

**EXAMINING THE AGENCY OF DIGITAL DIPLOMACY IN DRIVING
GHANA'S ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY**

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DECLARATION

I hereby, declare that this dissertation is a result of my independent study under Dr Philip Attuquayefio, and that references to other works have been duly acknowledged. I further declare that no part of this work has been submitted elsewhere for any other purpose.



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INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration for providing me with this opportunity.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My heartfelt gratitude goes to God Almighty for his guidance and mercy throughout the study period. To my supervisor, thank you for your guidance, comments, and critique of this academic work. I must say that I learned a lot from him during my time under his supervision, which I believe will help me in my future academic endeavors. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of my interviewees for their contributions to the completion of this work, as well as the staff of the MFARI, GIPC, MoT, and other institutions that allowed me to conduct interviews for the study. Indeed, the study would not have been possible without their contributions. My deepest gratitude also goes to all of my relatives and friends who supported and encouraged me in various ways throughout this study.



LIST OF ACRONYMS

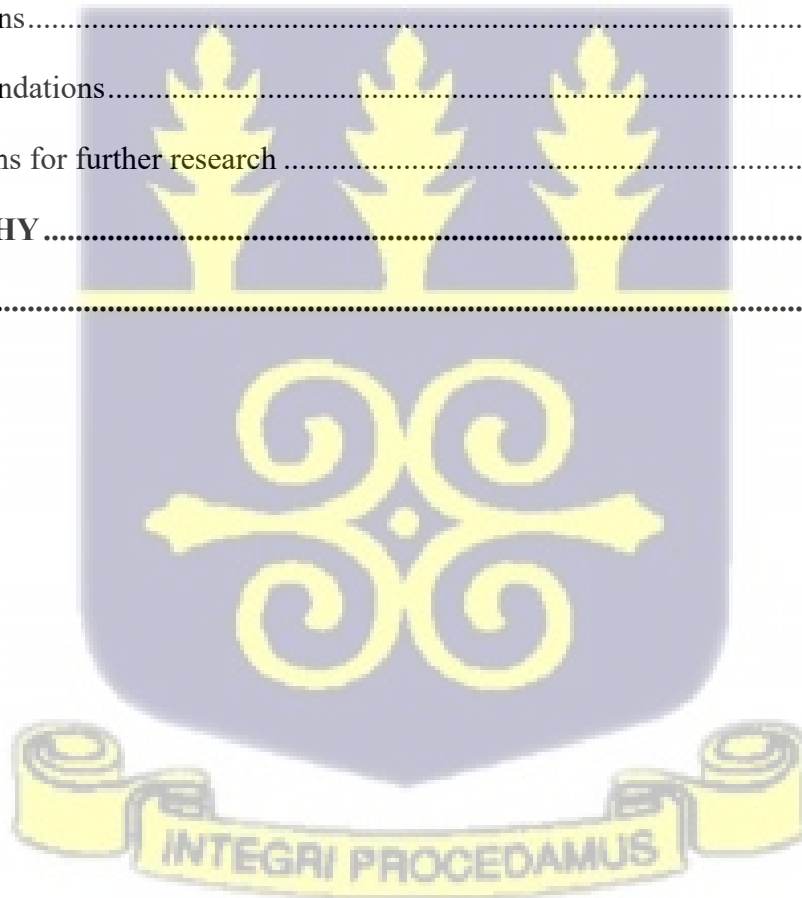
AR/VR	–	Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality
CERN	–	European Organization for Nuclear Research
CNN	–	Cable News Network
CO ₂	–	Carbon Dioxide
COP21	–	Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the Parties
COVID-19	–	Coronavirus 2019
DFAT	–	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
FCO	–	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GEPA	–	Ghana Export Promotion Authority
GIPC	–	Ghana Investment Promotion Council
ICANN	–	Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers
ICT	–	Information and Communication Technology
ITU	–	International Telegraph Union
MDAs	–	Ministries, Agencies, Departments
MFA	–	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoT	–	Ministry of Tourism
SMEs	–	Small and Medium Size Enterprises
UN	–	United Nation
UNICEF	–	United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
WSI	–	World Summit on the Information Society
WWW	–	World Wide Web

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ABSTRACT

The advent of technology and social media has profoundly shaped diplomatic practice in the 21st century. Across the globe, many foreign ministries use digital media for the conduct of diplomacy towards the achievement of spectrum of goals such as building a country's international image and promoting economic diplomacy in particular in the areas of trade and investment. Traditionally, this has been referred to as digital diplomacy. This study builds upon existing research by primarily examining the agency of digital diplomacy in driving Ghana's economic diplomacy, specifically the promotion of trade and investment. The study also examined the institutional framework for the conduct of diplomacy within MDAs, how digital diplomacy is carried out and the implications of digital diplomacy on Ghana's foreign policy. The qualitative research approach was adopted to conduct the study. A sample of 18 persons were used for the study all selected from MDAs. The purposive sampling strategy was utilized for the selection of respondents. Interviews were used as the research instrument of data collection. Data collected was analysed using thematic narration and logical inferences. Results of the study reveal that although the MFA has a framework for carrying out digital diplomacy, the framework is limited in scope mostly involving a filtering process where information is evaluated by the Director of Information to be posted online. An overarching framework that specifies guidelines, network of targeted actors, the type and complexity of reach, tools and techniques, frequency of communication, and monitoring effectiveness of digital diplomacy among others are all absent. Results also indicate that the MFA conducts digital diplomacy by posting its activities on various digital platforms mostly Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Messages posted in this regard revolve around the economic potential in Ghana as well as trade and investment opportunities. Further, the study found that digital diplomacy could play a significant role in driving Ghana's economic diplomacy goals of boosting trade and investment. Results again underscore the fact that digital diplomacy has vast implications for Ghana's foreign policy in the future as it can influence how other States interact with Ghana. The study ends by outlining policy implications for policy and practice. Among other measures, it is recommended that the MFA should develop and implement a comprehensive digital diplomacy framework, enhancing the design of messages and communication using algorithms, visuals, and emotions, training MFAs personnel to be proficient in communicating with digital media, and collaborating with active online actors including policymakers, academics, diplomats, and leaders of the diaspora.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Digital diplomacy is regarded as one of the major trends in diplomatic communication in the twenty-first century. As a result of globalization and its associated advances in ICT, the internet, and social media, new public diplomacy is increasingly deviating from traditional diplomatic elements. The significance of digital diplomacy is based on the use of information and communication technology (ICT), the internet, and social media, all of which present opportunities for strengthening diplomatic relations through enhanced communication. As a result, comprehending the role and importance of digital diplomacy is critical.

On the global level, digital diplomacy is transforming traditional diplomacy. According to Verrekia (2018), the innovations characteristic of the digital age has made the conduct of diplomacy relatively easier. Lord Palmerston, British Foreign Secretary, is said to have exclaimed, "my God, this is the end of diplomacy," upon receiving the first telegraph message in the 1860s. Surprisingly, diplomacy has outlasted the telegraph and subsequent technological advances such as radio, television, and faxes (Hocking and Melissen, 2015). Now, social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook have expanded communication from being a monologue to a dialogue, allowing government officials to be able to engage in two-way conversations with the public. Although digital diplomacy has been on the upsurge on the global level, there are variations in the degree of its use. Wekesa, Turianskyi and Ayodele (2021) have generally bemoaned its Eurocentric character suggesting that it is predominantly a western practice and that Africa lags behind. Nonetheless, Wekesa et al. (2021) observe that some African countries are doing well in the area

of digital diplomacy citing countries like Kenya, South Africa, and Rwanda. A study by Kampf, Manor, and Segey (2015) found that whilst African countries generally lag behind in terms of the use of digital diplomacy, there are still Foreign Ministries (MFA) that operate websites, Facebook, and twitter accounts to drive their foreign policy goals just as their foreign counterparts. The study precisely reported that Ethiopia's MFA had 34.6k followers on twitter; Kenya's MFA enjoyed 52.8k followers while Rwanda's MFA had 16k followers. In the Ghanaian context, a more recent survey by Twiplomacy (2019) revealed that the President of Ghana, Nana Akufo-Addo uses Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram for diplomatic motives. This survey specifically found that Ghana's president, Nana Akufo-Addo had 421k followers.

Conceptually, a variety of definitions of digital diplomacy are cited in existing literature. The United States Department of State defines digital diplomacy which it also refers to as 21st Century Statecraft, as the use of new technology to engage a growing, changing set of stakeholders across the globe. The United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) defines the term as solving foreign policy problems using the internet and is an extension of conventional diplomacy but via a different medium. Similarly, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development interpret it as "Open Policy" (Moens & Chandra, 2021). From these definitions, it can be inferred that digital diplomacy is a type of new public diplomacy that makes use of the internet, new information and communication technologies (ICT), and social media to strengthen diplomatic relations. The main differences between classical public diplomacy and modern public diplomacy are greater access to information, greater interaction between individuals and organizations, and greater transparency (Chakraborty, 2013). The development of websites by foreign ministries, embassies, and delegations within international organization is now standard practice. The websites of foreign ministries serve to explain and record their national foreign

policies, as well as to refute unacceptable actions or claims by other actors in international relations (Barston, 2014). Social media have evolved into important diplomatic tools. This worldwide acceptance of online channels has resulted in unprecedented levels of openness and transparency. In November 2020, Switzerland unveiled its Digital Foreign Policy Strategy, ushering in a new phase in its efforts to shape digital governance (Kurbalija, 2021).

World leaders, diplomats, cabinet members, and political leaders use social media, specifically Twitter, to communicate their national policies, which have both positive and negative outcomes (Taylor, 2017). Twitter is the most popular social media platform, with approximately 97 percent of all 193 United Nations member states having an official account, followed by Facebook with 93 percent, and Instagram with 81 percent (Cole and Wolfe, 2018). According to the global soft power index conducted in 2022, South Africa is a regional soft power leader, having risen three places this year to 34th place, outperforming its Sub-Saharan African neighbors. South Africa, like Brazil, has increased its Familiarity, resulting in higher scores in other soft power pillars such as Media & Communication, Education & Science, and Business & Trade.

Empirically, Yates (2019) reports on how digital diplomacy enabled Nepal to mobilize resources following the earthquake including a huge amount of \$16.2 million promised by India and a total of \$4.1 billion by donors for post-quake rebuilding. In the USA, a frontrunner of digital diplomacy, having established e-diplomacy in 2002, Adesina (2017) reports how it has through diplomacy ensured cost-cutting strategies by interacting with the public and also how a diplomat in China uncovered that the US embassy in China was overcharged in the usage of electricity in USA and illegal energy tapping by residents in China saving tens of thousands of dollars (Hanson, 2012) made possible through digital diplomacy.

For the sake of effectiveness, digital diplomacy requires diplomatic agency. This idea underscores the fact that digital diplomacy is largely dependent on new communication and technical skills. Although communication is generally a cornerstone of diplomacy, the codes, habits, and norms of communication markedly differ from both the formal and the informal diplomatic communications that take place behind closed doors. Impliedly, possessing mastery over the formatting logic of software and the navigation of big data, and the management of relationships with tech companies have become additional tasks of diplomacy (Riordan 2019). This has in turn created the need on the part of diplomacy to recruit new competencies and learn new skills. Thus, the agency of digital diplomacy as used in the current study suggests diplomatic personnel are agents to drive digital diplomacy and that learning is central to understanding the changes in diplomatic agency brought about by digitalization (Bueger and Gadinger 2018).

Most of Ghana's Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), the Presidency, and Parliament, are on these platforms. According to Taylor, 2017, the Ghana Tourism Authority and the Ministry of Tourism have been able to use their digital media platforms to run the Year of Return and the See Ghana, Eat Ghana, Wear Ghana, Feel Ghana campaigns, which have conscientized Ghanaians to patronize made in Ghana products. Those same channels have enabled the Tourism Ministry to provide reasonable assistance to tourists and foreigners visiting Ghana for other reasons.

Though there is little information on the benefits of social media in assisting nations in achieving their national interests and how these technologies influence the advancement of foreign policy objectives (Bjola,2015), it is critical to investigate how the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration in collaboration with relevant Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) are using their social media platform and websites in leveraging and advancing Ghana's economic interests.

1.1 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

At the core of Ghana's foreign policy objectives is economic diplomacy. In its basic form, economic diplomacy represents efforts to leverage a country's diplomatic initiatives to drive its economic interests abroad. In its 2016 manifesto, the ruling New Patriotic Party explained economic diplomacy as the basis of attracting large investments, trade, and businesses into Ghana. Similarly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs defines Economic Diplomacy as the advancement of national goals and improvement in the economy with the focus on diversifying and increasing Ghana's export base by actively seeking markets for Ghanaian products abroad and taking advantage of preferential arrangements and multilateral trade agreements. Over the years, successive governments have employed a number of measures to drive Ghana's economic diplomacy. Under the Kufuor Government, for instance, it was the case that good neighbourliness was projected as a key enabler for economic diplomacy etc. Like many countries, Ghana is fast leveraging on digital media opportunities to increase its digital visibility in a number of sectors. From Agriculture to Sports, Ghana is fast harnessing the benefits of digital visibility. In the management of the country's foreign relations, Ghana is also harnessing digital diplomacy. This is evident in the MFA's engagement with actors in the international system. In recent times for example, Nana Akuffo Addo, the President of Ghana is noted to use his Twitter account to promote trade and investment in Ghana by posting messages on the economic potential of Ghana. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also posts the activities of the President and its own institutional activities that seek to promote investment in Ghana on its website. To add up, The Ghana Tourism Authority also engages in live streaming of events on their Facebook pages that seek to promote tourism in Ghana. The evident visibility notwithstanding, the extent to economic diplomacy, a key foreign policy objective, is being achieved through the agency of diplomacy remains unclear.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the existing institutional framework within MDAs for the use of digital platforms??
2. How does the MFA employ digital diplomacy in its activities?
3. What is the agency of digital diplomacy in the attainment of the goals of Ghana's economic diplomacy?
4. What are the implications of Ghana's use of digital diplomacy on the future of the country's foreign policy?

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the existing institutional framework within MDAs for the use of digital platforms.
2. To assess how the MFA employs digital diplomacy in its activities.
3. To analyse the agency of digital diplomacy in the attainment of the goals of Ghana's economic diplomacy.
4. To assess the implications of Ghana's use of digital diplomacy on the future of the country's foreign policy.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

This study seeks to analyze the level of collaboration between the digital media platforms and websites of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration and other relevant MDAs that play key role in the economic development of the state, and how these platforms have been used to leverage and advance Ghana's economic interests for the last five years, 2016 - 2021.

1.5 RATIONALE OF STUDY

Analyzing digital diplomacy is crucial in light of current developments, as well as the scope of the practice and the benefits Ghana can reap. The use of digital diplomacy is vital to the foreign policy of every state since it serves as a tool for economic development. According to the global soft power index conducted in 2022, South Africa is a regional soft power leader, having risen three places this year to 34th place, outperforming its Sub-Saharan African neighbors. South Africa, like Brazil, has increased its Familiarity, resulting in higher scores in other soft power pillars such as Media & Communication, Education & Science, and Business & Trade. As a result, Ghana must use its digital media to increase its popularity to advance its economic gains thus the need to study and understand the effective use of digital media within MDAs and to know the benefits, innovations, and challenges they face. Also, the study will bring out possible recommendations on how best these digital media platforms can be used to promote Ghana and as well add to the existing literature.

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study will be guided by the concept of soft power. Soft power is a nation-state's ability to influence the preferences of diverse actors in the international sphere through either attraction or persuasion rather than coercion and hence employs the power of attraction or persuasion. Soft power has a huge impact on the decisions made by individuals, businesses, and governments. It's partly because soft power encompasses everything that makes people love a country rather than fear it, such as products from people, institutions, and brands rather than governments (Gosling, 2021). This concept was propounded by Joseph Nye in his 1990 book "Bound to Lead: The

Changing Nature of American Power” and he noted that it is "a means to success in world politics" for those who know how to wield it.

Soft power can be used to transmit engaging tales, establish international laws, and draw on the resources that naturally make a country appealing to the rest of the world. At the same time, the importance of national branding should not be overlooked. A nation's brand is one of a state's most valuable assets, attracting inbound investment, enticing tourists, and adding value to exports (Haigh, 2021). National governments are currently engaged in two types of policies: macro-level nation branding and micro-level individual product branding. Nonetheless, the two phrases are inextricably linked. In the words of Steve Thomson, "Soft power perceptions form a key component in the overall measurement of a nation's brand strength."

In the same vein, digital diplomacy entails the non-coercive and persuasive use of technology and communication tools to influence and communicate with foreign audiences. By aiming to shape perceptions, build relationships, and promote country's values and culture through channels such as social media, websites, and online platforms, increasing state's influence and attractiveness on the global stage rather than using force, economic incentives, or economic pressure, making it a non-coercive tool in international relations. Digital diplomacy allows governments to contact directly with people in other nations to increase mutual understanding. It is a crucial component of public diplomacy, which strives to engage with foreign publics and establish a positive image of a nation. By sharing a nation's culture, art, language, and ideas, digital diplomacy has cultural influence. This cultural exchange can be an effective means of influencing and appealing to international audiences. While digital diplomacy is a powerful weapon for advancing a country's objectives, it should be recognized that it supplements, rather than replaces, traditional hard power

techniques in international relations. Digital diplomacy plays a crucial role in creating and applying soft power in the practice of public diplomacy.

The concept by Joseph Nye argues that political leaders and diplomats commonly view “power as the possession of population, territory, natural resources, economic size, military forces, and political stability”. Nye argues that hard power which lies in military strength or the strength of a state during wars has shifted to soft power which is the ability to set the agenda in world politics through persuasion, enticing and attracting others, through the force of one’s beliefs, values, and ideas, and not through military and economic coercion” (Nye, 1990).

Yukaruç, on the other hand, believes that the concept of soft power is not novel. He argues this by drawing parallels between Joseph Nye's concept of soft power and the works of E.H. Carr (a classical realist), Steven Luke, and the Gramscian Approach. Carr recognizes power as an end in international politics and divides political power into three categories: military power, economic power, and power over opinion. "While material resources such as military or economic power are central to realist theory, Carr believes that non-material concepts such as human psychology or public opinion are also important. According to Yukaruç (2017), Carr stated that "the art of persuasion has always been a necessary part of a political leader's equipment." and this statement is similar to Nye's work, which calls into question the concept of soft power's uniqueness.

The inability to quantify soft power is another flaw in the concept (Yukaruç, 2017). According to Yukaruç, it is difficult to demonstrate that a state changes its behavior as a result of the soft power of other states. He bases his analysis on Kenneth Waltz's Theory of International Politics, which was published in 1979. According to Waltz, power is based on a state's tangible economic and

military might, as Yukaruç points out. He observed that a state's material capabilities are the causes of change in its behavior.

Despite its flaws, this theory is relevant to the study because it explains alternative methods of exerting power and indirectly advancing a state's national interest that do not involve the use of force. It entices and attracts audiences to learn about and appreciate that state's culture, ideas, and values. This is primarily beneficial in developing countries such as Ghana. Gosling (2021) argues that digital diplomacy has become an important means of articulating soft power in contemporary times. Gosling in addition contends that digital diplomacy provides a new way of conducting public diplomacy which actually provides novel and unmatched ways of building trust with audiences who were previously engaged. With soft power being a driving force behind reputation and influence on the global stage, digital diplomacy plays an essential role in exerting this influence.

As previously asserted, soft power essentially reflects the ability of a nation to influence various actors' preferences within the international space, through either attraction or persuasion instead of coercion. According to Steve Thomson, soft power exerts a noticeable impact on the decisions of people, businesses and governments. It aims to achieve influence by building networks that are magnified in the digital age which makes digital diplomacy akin to soft power. By forging a web of actors, digital diplomacy promotes soft power of a country.

Anne-Marie Slaughter similarly posits that the best way to enhance the image of a country is through the creation of integrated networks which include “good web actors” - such as corporate, civic, and public bodies. It does this by promoting a nation's brand which play a key role in the attraction of investment and tourists. Anne-Marie further asserts that there is a broad consensus in view among some scholars that diplomacy is regarded as the “engine room” within international

relations which has witnessed huge changes over the last several decades with the emergence of digital technologies which makes technological innovation a major change in defining soft power. A consequence of this is that the direction of soft power messages has shifted significantly so that ordinary citizens, not government experts, can have greater influence on soft power conversations. In this regard, what becomes important in the process is the use of user-generated content compared to more traditional diplomatic sources which is all enabled by digital diplomacy.

1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.7.1 Digital Diplomacy

Since researchers and practitioners use the phrase "digital diplomacy" to describe a variety of ideas and practices, its definition could be confusing. Scholarly conceptualizations frequently differ depending on the discipline, the people involved, the breadth of the initiatives under consideration, and the methods and resources used in communication and diplomatic processes. In most early definitions, digital diplomacy was referred to as a new idea in the conduct of international relations. For instance, Dizard (2001) described digital diplomacy as a "significantly different form of relations between nations that is a necessary and unavoidable byproduct of the emergence of electronic communication tools like radio, telephony, television, faxes, and the Web. Conversely, digital diplomacy could be defined more restricted to describe the Web-based delivery of consular services like aid to citizens overseas (Melissen & Caesar-Gordon, 2016). In other formulations, the phenomenon's instrumental aspect is highlighted. Thus, the instrumental nature of digital diplomacy is highlighted in such definitions. For instance, Manor and Segev (2015) describe digital diplomacy as "a nation's increasing utilisation of social media sites to fulfil its objectives for foreign policy and actively control its public image" (p. 94). Bjola (2015) adopting

transdisciplinary approach to foreign and diplomatic studies defines digital diplomacy as the use of social media for diplomatic purposes. This viewpoint combines a number of distinct elements of diplomacy, including the existence and development of professional standards, diplomatic decision-making procedures, and public diplomacy initiatives and tactics. Additionally, the last two meanings place digital diplomacy in the "social media" subcategory of web-based telecommunications.

Drawing on these conceptualisations, Mazumbar (2019) describes digital diplomacy as the practice of using Internet-based channels to connect or interact with external audiences so as to advance political objectives. These definitions converge in some respects with the definitions of "cyber-diplomacy" and "public diplomacy (Cull, 2011, 2013; Khatib, Dutton, & Thelwall, 2012; Newsom & Lengel, 2012; Dodd & Collins, 2017). Mazumbar (2019) in addition postulates that digital diplomacy is closely with the practice of public diplomacy. Viewed from this perspective, one can consequently infer that the most basic and useful definition of digital diplomacy entails the utilisation of web-based channels for public diplomacy.

By its nature, digital diplomacy can also be examined on many levels. One of such levels is the policy level since social networking can facilitate, obstruct, or interrupt diplomatic operations like communications, relationship building, and representations, digital diplomacy is being studied at the government level. A variant level at which digital diplomacy can be examined is the institutional level since overseas ministries have various degrees of interest in and capacity to respond to the modern, social media-driven communication climate (Bjola, 2015). When analysed from the institutional level, digital diplomacy enables inquiry of a vast scope of diplomatic procedures, techniques, and organisational issues; contributors are able to examine issues such as the impact of computerisation on diplomatic procedures and the resulting organisational behaviours (Murray, 2015; Corrie, 2015; Pelling, 2015), the use of social media in nation branding

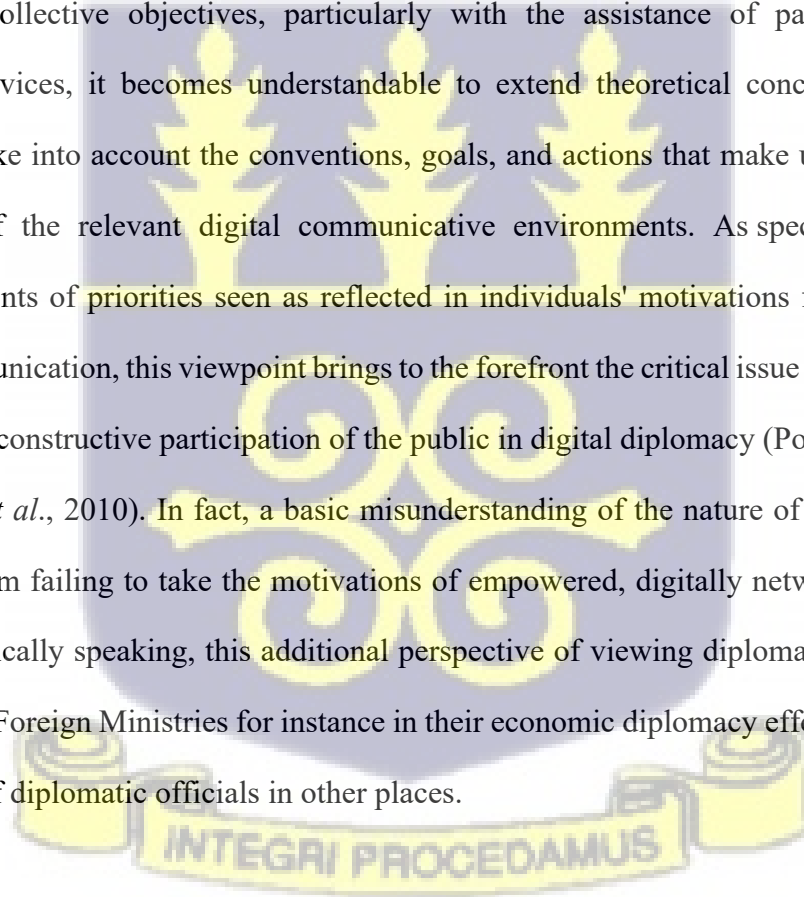
(Manor & Segev, 2015), and the efforts of embassies and other actors to utilise social networking sites in public diplomacy (Bjola & Jian, 2015; Corrie, 2015).

Digital diplomacy may further be placed more directly (Sotiriu, 2015) or indirectly (Pelling, 2015) within the perspective of soft power, Joseph Nye's (2004) popular concept for the capacity of a State to impact the global order via appeal its policy initiatives, thoughts, value systems, opinions, and culture. According to this viewpoint, public diplomacy in all of its forms is the main method by which a country could build up or exercise soft power (Nye, 2008). Hence, in relation to the strategic application or accumulation of soft power resources, digital diplomacy is seen as a "new and realistic development" of public diplomacy (Sotiriu, 2015). According to this theory, a country's propensity for soft power depends on how its values and traditions are portrayed by its leaders and reflected in the political spotlight. Digital diplomacy can boost a country's comparative soft power per the account of Pelling (2015) since socially conscious internet media could be utilized to disseminate soft power resources in an increasingly encompassing and consequently more trustworthy fashion than conventional media.

It is instructive to again highlight that digital diplomacy has two faces but has often not been recognized (Mazumbar, 2019). This has often been attributed to the fact that academic viewpoints frequently concentrate on the concept of dialogue, seeing nation-states' use of Social Networking Services as an unrivaled chance to participate in a balanced discussion with the public in order to accomplish common objectives. Due to the interactional capabilities of Social Networking Services, which give the potential for global agencies to build democratic credibility via discussion, the usage of social digital media, such as Social Networking Services, has also been linked to the capacity to exert influence on a global scale (Van Ham, 2010). However, there has

not been much scientific research on the quantity and type of conversation in digital diplomacy. Whenever a broad set of public diplomacy players have built a position on Social Networking Services, these have centered on one foreign affairs ministry (Manor, 2017) or two nominally similar Ministries of Foreign Affairs (Kampf *et al.*, 2015), embassies (Cha, Yeo, & Kim, 2014), and other international actors (Bjola & Jiang, 2015). There are a variety of organizational orientations among foreign relations bureaucracy when it comes to adopting new technology, fostering a participative digital culture, and taking technical risks. Several players in digital diplomacy are entrusted with enabling discussion or dialogue with the internet public in addition to or instead of what Ministries of Foreign Affairs or embassies can or are inclined to do. Other digital diplomacy players are directed by special, explicit or implicit operations about dialogue. Thus, the existence and dedication to discourse in digital diplomacy could differ depending on elements that have not yet been taken into account in the publications, such as institutional positions on issues on participatory digital strategies and culture and guiding organizational missions that demonstrate the importance put on engaging in discourse with publics. Furthermore, the practical implications of dialogic communication as it appears in digital diplomacy have not been revised to take into account the modern socio-technical environment. Research of discourse in digital diplomacy has not yet taken into account common but socially relevant behaviors like hyperlinking, retweeting, and hash tagging, and the incorporation of multimedia has not received enough attention. For example, using hyperlinks with the aim of directing users in digital environments may serve dialogic purposes by supplying additional details that can serve as the foundation for discourse but not only social activities like self-expression and the building of trustworthiness as often believed (Freelon, 2014). Similarly, retweeting, or publishing another user's tweets to one's own Twitter followers, can have a dialogic purpose by igniting dialogues and indicating that one is paying attention (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013, citing boyd, Golder, & Lotan,

2010; both cited in Freelon, 2014). Additionally, hashtags, denoted by the symbol "#," are used to group relevant information and may have an amplification effect because they make content viewable to anybody who clicks on the associated hashtag. Lastly, by giving consumers context and instances they can utilize in conversations with experts or other users, multimedia like pictures, images, and videos may fulfill a dialogic function in digital diplomacy. This perspective introduces the second facet of digital diplomacy with a focus on the public who also utilize digital platforms. But as already stated, neither academics nor the media have given the participatory public or the "audience" for digital diplomacy its full attention. But when one concedes to the reality that the modern, digitally connected citizenry has never had more ability to communicate their own or collective objectives, particularly with the assistance of participatory Social Networking Services, it becomes understandable to extend theoretical conceptions of digital diplomacy to take into account the conventions, goals, and actions that make up and distinguish public usage of the relevant digital communicative environments. As specific interests the important elements of priorities seen as reflected in individuals' motivations for using digitally mediated communication, this viewpoint brings to the forefront the critical issue of the motivations that support the constructive participation of the public in digital diplomacy (Ponder & Haridakis, 2015; Hanson *et al.*, 2010). In fact, a basic misunderstanding of the nature of digital diplomacy may emerge from failing to take the motivations of empowered, digitally networked public into account. Analytically speaking, this additional perspective of viewing diplomacy is important in this study since Foreign Ministries for instance in their economic diplomacy efforts may target the public instead of diplomatic officials in other places.



1.7.2 Digital Diplomacy and Economic Diplomacy

The concept of "economic diplomacy," which is frequently used in scholarly articles and official public reports, also lacks a clear definition like the concept of digital diplomacy. Scholars and practitioners frequently talk of different purposes which cause confusion (Bayne & Woolcock, 2003 cited in Okano-Heijmans, 2003). But there are several explanations in the literature that helps us grasp the essence and objectives of economic diplomacy.

In general, the techniques of decision-making and negotiations on major economic issues may differ from more openly political diplomacy and economic diplomacy could well be viewed as a different aspect of diplomacy generally. Due to the growing necessity to discuss responses to issues like strong financial systems, free trade, and investment, or climate change so as to accomplish domestic policy goals, economic diplomacy has gained increasing significance as international economic interdependence or globalization has expanded. Notwithstanding a relative rise in the significance of private players, State governments continue to be primary players in economic diplomacy (Baranay, 2009).

Economic diplomacy has been characterized as the quest for economic security within unstable systems when viewed through the lens of this type of state-centric realist perspective. If a country's economic security is understood as its economic prosperity and political stability, it stands to reason that a State's economic diplomacy will include a range of tactics that are either comparatively more economic or politically oriented. Specifically, economic diplomacy has a "business end" and a "power-play end," and all of its instruments could be positioned someplace between these two poles (Okano-Heijmans, & Asano, 2018).

Sanctions are an example of a weapon that falls under the "power-play end," which often involves conversations and acts that are essentially politically motivated. The major motivations for these actions are a state's policy goals, and the underpinning cost-benefit analyses reflect a political rationale (Woolcock & Bayne, 2013). Actions are frequently described as economic statecraft since they principally attempt to support a secure global setting. The combined efforts of the State and industry to accomplish commercial goals that enhance national interests, such as trade and investment development, are what is known as the "business end" of economic diplomacy (commercial diplomacy). In this case, cost-benefit analyses are predominantly driven by economic logic, and the goal is to maximize commercial potential. Actions that might or might not be more or less economically or politically motivated, including economic or economic assistance (and aid withdrawal), both bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations (trade diplomacy), and discussions about financial and monetary policy, are conducted among these endpoints (financial diplomacy) (Woolcock & Bayne, 2013). Despite the diversity, it is important to note that the lines separating the multiple facets are permeable and that they may cross over. This suggests that economic diplomacy involves more of a network idea than a linear one.

Indeed, definitions of some leading scholars in the field of diplomacy like George and Alan capture both stated faces of economic diplomacy. These authors specifically define economic diplomacy as diplomacy that concerns itself with questions related to economic policy and utilizes economic resources as either a reward system or punitive measures, in quest of a specific foreign policy goal. Although the goals are not mentioned, the first portion of this definition deals with political instruments while the second part deals with economic tools that are utilized for political ends. Gilpin similarly contends that the goal of economic diplomacy is to obstruct, use, and influence political and commercial discourse. The majority of economic diplomacy's manifestations involve

numerous objectives and, in theory, fit into further than one classification. Nevertheless, in most cases, it can reasonably determine which classification best sums up the main objective or rationale behind a specific economic diplomacy statement. Some would argue, for instance, that sanctions usually target political and strategic objectives whereas export-led growth tries to boost one's industry and, therefore, basically serves the nation's economic prosperity. The main objective of trade and aid discussions is comparatively more based on the particulars of a situation and is likely to differ more between nations. All of them go to highlight the idea of economic diplomacy being flexible. For instance, while development aid from European and American nations tends to be increasingly political in nature and intent (seeking to advance effective governance, democratic values, and civil rights), Asian nations are using these funds primarily to boost the economic output of the beneficiary and the provider of aid, via trade and investment. It is significant in this perspective that China, Japan, and India choose to talk about economic partnerships over development aid. Comparable to political discussions, trade talks can have a less political character. In contrast to the aid example, here the roles are reversed: When negotiating bilateral or regional trade agreements, Countries of Europe more frequently have economic goals and increased cost-effectiveness in thought. In contrast, trade diplomacy from the Asian perspective is frequently more political because trade and financial agreements are a factor in the struggle for power in the region (Woolcock & Bayne, 2013). Overall, the argument advanced is that the concept of economic diplomacy can be more fluid in nature (Woolcock & Bayne, 2013).

Having examined the conceptual bases of economic diplomacy, the discussion now turns to the role of digital diplomacy in economic diplomacy. In other words, the center of the discussion is on how States have utilized digital diplomacy to project their economic diplomacy agendas. Indeed, States all over the world have embraced digital diplomacy, which can be used to advance

economic diplomacy albeit in varying degrees. It is important to note that, in addition to economic diplomacy, digital diplomacy can also be employed to promote political diplomacy, public diplomacy, and a broad range of other "diplomacies." However, attention here is on economic diplomacy.

The Netherlands Government argues that, until recently, economic diplomacy has lagged in terms of digitization. Although several online technologies have developed over the last two decades that can enable trade and business, it is noted that trade and business practices have stayed relatively conventional, with bilateral trade meetings continuing to be held in person and trade missions having their roots in real-world conferences and exhibitions.

Kampf et al. (2015) provide evidence for the scant usage of digital diplomacy in their research. In their study, they examine the degree to which dialogic communication is used by international bodies regarding content, media outlets, and public participation employing Kent and Taylor's paradigm for dialogic communication. The findings of a 6-week review of content posted on Facebook and Twitter by eleven foreign ministries reveal that dialogic involvement and communication are uncommon. When interaction does happen, it is restricted to particular problems. Foreign ministry social media posts are an ongoing stream of press releases aimed at international instead of local audiences. There were no observable disparities in the use of dialogic principles across nations, according to a comparative analysis. The findings show that foreign ministries continue to underutilize the ability of digital diplomacy to promote communication.

Nonetheless, there are several examples across the globe of how digital diplomacy is being used to conduct economic diplomacy. The Netherlands Foreign Ministry in the Gulf region for instance has over the years been using digital diplomacy techniques as part of its economic diplomacy. This

is witnessed in the area of enhancing our economic bilateral cooperation through holding several video conferences with ministries and officials on topics like food security, culture, and education, checking up on Dutch companies in the country by holding conversations, video conferences, and online roundtable discussions to assess how businesses are performing comprehend their issues or priorities and assist them as needed and supporting small and medium sizes enterprises (SMEs) in the Netherlands by increasing knowledge of market potential in the Gulf region through a series of webinars on topics like logistics, health care, sustainable energy, water technologies, and more, and setting up online meetings involving Dutch Small and Medium-scale Enterprises, Dutch industry organizations, and regional players.

Maluki and Nwangagangi similarly discuss how digital media is utilized by Kenya which has a diaspora population base of over four million people, to enhance its economy through remittances. The Central Bank of Kenya estimates that as of June 2019, remittances from abroad were roughly KES 276.8 billion. Kenyan embassies overseas use digital media to disseminate information about investment prospects back home. Digital media has also been used by Kenya's Ministry of Tourism, which in the past launched a digital campaign on Brand Kenya, as it begins to advertise and brand the country.

In the Ghanaian context, The Foreign Ministry has also been using technology to conduct economic diplomacy. The Ministry has official online handles that it uses to communicate to the outside world and the general public. Some of these efforts have also been the use of technology to brand the country to enhance its international competitiveness. Ghanaian economy diplomacy strategy is centered on the country's goal of expanding and broadening its international presence by aggressively looking for markets for Ghanaian goods overseas and capitalising on favourable trade agreements and multilateral trade accords. The Foreign Ministry has engaged in

a range of financial transactions to involve current partners and build forums for new collaborations and connections in line with its mission and the State's vision for economic development. These were carried out to advance Ghana's interests in commerce, investment, and tourism within the framework of Ghana's bilateral and multilateral ties.

1.7.3 Channels of Digital Diplomacy

Digital diplomacy is generally conducted via a variety of digital channels. Currently, digital tools are used by ambassadors in all aspects of their regular tasks, including communications, policy analysis, and diplomacy. The application of social media for public diplomacy (such as Twitter diplomacy and Facebook diplomacy) is the most prominent. Diplomacy has moved online using videoconferencing tools like Zoom, especially during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic (Bjola & Manor, 2022). Internet meetings, though, are not as novel as one may believe are also emerging. Historically, it has been documented that The International Telecommunication Union hosted the very first online engagement event in multilateral diplomacy in 1963 (External Affairs Directorate Scotland, 2022). Ever since more diverse and open international negotiations have become a reality because of conference rooms' access to the internet.

1.7.4 Benefits and Shortfalls of Digital Diplomacy

Theoretically, the benefits associated with digital diplomacy have been well documented in existing research. Rashica (2018) argues that the major benefits of digital diplomacy include strengthening international relations, proximity with audiences, fast and effective communications, and lower financial costs which are particularly relevant for small states that face resource constraints. Regarding the potential of digital diplomacy in strengthening international relations, it has been argued that digital diplomacy now provides a vast network of international

organizations of varying sizes and types that unite people from different countries. Actors involved in digital diplomacy are known to provide the course that unites people to some degree and ensures world order even when leaders and circumstances change and when norms are undermined following unexpected changes in power relations (Goldstein, 2003; Khomeriki, 2022). Explanation of the benefit of proximity highlights the fact that now the geographical distance between embassies is of lesser importance unlike in the past. In contemporary times, digital diplomacy enabled by such platforms as internet websites, blogs, and social media enables politicians and diplomats to interact with people across the globe to advance particular political or economic goals (Snow & Taylor, 2009). These tools as well enable diplomats to observe events, gather information, and reach out to people beyond the traditional audience. The benefit of fast and effective communication lies in the fact that digital diplomacy provides a quick means of communication that states deploy in many situations including crises situations (Sandre, 2015). In the past, this benefit has been manifested in cases where embassies create Whatsapp groups constituted by key actors like the ambassador, consular officer, press secretary, and staff who collect online information ostensibly to function as crisis management cells. With regards to the low presented by digital diplomacy, it is argued that it does not always involve huge financial investments and is particularly beneficial for smaller countries. One of the often cited constraints facing smaller states in the implementation of their foreign policies is financial capacity. The utilization of digital diplomacy can go a long way to address this challenge. The case of the Republic of Kosovo corroborates this claim which given its status as a new and small country embraces digital diplomacy as a contributor to its cause by linking its diplomats and citizens with people of other states. Specifically, to pursue its international recognition agenda, Kosovo set up the Digital Kosovo platform which was subsequently adjudged by the Turkish public diplomacy magazine “Yeni Diplomasi” as the fourth best in the world after that of the UK, the USA, and

Israel (Rashiva, 2018). Loerincik (2018) as cited by Verrekia (2018) similarly observes that the use of digital diplomacy is associated with low financial and environmental costs. The author shares the notion that the advent of technology has now eliminated the need for foreign representatives to travel over long distances. The reduction in environmental costs is also explained by the fact that digitalization has led to newspapers and books being printed online, reducing paper and printing production. Loerincik (2006) reports that a study conducted by Japan revealed that the use of digital technology can reduce their CO2 emissions by up to 7% which is all facilitated by digital diplomacy.

Notwithstanding the numerous associated benefits of digital diplomacy, there are still known risks and challenges (Rashika, 2018). One of the challenges in this regard is a lack of understanding of how to use the web and social media (Keesande, 2022). It is argued that inadequate knowledge on how to use modern communication tools, the internet, and social media can have disastrous effects, lead to serious disputes, and sometimes even end in the expulsion of authorities. This presents a challenge that Foreign Ministries must contend with. To mitigate the dangers of the digital era, it is advocated that foreign ministries train their personnel in the manner to employ digital communication tools to prevent further harm (Kesande, 2022). Major governments' embassies and consulates have constant personnel who are skilled in handling cases involving science and technology (Ruffini, 2017). Today, to get the essential information regarding their use and to prevent hazards of this sort, consumers of digital diplomacy must continuously receive training, practice, and embrace fresh digital technologies as promptly, even if they are sophisticated. Another risk of digital diplomacy centers on disagreements. The "secrecy" component of diplomacy has been eclipsed by the rise of social media. Ambassadors could no longer be sure that their ideas cannot be leaked to people they have never intended to reach, and it is difficult to escape

the public spotlight. The instant dissemination of news regarding recent and distanced events is more highly probable to present a threat to politicians than just an advantage. The "period of concealment" appears to have already given way to the "era of distribution," in which regular people sit for a long-time daily reading, noting, and critiquing government programmes before posting their opinions on the internet and social media. Regrettably, social media has a very poor level of communication culture. As a result, numerous politicians and ambassadors receive abuse in addition to provoking and frightening messages, which leads to numerous disagreements. The internet also offers a tone of information with dubious provenance. Because of how they operate, social media have a massive effect, therefore it would be good to participate as much as the truth comes to light. Nevertheless, the information that is exchanged within them is marked by defamation and fabrication.

A variant challenge is the culture of anonymity. The culture of anonymity, which allows anybody to claim to be somebody else and harm particular people, presents another difficulty for digital diplomacy (Rashika, 2018). Because of the dissemination of contradictory and even false information, the culture of anonymity could result in intricate conflicts. The capacity of authorities to handle the subsequent challenges may be hampered by this kind of pervasive misinformation on the internet. As a countermeasure, it has been suggested that social media platforms must update their pages to make it evident whether a post originates from a reliable source to prevent misuse. Further, there is the risk of hacking associated with digital diplomacy. Several digital optimists have become digital naysayers as a result of the increasing ubiquitousness of the digital world and the worry over upcoming assaults on important institutions. The danger of hackers has persisted since the development of the internet. This is viewed as the greatest risk of digital diplomacy for the extremely good reason that numerous national leaders, administrations, and ambassadors have fallen prey to it, seldom putting their careers in danger. State and non-state groups that are

diplomatic rivals attempt to attack governmental systems to obtain information that would be useful to them (Westcott, 2008).

1.8 METHODOLOGY

1.8.1 Research Approach

Creswell defines research designs as "research plans procedures that cover everything from general hypotheses to specific data collection and analysis approaches" (Creswell, 2009). Most descriptive qualitative research seeks to understand "participants' experiences, opinions, and thoughts." 2011 (Harwell). On the other hand, quantitative research is more rational in nature and is founded on predetermined factors. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches are applied in a mixed-method study. The qualitative approach is employed for this study since it enables flexible yet thorough data collection on the part of the researcher.

1.8.2 Sources of Data

Primary and secondary data are both used in the study. Primary data is gathered through key informant interviews with people from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Ghana Investment Promotion Centre, Ghana Tourism Authority, and Information Service Department. Secondary data will be gathered from dissertations, policy documents, journals, and articles.

1.8.3 Target Population and sample size

The study targets information officers who are responsible for the flow of information, communication, and management of organizational digital media platforms as well as Policy Makers. In total eighteen (18) people are interviewed.

1.8.4 Sampling Method

The purposive sampling method allows the study to target certain respondents who have the necessary levels of knowledge to benefit the investigation and boost the study's representativeness and generality. The kind of selection conforms to Yin's (2005) arguments that purposeful or deliberate sampling is a preferable alternative for selecting the most relevant aspects if a researcher knows the population of a study.

1.8.5 Data Collection and Analysis

Personal interview respondents are performed utilizing a semi-structured interview guide. The interviews are transcribed, edited, and coded thereafter. Secondary data is also acquired as it is relevant to the study, and the research further employs the Braun and Clarke, 2006 thematic analysis for both the primary and secondary data in the study: The analysis of data is grouped based on the objectives of the study. Relevant conclusions and recommendations are reached as a result of the analysis.

1.8.6 Ethical Consideration

Before conducting the interviews, consent is obtained from the respondent as well as permission to record interviews. With the assistance of my department, I can secure official letters which are sent to the target institutions for their kind permission for interviews to be conducted. The respondents are assured of anonymity and interviews are purely for academic purposes.

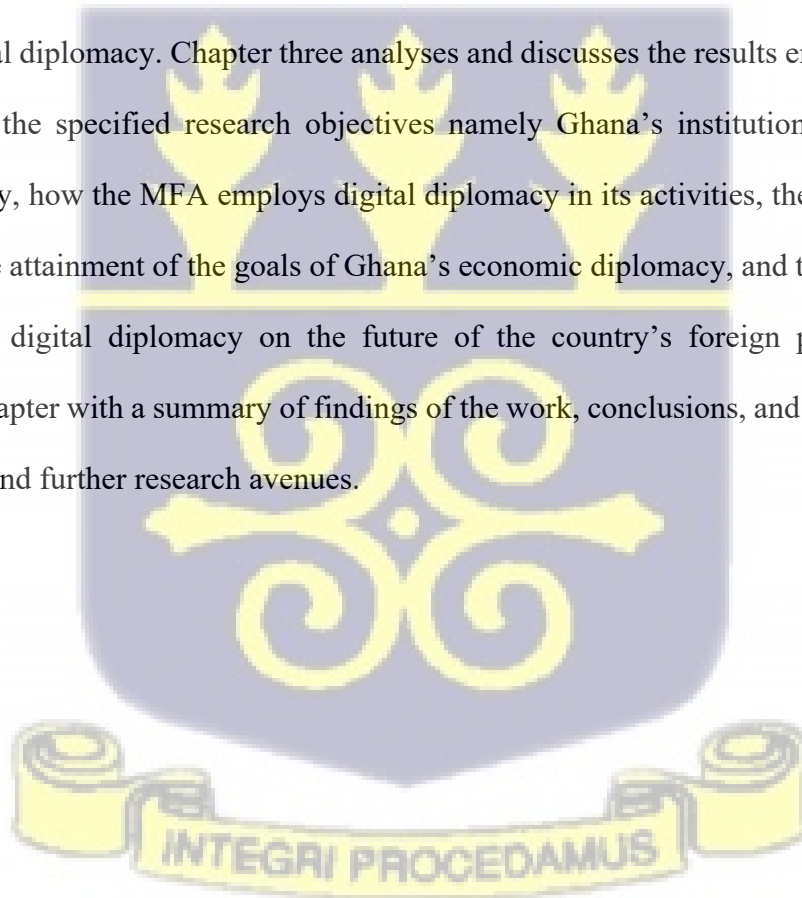
1.8.7 Limitation of the Study

The main problem of this study is that the researcher finds it extremely difficult to schedule interviews with respondents on time. This is because the respondents might have hectic schedules,

making it difficult to contact them for interviews. Despite those issues, the analysis does not jeopardize because enough data is gathered regarding the study topic

1.9 ARRANGEMENT OF CHAPTERS

The study comprises four chapters. Chapter one presents a general introduction to the study. Specifically, the chapter comprises a background to the study, statement of the research problem, research objectives and related research question, significance of study, and scope of study. The chapter also reviews related literature on the research phenomenon and further discusses the research methods and techniques. Chapter two examines the evolution of digital diplomacy, the history of the use of digital diplomacy for economic diplomacy, and the digital platforms for conduct of digital diplomacy. Chapter three analyses and discusses the results emanating from the study based on the specified research objectives namely Ghana's institutional framework for digital diplomacy, how the MFA employs digital diplomacy in its activities, the agency of digital diplomacy in the attainment of the goals of Ghana's economic diplomacy, and the implications of Ghana's use of digital diplomacy on the future of the country's foreign policy. The study culminates in chapter with a summary of findings of the work, conclusions, and recommendations for both policy and further research avenues.



CHAPTER TWO

EVOLUTION OF DIGITAL DIPLOMACY AND DIGITAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

2.0 INTRODUCTION

There is a broad consensus that the current expansion of digital initiatives in foreign ministries represents nothing more or less than a breakthrough in how diplomacy is conducted. States are only now becoming conscious of the capacity of digital technology to transform all facets of statewide interactions. Already, digital technology has altered how businesses conduct themselves, how people engage with one another, and how States carry out their domestic governance. In particular, it has been argued that public diplomacy has historically been a monologue, meaning a one-sided delivery of communications. The advent of digital technology, including social media, has made public diplomacy relational, thus providing two-way communication between audience members and stakeholders. This chapter generally examines the origin of the use of technology in diplomacy in general, the history and evolution of digital diplomacy, and also provides a description of various digital media platforms for digital diplomacy. The chapter ends with a conclusion based on the history and review of the digital media platforms examined.

2.1 ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY AND HISTORY OF THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN DIPLOMACY

To comprehend the use of technology including digital technology in the field of diplomacy like economic diplomacy, it is important to first have a grasp of what economic diplomacy is all about. The Public Diplomacy Council, Catalonia (2019) asserts that diplomacy is not about presenting narratives but rather about living them and allowing other people to do the same. The Council observes that economic diplomacy increases a region's competitiveness, which makes it much more enviable overall and draws in additional investment (Public Diplomacy Council of Catalonia,

2019). Economic diplomacy without a sound business strategy may be detrimental to an area. Consequently, having a robust business community is necessary for conducting wise economic diplomacy because it can benefit the industry as a whole as well as the area. In several nations, various parties are in charge of conducting economic diplomacy. For example, in Spain, the ACCI is responsible for encouraging international investors in Catalonia and assisting Catalan businesses in expanding into new markets overseas. In the case of Ghana, The Ghana Investment Promotion Centre is in charge of encouraging and luring investment into the nation. A competent administration of the nation's brand, or the ideas connected to an area's reputation, is required to strengthen this beneficial cycle. These first impressions of a place or a municipality have an impact on how each person, partner, and business behaves. The vast majority of countries effectively manage their brand as a result. Because the brand must work to draw both tourists and businessmen or customers, it must be genuine yet adaptable. If the brand is well-designed, a full complement of instruments will be made readily available. The commercial component of a brand can be made more comprehensible with the aid of organisations like the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre and ACCI. These give businesses and their communities' legitimacy. In other words, business diplomacy outcomes do not happen suddenly; they come from the consistent effort made with each as well as every customer and invoice. It only functions if local companies and the area are in a positive feedback loop. Commercial promotion, business associations, and corporate bodies all engage in it. If the geographical brand is managed efficiently, it is strengthened (Public Diplomacy Council of Catalonia, 2019).

Ruel and Visser (2015) similarly share the view that economics and diplomacy in the era of digital information is an issue that unites the three fields of information technology, diplomacy, and the economy. Every one of these fields has its fundamental components: the economic field includes commercial activity (on a worldwide scale), the diplomatic field includes conversations between

government or country players, and the information technology field includes the performance of the data processing, analysis, and transmitting (Ruel & Visser, 2015).

According to Mohammed (2022), the advent of the fourth industrial revolution has given several nations the opportunity to utilise technology in diplomatic practice to expand their dominance and boost their capacity for competition in the global marketplace. This is because the latest technological developments have changed both the internal and global realities of different nations (Mohammed, 2022). As a result, a country can create advantageous macroeconomic frameworks by persuading political and economic authorities to embrace conventions that they perceive as superior for their own economy and for the world economy overall through the use of technology.

Additionally, it is an effective tool for educating people and "advancing a habit of mass consumption." The use of technology including digital tools in diplomacy really does have the ability to influence global economic policy by expanding exports and establishing new markets (Mohammed, 2022).

Historically, it is argued that one can generally understand present day digital diplomacy by tracing the origin of the use of technology in diplomatic practice since the renaissance period, the era that full diplomatic establishment was founded (DiploFoundation, 2018). It is documented that Italian states engaged in diplomatic exchanges during the Renaissance. The very first comprehensive diplomatic structure, with official diplomatic missions, diplomatic reports, and diplomatic perks, were all founded in this period of the Renaissance. Since then, technology had been utilized in many forms in diplomatic practice. Among these times is the Reformation period, when the "age of parchment" and the "era of paper material" in diplomacy came to a close. In approximately the year 1440, the German inventor Johannes Gutenberg created the printing machine (DiploFoundation). The effects of this breakthrough on all facets of society, especially diplomacy, were significant. Following this was the invention of the electrical telegraph in 1832.

The electrical telegraph was successfully tested by Russian ambassador Pavel Schilling. In 1860, the first diplomatic message was sent using an electrical telegraph. It is said that Lord Palmerston, the then-prime minister of Great Britain, declared that diplomacy was over after getting the very first telegraph communication in the 1860s (DiploFoundation). The International Telegraph Union, which furthered progress, was founded in 1865. As the International Telegraph Union (ITU), it created the first worldwide rules and guidelines for global telegraph systems. Communication on a local and global scale was altered by the invention of the telegraph in the early nineteenth century. In an effort to standardise international communications, European powers in the West entered into a number of bilateral and regional accords between 1849 and 1865. In 1917, there was the Zimmerman telegram (1917), a secret diplomatic communication, issued from the German foreign office. In 1942, radio broadcasts continued. The radio was the single most important device that affected how World War Two turned out. All parties to the war exploited it as a propagandist and morale-boosting tool. The International Telegraph Union then began conducting teleconferences between New York and Geneva in 1963. Following this was the internet corporation for designated names and numbers (ICANN), founded in 1998, which was in charge of overseeing the upkeep and processes among many database systems linked to the namespaces and numerical spaces of the internet. This organisation also had an impact on the digitization of diplomacy by guaranteeing the channel's secure and reliable function. The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) followed, taking place between 2003 and 2005. WSIS, a two-part summit hosted by the UN on information, communication, and, more broadly, the information society, took hold in 2003 in Geneva and in 2005 in Tunis. Among its main goals was to eliminate the worldwide digital gap that existed between wealthy and developing nations. By increasing internet connectivity in underdeveloped countries, they were able to accomplish this. In

the more recent time, social media has been utilised in diplomacy, with diplomats first utilising these channels in 2010 to connect with one another and back one another's positions.

Overall, it is evident that the influence of technological advancements on the environment is typically increasingly apparent as we move closer to contemporary days. Every new technological advancement added new problems to the diplomatic discourse. For instance, technology was crucial in the development of several international institutions, like the Red Cross and the International Telecommunication Union. The technology launched innovative instruments into diplomacies, such as pigeons and fire signals as well as historic archives, the telegraph, the telephone, and the internet. Historical background has shown that information and communication are the two main ties that unite diplomacy and technology. They serve as technology's two central tenets simultaneously. All of these factors have raised the visibility of digital economic diplomacy today. In the ensuing sub-section of the study, a detailed history and evolution of digital diplomacy are outlined.

2.2 HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF DIGITAL DIPLOMACY

Mannor (2015) claims that when discussing digital diplomacy, academics frequently concentrate on its current applications and prospects in the long term. But examining its background and figuring out the actions and occasions that have influenced its development may be useful as well. This subsection of the study traces the history and evolution of digital diplomacy in its various dimensions.

Following the end of the Cold War, the time that democracy and its ideals were growing throughout the erstwhile communist nations and when folk's ability to access global information was greatly expanding, digital diplomacy was born. In this same era, it was observed that the growing interests of the people in the knowledge of government foreign policy operations were

sparked and encouraged by the growth of Information and Communication Technology and the media, facilitating and fostering the people's impact on foreign policy (Jazbec, 2010). The very first advances in digital diplomacy occurred in the year 1992, the time that social movement electronic mail messages were employed for the first time in deliberations at the Earth Summit held in Rio Janeiro. During the same period, the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies was established in Malta as the first centre for computer applications in diplomacy (DiploFoundation Blog, 2017). The second significant event was the WikiLeaks affair of 2010, wherein WikiLeaks⁴ disclosed two hundred and fifty thousand diplomatic documents transmitted between United States embassies and Washington. This revelation thought diplomats that classified information can either no longer exist in the digital era or can only exist in very limited quantities.

Although the preceding events contributed to the emergence of digital diplomacy, there are still other scholars who frequently cite The Arab Spring as the beginning of digital diplomacy (Manor, 2017). Those who hold this view argue that the Arab Spring uprisings of 2011 which resulted in the overthrow of Egyptian leader Mubarak, was certainly a turning point in the development of digital diplomacy. It was during this period that Youth activists exploited social media throughout and after the Arab Spring also used the digital media to disseminate oppositional ideas, create storylines, and live streamed coverage of upheavals all around the world. MFAs, missions, and diplomats all realised at this point that offline activities also have online dimensions. Additionally, most acknowledged that social media has developed into a tool that can provide good insights into popular views, and opinions that in turn facilitate analysis of foreign policy (Manor, 2017). Other issues and events equally important to highlight here as far as the development of digital diplomacy is concerned are the rise of the concept of citizen journalism and the September 11 attacks. The

rise of citizen journalism in particular was fueled by social media platforms like Facebook. Having mobile phones in hand, protesters in Iran's Green Revolution or Ukraine's Orange Revolution were able to communicate with a big crowd about what was unfolding in their nations. Governments needed to respond as rapidly as the news was becoming accessible on the internet, which was now possible. As a result, governments have to keep an eye on the data made public on social media. With regards to the September 11 attack, it is argued that governments began to use the internet to refute the false beliefs and stories orchestrated by terrorist organisations and thus contributed to the rise of digital diplomacy.

In 2017, many people claimed that the year marked ten years since "digital diplomacy" first appeared. These claims were based on the fact that what was once considered experimental by a small group of foreign ministries and consular innovators is currently considered a regular procedure for diplomatic organizations worldwide. Reference in this regard was made to Sweden's online mission to Second Life, established in 2007, and the creation of a United States digital outreach team in 2006, two prominent instances of "digital diplomacy (Manor, 2017).

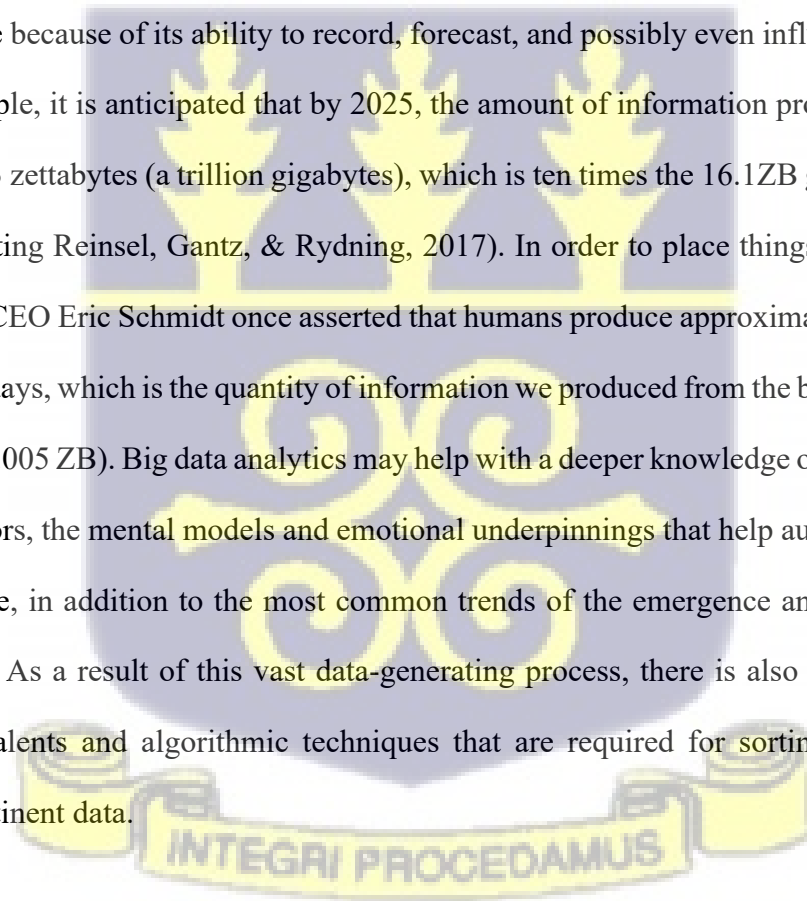
It is important to emphasize here that there are other scholars who do not necessarily concede to the fact that digital diplomacy is as recent as held by authors like Manor (2017) and others. A reference in this regard can be made to Bjola (2017) who argues that traditionally, the residential ambassador's primary responsibility was to oversee friendly or hostile relationships at foreign courts. As a result, Bjola opines that diplomacy has consisted of a social component for many years. Dizard (2001) similarly holds the view that the use of telegraph secretaries by MFAs in the 19th century led to the first digitalization of diplomacy. Therefore, regardless of whether social or digital, the basic qualities of digital diplomacy are not exactly revolutionary but rather are a component of diplomacy's continual development. Although these views hold to some extent, one

cannot deny the fact that digital diplomacy has become more pronounced in recent decades as compared to the olden times. More so, digital diplomacy has now widened in scope in terms of its audiences to include many publics including multinationals and citizens at large who were previously not target of diplomacy.

Further, to better comprehend the evolution of digital diplomacy and its challenges, one cannot downplay the technological context from which it has evolved. Three characteristics of the process of digital transformation among others matter for understanding the evolution of digital diplomacy and the challenges in an ever-changing technological landscape (Dreischmeier, Close, & Trichet, cited in Bjola, 2017). The first is speed, which describes how quickly new digital innovations are introduced to the public and how quickly people, businesses, and agencies embrace them. For instance, it took the telephone seventy-five years to achieve one hundred million users globally, but it took the cell phone and its most prominent programme, Facebook, only sixteen and four and a half years, correspondingly, to achieve the very same landmark (Dreischmeier, Close & Trichet, 2015 cited in Bjola, 2017). It is worthy of note that the introduction of the third generation of wireless mobile telecommunications technology (3G) in early 2000 paved the way for the widespread use of smartphones and mobile internet. A new wave of digital technologies, including mixed reality, artificial intelligence, blockchain, and digital twinning, is anticipated to be widely used with the introduction of 5G technology in the years ahead. These technologies will hasten the advancement of information sharing, social interaction, digital innovation, and public entrepreneurship. The influence of the digital transformation process on cognition is the second crucial characteristic. Most precisely, how we communicate with others through digital technology is not only a means of achieving a goal but it also changes the mental contexts in which we construct our own personalities and even attempt to make sense of the world around us. The truth is that the online environment symbolises an entirely fresh vocabulary where the semantic feature

of conventional nouns, adjectives, or verbs is now performed by the kind of information we share, the growing importance of feelings and visuals, along with Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality (AR/VR) simulations in the near future, in framing the messages that we converse, and the (obfuscated) trends through which algorithms frame our conversations with website visitors. The disturbing rise of "post-truth" politics in current history is proof that the digital medium has an exciting and promising influence on the stakeholders' offline values and preferences as well as, in exceptional instances, their epistemological perceptions of societal reality. This is because the digital medium directly influences how social relations are conducted online.

Thirdly, Big Data, the "lifeblood" of the internet revolution, has evolved into the greatest vital asset of our time because of its ability to record, forecast, and possibly even influence behavioural traits. For example, it is anticipated that by 2025, the amount of information produced worldwide would reach 163 zettabytes (a trillion gigabytes), which is ten times the 16.1ZB generated in 2016. (Bjola, 2017, citing Reinsel, Gantz, & Rydning, 2017). In order to place things into perspective, former Google CEO Eric Schmidt once asserted that humans produce approximately five exabytes of data per two days, which is the quantity of information we produced from the birth of civilization until 2003. (or 0.005 ZB). Big data analytics may help with a deeper knowledge of the key concerns of website visitors, the mental models and emotional underpinnings that help audiences relate to a specific message, in addition to the most common trends of the emergence and development of internet groups. As a result of this vast data-generating process, there is also an increase in the need for new talents and algorithmic techniques that are required for sorting, analysing, and deciphering pertinent data.



2.3 PLATFORMS FOR DIGITAL DIPLOMACY

2.3.1 Facebook

Alexia ranks Facebook, an online social networking service that can be accessed via the internet, third. It was created in 2004 by Harvard University students Dustin Moskovitz, Chris Hughes, Mark Zuckerberg, and Eduardo Saverin. With over two billion monthly active users, Facebook has become the "largest social network in the world" and is said to be the largest virtual state, with more than twice the population of China since 2005. (Hall, 2019). Facebook, which began as Facemash and was primarily used by Harvard students, is the second most popular digital media platform in diplomacy (Cole & Wolfe, 2018).

The Facebook website is divided into several sections, including a Timeline, Status, and News Feed. Hall (2019) defines the timeline as a space on each user's profile page where users can post content and friends can post messages. The status can be used to notify friends of a user's current location or situation. Unlike the news feed, which notifies users of changes to their friends' profiles and statuses, Facebook users can hold a conversation and send private messages to one another.

In contrast, a Facebook page is a public profile created specifically for businesses, brands, celebrities, and other organizations (Rouse, 2010). The primary distinction between a personal Facebook profile and a Facebook Page is that a page can have an unlimited number of followers, whereas a personal Facebook profile is limited to 5,000 followers. Another difference between a page and a profile is that the former collects fans while the latter collects friends. A page can be liked, but a personal profile can only be friended. Most institutions and leaders in states have a page rather than a profile. Anyone, according to Facebook's help center, can create a Facebook

page, with the exception of pages for an organization, business, brand, or public figure that needs to be created by an official representative.

Facebook's long history with diplomacy dates back to 2007, when Barack Obama created his account as a Senator from Illinois (Cole & Wolfe, 2018b). According to the study World Leaders on Facebook, one hundred and seventy-five leaders and governments of state have an official presence on this platform, out of the one hundred and ninety-three United Nations member states. As of March 15, 2018, there are 650 Facebook personal and institutional pages of world leaders, governments, and foreign ministries, with a total of 309.4 million-page likes (Cole and Wolfe 2018b). Since January 1, 2017, the leaders have uploaded 536,644 posts, garnering nearly 900 million interactions. The governments of eighteen states have yet to join Facebook. These countries include "China, North Korea, and Turkmenistan, where the social network is prohibited, as well as a handful of small Pacific Ocean Island states" (Cole & Wolfe, 2018b).

Government officials spend the most time on Facebook, where their followers are the largest. With six-hundred and seventy-seven Facebook accounts, the Presidents of States and Foreign Ministers of one hundred and seventy-nine nations representing ninety-three per cent of the total of all United nations are available on the Facebook platform. While some pages only report on their officials' everyday routines, many interact with their followers by responding to the most important remarks and even enabling visitors to freely write on their own pages. With more than 43.5 million page likes, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Damodardas Modi for instance is noted to have the largest following on Facebook (Twiplomacy, 2018). President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya is the "most popular leader in Sub-Saharan Africa, with 3.5 million likes," followed by President Nana Akufo Addo of Ghana, who has "1.6 million likes," President Paul Biya of Cameroon, Guinea's Alpha Condé, and President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, who "complete the top five list, each with

more than 700,000 likes" (Cole and Wolfe 2018b). It has also been established that whenever they have their largest and most engaged audiences, ninety-seven international organisations use Facebook as their primary medium (Twiplomacy, 2017).

2.3.2 Twitter

Twitter is a microblogging and social networking service owned by Twitter, Inc., where users post and interact with messages known as "tweets." Registered users can post, like, and retweet tweets, whereas unregistered users can only read public tweets. The platform, which incorporates elements of social networking websites such as "Myspace and Facebook," was founded in March 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams and launched in July of that year (Britannica, 2019). This digital platform has approximately 400 million subscribers, with an estimated 500 million people using Twitter's real-time information and social networking service, many of whom are governments, embassies, and diplomats (Sandre, 2013). It is ranked 11th in the global rankings of social media platforms by Alexa ("Twitter.com Traffic, Demographics, and Competitors," 2019). Twitter is the go-to site for breaking news, political campaigns, and public and digital diplomacy displays. On the day of the 2016 United States Presidential Elections, Twitter was the most popular source of breaking news, with over 40 million tweets sent (Isaac & Ember, 2016).

Twitter is used by approximately 97% of world leaders. Nicaragua, Laos, Mauritania, Swaziland, Turkmenistan, and North Korea are the only countries that do not have an official presence on this digital media platform (Cole & Wolfe, 2018). It has evolved into the official diplomatic social media platform for states to employ soft power. The enthusiastic use of Twitter in diplomacy has resulted in the Twitter Diplomacy or Twiplomacy trend, in which heads of state, ambassadors,

their officials, ministries, and international organizations interact with the public. Japan was the first country to join Twitter, with the handle @Japan. This account was also established in March 2007. Former President of the United States Barack Obama is the "first world leader" to join Twitter (Cole & Wolfe, 2018a). According to the Twiplomacy research, the account was created on March 5, 2007, while he was still a Senator of Illinois. "Mexico's President Enrique Peña Nieto (@EPN) and the United States State Department (@StateDept) were among the first to sign up for the microblogging service more than a decade ago." Between 2009 and 2015, most world leaders followed suit." Mike Pompeo (@SecPompeo, United States Secretary of State) is the most recent to join Twitter in May 2018.

The vast majority of UN member States and particular Ministries of Foreign Affairs have Twitter accounts, proving how important it is for traditional diplomatic methods to take use of the availability and rapid dissemination of information provided by digital platforms. Given that Twitter is the largest social platform for international leaders, including presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministries, and diplomats, the term "Twitter diplomacy" first emerged to describe digital diplomacy (Sandre, 2013).

Employing Kent and Taylor's (1998) concept of dialogic communication, Kampf, Manor, and Segev (2015) compared the Facebook and Twitter practices of eleven foreign ministries. The research showed that the use of social media by various foreign ministries is the same. The survey also shows that ministries are unable to promote conversation in a dialogue form on social media. Khatib, Dutton, and Thelwall (2012) investigate United States Digital Outreach Team's to a broad audience. According to the research, all of the internet sites that were chosen were perceived as negative by audience. In addition, the study found that DOT has a variety of difficulties, such as the requirement to combat misleading information and hostility. Cha, Yeo, and Kim (2014)

investigate how foreign embassies in Korea use social media, using Kent and Taylor's (1998) concept of dialogic communication as their reference.

According to the survey, the missions of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and Israel use social media more frequently than those of other nations. Simons (2014) explores Russian public diplomacy in line with the current fad and demonstrates that the relationship strategy is more successful and that embassies do not fully utilise the potential of social media.

In 2021, social networking of French embassies and Consulates increased with Facebook recording two hundred and sixteen posts, and Twitter had one hundred and eighty-nine. Bjola (2017) in his study examined the use of Twitter by selected Ambassadors. These Ambassadors were Dave Sharma represented Australia as the country's ambassador to Israel. Euripides L. Evriviades who represented the Republic of Cyprus as the country's high commissioner to the UK of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Jorge Heine who represented Chile in China all within the period of 2013 to 2017. Bjola (2017) found that they have high numbers of followers and intense digital interactions (number of likes, retweets, and responses). Bjola (2017) further asserts that these three diplomats' cases are especially fascinating because they all portray medium-sized nations. The High Commissioner Evriviades, according to the author is more engaged in political and diplomatic matters, for example, that feels right especially during the Brexit discussions and Cyprus's present regional security issues. To build stronger diplomatic relations with the host nation, Ambassadors Heine and Sharma adopt also adopt a more nuanced stance and make comments on a variety of topics (tourism, the environment, science, and technology, for example) adding to the political and economic ones (Bjola, 2017).

2.3.3 Instagram

Instaplomacy is the latest term for digital diplomacy since Instagram Posts have evolved into a supplementary platform for digital diplomats where they may connect, say hello, and tag other political figures. It is helpful to track world leaders' Instagram accounts to observe what they are up to during international meetings and seminars to gain insightful information on what takes place behind the scenes in the corridors of power (Twiplomacy, 2018). The prefixes "digital," "net," "e-," "Twitter," "Insta," and others are sometimes used interchangeably, confusing some people. However, all of these prefixes refer to the influence and varied advancements of the Internet and social media in diplomacy.

Instagram is a Facebook-owned social network, but it was created by Mike Krieger and Kevin Systrom and launched on October 6, 2010. It is estimated that there are one billion users worldwide. Users can use the app to upload photos and videos to the platform. These images can be enhanced with various filters and location data. A post can be shared with anyone or only with approved followers.

Although Instagram is relatively new in comparison to Twitter and Facebook, its popularity in diplomacy has resulted in the publication of a guide for people in this category called Instagram Basics for Politics and Government (2018) by the company. According to the guide, the platform has 800 million monthly users, 300 daily stories, and 80 percent of its users are from countries other than the United States. Instagram has evolved into a tool used by "elected officials, governments, campaigns, and candidates to break down barriers and meaningfully connect with their constituents in a visually compelling way" ("Instagram Basics for Politics and Government," 2018).

Alexi.com ranks Instagram 16th, and it is the third most popular digital media platform in diplomacy. One hundred and twenty member states of the United Nations are on Instagram. With the exception of Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping, all other G20 and G7 leaders have personal Instagram accounts (Cole & Wolfe, 2018c). Once again, former President Barack Obama was the first leader to open an account on this platform. Today, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi has 14.8 million Instagram followers. President Joko Widodo of Indonesia, who is ranked sixth on Facebook, is ranked second on Instagram with 12.2 million followers, and President Donald Trump of the United States is ranked third with 10 million followers (Cole & Wolfe, 2018c).

None of Africa's leaders made the top ten list of Instagram's most followed leaders; however, the President of Ghana, Akufo-Addo, is the most followed African leader in the Sub-Saharan region, according to Cole and Wolfe (2018c). He leads with 431 thousand followers, followed by Rwandan President Paul Kagame and Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, both of whom have over 160 thousand followers as of 2018. Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya ranks fourth with over ninety-one thousand (91,000) followers, while the institutional accounts of Nigeria's President and Tanzania's Presidency rank fifth and sixth, respectively, with over sixty-three thousand (63,000) and fifty thousand (50,000) followers.

According to Instagram Basics for Politics and Government (2018), elected officials, campaigns, candidates, and governments use Instagram to connect with their followers and allow them to see the work of their leaders both locally and globally. Ghana has an opportunity here because Ghana's President leads the conversation among African leaders. Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) can learn from and improve on President Akuffo Addo's social media team. Ghana's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration (Ghana MFA) has 286 Instagram followers,

while the Ghana Tourism Authority (Ghana Tourism Authority) has over 4,000. The Ministry of Tourism (motacghana) has 2,425 followers, and the Presidency has no institutional account but is linked to President Akuffo-Addo's account.

2.3.4 Websites

Tim Berners-Lee, a British scientist, created the first website with the help of his colleague Robert Cailliau. Tim created the World Wide Web (WWW) in 1989 while working at CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research). The first web was created to meet the demand for automated information sharing among scientists in universities and institutions around the world (Berners-Lee, 2000). To gain access to various types of information, such as a researcher's technical papers, manuals for various software modules, and meeting minutes, and to avoid answering the same questions by different people repeatedly, Jim was inspired to create a platform that would allow everyone to read his database more easily. Website use is no longer limited to scientists but has spread to other fields such as education, news, sports, governance, commerce, etc., and could be devoted to a particular topic or goal, such as entertainment, news, social networking, or education (Berners-Lee, 2000).

Websites could be personal, cooperative, governmental, or organizational. E-government is the internet-based representation of various ministries, which may provide both information and services to government agencies, as well as the use of digital media platforms such as websites. Government websites, also known as e-government websites, can be thought of as a virtual representation of a state (Kurbalija & Badi, 2000:100) as noted in (Grech, 2006). One of the main goals of e-government is "developing and implementing a well-functioning e-government system to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery to citizens, businesses, and

government officials" (Naidu & Chand, 2018). Using e-government websites to increase accessibility to anyone around the world has never been simpler.

Websites are also important digital media platforms for conducting digital diplomacy. Jiang (2016) looks into how the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Cuba, and Korean embassies in China use Sina Weibo. The measure and context of the remarks on the embassies' Weibo pages make the analysis pertinent. According to the findings, Weibo is utilised successfully to connect to the Chinese audience. The results also indicate that "strong interaction with internet audiences does not generally correlate to 'conversational' communication enabled by 'generative technology.

In Iran, it is argued that Foreign Minister Zarif established a new website for negotiation which was particularly notable for nuclear energy during 2013 negotiations that sought to provide background information on Iran's nuclear programme and its goals. Upon his arrival in Tehran, Zarif made significant use of social media tools to justify the deal domestically and "frame" it for a population outside of Iran.

Ministries of Foreign Affairs see opportunities for digitalization in the areas of more individualised client guidance in addition to general travel guides when confronted with such challenges. An effective website, automated services for people travelling, and the usage of social media platforms in crisis and emergency situations are all part of the short-term consular solutions. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of Australia created the Smartraveller website, which it publishes travel advisory updates and changes for one hundred and sixty-nine foreign countries. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland has developed a map tool called "The World Surprises" that enables travelers to view and exchange Ministry of Foreign Affairs information about trip locations (Hocking & Melissen, 2015).

2.3.5 You Tube

Unlike the others that combine text, pictures, and videos, YouTube is known primarily for video streaming. YouTube is an American company founded in 2005 by Steve Chen, Jawed Karim, and Chad Hurley to remove technical barriers and help people share videos online (Burgess & Green, 2009). YouTube has grown to become the most popular entertainment website in the United Kingdom. Alexia.com currently ranks it as the second most popular platform. Every month, YouTube has over 1 billion active users. Every minute, approximately 500 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube (Burson-Marsteller, 2016).

Its features include channels, playlists, and tags. A YouTube channel is a place on YouTube where you can store all of your videos in one place. The playlist organizes YouTube content, and tags are words or phrases that help YouTube users find a subscriber's content (National Tourism and Development Authority, 2012). The user can also tailor his or her channel to their specific requirements. Unlike Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, YouTube users do not have followers or friends; instead, they have subscribers. The number of videos in a subscriber's channel is unlimited (Burgess & Green, 2009).

YouTube began as a site for distributing user-generated content and has evolved into a platform where an individual can build a personal brand and make it a career (Holland, 2016). According to Burson-Marsteller (2016), former President of the United States and Senator of Illinois, Barack Obama, first introduced the world of diplomacy to YouTube in 2006. His campaign team posted a recording of an interview with Wolf Blitzer of CNN's news channel on the Federal Spending Transparency Bill. He was followed by Matteo Renzi, who was the Mayor of Florence on November 8, 2006, and Italian Prime Minister as of 2016. Australia's Prime Minister Malcolm

Turnbull, who was then the Minister for the Environment and Water was the third world leader to create a YouTube account (Burson-Marsteller, 2016).

With the exception of the Swedish Foreign Ministry, which joined in 2008, government institutions such as the European Commission, the United States Department of State, and the United Kingdom Foreign Ministry joined in 2007. It has been revealed that 148 countries' foreign ministries, representing 77% of all United Nations (UN) member states, have subscribed to YouTube, and the platform is primarily used as a "video repository by governments rather than a social network" (Burson-Marsteller, 2016). YouTube videos have been used as a soft power tool to promote the national interests of states. Travel videos with advice for citizens, particularly those traveling abroad, are available from foreign ministries in countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia. The Estonian Foreign Ministry has released promotional videos in order to attract visitors and investors to the country (Burson-Marsteller, 2016). Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta recently posted a video promoting his country's film industry (Taylor, 2019).

According to Burson-Marsteller, the YouTube channel with the most subscribers is White House, which has 682,790 followers. Barack Obama ranks second with over 500,000 subscribers. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi has over 300,000 subscribers, trailing only President Barack Obama. Each has over 140,000 subscribers, including the Vatican and the British Royal Family (Burson-Marsteller, 2016). There are 31 YouTube channels for African states on the African continent. Ethiopia, South Africa, and Tanzania are among the states with official Foreign Affairs Ministry channels. Their president has both personal and institutional accounts. The Republic of Ghana has three YouTube channels: two institutional channels and one personal channel.

With 1,801 and 715 subscribers, respectively, both institutional channels, John Dramani Mahama and Flagstaff House Communication Bureau (now Jubilee House Communication Bureau), are operational. As of 2016, the personal channel of Ghana's President, John D. Mahama, had 187 subscribers and was dormant (Burson-Marsteller, 2016). Visit Ghana, a YouTube channel run by the Ghana Tourism Authority, has over 2,000 subscribers.

2.3.6 Snapchat

Snapchat is the fastest growing social media platform, and according to the most recent statistics, nearly two-thirds of its users are between the ages of 13 and 24, making it the ideal platform for reaching young audiences. As a result, it is not surprising that government leaders are beginning to create accounts on the platform in order to reach out to future leaders. Snapchat is a distinctive medium since neither the number of followers nor the number of views is displayed for each posting and even vanishes after a day. Governments could use it without concern because users are not permitted to publicly remark on or disparage the postings or accounts of other individuals. While providing a new form of casual communication and linear storytelling for government officials and institutions (Twiplomacy,2016). According to the research conducted by Burson-Marsteller (2017), 32 heads of state and government, as well as 12 international organizations, have official Snapchat profiles. Twiplomacy 2016 identified as active on the platform 12 presidents and presidencies, 14 governments and prime ministers, six foreign ministries and foreign ministers, and six foreign ministries and foreign ministers.

Despite its limitations, some governments have discovered Snapchat to be an effective broadcasting tool for reaching a younger audience, either by chronicling their leaders' public activities or increasing public engagement at specific events, according to Lufkens (2016).

International organizations such as UNICEF and the European Parliament use Snapchat to interact with their followers, often reposting their snaps. And the numbers are impressive: the UK Foreign Office reports an engagement rate of more than 60% (Snap views versus followers) and a 90% completion rate for its stories (last snap views minus first snap views).

Chat 2.0 was introduced as part of a late March 2016 update designed to position Snapchat as a competitor to Whatsapp and Facebook Messenger. The new feature improves your chat experience by allowing you to easily video chat, send audio notes, and chat messages.

On September 17, 2015, for the Rugby World Cup launch party and ahead of the annual Foreign Office Open House, the UKForeignOffice became the first foreign office to open a Snapchat account. Snapchat is a useful tool for connecting users who are at the same event and in the same location. The Foreign Office created a Snapchat virtual tour and asked Snapchatters on the ground to contribute their posts to the story. According to the Foreign Office blog, 300 new Snapchat connections were made over the weekend alone (Twiplomacy, 2016).

In December 2015, the US State Department set up a Snapchat channel specifically for the COP21 conference in Paris, and John Kerry made his first Snapchat statement on the Mashable Snapchat account. The State Department is currently testing the social network at a number of public events. During the COP21 UN climate conference, the United Nations Snapchat account was fairly active, and it was also featured as a special story with support from Snapchat staff on the ground. Watch the Snapchat video of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Leonardo DiCaprio meeting at COP21. The White House launched its Snapchat account to provide its followers with a behind-the-scenes look at the United States President's final State of the Union address on January 11, 2016. To attract younger talent, White House interns took over the account in March 2016 and

created a story about their work. The European Parliament published a similar story in April 2016 promoting traineeships in Brussels (Twiplomacy, 2016).

2.4 CONCLUSION

The preceding discussions generally highlight the digital diplomacy has evolved over the years. From its inception, it has undergone varying changes and technology has played the greatest role in the process. The review also confirms that a variety of digital media platforms are used for diplomatic purposes. However, there are variations in the extent of use of these platforms among Statesmen, Diplomats and MFAs. Largely, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram appear as the most predominant platforms for digital diplomacy.



CHAPTER THREE

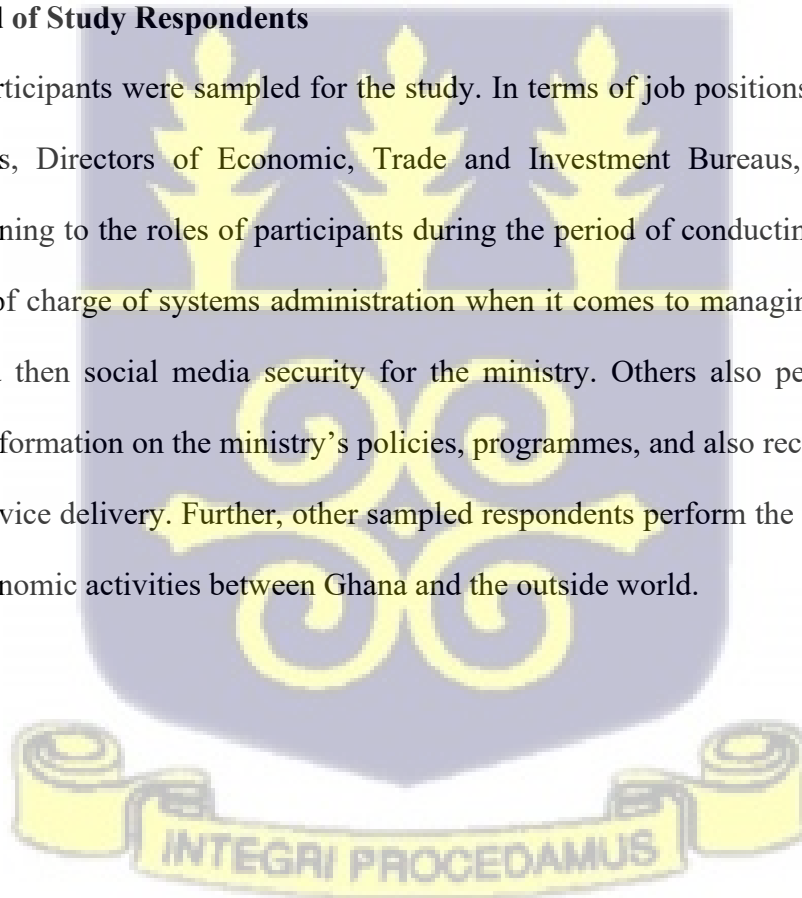
RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.0 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to present field data that was gathered for the purpose of achieving the research objectives and to analyse and discuss the data with reference to the study aims and objectives. The chapter first provides background information on the study participants before presenting the actual field interviews. This is done to enable the reader have a fair understanding of the nature of sampled used for the study. Following these domains of analysis are the discussion of the research data.

3.1 Background of Study Respondents

A total of 18 participants were sampled for the study. In terms of job positions, they range from System Analysts, Directors of Economic, Trade and Investment Bureaus, and Information Directors. Pertaining to the roles of participants during the period of conducting the study, some were in charge of charge of systems administration when it comes to managing of service, web applications and then social media security for the ministry. Others also perform the role of disseminating information on the ministry's policies, programmes, and also receive feedback that will improve service delivery. Further, other sampled respondents perform the role of facilitating all trade and economic activities between Ghana and the outside world.



3.2 Results

3.2.1 The existing institutional framework within MDAs for the use of digital platform

One of the objectives of the current study was to unravel the nature of institutional framework adopted by the MFA in conducting digital diplomacy towards the achievement of the goals of Ghana's economic diplomacy. Generally, the responses of study participants reveal that the institutional framework of the institution for carrying out economic diplomacy is a structure and process that involves the filtering of information before they are being posted on its digital media platforms. These vignettes from respondents corroborate this claim:

“The existing framework was simply a filtering process where we filter whatever we have to post from the information department, goes to the director, the director filters its, approves it and it comes to the ICT unit where we post it on the digital platforms”.

“An officer in the IT office section manages the platforms. The content is forwarded from IPAB to them after it has been approved from the various bureaus”

Further, responses from interviewees also reveals that the Ministry is now designing a new institutional framework for the conduct of digital diplomacy. As already stated, it is possible that the Ministry implicitly acknowledges the narrow scope of framework currently used for the conduct of digital diplomacy. The following accounts from interviewees confirm this assertion:

“Currently the ministry is reviewing its policies on our websites and social media platforms. So we are developing a new framework around it. For now, its mostly the activities we received approval, we want to come up with comprehensive communication piece that guides the missions as a well as that will take it into consideration, but for now, communication policy”.

When the staff from the ETIB were asked as to whether the unit has its own online platforms for conducting digital diplomacy, it was found that there is no platform but the unit also uses the platforms of the Ministry. The interview data again reveal that several reasons explain this trend.

These are confirmed by the following accounts from respondents: “

“I think the reason why maybe there's no specific digital platform for ETIB because it's almost like you're seeing all the other bureau. There's no specific digital platform for you know, the bureaus, for ETIB is just one of the bureaus. So for means of controlling what goes out there as we have always done. We use the ministry's mouthpiece the Twitter, Instagram to broadcast our events. Yes. So it has to go through a filter so what comes out at the end of the day is what the ministry wants and not just the bureau is putting out. Just like the other bureaus, if you want to know the framework that guides the activities on the digital platforms, the IT may assist, but there is no specific framework for the bureau. Not even the passport office which appears to stand alone. All is done through the main portal of the ministry. As I said it's a way to control the information outflow, what happens is bureau may put something out there but management may not be aware. It is one way to also inform management may not be aware, which is one way it will inform management or at least it goes up because they said like service structure, it goes up, it comes down is broadcasted on the digital channel of the ministry so both the bureau and the management are aware of what is going on”.

“Because our work and our online data platforms are just as they ministry' own is and therefore we the bureau specifically we don't have So we fall within the bigger or the ministry, yes, as far as how we went exactly. So tactics of communication we don't have specifics. Yeah. So whatever information we need to put out there goes straight. Yes, it is stream and it's loaded onto that platform except where maybe there's something that you want Sometimes some specific ones now goes to maybe the chamber of our commerce, AGI get back export promotion or GIPC. So we when is specific to them, we send it to them and they broadcast all the their digital platforms. Oh yeah, there are times give them about specific so we don't bother ourselves putting on our platform, we give it to them and they, they, they handle those”.

“When exhibitions come, we don't do the core work of going down there to the specific campaigns, oh, there's this exhibition we needed to participate, it makes the work difficult, We just want to make sure that it goes on smoothly. So we sent to them. It was a exhibitions regarding GEPA, it goes straight to the Ministry of Trade. So we send it to them straight away and they have a list they have, they've got full of companies who went well, that's what they get it in all for this area, these are the companies we are talking to so quickly they give it to them and they submit it is OK then the event just happened”

3.2.2 How the MFA employs digital diplomacy in its activities

A related objective of the study was to unravel how digital diplomacy is conducted by the MFA and all its allied agencies. In general, the data reveals that the Ministry operates an official website as one of its digital platforms. Besides this, it has other platforms specifically Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. In practice, it was found that the MDAs mostly post information on the website and the other social media platforms that promotes Ghana as an investment and tourist hub. These accounts from respondents reinforce these claims:

“Yes it should be information that projects Ghana positively, the ministry’s work, so we don’t put out information that will put the ministry, the country ins bad light, things that promote foreign policy of the country”

“So far the only way I can see that we are engaging in the digital diplomacy is through the use social media platforms? So you can testify or bear witness, that's just some few days ago we posted and something on our Instagram and Twitter pages informing the Ghanaian public about travel to Abuja. Yes, these are some of the ways that we communicate with the public and sometimes we engage with other countries to collaborate with the Ministry, for example, was the Russia Ukraine war where we had to evacuate our students into Ghana, so there was some kind of information exchange on these platforms. Some were being done by ordinary Ghanaians in the diaspora and the ministry also had two contact some agencies and organizations bringing down some of our citizens. So yes, so far we've been using the social media platforms and the website too.

“We use the platform very well, but we have all our missions. They have the diaspora engagement for over there. You can sit anywhere and just complete it and it comes through with database where we have, so we have diaspora database where we know what there's a Ghanian who or an African American who lives here and this is his area of interest. So if you can get a local partner, that person would be interested.

“Currently, we are subscribed onto Facebook, Twitter, Instagram. Yes, we do have an official website. That that's a mfa.gov.gh”.

“The blue colour is used a lot signifying peace just as the UN has been using blue. Yes, it's a calm color and we that's what I know for now. We use the blue colour to further signify that Ghana is one of the peaceful countries in the world”.

Further, the interview data suggests that the Ministry does not conduct digital diplomacy in isolation but collaborates with multiple actors and networks in the process. Interviewees generally admit that these actors are important in spreading the messages the Ministry puts across in its diplomatic activities conducted digitally. These responses from respondents corroborate these claims:

“So currently we have the international organizations, we have the MDA's, especially the Trade Ministry and the Information Ministry and office of the president. These a few to mention, and generally the public, because whenever we put something outside there, we want the public to read and educate themselves on it. So the public or the public is a major stakeholder too. When it comes to foreign, we liaise with other foreign ministries and then individual foreign ministers and ambassadors. So that' our target group, yes”

“Most of the investors who have come, either one. They make direct contact with the MDA or they go to through the mission. So the requests come here. If it is in the health Sector, Minister of Health, Ghana Health Service among others, we send them to the Sector Ministry and wherever it's going, it's going. Recently, with the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, there are investors who are here. That's why I said there's one for me winning two of their companies there to rub, recycle, but they want to meet specific companies in Ghana and those companies fall under Ghana National Chamber of Commerce. So we have linked them together. So they are coming from their own straight to GNPC and then they will take it from there”

“When requests come, we don't just go along. We are looking for company policy from you know. We have to write to the right MD that oh this sector. We need some companies in this sector to connect with this company from Switzerland. They are into these and then there's all we are working on this company or that company, all these are the selected ones suggest to them, so we know that know what information we give to the investor, give from the right source and if you want to check the credibility of the company, we know where to go you see. So these are matters are there Sometimes they say bureaucracy is a long chain .Because I don't think it's a long time, but sometimes it helps to establish credibility of certain things, or at least they say paper don't lie”.

3.2.3 The agency of digital diplomacy in the attainment of the goals of Ghana's economic diplomacy

The core objective of the present study was to examine the agency of digital diplomacy towards the attainment of the objectives of Ghana's economic diplomacy. To recall, the goals of Ghana's economic diplomacy is to promote higher level of trade and investment inflows into the country. Generally, respondents concede to the fact that the use of digital diplomacy can go a long way towards the realization of the objectives underpinning Ghana's economic diplomacy. Virtually all respondents consent that digital diplomacy plays an important role in realizing Ghana's economic diplomacy goals in particular in the area of trade and investment promotion. These claims are clearly evident in these responses by interviewees.

“So, it's very relevant like I said in the beginning basically, the digital diplomacy is using Social media platforms or any other digital platforms and in diplomacy, so if we are going to achieve Ghana's economic diplomacy through social media platforms, it's we communicating through their platforms that are available by posting a lot of attractive content by using infographics, videos that will catch the attention of a lot of people all over the world and also showcase the kind of culture that we have here, for instance, by showing even our tourism sites alone would attract a lot of people from the world. People who would visit Ghana and you return create a lot of foreign exchange for us and also by showcasing our talent. The talent would also attract investors who would like to come in, build companies here and employ the skill sets that we have. So yes, social media can go a long way by crossing boundaries, by crossing the oceans, you don't have to be in a plane to go and showcase your talent or your markets. But social media can do that for us and help in our economic diplomacy.”

“Like, like you said, we were in the information age. Everything is changing after COVID. Yeah, a lot of people in Ghana and all over the world realized the importance of gaining digital skills, especially in the education sector and also when it comes to being a diplomat, we have to do a lot of training and sensitization and also kill their fear that a lot of officers have. When it comes to being on social media, yes, there's a there's a lot of concern that is raised when it comes to being on social media, because they feel that they are being targeted, so we have to cure that fear and then train them on the use of using this these digital platforms, now the platforms are available, they are up and running most of the time, but the content creation is the most important thing and there are a lot of tools that can be used in creating content and I believe if we train our officers on the use of these skills or these tools, then we can make a digital diplomacy effective”.”

“Foreign governments multinational corporations, individuals, foreign journalists by that I mean we help facilitate press accreditations from ISD then with our local journalists as well, diplomats, and our stakeholders, other MDAs. We liaise with all of them and even when it come to economic diplomacy part, GEPA, GIPC, Freezones. All these networks can easily be accessed because of digital diplomacy”

“Because we call ourselves the facilitation bureau, and you know for investment into the country, there is a lead agency for that, that is GIPC, which is one of the main partners of this bureau, so we work hand in hand with them. Almost all the investment promotion activities that they have carried out there for FDIs pass through this place. We organize and coordinate with our mission out there, the place everything from A-Z we reorganize or we facilitate all for them. With all those things for them, so for countries or investors or NGO or even companies, even individuals. Well, there's a even right now. I was working on something from Iran. It involves two companies who all had their CEOs coming. The area of interest is rubber recycling. So they sent a request through our mission and a copy through their embassy here is on the desk. We are supposed to facilitate a meeting with the Ghana National Chamber of commerce for them. So they will meet their counterparts who are also interested in the same area. They can have a meeting and then they will take it from there. With the use of digital diplomacy, this was successfully accomplished”

“It depends on the request. It can come from countries, that's governments or individuals or companies, yes that is how the work goes on it comes in and out depending on what area that they are interested, we will get them those connections. Because our MDA's, we have what we call the 'Lead Generators' For instance, GIPC may have an interest in an investment with foreign company but the process of getting them. Like we play a key role in getting the people here, the correspondences and those things because when they come, the foreign company. They just don't drop in, so we direct where they are going, where they are going we meet these people, these are our area of interest”.

“Yes, that's how the work was, only comes in and out. And I said when it comes depends on what area that they're interested we will get them those connections because our ministry, our empties, we have what we call the lead generators. For instance the. Maybe GIPC may have an interest in an investment, so they would generate that investment with the foreign company. Yeah, but the process of them getting there they we are, we would like, we play a key role in getting the people here, the cross condenses and all those because when they come. The foreign company and they don't just drop in for. So we direct our so where to go, what they are doing something or they request oh we meet these people here and these are the areas of our interest. How do we get back to them and that's where we come in so we can assist to create that linkage and connections for them, yes. So you liaise between our locals. I don't look at enterprise or companies and then the followers. That's it. So, And as I said, the facilitation and coordination, the facilitation comes and

where there's a need for us to do underground arrangement for them to be able for their mission to be successful. Now what do we leave with our missions to ensure that such events are, Yeah, it becomes a success.

“What we call the new generator is the MDA responsible for control training of online portal Well, it was it not specific for just economic diplomacy involves the general work of the ministry. For which ETIB is part of so we can classify in the form of training. You have to get a lot of investments and all that. But at base, are we working on getting them using our, you know, right now technology is advanced and people are using their media platform websites to attract. I've told you, I said, I said. The platforms of our mission there are websites, so it's our missions that can that does all these things? Because when I go to our MFA website, it's just letters. Nothing really. When you go to go to our missions they have put have a platform on information on economies, investment opportunities investment will open you can just check some of them should have some tool here at base as well. We have to have some today. Yeah you see what happens is foreign Ministry we are you understand it's going to be a duplication of fashion with another MDA”

“Again so when we are out there, that one we are out there, trade is not there even though we traded actually, but they missions platform is what they use for all those matters. GIPC is not there, GPA is not there. So if there's an investment that I was working on something, what we have we call as part of our performance appraiser we are supposed to promote trade, the non-traditional exports so all her missions have been informed. This is what is happening. So agreement should be made as part of your work plan and your budget that will procure the items you do. We do. We do markets survey intelligence. Oh yes what item do you can sell in Congo?”

“There was recently a chocolate show in South Africa in Johannesburg you have no idea. We made it. Huge sales because they love the Ghanaian chocolate. There was in one in from 10 to 13 in Zaragoza, Spain on chocolate gambling samples here. So these are all the course. We are the Foreign Ministry. Our activities are not so much internal, but when we go out there, most of its course, yes. So we use our missions, we do market intelligence on their platforms. Some people bring events and we're send them there and they advertise on the platform we have.

“Recently had the Ghana film show in Dubai. I don't know if you heard of it. Oh yes, it was a success. They were in Dubai. They showed two Ghanaian movies. For the Ghanaian in the movie in cinemas in Dubai. you have no idea. If you have no idea the patronage. Yeah, you have no idea petrol you Ghana film authority they were in charge so we just did the facilitation of the process informed our mission that advertisement, the promotion all those regions help them to do to consulate in Dubai and then the mission in Abu Dhabi. You have no idea they got called from sending messages”

“We use one trade programme called bazaar and it was used, it was placed on our website. Remember that one? We didn't do it this year. That's a from covid coming we have not done it. The

next is not in our work plan for next year. And how are we going to do it? It will be advertised on the ministry's platform. It will be there after the event. It will be in our the envoy, our missions out there, we will send it to them, they put on their platform, so as I said it depends on the events and when it's happening, you see them on the platform. you can check the platform right now let's do a test. This is that they are activities and events that we are announcing, right? Or maybe it may have happened, but we are not there. This is what happened. The Minister did this or this bureau is engaging in this activity exactly. So we put those information out there.

"We did it in the Coconut festival and there's not. generated by the ministry, who knows even when I said that most of the things that we did for the for active. Also the activities almost about 80% of actives are not generated by internally, internally they are generated by the lead generators and then we provide that we play that role to make it happen. GIPC led trade and investment mission to Scandinavia and they just came back, yes to Finland, Sweden and Norway. It was led by the deputy minister for foreign affairs, including the GIPCAS CEO. We are planning one to Latin American Indonesia and all the correspondence on everything. We are handling those with our missions there. So we see the role that we are playing. So at the end of the day, GIPC will go there for the events. And then in the photo of somebody from the movie, the Ministry may we may not even be there. We may not be there, but what has gone down for the event to happen.

"About 80% of it is that we get involved in are not generated by the Bureau itself as well, main activity that we have been made in Ghana Bazaar from that we are engaged in almost every economic activity. Outside Ghana and even though maybe we within Ghana, we did the world tourism expo by the World Trade Centre. Yes, they are doing this World Trade Centre Association General Assembly next year. So we see, oh, this is involved in all that. Yes we did the ATI which was organized by this year in June, June 24th in Ghana was led by Minister of Finance but the ministry was part of it. So Foreign Minister was needed and ETIB was on the committee. Through the head, so, most of that things are generated outside the bureau, but we work on them because there's GIPC will not go there without us, GEPA same, Intra African trade. they're in Lagos, as we speak for Lagos International affair"

"Digital diplomacy is faster, convenient and one of the easiest way of communication. If we have an idea of a business and Ghana, how do we tell the person in Australia we cannot write papers and then so we need newspaper space to publish. This is not. There's some online platform rather you say. Sit on my table now hit the Twitter button. The one in Australia, Papua New Guinea Canada is aware of the information available. So it's convenient and it's it simplifies things. We are doing business just so for digital platforms and economic diplomacy. I think this is the way to go for. Now also, there's a platform a digital platform meeting. So the moment Ghana makes the concession is loaded there. The moment is loaded there is broadcast to all the members straight away. So they have the information all Ghana has made a concession in these areas. That that's

actually it's fast. It's all there's no paper work. No. It's a platform. There's a platform for complain if you a trader and you are going through borders an encounter difficulties”.

Again, other responses highlight the centrality of the agency of digital diplomacy in realizing the goals of Ghana’s economic diplomacy. As already specified in the preliminary part of the study, this entails the capacity of diplomatic personnel to use various digital media in promoting the goals of economic diplomacy. Responses from interviewees indeed highlight that they consider technological skills as an important factor in realizing the gains presented by the digital media.

These vignettes from respondents go to lends credence to these claims:

“First of all, it has to start from the level of the personnel so training and education on digital diplomacy and the fact that it has come to stay and how other countries are using it to their benefits and also after a training we have to inculcate it into our work in dealing with other countries. We should enhance it. We shouldn’t shy away from using it. We should rather promote its positive side.

“We have to inculcate these Digital platforms and digital knowledge in our schools, because tomorrow maybe you and I might be retired and we'll have the new generation coming in. We need to build a generation where they understand these tools in school before they even come into the job market. So we have to do a lot of education. We have to change our syllabus in our basic schools and secondary schools and tertiary schools so that by the time they graduate comes out and is looking for a job. He or she would know how to, at least, use these tips and making video conferencing, use social media tools in promoting a course or promoting a product. So I believe that education is key here from our basic schools”

Taken together, these suggest that respondents place much priority to the ability of diplomatic staff to communicate to diverse actors through the use of digital media which is the essence of digital diplomacy. Obviously, lack of competence in the technology among diplomatic staff will leave the country bereft of any benefits of digital diplomacy.

3.2.4 Implications of Ghana's use of digital diplomacy on the future of the country's foreign policy

One other objective of the study was to assess the implications of the utilization of digital diplomacy on the future of Ghana's foreign policy. Most interviewees once again acknowledge that digital diplomacy will influence Ghana's foreign policy in the future. Virtually, all interviews recognize that technology is altering the conduct of foreign policy and in the future, digital diplomacy will play important role in this regard. As far as foreign policy of Ghana is concerned, interviewees echoed that digital diplomacy will play an urgent role in enhancing Ghana's interactions with other States. Although these hold, interviewees nonetheless echoed that digital diplomacy cannot completely deal away with traditional phase to phase diplomacy. The following responses confirm these claims:

"Nowadays the traditional one-on-one diplomacy is not enough. You know what, let me give an example. French or France, you know they are reducing their diplomatic staff strategic service, yes. Because I think that some of the work will be done without sending physical persons abroad. There's a problem. There's not a problem. To know that at all, it will go so for instance, let's say yes, the future of diplomacy is now more digital than it used to be, like in-person. Yeah, now we are, we can hold a multinational conference virtually. And then we can have the PTC virtually and then documents are assigned from one country and then sent to the account where there's a need to append signatures by governments. Yeah, they are saying sending the signed copies are made and everybody's although it cannot erase completely the physical touch"

"In the future, the way Ghana projects its image through digital diplomacy can alter the way a country interacts with it and thus it can be said that digital diplomacy can affect foreign policy".

"Now the rise of technology has given rise to misinformation since anyone at all can post anything on the internet or any social media platform. Any negative information can tarnish the image of Ghana and so there is the urgent need to develop digital capability so as to counter such information using digital diplomacy which is a form of foreign policy".

"Digital diplomacy will be needed in the future to allow for effective oversight, coordination, and planning of foreign policy across government units as part of the response to the internationalization of bureaucracy"

“For effective conduct of foreign policy in the future, digital diplomacy will be required to create digital mechanisms to draw on and harness external expertise to advance national goals and priorities”.

“Digital diplomacy will be needed now and, in the future, to aggregate the wanton flow of information and to use it to better inform foreign policy making and to help respond to emerging social and political events”.

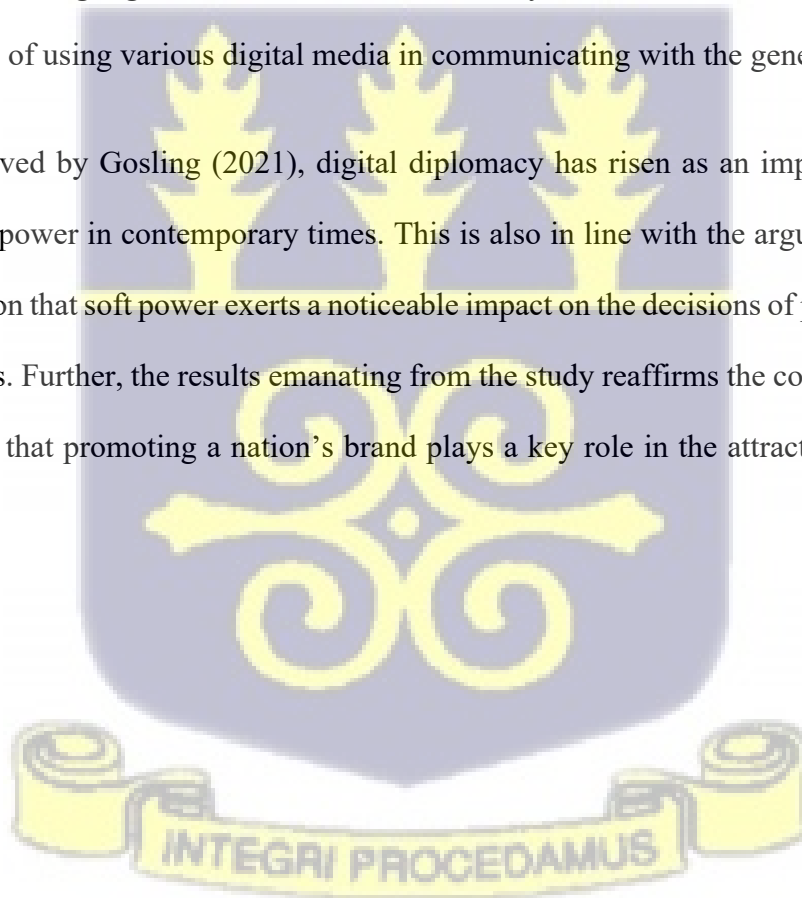
3.3 Discussion of Results

Generally, results emerging from the study demonstrate that digital diplomacy is becoming an important trend in the global diplomatic practice. In the case of Ghana, the potentials of the role of technology and social is being increasingly acknowledged among the MFA and its allied agencies. Results evidence that the MFA is also integrating most of the major digital platforms in its diplomatic activities. These are clearly evident in the use of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Through digital diplomacy, the Ministry has been able to project Ghana in the international stage through touting the economic potential of Ghana mostly in the arena of trade and investment. In practice, this has attracted investors into the country and has also succeeded in branding the country as a peaceful tourism destination or hub. Theoretically, these reflect Joseph Nye concept of soft power. As previously stated, unlike physical power as it is in the case of military strength, soft power rests on the use of persuasive messages and mass communication although often differentiated. In this case, digital diplomacy should be understood as a variant of soft power that States can leverage on to pursue diplomatic activities in the pursuit of national goals and objectives. Whilst the benefits of digital diplomacy towards the achievement of these ends are real, accomplishing them is not spontaneous. Largely, they require a deliberate and well-designed framework and a diplomatic staff competent in the use of digital media. In the current study, these were affirmed by respondents in many respects. Although the MFA has a framework in place, respondents implicitly acknowledge its limitations and unsurprisingly, it was found that the MFA is now reconfiguring the framework for conducting digital diplomacy. Among other things, this

framework aims to specify the tools, techniques and tactics that will help the diplomatic staff to succeed in the digital stage and enhance their relevance and salience as far as the objective of economic diplomacy through digital diplomacy is concerned.

From a theoretical standpoint, the results of the study reaffirm the benefits associated with digital diplomacy as espoused by Rashica (2018). As it has been previously established, Rashica argues that the major benefits of digital diplomacy include strengthening international relations, proximity with audiences, fast and effective communications, and lower financial costs which are particularly relevant for small states that face resource constraints. In the case of the MFA, this is evidenced by the benefits of using digital media to reach out to many investors across the globe at low cost and the potential of using various digital media in communicating with the general public.

As rightly observed by Gosling (2021), digital diplomacy has risen as an important strategy of articulating soft power in contemporary times. This is also in line with the argument put forward by Steve Thomson that soft power exerts a noticeable impact on the decisions of people, businesses and governments. Further, the results emanating from the study reaffirms the contention by Anne-Marie Slaughter that promoting a nation's brand plays a key role in the attraction of investment and tourists.



CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter ends the study by reiterating a summary of findings emerging, outlining conclusions, and proposing recommendations both for policy practice and for further research.

4.1 Summary of Findings

The study's motivation largely derives from the fact that diplomatic practice in the 21st century has been transformed by the advent of technology and the emergence of social media. It is evident that digital diplomacy is now on the rise which suggests that Diplomatic personnel must adapt to this trend in order to maintain their salience and relevance. The present study from this backdrop generally assessed the role of digital diplomacy in advancing Ghana's economic diplomacy. The study also examined the framework for conducting diplomacy within the MFA, the digital media platforms for conducting diplomacy, and the implications of digital diplomacy on Ghana's foreign policy in the future. The research began with general background information and also clarified the research problem and the study's theoretical and practical relevance. Subsequently, the study was connected to existing scholarship by synthesizing both theoretical and empirical scholarship. To achieve the set research aims and objectives, the study adopted the qualitative research approach to investigate the problem at hand. A total of 18 personnel working within various MDAs were selected for collecting data using purposive sampling. Interviews were utilized as the research instrument of data collection. Data analytical techniques in the study were done qualitatively using thematic narration of interview responses and logical inferences. The results of the study demonstrate that the MFA has a limited framework for conducting digital diplomacy. This framework consists of a filtering process whereby information is screened by the Director of Information before being sent to the IT unit of the Ministry for posting on digital platforms. Results

also suggest that the MFA digital diplomacy is predominantly carried out using Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and these exhibit varying degrees of usage. The findings of the study further revealed that the MFA in collaboration with other MDAs including GIPC and the MoT often post content that reflects the economic prospects in Ghana and also touts the trade and investment opportunities in Ghana. These activities as evidenced by the study include hosting of various programs that showcase trade and investment activities in Ghana often in collaboration with local entrepreneurs foreign Ministries, journalists, Diplomats inter-alia and subsequently posted on various digital platforms in order to attract investors. Again, the study affirms that digital diplomacy in the future has implications for Ghana's foreign policy. Most respondents acknowledge that the use of digital media for carrying out diplomacy is becoming a major trend globally and potentially influence how other States interact with Ghana.

4.2 Conclusions

The objectives of the current study, to reiterate, were to examine the institutional framework guiding the conduct of digital diplomacy within MDAs, how digital diplomacy is conducted, the agency of digital diplomacy in fostering Ghana's economic diplomacy, and the implications of digital diplomacy in Ghana's foreign policy. Based on the results emanating from the study, the researcher first concludes that the institutional framework for conducting digital diplomacy consists of a filtering process where information is assessed by Director of Information to be posted on its digital platforms. Given this limited scope of the institutional framework, the researcher also concludes that as it stands now, the MFA lacks an all-encompassing framework that specifies guidelines, network of targeted actors, the type and complexity of reach, tools and techniques, frequency of communication, and techniques of monitoring effectiveness of digital diplomacy. The study moreover concludes that the MFA mostly employs Twitter, Facebook, and

Instagram as digital media for conducting digital diplomacy with posted content often touting the economic, trade and investment opportunities in Ghana. Messages posted in this regard center on the economic potential in Ghana as well as trade and investment opportunities. Further, the study concludes that digital diplomacy plays a significant role in driving Ghana's economic diplomacy goals of boosting trade and investment and thus highlights the centrality of the agency of digital diplomacy. Again, the study concludes that digital diplomacy has implications on the conduct of Ghana's foreign policy that lies in the fact that it influences how other countries relate to Ghana.

Overall, the study concludes that digitalization brought about by technology and social media have led to changes in diplomatic agency in the sense of changing expectations of both what counts as diplomatic action and who counts as a diplomatic actor. Taken together, these changes underscore the evolving interplay between "traditional" and "non-traditional" diplomatic agents and that digital diplomacy has emerged as a practice that is differentiated from online behavior or digital action through the material aspect of doing diplomacy. Digital diplomacy must therefore be construed as an integral part of the broader process of reconfiguring diplomacy as a social institution that enhances our contributions to our understanding of how digitalization alters diplomatic agency.

4.3 Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the researcher puts forward a number of recommendations to enhance the practice of digital diplomacy towards the achievement of the goals of economic diplomacy by the MFA and its allied Ministries, Agencies, and Departments.

4.3.1 Development and implementation of a comprehensive Digital Diplomacy Framework

Although the research findings point to the use of a framework in carrying out digital diplomacy, the evidence suggests that the MFA lacks an all-encompassing framework that direct the conduct of digital diplomacy. Currently, the framework is limited to a filtering process where information is evaluated before posting on is digital platforms. It will be o much relevance for the MFA to develop a digital diplomacy framework with clear vision, mission, goals, actors, strategies, tools, and techniques. The framework must also provide the guidelines and principles that facilitate the achievement of the strategic objectives of the MFA. Besides, it must specify what tools can be deployed to ensure that online networks complements the strategic objectives of the MFA. The research findings further reveal that as it stands now, the MFA frameworks lacks guidelines on such issues as the type, size, and the extent of reach of networks. It is important that the MFA acknowledges that the attraction of vast followership may not necessary support the achievement of its strategic objectives. To this end, it must ensure that type of networks it chooses advances its strategic goals and that online network influence is actually translated into offline influence. Again, the framework must contain specifications on the frequency of network interactions and how their effectiveness can be established.

4.3.2 Enhancing Design of Messages and Communication

Currently, as evidenced by the research results, the MFA digital diplomacy does not integrate various strategic dimensions as far as communication is concerned. There is limited use of algorithms and visuals when carrying out digital diplomacy. Yet, algorithms, visuals, and emotions are integral part of the digital medium that actually inform, shape, and define the extent to which messages of MFA can travel online. In this regard, it is suggested that the MFA should tailor its messages based on the preferences of various publics, define cognitive frames

of interpretation, and manage diverse expectations. This measure even become imperative when some targeted audiences already hold negative perceptions of the MFA. The MFA should periodically evaluate its communication overtime to gauge their effectiveness. In this context, the use of analytical tools of various forms that can for example reveal the preferences of online communities (data analysis). The degree of perception gap (sentiment analysis), and testing alternative models of public engagement (prescriptive analysis) become crucial.

4.3.3 Training and Development

Generally, one cannot deny the fact that Diplomats need to develop competencies in certain areas in order to meaningfully carry out digital diplomacy. In the context of digital diplomacy, professionals of the MFA should be able to develop the skills and knowledge in order to perform optimally in the digital world. Personnel of the MFAs across various Units should be able to curate, collaborate, communicate, and create content. Therefore, viewing it from a skill-development standpoint, MFAs ought to review the range of skills that are required of Diplomats in the digital age. This will involve assessment of such issues like which set of traditional skills are no more relevant, what skills are relevant but need update what core skills are required for mainstreaming digital technologies into the MFA activities. In the end, as far as digital diplomacy is concerned, personnel pf the MFA must be well trained to acquire capacity in new skills like data analytics, visual reasoning, adaptive thinking, projecting successful online messages, and reacting properly to online events. Overall, diplomatic training in this age should integrate knowledge generation models over several online platforms that is focused on data driven simulation and social network analysis.

4.3.4 Collaboration with active online Actors

The MFA should ensure that it collaborates or engages with active influencers online who actually share interest in the policies of the MFA. Among others, these predominantly include policymakers, academics, diplomats, and leaders of the diaspora. When the connection between the MFA and these publics is strong, it can be of much benefit to the MFA. For example, this can be a research input from the academia, media reports from journalists, partnership activities from other diplomats inter-alia.

4.4 Suggestions for further research

It is important to highlight that the present study has some limitations, one being that is limited to a single country setting, specifically the Ghanaian setting, which limits generalizability of findings. As a result, it is recommended that future research should focus on other countries through a comparative study framework so that broad comparisons can be made. In addition, whilst the present study gives useful insights, it did not examine which digital media is most effective as far as the objective of using digital diplomacy for economic diplomacy is concerned. It is therefore suggested that future research should aim to assess the effectiveness of various digital media in the conduct of digital diplomacy so as to inform commitment of time and other resources. Further, future research should seek to explore issues of agency, space and materiality of new technology, and audiences. For instance, there could be a research to examine how encounters with digitalization reshape the diplomatic profession. This will be needed to map, explain, and understand evolution and learning from digital change in the practice of diplomacy and how these changes manifest in dispositions and differs from the orientation or the behaviour of the good diplomat in traditional diplomacy. Similarly, research should also be conducted to explain the relationship between online and offline practices of diplomacy to explore what real difference is

brought about in the absence of face-to-face interactions. Again, research should be conducted into the role of audiences in particular that seek to assess how audiences are empowered in diplomacy.



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APPENDIX

RESEARCH INTERVIEW GUIDE

**TOPIC: EXAMINING THE AGENCY OF DIGITAL DIPLOMACY IN DRIVING
GHANA'S ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY**

Dear Respondent,

I am Janet Amoah Mensah, a final year student at the University of Ghana pursuing a Master of Arts Degree in International Affairs. As part of the requirements for the award of the stated degree, I am conducting a study on the use of digital diplomacy in driving Ghana's economic diplomacy. I would, therefore, be grateful if personnel of your organisation can participate in the study.

Kindly provide answers to the following question. There are no right and wrong answers. In accordance with the ethics of research, individual responses will be completely confidential. Your Organization will not have access to the individual responses provided. Instead, responses will be considered collectively. Your participation is vital to completing the study.

Section A: Personal Data

1. Kindly indicate the following

- Job Title/ Position in the organisation
- Department /Bureau

2. Briefly describe your role in the organization

Section B: Research Questions

3. What digital platforms have the organization subscribed to for the conduct of business? Why these platforms?

4. What framework(s) guide the communication of your digital diplomatic activities (for example, the use of algorithms, visuals, and emotions that inform, shape, and define how well your messages

travel online)? These may also include other frameworks you employ to structure interactions with audiences by tailoring messages to suit individual preferences, defining cognitive frames of interpretation, and managing expectations)

5. What types of people/organizations/networks does your company work with? (This could include foreign governments, multinational corporations, investors, journalists, diplomats, academics, diaspora leaders, and so on.) It could also refer to the type, size, and reach of networks you create).

6. What tactics guide your building of online network communities that support and enhance your economic goals?

7. Do you collaborate with other Ministries and organisations? If yes, how do you synchronise information with MFARI, GIPC, MOTI, MOTAC, GTA, and ISD to ensure unity of purpose for investment and FDI?

8. What are the institutional arrangements for training personnel to be competent in digital diplomacy?

9. How does the MFA engage in digital diplomacy?

10. Which digital platforms does your organisation employ for conducting economic diplomacy? What is the rationale for choosing the platform?

11. How does your organisation employ these digital media for economic diplomacy?

12. What is the frequency of posting various economic activities by your organisation?

13. Does your organisation have office personnel for managing its digital media platforms?

14. Do your organisation monitor the effectiveness of its digital media for diplomatic purposes?

15. If your response to (14) is “Yes”, how does your organisation monitor its effectiveness? (For example, the use of back-end data analysis and network development after public-facing front-end message dissemination and engagement to develop strategic approaches to target audiences, engagement methods, and skills development)

16. How can the platform influence foreign countries' economic policies?

17. How is the post on these platforms directed to attracting foreign investment, FDI, etc?
18. What annual frequency/ percentage of economic gains have these digital platforms secured?
19. What is the mechanism available in liaising investors to the relevant sectors/MDAs?
20. In your view, what is digital diplomacy's relevance in achieving Ghana's economic diplomacy? (for example, as it is in the pursuit of the goals of trade and investment promotion, enhancing the country's image)
21. To what extent does digital diplomacy effectiveness depend on new communication and technical skill of diplomatic personnel?
22. How relevant are these digital platforms to the future of Ghana's foreign policy?
23. In your view, how can digital diplomacy be employed to influence Ghana's foreign policy goals of promoting economic interests and enhancing its image and influence?
24. Overall, what changes will be required in the future regarding Ghana's use of digital diplomacy for the pursuit of foreign policy?

