. This fact makes Russian actions in the sphere of soft-power application difficult to understand for the world community and the political elites of different states. The principal contradiction of Russia's soft-power policy is that despite the active confrontation between Russia and the Western world, Russia is in the headlines of public discussions, and the role of Russian elites in the world is significant. Since 2014, when Russian political elites were accused of aggressive intrusion into the political processes in Ukraine, Western elites have declared a policy of sanctions against Russia and created conditions for the political and economic isolation of the state. The idea of this policy was to remove opportunities for the economic development of the state and force Russian elites into a more peaceful and democratic policy (Delcour & Wolczuk, 2015).

Despite the negative press, the analysis of recent news from media sources demonstrates that Russia remains one of the most active players in world politics. Russian President Vladimir Putin is actively engaged in processes of conflict resolution worldwide. Russia plays a leading role in various formats of international cooperation, including G20, conflict resolution in Syria, and international cooperation between Europe and Asia. These facts demonstrate that Western sanctions have not led to the isolation of Russia. On the contrary, Russia's application of soft-power instruments has allowed the state to become even more influential in the modern world.

The brightest example of this result is the recent decision of US President Donald Trump to invite Russia to the G7 format to restore the G8 format. Impressively, this means that the Russian soft-power policy will have succeeded in overcoming its Western sanctions position in about five years (Becker, 2004; Wolfsfeld & Gadi, 1997).

In this context, it is important to understand what actions led to Russia's success in the modern world. Compared to the US and China, Russia cannot be considered an active user of traditional commercial nationalism practices. The tourism industry is also an area of "soft power" considered to be under development (Bunakov et al., 2018). The only Russian media instrument available in the West is the *Russia Today* news channel, which on its own is not influential enough to be considered as the instrument that has driven the state to reach its current success. Russia did not develop the brand of a prosperous country that could be attractive to other countries. Instead, the Russian model of soft power is founded on the state brand as a reliable and trustworthy partner in the sphere of international relations. In short, Russia positions itself as an active peacekeeper in the modern world—granted, Russian intrusion into Ukrainian politics remains a reason for criticism. Nevertheless, the state demonstrated effective soft-power politics in other regions. In Syria, Russian engagement led to the resolution of ISIS aggression at a time when the US and Western states have failed. This led Russia to become one of the pioneering actors in the Middle East. Russian elites position themselves as loyal to the international law standards and win from the comparison between Russia as a trustworthy ally and the US as the actor that ignored its ally responsibilities in the past (Dimitrova & Dragneva, 2009).

Among the cultural barriers that limit opportunities for Russian soft-power application abroad are the ideological models of Western states. For them, Russia remains the “evil empire,” and this is an ideological image that the country must overcome if Russia wants to strengthen its global standing and reputation (Rowland & Jones, 2016).

Technological opportunities available to Russia include active participation in the resolution of global conflicts, which is a significant solution. Russia's economic potential is too limited to compete in the sphere of public media, as is typical for the US, or to develop global infrastructure projects like China. The only available solution to Russia is its promotion as the peacekeeper and protector of international law (Walker, 2019).

Compared to the US, Russia has the most ineffective cultural policy, mainly due to the state's economic potential. A certain part of Russia's global recognition is caused by the significant reputation of the USSR, which is considered to be the legal predecessor of modern Russia. Most opponents of US influence in the modern world consider Russia to be a logical opponent of the US and its potential protector. Russia currently gains political and military potential, which can make it a reliable partner for all global opponents of the US (Dinnie, 2010).

Culturally, Russia reached its goals through scientific cooperation and distribution of Russian culture abroad. Examples of successful scientific collaboration are evident in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, where the Russian company Rosatom led to the development of innovative projects like nuclear power plants. As a result, Russia has positioned itself as a leader in nuclear technologies and the space industry. Despite

confrontations with the US and the Western world, American space projects are still realized using Russian space engines. Through these efforts and achievements, Russia presents an image of successful scientific cooperation, which is its tool for cultural policy realization (Helmus et al., 2018).

Another sphere for the application of cultural resources in Russia is art. The most recent example of art as a tool for soft power is when the Russian military orchestra organized a concert in the Syrian Palmira region after the removal of terrorists. The significance of this concert is in the message the event delivered to the global community. The Russian military orchestra played in the ruins of a monument that serves as a heritage site for one of the most ancient world civilizations. Through this image, Russia delivered the following statement: “We are the country with military power that can protect world cultural heritage, and establish peace for mutual prosperity and development.” Despite its resource limitations, Russia has successfully managed to apply its available potentials for the highest probable outcomes (Helmus et al., 2018).

The discussion of the application of soft power in modern politics demonstrates this strategy's relevance for the realization of the state's objectives; leading players in world politics are all actively using this instrument in their operations. Each of the countries presents three different strategies of soft-power application, each of them with specific, interesting, and unique elements. For each of the world leaders, the realization of the chosen soft-power strategy led to the desired result. Building on this research, it is important to discuss other means of soft-power realization and monitor its possible future applications.

Among developed countries, Norway's status in the world's Soft Power 30 elite is maintained by its constant top position on the human development index, high life expectancy, high-quality education, and high gross domestic product per capita. Norway's key to reclaiming its 12<sup>th</sup> place has been gradual progress. The most significant progress has been made in education, with Norway rising seven points in the rankings. Universities in Norway continue to be tuition-free for all, and government spending on education—the largest as a percentage of GDP in the world—is proving to be a worthwhile investment. Other than that, Norway's rankings have been stable. The Government Pension Fund of Norway's decision to divest from fossil fuels brings ecological credentials to Norway's international image, as does its continued contribution to social justice and fair income distribution.

Scholars are interested to know how their nation's diplomacy leads to the growth towards the top and an interdependent world order. This is especially true in the case of non-brand or small states; for example, how Kazakhstan manages its global reputation and soft power as the country aims to be among the top thirty countries in the world by 2050 in terms of various rankings and ratings (Nair et al., 2020); promoting national identity in Britain (Uberoi, 2018); how Nepal as a small state can effectively examine its soft-power sources to garner influence in the global power structure and meet its foreign policy objectives (Karki & Dhungana, 2020); and how Norwegian soft-power practices have proven world-wide currency (Huq, 2019). Bear in mind that every state's soft power relies on the capital it has and can mobilize (Karki & Dhungana, 2020).

### 2.3.2.2 Asian Soft-Power Practices

Ever since Joseph Nye coined the phrase “soft power,” global soft-power indices have been released to rank countries according to their international appeal and reputation. As will be discussed in the following section, the U.S., which was at the top of these indices, has now dropped to the fifth position, Germany has moved up to the first place, and the U.K. remains stable in the third position. Several European countries also earned top spots, including Switzerland (fifth), France (sixth), and Sweden (ninth), while Canada is fourth and Australia 10<sup>th</sup>, with minor variations when compared to last year. However, when it comes to Asian soft powers, such as China, with a tumultuous year of competition and reciprocal recrimination with the United States, or Thailand, a country profoundly dependent on tourism that has dropped in rankings, the situation has ups and downs. China ranked down from fifth place in 2020 to eighth place in 2021. Japan, on the other hand, ranked up from fourth to second place. South Korea boosted its ranking as well, moving up from 14<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>. Singapore and Thailand have stayed stable in 20<sup>th</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> place, respectively, while India has slipped several positions to 36<sup>th</sup>, only ahead of Malaysia (39<sup>th</sup>) and Indonesia (40<sup>th</sup>) (45<sup>th</sup>). Vietnam is a distinct possibility. Vietnam moved to the 47<sup>th</sup> position in the index, presumably due to its successful handling of the pandemic. The Philippines is not far away but ranks 53<sup>rd</sup>, down from 52<sup>nd</sup> the previous year. Myanmar saw the most significant decline, falling more than 30 positions to 90<sup>th</sup> place, and this was most likely before the military retook control at the beginning of February (Carminati, 2021).

Japan is the best-performing Asian country and the second-best overall in soft power (60.6 out of 100), moving up two points from last year. Japan continues to enjoy

the benefits of its powerful labels, robust customer spending, and high rate of corporate activity, placing first in business and trade support for the second year in a row. Also, Japan's education and science score has improved, and it now ranks first in this metric (Brand Finance, 2021). Japan was the most successful non-Western and Asian “soft power nation” in Southeast Asia, as reported by the ASEAN Studies Centre written by (Tang et al., 2019). Its ranks increased to fourth (after the US, the EU, Australia, 2019) as the preferred choice of tertiary education, and it is the second most preferred destination to visit. The Japanese language is the third most popular foreign language after English and Mandarin. Southeast Asians have the highest regard for Japan. About two-thirds of all respondents are “confident” or “very confident” that Japan will “do the right thing” in international relations. The score of 65.9 percent is the highest among all major powers, essentially establishing Japan as the region's most trusted major force.

As it stated, South Korea ranking moving up from 14<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>. And the country's global image has improved even more after the coronavirus outbreak as the country is perceived as a model of how to cope with the crisis. Singapore and Thailand have stayed stable in 20<sup>th</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> place, respectively, while India has slipped several positions to 36<sup>th</sup>, only ahead of Malaysia (39<sup>th</sup>) and Indonesia (45<sup>th</sup>). Vietnam moved to the 47<sup>th</sup> position in the index, presumably due to its successful handling of the pandemic. The Philippines is not far away but ranks 53<sup>rd</sup>, down from 52<sup>nd</sup> the previous year. Myanmar saw the most significant decline, falling more than 30 positions to 90<sup>th</sup> place, and this was most likely before the military retook control at the beginning of February.

A survey report by the ASEAN Studies Centre with 1,008 experts and stakeholders in Southeast Asians shows that over the past decade, South Korea, as the fourth-largest economy in Asia and the 11th-largest in the world, has built powerful industries in high tech, mobile, automotive, and technology. This survey presented a general view of attitudes influencing soft-power policy (regional political, economic, and social issues and concerns) (Tang et al., 2019).

Korean citizens played an essential role in the rise of their national brand by being the first to model “voluntary passive social isolation,” an element that was vital to the success of the government’s measures (Attias, 2020). According to this report, China has the highest economic influence in Southeast Asia, followed by Japan, Thailand (16.8%), the Philippines (14.4%), Laos (13.8%), Indonesia (10.4%), Malaysia (10.4%), Singapore (9.5%), and Cambodia (8.3%). From a political soft-power standpoint, China has the most influence in political and strategic matters. This view is most pronounced in Brunei (53.4%), Vietnam (52.1%), and Cambodia (50%). In comparison, 30.5% think the US is still the most influential in this domain. ASEAN—which continues to surprise throughout the survey—obtains 20.8% of the vote share.

Overall, Western soft power continues to predominate in Southeast Asia. From an Asian point of view, overall, 81.1 percent of the respondents’ favor “Western education”; 56.1 percent prefer Europe, the United States, and Australia as vacation destinations; and the English language is widely regarded as the most useful and profitable foreign language in the country. Japan is South Korea's most prosperous non-Western/Asian "soft power country."



Overall, Western soft power is still dominant in Southeast Asia. Collectively, 81.1% of the respondents favor “Western education”; 56.1% list Europe, the US, and Australia as their favorite destinations to visit; and the English language is overwhelmingly considered the most useful and beneficial foreign language in the region. The results of this survey suggest that Chinese soft-power penetration in mainland Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam) is surprisingly low despite the widespread belief that these countries have a closer cultural affinity with China. Chinese universities are the least preferred choice for higher education among the respondents from Myanmar and Vietnam. In terms of tourism appeal, China ranks the second last, before only India. China’s most potent soft-power tool is the Mandarin language. Even then, the number of respondents in mainland Southeast Asia choosing Mandarin as the “most useful and beneficial foreign language” is surprisingly lower than in maritime Southeast Asia: Thailand (49.1%), Cambodia (37.5%), Laos (24.1%), Vietnam (27.6%) and Myanmar (18.7%). The low appeal of Chinese educational institutions and tourism and moderate interest in its national language are critical soft-power challenges for China in the region. While these results do not represent public opinion, they raise serious concerns about Asian countries' soft power. In this regard, this survey shows there are four top-six security concerns that Asian countries need to address: (1) domestic political instability; (2) ethnic and religious tensions; (3) climate change, and; (4) economic downturn (Tang et al., 2019).

Singapore is simultaneously a small multicultural nation-state and a cosmopolitan global city. To manage fundamental contradictions, the state takes the lead in authoring the national narrative. This is partly an internal process of nation-

building, but it is also achieved through more commercially motivated and outward-facing efforts at nation and city branding. Both sets of processes contribute to Singapore's capacity to influence foreign affairs, if only for national self-preservation. For a small state with resource limitations, this is mainly through the exercise of smart power, or the ability to combine soft- and hard-power resources strategically. Singapore is such a small country, yet it commands a great deal of attention when all countries are looking for new ideas for to grow and develop sustainably. Singapore's brand is important for its commercial success and soft power and its ability to attract people without military might (Tan, 2018).

In the Global Soft Power Index 2021, the soft-power rank of fifteen nations in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) increased, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Qatar, Egypt, Iran, Algeria, and Iraq, respectively. The UAE is the region's highest-ranked nation with an overall index score of 48.4 out of 100 and 17<sup>th</sup> globally. The country has experienced an improvement in the governance soft power (18<sup>th</sup>), education and science soft power (19<sup>th</sup>), and people and values soft power (24<sup>th</sup>) pillars, with the governance pillar showing the most significant improvement among the top 20, as perceptions of its political stability vastly improve. Qatar and Saudi Arabia have both seen substantial changes in their soft power, with significant increases in favorable opinions of their governments and perceptions of the countries as stable and prosperous. The UAE is also the highest-ranked nation from Asia and 15<sup>th</sup> globally on the COVID response metric and is perceived to have handled the pandemic better than Qatar and Saudi Arabia; however, the UAE scores lower on the familiarity metric (37<sup>th</sup>), which proves to be a limiting factor across the COVID-19 metric generally. Saudi Arabia is the second-highest ranked MENA nation, which

improved its scores across the familiarity soft power (32<sup>nd</sup>), governance soft power (27<sup>th</sup>), and culture and heritage soft power (39<sup>th</sup>) metrics. The nation has recorded significant improvements in governance, being a safe and secure nation.

Among Asian countries, China's ranking as a soft power is continually dropping. The state brand delivered by Chinese political elites has seriously changed during the past few decades. Initially, China faced a crisis of culture inside the country. As a historically Maoist communist community, China has had to sacrifice these roots to move towards the active integration of capitalist ideology within the sphere of public life (Kang, 2012, p. 922). This change led to the development and delivery of a new model of Chinese identity. In recent times, China has been positioned not as a global center of socialism but rather as the world's economic leader. China abandoned the image of a communist society because they understood it was unattractive to the modern world. Instead, China rebuilt its image as a hub of economic development and prosperity, and this was the message it delivered to other states. While the US was considered a distributor of democracy, China positioned itself as a distributor of prosperity (Kang, 2012).

With China's new image came new barriers associated with the differences in the culture between China and other states. China has a unique culture that is not common in the Western world or most other Asian countries. A recent study demonstrated that Chinese culture is still poorly understood by the world (McClory, 2019). This factor requires additional flexibility in foreign relations with China (USC Center of Public Diplomacy, 2019), and the Chinese elites have had to be flexible in the adoption of the local conditions of foreign states.

As for technology as a promotional vessel for ideas, China is even more creative than the US and Russia. Primarily, China's creativity is channeled through its economic potential. Many solutions available to China are not cost-effective for Russia and the US; this gives China an edge. Among China's ideas, the most important instrument is the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). This is a global project designed to unite China's infrastructure with a full list of countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. Through the BRI project, China hopes to attract the mentioned states into its orbit of influence. China operates its impact by investing significant sums into the chosen countries, expecting that they will gain political power in those regions (Chan et al., 2020).

In combination with China's global strategy, the activity of Chinese tourists is also worth noting. The booming Chinese tourism policy in Africa is a prime example of China's foreign influence. There, Chinese tourists serve within local communities, demonstrating the goodwill of China and the benefits of cooperation with the state (Chen & Duggan, 2016). China is also active in the question of international scientific cooperation. These combined policies and projects make China one of the leading players in the sphere of soft-power application.

As for the Chinese cultural policies, these are complicated by significant differences between the Chinese culture and that of most modern states. Chinese culture is unique, not similar to any other Asian culture, and even more disparate from Western cultures. This fact makes it difficult for China to compete in the global cultural environment (Link, 2019). In answer to this challenge, China has adopted a strategy focused on the active movement of Chinese citizens around the world. Global tourism policies include the ease of movement for Chinese people as tourists and international

students (Liu & Turner, 2018). Today, Chinese citizens are the image of prosperity and wellbeing in Chinese society. They buy expensive goods abroad, stay in luxury hotels, and have purchase power that exceeds tourists from other countries. Tourist positioning makes it possible for the local population to decide that China is an economically developed and prosperous state that is attractive to live in and visit. Ironically, one of China's biggest problems is the overwhelming poverty in rural areas, which has not been solved or overcome. Despite its economic challenges, China's cultural policy makes it possible to create a myth about this prosperous state in Asia (Link, 2019).

### **2.3.2.3 UAE Soft-Power Practices**

The assessment of the effectiveness of the current soft-power strategy of the UAE should start from a discussion of the relevant ratings of states from the position of soft-power strategy. In the 2018 Elcano Global Presence Index (EGPI) assessment, the UAE ranked 21<sup>st</sup> (Heras-Saizarbitoria et al., 2018; Olivié & Gracia, 2018). Considering the different dimensions of the global-presence index, the ranking of economic presence for the UAE was assessed at the 20<sup>th</sup> position, military presence level was found to be equal to the 31<sup>st</sup> position, and the soft-power ranking of the state obtained the 26<sup>th</sup> position. It is important to highlight the significant improvement in the global ranking position of the UAE from 1990 to 2017. While in 1990, the global ranking position of the UAE was in the 67<sup>th</sup> position, in 2017, the country occupied the 21<sup>st</sup> position. Finally, the global presence shares in international politics for the UAE had increased from 0.1% in 1990 to 1% in 2017. Taken together, the current soft-power policy of the state contributed to the increase of its weight in the world politics sphere. Nevertheless, it is important to perform a complex assessment of the current

soft-power strategy of the UAE to identify factors that led to the effective improvement of the state's international positions. It is also imperative to provide recommendations for further improvement of the country's positions in this sphere based on its soft-power strategy.

Another source of information for the assessment of the current positions of the UAE in the international political sphere is the Brand Finance report on the Global Soft Power Index 2020. According to the outcomes of the performed analysis, UAE's performance in the sphere of soft-power strategy development was assessed as best compared to most other countries in the Middle East. The global ranking of the UAE from this position equaled the 18<sup>th</sup> position (Brand Finance, 2021; Haigh, 2020). The soft-power score of the state equaled 45.9 points out of 100, and the following parameters of soft-power strategy were assessed, namely: awareness and familiarity level, the overall influence of the state, overall reputation, and the current performance of the state on each of the seven soft-power pillars. The assessment of results for each of the seven pillars of soft power is an important indicator of the current effectiveness of the soft-power strategy of the UAE, thus each of these pillars should be mentioned. Among them, the following were defined: Business & Trade, Governance, International Relations, Culture & Heritage, Media & Communication, Education & Science, People & Values (refer to Figure 2.6). The outcomes of the global ranking assessment of each of these parameters for the UAE are presented in Figure 2.7.

As can be seen from the results of the global soft power ranking assessment for the UAE and the comparison of these outcomes with the progress of the best players in the class, the UAE lacks the effectiveness of soft-power policies in all categories of assessment. The sphere where the effectiveness of the soft-power policies of the UAE

is closest to the best world standards is business and trade. Experts from Brand Finance agreed that the appealing business environment, stable economy, and consensus among investors about the attractiveness of the UAE as a business center define strong positions of the organization in this sphere.

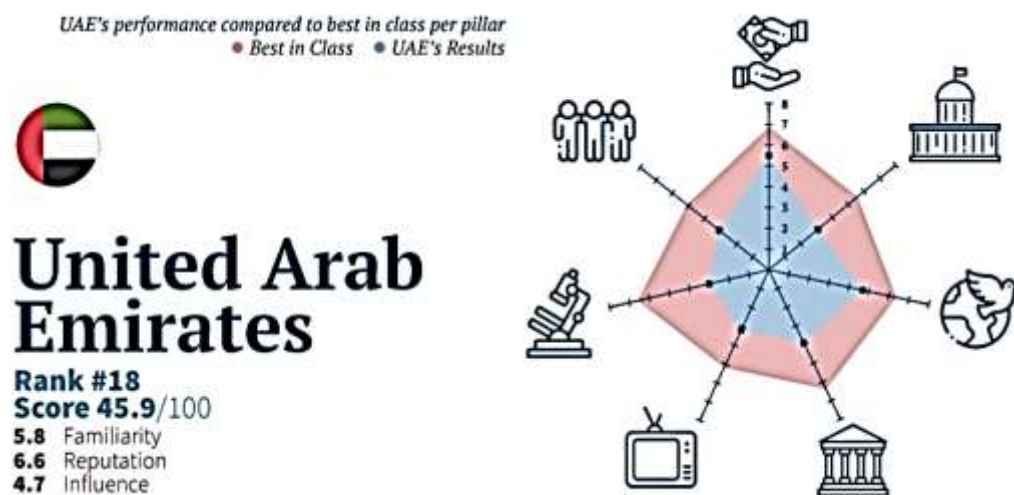


Figure 2.6: UAE Global Soft Power Ranking  
 Source: Brand Finance, 2020

Simultaneously, the soft-power assessment sphere demonstrated the worst assessment results in education and science compared to other players. Currently, the global community does not consider the UAE a serious source of technological and knowledge development, which can considerably define the lower interest in the state among the scientific community compared to leaders in this domain. The realization of the knowledge-based economic model should allow the state to improve its positions in science and technology development.

The outcomes of the performed assessment demonstrated that the UAE had succeeded in reaching the strongest positions in the sphere of soft-power strategy realization compared to most other Arab countries. The country's international

business and cultural reputation contributed to the increase of its attractiveness for talented employees and specialists from different regions of the modern world. Opportunities for life and self-realization provided in the UAE motivate foreign specialists to move to the UAE for work, which generates additional benefits for the UAE's economy and society. In this context, it is important to assess the current soft-power strategy of the UAE to define key sources of soft-power benefits and destinations for further improvement.

The improvement of the UAE international position is based on applying a complex soft-power strategy supported by the majority of engaged stakeholders inside the UAE and abroad. A relevant model of the UAE soft-power strategy was defined in 2017. The key pillars of the UAE soft-power strategy include the following values: "identity, heritage, culture and contributions," as stated on the official website of the United Arab Emirates' government portal. These are the key values and principles that form the basis of the message delivered from the UAE to the modern world. According to the official website of the United Arab Emirates' government portal, the main objectives of the current soft-power strategy in the UAE include the following:

"To develop a unified direction for various sectors including the economy, humanities, tourism, media, and science; to promote the UAE's position as a gateway to the region; to establish the UAE as a regional capital for culture, art, and tourism; to establish its reputation as a modern and tolerant country that welcomes all people from across the world (The Official Portal of the UAE, 2020).

As can be seen from the description of the key objectives of the current soft-power strategy, the UAE government considers the complex approach to economic



and social development as a critical priority of soft power in the future. At the same time, the UAE's status is related to its positioning as the center of the MENA region. This strategy's success can be seen in the fact that the UAE will become the home to the Expo2020 international event. This is a sign of the strong reputation and international position of the UAE as a regional leader.

In view of the soft-power strategy in the UAE, the key pillars and spheres of soft-power activity were identified in the mentioned strategy. The following spheres of activity were defined as critical for soft-power rating improvement in the UAE: “humanitarian diplomacy; scientific and academic diplomacy; national representatives diplomacy; people diplomacy; cultural and media diplomacy; economic diplomacy,” as stated on the official website of the United Arab Emirates' government portal, (The Official Portal of the UAE, 2020). The realization of the country's current objectives in each of these spheres should allow the UAE to reach the best positions in the international soft-power ratings. To receive a complex image of soft-power strategy outcomes, it is important to discuss the state's current progress in each of these spheres.

The positive progress of the UAE in the sphere of economic diplomacy should be mentioned. As stated earlier, the UAE is considered one of the strongest players thanks to its economic positioning and reputation (Brand Finance, 2020). International state and non-state actors consider the UAE one of the desired positions for the development of economic and business relations. The UAE's reputation as a reliable and effective economic partner contributed to the establishment of new international projects and high investment activity in the UAE.

The lowest results in the soft-power domain were recorded in scientific and academic diplomacy. The UAE Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy was developed in 2015 to reach the optimal results in this field. From the position of the UAE soft-power strategy realization, the UAE Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy has been oriented in alignment with the current and future international trends in the sphere of scientific and academic development. The key focus areas of the UAE Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy are presented in Figure 2.7. As can be seen from the proposed scheme, the UAE government's ambitions are oriented toward the realization of innovations in a wide range of spheres, which should significantly improve the international ratings of the state as a technological and academic leader.



Figure 2.7: UAE Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Focus Areas  
Source: UAE Government, 2016

In the scope of humanitarian diplomacy, the UAE government played an active role in resolving international humanitarian crises and gaining the support of foreign states from the beginning of the twenty-first century. Since then, the UAE has demonstrated interest in the resolution of humanitarian challenges in the Balkans and the Middle East (Lauri, 2018). Since 2013, the UAE has reached the highest level of humanitarian aid provision per capita globally (Lauri, 2018). In contention with these

approaches, the UAE demonstrated opportunities for the establishment of humanitarian activity as a prospective business. Since 2004, the UAE has created the International Humanitarian City in Dubai. It is the largest logistic center for the storage and distribution of humanitarian aid in the Middle East (Lauri, 2018). Together with this, Dubai served as a platform for the annual DIHAD-Dubai International Humanitarian Aid and Development Conference and Exhibition—the largest platform that unites private business and profit-oriented organizations concerned with humanitarian aid issues (Lauri, 2018). The country had reached progress in humanitarian diplomacy as part of its soft-power strategy.

## **2.4 Media Framing Theory**

The variables of media framing perception used for this study were adopted from the framing theory to measure the efficacy of the media in promoting UAE's international relations from a worldwide perspective.

Framing theory was initially introduced by anthropologist Bateson (1972) in a book entitled "Steps to an Ecology of Mind." As deliberated by Ardèvol-Abreu, he defined "frame" as a psychological concept and two different analogies: "Venn diagrams" and a "picture frame," which are used in mathematical set theory (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015, p. 428). The frame reminds the audience of relevant messages in context, and those outside the frame are ignored. This is a meta-communicative use of language that allows contextualization, leading to operating issues in empirical detection frames. Through this perspective, framing can be characterized as a process in which certain aspects of fact are chosen and given greater significance or importance in defining a

problem, and in diagnosing its causes, “in proposing moral judgments and in proposing appropriate solutions and acts” (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015, p. 424).

There are many definitions of framing. De Vreese (2005) defines framing as a communication process containing critical components of several locations, a communicator, a message, a receiver, and a culture. These components develop an environment for frame building, frame-setting, as well as individual and societal level consequences of the process. Scheufele (1999) defines framing as the construction of social reality, based on how mass media can actively set the given frames of reference that the audience utilizes to interpret and undertake a discussion of public events.

In the case of media, news stories tend to be systematized, based on narrative structures that provide an overview of who does what and for what reason. Scholars define the news as a window whose frame restricts the perception of reality by limiting the perception of various realities, thus concentrating on a single piece of reality. As a result of these systems, some facets of fact viewed by the news may be more prevalent than others (Robinson & Tuchman, 1981; Tuchman, 1978).

The framing theory was swiftly developed in the 1960s and has become a multidisciplinary paradigm that allows the study of media and its effect on the population (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015). Tuchman (1978) asserts and likens the news to a window frame that controls how we see reality through texts and visual structures built on an axis of thought from one perspective. D’Angelo (2002) highlights that framing is more of a research program rather than a unified plan.

Other scholars have specialized in the framing theory that is concerned with: media frames (De Vreese, 2005), audience frames (Geske, 2009), the start and end of

a framing process, and whether the message impacts the recipient in the same way. There is a consensus amongst framing theorists regarding the connection between the frame sender and receiver, and the theoretical foundation of framing is located in interpretive sociology. Scheufele (1999) further asserts that the frame is located in both the sender and receiver. As a result, scientific literature often distinguishes between media frames and audience frames.

The American political scientist Entman (1993) defines framing as a process in which some aspects of reality are given great importance, pinpointing its problems and diagnosing the causes. He also highlighted the absence of a unified theory and how the theory explains how frames are constructed and manifested into text, and this conceptualization has brought about a different methodological approach in the identification of frames and in measuring their effects. Years later, Weaver (2007) argued that the word frame still lacked conceptualization, and there are differences in defining the framing theory.

In the question of framing policy realization, research shows that it is useful to apply the support of authentic local influence. In this way, actors of international politics should be oriented toward cooperation with local public-opinion leaders during the occupation of the public sphere in the concrete country (Grieb & Schwalb, 2019). The concrete means of this objective's realization will be discussed later in this research.

Although the international advancement of the discipline is still in its early stages, the UAE is thriving in the field of framing research. Although significant attention has initially been given to record media framing effects on different political and cultural subjects, a level of coverage of every aspect of framing efficacy is still

lacking. Research studies on framing published in source journals of communication are still relatively rare (Rookwood, 2019).

A detailed comparative analysis of four Arab television news channels was conducted. The study shows that framing theory is presented as a means of identifying the ideological bias underpinning particular media products in the non-western context. Thus, it offers further evidence from Arab media cultures (Rookwood, 2019).

Although there is little consensus among local scholars regarding the relationship between framing and soft power (Pamment, 2016), some debate that framing theory is still a valid hypothetical framework that can explore the power of media in shaping attitudes and group opinions that can further shape social processes (Leeper et al., 2018; Rookwood, 2019). As an academic consensus, various definitions of framing have been suggested and discussed. However, for this research, the media framing role in promoting the international image of the UAE and soft-power policies effectiveness is considered.

Table 2.4 summarizes the research results about the soft-power practices in various disciplines applying framing theory. Several studies have revealed that practicing soft-power policies uncovers several challenges facing nations' branding. The policies also help them host international events (Rookwood, 2019), build relationships with other countries (Andressen, 2016; Pamment, 2016), and enhance public diplomacy in case of an international crisis (Cherkaoui, 2018).

Based on the presented table on the next page, researchers offer valuable insight into the perceptions of soft power, nation branding, and organizational challenges.

Table 2.4: Studies on Soft Power and Framing Theory

Title and sources	Subjects/method	Relevant findings
Access, Security, and Diplomacy: Perceptions of Soft Power, Nation Branding and the Organizational Challenges Facing Qatar's 2022 FIFA World Cup (Rookwood, 2019).	Nations' perceptions of branding and soft power and draws on the experiences of various key demographics who offer valuable insight into Qatar's World Cup.	The paper uncovers several challenges in hosting the first Middle Eastern World Cup in Qatar in 2022, including supporter access, security, and the fan experience.
News as Brands: Branding Television News Channels in the Arab World (Alabdalkarim, 2019).	A comparative analysis of news branding among four Arab television news channels.	The framing theory is relevant to the study of both public and private television channels.
Soft Power and Japan-Qatar Relations (Andressen, 2016)	A book chapter discussing the modern globalization process and framing soft-power practices.	The book suggested a real effect on the development of the culture of the institution by extension on the framing of issues of global higher education.
Qatar's Public Diplomacy, International Broadcasting, and the Gulf Crisis (Cherkaoui, 2018).	The paper analyzes the GCC Crisis from a public diplomacy perspective.	
Intersections between Public Diplomacy & International Development (Pamment, 2016).	This project investigates the conceptual and practical challenges facing policymakers and practitioners at the intersection between public diplomacy & international development.	Public diplomacy & international development require an ability to imagine the framing and understanding of the situation framed by the media.
Al-Jazeera, Qatar, and New Tactics in State-Sponsored Media Diplomacy (Samuel-Azran, 2013).	The paper discusses the quality of applying international broadcasting as a tool of public diplomacy.	Qatar invented a new model of public diplomacy by operating Al-Jazeera as a hybrid state-sponsored/private network, effectively transforming the network into a highly potent public diplomacy tool.

## 2.5 Soft Power and Framing by the Media

At the beginning of the analysis, it is essential to define the connections between framing and the soft-power practices utilized by modern states. In this context, framing theory is generally considered as a form of media effect that includes persuasion, agenda-setting, priming, and illustrating the various ways by which the media can influence the public (Leeper et al., 2018). In consonance with this logic, the framing theory affirms that the objective of modern media is to present information in a way that persuades the audience to align or change their choices according to media views (von Sikorski & Matthes, 2020). In short, the media plays a crucial role in



changing public opinion and behavior models, following the needs of the subject delivered by the media. To fulfill this objective, the statement provided by the media should persuade the audience by sharing the benefits and advantages of the chosen strategy of action (Leeper et al., 2018).

Nations adapt their strategies to improve their international image, such as Turkey, where the Turkish soft-power strategy tends to adopt a global reputation stance (Molho, 2015). Countries, rather than being dependent on hard factors alone, focus on the global art market results from the social construction of space (Molho, 2015).

Literature indicates that there is a link between the framing theory and soft power, which is demonstrated by the role of framing in public diplomacy. The study by Gilboa (2008) provides a promising approach to the idea of the connection between policy, media, and public opinion. This theory explains the activities of presidents, their chief foreign policy advisors, and the media competition in shaping the frames within the context of soft power. That is, shaping frames that will reach the public and therefore influence the formation of public opinion (Gilboa, 2008). Therefore, these parties impact the formation of foreign policy, which influences the formation of soft power. In this case, framing works as a way of influencing the opinion of others, and consequently, a way to gain soft power. This phenomenon is illustrated by how political communication through the media shapes public opinion and political behavior (Leeper & Slothuus 2018). Accordingly, the media plays an instrumental role in framing and defining soft-power gain.

The link between framing theory and soft power is demonstrated further in how framing results in shaping public opinion—framing from the perspective of media influence on shaping public opinion. This study affirms that framing is used to examine how external communicative agencies shape the national public's opinions. This study provides an example of the US efforts in using the media to garner support for its foreign policy by ensuring the right kind of media coverage on this in various international news. With this, the US can develop favorable diplomatic relations contingent on political-cultural congruence between the US and a targeted nation. It is essential to note that this phenomenon is dependent on the willingness of foreign elites to foster positive news coverage for the US, developing into the formation of positive public opinion. The mentioned findings work in tandem, suggesting that framing theory is all about how something is presented (framed) to the audience, which influences the choices made by people concerning how they choose to process information.

To further conclude the use of media, it is important to discuss the framing theory, which is significant in explaining previous work on soft-power practices carried out around the world. For instance, a study by de Vreese (2005) shows how frames and their representations in the media influence public opinion and, consequently, reveal insight into some of the critical practices of soft power. The study indicates that assessing and identifying frames within the news can create valuable insights. Another method is a deductive approach, investigating the frames that are defined and operationalized before the investigation (de Vreese, 2005). Understanding the typology of news frames is essential to gaining insight into how they influence public opinion; however, this should be caveated considering that different

newsmakers may apply different frames while covering the same issue. Nonetheless, it is possible to capture this analysis because of specific distinct characteristics.

The fact that frames within communication can impact people's attitudes and behaviors also illustrates how the framing theory is significant in explaining previous work on soft-power practices carried out around the world. The study by Chong and Druckman (2007) illustrates this with the example of politicians and their adoption of communication frames used by fellow politicians, the media, and citizens. When invoked, the frames influence citizens' attitudes, resulting in what is known as the framing effect. Various global communication frames that condition the reception of news regarding the nation and how US framed information can activate or reinforce previous associations with this country. This reinforcement of previous association describes public policy and, therefore, the U.S soft power.

In a further demonstration of the significance of the framing theory, it is important to explain previous work on soft-power practices carried out around the world. The aspect of branding is also illustrated in the literature. A nation's values remain essential to its identity and, therefore, a source of soft power. Branding a nation gives it an emotional lens through which it gains recognition. From this perspective, a nation's brand is what people worldwide think about the said nation (Gilboa, 2008). In this context, nation-branding exemplifies a shift within the political paradigms in the modern world of geopolitics and power, lending itself to a postmodern world driven by influence and image. A by-product of this phenomenon is how the states with poor brand equity cannot compete politically and economically within the new world system (Gilboa, 2008). Weak branding demonstrates a lack of soft power for such

nations, and due to this lack of robust soft power, these nations are not able to achieve political and economic influence over other nations.

As per existing studies, the capacity of soft power is instrumental in enabling nations to influence foreign public opinion and enhancing their public diplomacy. Exemplifying this point, understanding framing and applying this to the media is essential in supporting nations to develop superior public diplomacy. Nations can make use of strategically framed issues for other nations to impact public opinion and policy. This phenomenon uses the example of China, which evolved the methods it uses, including the development of soft power and turning away from propaganda devices. China now employs more effective methods to create sophisticated and systematic public policies that can address several issues and stakeholders. South Korea has also sought to improve its image abroad and thus enhance its soft power.

Using framing theory to realize soft power and control public opinion is an effective strategy for a state aiming to improve its position internationally and gain support from the public. Nevertheless, the realization of such a strategy is associated with a list of risks and barriers that reduce the effectiveness of soft-power initiatives abroad. These barriers will be discussed in detail, and the potential impacts will be assessed.

The main reason for creating barriers to the successful realization of soft-power strategies abroad is the desire of the targeted country's government to maintain control over public opinion and avoid the impact of foreign propaganda and soft power on its public sphere. The political elites of modern states understand that the application of soft power is a risk that may threaten their domination of the country. China is a clear

example of a state that has applied the strategy of foreign soft power influence-prevention. The creation of the Chinese "firewall" guaranteed the isolation of Chinese society from the influence of foreign soft-power instruments (Kang, 2012, p. 927). Chinese citizens cannot access social media networks like Facebook or search engines like Google, and therefore lack exposure to the media contexts of Western states. This decision was not initially relevant for Chinese society since, after China's active integration into the globalized world, western social media was applied in the country.

China's firewall is an active demonstration of the fact that Western soft power can impact and cause a severe political crisis. China, in 2008-2009 persuaded the government of the need for an isolation policy. Chinese citizens have social media platforms like Weibo and WeChat that operate only in China's territory to compensate for the blocking of Western social media. Of course, such an isolation policy cannot completely prevent the influence of foreign states on Chinese public opinion.

Many Chinese citizens travel abroad and can observe the benefits of the Western lifestyle and political model (Chen & Duggan, 2016, p. 47). At the same time, the number of tourists from China is considerably low compared to the actual Chinese population, and tourists alone cannot generate a significant impact on changes to public policy and opinion in a country.

Another barrier to international state branding is culture. Each nation has cultural specifics, characterized by a varied level of connections. While the cultures of Western states are highly connected, the cultures of the West and East are different, and the search for similarities and connections becomes one of the main objectives of soft-power policies. Nations looking to overcome cultural barriers adopt different

formats of international cooperation, including the World Cities Culture Forum. In these conditions, world cultures are looking for opportunities to develop new connections.

To conclude, while the framing theory focuses its attention on certain events and places them into a contextualized field of purpose from the “sender” to the “receiver,” we also have “state branding.” A country's branding is related to a country’s image: political, economic, and cultural. The primary disadvantage related to the theoretical body of framing is how the news purportedly distorts reality (bias). The points discussed previously are non-quantifiable forces. These forces can be displayed as an equation. He suggests that news should include visual and verbal information, and all elements of framing with priming effects should be included.

## **2.6 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, the researcher reviewed and discussed the literature relevant to the soft-power indices, strategies, and practices in the UAE and other countries, as well as international relations and media framing. Reviewing the literature, the researcher brings out where the literature gaps are and how this research helps to fill in one or more of these gaps. The main theoretical framework for this study was Nye’s soft powers model. The researcher also added a mediation factor (framing by media) adopted from the framing theory to measure media efficacy in promoting UAE’s international relations in a worldwide perspective.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

The methodology is a significant part of the research because it facilitates collecting and analyzing the information needed to answer the research question (Johnson et al., 2007). For the current research, a methodological framework that is sufficient to lead to the success of the study was used. As discussed in the literature review, soft power showcases a nation's culture, foreign policy, academic excellence, positive media output, and values. Several key questions were raised when considering the UAE's soft power and international relations. To address the research question effectively and meet all the needs of the study, the researcher applies an online survey. The combination of each of these processes plays an instrumental role in responding to the research questions. The approach styles and contributions to the overarching study are provided below.

Solving a research problem is one of the most technical aspects throughout the course of research (Johnson et al., 2007). The starting point of this study is in-depth research on the background of soft power and the role that it has had in determining the international relations for a given nation. Understanding the origin of soft power and the role that it has played in enhancing international relations will be critical in helping one understand the background of the problem. Conversely, there will be an in-depth discussion of the disadvantages connected with the use of soft power in international relations. It will be followed by more specific research concerning the UAE and its utilization of soft power. Approaching the problem from a general perspective and taking time to explore specific domains is essential because it uncovers a more in-depth analysis of the subject. The effect of the issue will be understood by

following all the required procedures. Comparing the different information and views gathered in the research will help in satisfactorily addressing the problem. It will boost the overall research and its expected outcomes.

This study used a mixed-methods approach to collect the required data. With respect to quantitative data collection, an online survey was conducted, and for the qualitative part, an interview was conducted with twenty UAE diplomats.

Two stages of this method were used to carry out this research. The study employs a quantitative research approach in nature. For this stage, 300 responses were collected via a close-ended questionnaire to gather the information needed to demonstrate or disprove the hypotheses outlined in the preceding section. One open-ended question was added to the survey to give a chance to include citizens' opinions regarding the best soft-power practices. Data obtained from these questions have been analyzed using thematic coding methods.

To further enhance the research, a group of 20 UAE diplomats was interviewed. The group is considered a sample where the researcher asked the participants to recommend diplomats for the interview. The interview starts with two open-ended questions and a short survey to have a better insight from a diplomat's perspective on soft power. The interviews took two weeks to be conducted. The reason for interviewing the diplomats was to rate the main findings of the survey

For this study, a quantitative survey was planned because of the capacity to generalize the research results gathered from a small sample representing UAE citizens to the broader population (Remenyi & Williams, 1996). The interview's main aim was to test the validity of the findings that were derived from the survey.



### 3.2 Population and Sampling

Two studies were conducted for this research: a quantitative survey of 300 Emirati citizens and interviews with 20 subject-matter experts. The population of the first study was constituted by the Emirati citizens from seven cities (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Alquwain, Ras Alkhaimah, and Fujairah). The idea behind studying citizens' perception about soft power is generally that people who live in a country have wise perspectives about their country's citizens, and their positive feeling about their country will help nations to gain global attention and come up with an insightful strategy of soft power; listening to a country's nationals is therefore essential. The researcher was interested to know whether the perception of UAE nationals will pave the way for many studies to come that will enhance UAE's overall soft power. This study will show where to focus and how to enhance any given strategies utilizing UAE's own people's preference and perception for sustainability purposes. According to the notional branding philosophy, citizens have an impact on internal policies. The pride of being Emirati is one sign of successful public diplomacy and political dynamics.

The other reason for selecting citizens as the population of this study is that citizens' perception of their country when interacting with the world is key to contributing to the government's strategies on international communication, public relations, and public diplomacy (Vibber & Lovari, 2021). Especially with the rapid technological change, which has made communication easier, citizens' perception of their country's reputation is imperative. Hence citizens' standpoint about the soft-power practices and their positive soft-power perceptions allows a nation to promote

itself as a place for people to visit, invest in, and build a reputation for their quality of goods and services (Thomson, 2020).

After surveying citizens, the researcher interviewed diplomats using structured questions derived from the main findings of the survey. The researcher selects sampling units based on his judgment of what units will facilitate an investigation. Hence, the diplomats as professional citizens were chosen purposively to rate the citizens' perception about the best soft-factor practices and effect of soft power on international relations since they have, indeed, a voice in the specific foreign policies and practices. Snowballing methods were used to select a sample of diplomats since the researcher did not have full access to the population, and due to COVID-19, the population was "hard to reach".

### **3.2.1 The Quantitative Study**

The population of this research includes UAE nationals from the seven emirates. The total population is 2,733,519, and the sample size is aimed to be 384 based on the sample-size table (Table 3.1) using stratified random sampling. However, the researcher received 300 respondents after two months. He started in December 2019 and finished by February 2020. The researcher personally followed up with a link generated by SurveyMonkey and sent out via WhatsApp with instructions demonstrated in the broadcasted message.

Table 3.1: Sample-Size Table

	Confidence level = 95%			Confidence level = 99%		
	Margin of error			Margin of error		
Population size	5%	2,5%	1%	5%	2,5%	1%
100	80	94	99	87	96	99
500	217	377	475	285	421	485
1.000	278	606	906	399	727	943
10.000	370	1.332	4.899	622	2.098	6.239
100.000	383	1.513	8.762	659	2.585	14.227
500.000	384	1.532	9.423	663	2.640	16.055
1.000.000	384	1.534	9.512	663	2.647	16.317

Source: (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970)

The sampling procedure was planned as below:

1. The population was defined as UAE citizens who have access to the Internet and were reachable online.
2. Seven emirates were randomly selected as the sampling location (including Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah, and Umm al Quwain).
3. A sample size of 384 was required based on sample-size table.
4. The sample of the study was selected randomly stratified from nationals of seven emirates. The reason is to see if there is a significance in perception among different emirates. The link was shared via WhatsApp broadcasted message.

The researcher used an online stratified sampling/mathematics calculator. The stratified calculations are presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Stratified Sample-Size Procedure

Cities	Population based on World Population Review 2020	Estimated number aimed for
Dubai	1,137,347	160
Abu Dhabi	603,492	85
Sharjah	543,733	76
Ajman	226,172	32
Ras Al Khaimah	115,949	16
Fujairah	62,415	9
Umm al Quwain	44,411	6
Total	2,733,519	384

An online survey method has been often presented and adopted by many researchers. In a worldwide context that tends to move simultaneously between physical and virtual reality, consideration should be given to the possibility of using new sources of data. In this context, an online survey was regarded to be efficient in the present research. Hence, the survey was sent via a commercially available website (SurveyMonkey) for a period of two months until the survey was closed, and the analysis of data got initiated. Apart from the reason explained, an online survey was chosen due to the quarantine caused by COVID-19 and the researcher's personal intention to adopt a paperless survey method to build an environmental care culture.

A link to the questionnaire was shared with those who were reachable using WhatsApp, Instagram, and email. The researcher closed the survey approximately a week after no more responses were received (the whole process took two months). The researcher reached out to potential respondents from seven emirates to ensure inclusion.

The research focused on understanding the general perception of soft power among UAE nationals. Soft power as a concept is general and tacit; therefore,

exploring soft-power instruments, such as media and culture, is paramount. The researcher wanted to explore how nationals assess their soft power and media outreach effectiveness locally and internationally. The research aimed to include nationals from different backgrounds to develop well-rounded strategic initiatives for soft power. This included representatives of both the private and government sectors.

There was also an aim to gather opinions from nationals who were not working. Age was also an important factor. The researcher tried to gather data from respondents aged 18 to 50 to ensure fair representation across generations. Another critical factor was to include responses from all seven emirates of the UAE.

### **3.2.2 Interview Diplomats**

Interviews are a crucial part of research. Essentially, they entail the presentation of a set of questions by the researcher to another person, the interviewee. These questions may vary from being open-ended, structured, or even simply being directed by the flow of the interview. An interview is conducted in a bid to secure information on the different aspects being studied, including information about the interviewee, other people, or things that they either know or in which they have an interest. It may also be used for the corroboration of evidence received from other sources or to enlist the informant's cooperation. Even more, the editors emphasize the main advantages of interviews as their lack of need for literacy, better rate of response, increased flexibility, and the ability to probe and reveal data on complex and emotionally charged subjects.

There are various types of interviews, including structured, unstructured, and narrative interviews. Structured interviews present the same questions to every

participant in the same order. Ultimately, structured interviews place an imposition on the informant to answer, choosing a response out of the ones provided by the interviewer. Unstructured interviews, in contrast, have the interviewer asking minimal questions that guide the informant on the general topic and then listen through the informant's responses. Narrative interviewing entails allowing the informant's point of view to dominate instead of evaluating their interaction with the researcher. This is attained by prompting narration from them while intervening minimally. The results are often considered more genuine.

Structured interviews are more commonly used in qualitative studies. This is because these interviews offer a variety of advantages. Such advantages include the primary aspect of testing an existing set of hypotheses as one is less bothered about making any further discoveries. Additionally, the level of standardization employed in structured interviews is crucial to the attainment of reliable results. The ease of comparing the responses of multiple different candidates allows for reliability (Platt, 2012). This tends to create a problem in the validity of the results due to the limiting nature of rigid interviews. However, such a problem has been raised commonly by those researchers who use other individuals to carry out their interviews. In contrast, researchers who conduct their own interviews often consider such interviews as self-evidently valid.

Platt (2012) also asserts that structured interviews also present a clear means of saving resources, such as time and money. The main reason for this is that structured interviews often have the researcher formulate the same types of questions in a particular order. Therefore, this keeps the researcher focused on just those questions

that they formulate rather than employing different rounds to create different questions for different informants.

On the other hand, structured interviews in the qualitative approach have several setbacks. For instance, they present the possibility of imposing the researcher's categories or thoughts upon the interviewees. This is due to their nature of relying on the formal testing of proposals about the existence of certain phenomena or patterns (Platt, 2012). Additionally, their pre-planned sets of prompts may not apply to every participant, thus resulting in irrelevant responses that may affect the consistency of the results. Such characteristic poses a challenge as the researcher must be sure about the types of questions to ask. As such, there is a need for proper advance preparation.

Due to the reasons mentioned above, the next sections further explore the qualitative structured type of data collection employed in this study. To enhance the validity of the results, a group of subject-matter experts, diplomats, in this case, were interviewed. The interview starts with two open-ended questions and a short survey, which will provide a more educated insight into soft power in the UAE. The interviews were conducted throughout a full week. The questions were distributed via email to give the respondents more convenience, which will better the overall outcome. Phone calls were made to ensure receipt of the interview questions and to follow up on the delivery.

Snowballing methods were used for the interview sample size, "the researcher does not have full knowledge or full access to the population, and the population is 'hard-to-reach'" (Van-Rijnsoever, 2017). The interview process has been continued until no new information was received. Data saturation in thematic analysis refers to achieving saturation when no further information or themes are observed (Ando et al.,

2014). For this research, saturation has been reached for the interview questions, which were mainly aimed to rate the primary finding of this study by the twelfth interview. Therefore, the researcher stopped the process when no more new information was received.

For the analysis of the interviews, the thematic analysis approach was selected. It is an ideal method for researchers who are new to qualitative research because it is one of the most accessible qualitative analytic methods, and it involves procedures that are common to most forms of qualitative analysis (Braun et al., 2014). The technique used for thematic analysis was based on the steps suggested by Braun et al. (2014). They are:

1. Familiarization with the data: reading and re-reading the data.
2. Coding: generating succinct labels that identify important features of the data relevant to answering the research question. After that, the entire dataset, collating codes, and relevant data extracts are coded.
3. Searching for themes: examining the codes and collated data to identify significant broader patterns of meaning, then collating data relevant to each candidate theme.
4. Reviewing themes: checking the candidate themes against the dataset to determine that they tell a convincing story that answers the research question. Themes may be refined, split, combined, or discarded.
5. Defining and naming themes: developing a detailed analysis of each theme, choosing an informative name for each theme.



6. Writing up: weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts; contextualizing the analysis with existing literature.

### **3.3 Research Instrument**

The study measurement was built using a mixture of proven scales and standard questionnaires adopted from reviewing a broad range of related literature. In the following parts, details of the measurement development will be clarified. Details of originally adapted and adopted items to measure the research's variables are presented together with their references and the changes made.

#### **3.3.1 Variables**

The variables of the study are defined conceptually and practically. Details are discussed below.

The dependent variable of this study is international relations. International relations refer to how effective the country's policy is to contribute globally and how they take a creative strategy to the wider toolkit that a country employs to influence other countries (McClory, 2019).

Table 3.3 presents an original item to measure each variable, with the adopted sources and the changes made. Table 3.4 presents modified and final measurements of the study after the modification process to align the purpose of the study.

Table 3.3: The Process of Developing the Measurements

Original items/questions	Revised suggested by experts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UAE media has a global reach, which could be applied to spread its values abroad</li> <li>• UAE's foreign policy has helped the emirates create cordial relations with the outside world</li> <li>• Considering the value of the foreign policy in soft power and keeping in mind the recent developments in the international system, the UAE's foreign policy is good for the country</li> <li>• Looking at recent history, the UAE government needs to change its strategy on how to use media to promote the emirates' values and influence abroad</li> <li>• Media increased publicity of UAE's cultural values, which will improve their standing abroad</li> <li>• Media could help the UAE government to promote the emirates values and influence abroad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted from local literature This assesses if the UAE media platforms are strong enough for an international audience and able to pass UAE values (culture) abroad</li> <li>• This assesses if the UAE media platforms are strong enough for an international audience and able to pass UAE values (culture)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping refugees</li> <li>• Helping children</li> <li>• Feeding the hungry</li> <li>• Healing the sick(United Nations, 2018)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UAE has a good record in helping refugees</li> <li>• UAE has a good record in helping children</li> <li>• UAE has a good record in feeding the hungry</li> <li>UAE has a good record in healing the sick</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The spread of cultural influence and the influence of popular culture Soft Power in Asia Survey, 2008 (Bouton et al., 2010)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UAE culture could be promoted to an international audience</li> <li>• UAE is open for other cultures to present themselves</li> </ul>
Movies, TV, music(Bouton et al., 2010)	IFPI Global Music Report 2019 UAE's cultural industries such as movies, TV, music could be shared with the outside world
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive economy</li> <li>• Economic opportunities for the workforce <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading multinational corporations (S.-J. Lee, 2009)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UAE has a competitive economy</li> <li>• UAE has economic opportunities for the workforce</li> <li>UAE leading multinational corporations</li> </ul>
Foreign direct investment The Soft Power 30 - A Global Ranking of Soft Power (McClory, 2019).	Originally adopted from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Statistics and the World Bank UAE has foreign direct investment
Number of top global universities	Times Higher Education (Top 200) The number of top global universities in the UAE are considerable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of academic science journal articles published</li> <li>• International student exchanges</li> </ul> The Soft Power 30 - A Global Ranking of Soft Power (McClory, 2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• . Originally adopted from the World Bank UAE has a great number of published academic science journal articles</li> <li>UAE has a good record in international student exchanges</li> </ul>

Table 3.4: Modified Measurements

<b>Modified scale</b>
<b><i>Dependent variable: (International Relations)</i></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 UAE media has a global reach, which could be applied to spreading its values abroad</li> <li>2 UAE's foreign policy has helped the emirates create cordial relations with the outside world</li> <li>3 Considering the value of the foreign policy in soft power and keeping in mind the recent developments in the international system, the UAE's foreign policy is good for the country</li> <li>4 Looking at recent history, the UAE government needs to change its strategy on how to use media to promote the emirates' values and influence abroad</li> <li>5 Media increased publicity of UAE's cultural values, which will improve their standing abroad</li> <li>6 Media could help the UAE government promote the emirates' values and influence abroad</li> </ol>
<b><i>Independent variable for international relations (Soft-power factors)</i></b>
<b><i>Humanitarian aid</i></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Helping refugees could help the UAE government promote their values and influence abroad</li> <li>2 Helping children could promote UAE values and influence abroad</li> <li>3 Feeding the hungry</li> <li>4 Healing the sick</li> </ol>
<b><i>Cultural diplomacy</i></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 UAE culture could be promoted to an international audience</li> <li>2 UAE is open for other cultures to present themselves</li> <li>3 UAE's cultural products such as movies, TV, music could be shared with the outside world</li> </ol>
<b><i>Economic diplomacy</i></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 UAE should have a competitive economy</li> <li>2 UAE should have economic opportunities for the workforce</li> <li>3 UAE should be open for leading multinational corporations/foreign direct investment</li> </ol>
<b><i>Academic diplomacy</i></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 The number of top global universities in the UAE are considerable</li> <li>2 UAE has a great number of published science academic journal articles</li> <li>3 UAE has a good record in international student exchanges</li> </ol>
<b><i>The independent variable for the soft-power factor (framing by media)</i></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Media could help the UAE government promote the emirates' cultural, political, social, and economic values abroad</li> <li>2 UAE media promoting the country's culture</li> <li>3 Media has done much to promote UAE's culture abroad</li> <li>4 Media has done much to promote UAE's culture locally</li> <li>5 Media increased the publicity of UAE's cultural values, which will improve their standing abroad</li> <li>6 Media is reliable in promoting UAE's values abroad and helping the country enhance its authority within the field of cultural diplomacy</li> </ol>

### 3.4 Conceptual Framework

Applying Nye's soft power theory, researchers reconceptualized the framework to find the most stable and effective strategies to strengthen their notions, power (AlKetbi, 2017; Gulf News, 2020; G. Lee, 2009; Rookwood, 2019; Singh, 2020; Villanueva, 2007). Soft power is a conceptual approach that links empirical data to address a major question in international politics: How to measure a country's soft power? A country has soft power when it can persuade, rather than force, other countries to adopt its point of view. A country's ability to attract foreign students to its universities is one common way to understand its soft power in the international community (Singh, 2020). This study examines the underlying strategies of soft power through data collected among UAE citizens. This uncovers unexpected soft-power relationships that the UAE cultivates as international education hubs.

As discussed in an earlier section, under the theory subtitle, the framing theory confirms that the way the media presents something to the audience shapes the ways of processing information. Scholars (D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010; Fisher, 2020; Gandy Jr, 2010; Leeper et al., 2018; Ogunnubi & Tella, 2017; Yan, 2020) provide an interpretive guide to media frames (mostly within the news, e.g., D'Angelo, 2002; De Vreese, 2005; Gandy Jr, 2010). It can be observed in news texts and how framing effects are uncovered and substantiated in reflecting on their empirical work in research, classroom, and public settings to address specific aspects of framing analysis. Their debates encourage greater clarity from framing analysts and cover the full range of ways in which framing has been theorized and applied. The framing theory is used in several perspectives and found to be related to soft-power practices (D'Angelo,

2002; Gilboa, 2008). In this study, the framing theory is used by the media to promote and endorse the international values of the UAE.

A review of the theoretical literature demonstrates that promoting an international reputation requires different international policies. As a significant approach in the modern world, soft power is found to be greatly effective in improving the value of nations globally. Besides, the application of the framing theory was reported as being a factor that increases the value of an international place. The research aimed to confirm if nationals assess their soft power and media outreach effectiveness locally and internationally. Accordingly, the hypothesis is stated, followed by this study's conceptual framework (refer to Figure 3.1).

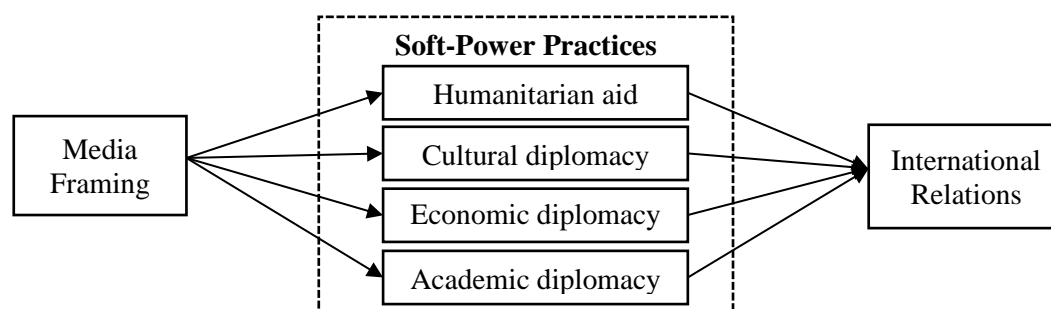


Figure 3.1: Conceptual framework for the study

### 3.5 Pilot Study

Reliability analysis refers to the measuring instruments' internal consistency when there is a high value of inter-correlation among items (indicators). The reliability of the measurement is achieved when the questionnaires have both consistency and stability. If the Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.7, then the measure is considered item-specific variance (Holland & Cortina, 2013). Consequently, it can be concluded again that the questionnaires used in this survey are consistent, reliable, stable, and accurate. Cronbach's alpha is the most common method used in assessing reliability

(Nunnally et al., 1967). Cronbach's alpha is a reliability coefficient that designates how well the items in a set are positively correlated to one another.

The average correlations between the indicators (items/questions) representing the constructs' details are presented by means of reliability assessment. The confidence of the instrument represents the validity coefficient shown by the Cronbach alpha scores. The alpha value ranges from 0 to 1. Theoretically, the closer the Cronbach's alpha is to 1, the higher the internal consistency reliability, which should be considered as it may measure the same concepts. Those in the 0.70 range are acceptable and considered reliable, and those over 0.80 are good.

To test reliability, a pilot study was conducted with 30 randomly selected respondents. Results show that the value of Cronbach's alpha for international relations was 0.67, 0.94 for humanitarian aid, 0.9 for cultural diplomacy, 0.9 for economic aid, 0.9 for academic diplomacy, and 0.78 for framing by the media (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5: Cronbach's Alpha of Pilot Study

Variables	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
1. International relations	6	.67
2. Independent variable (Soft-power factors)		
2.1 Humanitarian aid	4	.94
2.2 Cultural diplomacy	3	.9
2.3 Economic aid	3	.9
2.4 Academic diplomacy	3	.9
3. Framing by the media	6	.78

### 3.6 Data Analysis Methods

Two methods were applied to analyze the data collected from Studies One and Two. The data collected from Study One was analyzed using the previously recognized

Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 26. The data was analyzed using two sets of data analysis: descriptive and inferential data analysis. For descriptive statistics frequency, the percentage of respondents' answers was described, and the central tendency was measured. For the testing hypothesis, the inferential statistic was performed using SPSS version 26. For Study Two, a thematic method was applied to analyze the content of the first open-ended interview questions. For analyzing the interview and virtualizing the themes and codes extracted from the interview, ATLAS.ti software version 8 was applied. The third question of the interview was analyzed using SPSS version 26.

### **3.7 Chapter Summary**

Overall, the methodology described in this section explains a set of approaches to collecting research data that will help develop the results of the study. The combination of data collection, surveys, and content analysis of previous work will provide the data needed for the study, contributing to the study's success. The research design and method were discussed in detail. A mixed-methods approach of quantitative design and thematic content analysis for conducting the research was chosen because of its ability to test theoretical frames from past studies and generalize research results from collected data. The first data set was collected online, and a sample of the population was selected using stratified sampling among 384 respondents. The study measurement was built using a modified version of standard measurement adapted from literature. Variables, pilot study, and data analysis methods were clarified at the end of the chapter.

## **Chapter 4: Results**

### **4.1 Data Analysis for the Survey**

As explained in the previous chapter, two studies were conducted: an online survey of 300 UAE citizens and an interview with 20 diplomats. Details of the analysis are presented, respectively.

#### **4.1.1 Personal Data Analysis**

This section provides descriptive statistics of the demographic characteristics of the respondents to the questionnaire. The gender distribution of the respondents reveals that 67% are females, while 33% are males. Statistics related to nationality show a predominance of UAE nationals (94%). The results are convenient since the researcher is interested in acquiring results related to the perceptions of UAE nationals on the country's cultural and social efforts locally and globally. Results demonstrate the distribution of the respondents in terms of the Emirate they live in. Results show that 42.0% of the respondents live in Dubai, while 26.7% live in Abu Dhabi. These are the two largest Emirates and represent the highest percentage of the population.

Age distribution reveals that 44% of the participants are within the 21-30 age group. In addition, the 31-40 age group represents 38% of the sample. This is a good representation since the researcher is interested in the opinion of young Emiratis regarding the country's efforts locally and globally. The respondents' distribution by the highest level of educational achievement reveals that 63% of the respondents hold a Bachelor's degree, while 26% are with a Master's degree. The ones with high school or Ph.D. qualifications have the least representation within the sample. The results of occupation distribution show that 73% of the respondents are employed, 11% of the



participants are students, while 9% are unemployed. This representation is suitable since it represents those that are still young. All details are presented in Table 4.1 with sorted data from the highest to the lowest frequency for each category.

The other question about social vs. traditional media effectiveness on soft power demonstrates that 93% of the respondents favored social media. The research shows that social media is more effective in enhancing the soft power of the UAE than traditional media.

Table 4.1: Demographic Data Distribution

<b>Demographic variables</b>		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
	Female	202	67.3
	Male	98	32.7
<b>Age</b>			
	21-30	132	44.0
	31-40	115	38.3
	41-50	27	9.0
	Below 20	23	7.7
	Above 50	3	1.0
<b>Emirate</b>			
	Dubai	126	42.0
	Abu Dhabi	80	26.7
	Sharjah	50	16.7
	Ajman	20	6.7
	Ras Al Khaimah	12	4.0
	Fujairah	7	2.3
	Umm al Quwain	5	1.7
<b>Education level</b>			
	Bachelor	188	62.7
	Masters	79	26.3
	Less than high school	22	7.3
	Ph.D.	11	3.7
<b>Occupation</b>			
	Employee	219	73.0
	Student	33	11.0
	Unemployed	27	9.0
	Self-employed	12	4.0
	Retired	5	1.7
	Other	4	1.3

#### **4.1.2 Crosstabulation**

In this section, cross-tabulation tests using pivot tables with multiple variables are presented. The aim is to see how participants perceived the UAE's efforts to market its cultural and political values abroad.

Table 4.2 shows how the gender, occupation, and education categories are distributed towards the perception of the UAE's efforts to market its cultural and political values. Interestingly, the results show that those who believe that the UAE has done enough to market its cultural values abroad were mostly females, hold a bachelor's degree, and are employed. The number of males and females that did not think the efforts were enough is similar.

Table 4.2: A Pivot Table of the Distributions of Gender, Occupation, and Education on the Perception towards UAE's Efforts of Cultural Diplomacy

Occupation Educational level		UAE has strong cultural values			Total		
		Yes	No	Don't know			
Unemployed	Less than high school	Gender	Male	0			
			Female	1			1
		Total	1			1	
	Bachelor	Gender	Male	3	0	0	3
			Female	19	1	1	21
		Total	22	1	1	24	
Masters	Gender	Male	1			1	
		Female	1			1	
	Total	2			2		
Self-employed	Less than high school	Gender	Male		1		1
			Female		1		1
		Total			1	1	
	Bachelor	Gender	Male	2		0	2
			Female	6		1	7
		Total	8		1	9	
	Masters	Gender	Male	1			1
			Female	1			1
	Total	1			1		
Ph.D.	Gender	Male	1			1	
		Female	1			1	
	Total	1			1		
Employee	Less than high school	Gender	Male	2			2
			Female	2			2
		Total	4			4	
	Bachelor	Gender	Male	44	4	4	52
			Female	71	9	1	81
		Total	115	13	5	133	
	Masters	Gender	Male	24	1	2	27
			Female	40	4	2	46
		Total	64	5	4	73	
	Ph.D.	Gender	Male	1			1
		Female	8			8	
	Total	9			9		
Student	Less than high school	Gender	Male	1	0	0	1
			Female	11	2	1	14
		Total	12	2	1	15	
	Bachelor	Gender	Male	3			3
			Female	14			14
		Total	17			17	
Masters	Gender	Female		1		1	
		Female		1		1	
	Total			1	1		
Retired	Bachelor	Gender	Male	2			2
			Female	1			1
		Total	3			3	
	Masters	Gender	Male	1			1
		Female	1			1	
	Total	2			2		
Others	Less than high school	Gender	Female		1		1
			Female		1		1
		Total			1	1	
	Bachelor	Gender	Male	1			1
			Female	1			1
		Total	2			2	
Ph.D.	Gender	Female	1			1	
		Female	1			1	
	Total	1			1		

Table 4.3: Cross-Loading of Gender with UAE'S Efforts to Market Its Cultural and Political Values

Gender	Has the UAE done enough to market its cultural and political values abroad?		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Male	59	32	7
Female	130	40	32
<b><i>p-value = 0.014</i></b>			

Table 4.3 shows how the respondents from different Emirates perceived the UAE's efforts to market its cultural and political values abroad. Results show significant differences between respondents from different Emirates concerning their perceptions ( $p$  value= 0.014). It is demonstrated that the majority of respondents thought the UAE efforts are enough to live in Dubai. This is followed by respondents that live in Abu Dhabi. However, half of those respondents thought the efforts are not enough to live in Abu Dhabi. These results demonstrate that individuals who live in different Emirates have different perceptions of the UAE's efforts to market its cultural and political values abroad (refer to Tables 4.4 and 4.5).

Table 4.4: Pivot Table of the Distribution of Gender and Occupation towards UAE's Efforts Perception of Political Diplomacy

Occupation	Education level		Has the UAE done enough to market its cultural and political values abroad?			Total	
			Yes	No	Don't Know		
Unemployed	Less than high school	Gender	Female	1			1
		Total		1			1
	Bachelor	Gender	Male	2	0	1	3
			Female	14	3	4	21
	Total		16	3	5	24	
	Masters	Gender	Male	0		1	1
			Female	1		0	1
	Total		1		1	2	
	Total	Gender	Male	2	0	2	4
			Female	16	3	4	23
Total		18	3	6	27		
Self-employed	Less than high school	Gender	Male	1			1
		Total		1			1
	Bachelor	Gender	Male	1	1	0	2
			Female	5	1	1	7
	Total		6	2	1	9	
	Masters	Gender	Male	1			1
			Total		1		
	Ph.D.	Gender	Female	1			1
			Total		1		
	Total	Gender	Male	3	1	0	4
Female			6	1	1	8	
Total		9	2	1	12		
Employee	Less than high school	Gender	Male	2			2
			Female	2			2
	Total		4			4	
	Bachelor	Gender	Male	32	18	2	52
			Female	56	14	11	81
	Total		88	32	13	133	
	Masters	Gender	Male	13	12	2	27
			Female	28	13	5	46
	Total		41	25	7	73	
	Ph.D.	Gender	Male	1	0		1
Female			4	4		8	
Total		5	4		9		
Total	Gender	Male	48	30	4	82	
		Female	90	31	16	137	
Total		138	61	20	219		

Table 4.5: Pivot Table of the Distribution of Education towards UAE's Efforts Perception of Political Diplomacy

Occupation	Education level		Has the UAE done enough to market its cultural and political values abroad?			Total	
			Yes	No	Don't Know		
Student	Less than high school	Gender	Male	1	0	0	1
			Female	6	2	6	14
		Total	7	2	6	15	
	Bachelor	Gender	Male	2	1	0	3
			Female	9	1	4	14
		Total	11	2	4	17	
	Masters	Gender	Female		1		1
		Total		1		1	
	Total	Gender	Male	3	1	0	4
			Female	15	4	10	29
Total		18	5	10	33		
Retired	Bachelor	Gender	Male	1		1	2
			Female	1		0	1
		Total	2		1	3	
	Masters	Gender	Male	1		0	1
			Female	0		1	1
		Total	1		1	2	
	Total	Gender	Male	2		1	3
Female			1		1	2	
Total		3		2	5		
Others	Less than high school	Gender	Female	1			1
		Total	1			1	
	Bachelor	Gender	Male	1			1
			Female	1			1
		Total	2			2	
	Ph.D.	Gender	Female		1		1
		Total		1		1	
	Total	Gender	Male	1	0		1
			Female	2	1		3
		Total	3	1		4	

Table 4.5 shows how respondents with different educational levels perceived the UAE's efforts to market their cultural and political values abroad. Based on the results of the multi-variable descriptive analysis, those who believe that the UAE has done enough to market its political values abroad were mostly female, hold a bachelor's degree, and are employed.

It is seen that more than 60% of those that thought the efforts are enough hold a bachelor's degree. Furthermore, it is noticed that those who have a Masters' degree are predominantly acknowledging the UAE's efforts. In general, a trend can be noticed where educated individuals value the UAE's role in marketing its cultural and political values abroad.

Table 4.6: Cross-Loading of Emirates with UAE's Efforts to Market Its Cultural and Political Values

Emirate	Has the UAE done enough to market its cultural and political values abroad?			
	Yes	No	Don't Know	Total
Abu Dhabi	47	26	7	80
Dubai	85	17	24	126
Sharjah	34	11	5	50
Ajman	9	10	1	20
Umm Alquwain	4	1	0	5
Ras Alkhaimah	8	3	1	12
Fujairah	2	4	1	7
Total	189	72	39	300
<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>	<i>Value</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</i>	
<i>Pearson Chi-Square</i>	27.437 <sup>a</sup>	12	.007	
<i>Likelihood Ratio</i>	27.180	12	.007	
<i>Linear-by-Linear Association</i>	.054	1	.817	
<i>N of Valid Cases</i>	300			
a. 10 cells (47.6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .65.				

Based on the results presented in Table 4.6, there are significant differences between the respondents from different Emirates with respect to their perceptions about UAE's effort to market its cultural and political values abroad (p value= 0.007).

Table 4.7: Cross-Loading of Education with UAE's Efforts on Cultural and Political Values

Has the UAE done enough to market its cultural and political values abroad?			
Education	Yes	No	Don't know
Less than high school	14	2	6
Bachelor	125	39	24
Masters	44	26	9
Ph.D.	6	5	0
p-value = 0.032			

Based on the results presented in Table 4.7 there are significant differences between the respondents from different educational backgrounds with respect to their perceptions about UAE's effort to market its cultural and political values abroad (p value= 0.032). Results show that the majority of those that perceived the efforts of the UAE in marketing its cultural and political values abroad hold a bachelor's degree.

Table 4.8: Cross-Loading of Occupation with the UAE's Efforts to Market Its Cultural and Political Values

Occupation	Has the UAE done enough to market its cultural and political values abroad?		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Unemployed	18	3	6
Self-employed	9	2	1
Employee	138	61	20
Student	18	5	10
Retired	3	0	2
Others	3	1	0
p-value =0.015			

Table 4.8 shows how respondents of different occupations perceived the UAE's efforts to market their cultural and political values abroad. Results show significant differences between respondents from different Emirates with respect to



their perceptions ( $p$  value= 0.015). Results show that the majority of those that perceived the efforts the UAE is making to market its cultural and political values abroad are employees. In general, it seems that employees can see the efforts more clearly and appreciate what is done.

By considering the results from all the above tables, it can be implied that those that appreciate the UAE's efforts are females, live in Dubai, hold bachelor's degrees, and are employees.

#### **4.1.3 Descriptive Analysis of Variables**

The researcher used descriptive statistics to examine the percentage of agreement from each variable's item. The tables below showed the frequency and percentage of responses to items measuring variables. All questions measured the variables in the five-Likert scale labeled as (1: strongly disagree; 2: disagree; 3: neutral; 4: agree; 5: strongly agree). Details for each variable are shown in the table below.

Table 4.9: Descriptive Analysis of International Relations

Variables and items	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		M	S.D
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
International relations												
UAE media has a global reach, which could be applied in spreading its values abroad	7	2.3	59	19.7	26	8.7	120	40.0	88	29.3	3.74	1.15
UAE's foreign policy has helped the emirates to create cordial relations with world	7	2.3	23	7.7	52	17.3	134	44.7	84	28.0	3.88	0.98
Considering the value of the foreign policy in soft power, the UAE's foreign policy is good for the country	5	1.7	12	4.0	64	21.3	56	18.7	163	54.3	4.20	1.01
UAE government needs to change its strategy to use media to promote the UAE values	13	4.3	7	2.3	94	31.3	121	40.3	65	21.7	3.73	0.97
Framing by the media												
Media could promote the UAE cultural/political/social/economic values abroad	18	6.0	0	0.0	24	8.0	0	0.0	258	86.0	4.60	1.06
UAE media promoting the country's culture	18	6.0	0	0.0	31	10.3	168	56.0	83	27.7	3.99	0.96
Media has done much to promote UAE's culture abroad	23	7.7	65	21.7	18	6.0	122	40.7	72	24.0	3.52	1.28
Media has done much to promote UAE's culture locally	14	4.7	39	13.0	7	2.3	148	49.3	92	30.7	3.88	1.12
Media increased the publicity of UAE's cultural values, which will improve their standing abroad	6	2.0	19	6.3	17	5.7	155	51.7	103	34.3	4.10	0.91
Media could help the UAE government to promote the values and influence abroad	7	2.3	22	7.3	17	5.7	159	53.0	95	31.7	4.04	0.94
Soft-power practices												
Cultural diplomacy												
UAE's culture could be promoted to an international audience	8	2.7	14	4.7	53	17.7	91	30.3	134	44.7	4.10	1.02
UAE is open for other cultures to present themselves	4	1.3	17	5.7	50	16.7	95	31.7	134	44.7	4.13	0.97
UAE's cultural products such as movies, TV, music could be shared with the world	9	3.0	14	4.7	51	17.0	93	31.0	133	44.3	4.09	1.03
Economic diplomacy												
UAE should have a competitive economy	12	4.0	11	3.7	43	14.3	91	30.3	143	47.7	4.14	1.05
UAE should have economic opportunities for the workforce	4	1.3	20	6.7	44	14.7	90	30.0	142	47.3	4.15	0.99
UAE should be open for leading multinational corporations/foreign direct investment	1	0.3	9	3.0	42	14.0	93	31.0	155	51.7	4.31	0.85
Academic diplomacy												
The number of top global universities in UAE are considerable	3	1.0	25	8.3	56	18.7	95	31.7	121	40.3	4.02	1.01
UAE has a great number of published academic-science journal articles	4	1.3	24	8.0	57	19.0	93	31.0	122	40.7	4.02	1.02
UAE has a good record in international student exchange	2	0.7	19	6.3	67	22.3	91	30.3	121	40.3	4.03	0.97
Humanitarian aid												
Helping refugees	11	3.7	14	4.7	41	13.7	61	20.3	173	57.7	4.24	1.09
Helping children	4	1.3	15	5.0	41	13.7	65	21.7	175	58.3	4.31	0.97
Feeding the hungry	1	0.3	5	1.7	38	12.7	63	21.0	193	64.3	4.47	0.80
Healing the sick	4	1.3	14	4.7	42	14.0	64	21.3	176	58.7	4.31	0.97

Based on the descriptive results presented in Table 4.9, among factors of soft-power practices, the highest mean for items measuring cultural diplomacy was “UAE is open for other cultures to present themselves” (mean: 4.13). It shows that most respondents agree that the UAE is open to other cultures to present themselves. The highest mean for items measuring economic diplomacy, the second factor of soft power was “UAE should be open for leading multinational corporations/foreign direct investment” (mean: 4.31). It shows that most respondents agree that the UAE should be open to leading multinational corporations/foreign direct investment. The highest mean for items measuring academic diplomacy, the other soft-power factor was that “UAE has a good record in international student exchanges” (mean: 4.31). It shows that most respondents agree that the UAE has a good record in international student exchange. The highest mean for items measuring humanitarian aid, the other factor of soft power, was “feeding the hungry” (mean: 4.47). It shows that the majority of respondents agree that the UAE has a good record of feeding the hungry.

The highest mean for items measuring international relations was “considering the value of the foreign policy in soft power and keeping in mind the recent developments in the international system, the UAE’s foreign policy is good for the country” (mean: 4.20). It shows that majority of respondents approved the UAE’s foreign policy.

The highest mean for items measuring media framing was “media increased publicity of UAE’s cultural values which will improve their standing abroad” (mean: 4.1). It shows that most respondents agree that the media has increased the publicity of UAE’s cultural values, which will improve their standing abroad.

Table 4.10: Central Tendency Report of Variables

<b>Variables and factors</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
International relations	3.89	0.73
Framing	4.02	0.72
<b>Soft-power factors</b>		
Humanitarian aid	4.33	0.89
Economic diplomacy	4.20	0.90
Cultural diplomacy	4.10	0.97
Education diplomacy	4.02	0.98

Based on the average central tendency (Table 4.10) for the international relations variable, respondents perceived that the UAE could apply great international relations strategies such as spreading its values abroad and taking on friendly foreign policies to promote the Emirates' values and influence abroad (mean:3.89).

The results demonstrate participants' opinions about the UAE media effectiveness in promoting values abroad (mean:4.2). Results show that most of the respondents strongly agree about the effectiveness of the UAE media to promote UAE's image globally. This makes an overall agreement and implies that most participants think highly of the UAE media's efforts to promote the country's values abroad. This implies that UAE media could promote great UAE values, whether locally or globally.

For factors of soft power, the results of the descriptive analysis show that the perceptions of participants about the UAE's humanitarian efforts to the world are at a high level (mean:4.33). The results demonstrate that the overwhelming majority of the participants believed that the UAE needs to enhance its cultural values to share with the world (mean:4.10). This requires the attention of officials in the UAE to explore the values that they have and promote them in a heightened sense. UAE nationals think

highly of the state's cultural diplomacy with other countries and consider it a significant soft-power practice.

Analyzing the data measuring the other soft practices' perceptions demonstrates that participants' opinions about the economic aid efforts of the UAE are also great. UAE nationals think highly of the economic aid provided to other countries and consider it a significant soft-power practice.

The last factor of soft-power practices is academic diplomacy. The result demonstrates the participants of this study think academic diplomacy is substantial to promote UAE global image. UAE nationals think highly of academic diplomacy and consider it as a significant soft-power practice.

#### **4.1.4 Inferential Analysis**

##### **4.1.4.1 Normality Test**

According to (Coura & Nardi, 2007), data distribution is considered normal when the shape shown in the histogram is of a normal curve, and the normality test is not important. The two most popular tests of normality are the Kolmogorov-Smirnova and Shapiro-Wilk tests. A significant p-value implies acceptance of the hypothesis of non-normal distribution. The p-value of all factors in this research is, therefore, important. This means that the information was not usually distributed when the results of testing normality showed that the data was not normal if both Kolmogorov-Smirnova and Shapiro-Wilk tests were significant. This means that the hypothesis of non-normal distribution was accepted, and the data were not normally distributed (refer to Table 4.11, and for histogram shape evaluation refer to Figures 4.1-6). Hence, a non-parametric test for the hypothesis was chosen.

Table 4.11: Tests of Normality

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig
International relations	.181	300	.000	.892	300	.00
Framing	.149	300	.000	.922	300	.00
<b>Soft-power factors</b>						
Humanitarian aid	.342	300	.000	.747	300	.00
Cultural diplomacy	.256	300	.000	.819	300	.00
Economic diplomacy	.264	300	.000	.813	300	.00
Education diplomacy	.245	300	.000	.848	300	.00
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

It is suggested, along with the Kolmogorov-Smirnova and Shapiro-Wilk tests, to observe the shape of the histogram graph to assess the normal distribution of data for each variable (Fields, 2009). The data is approximately normal if the bell-shaped is achieved. “Frequency distributions” are most commonly used to assess the normal distribution known as “histogram.” Researchers visually assess whether the curve is “bell-shaped, right/left-skewed, leptokurtic, platykurtic, or bimodal” (Fields, 2009, p. 18). Frequency distributions come in many different shapes and sizes to have some general descriptions for the common types of distributions. The data would be distributed symmetrically around the center of all scores. As such, if vertical lines were drawn through the center of the distribution, then it should look the same on both sides. This is known as normal distribution and is characterized by the bell-shaped curve with which readers might have already been familiar (Fields, 2009, p. 18).

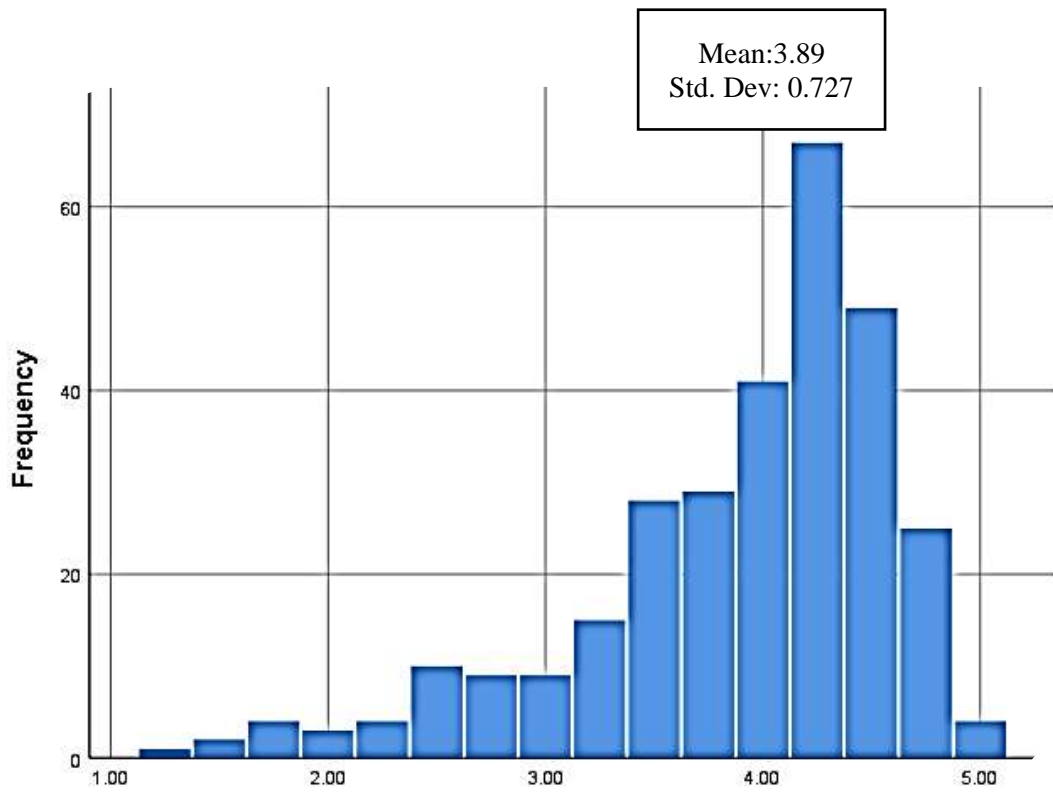


Figure 4.1 Histogram Graph for International Relations

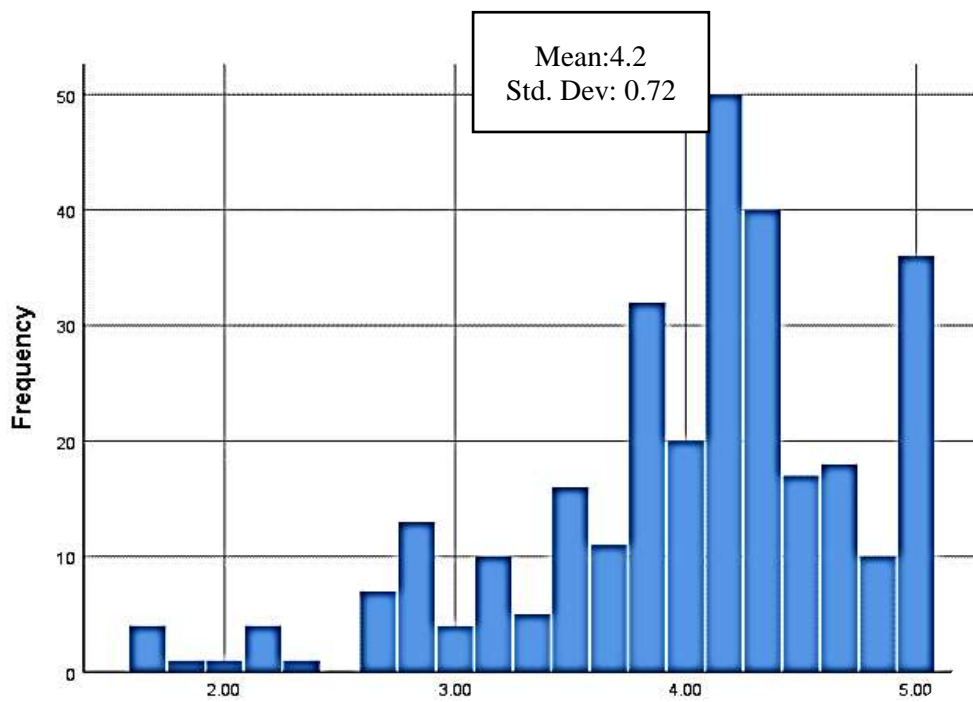


Figure 4.2 Histogram Graph for Framing by Media

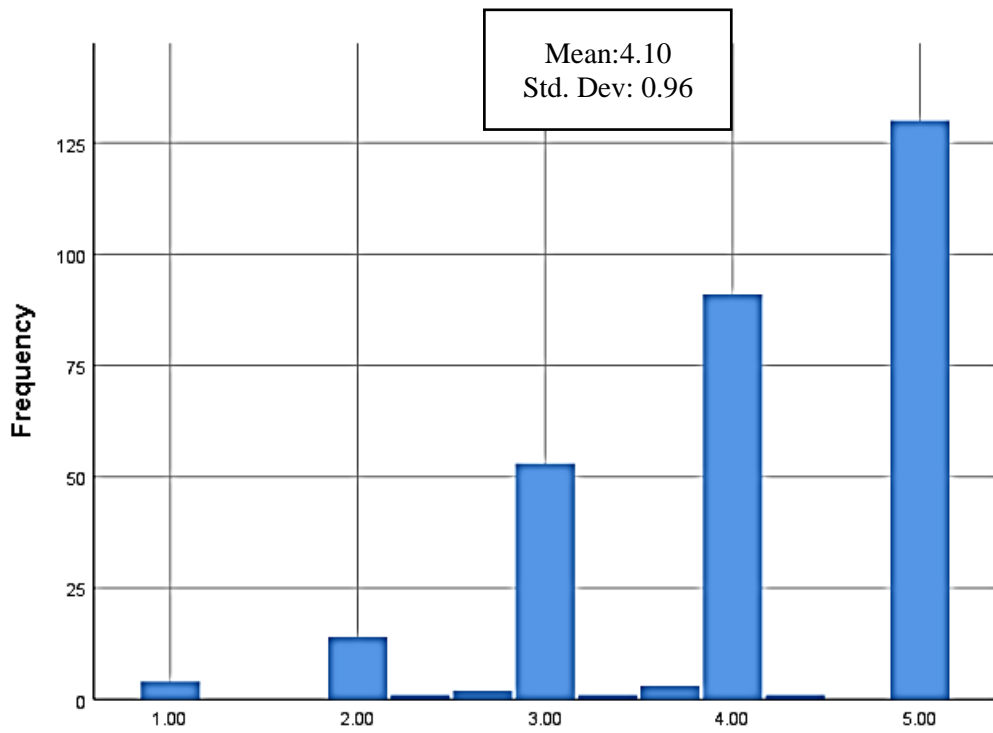


Figure 4.3 Histogram Graph for the Cultural Diplomacy

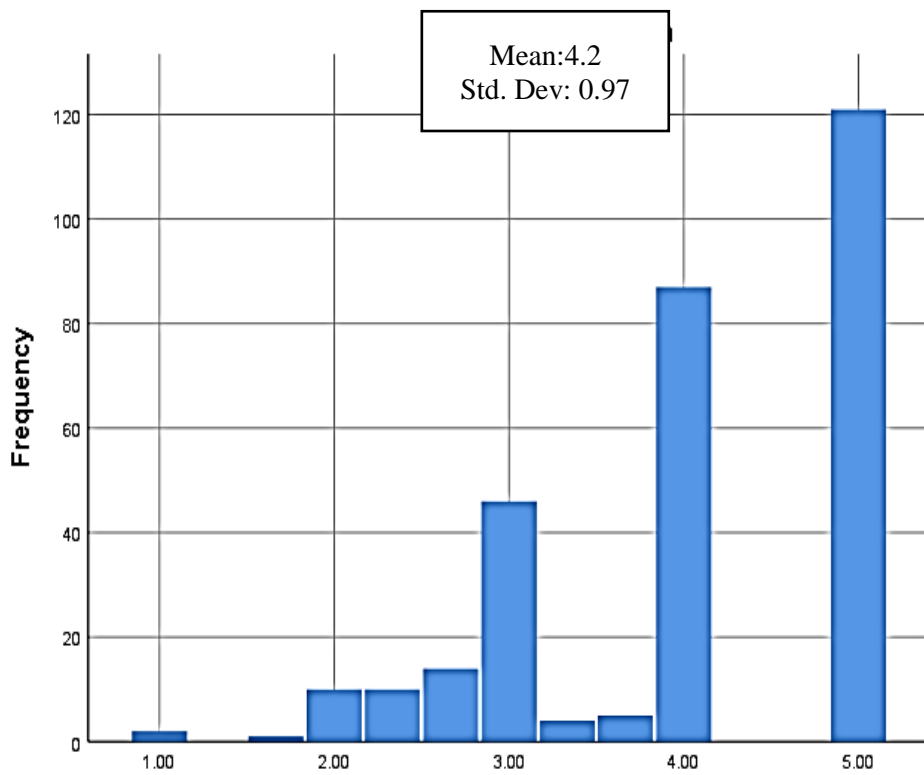


Figure 4.4 Histogram Graph for the Educational Diplomacy



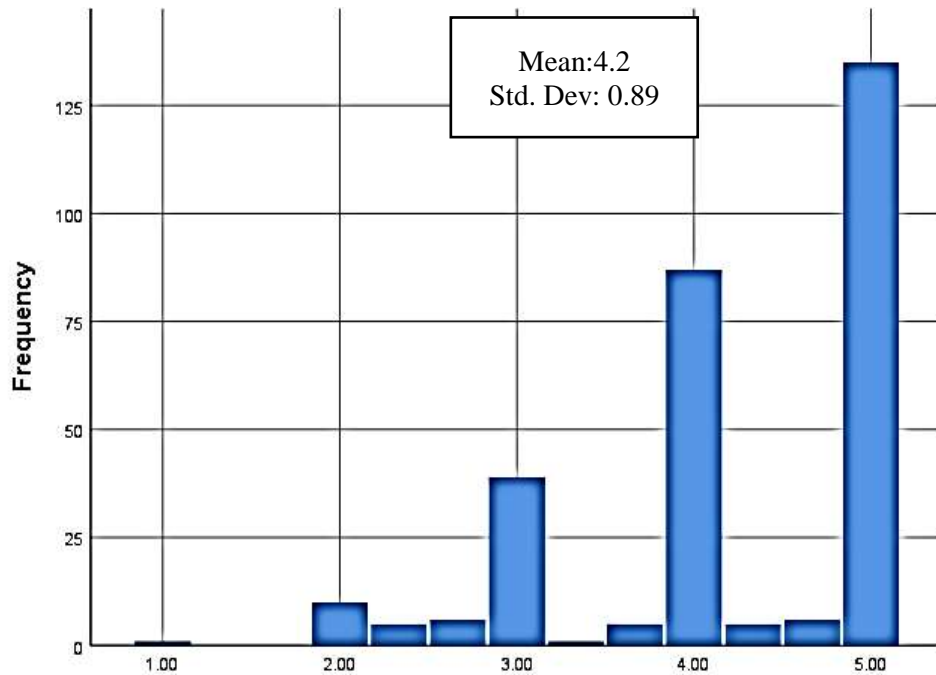


Figure 4.5 Histogram Graph for the Economic Diplomacy

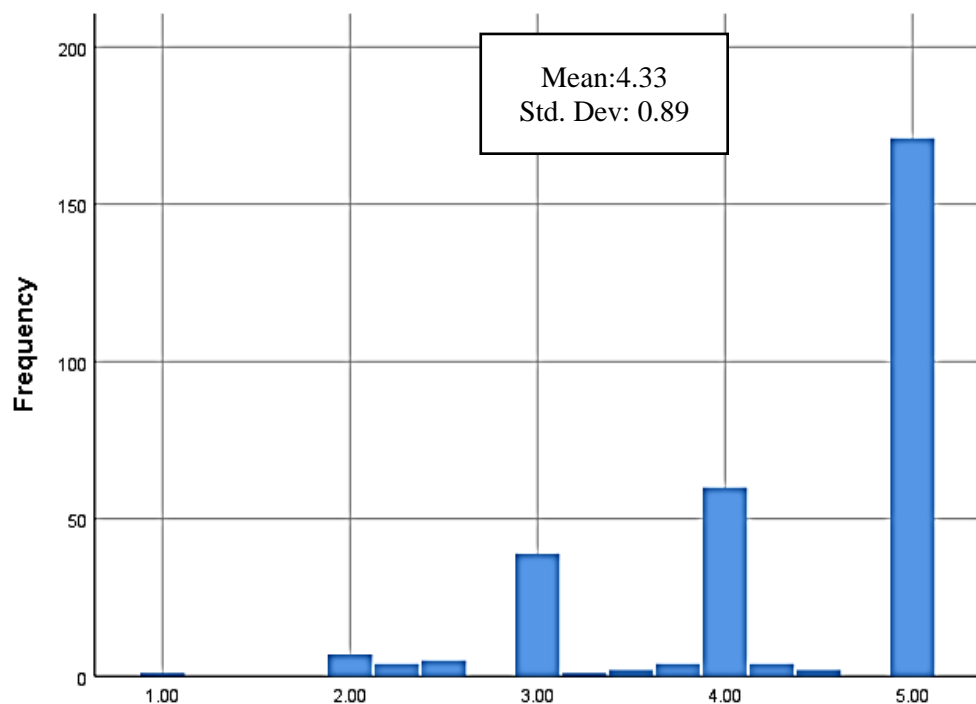


Figure 4.6 Histogram Graph for the Humanitarian Aid

As shown in Figures 4.1-6 for this study, media framing and international relations are skewed to the right (agree), and all four factors of soft power are shaped bi-model, which could be calculated as the data for this study that was not normally distributed.

## 4.2 Hypothesis Testing

The study's hypotheses were tested using a non-parametric correlation test (Spearman's Rho) since the data was not normal, and not-normally distributed data is conventionally tested using non-parametric tests. The details are discussed, respectively. Four specific hypotheses were generated to test the relationship between soft-power practices and the UAE's international relations.

Hypothesis 1: Soft-power practices influence UAE's international relations.

H1a: There is a significant correlation between humanitarian aid as a soft-power practice and UAE's international relations.

Null hypothesis 1a: There is no significant correlation between humanitarian aid as a soft-power practice and UAE's international relations.

The correlation test shows that the relationship between humanitarian aid as a soft-power practice and the UAE's international relations was significant and positive ( $r= 0.159$ ,  $p=0.00 > 0.05$ ). So, the hypothesis was accepted. As a result, the study confirmed that humanitarian aid would promote UAE's position internationally.

H1b: There is a significant correlation between cultural diplomacy aid as a soft-power practice and UAE's international relations.

Null hypothesis 1b: There is no significant correlation between cultural diplomacy as a soft-power practice and UAE's international relations.

The correlation test shows that the relationship between cultural diplomacy as a soft-power practice and the UAE's international relations was significant and

positive ( $r= 0.213$ ,  $p=0.00>0.05$ ). So, the hypothesis was accepted. As a result, the study confirmed that cultural diplomacy would promote UAE's position internationally.

H1c: There is a significant correlation between economic diplomacy as a soft-power practice and UAE's international relations.

Null hypothesis 1c: There is no significant correlation between economic diplomacy as a soft-power practice and UAE's international relations.

The correlation test shows that the relationship between economic diplomacy as a soft-power practice and the UAE's international relations was significant and positive ( $r= 0.160$ ,  $p=0.00>0.05$ ). So, the hypothesis was accepted. As a result, the study confirmed that economic diplomacy would promote UAE's position internationally.

The correlation test shows that the relationship between academic diplomacy as a soft-power practice and UAE's international relations was significant and positive ( $r= 0.163$ ,  $p=0.00>0.05$ ). So, the hypothesis was accepted. As a result, the study confirmed that academic diplomacy would promote the UAE's position internationally.

H1d: There is a significant correlation between academic diplomacy as a soft-power practice and UAE's international relations.

Null hypothesis 1d: There is no significant correlation between academic diplomacy as a soft-power practice and UAE's international relations.

The correlation test shows that the relationship between academic diplomacy as a soft-power practice and UAE's international relations was significant and positive ( $r= 0.163$ ,  $p=0.00>0.05$ ). So, the hypothesis was accepted. As a result, the study confirmed that academic diplomacy would promote UAE's position internationally (Table 4.12 and Figure 4.7).

Table 4.12: Spearman's Rho Correlation for First General Hypothesis

Dependent variable		International relations
Independent variables		
Humanitarian aid	Correlation coefficient	.159**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006
	N	300
Cultural diplomacy	Correlation coefficient	.213**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	300
Economic diplomacy	Correlation coefficient	.160**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005
	N	300
Academic diplomacy	Correlation coefficient	.163**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005
	N	300

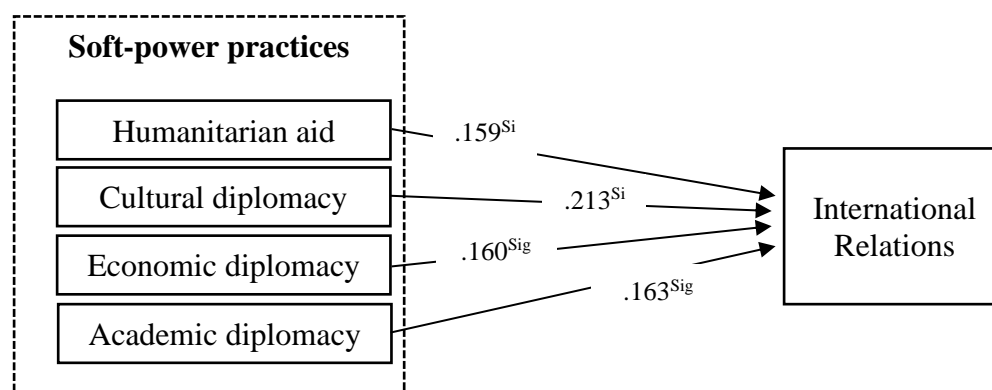


Figure 4.5: Study Model for Effect of Soft-Factor Practices on International Relations

Hypothesis 2: UAE's media framing increases the level of soft-power practices' success.

Four specific hypotheses were generated to test the relationship between media framing and soft-power practices. Details are explained as follows:

H1a: There is a significant correlation between media framing and humanitarian aid as soft-power practices.

Null hypothesis 1a: There is no significant correlation between media framing and humanitarian aid as soft-power practices.

The correlation test shows that the relationship between media framing and humanitarian aid as soft-power practices was significant and positive ( $r= 0.243$ ,  $p=0.00>0.05$ ). So, the hypothesis was accepted. As a result, the study confirmed that humanitarian aids would promote the UAE's position internationally.

H1b: There is a significant correlation between media framing and cultural diplomacy aid as soft-power practices.

Null hypothesis 1b: There is no significant correlation between media framing and cultural diplomacy as soft-power practices.

The correlation test shows that the relationship between media framing and cultural diplomacy as soft power practices was significant and positive ( $r= 0.393$ ,  $p=0.00>0.05$ ). So, the hypothesis was accepted. As a result, the study confirmed that media framing increases the level of cultural diplomacy promotion.

H1c: There is a significant correlation between media framing and economic diplomacy as soft-power practices.

Null hypothesis 1c: There is no significant correlation between media framing and economic diplomacy as soft-power practices.

The correlation test shows that the relationship between media framing and economy diplomacy as soft-power practices was significant and positive ( $r= 0.277$ ,  $p=0.00>0.05$ ). So, the hypothesis was accepted. As a result, the study confirmed that economic diplomacy would promote the UAE's position internationally.

The correlation test shows (Table 4.13, and Figure 4.8) that the relationship between media framing and academic diplomacy as soft-power practices was significant and positive ( $r= 0.163$ ,  $p=0.00>0.05$ ). So, the hypothesis was accepted. As a result, the study confirmed that academic diplomacy would promote UAE's position internationally.

H1d: There is a significant correlation between media framing and academic diplomacy as soft-power practices.

Null hypothesis 1d: There is no significant correlation between media framing and academic diplomacy as soft-power practices.

The correlation test shows that the relationship between media framing and academic diplomacy as soft-power practices was significant and positive ( $r= 0.221$ ,  $p=0.00>0.05$ ). So, the hypothesis was accepted. As a result, the study confirmed that media framing increasing the level of academic diplomacy would promote the UAE's position internationally.

Table 4.13: Spearman's Rho Correlation for Second General Hypothesis

Independent variables	Dependent variable	Media framing
<b>Humanitarian aid</b>	Correlation Coefficient	.243**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	300
<b>Cultural diplomacy</b>	Correlation Coefficient	.393**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	300
<b>Economic diplomacy</b>	Correlation Coefficient	.277**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	300
<b>Academic diplomacy</b>	Correlation Coefficient	.243**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	300

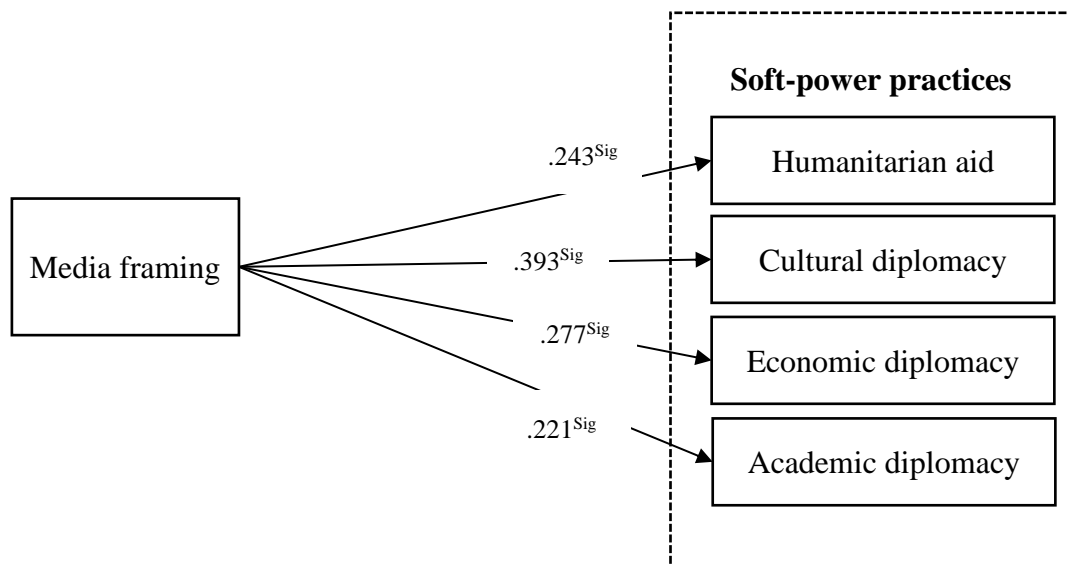


Figure 4.6 Study Model for the Effect of Media Framing on Soft-Factor Practices

### 4.3 Thematic Analysis

In this section, responses to the open-ended questions are analyzed using a thematic approach. There was an open-ended question that the respondents answered towards the end of the survey. Applying thematic coding, the researcher analyzes the open-ended responses to the question: “What are some of the soft-power practices that you know?”. Thematic analysis is a process of translating qualitative information into quantitative data and encoding qualitative information. As suggested by the researchers, encoding requires an explicit "code". This may be a list of themes or a complex model with themes (Boyatzis, 1998). For the data obtained from the open-ended questions, indicators that are causally related were categorized. For the thematic coding, first, all answers have been categorized in a general theme and coding. Details are described as follows.

Table 4.14: Thematic Categories and the Number of Coding

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Frequency of codes</b>	<b>Frequency of repetition</b>
1. Cultural diplomacy	12	102
2. Media	3	59
3. Foreign diplomacy	6	50
4. Nation branding	17	33
5. Economic diplomacy	8	32
6. Educational diplomacy	10	25
7. Humanitarian aids	7	20
8. Sport diplomacy	2	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>341</b>

Table 4.14 shows thematic coding in a general view. The answers have been categorized in eight codes: (1) cultural diplomacy, (2) media framing, (3) foreign diplomacy, (4) nation’s branding, (5) economic diplomacy, (6) educational diplomacy, (7) humanitarian aid, and (8) sports diplomacy, with 65 codes repeated 341 times. Each categorization was coded and explained as follows.



Table 4.15: Thematic Coding for Cultural Diplomacy

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Frequency of repetition</b>	<b>Percentage of code %</b>
1. Music	34	33
2. Cultural strategies	17	17
3. Language	15	15
4. History, historical ties to others	9	9
5. Art	7	7
6. Diversity	5	5
7. Fashion	4	4
8. Cuisine, food diplomacy	3	3
9. Cultural events	3	3
10. Cultural exchanges	2	2
11. Historical legacy	2	2
12. Arranging a festival abroad	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.15 represents a thematic coding for cultural diplomacy as a soft-power practice. The total suggests that the most prevalent practice as a cultural soft power is working on music industries and presenting to the world, followed by applying cultural-related strategies, and working on language as a voice of boosting the UAE's culture.

Table 4.16: Thematic Coding for Media Framing Diplomacy

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Frequency of repetition</b>	<b>Percentage of code%</b>
1. Social media, networking (Twitter, Instagram)	35	59
2. Movies, TV shows, cartoons	23	39
3. YouTube channels	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.16 presents a thematic coding for media framing as a soft-power practice. A total of three thematic indicators were coded. Respondents suggest that the most prevalent media framing practices are using social media to promote the UAE abroad. Directing movies, animations, and TV shows were also pointed out as a great way to boost the UAE's international standing.

Table 4.17: Thematic Coding for Foreign Diplomacy

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Frequency of repetition</b>	<b>Percentage of code%</b>
1. Diplomacy, foreign strategies	19	38
2. Political events	16	32
3. Adopting the U.S, Germany, France, U.K, Japan, China, USA, Russia, and British soft power	11	22
4. Powerful passport	2	4
5. International relations	1	2
6. Working closely with global international bodies	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.17 shows a thematic coding for foreign policy as a third-ranked soft-power practice from the respondents' perspective. A total of six thematic indicators were coded. Respondents suggest that the most prevalent practices as foreign policies are applying the effective foreign strategies, events, and soft-power policies adopted by top-ranked nations.

Table 4.18: Thematic Coding for Nation Branding Initiatives

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Frequency of repetition</b>	<b>Percentage of code%</b>
1. Excellent behaviors of UAE citizens, tolerance, and kindness	4	12
2. The reputation of the country	3	9
3. Lobbying, mediation	3	9
4. Values, icons	3	9
5. Tourism	3	9
6. Communication, sharing knowledge and experiences	2	6
7. Promoting the UAE's culture	2	6
8. Leadership	2	6
9. Year of tolerance	2	6
10. Advertising	2	6
11. Developing the new nation's brand	1	3
12. Engagement of the society	1	3
13. Social solidarity	1	3
14. Hospitality	1	3
15. Create national figures in different fields	1	3
16. Promoting multiculturalism	1	3
17. Promoting the Islamic Emirate	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.18 shows a thematic coding for nation branding initiatives as a fourth-ranked soft-power practice from the respondents' point of view. A total of seventeen thematic indicators were coded. The respondents suggest that the most prevalent

practices as foreign policies are excellent behaviors and the reputation of the UAE citizens, such as tolerance and kindness.

Table 4.19 Thematic Coding for Economic Diplomacy

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Frequency of repetition</b>	<b>Percentage of code%</b>
Economic and financial diplomacy	14	44
Expo 2020	9	28
R&D	2	6
Emiratization of companies	2	6
Jobs	2	6
Trade	1	3
Real-estate promotions	1	3
Infrastructural development	1	3
Total	32	100

Table 4.19 presents a thematic coding for economic diplomacy as a fifth-ranked soft-power practice from the respondents' perspective. A total of eight thematic indicators were coded. Respondents suggest that the most prevalent practices as economic policies are applying strategies, such as hosting EXPO, R&D, and branching local companies abroad.

Table 4.20: Thematic Coding for Education Diplomacy

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Frequency of repetition</b>	<b>Percentage of code%</b>
1. Improving education	10	40
2. Investing more in research and development	3	12
3. Scientific diplomacy	2	8
4. Technology, science	2	8
5. Scholarships	2	8
6. Conferences	2	8
7. Training programs for foreign students	1	4
8. International students events	1	4
9. Student exchanges	1	4
10. Talent talks	1	4
Total	25	100

Table 4.20 presents a thematic coding for education diplomacy as a sixth-ranked soft-power practice from the respondents' perspective. A total of ten thematic indicators were coded. Respondents suggest that the most prevalent practices as educational policies are applying strategies such as investing more in research and development, employing scientific diplomacy methods, providing scholarships, training programs for international students, managing international student events, student exchanges, and talent talks.

Table 4.21: Thematic Coding for Humanitarian Aids Diplomacy

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Frequency of repetition</b>	<b>Percentage of code%</b>
1. Leading humanitarian aid missions	12	60
2. Human rights	2	10
3. Foreign assistance	2	10
4. Donations to support AUS	1	5
5. Environmental aid	1	5
6. Financial aids	1	5
7. All kinds of foreign aid	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.21 presents a thematic coding for humanitarian diplomacy as the seventh-ranked soft-power practice from the respondents' perspective. A total of seven thematic indicators were coded. The respondents suggest that the most prevalent practices as humanitarian aid are leading humanitarian aid missions, respecting human rights, foreign assistance, donations to support AUS, environmental and financial aids.

Table 4.22: Thematic Coding for Sports Diplomacy

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Frequency of repetition</b>	<b>Percentage of code%</b>
1. Sports events, Olympics	16	80
2. Sports mediation	4	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.22 shows a thematic coding for sports diplomacy as the last and eighth-ranked soft-power practice from the respondents' perspective. A total of two thematic

indicators were coded. The respondents suggest that the most prevalent practices as a form of sport-related diplomacy are hosting and participating in international sports events.

#### **4.3.1 Respondents' Suggestions for the Best Soft-Power Practices**

By applying thematic coding, the researcher suggested that the data could be categorized into eight thematic categories. The results indicate that the highest practice is cultural diplomacy. The respondents believe that cultural diplomacy is an important soft-power practice both locally and globally. This implies that more efforts should be placed on extending cultural diplomacy efforts using the media. One of the respondents wrote, "Promoting culture and literature is in inviting others to our opera house and louver and other museums." Others pointed, "Celebrating with other nations their national days and sharing the festivity of other religions promote Inclusivity."

Respondents ranked media framing strategies as the second most important soft-power practice. Some quotations from participants who believe that media is an important soft-power policy are stated bellow:

*"Working with the media on developing stories that reach not only the local audience but also global audiences."*

*"...Using the country's traditional culture to the world... usage of pop culture."*

*"To use media (traditional and digital) to communicate a positive image of the country that can persuade and attract others to support nations agenda, including Emirati locations in international films (film and media)."*

*"...I have seen many countries now rely on platforms like YouTube to bring the cultural value of the UAE to others, even foreigners living like in the UAE. Other like cinematic aspect when you show the world in a movie a nice view of the UAE, not like in Hollywood who shows the only dark and ugly side of the UAE. Take, for example, Tom Cruise's movie,*

*which showed the UAE as a dusty country. We need to be aware of what we show the world...*

Respondents ranked foreign diplomacy strategies as the third most important soft-power practice. The respondents stated that to promote the UAE in the international sphere, different strategies such as having councils in other countries, participating in international events, and other strategies:

*“... Promote the UAE’s position as a gateway to the region.”*

*“...Having seats in international and regional committees & venues.”*

*“...Having councils in other countries abroad that help the embassies activate events that through them, they talk about their country.”*

*“...The relationship is most important, which we can soulfully reach to goal and target.”*

Respondents ranked nation-branding strategies as the fourth most important soft-power practice. Some of their statements:

*“...Have a country's 'representative' to be the known & loved figure of the country - that person to be on & close to people everywhere (Ex: Princess D) 2- Strong content creation & development 3- Creating a country's brand/slogan & strategically creating big moonshots around it (ex: NY, the city that never sleeps & their 24/h subways; Paris, the city of love & all the romanticism portrayed in their movies), etc. ”*

*“...Including Emirati locations in international films (film and media) ”*

*“...Making it clear internationally that the UAE is a friendly country that welcomes people, is also the land of opportunities and good for business. and projects are done in the UAE to reach global media, such as the Burj khalifa that made it easy to identify Dubai because it holds a world ranking building.”*

Respondents ranked economic-diplomacy strategies as the fifth most important soft-power practice. One of their statements:

*“...Direct interaction of corporations with the population, involving people into decisions.”*

Respondent ranked educational diplomacy strategies as the sixth most important soft-power practice. One of their statements:

*“...Building schools in developing countries.”*

*“...It supports dialogue, education and cultural exchange, in the service of improved mutual respect, international collaboration and global prosperity.”*

Respondents ranked humanitarian-aid strategies as the seventh most important soft-power practice.

Humanitarian aid is the second most important soft-power practice both globally and locally. The UAE should exert more effort into highlighting the humanitarian aid that it delivers to various countries around the world as they stated:

*“...Foreign aid humanitarian response, but let's not exaggerate it.”*

*“...Humanitarian aids not just for the poor, but people who might have a voice in the future. Like scholarships for bright college students in global universities, funds for prestigious medical research centers. Etc.”*

*“...Initiatives aiming to support minorities of whom suffer medical conditions.”*

*“...Investing in emerging or underdeveloped countries to help them get on their feet and progress from their current state.”*

Respondents ranked sports diplomacy strategies as the ninth and last most important soft-power practice.

*“...I think UAE participating in world Olympics activities is one of the soft-power practices in an indirect.”*

Another important soft-power practice is economic aid. These three practices were among the practices examined in this study. In addition, respondents believe that organizing expos and events helps establish a strong image of a country. Hence, a lot of countries are taking part in and being active in organizing events and expos.

With respect to the open-ended questions, nationals that took part in this study believed that the most distinguishing feature of the UAE is its culture, followed by its values. This study examines the role of the UAE media in promoting culture and values. UAE nationals perceive these two features as a distinct mark of the UAE's identity. Moreover, nationals that took part in the study thought that the UAE's language is another distinguishing feature. The respondents believe that the UAE needs to play a more significant role in preserving its identity by assuring that the language is used across the country and in local and global events. Finally, the UAE nationals' generosity and appearance make them unique and allow them to spread their identity in the global arena. That is why it is stressed that the UAE government should ensure that the identity represented by dress code and manners is preserved.

In conclusion, citizens that took part in the study believed that the UAE government should focus on its media efforts to help the UAE strengthen its cultural diplomacy, media framing, foreign diplomacy, nation branding, economic diplomacy, educational diplomacy, humanitarian aids, and sport diplomacy. Another important observation is that culture was named as an essential feature and soft-power practice, as well as a way to help the UAE promote its image abroad.

The respondents included culture, media politics, and national branding as being of utmost importance. This shows the importance of these factors to the UAE



nationals and how it helps promote the image of the UAE globally and locally. Also, the respondents mentioned that strategy is one of the tactics that the UAE should follow to strengthen its cultural, political, economic, and general soft-power influence abroad.

#### **4.3.2 Thematic Analysis of the Diplomats' Interviews**

When applying qualitative interview research, twenty UAE diplomats were interviewed. The researcher reached out to former Master's colleagues, "Master's or international relations and diplomacy," and was referred to diplomats who were willing to be interviewed. The sampling method was a snowballing method since the researcher found challenges to access diplomats directly. Therefore, social circles and acquaintances helped to mitigate this challenge.

Three main questions asked in the interviews are listed below:

Q1: In my study, cultural diplomacy was found to be more effective in improving international relations among four soft-power factors, including (1) humanitarian aid, (2) economic diplomacy, (3) cultural diplomacy, (4) academic diplomacy. What do you think about this result? Please elaborate.

Q2: My research found eight factors of soft power which improve the UAE's image from a citizen's standpoint. What do you think about it? (1) Cultural diplomacy; (2) Media ;(3) Foreign diplomacy; (4) Nation branding;(5) Economic diplomacy ;(6) Educational diplomacy;(7) Humanitarian aids ;(8) Sports diplomacy

Q3. My study found that these eight soft-power policies have some sub-categories. Please rate how effective you think they are.

Twenty diplomats were interviewed, but eight diplomats did not answer question one, and only two rated the eight factors of soft power effectively. Diplomats' demographic information is presented in Table 4.23.

Table 4.23: Diplomats' Demographic Information

<b>Variables</b>		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent%</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
	Female	6	30.0
	Male	13	65.0
	Missing data	1	5.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Age</b>			
	32	7	35.0
	35	2	10.0
	37	2	10.0
	42	1	5.0
	43	1	5.0
	47	1	5.0
	48	5	25.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>95.0</b>
	Missing data	1	5.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Occupation</b>			
	Diplomat	12	60.0
	Ambassador	5	25.0
	Deputy Head of Mission - UAE Embassy Rome	1	5.0
	Foreign Nationals Affairs Senior Specialist	1	5.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Educational level</b>			
	Master's degree	9	45.0
	Bachelor's degree	8	40.0
	Currently a Ph.D. candidate at KC London	1	5.0
	John Cabot University- Rome	1	5.0
	Missing data	1	5.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Following the guide given by Braun (2014), first, the answers for the first two open-ended questions were reviewed thoroughly. Twelve diplomats answered questions

one and two. The important points and relevant data were extracted, refined, re-written (refer to table second column), and labeled using four main themes including (1) cultural diplomacy outcomes, (2) successful cultural diplomacy approach, (3) the most effective soft factor, (4) eight-factor validity (details are presented in Table 4.24).

Next, the codes were examined to identify significant broader patterns of relevant data to each theme. Therefore, the details of each theme were analyzed, and an informative name was chosen for each theme. Codes were reviewed and refined (e.g., cultural diplomacy plays a huge role in improving the international relations of the UAE- this statement has been refined as “Improving UAE’s IR”), split (e.g., *“helps to create cultural, intellectual between human’s communication, exchange in common, noble ideas, cultures, beliefs, human concepts, principles, and eliminates misconceptions that harm humanity and cooperation between people.”* This statement has been split to “Create deep relations, create cultural interaction, exchange noble ideas, exchange cultures and beliefs), and combined (e.g., *“I agree with cultural diplomacy being the most impactful,” “The cultural diplomacy is usually most impactful to the people,” “The cultural diplomacy is the most impactful indeed,”* which were combined as the most effective factor).

The respondents’ answers were reviewed and summarized cautiously. Referring to Table 4.24, the interviewees’ statements were quoted in the first column and themes were extracted from quotations were stated in last column. Preliminary codes were assigned to describe the content, and themes were coded based on the similarity in contents and sorted. Details of quotes and themes extracted are presented in Table 4.25.

Table 4.24: Interviewees' Quotes and Theme Extraction

N	Quotes	Theme extracted	Coding theme
<b>In my study, cultural diplomacy was found to be more effective in improving UAE's IR. What do you think about this result?</b>			
1	<i>I completely agree with that, and the UAE is fully aware of cultural diplomacy importance in improving IR in the UAE, especially with the cultural diplomacy established with aims and targets to be achieved by UAE embassies abroad and a cultural affairs department being newly established in MOFAIC</i>	I completely agree with that. Cultural diplomacy found to be more effective	Cultural diplomacy outcomes
		The targets of cultural diplomacy are to be achieved by UAE embassies abroad and the cultural affairs department	Successful cultural diplomacy approach
2	<i>Indeed, CD plays a huge role in improving the UAE's IR. Stressing and building upon the cultural bonds that join together the UAE and its international friends allow our country and our counterparts to deepen further the pre-existing relations in other fields, such as the political and economic ones.</i>	Cultural diplomacy plays a huge role in improving the UAE's IR.	Cultural diplomacy outcomes
		Stressing and building upon the cultural bonds Create new opportunities for collaboration and partnership	Successful cultural diplomacy approach
3	<i>I agree with cultural diplomacy being more effective. Because the spread of culture is much more faster and impactful than other factors. Culture is for all.</i>	cultural diplomacy is more effective. Spreading culture is much faster and impactful than other factors	Cultural diplomacy outcomes
4	<i>Culture diplomacy can reach people and the government quicker. Therefore, the result of that is very effective.</i>	Culture diplomacy can reach people and the government quickly	
5	<i>Cultural diplomacy helps to create cultural, intellectual connections between humans communication, exchange in common, noble ideas, cultures, beliefs, human concepts, principles, and eliminates misconceptions that harm humanity and cooperation between peoples. The foreign policies of each state must be reflected in each nation's culture, which in turn should create communication between people and not only through agreements or official diplomacy. But the state can direct its policies through cultural institutions, media, and non-governmental organizations towards closer cooperation with other non-governmental organizations.</i>	Cultural diplomacy is one that focuses on the deep relations between people and helps to create cultural exchanges Helps create cultural, intellectual between humans communication, exchange in common, noble ideas, cultures, beliefs, human concepts, principles and eliminates misconceptions that harm humanity and cooperation between peoples	
		But the state can direct its policies through cultural institutions	
6	<i>In my opinion, follow the money, the more money the state has, the more soft power it will have.</i>	The more money the state has, the more soft power will have	The most effective soft factor
7	<i>Yes, it is. The important areas are humanitarian aid, cultural diplomacy, and economic diplomacy. They are wildly suitable for the bilateral relationship.</i>	Yes, it is important areas	Cultural diplomacy outcomes
		Humanitarian aid, cultural diplomacy, and economic diplomacy are wildly suitable for the bilateral relationship.	The most effective soft factor
8	<i>Cultural diplomacy includes, but is not limited to, the exchange of ideas, art, and language for the greater purpose of creating an understanding between nations and people. It supports dialogue, education, and cultural exchange, in the service of improved mutual respect, international collaboration, and global prosperity.</i>	Its not limited to the exchange of ideas, art, and language for the greater purpose of creating understanding between nations and people	Successful cultural diplomacy approach
		It supports dialogue, education, and cultural exchange, in the service of improved mutual respect, international collaboration, and global prosperity.	
9	<i>CD is the most effective to improve IR in UAE For the great role of cultural diplomacy in bringing people together, dissolving differences, and avoid the clash of civilizations.</i>	I agree with you that cultural diplomacy is the most effective to improve IR	Cultural diplomacy outcomes
10	<i>I agree with cultural diplomacy being the most impactful. But also, the other factors are very impactful.</i>	I agree with cultural diplomacy being the most impactful.	
11	<i>Cultural diplomacy is usually most impactful to the people. But the context and the economic and social factors of a given country will determine which form of diplomacy is more impactful.</i>	Is most impactful to the people.	The most effective soft factor
		the context and the economic and social factors will determine which form of diplomacy is more impactful.	
12	<i>Cultural diplomacy is the most impactful indeed since it touches people's hearts</i>	Cultural diplomacy is the most impactful indeed since it touches people's hearts	Cultural diplomacy outcomes

Table 4.24: Interviewees' Quotes and Theme Extraction (Continued)

My research found eight factors of soft power which improve the UAE's image from a citizen's standpoint. What do you think about it?			
1	<i>Cultural diplomacy cannot be achieved without relying on media, whether social or traditional media, to manipulate it to reach a wider foreign audience. Foreign diplomacy also requires media and national branding to have a strong, soft power impact on a country. However, economic diplomacy is mainly efficient in soft power when dealing with developing countries through financial, medical aid and humanitarian aid.</i>	Cultural diplomacy cannot be achieved without relying on media (traditional and new)	Successful cultural diplomacy approach
		Media helps to reach a wider foreign audience	
		Foreign diplomacy also requires media and national branding to have a strong, soft power impact on a country	The most effective soft factor
		Economic diplomacy is mainly efficient in soft power when dealing with developing countries through financial, medical aid, and humanitarian aid	
2	<i>It can be agreed that all of these factors play an important role in promoting the international and local projection of the UAE. Among these, it could be stressed that cultural diplomacy, foreign diplomacy, economic diplomacy, humanitarian aid, and sports diplomacy play a particularly important role. This is no small part due to the effectiveness of the UAE's Foreign Service and the strategic investments that UAE stakeholders and companies have undertaken in key strategic sectors, both locally and abroad.</i>	Cultural diplomacy, foreign diplomacy, economic diplomacy, humanitarian aid, and sports diplomacy play a particularly important role	The most effective soft factor
		Effectiveness of the UAE's Foreign Service and the strategic investments	
3	<i>I agree with the 8 points it covers a comprehensive soft-power strategy.</i>	I agree with the 8 points it covers a comprehensive soft-power strategy	Eight-factor validity
4	<i>Yes, the mentioned factors can help with improving the UAE's image, and they are considered to be the quickest or fastest tools to reach the people and the government.</i>	Eight-factor can help with improving the UAE's image	
		Eight-factor is the quickest or fastest tool to reach the people and the government	
5	<i>I think you covered most of the soft diplomacy that reflected UAE, but we can add a few more.</i>	Covered most of the soft diplomacy	
6	<i>Economic diplomacy, again, follow the money, and all other codes will follow.</i>	Economic diplomacy	The most effective soft factor
7	<i>Agree with the 8 factors; however, we should focus on the strongest 3 factors. Also, we shall associate the factors with the UAE vision 2071. Furthermore, to achieve this goal, there should be an office that's working on applying this strategy with each entity. The office should be under the Prime Minister's office .</i>	Should focus on the strongest 3 factors	
8	<i>The eight factors within the soft power identified in the question are a valid and effective way to show our foundational values and what we want to project, which can be visualized as our country's image. In this advanced technological world, people with different interests acquire information through different channels. To utilize and integrate all the main perspective angles of the soft power (the eight factors), we can pass the right message of our country to the world audiences and improve our image. We can always develop or enhance a new factor. Nowadays, digital diplomacy played a big role in improving the UAE's image. For example, online meetings with high officials</i>	The eight factors within the soft power are valid and effective to show our foundational values	Eight-factor validity
		To utilize and integrate all main perspective angles of the soft power (the eight factors), we can pass the right message of our country to the world audiences and improve our image	Eight-factor validity
		Digital diplomacy played a big role in improving the UAE's image	Effective soft factor
9	<i>I strongly agree with you about this eight-factor of soft power which improves the UAE's image</i>	The eight factors of soft power improve the UAE's image	Eight-factor validity
10	<i>I think the 8 factors are comprehensive and cover all aspects of soft power.</i>	The eight factors are comprehensive and cover all aspects of soft power.	
11	<i>The eight factors within the soft power identified in the question are valid and summarize the soft power essentials.</i>	The eight factors within the soft power identified in the question are valid and summarize the soft-power essentials.	
12	<i>The factors are representable, maybe emphasizing values.</i>	The factors are representable, maybe emphasizing values.	

Table 4.25: Defining Themes and Coding Extraction

Theme sub-categories	Themes	Indicators
<b>Theme 1: Cultural diplomacy effects</b>		
Diplomat 1	I completely agree that. Cultural diplomacy found to be more effective	Effective
Diplomat 7	Cultural diplomacy plays a huge role in improving the international relations of the UAE	Improving UAE's IR
Diplomat 5	I agree with cultural diplomacy being more effective	
Diplomat 2	Spreading of culture is much faster and impactful than other factors	Faster impact
Diplomat 4	Culture diplomacy can reach people and the government quickly	Reach people quicker Reach the government quicker
Diplomat 5	Cultural diplomacy is one that focuses on the deep relations between peoples	Deep relations Create cultural interaction
Diplomat 3	Helps to create cultural and intellectual connections between humans, enhance communication, exchange in common, noble ideas, cultures, beliefs, human concepts, principles, and eliminates misconceptions that harm humanity and cooperation between peoples	Humans communication exchange Noble ideas Exchange cultures and beliefs Exchange human concepts Exchange principles Eliminates misconceptions that harm others Spread humanity
Diplomat 10	Yes, it is important areas	
Diplomat 9	I agree with you that cultural diplomacy is the most effective way to improve IR	Improve IR
Diplomat 3	I agree with cultural diplomacy being the most impactful	Effective
Diplomat 12	Cultural diplomacy is usually the most impactful to the people	Effective
Diplomat 11	Cultural diplomacy is the most impactful indeed since it touches people's hearts	Touches people's hearts
Diplomat 11	Cultural diplomacy is the most impactful indeed since it touches people's hearts	Touches people's hearts
Diplomat 11	But is not limited to the exchange of ideas, art, and language for the greater purpose of creating understanding between nations and people	Exchange of ideas Exchange of art and language
<b>Theme 2: Successful cultural diplomacy approach</b>		
Diplomat 5	Stressing and building upon the cultural bonds	Stressing and building upon the cultural bonds
Diplomat 8	New opportunities for collaboration and partnership	New opportunities for collaboration
Diplomat 2	But the state can direct its policies through cultural institutions	National policies through cultural institutions
Diplomat 2	It supports dialogue, education, and cultural exchange, in the service of improved mutual respect, international collaboration, and global prosperity	Effective
Diplomat 1	Cultural diplomacy targets to be achieved by UAE embassies abroad and a cultural affairs department	Help cultural diplomacies
Diplomat 1	Cultural diplomacy cannot be achieved without relying on media (traditional and contemporary)	Relying on media (traditional and contemporary)
Diplomat 1	Media helps to reach a wider foreign audience	Media help reaching a wider foreign audience
Diplomat 8	Foreign diplomacy also requires media and national branding to have a strong, soft power impact on a country	Help foreign diplomacy Branding

Table 4.25: Defining Themes and Coding Extraction (Continued)

Theme sub-categories	Themes	Indicators
<b>Theme 3: The most effective soft-power factor</b>		
Diplomat 2	The more money the state has, the more soft power it will have	Money spending
Diplomat 8	Humanitarian aid, cultural diplomacy, and economic diplomacy are widely suitable for bilateral relationships	Humanitarian aid, cultural diplomacy, and economic diplomacy
Diplomat 6	But the context and the economic and social factors of a given country will determine which form of diplomacy is more impactful	The economic and social factor
Diplomat 1	Economic diplomacy is mainly efficient in soft power	Economic diplomacy
Diplomat 7	Effectiveness of the UAE's Foreign Service and the strategic investments	Foreign Service
Diplomat 6	Economic diplomacy	Economic
Diplomat 1	Should focus on the strongest 3 factors	
Diplomat 5	Digital diplomacy played a big role in improving the UAE's image	Digital diplomacy
<b>Theme 4: Eight-factor validity</b>		
Diplomat 4	I agree with the 8 points it covers a comprehensive soft-power strategy	A comprehensive soft-power strategy
Diplomat 4	Eight-factor can help with improving the UAE's image	Can help with improving the UAE's image
Diplomat 3	Eight-factor is the quickest or fastest tool to reach people and the government	Are quickest or fastest tools
Diplomat 11	Covered most of the soft diplomacy	Covered most of the soft diplomacy
Diplomat 8	The eight factors within the soft power are a valid and effective way to show our foundational values	A valid and effective way to show our foundational values
Diplomat 812	To utilize and integrate all the main perspective angles of the soft power (8-factor), we can pass the right message of our country to the world audiences and improve our image	Pass the right message to the world audiences Improve our image
Diplomat 10	This eight-factor of soft power improves the UAE's image	Improve the UAE's image
Diplomat 9	This eight-factor is comprehensive and covers all aspects of soft power	Comprehensive
Diplomat 8	The eight factors within the soft power identified in the question are valid and summarize the soft power essentials	Covers all aspects of soft power
Diplomat 1	The factors are representable, maybe emphasizing values	Representable Should be emphasized in values
Diplomat 7	There should be an office that's working on applying this strategy with each entity. The office should be under the Prime minister's office	An office to apply them under Prime Minister's office

The final themes and codes are presented in Table 4.26.

Table 4.26: The Final Themes and Codes

<b>1. Cultural diplomacy outcomes</b>	
1	Reach quicker to people
2	Reach quicker to government
3	
4	Improving UAE's IR
5	Effective
6	Faster impact
7	Deep relations
8	Create cultural interaction
9	Human's communication exchange
10	Noble ideas
11	Cultures, beliefs, exchange human concepts
12	Eliminates misconceptions that harm others
13	Spread humanity
14	Exchange principles
15	Touches people's hearts
16	Exchange ideas
17	Exchange art and language
<b>2. Successful cultural diplomacy approach</b>	
1	Media help cultural diplomacies
2	Media help reaching a wider foreign audience
3	Media help UAE's branding
4	Stressing and building upon the cultural bonds
5	Create new opportunities for collaboration and partnership
6	Build-up national policies through cultural institutions
<b>3. Eight-factor validity</b>	
1	Improve the UAE's image
2	Quickest or fastest tools
3	Covered most of the soft diplomacy
4	A valid and effective way to show our foundational values
5	Pass the right message to the world audiences
6	Improve the UAE's image
7	Comprehensive factors
8	Covers all aspects of soft power
9	Representable factors
	<i>Should be emphasized in values</i>
	<i>An office to apply them under Prime Minister's office</i>
<b>4. The most effective soft factor</b>	
1	Money spending
2	Humanitarian aid, cultural diplomacy, and economic diplomacy
3	The economic and social factor
4	Financial, medical, humanitarian aids developing countries
5	Cultural, foreign, economic, and sports diplomacy, humanitarian aid, and diplomacy
6	Foreign service
7	Economic diplomacy
8	Cultural diplomacy, media, and foreign diplomacy
9	Digital diplomacy

The first theme was cultural diplomacy as the most effective soft-power factor to improve the UAE's international relations or to be successful. This theme captured diplomats' opinions in which they agreed that cultural diplomacy is the most effective soft-power factor among four factors that improve the UAE's image internationally,



including (1) humanitarian aid, (2) economic diplomacy, (3) cultural diplomacies, and (4) academic diplomacy. The interviewees were asked whether they agree with the research finding of the present survey. All interviewees agreed that cultural diplomacy is the most powerful soft-power practice for promoting the UAE's image. The reasons that make the factor more effective were coding, as presented in Table 4.26. The essential point is that all diplomats agreed that cultural diplomacy is one of the most effective soft power, which confirms the citizens' point of view.

The next question was raised, aiming to rate the eight soft-power factors extracted from survey data. As explained, 300 UAE citizens were asked to participate in an online survey. In the final part of the questionnaire, the researcher provides one open-ended question. The responses were analyzed using the thematic method. Then, themes and codes were extracted from that analysis and explained in Chapter 4 (p. 93). The codes generated from the final part of the quantitative study were categorized into eight factors, present soft-power strategies, and diplomacies as the selected citizens suggested. To test the validity of the generated factors, interviewees were asked to comment on whether they agree with these soft factors. They were also asked to rate the importance of the codes generated to achieve the eight factors of soft power.

The four networking models are presented below based on a thematic analysis of questions one and two using ATLAS.ti. The Network Editor allows the researchers to create and edit a conceptual network from the material gathered during the "textual phase" of the study, which could be codes, memos, themes, and data.

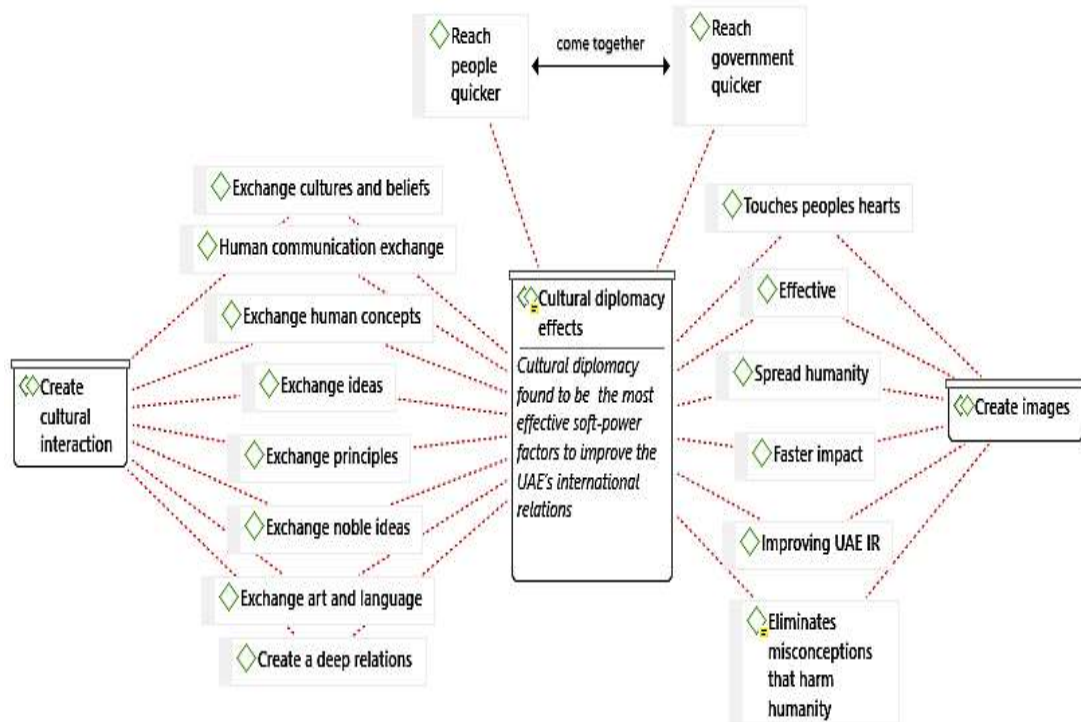


Figure 4.7: Network Model for “Cultural Diplomacy Outcomes”

A conceptual network model for cultural diplomacy outcomes was created using ATLAS.ti and presented in Figure 4.7, which shows the cultural diplomacy effect as the most effective soft factor of diplomacy, defined by 16 codes. As it was presented, eight of them (left side from cultural diplomacy effects to the center) will help create a cultural interaction. Six of them (right side from cultural diplomacy effects to the center) would help create or improve the UAE’s image.



Figure 4.8: Network Model for “Successful Cultural Diplomacy Approach”

Another conceptual network model for the successful cultural diplomacy approach was created and presented in Figure 4.8. It shows that the diplomats suggested that for cultural diplomacy to be more effective, some considerations have to be made. They suggested that media has a decisive role in helping cultural diplomacies and reaching a wider foreign audience as well as UAE’s branding. Diplomats also suggested that if a policy-maker of any related kind takes the action of stressing and building upon the cultural bonds, creating a new opportunity for collaboration and partnership, and build up national policies through cultural institutions, cultural diplomacy would be more effective.

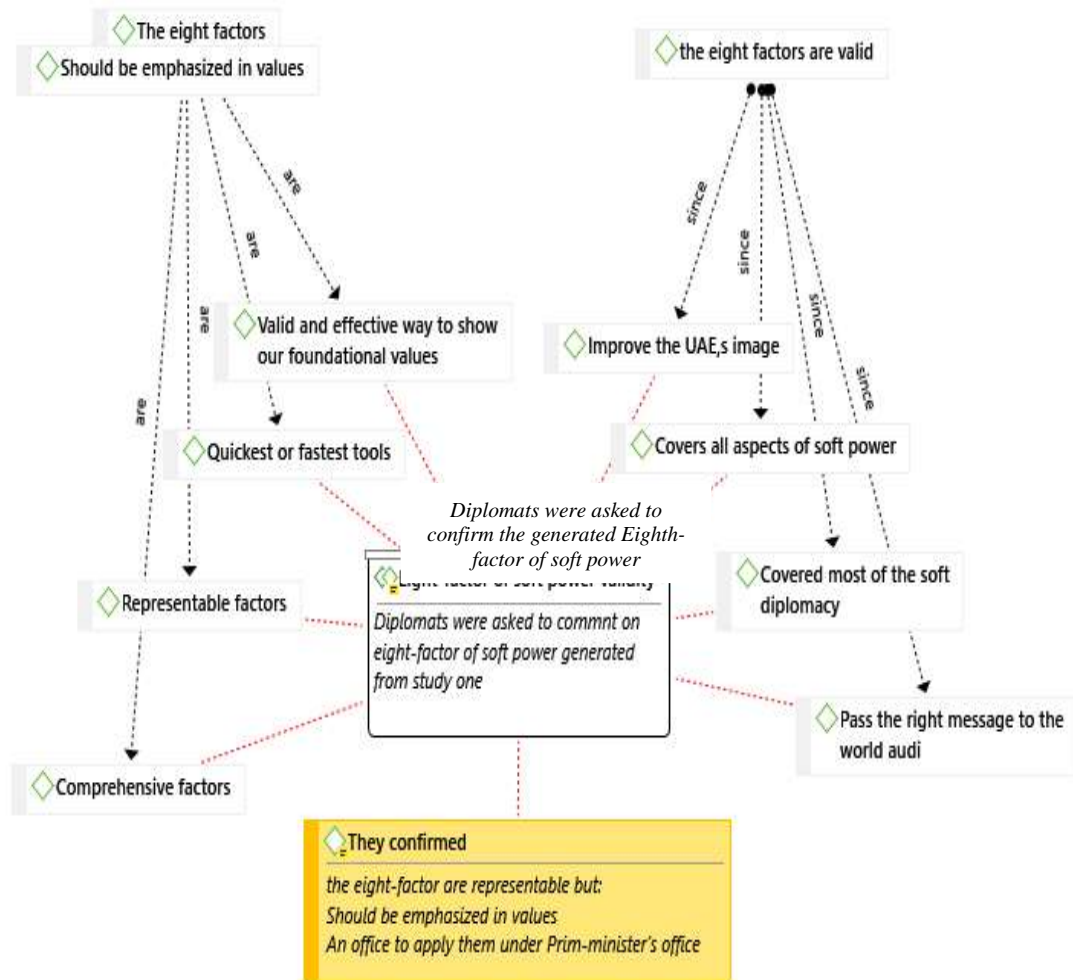


Figure 4.9: Network Model for “Eight-Factor Validity”

Another conceptual network model was created using ATLAS.ti to present the validity of the generated eight factors of soft power from the citizens' perspective (refer to Figure 4.9). They confirmed the effectiveness of the eight factors of soft power since the factors are comprehensive, representable, and cover all aspects of soft power, which will improve the UAE's image. However, they suggested that it should be emphasized in values.

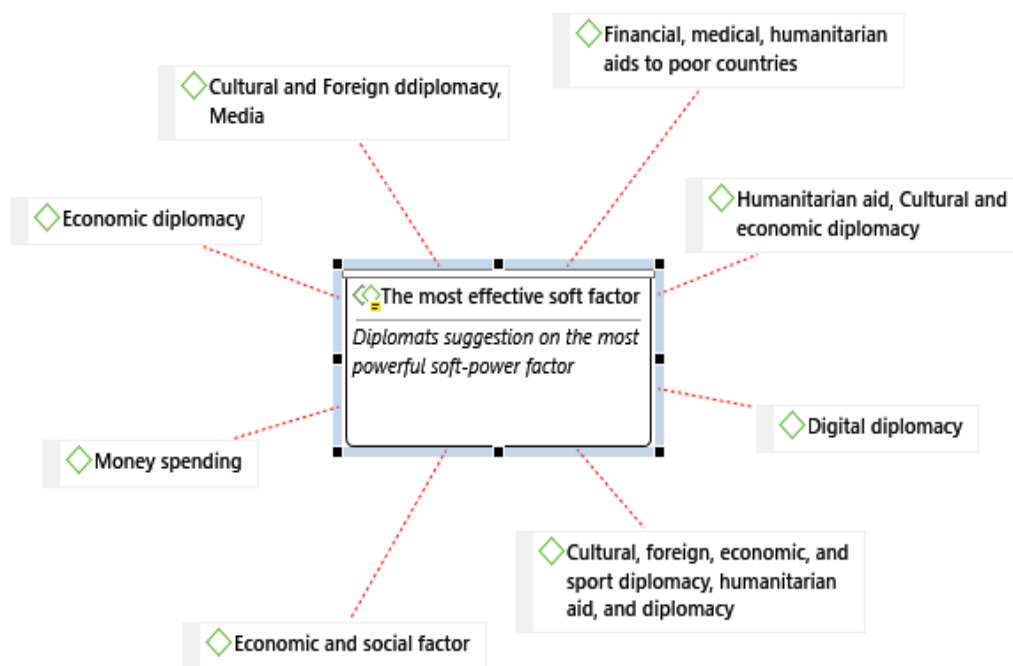


Figure 4.10: Network Model for “The Most Effective Soft-Power Factor”

The most effective soft-power practices, rather than those that have been discussed, are presented in another conceptual network model (refer to Figure 4.10).

### 4.3.3 Diplomats’ Rating for the Eight Factors of Soft Power

Diplomats were also asked to rate the generated themes and codes from study one, which were categorized under the eight themes. The rating scale was defined as (1) not effective, (2) somehow effective, and (3) very effective. The most effective and the least important factors of cultural diplomacies are cultural events and music, respectively. The most and the least important factors of media framing are social media, networking (Twitter, Instagram), and movies, TV shows, cartoons, respectively. The most and the least important factors of foreign diplomacy are political events and adopting U.S, Germany, France, U.K, Japan, China USA, Russia, British soft power, respectively. The most and the least important factors of national diplomacy are leadership and developing the new nation brand, respectively. The most

and the least important factors of economic aspects are Expo 2020 and the Emiratization of the companies, respectively. The most and the least important factors are education diplomacy and international student events and education, respectively. The most and the least important factors of humanitarian aids are foreign assistance and financial aids, respectively. The most important factor in soft power is hosting sports events. Based on the average mean for each factor, foreign diplomacy has the highest mean (2.85), and the media mediation effect has the lowest mean of expert rating (2.3) (Table 4.27).

Table 4.27: Diplomats' Rating of the Eight-Factor of Soft-Power Effectiveness

<b>Eight-factor of soft power</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>Cultural diplomacy</b>	<b>2.42</b>	<b>0.61</b>
Cultural events	2.80	.410
Diversity	2.75	.444
Cultural exchanges	2.70	.657
Cultural strategies	2.70	.571
History, historical ties to others	2.60	.598
Historical legacy	2.45	.686
Art	2.40	.598
Arranging a festival abroad	2.35	.671
Cuisine, food diplomacy	2.25	.639
Language	2.10	.718
Fashion	2.05	.605
Music	1.90	.718
<b>Media</b>	<b>2.37</b>	<b>0.59</b>
Social media, networking (Twitter, Instagram)	2.75	.444
YouTube channels	2.30	.571
Movies, TV shows, cartoons	2.05	.759
<b>Foreign diplomacy</b>	<b>2.85</b>	<b>0.3</b>
Political events	3.00	.000
Working closely with global international bodies	2.95	.224
International relations	2.95	.224
Diplomacy, foreign strategies	2.90	.308
Powerful passport	2.75	.444
Adopting U.S, Germany, France, U.K, Japan, China, Russia soft power	2.55	.605
<b>National diplomacy initiatives</b>	<b>2.63</b>	<b>0.51</b>
Leadership	2.90	.308
Lobbying, mediation	2.85	.366
Excellent behaviors of UAE citizens, tolerance, and kindness	2.85	.366
Communication, sharing knowledge, and experiences	2.80	.410
Tourism	2.80	.410
The reputation of the country	2.80	.410

Table 4.27: Diplomats' Rating of the Eight-Factor of Soft-Power Effectiveness  
(Continued)

Promoting the UAE's culture	2.75	.444
Promoting multiculturalism	2.65	.489
Advertising	2.65	.489
Promoting the Islamic emirate	2.60	.503
Hospitality	2.60	.598
Values, icons	2.55	.510
Year of tolerance	2.55	.759
Create national figures in different fields	2.45	.510
Social solidarity	2.45	.605
The society engagement	2.25	.786
Developing the new nation brand	2.25	.639
<b>Economic factors</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>0.52</b>
Expo 2020	2.85	.366
R&D	2.70	.470
Trade	2.70	.657
Economic diplomacy	2.65	.489
Infrastructural development	2.55	.510
Jobs	2.40	.503
Real-estate promotions	2.35	.671
Emiratization of companies	2.10	.788
International student events	2.80	.410
Training programs for international students,	2.80	.410
Student exchanges	2.70	.470
Technology, science	2.65	.489
Investing more in research and development	2.60	.598
Scientific diplomacy	2.60	.598
Talent talks	2.50	.513
Conferences	2.50	.513
Scholarships	2.45	.510
Education	2.25	.639
<b>Education diplomacy</b>	<b>2.585</b>	<b>0.515</b>
International student events	2.80	.410
Training programs for international students	2.80	.410
Student exchanges	2.70	.470
Technology, science	2.65	.489
Investing more in research and development	2.60	.598
Scientific diplomacy	2.60	.598
Talent talks	2.50	.513
Conferences	2.50	.513
Scholarships	2.45	.510
Education	2.25	.639
<b>Humanitarians aids</b>	<b>2.66</b>	<b>0.56</b>
Foreign assistance	2.85	.489
Leading humanitarian aid missions	2.85	.489
Environmental aids	2.75	.550
Human rights	2.65	.587
Donations to support AUS	2.60	.598
All kinds of foreign aids	2.50	.607
Financial aids	2.45	.605
<b>Sports</b>	<b>2.48</b>	<b>0.76</b>
Sports events, Olympics	2.50	.688
Sports mediation	2.45	.826

#### 4.4 Summary of the Results

Results show that females, more than males, believed that the UAE government should make more efforts to promote its values. Females care more about the UAE's image and hence are passionate about delivering its message and values both globally and locally. Moreover, Dubai and Abu Dhabi are more open to the outside world and have a high percentage of expatriates and visible efforts in the media. Hence, residents of these two emirates feel that the UAE government should do more to promote its image locally and globally. In terms of educational status, results show that nationals with a Bachelor's or a Master's degree think that the UAE government has done enough to promote its values abroad. However, they would like the government's efforts to continue and stay at the same level of excellence. Lastly, employees believed that the UAE government is making enough effort to promote its values. The reason behind this conception is that the UAE nationals work mostly in the public sector and can observe what the government is doing both locally and globally to promote its values. It is important to those individuals that the UAE keeps using the media in a positive manner to promote its values and culture.

This implies that the UAE government is doing a great job in granting economic aid to countries in need, and it announces this in a profound manner. The UAE is also using its cultural diplomacy efforts globally, promoting its culture using the media. In terms of the UAE's efforts to promote its culture and values locally, it was demonstrated that the UAE is doing a great job locally and not only focusing on the global arena.

Spearman's Rho, as a non-parametric correlation result, shows a positive relationship between four soft-power practices (humanitarian aid, economic



diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, academic diplomacy) and international relations. Concerning the effect of humanitarian aid on international relations, a significant but weak correlation of 0.16 was found. Moreover, the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy to promote international relations was found to be significant and has a correlation of 0.21.

In addition, a significant correlation was found between UAE citizens' perception of media framing and four soft-power practices (humanitarian aid, economic diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, academic diplomacy). However, the relationships between media framing and cultural diplomacy, as well as cultural diplomacy and international relations, were greater than the other three factors of soft-power practices with a correlation of 0.393 and 0.213, respectively. Concerning the effect of humanitarian aid on international relations, a significant but weak correlation of 0.159 was found. Moreover, the effectiveness of media framing on humanitarian aid was found to have a significant correlation of 0.243. Economic aid was also correlated to international relations with a correlation of 0.16. Media framing had a correlation with economic aid of 0.277. Academic diplomacy was found to have a significant but weak correlation with international relations with a correlation of 0.163. Media framing was found to have a significant correlation of 0.243 with academic policy. This implies that the government's media efforts to promote culture globally help the soft-power practices be successful.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

### **5.1 Outline**

The current study was conducted to fill the knowledge gap on UAE citizens' perception of media framing, soft-power practices, and international relations strategies. The section includes a discussion of the results in greater depth. This is followed by a discussion on how the present research is connected to and how it supports the body of related knowledge. Next, the implementation of the framing theory is discussed, and a claim for how the results can be applied more generally is presented.

### **5.2 Findings of the Study**

The presented results are research-oriented on discussing the specific research questions and realizing the research objectives. To summarize the findings of the study, the research questions should be covered. They serve as a logical basis for the discussion of the findings. The following research questions were defined:

1. Is there any relationship between soft-power practices and the UAE's international relations perceived by UAE's citizens?
2. Is there any relationship between media framing and the soft power of the UAE? Is there any relationship between soft-power practices and the UAE's international relations from UAE's citizens' perception?
3. What are the best soft-power practices to improve the UAE's image internationally from UAE's diplomats' and citizens' points of view?

To begin with, the results of the study were developed using two methodological approaches: (1) an online quantitative survey among 300 respondents as the primary approach to testing the generated hypotheses; (2) a thematic analysis of one open-ended question asking the citizens of the UAE about the most effective soft-power policies and an interview with experts to rate the results.

The quantitative survey descriptive analysis shows that most respondents were females aged 20-40, held a bachelor's degree, were employees, and lived in Dhabi or Abu Dubai.

Those who believe that the UAE has done enough to market its cultural and political values abroad were mostly females, held a bachelor's degree, and were employed. The number of males and females who did not think the efforts were enough is similar. Respondents perceived that the UAE could apply a great international relations strategy such as spreading its values abroad and adopting a friendly foreign policy to promote the Emirati values and influence abroad. Results demonstrate the opinions of participants about the UAE's media effectiveness in promoting values abroad. Results show that most of the respondents strongly agree about the UAE media framing's effectiveness to promote the UAE image globally.

With respect to the factors of soft power, the results of the descriptive analysis show that participants' perceptions about all four soft-power practices are high. However, respondents perceived that the UAE's efforts on humanitarian aids are higher than the other three practices.

The hypotheses of the study were tested using a non-parametric correlation test (Spearman's Rho). Two general hypotheses (to answer research questions one and

two) with eight specific hypotheses were generated. In terms of soft-power practices, the results have demonstrated a positive correlation between the effectiveness of soft-power practices (humanitarian aid, economic diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, academic diplomacy) and international relations. However, the relationship between cultural diplomacy among four soft-power practices is more correlated. Using a correlation test shows that media framing and soft-power practices (humanitarian aid, economic diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, academic diplomacy) are significantly correlated. However, the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy to promote the UAE abroad was higher than the other three soft-power practices from respondents' perceptions.

Respondents believed that soft-power practices would help the UAE to be promoted in terms of international relations policy. This implies that the UAE citizens believed that if the UAE practices more soft power, it will enhance its values and image worldwide. The results imply that the more the UAE exerts efforts and focuses its media towards enhancing soft-power practices, the more effective it is in delivering the intended results. Figure 5.1 and Table 5.1 present the final study model and summary of findings.

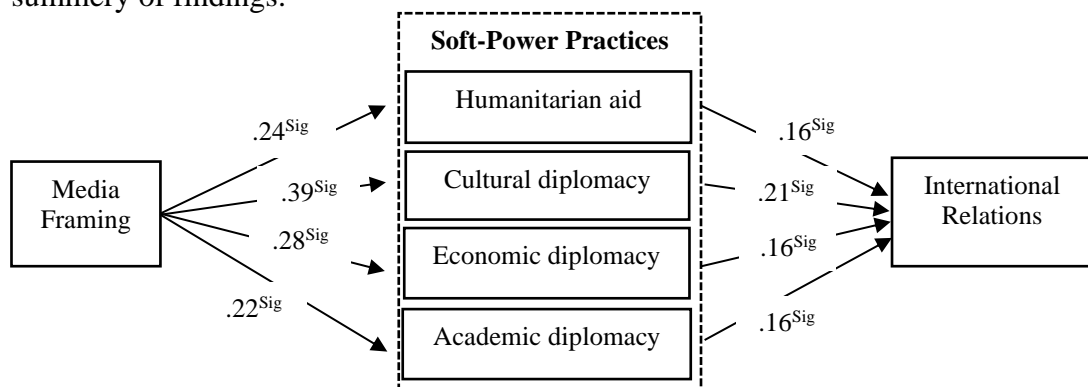


Figure 5.1: Framework of the Study

Table 5.1: Summary of Findings

Hypothesis		Findings	Lessons
To answer research question 1: Is there any relationship between soft-power practices and the UAE's international relations?			
The relationship between humanitarian aid and international relations	Approved	The UAE's citizens perceived that higher humanitarian aid would promote the UAE's international relations	More efforts should be exerted on delivering humanitarian aid to enhance the UAE's international relations policies
The relationship between cultural diplomacy and international relations		The UAE's citizens perceived that higher cultural diplomacy would promote the UAE's international relations	More efforts should be exerted on embracing cultural diplomacy to enhance the UAE's international relations policies
The relationship between economic diplomacy and international relations		The UAE's citizens perceived that higher economic diplomacy would promote the UAE's international relations	More efforts should be exerted on embracing economic diplomacy to enhance the UAE's international relations policies
The relationship between academic diplomacy and international relations		The UAE's citizens perceived that higher academic diplomacy would promote the UAE's international relations	More efforts should be exerted on embracing academic diplomacy to enhance the UAE's international relations policies
To answer research question 2: Is there any relationship between media framing and the soft power of the UAE?			
The relationship between media framing and humanitarian aid	Approved	The UAE's citizens perceived that the perception of media framing would promote the UAE's soft-power practices in terms of humanitarian aid	The media should be focusing more on framing the perception of the UAE's humanitarian aid as a soft-power practice to enhance the UAE's international standing
The relationship between media framing and cultural diplomacy		The UAE's citizens perceived that media framing would promote the UAE's soft-power practices in terms of cultural diplomacy	The media should be focusing more on framing the perception of the UAE's cultural diplomacy as a soft-power practice to enhance the UAE's international standing
The relationship between media framing and economic diplomacy		The UAE's citizens perceived that media framing would promote the UAE's soft-power practices in terms of economic diplomacy	The media should be focusing more on framing the perception of the UAE's economic diplomacy as a soft-power practice to enhance the UAE's international standing
The relationship between media framing and academic diplomacy		The UAE's citizens perceived that media framing would promote the UAE's soft-power practices in terms of academic diplomacy	The media should be focusing more on framing the perception of the UAE's academic diplomacy as a soft-power practice to enhance the UAE's international standing

The thematic analysis was conducted to answer the third general question of the study, which was added to the end of the online survey: What are some of the soft-power practices that you know and suggest? The thematic coding of nationals' suggestions was categorized in eight themes (1) cultural diplomacy, (2) media framing, (3) foreign diplomacy, (4) nation's branding, (5) economic diplomacy, (6) educational diplomacy, (7) humanitarian aids, (8) sports diplomacy, with 65 codes repeated 341 times.

Interviewing twenty diplomats shows that the results of the quantitative study are valid and confirmed by experts. The results also found that the most effective factor of cultural diplomacies is cultural events. With respect to the least important factor, music was selected among other factors. Another finding was the effectiveness of the media-framing factor. Social media was ranked as the most effective among said factors. Movies, TV shows, cartoons ranked the least effective. The foreign diplomacy factors that were ranked the highest are political events. The least effective was adopting Germany, France, U.K, Japan, China, USA, Russia soft power. Regarding the national diplomacy initiatives, leadership was selected as the most important, while developing a new brand was regarded as the least important. The most important economic factor was Expo 2020, while the Emiratization of companies was labeled the least important.

The most and the least important factors in education diplomacy were international student events and the training of international students equally. the most, and the least important factors of humanitarian aid are foreign assistance and financial aids, respectively. Finally, the most important factor in sports diplomacy is hosting sports events.

### **5.2.1 UAE's Soft Power and International Relations**

The first research objective of this study was to identify the relationship between soft power and the UAE's international relations. Spearman's Rho correlation result shows a correlation between four of UAE's soft-power practices and international relations, with respect to cultural diplomacy as the highest correlation and academic diplomacy, economic diplomacy, and humanitarian aid with significant but weak correlation.

With respect to this study, UAE's citizens think that cultural exchange brings a wider gesture of attention. According to these results, previous studies have demonstrated that cultural diplomacy is a powerful factor to re-build the country's image (Abdulilah & Khan, 2019; Castillo, 2019). The UAE, over time, has been using its cultural diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy for the promotion of its soft power at the regional and global levels.

According to the study results, the soft-power strategy of the UAE aims to create the country's image as a regional center of tourism, art, and culture. In current conditions, the UAE's image as a regional development center can be considered as corresponding to the country's strategic objectives. The main condition for the success of the UAE soft-power policies today is the presentation of effective cultural values that would attract specialists from around the world. The results of the survey analysis demonstrated that the current environment and the infrastructure of soft-power policies in the UAE are well organized. It ought to be filled with proper cultural values and messages to maximize the benefits of the state.

In the context of promoting the UAE's cultural values, foreign policy and humanitarian-aid policies can be utilized. According to the study results, the majority of the UAE nationals who took part in the research believed that the foreign policy of the UAE is effective in the realization of the stated objectives. At the same time, the participants provided a high assessment of the effectiveness and positive impact of humanitarian aid policies by the UAE. The same high assessment was demonstrated by the economic aid policies within the country. The interesting finding of the study was that a significant number of participants provided a high assessment of the quality of the cultural policy of the country. Hence, while the study demonstrated a low level of belief in the cultural values among the participants, the existing cultural policy of the UAE was assessed as effective. Such a result means that future progress in the field of soft power for the UAE is possible if the country can develop strong and reliable cultural values. Hence, all the infrastructure for the realization of new potentials is available and effectively operating.

The current situation in the domain of international relations is characterized by raising competition among world leaders for global spheres of influence. In this study's interest, specific attention is given to the role of soft power as a tool. The specifics of this type of policy is that the government realizes the objective of the increase of its influence in the target country not through aggression, but presenting its ideological and political model as more attractive, making an offer for the target country to follow it. Such strategies allow the country to avoid confrontation and reach expansion objectives related to political influence. The presented research assesses the role of soft power in modern politics through the example of leading global players.



### 5.2.2 Media Framing and the UAE's Soft Power

This study's second general objective was to identify the relationship between media framing and the UAE's soft power. Spearman's Rho correlation results show a correlation between media framing and four of the UAE's soft-power practices, sorted from the highest to the weakest effect (cultural diplomacy, economic diplomacy, humanitarian aid, and academic diplomacy).

The social image of a country is shaped by the media, and the media builds a representation of the environment based on terminological choices, content choices, and form several angles and viewpoints (Ospina Estupinan, 2017). With respect to the association between framing by the media and soft power, this study confirmed Molho (2015), who acknowledged the crucial roles played by the media. A comparison of the findings with those of other studies (Molho, 2015; Ogunnubi & Tella, 2017), confirms the media has a strong effect on nations' image. This also accords with our earlier observations, which showed that soft-power practices could be more successful if the media were involved. It is encouraging to compare this figure with that found by Kang (2012), which showed that the Chinese media helps build a new cultural identity.

Framing theory affirms that the way something is presented to the audience (frame) influences their choices concerning how they process information. In this case, frames work as abstractions that organize and structure the meaning of a message. This perception is reiterated by Chong and Druckman (2007). They explain the central premise of the framing theory as the presentation of an issue from several perspectives, which have implications for multiple values or considerations. Within this definition, framing is a process used by people to develop a specific conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking concerning an issue. Chong and Druckman (2007) further

note that frames as an outcome of the framing process come about in communication as a way for people to organize everyday reality. This happens when frames provide meaning to unfolding strips of events.

Results show that most of the respondents strongly agree about the UAE media's effectiveness to promote the UAE's image globally. This makes an overall agreement and implies that most participants think highly of the efforts that the UAE media is exerting to promote the values abroad. This implies that UAE media could promote great UAE values, whether locally or globally.

The study's findings broadly support the work of other studies in this area, linking media and soft powers. For example, a study entitled "A Perspective on Saudi Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy" confirmed that (Abdulilah & Khan, 2019). As discussed in the literature review, using a soft power theory is an effective strategy for a state aiming to improve its international status. These two elements are significantly correlated with each other. However, the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy to promote the UAE abroad was higher than the other three soft-power practices from the respondents' perceptions.

The other important aspect of the survey analysis resulted from discussing the assessment results on the media's effectiveness as an instrument of soft power in the UAE. The majority of the study participants agreed that social media should be considered a more effective instrument of soft power than traditional media. Such an approach is explained by the rising popularity of social media in the modern world and the reduction of traditional media's effectiveness as a tool of public-interest attraction and maintenance. Modern people prefer to gain useful information from social media. Compared to traditional media, social media offers a higher level of flexibility and

freedom in the choice of sources of information. In the question about the effectiveness of the UAE media abroad, about 75% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the UAE media serves as an effective instrument of the state's soft power abroad. In assessing the effectiveness of social media inside the UAE, approximately 80% of participants agreed that this is a useful tool of soft-power realization for the UAE inside the country.

Overall, this study supports evidence from previous observations (e.g., (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015; D'Angelo, 2002; Gilboa, 2008; Wagner et al., 2017; Yan, 2020). These studies confirm the media's power in framing public opinion to accept or reject beliefs and form them.

### **5.2.3 Best Soft Power Practices**

The third objective was to explore the best soft-power practices to improve the UAE's image internationally from the UAE's diplomats' and citizens' points of view. The descriptive analysis of the quantitative survey shows the UAE among the four-factor of soft-power strategies, the perceptions of participants about the UAE's humanitarian efforts to the world placed at the highest level, which indicates that most citizens considered the UAE very inclusive in terms of providing help to those in need. Data from an open-ended question, however, shows that the most important factor for grading the UAE in global ranks is a cultural strategy, which diplomats confirmed. The inclusiveness of society and culture means that any person can find a proper place and self-realization opportunities. In the conditions of socio-economic globalization, the image of an inclusive society with high economic opportunities and social development can become a serious factor for the attraction of innovative leaders from

around the world. Such a result strengthens the global socio-economic potential of the UAE.

With respect to this study, UAE's citizens think that cultural exchange, including music, language; history, art, fashion; cuisine, food along with cultural diversity, cultural strategies, cultural events, cultural exchanges could bring a wider gesture of attention. Among the potential advantages of the cultural values of the UAE that could be promoted is the inclusiveness of society.

The thematic analysis results demonstrated that the practices of nationalism and cultural strategies could be considered the main key approaches and most effective methods of soft-power promotion for the modern states. In this way, cultural strategies are an effective instrument of promoting the state's interest abroad based on the delivery and sale of the attractive image of the state that used soft-power instruments abroad (Bolin & Miazhevich, 2018, p. 528). The basis of soft-power standards, ethics, values, style, policies, and institutions can be referenced by the term "culture." In this sense, similar to culture, the concept of soft power can be applied and stretched beyond the activities of national governments and include the popular participation in efforts to strengthen the image of a nation through cultural exchanges, media, the internet, tourism, and among various non-governmental organizations.

The most effective soft-power practice that was defined as a result of the thematic analysis was the cultural strategy of the state. The logic behind this instrument's application was the idea that the modern states should effectively apply the strong sides of their national cultures into soft-power strategies. The formats of intercultural dialogues, assistance to local activists abroad, and the provision of resources for the change of cultural codes abroad were found to be effective

(Schneider, 2009). The agents of cultural diplomacy should represent the advantageous position of the state's cultural model that utilizes the soft-power instruments. Again, the results of the cultural strategies application were summarized for three different states: the US, China, and Russia. In the context of the US, it was found that the country succeeded in the application of the broadest range of cultural strategies in the spheres of media and cinema, educational, and travel programs. The US has also succeeded in delivering resources of attractiveness for its local business abroad (USC Center of Public Diplomacy, 2019). For China, the instrument of international tourism became the main source of advantages, while the Chinese national culture cannot be effectively exported (Liu & Turner, 2018). In Russia, the cultural strategy is oriented toward utilizing the USSR's reputation and scientific potential of the country in the fields of space and atomic energy. At the same time, it was stated that the cultural strategy of the state that applied soft-power policies should carefully consider the specific conditions of the culture in the targeted nation. It is crucial to adapt to the local conditions to avoid the risk of serious confrontation. All in all, the thematic analysis of the first research question provided important insights into the most effective soft-power practices that were supported with practical evidence.

Apart from that, discussions of said concept provided the researcher with an interesting insight into the need to assess soft-power policies as an analog of the business marketing activities at the state level. The objectives of these two types of activities are similar: the effective promotion and sales of a new type of product, the socio-economic and cultural model of the state. The analysis of the applied practices of commercial nationalism for the US, China, and Russia demonstrated that each of the players utilized specific messages and marketing methods. America was

characterized by the aggressive, market-type promotion of its culture and social model via social media (Castillo, 2019). Russia is oriented on the national branding strategy based on the military and political potential of the state. Finally, China is focused on the marketing image of the economically prosperous state and source of prosperity for the world in general.

The results of the discussion of the commercial nationalism practices demonstrated that the success of soft-power practices depends on the ability of the state to maximize its advantages and effectively promote them in the world. Each of these nations has serious benefits and challenges. For instance, the US managed to apply the benefits of the developed socio-economic model and attractive image of the American lifestyle, maximize it, and sell it to the world. The actual socio-economic situation in the US is quite different from the delivered image, and the following issues are relevant, namely economic and social inequality, as well as problems with poverty and expensive education. However, the US provided a one-sided image of its socio-economic model. For Russia, the actual situation includes even higher results compared to the US level of inequality, serious weaknesses of the economy, as well as difficulties in the organization of the political system. At the same time, Russia has a developed military system and experience of military operations around the world. Finally, China is not actually a zone of absolute prosperity, though it managed to deliver an effective message abroad. The analysis of this question demonstrated that the success of soft-power policies depends on the effectiveness of the chosen “marketing strategy.” State governments should effectively maximize their benefits and remove existing problems from their soft-power image. The targeted countries should value and follow them. At the same time, the nations that apply soft-power

policies should offer proper benefits for the targeted states to reach success. Hence, the “marketing strategy” ought to be adapted to the needs of the specific state—similar to the situation in modern business.

The answer to the research question was received as a result of the synthesis of findings of the thematic analysis and assessment of survey results. In the context of the thematic analysis, it was found that from 1990 to 2018, the global position of the UAE in the aspect of soft-power application effectiveness changed from the 67<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> position (Olivie & Gracia, 2018).

Even a correlation between soft power and international diplomacy found by some scholars (Abdulilah & Khan, 2019; Chen & Duggan, 2016; Kuznetsova, 2020; Wu, 2017) and the present study correctly point out that the concept of soft power, this notion does not have its origin in Joseph Nye. Nye certainly presented soft power as an inspiring instrument that should be used more by the states. But his notion translated into context-specific strategies of international inspiration over time (Hayden, 2012). As for public diplomacy, states can indirectly use national perspectives to create a shared understanding and situation to advance the objectives of national security.

#### **5.2.4 Demographic Results**

Apart from the inferential analysis of this study that gave a tangible insight into soft power, the descriptive results deserve consideration. According to the survey analysis results, females were considerably more optimistic in assessing the outcomes of soft-power policies in the UAE. An interesting debate contributed by Lyman (2013) demonstrates that women play an essential role in bringing peace to Sudan and South Sudan. The gender-specific differences show that the soft-power policies of the UAE

are effective in relation to women, while men are more skeptical in their assessment. Such results might be supported in the process of a similar survey analysis performed for non-nationals in the UAE and abroad. If this statement's relevance is backed by facts of additional study, it would be possible to say that the soft-power policies of the UAE ought to be improved through further orientation on the needs of males.

While the independent assessment of the state's success abroad was demonstrated, it is also important to comprehend the UAE nationals' position about the current soft-power situation in the UAE and the effectiveness of existing policies. In this context, the survey analysis of the responses of the UAE nationals was conducted. For the aims of survey analysis, the diversified population of participants was assessed, including representatives of all emirates in the UAE and people of different genders and educational levels. At the same time, the majority of participants included people with bachelor's degrees or higher-education degrees, which defined a high level of literacy as well as reliability for the assessment of soft-power policies of the UAE.

Another interesting finding is related to assessing the outcomes of the UAE soft-power policies by the representatives of different educational levels. The share of supporters of the current soft-power policies in the UAE keeps declining, in line with the increase in the respondents' academic and educational levels. It means that the higher level of education of the target population reduces the effectiveness of the UAE's soft-power policies. The country's modern strategies are most effective for people without higher education and bachelor's degrees, while people who hold Master's and Ph.D. degrees are quite skeptical and sometimes even critical in assessing the results. While the representatives of the country's educational and academic elites



usually serve as key sources for social and economic changes, their support is vital for the success of the UAE's soft-power policies. As a result, it is crucial to improve the existing policies to guarantee the increase of their effectiveness and attractiveness for the representatives of academic and scientific elites in the UAE and abroad. Such a factor can serve as a catalyst for a serious change in the image of the UAE in the world. The country should have representatives of progress and innovations, which would gain the interest of scientists and intellectuals around the world.

The survey analysis results demonstrated that while most participants believed that the UAE has a culture that can be shared abroad with respect to marketing, its cultural and political values abroad were not influential. The fact is that the UAE nationals do not observe such values in their everyday life. It is suggested to deliver and offer such effective cultural values that would motivate the UAE nationals and increase the level of interest to the country abroad. Among the potential cultural values that can be delivered to the world, the following might be mentioned: inspiration for permanent development, effective utilization of available resources for maximum prosperity, and effective synthesis of traditional culture and religion with the innovative economy and science. Thus, the UAE can develop and support the cultural image of the country that has passed development to one of the regional economic and technological leaders.

The question about the role of media as an instrument of realization of soft-power objectives in the UAE was discussed in the context of the thematic analysis and survey assessment. As a result, the comparison of best practices in social media for different countries demonstrated that each of them directly benefited from the effective application of this instrument. The US guaranteed global cultural dominance using

social media. China managed to reduce the pressure of its competitors, gaining control over social media. As for the UAE, the survey's analysis results stated that the UAE had reached a high level of effectiveness in the use of social media as an instrument of soft power, both inside the country and abroad. Social media is considered an important instrument of the UAE culture promotion. Overall, in the process of survey analysis, it was stated that the UAE should change the current government media strategy and put more effort into the development of social media in the future.

Based on the study results, it is obvious that the future progress of soft-power policies in the UAE would be directly related to the successful development of a social media strategy and specific instruments. Among the opportunities that can be applied in modern conditions is promoting the UAE's image as a tourism destination and art center on social media. Such a decision would both guarantee the improvement of the global reputation of the UAE and generate additional profits for the country from tourism and the realization of projects in the arts sphere. Together with this, the implementation of these recommendations can help the UAE improve its position among scientific and academic elites.

Altogether, the UAE government should consider opportunities for a more active control of social media activities inside the UAE. It is crucial to use social media to popularize all other aspects of the state's soft-power policies, namely humanitarian and economic aid, cultural strategy, as well as the promotion of cultural values in the world. The effective decision can be related to the application of the media products, promotion of ideas of cultural inclusiveness of the UAE, and openness for new useful knowledge and arts. The outcomes of art development in the UAE should be

effectively shared via social media. These initiatives should serve a similar objective, namely, the development of the new image of the UAE in the world.

### **5.3 Contribution and Implementation**

#### **5.3.1 Theoretical Contribution and Recommendation**

Among the study's theoretical implications is that the thematic analysis provided a useful summary of the best practices of soft power in the modern world. Based on these results, a general understanding of the current trends in the field of soft-power policy development in different states was formed. Simultaneously, the comparison of the soft-power policies of different states demonstrated the general principles of the soft-power methods utilization, based on the specific benefits for each country and the characteristics of the target population and states. Such findings can serve as a basis for a more detailed and complex analysis of the problem of soft power policy utilization in the future in a global context, not only in application to the conditions of the UAE. Hence, the presentation of the findings of the character of soft-power policies for global leaders ought to motivate researchers to perform a more careful analysis of the specifics of soft power for these concrete countries.

Rather than interpreting the national establishment as the result of a strategy of soft power suggested by Nye, this paper has focused on the nationals' perception of the most effective soft-power strategies. This leads to initiating movements and establishing the national self-impressions survey toward branding actions. It has a tangible impact on the mobility of professionals to reconsider their international relations strategies. In this sense, the study of culture allows the understanding of new concepts and ideas of international insertion, with the participation of higher-education

institutions, research centers, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations. It is worth noting that the specific interest of the UAE government should be delivered to the question about the organization of the state's cultural strategy.

News framing application has a strong influence on public opinion (De Vreese et al., 2011). In the field of international communication, Zhao (1989) found that media coverage could affect an international audience regarding the impact of the media on developing countries. The media have a significant impact on cultural globalization in two mutually dependent ways: first, they provide extensive transnational transmission of cultural products, and second, they contribute to the formation of communicative networks and social structures.

Reassessing soft power in terms of items that policymakers monitor and use, such as agenda-setting and framing, provides more valuable objective variables for understanding foreign affairs and making policy recommendations (Rothman, 2011). The media shapes a country's image, influencing its economic, cultural, and political standing in the international context. Since media and communication technology have greatly lowered the cost of information processing, a substantial portion of the population now has access to soft power (Nye, 2008).

Multiple studies and surveys have found correlations between media coverage and the public perception of foreign nations in relation to international news (Nye, 2008). A study discovered a relationship between the media representation of a country and the emotions of the international audience. The researchers explained that negative news could negatively effect on public's views compared to optimistic or even moderate ones. This suggests that if a country is framed negatively in the mainstream,

it is more likely to be viewed negatively by the target market (Ospina Estupinan, 2017). Also, once people's attention is drawn by the media, they are more likely to change their attitudes toward unfamiliar topics. The public will view a country as more significant if it receives more media coverage (Ospina Estupinan, 2017). According to this theory, the news media not only influences what people say about a topic, but it also has a significant impact on how people think about it. This provides a benefit of using the media as a vehicle of influence to manipulate public opinion across various forms of communication (Ospina Estupinan 2017).

As discussed, the application of soft power according to the concept of framing by the media can explain the best practices of international relations. One key reason justifying this theory can provide basic concepts regarding soft power and, therefore, direct the researcher towards the significant questions. Another reason that justifies the use of this theory is that it allows for the connection of studies on soft power to the immense base of knowledge to which the study contributes. In this case, framing theory will enable the researcher to better understand the interconnections of soft power in literature and develop a broader significance of any collected data. To conclude, the discussion undertaken in this study provides a critical introduction to soft power theory as a basis for the theoretical framework integrated by media framing. Media framing is a tool employed to shape the opinion of the public and public behavior, and this theory is best observed and applied through frames in the media.

As a theoretical contribution, a national-index soft-power strategy, along with marketing strategies to boost strength and using news coverage as a way to market the nation's image, contribute to how nations make use of branding. Branding and the creation of a positive image reinforce the national development of soft power. Positive

framing through the media is an impactful approach to influencing the public on an international level.

Analyzing the adopted scale of soft power and citizens' suggestions show that the scales need to be modified in the national index. Although the generated soft-power instruments of the UAE can be applied to create a global hub for innovative people internationally, national modification is required. In such a manner, the methodology will be thorough and holistic. It will include various data-collection approaches to ensure that the question is well-answered.

### **5.3.2 Practical Implementation and Recommendation**

The importance of the study findings is explained by the fact that they provide a set of useful insights and practical recommendations for the improvement of future soft-power policies in the UAE. First, the study results demonstrate the most useful practices of soft power that can be applied to the UAE. The crucial insight of the study was that the modern state should orient toward the definition and utilization of its strongest advantages for the effective realization of soft-power policies. The conclusion was that specific soft-power strategies, and practices should be mainly adapted to the needs of the object of soft-power influence. Hence, the UAE government could utilize these findings to define countries that perfectly fit the current model of soft power and changes to the soft-power policies that should be applied to contribute to a more effective influence of the highest interest for the UAE. The discussion of the role of cultural strategies and cultural values in the soft-power model of the UAE also provided important practical insights. Overall, the study's importance mainly lies in developing practical and useful knowledge used for improving the soft-power policies of the UAE.

The UAE needs to enhance its packaging of the cultural values it shares with the world. This requires the attention of officials in the UAE to explore the values that they have and promote them in a heightened sense. UAE nationals think highly of cultural diplomacy with other countries and consider it a significant soft-power practice.

Together with the development of the recommendations to improve the UAE's soft-power policies based on the global experience in this field, the study results deliver useful outputs about the current quality of the UAE soft-power policies from the perspective of Emirati nationals. Such knowledge offered the basis for a critical assessment of the existing soft-power practices utilized in the UAE. While the general result of survey analysis can be assessed as positive for the quality of the soft-power policies in the UAE, it is crucial to demonstrate the role of the survey analysis in the definition of several serious weaknesses of the current soft-power policies of the UAE. Among them are the problems of compared effectiveness of the soft-power policies of the UAE between males and females, people of different education levels, and the question of the absence of a strong and attractive promotion of cultural values as the core of the soft-power policies of the state. Such findings can be considered the most important outcomes of the study. All in all, they highlighted the key weaknesses of the existing model of soft-power practice realization in the UAE. They are the problems that require the most careful attention of experts and practitioners in the UAE authorities.

Among the practical implications of the study, it is crucial to mention that it allowed the researcher to better understand the perception of the soft-power policies in the UAE. The analysis of the UAE nationals' approach to the question of soft power

and social media demonstrated a level of effectiveness of social media utilization for changing public opinion. Such insights should support the UAE government in improving social media policies, mainly in the question about the development and the promotion of the proper cultural values. The definition of the problem of the absence of promotion of cultural values in the soft-power policies of the UAE should be considered as one of the most important factors for future study implications. It ought to serve as a serious motivation for the UAE government and experts to seek and offer the promotion of cultural values that can be offered to the audience inside and outside the UAE. As it was stated, the cultural strategy should be one of the most effective soft-power practices in the modern world. The results ought to motivate practitioners who operate in the field of soft power, namely state and non-state actors, to ensure a more responsible, productive search and presentation of the UAE's cultural values that could be shared with the world.

The final aspect of the study's practical implications is that it is supposed to motivate the scientific community to conduct a more complex and detailed analysis of the results and stated questions in future research. The study contributed to the identification of a set of useful insights that require additional discussion and research. First, the research delivers insight into gender-specific differences in assessing the effectiveness of the UAE's soft power among UAE nationals. Such an outcome can lead to the development of two different studies: a study oriented toward specific gender-role questions in planning the UAE's soft-power policies, and another that looks into the differences in gender-specific perceptions of soft power inside and outside the country. Additionally, the second useful finding of the study was related to the role of the academic level of subjects in assessing the effectiveness of the UAE's



soft-power policies. In the future, this finding can lead to a discussion of the question about the role of education in assessing the results of the UAE's soft-power policies and the means that could be applied to guarantee the improvement of the level of satisfaction with the UAE's soft-power policies among the academic elites in different countries. Equal to the prior question about the gender-specific perception of the UAE's soft power, this result can lead to an interest in the differences in assessing the UAE's soft power depending on the education level of the population in different countries.

Altogether, the current study can serve as a basis for the generation of important and useful applications, both in practice and theory. While the study's findings can lead to serious changes in the course of the UAE's soft-power practices and strategy development and realization, they can also motivate the scientific community to address the stated questions that were the results of the study findings definition. In this way, the present study did not just answer the defined research questions but also formed the basis for new research questions in the future.

#### **5.4 Limitations of the Research**

The present research was associated with several limitations that could affect the overall result as well as the insights into the study. First, it is important to mention that the sampling bias could take place in the aspect of the thematic analysis of the current study. This is one source of weakness in this study that could have affected the generalizability of these results to all UAE citizens and diplomats. Due to the communication restrictions caused by pandemic researcher, the data were collected online and researcher was not able to supervise the data collection accuracy.

The second important limitation of the study was related to the sample bias in the procedure of survey analysis. As it was stated, the survey analysis process was oriented on the collection of information only from UAE nationals, hence ignoring the problem of assessment of similar positions among non-nationals and foreigners outside the UAE, who are also the object of the UAE's soft policies. In fact, such an approach was explained by the need to assess the effectiveness of the UAE's soft policies inside the country. Nevertheless, this model led to a limited understanding of the results of the soft-power policies in the UAE for the foreigners and citizens of the states targeted by the UAE's soft power. It would be beneficial for the researcher to be oriented with the assessment of said targeted audience to understand the effectiveness of these policies in the question of the realization of the stated objectives. In this way, the analysis of the position of external and foreign citizens can be considered an even more important result that contributes further to the effective development of soft-power strategies and practices in the UAE. As stated earlier, the main objective of soft power is to influence the change in the country's perception abroad but not locally. The change of perception of the country among the UAE nationals is also an important objective. However, it would not contribute to the improvement of the UAE's reputation in the world. In the future, it would be very important to be oriented with the perception analysis among foreigners about the UAE, as well as to understand the role of the soft-power policies in this question.

An additional limitation of the research can be related to the problem of the organization of the survey questions. As mentioned earlier, the survey analysis results allowed the researcher to identify the weaknesses and problems in the current model of the soft-power strategies utilized in the UAE. It is possible to say that additional

survey questions could contribute to the definition of even more important questions and issues concerning the UAE's soft-power model.

Despite the limitation on reviewing soft-power policies and practices from other countries due to resource availability and researcher's accessibility, the study covered the general understanding of global soft-power practices. Such an approach allowed the researcher to gain a broad knowledge of the most effective practices of soft power and answer the first research question. Simultaneously, the lack of interest in discussing the specific soft-power practices applied by small countries could contribute to the researcher's inability to implement the full potential of the evidence analysis. Thus, the discussion of the experience of smaller states in the field of soft power could provide the researcher with more useful insights that could have effectively been utilized in the case of the UAE.

### **5.5 Potential Future Research**

The study's results led the researcher to the definition of the set of opportunities. The first important and interesting aspect that requires additional analysis is related to the impact of the UAE's soft-power policies on different genders. The study results indicated great differences in the attractiveness of the UAE's soft-power policies for males and females. In fact, men were more skeptical and critical in assessing the effectiveness of the UAE soft-power policies. It is crucial to understand whether similar results are relevant for an audience outside the UAE. Therefore, based on this knowledge, it should be possible to develop better initiatives to soft-power policies in the UAE to make them more attractive for men inside and outside the country.

The second crucial question for further assessment was related to understanding the role of soft-power policies in the UAE for participants with high scientific and academic levels. According to the study outcomes, the categories of people who obtained master's or Ph.D. degrees were less satisfied with the quality of the UAE's soft-power policies compared to individuals with lower academic levels. It means that current soft-power policies in the UAE cannot gain the interest and support of people with high academic levels. Such concern requires careful research to define the fundamental causes and opportunities for improvement in the future. The increase of interest in the UAE's soft-power policies among people with high academic levels should be considered a factor that would serve as a catalyst for serious social changes. Hence, this question needs a complex and effective resolution.

The final question that identified the need for further research was related to the definition of the cultural values that should be integrated into the soft-power policies of the UAE. Unfortunately, based on the survey analysis results, it was stated that the UAE nationals generally do not consider possible cultural values that could be delivered to the world as a basis for the effective international promotion of the UAE's image. As stated earlier, this result means that the UAE needs more effort to provide a proper understanding of this topic to the citizens inside the country.

Overall, the stated research questions demonstrated that the current quality of soft-power policies in the UAE is under question, and the significant opportunities for improvement in the future were defined in the context of single research. At the same time, the realization of all defined opportunities would require more serious scientific and practical work. The results of future studies should provide practitioners in the

UAE government with useful insights and recommendations about future improvement in the quality of the UAE's soft-power policies.

To conclude, as discussed previously, "soft power" has gained influence and dominance in a world where technology is growing exponentially. Governments' media communication no longer operates via newspapers, news channels, and journalists. The media is now controlled by "social media" where views and perceptions by non-governmental bodies and/or persons are recognized. In an ever-changing, dynamic, and technological society, the "media" as we know it now is a powerful force. Public opinion locally and internationally can be governed by the media. The role that governments play in foreign policy, investments, food, economic diversity, brand diplomacy, academia, and culture are showcased in an increasingly digitized media platform. As previously discussed, the decline of the US government and its foreign policies have contributed to the changed perceptions.

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## Appendix

### Frequency and Percentage of Diplomat's Rating Soft Power Practices

Items	Not effective		Somehow effective		Very effective	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
<b>How effective do you think the following cultural factors are in improving the UAE's international image as a soft-power practice?</b>						
Music	6	30.0	10	50.0	4	20.0
Cultural strategies	1	5.0	4	20.0	15	75.0
Language	4	20.0	10	50.0	6	30.0
History, historical ties to others	1	5.0	6	30.0	13	65.0
Art	1	5.0	10	50.0	9	45.0
Diversity	0	0.0	5	25.0	15	75.0
Fashion	3	15.0	13	65.0	4	20.0
Cuisine, food diplomacy	2	10.0	11	55.0	7	35.0
Cultural events	0	0.0	4	20.0	16	80.0
Cultural exchanges	2	10.0	2	10.0	16	80.0
Historical legacy	2	10.0	7	35.0	11	55.0
Arranging a festival abroad	2	10.0	9	45.0	9	45.0
<b>How effective do you think the following media framing factors are in improving the UAE's international image as a soft-power practice?</b>						
Social media, networking (Twitter, Instagram)	0	0.0	5	25.0	15	75.0
Movies, tv shows, cartoons	5	25.0	9	45.0	6	30.0
YouTube channels	1	5.0	12	60.0	7	35.0
<b>How effective do you think the following foreign diplomacy framing factors are in improving the UAE's international image as a soft-power practice?</b>						
Diplomacy, foreign strategies	0	0.0	2	10.0	18	90.0
Political events	0	0.0	0	0.0	20	100.0
Adopting the U.S, Germany , France , U.K , Japan, China USA, Russia, British soft power	1	5.0	7	35.0	12	60.0
Powerful passport	0	0.0	5	25.0	15	75.0
International relations	0	0.0	1	5.0	19	95.0
Working closely with global international bodies	0	0.0	1	5.0	19	95.0
<b>How effective do you think the following nation branding factors are in improving the UAE's international image as a soft-power practice?</b>						
Excellent behaviors of UAE citizens, tolerance, and kindness	0	0.0	3	15.0	17	85.0
The reputation of the country	0	0.0	4	20.0	16	80.0
lobbying, mediation	0	0.0	3	15.0	17	85.0
values , icons	0	0.0	9	45.0	11	55.0
Tourism	0	0.0	4	20.0	16	80.0
Communication, sharing knowledge, and experiences	0	0.0	4	20.0	16	80.0
Promoting the UAE culture	0	0.0	5	25.0	15	75.0
Leadership	0	0.0	2	10.0	18	90.0
Year of tolerance	3	15.0	3	15.0	14	70.0
Advertising	0	0.0	7	35.0	13	65.0
Developing the new nation Brand	2	10.0	11	55.0	7	35.0
The society's engagement	4	20.0	7	35.0	9	45.0
Social solidarity	1	5.0	9	45.0	10	50.0
hospitality	1	5.0	6	30.0	13	65.0
Create national figures in different fields	0	0.0	11	55.0	9	45.0
Promoting multiculturalism	0	0.0	7	35.0	13	65.0
Promoting the Islamic emirate	0	0.0	8	40.0	12	60.0

## Frequency and Percentage of Diplomat's Rating Soft Power Practices (Continued)

<b>How effective do you think the following economic factors are in improving the UAE's international image as a soft-power practice?</b>						
Financial diplomacy	0	0.0	7	35.0	13	65.0
Expo 2020	0	0.0	3	15.0	17	85.0
R&D	0	0.0	6	30.0	14	70.0
Emiratization of the companies jobs	5	25.0	8	40.0	7	35.0
Trade	0	0.0	12	60.0	8	40.0
Real-estate promotions	2	10.0	2	10.0	16	80.0
Infrastructural development	2	10.0	9	45.0	9	45.0
0	0.0	9	45.0	11	55.0	
<b>How effective you think the following educational diplomacy factors are to improve the UAE's international image as a soft-power practice?</b>						
Education	2	10.0	11	55.0	7	35.0
Investing more in research and development	1	5.0	6	30.0	13	65.0
Scientific diplomacy	1	5.0	6	30.0	13	65.0
Technology, science	0	0.0	7	35.0	13	65.0
Scholarships	0	0.0	11	55.0	9	45.0
Conferences	0	0.0	10	50.0	10	50.0
Training programs for international students	0	0.0	4	20.0	16	80.0
International students' events	0	0.0	4	20.0	16	80.0
Student exchanges	0	0.0	6	30.0	14	70.0
Talent talks	0	0.0	10	50.0	10	50.0
<b>How effective do you think the following humanitarian aids diplomacy factors are in improving the UAE's international image as a soft-power practice?</b>						
Leading humanitarian aid missions	1	5.0	1	5.0	18	90.0
Human rights	1	5.0	5	25.0	14	70.0
Foreign assistance	1	5.0	1	5.0	18	90.0
Donations to support AUS	1	5.0	6	30.0	13	65.0
Environmental aid	1	5.0	3	15.0	16	80.0
Financial aids	1	5.0	9	45.0	10	50.0
All kinds of foreign aid	1	5.0	8	40.0	11	55.0
<b>How effective do you think the following sports diplomacy factors are in improving the UAE's international image as a soft-power practice?</b>						
Sports diplomacy, Olympics	4	20.0	3	15.0	13	65.0
Soft power in politics and foreign affairs	2	10.0	6	30.0	12	60.0