



**HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS**

**Hugvísindasvið**

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***and its effect on Iceland***

**Ritgerð til BA-prófs í Japönsku máli og menning**

**Svavar Páll Guðgeirsson**

**Apríl 2014**

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**Kt.: 050786-2939**

**Leiðbeinandi: Gunnella Þorgeirsdóttir**

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## Abstract

With the rising popularity of Japanese Culture, there have been many people that have been influenced by it. How come that The Japanese government is so successful with their Soft Powers compared to many other nations? And how come that Iceland, a little island located in the Atlantic Ocean, is getting so affected by Japans Soft Power. What the researcher is hoping to answer in this paper is how come Japan is able to increase their influence so much with just Soft Powers, and if there could be any specific reason that can explain Japans increasing influence on Iceland.

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## 1. Introduction

The earth is an enormous place. There are countless cultures and over seven billion people on this earth (United Nation, 2013). Under such circumstances, how can one culture manage to stand out from the rest? Do governments promote their culture so the rest of the world gets to know it? What kind of methods are used in order for cultures to get noticed? Are governing bodies trying to advertise their culture? Alternatively, do cultures possess charm and uniqueness that are advertising and appealing? Among the ways for a government to introduce their culture is to try to use charm to promote it to other people, usually by showing and demonstrating the best features of their culture in hope that it will become interesting and attractive, another way is to force their culture on people. Most people understand the concept of power, however there are different kinds of power, for instance when someone pushes another person into doing something, an act deriving from aggressive power. However if a friend says “you should watch this show, it’s good” it is a different form of power, power of persuasion and positive influence. Countries are able to influence people by using these same means, using aggressive or persuasive powers.

The focus of this paper is to explain these two different forms of powers that will to be referred to as “Soft” and “Hard” Power, as well as to define the meaning of these two concepts. Furthermore to discuss various ways the Japanese governments has made use of in order to promote their culture to the rest of the world. We will focus on just Japan and Iceland in this report. We will also discuss the effect Japan’s Soft Power has had in Iceland, and in what manner the Japanese way of living and culture is being promoted. We will be looking in depth at the affects that Japanese culture has had on students who are studying, or have studied Japanese at the University Of Iceland over the last ten years. As we take a small journey together, the researcher and the reader will be referred to as “we” during a discussion on possible reasons why Icelandic people get interested in Japan.

The thesis is that for the last decade or so Japan’s use of Soft Powers has been influencing people all over the world. How has the means of Soft Power impacted Icelanders, or to be more specific, the students of Japanese Language and Culture at the University of Iceland, since they have gotten influenced to the point of starting studying Japanese language and culture? What causes these young Icelanders to take an interest

in Japan? Could it be because of Japan's many cultural differences when compared to Iceland? Did the Internet play a part in making Japanese culture and language more known to the world? The internet makes the world smaller, and as a result information are easily obtained and allow us to gain knowledge about different countries and their culture, an advantage point which Japan has made use of. Even though other Asian countries are trying to duplicate the results (Er, 2007), Japan seems to be the most successful of them when it comes to promoting their country and culture.

Why is it that the Japanese culture continues to achieve more recognition and what is making Icelanders so excited about Japan? Additionally, how is Japan affecting Icelandic youth? Through what medium are people connecting with this foreign culture, especially considering the limited amount of information available in Icelandic. What is the Japanese government doing that is influencing Icelanders to gain an interest in Japan? Is it a conscious strategy that the Japanese Government has composed in order to lure foreigners to gain an interest in Japan? This essay aims to gain an understanding and possible some explanation as to why Icelanders got influenced by Japan, and how they might have been introduced to it. To do so a survey was conducted among Icelandic students of Japanese as to better understand if there is a specific reason that Icelandic students got interested in Japanese culture and language. Is there one specific aspect of Japan that Icelandic students of Japanese seem to have an interest in, and what has been the dominating factor influencing Icelanders to get to know Japan?

## **2. Power**

The concept of Soft and Hard Power which was introduced in 2004 by Professor Joseph S. Nye, Jr. in his book: *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. In the book, Nye describes two different ways people tend to make use of in order to influence one another. While some people tend to use flattery and charm in order to achieve their goals, others use brute force or threats. The former is an example of someone practicing Soft Power while the latter is an example of using Hard Power. Many governments have been able to use Soft Power while, others have not. Alternatively as scholar Kurlantzick said, "Washington, whether focused on China's military or stuck remembering China's old blunt, gray diplomacy, simply had disregarded the gravity of China's growing Soft Power, or America's Soft Power deficit" (Kurlantzick, 2007).

There are several ways that governments can, or do use Soft Powers, and there seem to be a few countries' governments that are more aware of what Soft Power is and how

it can be utilized. Governments can achieve results using various methods of influence as mentioned before through various methods. As an example, many people are attracted to The United States because of Hollywood and the movies produced there, which the American government has realized and uses to its advantage by generating large amount of money to Hollywood the film industry, every year (Masnick, 2014). Iceland on the other hand attracts due to its nature, a well-known fact, and Icelandic travel agencies are using the Icelandic nature in order to make profit from tourism (Svandís Svavarsdóttir, 2010). There is also the famous Korean wave, a name given to the risen popularity of Korean musicians, movies and TV episodes, making Korea better known in the world (Beng, 2008, introduction p:15-16). Governments can utilize Soft Powers such as these mentioned above to increase people's interest in countries and respective cultures.

Thus, the question arises whether governments have been consciously applying Soft Power to increase their cultural influences on people from all over the world? Have Governments found a way to use Soft Power effectively? Especially the Japanese government, have they found a way to promote their culture better than other nations? What do they have that other nations do not?

In order to understand these two powers, let's imagine a bar of metal and a piece of silk. As commonly known metal is hard and usually used when something has to be sturdy and solid, something that will not falter no matter what, whereas silk is soft to the touch and often used for clothing, bed sheets and even underwear. Just as one can see the differences between silk and metal, we will see roughly the same differences between Hard and Soft Power.

The question that comes forth is how this fits within the concept of power. To answer that, imagine if a small piece of silk were to fall down on you, it wouldn't hurt since it is silk, light and flexible. However, in contrast to the silk, if a piece of metal were to hit you, you would most likely get hurt, since unlike the silk, it won't bend and is heavy.

The same thought can be applied when talking about Soft and Hard Power. Soft Power should not hurt when applying it, yet not everyone might like it. However if you deliberately try to force people to like something would fall under the definition of Hard Power, as Professor Joseph S, Nye said that these powers are the ability to get the outcome that one wants (Nye, 2004, p. X) . In order to explain these concept of the powers better, they will now be discussed individually.

## 2.1 Soft Power

Continuing with the silk analogy, silk is something that is nice to the touch, and people might like it. That is exactly how Soft Power works, it is a difficult thing to use effectively. However, if it is used effectively, it can influence people's opinion.

Soft Power, according to Nye is the power to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payment. Because of that, it is more difficult to use. Nevertheless, it should not be ignored since it is a form of power (Nye. 2004, p. X). An example of Soft Power would be politicians who have to rely on a combination of inducement and attraction (Nye. 2004, p. 6) both of which are a form of Soft Power.

The main problem with using Soft Power is that there is no guarantee that it will work as intended. It's the same as shooting a golf ball, hole in one is not guaranteed. The problem with Soft Power is that people might not like it, since people's interests are various it is difficult to aim at a large group, what influence one person might not have the same effect on another. Governments all over the world can use Soft Power to their advantage. Causing an avalanche by influencing one whose echo travels from one to the next.

This is the essence of how Soft Power works, having a person decide for themselves if they like something or not with a hint of influence. However, if Soft Power is used along with Hard Power, gaining control over something is much more efficient. Let's imagine that a country was to invade another country, in order to make the inhabitants of the defeated country start living as the invading country does, after taking over the country with Hard Power, they would use Soft Power trying to increase their influence thus alluring the new citizens to new habits. If the victors' use of Soft Power is successful, the new way of life will become accustomed to the inhabitants leading to a complete control of the victor. Not all countries are able to use Hard Power and therefore rely on Soft Power.

As an example of a successful use of Soft Power is when the Japanese army was in a peace mission in the Middle East. Japan was able to use the image of Captain Tsubasa, a famous football Anime that had been shown in the Middle East to gain the trust of the natives, the natives didn't even know that he was Japanese (Er, L. P., 2007). The show was very popular there and caused the native children to trust the Japanese troops more than the other troops.

## 2.2 Hard Power

As we talked about before, both Hard and Soft Powers are needed to gain complete control over something. Hard Power is the most obvious use of power, it is newsworthy and noticeable through media every single day (Robert, 2004). Hard Power is usually applied by using force in order to achieve a goal, which could lead to violence and compulsion.

To find what embodies Hard Power, we simply need to look at criminals, since they usually force their will upon other people, whether those people like it or not. A quote by Zedong describes Hard Power essence quite well when he said “power grows from the barrel of a gun” (Zedong, 1990).

Alternatively as scholar Robert Copper mentioned a realist has a preference for Hard Power. Bismarck is famous for the remark that “this policy cannot succeed through speeches... and songs; it can be carried out only through blood and iron” (Held, 2004), meaning that when Soft Power fails to appeal to the people, they have to use Hard Power to get people to submit.

While using Hard Power does indeed have strong effect its down sides are that the forcers become unappealing. It works the same way with nations, those who focus on Hard Power might lack in Soft Power therefore making them look unappealing. So due to this and other various reasons countries usually want to look appealing, in order to get people from other countries to take an interest in and go and visit them. Mainly because each and every year nations rely on income from tourism, which also creates one of every eleven jobs (UNTWO, 2013).

There are many countries that tend to focus more on Hard Power then on Soft Power. When governments force their opinions on others and do not follow up with Soft Power the people that they are forcing might not respond well to such coercion. If the oppressor uses Soft Power along with Hard Power then they might obtain better reaction. It is therefore evident that in order to successfully gain complete control, usage of both Hard and Soft Power is necessary.

## 3. Japan

Japan is an island located in the continent of Asia, also known as the land of the Rising Sun. What is considered common in the west, such as reading from left to right is the opposite there, reading from right to left. When the western nations wanted to start to

trade with the Japanese government, the Japanese government refused to do so. The United States were unsatisfied with such an answer, commodore Matthew Perry stepped in and forced them to open their borders, with his fleet, known as the “black ships” by native Japanese (Schirokauer et al., 2006. P. 176).

The history of Japan is long and bloody, having internal conflict, the biggest one being the “Sengoku Period,” a large conflict that started around 1568, and lasted until 1600 (Schirokauer et al., 2006. P. 124). After the war, Tokugawa Ieyasu who was the current ruler, decided to close Japan off to incoming foreigners. They were afraid of the growing Christian influence, and he banned foreigners from coming and staying in Japan. This terror resulted in a campaign to expel the Christian missionaries from Japan. They went as far as to ban Christianity and, as a result, many Japanese Christians were persecuted and killed (Schirokauer et al., 2006. P.137).

It was after these events that Japan closed its border for almost 214 years; after the “opening,” however, Japan was behind Europe which was industrializing. Japan had to close the gap between them and the rest of the world. That’s when The Meiji Restoration started a time in history when Japan was evolving into a more modern state (Schirokauer et al., 2006. P. 189). During that time, Japan was influenced by Western countries.

Japan was becoming imperialized at the start of the 1900, trying to create an empire in Korea and Manchurian through force. With that arose some questionable subjects, such as Comfort Women, where women were systematically raped by Japanese soldiers (Soh, 1996) and the slaughter of Nanking, a town in China (Yamamoto, 2000). Both are acts that Japan is and has been denying for some time. This has caused problems with neighboring countries which isn’t good for Japan’s foreign relationships. The story and historical facts that come with both of these events have materials that have made much notice as of late, and with that came a great deal of research into the matters, and many books have been written about the events.

Japan has not apologized nor recognized these atrocities, despite the historical certainty during the wars, where many human rights were violated against the Koreans and Chinese people (Children in History, 2002).

Furthermore, they have only made it worse with the Prime Ministers yearly visit to the Yasukuni shrine, a famous shrine in Tokyo, which is supposed to host the bodies of those who have died in battle (Yasakuni Shrine, n.d.) creating a lot of debate, since

allegedly it is also supposed to host war criminals. These shrine visits are preventing Japan to get back on good terms with some of their neighbors. For instance enraged Koreans have taken extreme actions to protest these shrine visits (Jouhki, 2009).

Few events have shaped the history between Japan and the Western world. We have the Russo-Japanese war, which started in 1904. When it started Japan wasn't considered a threat, and then they won against the Russian empire. Their victory demonstrated to the world that Japan was powerful and should be feared (Schirokauer et al., 2006. P. 219).

Following the allied retribution for the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japan was subjugated to Western control, consequently the Japanese constitution was forcibly changed and clause 9 was introduced, which forbids Japan to have an army, it also prevents Japan from being able to invade a different country (Umeda, 2006). They were allowed to maintain a Self Defense Force, a subject of Clause 9 but cannot go outside of Japan unless for peace keeping missions.

Japan used to have little connection with the outside world. Usually it was with their neighboring countries, Korea, Russia and China. However, in 1543 Portuguese explorers discovered Japan (Schirokauer et al., 2006. P. 131) and started to trade with them. Shortly after the arrival of the Portuguese, as mentioned before, Japan closed themselves off. They did however maintain a business relationship with three countries, China, Korea and The Netherlands. Despite Japan closing off its borders, from almost the whole world, they still had some connection to the Western world.

The United States has had a great influence on the Japanese nation more so than almost any other country. As mentioned The United States forced Japan to open their borders for trade and resupply which allowed America to get a foothold there. It was after that when different countries came forth and wanted Japan to sign a treaty with them as well. After "the opening", Japanese society started to modernize themselves and look to other nations in order to archive modernization. Incorporating with military organization from Germany and the education system in France which led to Japan quickly becoming modernized, showing their strength to the world. A rise that became apparent was through the increased militarization of the Japanese nation.

### 3.1 Cool Japan

For the last few years, Japan has been trying to promote “Cool Japan“ (Billones, 2013). There is no simple way to explain this concept since there are more than just one thing that makes “Cool Japan.” There are selective subcultures in Japan that have gained some popularity and have spread around the world, which are effecting the younger adults in the world and consequently form “Cool Japan.”

The leading figure to promote “Cool Japan“ to the Western world was Aso Taro, one of Japans former Prime Ministers, who was known for liking Manga and would read it almost daily. He was trying to have the government promote Japanese selective subculture that had gained some popularity and spread around the world and effected many of the younger adults in the world. He believed that promoting these subculture would attract foreign people to come to Japan. Among those things are: Manga, Anime, clothes, food, consumer goods and electronic goods. By exporting these goods, Japan has managed to promote the country and gain support from foreigners. These subcultures make “Cool Japan“ and define the concept.

### 3.2 Manga

Manga is a term coined for Japanese comics, an art of storytelling with pictures. Most Westerners know about comics, the main difference between Western comics and Japanese Manga is that American comics are aimed at the younger generation, while Manga is for all ages (Graillat, 2004).

Visually there are few differences between a Manga and a comic, the style is different in Manga compared to Western comics. Manga can go into dark themed stories, something that children won't be able to read while American comics are normally child safe, the plot does not become cruel enough so a child won't be able to read it. Another difference is that while Western comics usually make theirs in color, Manga comics do not have coloring in them, they are usually made in black and white. Western comics tend to have more details on the body, showing the muscles and outline their figures than a Manga does.

The way Manga is created makes it easier to convert it into animation, unlike Western comics that could be described rather as visual novels then comics which makes converting them into cartoons very hard. When Manga is made it is made with a cinematic style drawing, making them rather easy to change into an animated series. Japanese Manga are usually drawn in what's called a moment to moment scenes, aspect

to aspect scenes and many more, in a manner that tells the reader what is happening between picture to picture, Western comics are not drawn in the same way, they focus more on the scene to scene drawing (McCloud, 1993, p 74-77). Western comics won't tell you anything what happened between pictures or frame, all of a sudden you're finding yourself at a point without any information what happened between those two points in the story line.

Because Manga's are aimed at all age groups, Manga has a bigger sales group then the Western comics. There are also many companies that publish out a Manga magazine on a weekly basis. These magazines contain chapters from recent series, the most popular is Shonen Jump. Shonen Jump contains some of the most popular ongoing Manga's. You could be a high school student, working father, or an elderly man, reading the Manga material is not considered weird or strange in any way.

These magazines differ from normal volumes in that they do not just publish one story. Instead they get a chapter from a story to put into a magazine, so when you are reading it, you can read variety of different stories. Even if you do not like one of the stories, there might be a different one that you might like. After stories have gained popularity in the magazine they usually get published in volumes. Some stories have gained such immense popularity that they have been published for a long time, as an example is the Manga and Anime called One Piece. This Anime started airing around 1999 and is still on today, there are over 600 episodes for the series (Toei, 1999) and the Manga is still ongoing, since 1997, with over 700 chapters. These are just few of the examples explaining the major differences between the Western comics, and the Japanese Manga.

These Manga do in some cases show Japanese everyday life, and many events such as a first shrine visit, and many more, so as one where to read this, one might get a small hint of how it is to live as a Japanese person.

### **3.3 Anime**

This is a term used for Japanese Animation, or what Westerners would call animated cartoons. These are usually 20 minute long animated shows, very popular amongst people from almost all over the world. Even Icelandic children were shown on Icelandic television an Anime called Shin-Chan, a story about a young misbehaving Japanese boy and his daily life. It's becoming one of the most successful promotional subculture that Japan has transported to the Western world. They do, however, slightly differ from the Western animated cartoons. While a Western animated cartoons are created for, and

aimed at the younger generation making them more family friendly. The Japanese Anime doesn't necessarily do the same. They are usually aimed at all age groups. Both young and old should be able to enjoy them. Even though many Anime are produced as family friendly they also produce darker themed shows because of their broad viewers. The visual differences between Western animated cartoons and Japanese animated Anime are the same as between Manga and Western comics.

### **3.5 Clothing**

Recently Japan has become known for their fashions and colorful style. In Japan, different styles have emerged and are worn by large number of people. Even older men sometimes stop in front of mirrors and see if their clothes are all right, if their hair is decent or not. What makes Japanese style differ from western style? There is a considerable difference between styles in Japan and in the Western world. The main difference is that the Japanese fashion is not stuck on one thing, the saying "To each his own" fits when discussing Japanese fashion styles, because they allow all styles. Japanese girls are not afraid to try new things which is the main reason for Japan's different fashion styles or as scholar Alberto, Nicole Marie C. mentions in her report, "Many people are intrigued by how Japanese fashion developed and people all over the world try to dress up like the Japanese because in Japan, there is no such as thing as conformity" (Alberto, 2009).

Many fashion styles that are emerging from Japan are becoming famous in the Western world, as an example, Gothic Lolita. Someone who is young and attractive. Usually they wear clothing that resembles Europe's royalty around the 17<sup>th</sup> century. There is also Gyaruru, dark makeup that usually covers the entire face. They have colored hair, and their way of talking is different from when Japanese normally talks. These are just two of the handful of styles that are surfacing in Japan. In some cases new styles grow from the original styles.

With the growing popularity of Japans fashion styles Japan has made a mark on the world, fascinating a lot of people who have gained an interest in Japan and its culture through fashion.

### **3.6 Food**

Japan is known for many things, among those is their food, besides from all of their traditional food, they are one of the nation that have been awarded numerous Michelin stars (Zadrozny, 2013) giving the French a run for their money with their delicious food.

There are large varieties of traditional Japanese food. The food that has had the biggest impact in Iceland and almost all over the world is sushi. Sushi is raw fish put on top of small ball of rice. It doesn't matter where in the world you go, in most cases you will find a sushi restaurant, or be able to buy sushi at stores. When it comes to sushi, Iceland is no exception, there are many restaurants that sell or specialize in sushi making in Iceland. Sushi has also made a strong impact on the food world, Sushi chefs have been given 3 Michelin stars and a documented movie has been made about them (Iwashina, 2011).

There are many places that have a large variety of Japanese food, they have many traditional dishes, such as Katsudon, which is deep-fried meat put on top of rice in a bowl, Onigiri, which is rice molded into shape and then eaten as a snack, usually made with something in the middle to create different flavors.

Japanese candy has also gained some popularity, though it isn't as big as the food, it is sold in various places. People might have heard of Pocky, which is a known Japanese candy.

Because of how wide spread sushi is it has intrigued many people to see whether sushi in Japan is better than their country. Showing the effect of Soft Power through the food culture, and some people start to wonder how it is traditionally eaten leading to people wanting to learn about Japanese culture.

### **3.7 Consumer and electronic goods**

Japan is a provider for consumers good; with many things that one might not expect to come from Japan. One of the strongest export would be in the car industry, with many big name brands, such as Mitsubishi, Suzuki and Toyota.

Japan is also famous for their electronic merchandize. Japan has numerous famous companies that sell all kind of electronic equipment, companies such as Sony Toshiba and more that have made a name in the electronic business. Japan is among the countries that have produced televisions that are ahead compared to the Western high definition. Japanese electronics companies aim to discover and improve their merchandize, explaining why they are one of the leading nations when it comes to producing various electronic equipments.

Japan is also one of the biggest video game's creators, and have produced many famous titles, titles such as Final Fantasy, Pokémon, Mega Man, Sonic the Hedgehog, and Street Fighter. The most famous one is Super Mario, the Italian plumber that is

trying to save a princess from the wicked Bowser. There are also numerous games that don't make it to the Western market, who are sold specifically in Japan.

Aside from that they have a big amount of various merchandize which they can export, and there are few websites that specialize in selling exported products, such as Rakuten.com and anything-from-japan.com.

These subcultures that have now been described make Cool Japan, which the Japanese Government is using to promote Japan. Advertising Japan's "uniqueness" or rather, people's "uniqueness" and its recently risen subcultures in Japan to the outside world. Trying to get people to have a favorable image of Japan. And the Japanese government is rather successful with its "Cool Japan" campaign since there are a number of people that have started to like Japan because of it. As an example of how strong "Cool Japan" is, there have been many animated series that people all over the world consider part of their childhood. Generations that were raised while the famous Pokémon came forth which sailed into the heart of the younger generation. Japan is in all increasing its influence in countries by using these subcultures to their advantage, demonstrating and proving just how strong their cultural power is.

#### **4 Iceland**

Iceland is a small country in the northern part of the world. A country mostly known for their beautiful nature, and the kind hearted people living there. Iceland is only around 1/3 of Japan, and population around 330.000 people. Despite those things, Icelanders are quite known to the outside world. Iceland's history starts around 870, but before it got its name Iceland, it received two other names, Naddoddr, and Snowland, the third name got stuck on this little island, Iceland. However it was shortly after the name giving that Vikings fleeing from the Norwegian king settled on this small island recently discovered in the North (Hermann Pálsson, 2006). Vikings were known for their travels to different countries and there are even records of Vikings going to America before Christopher Columbus. Icelandic Vikings travelled widely and have been to most countries close to them, amongst them Greenland and England. Unknown too many, Icelanders had a running government around 1000, where people would be made accountable for murders and other affairs, if one was to kill someone, one was likely to compensate the closest of kin of the murdered man or be made exile. And if exiled, anyone is allowed to kill the exile.

Icelandic conflict was usually not large battles, but rather duels. However after the largest internal conflict in the history of Iceland around 1300, Icelanders stopped traveling. After that Iceland interacted exclusively with Denmark for trade (Gísli Gunnarsson, 1987). Denmark ruled over Iceland until 1944, the year that Iceland gained its independence. Since getting their independence, Icelanders have been traveling all over the world for trade. Iceland was also one of the first places to elect a woman president, who was president for 16 years. The Icelandic language hasn't really changed throughout the years. Despite Iceland being so different from Japan, there is something that links them together, although what?

## **5 Iceland and Japan**

Iceland and Japan are two countries that have relatively few things in common. So how come we both have such interest in each other? We do have a business connection. Iceland sells a large quantity of fish to Japan every year. While Japan loves to put whale in their sushi, they have to buy whale meat from other countries, Iceland is among the countries that hunt whales every year, and because of that a lot of the whale meat that Japanese people eat comes from Iceland giving the country a business relationship.

Other things that unite such different cultures are habits or custom such as taking off one's shoes before entering the house, and an expression of gratitude before eating. Different from the Christianity's way of saying thanks for the food. Although there are various other things that we have in common, these are the most obvious ones. Amusing to mention there is also special kind of seaweed ball that are known as Marimo in Japanese and Kúluskítur in Icelandic, that happens to grow in both in Iceland and Japan (Nátturufraeðistofa Kópavogs, n.d.). Having these different aspects in common does not in any way demonstrate why Icelandic youth is so keen on studying the Japanese language and visiting the country, why has Japan had this influence on such a small island nation far far away?

Even though we are very unlike, there are Japanese people who have moved to Iceland and live and work there. As an example, the teachers that teach Japanese in the University of Iceland are Japanese natives that live in Iceland. There is also a priest that works specifically with foreigners who are Japanese natives. There are many more, but these are the most noticeable ones. There is also an Icelandic-Japanese group, which consists of Icelanders and Japanese people that are trying to promote Japan and

Japanese culture and language in Iceland, they do all kind of different activities to get them more noticed.

Every year there are a great deal of events held that could contribute to Icelanders increased interest in Japan. Annually there is a Japanese festival held at the University of Iceland organized by students in the Japanese department in the University of Iceland, there are also events that are held by the Japanese people that live in Iceland, such as the Bon-Festival (Mishima, n.d.) where they place candles in one of the lake in Reykjavík and let them float down. Such events show a few of the Japanese customs to the native Icelanders.

Are these the reasons why Icelanders have gained such an interested in Japan? Alternatively could there be something else that explains this increased interest? Considering that we live in an information age, the difficulty of getting information has been reduced which leads to easier access to information on various things, or is there another reason why Icelanders have been gaining more interest in Japan? Since the goal is to find out what it is that is effecting the Icelandic youth, resulting in more interest in Japan, culture and language, a survey was made for those who are studying Japanese language in The University of Iceland.

## **6 Research**

In order to figure out how much Japans Soft Power has influenced the students in the Japanese department at the University of Iceland, they were asked to take a survey. They were asked to answer a few questions about Japan and Japanese culture and how they first gained an interest in Japan. They were also asked if their interest had increased or spread after they had gotten interested in Japan, especially after getting to know the culture a bit more. The goal is to see the Japanese Soft Power effects on the students.

### **6.1 Materials and methods**

46 participants were in the research. They were divided into two groups. In group 1 were 16 students that have finished their B.A thesis and in group 2 were 30 students that are currently studying Japanese in the University of Iceland. The reason why these two groups were asked to participate was the fact that they all have, or are studying Japanese; they did, however, have some different reasons for their interest in Japan and for starting studying Japanese.

The students were asked to answer a survey, group 1, was asked through a closed group on Facebook. Whereas group 2, was informed about this survey by the student council they filled out electronically. They were asked how old they were when their interest in Japan started and how, whether if it was through a family member or a friend, or if it was in a completely different way. As we will see from the result it shows how effective Japans Soft Power is in Iceland, and how much it influenced the students to the degree that they eventually began to study Japanese.

## **7 Results**

Out of the 46 participants, there were 29 (63%) females and 17 (37%) males (Chart 1). The age of the participants was divided into three groups, the largest in the age 21-25 (76%), second largest 16-20 (13%), and 26 – 35 (11%) (Chart 2). When asked how old they were when they gained an interest in Japan, the largest age group was 13 - 20 (65%), second largest was 1 – 12 (30%), and the third one is 21 – 30 (4%) (Chart 3).

When the participants were asked how they got first introduced to Japanese culture, the largest factor was Anime 26%, second Manga 19%, third one Multimedia with 14%, other were Computer games 13%, Friend 11% and Family 10% (Chart 4). When asked how often they had visited, it was only once (100%) The reason for their visit was for School (76%) and for Vacation (24%) (Chart 5). What was largely maintaining their interest was Culture (30%), second largest was Language (27%), third one was Entertainment (23%), we also had Customs (17%), and Fashion and Music in Other (1%) (Chart 6).

When participants were asked if they had visited Japan it was 50/50, it should be mentioned though that group's 1 participants usually had gone to Japan to study. Since it is required of them in order to finish their Japanese studies. This was the only major difference between the two groups.

## **8 Discussion**

In order to figure out how much effect Japans Soft Power has had on young Icelandic adults, and if they could have started to gain more interest in Japan because of the Soft Power, students were asked if they started to gain more interest in Japan because of Cool Japan, or if there was another reason for them to get interested in Japan. They were asked them how they had gotten to know Japanese culture, what intrigued them

after they had gotten to know Japanese culture, and what was most interesting now that they had gotten to know Japan.

As was mentioned before Aso Taro said that they needed to grasp the heart of young people from many countries (Er, L. P., 2007). With that they are hoping that if they are able to get them while they are still young, they would later on have a good image of Japan, and therefore give Japan more support in the future. Did this go through though? Did the students start to gain an interest in Japan when they were children? Getting the interest from the younger people didn't prove difficult for Japan, since they have a lot of different ways to attract youth, and Japan in the case of these participants succeeded their goal of influencing for the benefit of their country.

When asked how old they were when they started to gain an interest in Japan we can see, that overwhelming number of participants were in between the ages of 13-20 when they started to gain interest in Japan. This shows that Japans Soft Power works just as Aso Taro claimed how it needed to work.

As it can be seen from the charts, when asked how old they were, it turned out that most of them who did gain an interest in Japan have all grown up with an average age between 21-25 years old, adult individuals that are already starting to close the gap between these two nations. Especially since they are now in the University they needed to gain an interest before they were 20 years old, in that case, as we can see from the result Japanese government did manage to do that.

The result shows that the participants were around the same age when they started to gain interest in Japan. However, did they start having an interest in Japan because of the same thing? Could it be that they got to know Japan because of the same thing? Maybe someone got to know it through Manga, or some because of the culture?

If we take a look at the participants, in most cases interest started with Anime or around 26% of the participants, and the runner up was Manga with 19%. Multimedia came after with 14%. 13% of participants gained an interest in Japan through video games. And then there were some who got to know Japanese culture through a friend or about 11% and those who got to know it from families 10%. Here we can see some of the effectiveness of Soft Power, advertising culture through Anime, Manga, and video games. It is evident that a lot of the students did start to take an interest in Japan through these mediums.

Even so the factors should not be ignored since they are still causing a large amount of interest through other fields than Anime and Manga. From this survey, one sees how

strong Japans' Soft Power effects on both these groups. In conclusion the survey shows that a bigger part of the students started to gain an interest in Japan through Soft Power. Although there were few who got introduced to Japan through a different way, the most popular way was through "Cool" Japan. Proving that Japans use of Soft Power is effective and practical. Since Japan has diverse means to promote their culture the chance that we might encounter something from Japan is high, it takes just one person to gain an interest, who consequently introduce it to other people causing an avalanche.

The question that awakens is to what extent Japan's Soft Power is going to effect the world in the next couple of years. Are they going to become even more famous, could it end with every person knowing Japan and its culture and Japan gaining even more fame after that? Will it end with every child on earth has seen an Anime or read a Manga, and consequently getting influenced by Japans Soft Power. Will Japan gain a better image to the outside world? Will they have a huge surge of people learning Japanese and going there as exchange students, changing their image even further.

Japans Soft Power has the potential to influence a large amount of people, and since it has gained a large number of people that already have an interest in Japan they are likely to influence even more. As the survey demonstrates, Iceland is no exception. This small country way up north of the world, in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, with no borders and fairly isolated can be just as easily influenced as any other country. This shows how effective Japanese Soft Power is which should not be taken lightly, just as Professor Nye said; "Soft Power is still a power that cannot and should not be ignored" (Nye, 2004, p. X), something that every person in the world should think about. It just might make the world a little bit better.

When participants were asked what they thought was the most interesting about Japan there were many different answers about that. Many of them started to like the culture or around 30% that were interested in after getting to know Japan. So the Japanese language had some 27% with participants. Many gained an interest in the culture and habits, others would gained an interest in Japanese fashion, other in music, after they had started to gain an interest in Japan, as you can see on chart 6 the groups started to gain an interest in all of these things after getting to know Japan through Cool Japan.

Cool Japan has become so famous that it has reached the point that it is considered culture normal to know of a series such as Naruto and One Piece, two of the most famous Japanese Animated series. Now, these are just 2 shows of the countless that are

created each and every year, if people are willing to look, they should be able to find something to match their individual preference. This could be one of the many reasons why „Cool Japan“ has gained such a large audience in the last couple of years.

As Japan has been able to use their “Cool Japan“ to promote their culture, they have also put forth entertainment for people of all age to enjoy. Many series that people grew up watching, shows such as Dragon ball Z, Akira as have all contributed one way or another to the popularity that Japan has been experiencing for the last decade or so. These are also a part of Japan’s Soft Power. There have even been fan spin offs from these series where people interested in these stories, draw their own stories featuring the characters from these series.

As one can see there are various amounts of things that could have affected Icelanders, many different ways that could have kindled an interest in Japan. Especially since the Japanese nation having numerous ways of introducing their culture to other people, with all of these subcultures the chances that people are going to get interested in their culture will increase.

Japan’s charm is working with great affect since the amount of people influenced by it are increasing. However, as mentioned they are unable to use Hard Power because of clause 9. Japan’s Soft Power isn’t put down because of that though since people still think that it is interesting, again this shows the how affective their use of Soft Power really is. If Japan can have this amount of effect on Icelandic people, then how much affect could it have on a country that is more connected, as an example, The United States of America, a country more connected to Japan than Iceland?

## **9 Conclusion**

With brilliant use of Soft Power, Japan has gotten a large number of people to like Japan. They are, however, damaging it at the same time, with many events that make people angry. Few events such as whale fishing, dolphin killing (Louie Psihoyos, 2009) and then there is the visit to the Yasukuni shrine. If they were to stop these visits, they might have more visitors coming to Japan in order to see the culture and the people. They are at the same time trying to improve their relationship with their neighbors using Soft Power, with means such as having a Manga drawing competition in the world. However, the winners usually come from China and Taiwan (Er, L. P.; 2007).

As time has passed, getting to know different people has also gotten easier and finding something, that one might find interesting has also become much easier.

Language barriers are not many since there are a large number of translators who translate for free so understanding the material isn't difficult, there is also a large number of websites that allow one to stream episodes, meaning that downloading episodes is no longer necessary, one can just watch the episodes right on of the internet. With the technology advanced to such a level that getting to know a different culture isn't hard, with that said if one manages to see something that is connected to Japan, someone just might start to research online in order to find some information about it.

Hard and Soft Powers have been explained with the use of silk and steel analogy as an example. Soft Power is an ability to get what one want through attraction rather than coercion or payment. The opposite of Soft Power is Hard Power, using force to get what one want. We also went into Japans history, and talked about "Cool" Japan, something that Japan is using to promote Japan, the most famous aspects of it where Anime, and Manga. Japan is also known for their large variety of different clothing styles, food, most famous being sushi, consumer's goods and electronic goods, Japan is one of the leading nations when it comes to these two aspects, especially in the electronic merchandise.

Then there is a discussion about Iceland and its history, followed by a look into the connection between Iceland and Japan, showing how Japanese natives living in Iceland might have had an impact on the Icelandic nation. As talking about Japan brings about the research, which was done among the former and current students of Japanese in order to see how they had gained an interest in Japan, if it was through Japanese Soft Power, and the result. What the survey demonstrated was that many of the students started to gain an interest in Japan and Japanese from the means of "Cool" Japan, where Anime and Manga were at the top. Many of the students also started to gain an interest in Japan when they were teenagers, showing how Japans' Soft Power was able to get them "hooked" into Japanese culture, and since these people are fascinated with Japan, they are likely to stay fascinated by it.

If Japan can maintain the use of this power they could even become more famous, most of the companies that create Anime and Manga usually don't assume that they are for foreigners or if they have any interest in it, their marketing group is focused on the Japanese, not Icelanders, Americans, or any other country outside of Japan. This has not prevented it from becoming famous in Iceland, not to mention the whole world. Showing the strength of the internet and how easy it is to find some materialwhen searching.

Even though there are a large number of wicked things have been done by the Japanese, it apparently did not affect the students in the University of Iceland, just as we saw from the results of the survey; it is without a doubt that the students were affected by Japan's Soft Power, showing that they have an increasing interest in its "Cool" culture. Since the students usually had their first impression on Japan from Anime or Manga, it shows the effect of Japans Soft Power. After taking an interest in Japan the students would usually start to gain more interest in Japan and with that they would be reeled in by Japans Soft Power. In conclusion the survey shows that, despite everything, there are people who are still getting interested in Japan and its culture, and are willing to study Japanese and then go there, in some cases go and live there, that's what makes the connection between Japan and Iceland better and will continue to do so.

## Charts

Chart 1

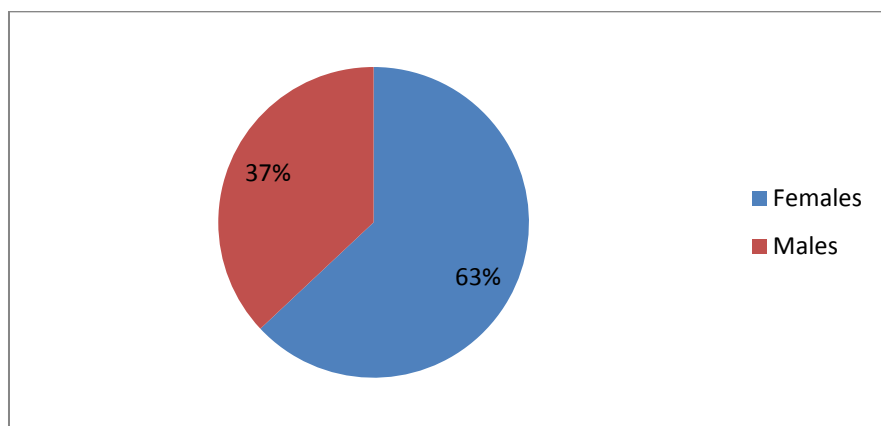


Chart 2

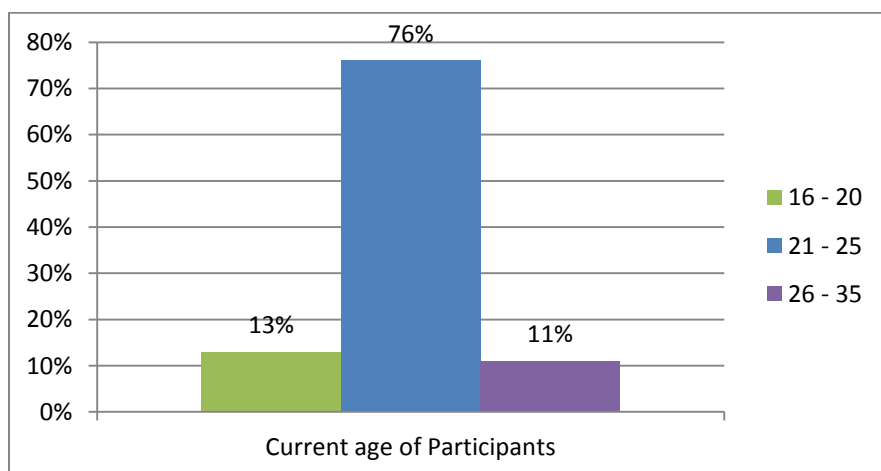


Chart 3

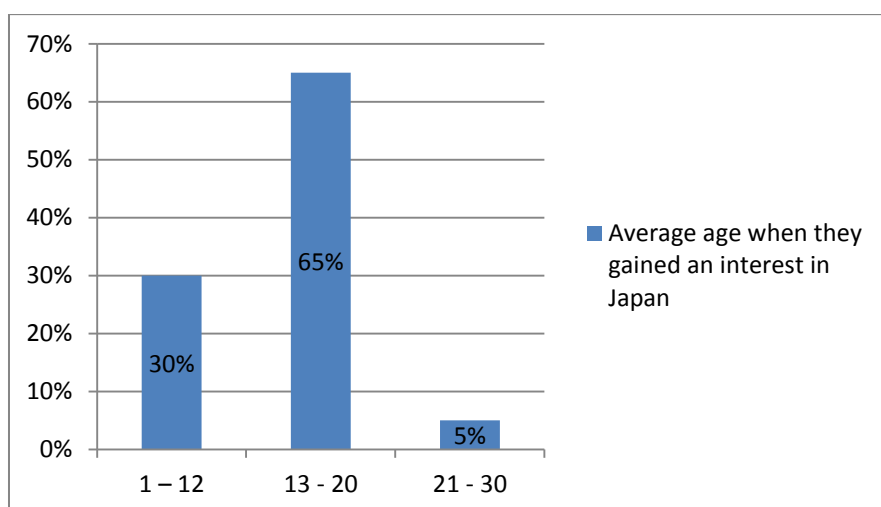


Chart 4

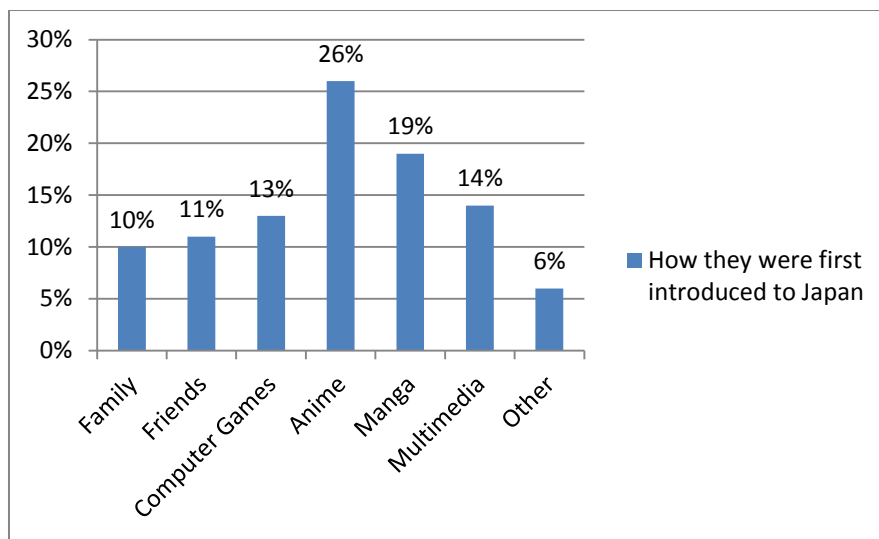


Chart 5

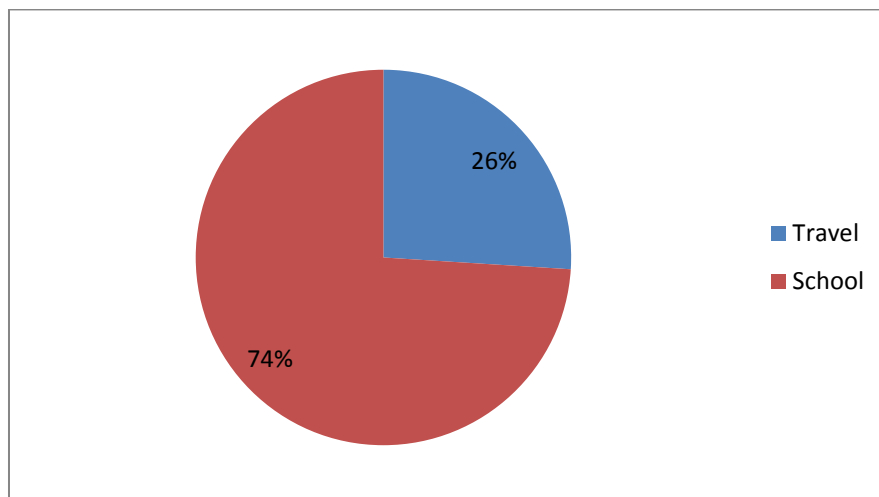
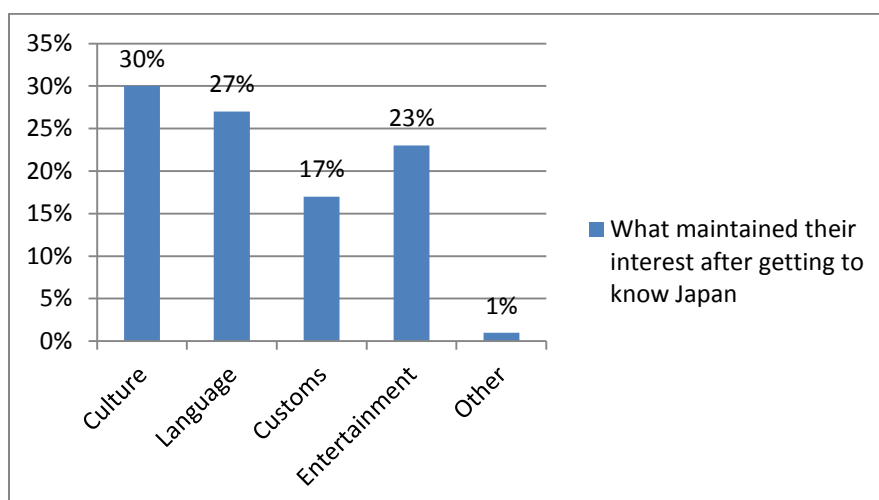


Chart 6



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## Appendix

### Survey Questioner

Góðan daginn

Ég heiti Svavar Páll Guðgeirsson og langar að spurja þig nokkrar spurningar varðandi Japanska menningu, svörin verða notuð við vinnslu á B.A ritgerð um Menningarleg áhrif Japans á Íslandi.

Könnunin er nafnlaus og verður yfirfarin af Deildarstjóra Japönskudeildar.

Með fyrirfram þökkum

Svavar Páll Guðgeirsson

Kyn

Karl

Kona

Hvað ert þú Gamall/Gömul

16 – 20

21 – 25

26 – 35

36+

Hefurðu farið til Japans?

Já

Nei

Hversu oft hefurðu farið til Japans

1 – 2

3 – 4

5 – 6

7+

Hvers vegna fórstu til Japans

Ferðalag

Viðskipti

Skóli

Hvað varstu Gamall/Gömul þegar þú fékkst fyrst áhuga á Japanskri menningu

1 – 12

13 – 20

21 – 30

31 +

Hvernig kynntistu fyrst Japanskri menningu?

Fjölskylda

Vin

Tölvuleikir

Anime

Manga

Margmiðlunarefni

Hvað er það sem heilar þig mest við Japanska menningu

Menning

Tungumálið

Siðir

Afþreyingarefni

Takk fyrir að taka þessa könnun og vonandi muntu eiga góðan dag

Með þökkum

Svavar Páll Guðgeirsson