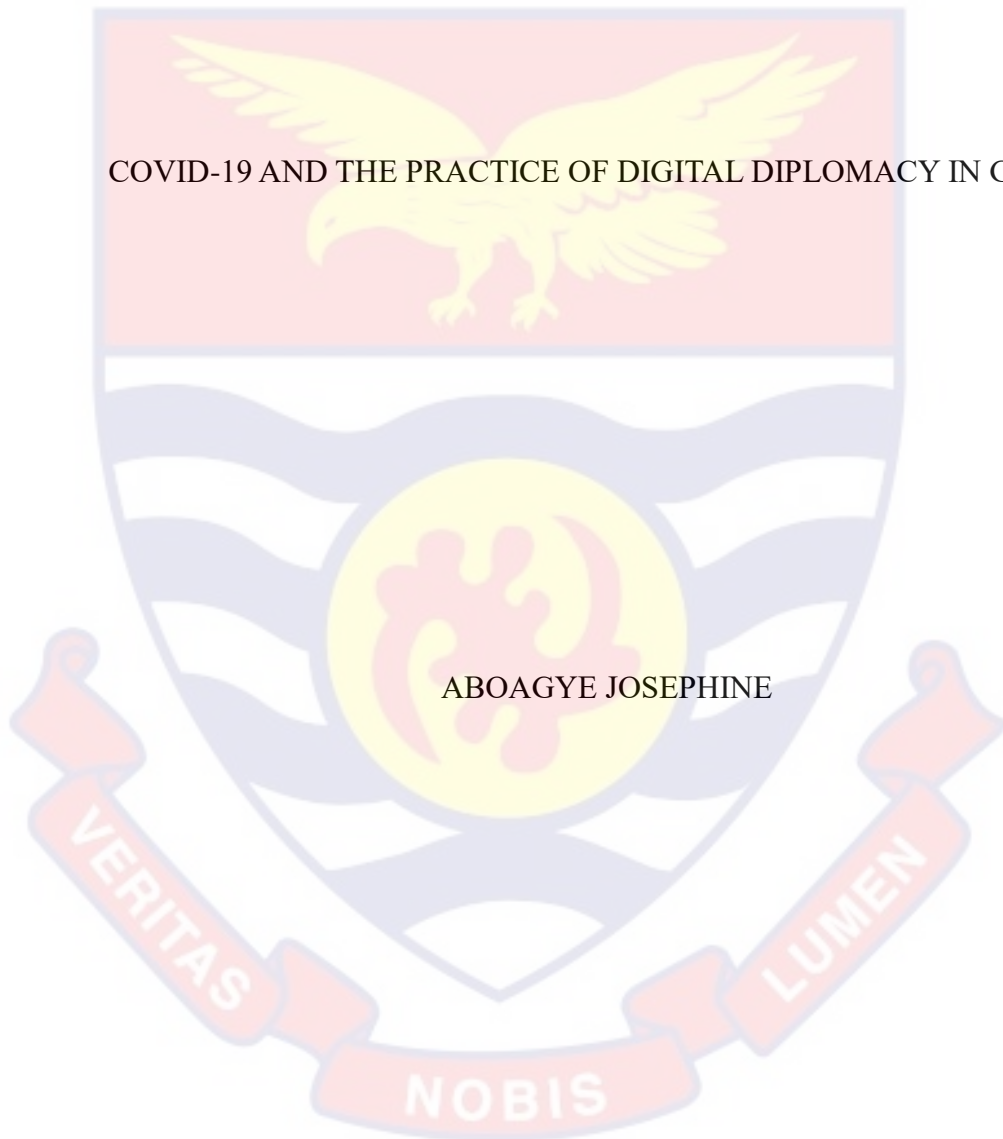


UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COVID-19 AND THE PRACTICE OF DIGITAL DIPLOMACY IN GHANA

ABOAGYE JOSEPHINE



2024

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BY

ABOAGYE JOSEPHINE

Dissertation submitted to the Centre for African and International Studies,  
Faculty of Arts, College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape  
Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Arts  
degree in International Studies

NOVEMBER 2024

## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my original research and that no part has been presented for another degree at this University or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature..... Date .....

Name: .....

### Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's signature..... Date.....

Name: .....

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the practice of digital diplomacy in Ghana during the COVID-19 pandemic. It analyses how diplomatic activities were conducted, the challenges encountered during the pandemic, and the future of digital diplomacy in Ghana. The study also tests whether COVID-19 magnified the use of technology and digital diplomacy in Ghana. Using the mixed method approach, the study reveals that COVID-19 magnified the use of digital tools in the furtherance of diplomatic activities (which is termed as digital diplomacy) in Ghana. The study also reveals that the future of digital diplomacy in Ghana is promising and positive and a combination of traditional and online diplomacy would enhance the conduct of diplomacy. The study identified that the concept and conduct of digital diplomacy came with challenges which were encountered institutional challenges in the context of how digitalisation is diffused in diplomatic contexts, internet connectivity, privacy, and security issues. The study recommends that stakeholders expand their social media presence by establishing and maintaining active and official social media accounts for the relevant ministries and Ghanaian missions abroad to share information, engage with citizens and promote the country's interests and values.

## KEYWORDS

COVID-19

Digital Diplomacy

Public Diplomacy

Technology

Digitalisation



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the vast tapestry of knowledge, where every thread represents a fragment of human understanding, this dissertation is but a humble stitch. It is with profound gratitude and reverence that I acknowledge the multitude of individuals and sources that have illuminated my path during this academic journey.

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## DEDICATION

To both Edward Antwi and Kobe Amoateng, your unwavering motivation and belief in me were the sparks that ignited my journey through my programme. This dissertation stands as a testament to the power of collaboration and support, and I thank you from the depths of my heart for being a part of this journey.



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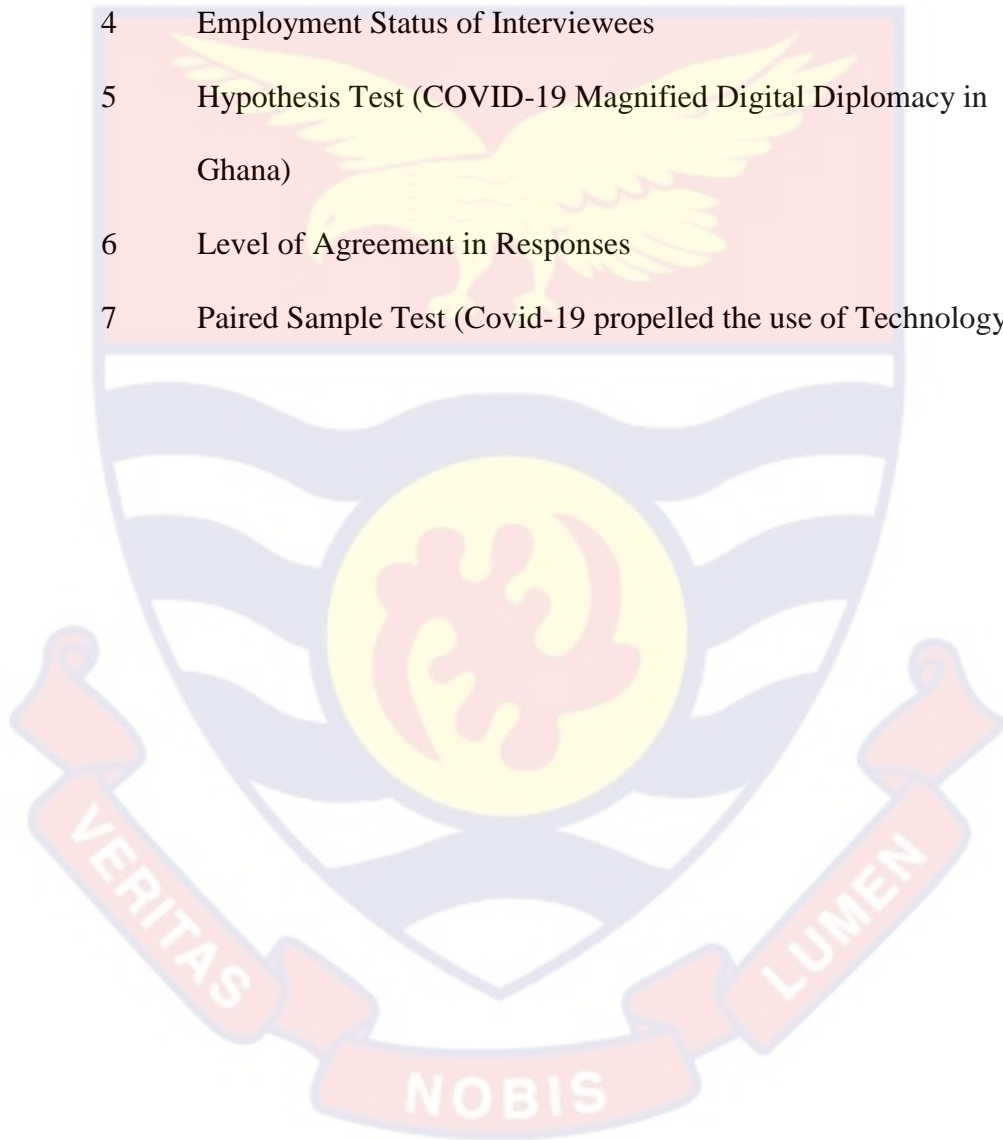
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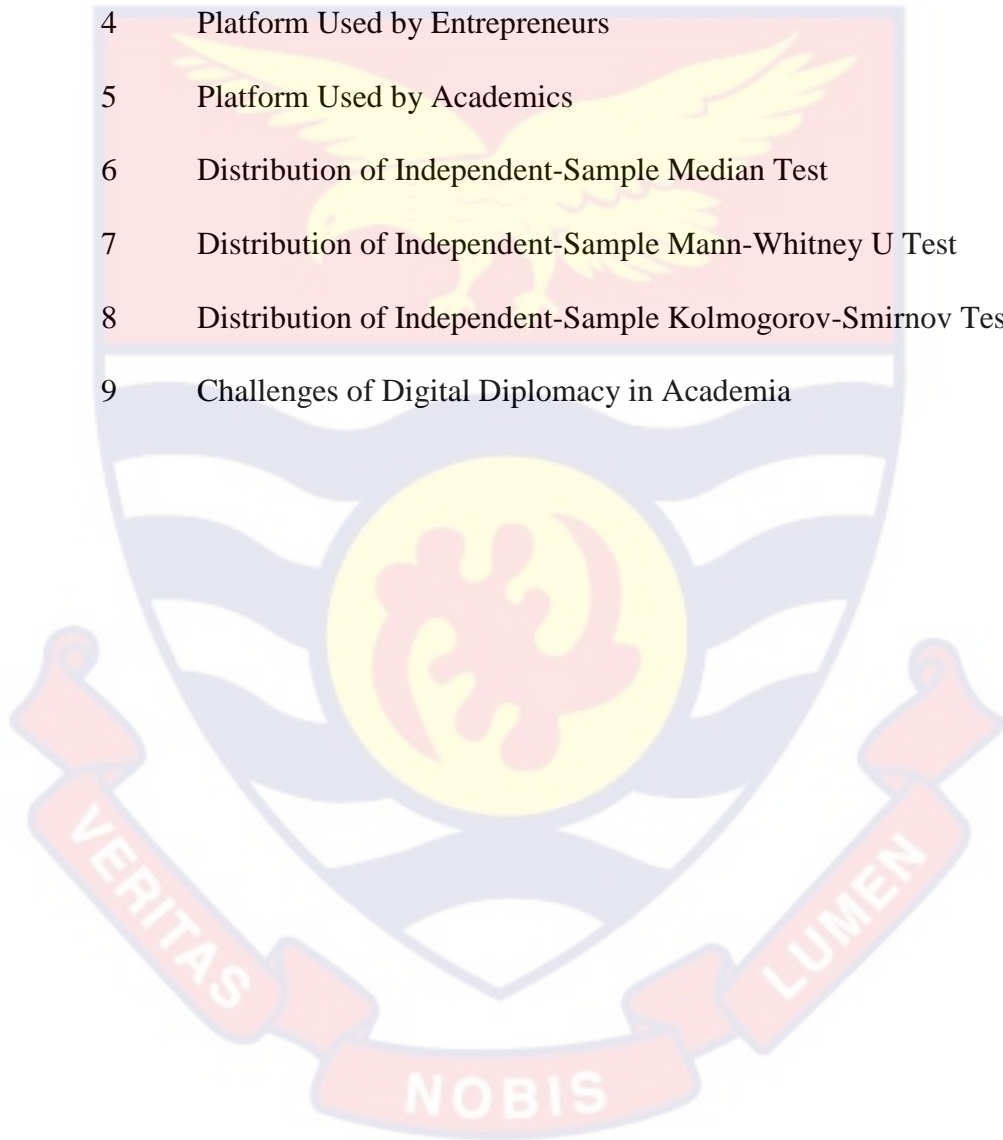
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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AI-	Artificial Intelligence
ALS-	Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis
GTA-	Ghana Tourism Authority
ICT-	Information and Communication Technology
ISD-	Information Services Department
MFARI-	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration
MFAs-	Ministries of Foreign Affairs
MOI-	Ministry of Information
MOPA-	Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs
MOTAC-	Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture
TAM-	Technology Acceptance Model
UN-	United Nations
NGOs-	Non-Governmental Organisations



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

The conduct of diplomatic relations has come under increased scrutiny since the end of World War II because of the active participation of non-state actors, including Adidas, McDonald, and Oxfam, among others, in international politics (Adesina, 2017), as well as the massive advancements in communication technology (Bjola & Manor, 2022). Nevertheless, these changes have widened the political landscape globally and facilitated the transfer of power between state and non-state actors. An assertion by Nye (2008) reveals that the post-World War II era is marked by competition for global influence with resources such as culture and foreign policies, among others, as opposed to the era before the war, when military, population, and economic power were used to measure a country's power and success in international affairs. In the international system, actors can influence others using force, threats, or other incentives and payments to appeal to and persuade them (Nye, 2008).

Moreover, in the international system, actors employ various diplomatic strategies and tools to relate to or engage with one another (Bjola & Holmes, 2015). Diplomats communicate by way of bargaining to reach a compromise over divergent interests for their states using diplomacy. As a result, communication is seen as a crucial component of diplomacy. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a change in communication routes towards digital platforms. The study of media and communications has evolved significantly over the past few decades (Adesina, 2017). The globalisation

discourse, which once placed a strong focus on economic objectivity, now emphasises how modern media influence economic, cultural, and social ties worldwide (Bradshaw, 2015). Media influence has grown in importance in the contemporary period of globalisation, and international relations now consider media and communications when evaluating cultures and people (Bradshaw, 2015).

Given the increasing importance of digital communication in international relations, Philip Seib proposed the concept of digital diplomacy to explain how states use the digital media space to interact with one another (Kluver & Banerjee, 2013). In agreement, diplomacy has always played a big role in global events because international ties are what define them, and digital communication is one of the more convenient ways to stay connected to others in this era of technological advancement. The digital revolution has had an impact on all sectors of society, especially international relations. States communicate their identities and foreign policy interests in the international system to impact how others see them and establish an environment where their goals and effectiveness as players are legitimate (Bradshaw, 2015).

Nowadays, the media is more than just a channel for communication; it is a potent tool for influencing society. Without a doubt, the media now contributes significantly to the process of socialisation, and social networks serve as new virtual spaces where people can engage as a result of contemporary technology development. They have changed reality into circles filled with daily happenings, allowing for extensive and branching conversations despite the distances. Consequently, a novel culture has arisen,

characterised by its divergence from the conventions and traditions of conventional society (Wekasa et al., 2021). Information transfer and communication technologies are considered essential foundations in the development of the modern cultural, economic, political, and social system. These technologies have played a significant role in the progression of several phases, including agriculture, industry, and informatics (Gates, 2004). Social networks such as Facebook, X formerly Twitter, and YouTube are essential for facilitating human interactions and providing rapid access to current events, text messages as well as videos, and other relevant information. This greatly enhances their use in daily life (Adesina, 2017). For instance, people can now make friends and connect with them wherever they are in the world without having to travel to their destination. These networks serve as venues for developing one's identity and putting oneself out there. With the self-portraits they post on their profiles or by telling the events of their everyday lives, users of these platforms can see into the subjective worlds of many others (Adesina, 2017). These developments have not only altered how power is obtained and employed in international politics, but they have also allowed countries the opportunity to use technology to share their cultures with other communities around the world.

Nonetheless, the adoption of digital diplomacy in the contemporary age could not be anticipated to be straightforward. There are several knowledge gaps regarding the application of digital diplomacy that need to be filled. Even though digital diplomacy is a change management technique that emphasises the naturally collaborative character of diplomacy both online and offline, academic circles and other new research and development

organisations have paid little attention to the notions of digital diplomacy, especially in Africa (Wekasa et al., 2021). Digital diplomacy refers to the utilisation of digital innovation by nations, particularly through social media networks like X and Facebook. States use these platforms to interact with a variety of audiences at a low cost. No country can currently afford to ignore digital media while conducting diplomacy (Sharma & Sisodia, 2022).

According to Sharma and Sisodia (2022), Diplomatic practitioners have regarded new technology as diplomatic instruments, exemplified by the utilisation of innovative digital innovations, digitised regulatory mechanisms, and the deployment of mobilising digital tools. The pandemic has accelerated governments' implementation of tools such as e-government portals and the establishment of dedicated websites as their country's official COVID-19 platform for disseminating information about the development of the crisis. This has facilitated their examination of matters such as the imperative to conscientiously sift through and authenticate a substantial volume of received information, the integration of social media, and the unparalleled time limitations on decision-making that can either impede or expedite diplomacy due to the progressively swift exchange of information among foreign ministries and foreign embassies, as well as among foreign policy stakeholders. This resulted in a change in focus towards the digitalisation of diplomacy, initially by enabling diplomacy to operate through digital methods and subsequently by embracing new digital technologies to address the specific requirements of diplomats (Adesina, 2017). Global economies and communities were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which could have long-lasting effects on social and political structures. Meanwhile, the steps

taken to contain it have had an impact on each of our daily activities, which attempt to maintain a work-life balance, and research practices. Consequently, long-planned intergovernmental gatherings were cancelled, transportation was suspended, and borders were closed. For instance, in Ghana, while there was a lockdown, all centres and venues where people massively gathered were closed temporarily.

The COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana, in the same manner, caused alarm since it left millions of Ghanaians trapped around the world and prevented them from returning home. This made some embassies and consulates employ a lot of digital methods to communicate with them. For instance, during the pandemic, the president, H.E. Nana Akuffo Addo, communicated via digital platforms such as YouTube, Facebook Live, and X, among others. These channels were used to spread information on repatriation, economic concerns, and health advisories. The government of Ghana also employed these digital platforms to express support for the populace that the global pandemic had forced indoors. These programmes contributed to improving ties between the public and the government. Embassies, high commissions, and foreign affairs organisations continued to face intense pressure to deliver precise and current data about the pandemic. Individuals participated in public debate, and their replies to social media posts (in the form of likes, comments, shares/retweets, calls to action, and trending hashtags) were viewed as indicators of engagement and involvement. Several other diplomats and dignitaries even decided to address the people live on X and Facebook. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, digital diplomacy is now notably supporting states in conveying their foreign policies to domestic and international audiences.

However, before the worldwide pandemic, little thought was paid to the significance of Internet diplomacy. The transition from an old economic and administrative approach to a digital one posed a significant operational challenge for personnel in private and governmental sectors. Today, digital diplomacy is critical to advancing a diplomatic agenda (Seib, 2013). A good illustration of this is the social media site X, which is particularly beneficial for communication and information sharing by diplomats, leaders of the state, and other people in prominent positions (Vadrot et al., 2021; Sharma & Sisodia, 2022). Considering this particular situation, the paper aims to tackle this fundamental inquiry: Does the COVID-19 pandemic catalyse the rise of digital diplomacy in Ghana, and does the abrupt shift to digital platforms indicate a potential for a sustained transition towards a more sophisticated digital economy?

### **Statement of the Problem**

In recent years, there has been a significant growth in communication channels due to scientific advancement and the technical revolution. The Internet revolution stands out as the most prominent example of how technology has surpassed all traditional modes of communication (Bollier, 2003). The flexibility and capability of virtual worlds have played a major role in shaping human behaviour by providing a comfortable environment for communication and interaction with others. The importance of digital diplomacy has increased significantly because of the travel limitations, social exclusion regulations, and stay-at-home orders imposed as a result of COVID-19. Consequently, many countries have been relying more frequently on social media platforms to achieve their diplomatic goals. Before the COVID-19

pandemic, only a few research studies by scholars such as Wescott (2008), Seib (2012), Dizard (2009) and Bollier (2003), among others, on digital diplomacy were conducted (Ozili & Arun, 2020).

Grant (2005) extensively examines the impact of internet growth on several aspects of diplomacy, such as governance, negotiation, and the roles of key participants. Grant's contribution to the literature on digital diplomacy is likely significant. He attempted to illustrate the impact of digital diplomacy on many aspects of administration and governance by primarily focusing on five key categories of connections. Since then, some scholars and researchers have sought to increase public understanding of digital diplomacy by utilising numerous case studies from diverse countries in the global north (Seib, 2013; Kalathil, 2013; Bollier, 2003). Their efforts have focused on guiding governments regarding the formulation of regulations and strategies for implementing digital diplomacy. Research institutions, governmental entities, and discussion platforms were established to tackle the obstacles associated with the implementation of the internet for diverse purposes.

In comparison to the global north, digital diplomacy is less common in Africa (Wekesa, Turianskyi, & Ayodele, 2021). Yet, according to Wekesa et al. (2021) and Adesina (2017), the COVID-19 pandemic has transformed how society functions, exposing various faults in current frameworks and emphasising the need to reconsider how information technology can be employed as a vehicle for economic advancement. According to Adesina (2017), The clear worldwide policy momentum that allowed for the elimination of technological and innovation-related obstacles during the pandemic serves as additional evidence that governments can have a crucial

impact on policy. This impact extends beyond simply facilitating technological innovation, but also includes promoting its widespread adoption and utilisation.

To better serve their populations, ministries of foreign affairs (MFAs) of African countries and other diplomatic representatives have had to think about how to use digital diplomacy to create agendas and enhance e-service delivery. Practices in international relations in general and the diplomatic sector have altered dramatically. Notwithstanding significant difficulties, such as a lack of guiding rules and digital diplomatic practitioners, these improvements have hastened Africa's adoption of digital diplomacy. This gives academics and practitioners alike the chance to talk more about digital diplomacy on the continent, to share lessons learned, and to identify best practices. In Ghana, there is a scarcity of research on the employment of digital diplomacy by both governmental and non-governmental entities in their execution of international affairs.

Taylor's research, titled "Leveraging Digital Media in Advancing Ghana's Foreign Policy under President Akufo-Addo's Administration in 2019," provides the most comprehensive analysis of how the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration (MFARI), the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture (MOTAC), the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), and the Information Services Department (ISD) utilise their websites, as well as social media platforms such as Facebook, X, Instagram, and YouTube, to promote the country's economic foreign policy objectives. The primary objective of the study was to analyse the use of digital media by President Akuffo Addo's government in advancing Ghana's foreign policy, with a specific emphasis on

trading, business, and other economic activities. Taylor (2019) also highlighted the role of only the state or its national agencies in digital diplomacy. This means that irrespective of the increasing use of digital diplomacy and digitisation of policies and institutions by the government of Ghana, studies have largely ignored the need to explore how COVID-19 has become one of the major factors responsible for the digitization drive in Ghana. This study investigates the degree to which both state and non-state actors utilise digital diplomacy in their domestic and foreign endeavours. Additionally, it explores the impact of COVID-19, which compelled a rapid transition to digital platforms.

### **Research Objectives /Questions/Hypotheses**

#### **Objectives of the study**

The study is driven by three primary objectives. These objectives are to;

1. Ascertain whether COVID-19 magnified digital diplomacy in Ghana.
2. Examine the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the conduct of diplomacy in Ghana.
3. Assess the risks and prospects of digital diplomacy in Ghana.

#### **Research questions**

1. How has COVID-19 magnified digital diplomacy in Ghana?
2. To what extent has COVID-19 impacted the conduct of diplomacy in Ghana?
3. What are the challenges and prospects of digital diplomacy in Ghana?

#### **Hypotheses**

The study will test the hypotheses below;

1. COVID-19 increased the use of technology among Ghanaians.

2. COVID-19 has magnified digital diplomacy in Ghana.

### **Significance of the Study**

Diplomacy's reach and the dynamics of technology bring a distinct dimension to state relations both locally and internationally. Diplomacy defines the fundamental institutions that countries might use to pursue their national goals. As a result, this research will be critical in improving understanding of international relations, particularly how Ghana can exploit access to and convey information. The study will advise policymakers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration in Ghana on how to position themselves and implement policies to enjoy the full advantages of diplomacy through technology. It will provide information to both state and non-state entities about issues of concern and investment in diplomacy and international relations. Again, the study will be helpful to those who study international relations because it will contribute important information about the integration of digital technology in the conduct of diplomacy. Available studies currently concentrate on how industrialised nations have included e-diplomacy in their activities. There are still limited studies on the practice of digital diplomacy in Africa and less developed nations like Ghana. Therefore, this study is timely as it will lift the curtain on how developing countries like Ghana are employing digital diplomacy in terms of foreign policy, relations with other nations, and advancing the values of Ghana on a global stage.

### **Delimitations**

The current study is focused on Ghana as a geographical context, exploring how diplomatic offices and officials in Ghana have engaged in digital spaces in their conduct of diplomatic activities within the country. The

study is also limited to exploring how COVID-19 has propelled the use of digital technologies in Ghana.

### **Limitations**

The study was constrained by the absence of some key interviewees at strategic times during data collection. Furthermore, some of the embassies and diplomats contacted via e-mail took a long time to respond. As a result, the researcher could not obtain some of the required responses on time. Furthermore, the bulk of the embassies contacted for a scheduled interview failed to reply, thereby making the collection of vital data on the conduct of diplomacy very difficult. Also, due to delays by some of the interviewees, phone calls had to be made to remind them or to follow up on previous discussions. Though most of the diplomats and embassies did not respond to the interview request, the few who did give crucial information contributed tremendously to the study.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Social media-** The network of websites and social media platforms where users may give and receive feedback, share and create information, and work together on projects like Facebook, X, Google+, Snapchat, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Wikipedia, among others.

**Digital diplomacy-** It is typically seen as how politicians and diplomats conduct their various activities on social media.

**Digital** – This uses binary logic to describe electronic systems that produce, store, and process information.

**Non-State Actors** - An individual or organisation, not aligned with any particular state, yet wields substantial (political) influence.

**COVID-19** - Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (also known as SARS-CoV-2).

### **Organisation of the Study**

The study was divided into five chapters. Chapter One looked at the introduction to the study, which comprised the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the objectives of the study, and the research questions. It also looked at the significance of the study, the hypothesis, and the organisation of the study. Chapter Two covered the review of available literature relevant to the study, while Chapter Three focused on the methodology, which included research design, population, sample size, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. Chapter Four also focused on the results and discussion of the data that were gathered. The final chapter looked at the summary, conclusion, recommendations, and suggested areas for further research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### Introduction

This section introduces and explains some of the main concepts in the study using literature connected to the various themes and the theories underpinning the study. They are diplomacy and digital diplomacy, public and digital diplomacy, and technological determinism and Technology of acceptance model respectively.

#### Diplomacy and Digital Diplomacy

Due to its recent emergence, there is a scarcity of research on digital diplomacy, particularly in the African context. Nevertheless, researchers like Melissen (2013) and Roberts (2007) initially elucidate the shift from conventional diplomacy to public diplomacy. These sources emphasise the impact of public diplomacy in transforming foreign policy talks from being limited to interactions among the privileged few to now encompassing exchanges between government officials and foreign populations (Kluver & Banerjee, 2013). Nevertheless, experts are engaged in a contentious discussion regarding the impact of emerging digital technologies on public diplomacy. According to Hocking and Melissen (2015) and Kamen and Murray (2013), there are two contrasting perspectives on the impact of digitalisation on public diplomacy. Some researchers argue that digitalisation improves public diplomacy, while others argue that it fundamentally transforms it into a new form called digital diplomacy.

Diplomacy has developed over the years and is now assisted by technology. Consequently, many now use the phrase ‘digital diplomacy’ while

discussing diplomacy on grounds of language. This section aims to examine the topic of 'Digital Diplomacy,' which has been discussed in the literature by various scholars. Digital diplomacy encompasses a range of definitions provided by researchers and practitioners, referring to the methods by which governments engage in communication within the context of foreign policy (Sotiriu, 2015). Over time, diplomacy has changed to accommodate advancements in technology, global politics, and cultural values. In the past, city-states and empires have utilised diplomacy to settle disputes. Diplomacy in the ancient world was focused on close ties between messengers and monarchs. For instance, ambassadors were dispatched to neighbouring kingdoms during the Hellenistic period to establish treaties and forge alliances. It is the primary tool used to carry out the broad tactics, plans, and objectives of foreign policy. Put simply, it is the traditional approach employed by governments to safeguard particular or more extensive interests, such as the reduction of tensions between or within themselves (Cohen, 1998). It works to maintain peace and attempts to foster goodwill towards other nations and peoples to secure their collaboration or, in the absence of that, their neutrality (Adesina, 2017).

Additionally, the body of literature on digital diplomacy is occasionally expanding. Digital tools like Facebook and X have given rise to new fields of study. The consequences of such instruments on people's daily lives and state international relations are the subject of investigations by researchers. E-diplomacy, virtual diplomacy, cyber-diplomacy, and 21<sup>st</sup>-century statecraft are some of the other names for it. Digital diplomacy refers to the deliberate efforts made to promote diplomatic goals through the utilisation of the

internet, social media, and other forms of communication technology. Digital diplomacy encompasses the methods by which foreign policy players and diplomats engage and influence international audiences through the use of digital technologies (Manor, 2016). The emergence of social media platforms and digital technologies has revolutionised the profession of diplomacy, leading to the development of digital diplomacy as a vital tool for governments to promote their goals and enhance their international standing.

According to Riordan (2016), digital technologies have significantly altered the way diplomacy is done. He argues that digital diplomacy has three primary advantages: it is faster, more transparent, and more participative. However, Riordan contends that while digital diplomacy has the potential to boost diplomacy's speed and efficiency, it also introduces new obstacles, such as the necessity for diplomats to negotiate complex social media landscapes and respond to public opinion in real time. Online public diplomacy, social media diplomacy, e-diplomacy, cyber diplomacy, and virtual diplomacy are only a few examples of the diverse activities that fall under the umbrella of digital diplomacy. It involves engaging with global audiences, spreading information, and influencing public sentiment via digital technologies such as social media platforms, websites, audio podcasts, and video calling (Riordan, 2016).

The increasing worldwide adoption of social media platforms by individuals and groups is a significant driver of digital diplomacy. It involves engaging with global audiences, spreading information, and influencing public sentiment via digital technologies such as social media platforms, websites, audio podcasts, and video calling. The increasing worldwide adoption of

social media platforms by individuals and groups is a significant driver of digital diplomacy (Manor, 2016). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn have evolved into important platforms for engagement and communication, offering new opportunities for diplomats to engage with international audiences. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn have evolved into important platforms for engagement and communication, offering new opportunities for diplomats to engage with international audiences (Riordan, 2016).

Diplomats can utilise social media platforms to facilitate bilateral communication, engage in immediate and interactive exchanges, and effectively disseminate information to a broader demographic. John Kerry expressed mild disapproval of the growing use of the term digital diplomacy among practitioners, scholars, and critics of diplomacy in 2013. Kerry (2013) argued that the term 'digital diplomacy' is superfluous as it is simply a form of diplomacy. John Kerry, the former US secretary of state stressed that while emerging information and communication technologies (ICTs) greatly enhance nations' foreign policy objectives and bridge the divide between people globally, they still fulfil the same essential diplomatic functions as traditional tools of public diplomacy. For instance, they enable diplomats to effectively interact with a broad range of people and establish a shared comprehension, which is primarily the objective of diplomacy (Kerry, 2013).

Several observers interpreted Kerry's statement to suggest that it is unnecessary to continually emphasise how Internet diplomacy is digitalised according to Endong (2020). Considering that multiple variables and evidence suggest that the use of technology in diplomacy will eventually become

excessively foreseeable, professionals and researchers in the field will cease to prioritise highlighting the digital aspect of digital diplomacy. Although the remark above has relevance, it seems to overlook other contemporary progressions, such as improvements in artificial intelligence (AI), the field of robotics smart cultures, and diplomacy. Indeed, the essence of digital diplomacy has transformed, becoming more dynamic and consequently challenging to discern the actors involved in the diplomatic arena. Governments have contemplated the idea of deploying robots or utilising artificial intelligence to manage diplomatic affairs, crisis communication, public diplomacy, and international negotiations. This is due to technological advancements in robotics and AI. China is an excellent example of a nation that has fervently used AI in diplomatic negotiations and crisis messaging in recent years (Endong, 2020).

In addition to these conceptual studies, some scholars like Bjola and Manor (2018) have examined the practice of digital diplomacy by various governments and organisations. For example, their work investigated the practice of digital diplomacy by the British Council, a cultural organisation that promotes British culture worldwide. They discovered that the British Council uses digital diplomacy to strengthen its public diplomacy activities, particularly through engagement with young people and the promotion of cultural diversity and understanding. Adesina (2017) confirms that states now use digital diplomacy as a key weapon to advance their objectives and improve their standing abroad. States can influence public opinion abroad and connect directly with overseas audiences. Also, it gives states a way to interact with foreign publics in a two-way manner, which can promote mutual respect

and understanding. According to Sotiriu (2015), involving the public in the diplomatic process has expanded the range of participants in international diplomacy, encompassing not just state-to-state relations but also transnational organisations and non-governmental organisations.

Sotiriu (2015) states that diplomats have recently expanded their efforts to engage with the public to enhance communication and get diverse perspectives on various issues. The management, analysis, and dissemination of information relevant to foreign ministries have a significant influence on the diverse interactions built between the government and various sectors of society. For minor governments and non-state entities, which can have constrained resources and diplomatic presence, digital diplomacy is especially crucial. They can get around some of the obstacles that traditional diplomacy faces and make a bigger effect on the world stage by utilising modern technologies. Small states, for instance, can interact with expatriate communities and promote their culture, tourism, and trade using social media platforms (Bennett & Segerberg 2013).

Digital diplomacy is also crucial in crisis management and conflict settlement. Digital technologies can be used in times of disaster to communicate with global audiences, give timely information, and organise relief operations. Furthermore, digital technologies may be used to track and analyse social media interactions, allowing policymakers to comprehend public opinion and mood in other nations (Seib, 2013).

### **Differences between Public Diplomacy and Digital Diplomacy**

Public diplomacy and digital diplomacy are two terms that have gained increasing attention in the field of international relations and diplomacy. While

there is some overlap between the two concepts, there are also some significant differences. Certain academic journals on public diplomacy highlight how public diplomacy has shifted foreign policy conversations away from elites and towards government officials and foreign audiences. There is a lack of consensus among scholars on the impact of new digital technologies on public diplomacy. According to Verrekia (2017), several experts argue that digitalisation enhances public diplomacy, while others contend that it fundamentally alters it, giving rise to a new form known as digital diplomacy. Public diplomacy is a form of diplomatic activity that involves nations using various methods to understand cultures, attitudes, and behaviour. Its purpose is to establish and manage contacts, as well as influence thoughts and motivate actions in order to promote their interests and ideals (Melissen, 2013). The range of actors active in global diplomacy has expanded, according to Sotiriu (2015), from state-to-state ties to international bodies and international non-governmental organisations. This is because “putting the public at large into the diplomatic equation.

In recent times, normal individuals have become an important source of information for diplomats, who often seek their perspectives to either support or challenge their own opinions on many matters (Sotiriu, 2015). The efforts of governments and other entities to connect with and influence the foreign public to promote their own goals and values are referred to as public diplomacy. Public diplomacy encompasses the development and transmission of ideas, information, and culture in a way that impacts the views and behaviours of international partners and governments (Snow & Taylor, 2009). Digital diplomacy is a modern concept that involves using digital technologies

and social media platforms in diplomatic efforts. It specifically refers to the use of digital technologies and communication strategies to advance foreign policy goals and influence international relations (Zaharna, 2010). One important distinction between digital diplomacy and public diplomacy is that digital diplomacy is a subset of public diplomacy. While digital diplomacy focuses solely on the use of digital technologies and social media platforms, public diplomacy encompasses a broader range of communication and cultural activities. Another significant difference is that digital diplomacy has the potential to reach a larger and more diverse audience compared to traditional methods of public diplomacy. Internet diplomacy can provide direct, immediate, and unfiltered access to global audiences without the use of intermediaries or conventional censors (Seib, 2013). Moreover, digital diplomacy can encourage increased participation and two-way contact between governments and foreign publics. Digital diplomacy has the potential to increase chances for discussion, exchange, and collaboration between governments and civil society players in different parts of the world (Kluver & Banerjee, 2013).

Despite the considerable overlap, public diplomacy and digital diplomacy are separate ideas with different emphases and methodologies. Although digital diplomacy primarily concentrates on utilising technology and social media platforms for practising diplomacy and communicating with foreign audiences, public diplomacy encompasses a range of communication strategies and cultural events that are aimed at influencing foreign audiences.

## Effectiveness of Digital Diplomacy

Many studies have looked at how digital diplomacy affects various facets of foreign policy, such as public diplomacy, soft power, and conflict resolution, as well as its success (Adesina, 2017). Public diplomacy has found digital diplomacy to be a useful instrument. Public diplomacy fosters relationships and promotes the practice of fostering relationships and promoting a nation's ideals and culture via communication and engagement. Melissen and Hocking (2015) assert that digital diplomacy has the potential to improve public diplomacy by giving governments fresh, creative ways to interact with international audiences. Social media sites like X and Facebook, for instance, can be used to connect with global audiences and promote a nation's culture and ideals. Digital diplomacy, according to Bjola and Holmes (2015), is now crucial to modern diplomacy. They further indicate that digital diplomacy can improve engagement, raise openness, and open new avenues for public diplomacy. Their main thesis was that digital diplomacy is a powerful tool that can enhance traditional diplomacy.

According to He, Wang, and Jiang (2020), digital diplomacy favours public diplomacy. The study examined 100 foreign ministries' X feeds and discovered that those who used X more frequently scored better in terms of public diplomacy. The study also discovered a correlation between foreign ministries' placement in the Soft Power 30 index, which gauges a nation's capacity for soft power, and their use of X. The function of the internet in public diplomacy is covered by Melissen (2015). He argues that through fostering greater public participation and offering a forum for conversation, the internet has the power to democratise diplomacy. However, Melissen

warns that the internet may be a double-edged tool because it can also spread false information and misinformation. His point is that the internet has the potential to enhance public diplomacy, but it requires careful management.

Also, some scholars have recently begun to investigate the impact of digital diplomacy on international relations. For example, R.S. Zaharna claims that digital technologies have enabled China to grow its soft power and challenge Western countries' dominance in international communication. They contend that China's use of digital diplomacy has been especially effective in reaching audiences in developing nations, where the Chinese government has made significant investments in internet infrastructure. Nye (2004) asserts that soft power is gaining importance in international relations and that digital diplomacy can aid nations in enhancing their soft power capacities. It has been discovered that digital diplomacy enhances a nation's soft power. The term soft power describes a nation's capacity to persuade others without resorting to coercion, such as through its institutions, values, and culture. Hayden (2011) however, talks about the function of digital diplomacy in fostering interreligious conversation. He contends that the use of digital diplomacy could open up fresh avenues for intercultural communication and mutual understanding.

Digital diplomacy, according to Hayden (2011), can assist forge relationships between various populations and advance peace. He concludes that digital diplomacy is a crucial facet of modern diplomacy. According to a study by Zaharna et al. (2014), digital diplomacy can boost a nation's soft power by giving public diplomacy a platform. The study examined the foreign ministries' X accounts for twelve different nations and discovered that

countries that used X more skilfully scored higher for soft power. The study also discovered that nations with greater soft power scores than those that mainly broadcast their messages were those who used X to interact with overseas audiences. The potential for digital diplomacy to aid in conflict settlement has also been highlighted. The term conflict resolution refers to the peaceful resolution of international disputes through diplomacy and other means. Cooper et al. (2013) claim that using digital diplomacy to foster understanding and partnerships between nations can contribute to preventing crises from escalating.

Digital diplomacy, according to Bjola and Manor (2018), can change conventional diplomacy. They point out that digital diplomacy has expanded the possibilities for public diplomacy and has the potential to raise accountability and transparency. Yet, they also point out that digital diplomacy can be difficult due to the meticulous management and oversight required. They conclude that digital diplomacy is a powerful tool that can enhance traditional diplomacy, but it requires a new model of diplomacy. A study by He, Wang and Jiang (2020), asserts that digital diplomacy can be useful in resolving disputes. The study examined the foreign ministries of South Korea and Japan on X and discovered that they used social media platforms to interact with one another positively. The study also discovered a link between the two nations' use of X and their capacity for amicable conflict resolution.

The research on digital diplomacy's effectiveness concludes that it can be a useful weapon for public diplomacy, soft power, and conflict resolution. Governments can communicate with overseas audiences, promote their foreign policy, and forge ties with other nations through the use of digital

diplomacy. The studies reviewed in this literature review have shown that digital diplomacy can have a positive impact on a country's soft power capabilities and its ability to resolve conflicts peacefully.

### **Benefits of Digital Diplomacy**

It strengthens international relations. The growth and intensification of cross-border political, economic, and cultural ties define globalisation (Horst, 2020). States, ethno-nationalism elements, multinational enterprises, intergovernmental bodies, non-governmental organisations, numerous transnational movements and networks, and even individuals are examples of international actors in the twenty-first century (Rashica, 2018). A network of global companies of various kinds and sorts has brought people from all nations together today (Horst, 2020). The rapid growth of this network, together with its robust and growing communication and interaction, are indications of growing global interconnectedness. For their part, these organisations set the route that, to a certain extent, maintains the global order even when leaders and conditions change and even when standards are undermined by unanticipated changes in the dynamics of power (Rashica, 2018).

On the other hand, postmodern diplomacy is nothing new. The idea of sending messengers to a foreign state is old and was common in many communities, however, it has taken on several forms in contemporary times (Chan, 2017). While digital diplomacy does not take the role of traditional diplomacy, it can effectively and quickly increase the state's involvement in international affairs. It is now a requirement for implementing foreign policy. Digital diplomacy is incredibly helpful in attaining foreign policy goals,

expanding global alignment, and persuading people who have never visited any embassies throughout the world. Direct public interaction and the involvement of non-state actors urge nations to use social media and digital diplomacy to build or strengthen alliances in a changing world while preserving their legitimacy (Deos, 2015). With the use of digital diplomacy, governments may interact and communicate more productively and effectively, lowering costs and improving results. Governments may engage and collaborate in real-time utilising digital tools such as instant messaging, email, and video conferencing, increasing efficiency. According to Melissen's (2015) study, digital diplomacy enhances efficiency by promoting more effective communication and collaboration across nations, lowering costs, and improving results. Governments, for example, can hold meetings via video conferencing instead of travelling, lowering expenses and increasing productivity.

Furthermore, another benefit of digital diplomacy is increasing transparency in international relations. The use of digital technologies such as social media, blogs, and websites allows governments to share information and news about their activities with the public, which promotes accountability and transparency. According to a study by Seib (2013), digital diplomacy fosters transparency and accountability by allowing governments to share information with their constituents and other nations. Governments can communicate information about their policies, initiatives, and successes, for instance, using social media, which promotes accountability and openness. He contends that governments can connect with individuals, civil society organisations, and foreign nations more rapidly and transparently thanks to

digital technologies, which can promote trust and collaboration. Seib (2013) also points out that using digital diplomacy as a tool for public diplomacy can help governments convey their beliefs and objectives to audiences abroad.

Another benefit of digital diplomacy is enhancing fast and effective communication. The advancement of national interests may frequently be aided by a quick understanding of various events. Digital technologies are very helpful for acquiring and analysing information regarding diplomatic activity as well as for communicating quickly in emergencies (Adesina, 2017). Governments can use them to assess how global changes might impact their nation. For instance, during a crisis, embassies can create WhatsApp groups including the ambassador, consular officer, publicity secretary, employees who gather information on the internet, diplomats from the headquarters, and staff workers who respond to online questions from citizens. This team can function as a crisis management cell, gathering data in real-time, making choices, and sharing information. Digital technologies, on the other hand, enable the free expression of disagreements with certain issues and reduce authoritarianism for those who live under authoritarian regimes that seek to restrict their ability to communicate both domestically and internationally (McGlinchey, 2017). A study by Seib (2013) found that digital diplomacy improves engagement by enabling governments to communicate with their people and other governments, which fosters diplomacy and builds connections between nations. Governments can interact with their citizens and other governments, for instance, through using social media. This fosters diplomacy and improves relations between nations (Seib, 2013).

Low cost is a vital element of digital diplomacy that has been covered in several areas of academic studies. For nations with limited resources or short budgets, using digital technology and social media platforms to reach broad audiences is an appealing alternative to using traditional diplomatic tactics (Adesina, 2017). The cost of using new technologies is continually declining because of ongoing technological advancements. International experience demonstrates that those who invest in digital diplomacy tools may benefit greatly from their effective use of them. Digital diplomacy, according to Kluver and Banerjee (2013), offers a practical substitute for conventional diplomatic techniques. They point out that social media channels like X and Facebook enable governments to communicate with enormous numbers of people at just a percentage of the price of more conventional channels like television or print media. Additionally, financial contributions are not always necessary for digital diplomacy (Adesina, 2017). Instead, it is commonly employed to reduce spending. For instance, by promoting public, media, and political-diplomatic contact to effect positive change, X messages can help with the investigation and identification of troublesome situations as well as the exposure of those responsible. Because it has no financial repercussions, this fact makes using digital diplomacy to extend their work more desirable to governments, MFAs, and embassies (Seib, 2013).

### **Challenges of Digital Diplomacy**

Digital diplomacy is the practice of conducting diplomatic operations, advancing foreign policy goals, and interacting with the foreign public through the use of digital technologies and social media platforms. While digital diplomacy offers numerous advantages, it also comes with several risks that

could have an impact on how diplomatic activities are conducted and how they turn out. The study shall discuss a few of the dangers of digital diplomacy in this post. The potential for misunderstandings and misinterpretations is one of the major risks connected to digital diplomacy (Rashica, 2018). A Pew Research Centre study found that face-to-face communication often has more complexity and context than digital communication channels like social media platforms (Hocking & Melissen, 2015). As a result, diplomatic statements sent via digital channels might be readily misunderstood, which can result in misunderstandings and even conflicts. For instance, North Korea mistook a tweet from US President Donald Trump in 2017 that threatened it with fire and fury as a declaration of war (Rashica, 2018). In terms of international affairs, such misunderstandings might have serious repercussions.

The loss of confidentiality and privacy is another problem posed by digital diplomacy (Bradshaw, 2015). When used for diplomatic purposes, digital tools like email and social media platforms run the risk of disclosing private data to unauthorised people or organisations. Sensitive material that affected the 2016 US presidential election was made public due to the hacking of the Democratic National Committee's email system (Nance, 2016). Similarly, using social media platforms for diplomatic purposes runs the risk of disclosing private data to foreign intelligence services, jeopardising national security. According to a report by the Brookings Institution, digital diplomacy has increased the potential of cyberattacks on diplomats, hence nations must invest in cybersecurity initiatives to mitigate this risk (Friedman, 2013).

Digital propaganda and misinformation have the potential to be another concern of digital diplomacy (Rashica, 2018). Countries all around the

world are becoming very concerned about how foreign governments and non-state entities use social media platforms to disseminate propaganda and false information. For instance, Russian trolls and hackers utilised social media platforms to spread misinformation and foment tensions among Americans during the 2016 US presidential election (Nance, 2016). Similarly, state-sponsored actors and conspiracy theorists exploited social media platforms during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic to disseminate fake information and conspiracy theories about the virus and vaccines (Hecht-Felella, 2020). Misinformation and propaganda campaigns can damage diplomatic efforts and weaken international trust.

The possibility for social media platforms to be utilised as a tool for cyberbullying and harassment is another risk linked with digital diplomacy (Bradshaw, 2015). Those who disagree with the positions or policies of diplomats and other officials can harass and cyberbully them when they use social media platforms. According to a study by the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, cyberbullying and online harassment can have serious psychological repercussions for diplomats and even have an impact on how diplomatic duties are carried out (Friedman, 2013).

Digital diplomacy also carries the danger of relying too heavily on technology. The overreliance on technology that might result from using digital tools for diplomatic purposes is a false sense of security. This may lead to a failure to prepare for and respond to emergencies and other unforeseen occurrences that might call for human involvement. According to research by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, while digital diplomacy may

improve diplomatic efforts, it should not take the place of more established diplomatic strategies (Wescott, 2008).

Based on the above limitations, it is safe to conclude that digital diplomacy provides several advantages, including enhanced public participation abroad and remote diplomacy, but it also poses several difficulties or dangers to nations' diplomatic efforts.

### **The Use of Digital Diplomacy by Non-State Actors**

The exclusive domain of governments and state actors has long been held when it comes to digital diplomacy. The use of digital technology for diplomatic purposes by non-state actors, such as NGOs, civil society organisations, people, and private businesses, has increased recently. NGOs have been instrumental in using digital diplomacy to further their goals. The use of social media by NGOs as a diplomatic tool is one such example. NGOs have reportedly used social media platforms like X and Facebook to interact with their audiences, spread awareness of their causes, and promote policy change, according to Khamis et al. (2017). For instance, the ALS Association's 'Ice Bucket Challenge'<sup>1</sup> went viral on social media in 2014 and helped raise over \$115 million for ALS research (Sutherland, 2016). The contest served as a fruitful illustration of how NGOs may utilise social media to increase support for and awareness of their causes. NGOs have also influenced international policy using digital diplomacy. NGOs have used digital technology to engage in diplomatic activities like attending UN conferences

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<sup>1</sup> The Ice Bucket Challenge was a summer-long popular social media campaign that took place in 2014. It entailed people pouring a bucket of ice water over their heads, filming it, and challenging others to do the same or donate to ALS research. The progressive neurodegenerative disease ALS (Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) destroys nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord. With almost \$115 million donated to the ALS Association, the challenge was a success in terms of generating awareness and finances for the condition.

and making written remarks to the UN (Khamis et al., 2017). According to the report, NGOs' use of digital technology has increased their impact and allowed them to engage in diplomatic activities that were previously only open to state entities.

According to Bennett and Segerberg (2013), digital diplomacy has helped civil society organisations (CSOs) enhance their lobbying and advocacy in international affairs. Bennett and Segerberg (2013) found that civil society organisations have used social media and other digital platforms to amplify their voices, increase awareness of their causes, and connect with decision-makers in their study of civil society organisations and digital diplomacy. For instance, Greenpeace launched online campaigns to compel businesses to adopt more environmentally friendly practices, while Amnesty International used social media to rally public support for the release of human rights advocates in Turkey. Bennett and Segerberg (2013) claim that CSOs have utilised digital technologies to organise their supporters and take part in coordinated action to affect policy. For instance, the #BringBackOurGirls social media movement went viral in 2014 and brought attention to the kidnapping of over 200 Nigerian school girls by Boko Haram (Roser & Nagdy, 2015). The campaign served as a successful illustration of how CSOs may utilise digital technologies to spread awareness of issues involving human rights and put pressure on governments to act. Civil society organisations now have additional avenues for influence over policy outcomes because of digital diplomacy.

Digital diplomacy has also been used by businesses to further their objectives in international relations. Adesina (2017) showed that firms use

digital technology to engage with overseas markets, promote their brands, and affect policy results in a study of corporate diplomacy. Multinational companies, for instance, utilise social media to advertise their goods and services in foreign markets, while business associations employ technology to advocate for favourable laws and regulations (Adesina, 2017). Thanks to digital diplomacy, businesses can now reach a wider audience globally and exert new types of influence over policy outcomes. Digital diplomacy has been utilised by individuals to further their objectives in international relations. Deibert (2000) discovered that people communicate with the international public on social media and other digital platforms to promote their political and cultural values and lobby for policy changes. Bloggers and activists, for instance, utilise social media to draw attention to human rights violations in other nations, and ex-pats use online forums to engage with their countries of origin and encourage cultural interchange (Deibert, 2000). Also, it is now possible to bypass conventional international relations gatekeepers and communicate directly with foreign audiences is now possible thanks to digital diplomacy.

Digital technologies have been embraced by non-state players, such as enterprises, people, and civil society organisations, to further their objectives in international relations. These actors may now reach a larger audience, make their views heard, and affect policy results in novel ways thanks to digital diplomacy. Yet, the use of digital technology in diplomacy by non-state actors has also presented several difficulties, such as establishing credibility and legitimacy and resisting restrictions and surveillance. Non-state actors must be

proactive in addressing these challenges to ensure the effectiveness of digital diplomacy in the post-pandemic world.

### **Impacts of COVID-19 on Digital Diplomacy**

Global Affairs, particularly diplomacy, have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Governments and diplomats have been compelled by the pandemic to use digital technologies to uphold diplomatic ties, participate in public diplomacy, and further their interests. The pandemic has disrupted traditional diplomatic procedures, such as face-to-face meetings, diplomatic banquets, and other types of traditional diplomacy (Seib, 2013). The pandemic, therefore, proves how excess deterioration of the environment can have drastic and immediate impacts on human lives and activities, among other features.

As a result, diplomats now rely on digital technologies to stay in touch with their colleagues, advance their interests, and accomplish their objectives in terms of foreign policy. The greater use of digital technologies has been one effect of COVID-19 on digital diplomacy. Since some nations have imposed travel restrictions and shut down their embassies, digital technologies have emerged as a crucial tool for diplomats to maintain contact with overseas audiences. The pandemic, according to Bjola and Manor (2022), in Melissen (2005), has compelled diplomats to rely increasingly on digital technologies for public diplomacy, negotiation, and communication. Digital diplomacy has become more crucial, according to Melissen, in pushing public health messaging and dispelling false information throughout the pandemic. 89% of interviewees in a Diplomatic Courier study of diplomats said they had expanded their use of social media during the pandemic (Bjola and Manor,

2022). Diplomats can now interact with foreign citizens in new ways because of the transition to online engagement.

Another impact of COVID-19 on digital diplomacy has been the enhanced collaboration between countries. After the COVID-19 pandemic, Cull (2020) explores the future of digital diplomacy. He contends that the pandemic has hastened the development of digital diplomacy and highlighted its significance. Cull points out that digital diplomacy will remain crucial for fostering global collaboration and solving pandemics and climate change issues. Diplomats have collaborated to share information, plan responses, and advance global collaboration as the pandemic has affected nations all over the world. Seib (2013) found that nations were more receptive to participating in cooperative online platforms, such as the World Health Organisation's COVID-19 portal, to share information and plan solutions. Countries are now able to cooperate to handle the global difficulties brought on by the pandemic.

### **The Future of Digital Diplomacy**

The world is becoming increasingly interconnected, and technology has played a pivotal role in shaping international relations. Digital diplomacy, also known as e-diplomacy or cyber diplomacy, is a rapidly evolving field that employs digital tools and platforms to enhance diplomatic efforts and international communication (Bjola & Manor, 2022). With the continued advancement of technology, the prospects of digital diplomacy are promising, offering new avenues for diplomacy, cooperation, and conflict resolution in the 21st century. According to Statistics Internet World Stats, by the end of 2021, Nigeria had fewer Facebook users than Egypt, which was third in terms of population and internet penetration by population, despite having the

continent's greatest population and number of internet users. Ethiopia, whose population is ranked second, continues to rank fourth in terms of Facebook users, internet penetration, and internet usage overall. Fourth- and fifth-most populous nations in the list, South Africa, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, respectively, were ranked third and last for internet and Facebook usage. Strong use patterns, goals, and effects are anticipated in the use of Facebook by African leaders given current theories about social media's impact during the coronavirus pandemic (Adesina, 2022). Digital diplomacy has now spread from the west through the African continent, from Kenya and South Africa to Mali and Namibia to Rwanda to Ghana.

However, there are challenges with digital diplomacy such as hacking and cyber fraud, as issues of privacy and anonymity among others and these risks in essence hold back digital diplomacy. Importantly, nations should use social media to leverage their positions in the international diplomatic sphere, particularly in Africa. MFAs can speed up the dissemination of information and make it possible for traditional diplomatic services to be provided more quickly and affordably by becoming active on social media platforms. A wider and more varied audience, such as the public, civil society, and diaspora populations, can be reached by diplomats. Social media sites like X and Facebook give diplomats direct access to the public for outreach and communication, promoting transparency and engagement (Melissen, 2005). Additionally, they can strengthen their nations' voices and interests in the global community, improving their reputation and advancing their objectives. When it comes to fostering trust and creating the framework for formal diplomatic engagements, digital platforms provide a virtual setting for

informal discussions and negotiations between non-governmental players (Manheim, 2017). Big data is a new phenomenon brought on by the digital age that can be used for diplomatic objectives. Data analysis is used to forecast possible conflicts and opportunities, analyse trends, and guide choices about foreign policy (Adesina, 2022).

Digital diplomacy offers numerous prospects for improving diplomatic engagement, crisis management, and international cooperation in an increasingly connected world. As technology continues to advance, diplomats and foreign ministries must adapt to these changes, leveraging digital tools and platforms to achieve their diplomatic goals. With the right strategies and safeguards in place, digital diplomacy has the potential to enhance transparency, facilitate dialogue, and contribute to more effective and responsive diplomacy on the global stage.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on how people around the world communicate, share information, and adapt to rapidly changing circumstances. One significant aspect of this transformation has been the increased reliance on social media platforms as tools for information dissemination, communication, and coping with the challenges posed by the pandemic. To understand the dynamics of how individuals accepted and used social media platforms during these unprecedented times, two theoretical frameworks can be particularly useful: The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Technological Determinism.

## Technology Acceptance Model and Technological Determinism

Extensive research has been conducted on the technology acceptance model since its inception over 25 years ago, providing strong evidence for the model's popularity in the field. The TAM model, proposed by Davis in 1989, draws upon psychology theories of reasoned action and planned behaviour and has subsequently emerged as a crucial instrument for comprehending the factors that influence individuals' inclination to embrace or decline the adoption of novel technology. With the increasing prevalence of social media, it is essential to formulate theories and comprehend user attitudes and usage patterns on platforms such as Facebook, X, Google+, and LinkedIn. This understanding is critical for developing future insights and incorporating these emerging technologies. To examine the factors that affect social media usage behaviour, it is necessary to analyse the technology acceptance model (Rauniar et al., 2014).

TAM posits that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are critical factors that influence users' intentions to adopt and utilise a technology, which ultimately leads to actual usage. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) has been extensively employed to evaluate consumer receptiveness towards technology in general. However, its utility in explaining system-related matters is limited (Gwala & Mashau, 2023). TAM emphasises the importance of perceived usefulness, which refers to individuals' beliefs about how using technology will enhance their lives. During the pandemic, social media platforms served as vital sources of information regarding COVID-19 updates, safety guidelines, and community support. Users found these platforms useful for sharing their experiences,

accessing real-time news, and connecting with others who were facing similar challenges. The perception that social media platforms provided valuable and relevant information strongly influenced their adoption.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the perceived ease of use of social media platforms played a pivotal role in their adoption. As lockdowns and restrictions limited physical interactions, individuals sought alternatives to stay connected and informed. Social media platforms such as Facebook, X, and Instagram, which were designed to be user-friendly and intuitive, became accessible tools for staying connected with loved ones and obtaining information. During times of unpredictability, the ease with which users may sign up, share information, and interact with content increased the popularity of such sites. Students' everyday academic activities, for instance, may be affected by the ease with which they can adopt and use electronic machine equipment, which in turn facilitates their use of digital information resources and makes learning more convenient. Using technology's automatic features makes finding data much less of a hassle than traditional approaches. Notes are no longer taken in class; instead, they are emailed to students ahead of time so they can read them on their laptops, tablets, or smartphones during the lecture. Time is saved for everyone, including those who had to miss class. The Youth are more likely to adopt new technologies than adults (Gwala & Mashau, 2023).

TAM proposes that the intention to use a technology is a direct precursor to actual usage. During the pandemic, individuals who perceived social media as easy to use and useful for staying informed and connected were more likely to intend to use these platforms. This intention translated into

actual usage, with people reading news articles, sharing updates, and participating in discussions related to the pandemic. As such, TAM helps explain the uptake of social media for pandemic-related purposes.

However, in contrast to TAM, which focuses on individual perceptions and intentions, Technological Determinism is a broader theory that examines how technological advancements can shape society's behaviours, values, and practices. It asserts that technological innovations often drive social change, influencing how people interact, communicate, and conduct their daily lives (Paragas and Lin, 2016). The idea is that technological advancement is the driving force behind social change. The American sociologist Thorstein Veblen is often credited with the development of this idea (Hauer, 2017). Veblen established a correlation between advances in communication technology and the conditions that help to propel them. Technology, technological advancement, communications technology, and media are in charge of societal shifts, say proponents of technological determinism including William Ogburn, Clarence Ayres, and John Dewey (Paragas and Lin, 2016). Despite technological advances that have aided nations' economic and social development, Ghana is still behind other, less developed countries. However, many Ghanaians have had to turn to digital life as a means of coping with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The argument is that although the Ghanaian population is still moving slowly towards a digital life, the necessities of the time forced a quick migration to what was previously seen as a distant goal.

As a result of these breakthroughs, new technologies, and their social and political repercussions, the contemporary information society emerged.

When investigating the effects of technology across generations, Adler (2006) argues that other factors should also be considered. He cites the state of the economy, the culture, the geography, the biology, and the language as examples of such factors. Adler argues that the theory is incomplete without considering these factors, which play important roles in the effects technology has on society. Critics of the theory say it exaggerates the possibilities of technology even as it explains its place in society.

Paragas and Lin (2016) expand on this dissertation by dividing technological determinism into “hard” and “soft” determinisms. They argue that hard determinism grants technology absolute power to shape society, in contrast to soft determinism, which places the power of technology on other pre-existing social and cultural aspects. While analogue instruments are still useful in some contexts, new technologies are constantly making inroads and revolutionising how people, especially the younger generations, can communicate (Maikomo et al., 2021). The Internet has removed all communication barriers. Online, the conventional constraints of space and time disappear and there is a dizzyingly wide range of communicative possibilities. Today, we can quite confidently say that the Internet and the nature of new media are fundamentally changing the structure of society.

This theory again indicates that technology has the power to change the nature of social relations and social reality relationships (Maikomo et al, 2021). Proponents of this theory believe that technology controls the progress of humanity, as individuals in various parts of the earth have failed to reach a solution that keeps them in constant contact until technology intervenes to provide them with radical solutions (Horst, 2020). These eliminate all the

problems that bother them and work to bridge the distances between the east and the west of the earth, as others see that technology is only a tool to impose hegemony and control over weak peoples and to control the convictions of individuals as it invades the personal life of the individual, and works to break up his real relationships (Dentzel, 2013).

The rising popularity of new media has changed the nature and the way our society and individuals act; the way we do the shopping, recruit staff, pay taxes, use the library, gain academic degrees, and educate ourselves among others. Just a century ago, this was unimaginable. An increasing number of couples come together, stay together, or break up with the aid or even because of social communication tools. There are even apps and social networks out there that are purposely designed to help people get together for sexual activities and other pleasures (Dentzel, 2013). As we have seen, the Internet revolution is not just technological; it also operates at a personal level, and throughout the structure of society. According to Horst (2020), the Internet makes it possible for an unlimited number of people to communicate with one another freely and easily, in an unrestricted way. By applying this theory to the current research, it can be said that browsing social networking sites has a set of positives that benefit the individual, whether at the personal level, the family level, or the societal level, but it also has a set of negatives.

Therefore, the pros and cons of social networking sites must be weighed. Somewhat related to technological determinism is the belief that people are powerless against media content. Taken to the extreme, whatever is shown on television for example will have the intended impact on producers and impact everyone in the audience in the same manner. Of course, people

are not passive consumers of the media but actively interpret and evaluate media in various ways for various reasons (Horst, 2020). Furthermore, it can be argued that the advancements in digital technologies have brought progress in the conduct of diplomacy. It is aiding in fast, cheaper and easy accessibility of information, bringing more efficiency to the field of diplomacy.

Since COVID generates a crisis, it potentially generates a time of rapid change. The identification of alternatives and the differences between them affects the understanding of actions taken during the COVID crisis. To understand these potential changes, it is necessary to specify the alternatives. Due to the prohibition of physical contact and emphasis on social distance as pandemic-slowing strategies, as well as the subsequent lockdown of public and private ventures to effectively combat it, new forms of interactions that facilitated business and administrative activities within safety limits emerged during the pandemic (Dentzel, 2013). People's public and private lives were transformed by digital life, which appeared to be the new standard everywhere. For instance, most people now use the Internet for business, meetings, and classes, among others unlike before when individuals had to communicate with one another in ways complementary to traditional face-to-face, telephonic, and written modes (Hauer, 2017).

During the pandemic, we have seen how social and cultural factors such as trust in institutions, privacy concerns, and access to technology can shape the adoption and use of technology. For example, some people may be hesitant to use contact tracing apps due to privacy concerns, while others may not have access to reliable internet or digital devices to participate in remote work or schooling. TAM helps us understand the individual-level factors that

influenced the adoption and usage of social media, while Technological Determinism sheds light on how these technologies became central to societal responses during a crisis.

The pandemic underscored the importance of technology in shaping human behaviour and society's ability to adapt to unforeseen challenges.

Social media, which was once a tool for social interaction and entertainment, became a lifeline for information, connection, and resilience. By considering both TAM and Technological Determinism, researchers can gain a more nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between individual choices and broader technological forces in times of crisis. This approach contributes to our knowledge of technology adoption and societal change, offering valuable insights for future research and policy considerations.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided an overview of relevant literature on digital diplomacy and highlighted its increasing popularity in recent years. The chapter highlighted that Digital diplomacy presents several opportunities for enhancing diplomatic engagement, crisis management, and international cooperation in an ever more interconnected world. In light of technological advancements, diplomats and foreign ministries must adjust to these developments by utilising digital tools and platforms to effectively accomplish their diplomatic objectives. Nevertheless, the chapter contended that the practice of digital diplomacy presents difficulties for both state and nonstate players. Additionally, the study emphasised the effects of COVID-19 on digital diplomacy and provided insights into potential future scenarios, particularly in developing nations.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The process by which scholars must perform their study is known as research methodology. It demonstrates how these scholars frame their issues and goals and how they report their findings based on the information gathered throughout the study period. The research methodology in this study covers the research approach, the research design, the study area, the target population, the sampling technique, the data collection instruments and the estimation techniques employed in order to achieve the overall objective of the study.

#### Research Approach

The study employed the mixed-methods research approach. According to Creswell (2015), the mixed-method approach combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches. That is, it covers both qualitative and quantitative data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting. The use of mixed-methods research by Enosh, Tzafrir, and Stolovy (2014) enables researchers to collect and analyse both qualitative and quantitative data thoroughly and comprehensively and makes it possible to generalise their results and possible consequences to a wider demographic. The mixed method approach, which assists the researcher in capturing both qualitative and quantitative data, increases the overall dependability and validity of the results (Rahi, 2017). This is because, the collected outcomes complement one another, making the results of greater significance and benefit to policies. The quantitative approach increases the likelihood that the findings can apply to a larger

population whereas the qualitative approach provides a deeper understanding of the topic under study since it captures the perspectives of the participants.

The mixed-methods approach is best suited to this study because it allows for the use of both quantitative research approaches and instruments, such as surveys and questionnaires as well as qualitative approaches, such as interviews, which may provide a deeper understanding of how COVID-19 impacts Ghana's use of digital diplomacy.

### **Research Design**

The study employed the explanatory sequential mixed methods research design. The sequential explanatory research design is defined by Creswell and Zhang (2009) as the sequential collection and analysis of quantitative and then qualitative data within a single study. According to Creswell (2014), the research design of every study indicates how the study is carried out: how data is gathered, analysed, interpreted, and reported in research studies. According to Ivankova and Creswell (2009), the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design consists of two distinct stages: the quantitative stage comes first, and the qualitative stage comes after. Sequential explanatory mixed method design enables the researcher to further analyse the quantitative results in great detail, despite the design's time-consuming nature and feasibility being its main challenges (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009). The explanatory sequential mixed methods research design is most applicable especially when the results contradict a prior expectation or theory (Subedi, 2016). The first phase of the research design, which is the quantitative phase examines if there is a statistically significant difference in the utilisation of social media among interviewees and also the impact of COVID-19 on the use

of social media and digital diplomacy. The qualitative phase delves deeper to ascertain whether there has been an increase or decline in the use of technology and social media for activities and how COVID-19 affected digital diplomacy.

### **Study Area**

The study was conducted in Ghana. Ghana, also known as the Republic of Ghana, is a country located in West Africa (Ntiamoah-Baidu et al., 2001). It is bordered by Cote d'Ivoire to the west, Burkina Faso to the north, Togo to the east, and the Atlantic Ocean to the south. Ghana has a population of over thirty million people. There are different ethnic groups with different local languages, like Fante, Ga, Ewe, and Hausa, among others. Ghana is a democratic nation with the president as the head of state. It is known for its natural resources like gold, timber, bauxite, and oil, among others.

### **Population, Sample Size and Procedures**

The target population for the study encompassed diplomats (MFARI, the MOI, MOPA) and consulates in Ghana, academics and entrepreneurs. The study employed the multistage sampling technique. According to Denscombe (2017) and Fricker (2008), the multistage sampling technique is advantageous and more appropriate for large-scale studies where it is not feasible to directly sample from the entire population. For the quantitative phase, the purposive sampling technique was used to select the people in academia (students and lecturers) and entrepreneurs because studies have proven that education (Rashid & Yadav, 2020; Toquero, 2020, Daniel, 2020) and businesses (Carracedo et al., 2021; Fairlie & Fossen, 2021; Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020) were the most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Because there was no

existing sampling frame for all academics and entrepreneurs in Ghana, the study employed the convenience sampling technique to select these interviewees. However, in order to get a sample size quite representative enough a total of six hundred and eighty-seven (687) interviewees were selected. Convenience sampling, according to Rahi (2017), refers to the process of gathering data from a research population that is easily accessible to the researcher. Convenience sampling can be used in nearly any research because it simply implies that the researchers use a sample that is accessible to them and readily available. Convenience sampling is helpful and used to develop a prospective hypothesis or study objective (Farrokhi & Mahmoudi-Hamidabad, 2012).

For the qualitative phase, diplomats or informants from MFARI, the MOI, and MOPA were purposively selected for the interview. This is because these state institutions were involved in the diplomacy. A total of eight (8) informants were interviewed. The research examined the use of social media by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration (MFARI), the Ministry of Information (MOI), and the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs (MOPA) during the initial COVID-19 pandemic. The purposive sampling method specifically makes use of expert sampling. Crossman (2018) claims that expert sampling is used when the research calls for knowledge in a particular field of expertise. Despite its drawback, of not being representative enough the purposive sampling approach is used in this study to pick interviewees because it helps gather precise expert responses for the research (Tongco, 2007).

### **Data Collection and Instruments**

The study employed primary data for the analysis. For the quantitative phase, structured questionnaires were self-administered to non-state actors, that is people in academia and entrepreneurs. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first component provided the interviewees' demographic information. The second section included questions about the effectiveness, accessibility, and frequency of usage of digital technology in Ghana prior to and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The final section included questions about the benefits, challenges and future of digitalisation in Ghana. For the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with foreign diplomats and Ghanaian embassies outside the country, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, and the Ministry of Information in Ghana. These informants were selected because they were experts and possessed special criteria in the fields of technology and diplomacy. The interviews explored how these stakeholders use social media and other digital platforms to conduct their diplomatic activities and also discussed the challenges and prospects of digital diplomacy.

### **Data Analysis**

The study used descriptive and inferential analysis to examine the impact of COVID-19 on digital diplomacy in Ghana. Descriptive statistics such as mode, mean and frequency were used to analyse interviewees' demography. For the inferential statistics, the study employed the Kruskal-Wallis, the Independent Samples Median test, Independent Samples Mann-Whitney U Test, the Independent Samples Kolmogorov Smirnov Test and the paired sample test. The Independent Samples Median test, Independent

Samples Mann-Whitney U Test, and the Independent Samples Kolmogorov Smirnov Test were employed as statistical tools to test the hypothesis that COVID-19 propelled the use of technology among academics and entrepreneurs. Similarly, the paired sample T-test was utilised to test the hypothesis that COVID-19 initiated digital diplomacy. All the quantitative analyses were carried out with the SPSS version 23 software. For the qualitative data collected, thematic and narrative analysis techniques were employed. Thematic analysis was incorporated as a technique to identify, analyse, and report patterns within data. To facilitate the analysis, the qualitative data collected for this study were transcribed verbatim and arranged by themes under the benefits, challenges, and prospects. The narrative analysis technique was incorporated and interpreted to analyse the impact of COVID-19 on digital diplomacy. According to Earthy and Cronin (2008) narrative analysis examines the structure, content, and meaning of these narratives to gain insight into individual experiences.

### **Validity and Reliability of the Research**

In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the acquired data for the research, the researcher employed the audit trial methodology. Cassel et al. (2018) state that the audit trial approach requires the researcher to provide a detailed account of the procedures followed, starting from data collection and continuing through to data analysis. This methodology effectively eliminated any biases and inaccuracies during the data analysis process. In this work, the transcribed data and the generated themes were examined by colleagues to ensure that the analysis aligns with, rather than contradicts, the acquired data. In addition, the researcher employed investigator triangulation as a means to

guarantee the validity of the obtained data. Triangulation, as described by Pansiri (2005), is a technique used to validate data by including multiple perspectives. Triangulation can be classified into four primary categories: data triangulation, methodology triangulation, investigator triangulation, and theory triangulation. The researcher utilised investigator triangulation to examine the data from several perspectives in this study. The researcher was able to thoroughly discuss the implementation of digital diplomacy by MFAs.

### **Ethical Consideration**

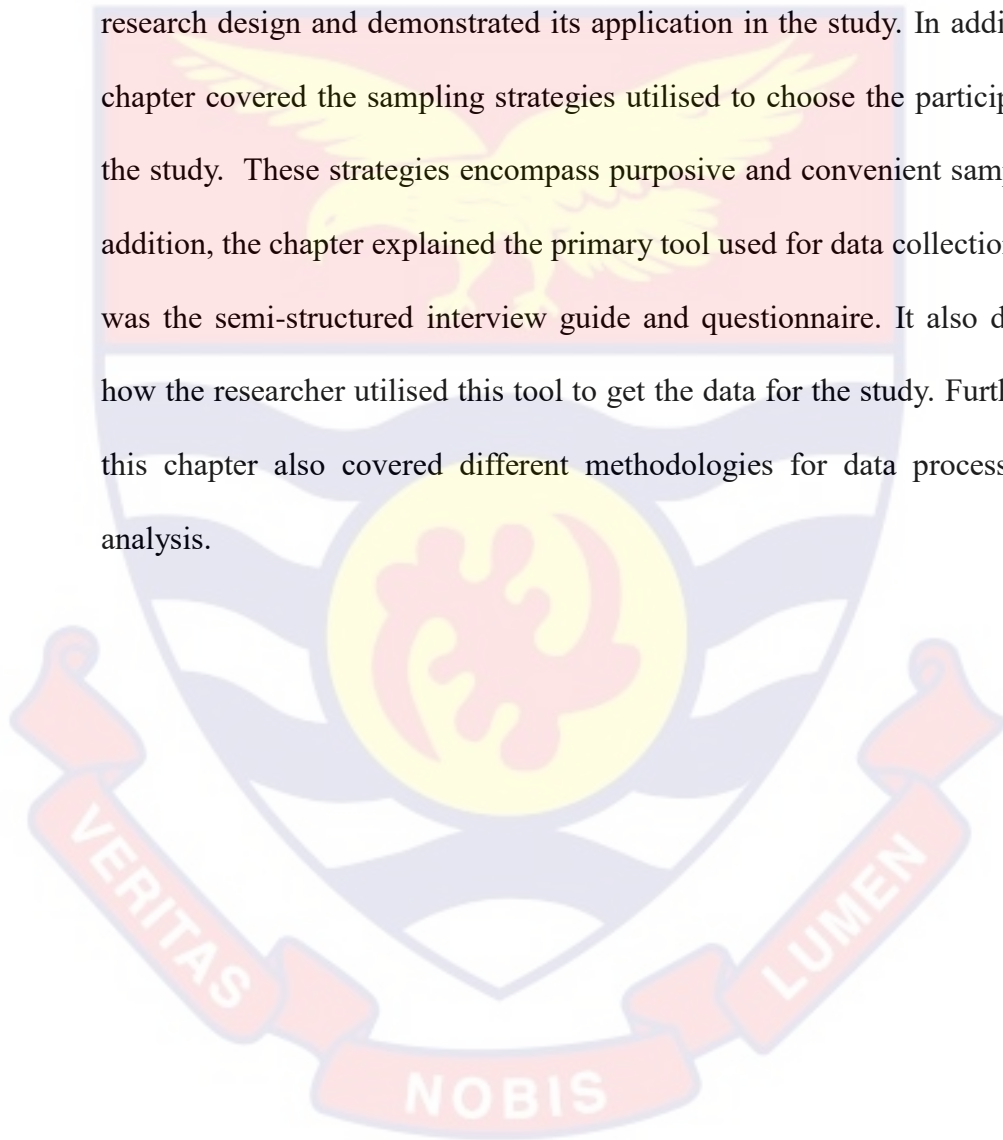
There is a perpetual apprehension regarding the treatment of research volunteers in light of ethical considerations (Walliman, 2011). Throughout this study, participants were consistently handled with reverence and prudence prior to, throughout, and subsequent to the data-gathering phase, in order to safeguard their dignity. Prior to the interview, the participants received a comprehensive explanation of the research objectives and were informed that any information they disclosed would be used exclusively for academic purposes.

Additionally, participants had the freedom to discontinue their involvement in the study at any time according to their own discretion. The purpose of these measures was to guarantee that no volunteer was coerced or compelled to partake in the study against their volition. All participants in the study were assigned pseudonyms (Interviewees). The majority of participants were willing to take part in the study, allowing their voices to be recorded. The request has been approved. The researcher recorded relevant information shared by the participant in a notebook. Moreover, the study adhered to all the ethical guidelines established by the University of Cape Coast. The researcher

received an introductory letter from the Centre for African and International Studies, which was then submitted to the Ministries and consulates.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter highlighted the methodologies employed for data collecting and analysis in the study. The chapter explained the mixed method research design and demonstrated its application in the study. In addition, the chapter covered the sampling strategies utilised to choose the participants for the study. These strategies encompass purposive and convenient sampling. In addition, the chapter explained the primary tool used for data collection, which was the semi-structured interview guide and questionnaire. It also described how the researcher utilised this tool to get the data for the study. Furthermore, this chapter also covered different methodologies for data processing and analysis.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

#### Introduction

This chapter seeks to offer a descriptive analysis of the data collected and to interpret and discuss the results of the study.

#### Descriptive Analysis

##### Sex Representation of Interviewees

Figure 1 presents the sex distribution of the six hundred and eighty-seven (687) interviewees who participated in the study. Four hundred and nineteen of the interviewees were males, representing about sixty-one percent, whereas two hundred and sixty-eight (thirty-nine percent) were females.

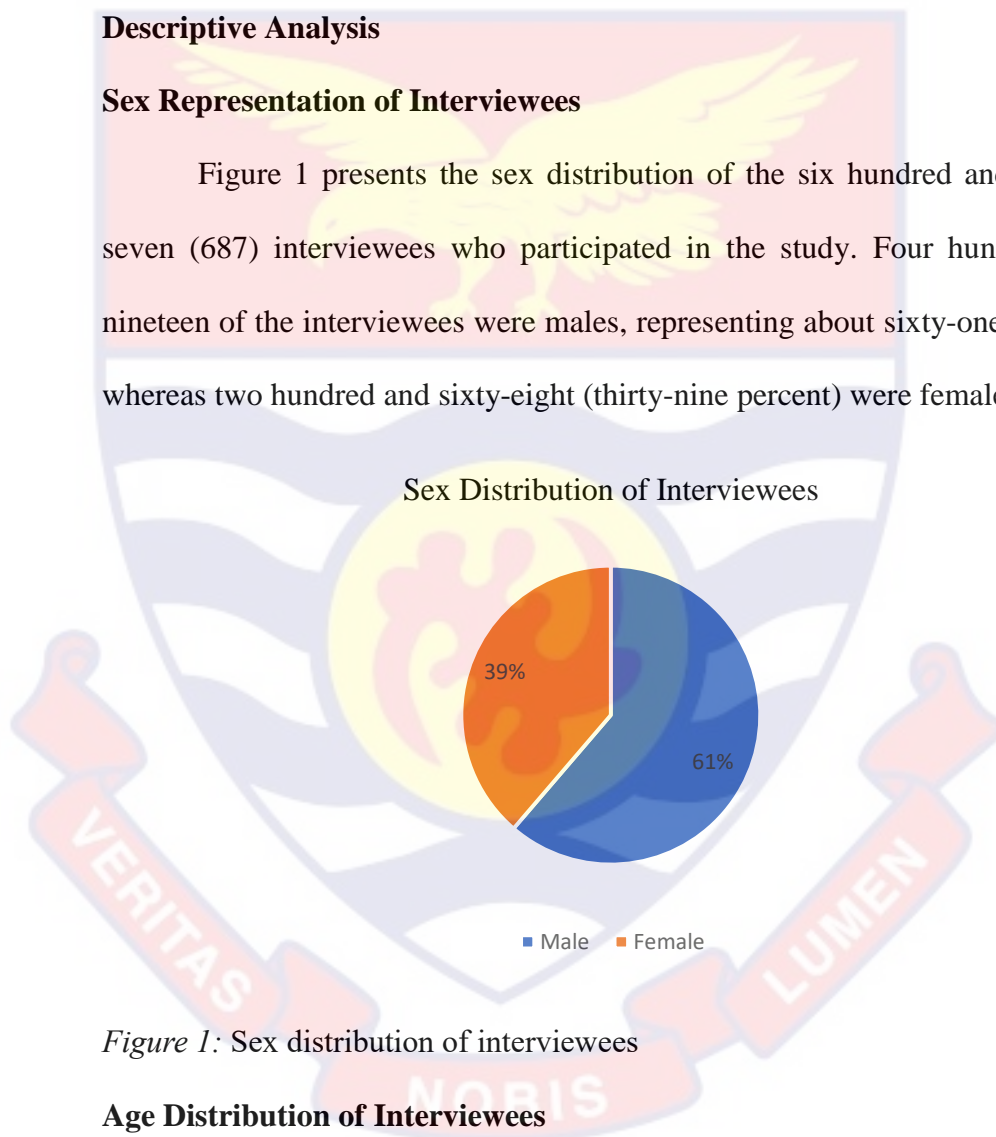


Figure 1: Sex distribution of interviewees

##### Age Distribution of Interviewees

The age distribution of interviewees is presented in Figure 2. The majority of the interviewees, representing 31 percent of the interviewees, were between the ages of twenty-six and thirty years inclusive. Approximately seven percent of the interviewees were over forty-five years old, but none were over sixty years old.

Age Distribution of Interviewees

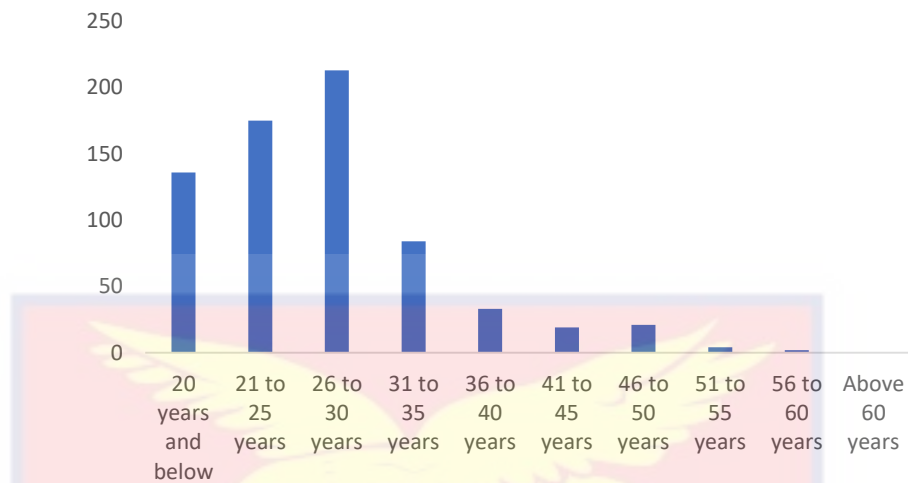


Figure 2: Age Distribution of Interviewees

### Household Size of Interviewees

The distribution of the household size of interviewees is represented in Table 1. From the table, about 34 percent of the interviewees had three or fewer people in the household. The majority of the households interviewed, constituting about fifty-four percent of the interviewees, had about four and six people included in their household.

Table 1: Household Size of Interviewees

Household Size	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Three or less	237	34.50	34.50
4-6	373	54.29	88.79
7 or more	77	11.21	100
Total	687	100	

### Marital Status of Interviewees

The distribution of marital status of the six hundred and eighty-seven interviewees who participated in the study is represented in Table 2. The majority of the interviewees, about five hundred and forty-two, representing

approximately eighty percent of the interviewees, were single or had never married. None were widowed, and only approximately nineteen percent were married.

**Table 2: Marital status of Interviewees**

Marital Status of Household Head	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Single/Never Married	542	78.89	78.89
Cohabiting	9	1.31	80.20
Married	128	18.64	98.84
Separated	6	0.87	99.71
Divorced	2	0.29	100
Widowed	0	0	100
Total	687	100	

### Interviewees' Level of Education

Table 3 presents the interviewees' level of education. From the table, it is evident that about ninety-six percent of the interviewees had tertiary education, whereas only four percent either had no formal education, basic education, secondary education, or middle school as their highest form of formal education received

**Table 3: Interviewees' Level of Education**

Level of Education of Interviewees	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
No Formal education	1	0.15	0.15
Basic education	4	0.58	0.73
Secondary education	20	2.91	3.64
Middle school	2	0.29	3.93
Tertiary	660	96.07	100
Total	687	100	

### Interviewees' Employment Status

Table 4 highlights the employment distribution of the interviewees. The majority of the interviewees, three hundred and eighty-two, representing fifty-five percent, were unemployed. Thirty-five percent were employed, and the other nine percent were self-employed.

**Table 4: Employment Status of Interviewees**

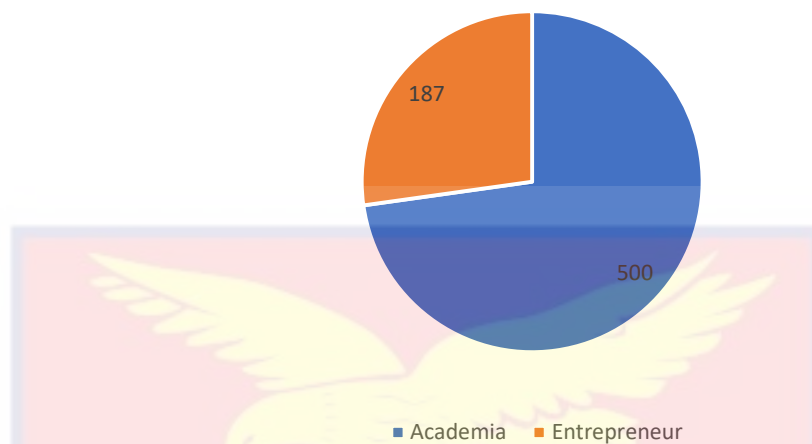
Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Employed	243	35.37	35.37
Self-employed	62	9.02	44.40
Unemployed	382	55.60	100
Total	687	100	

For those who were either employed or self-employed, the predominant work stated were administrator, teacher, project manager, banker, accountant, fashion/event designer, and business (trade).

### Area of Expertise of Interviewees

Out of the six hundred and eighty-seven interviewees who participated in the study, about seventy-three percent of the interviewees were in academia, whereas about twenty-seven percent (one hundred and eighty-seven of the interviewees) were entrepreneurs, as presented in Figure 3.

### Area of Expertise of Interviewees



*Figure 3: Area of Expertise of Interviewees*

Out of the five hundred interviewees who indicated that they were in academia, forty-five were lecturers, whereas four hundred and fifty-five were students.

#### **Platform Used**

For the entrepreneurs, the predominant platforms used were WhatsApp, Instagram, Zoom, and Facebook. X was the least utilised. The distribution of the platforms used by the entrepreneurs is presented in Figure 4. On the other hand, Zoom was the most utilised in the field of academia. Other platforms utilised by academics are Microsoft Meet, Ulesson, and Instative.

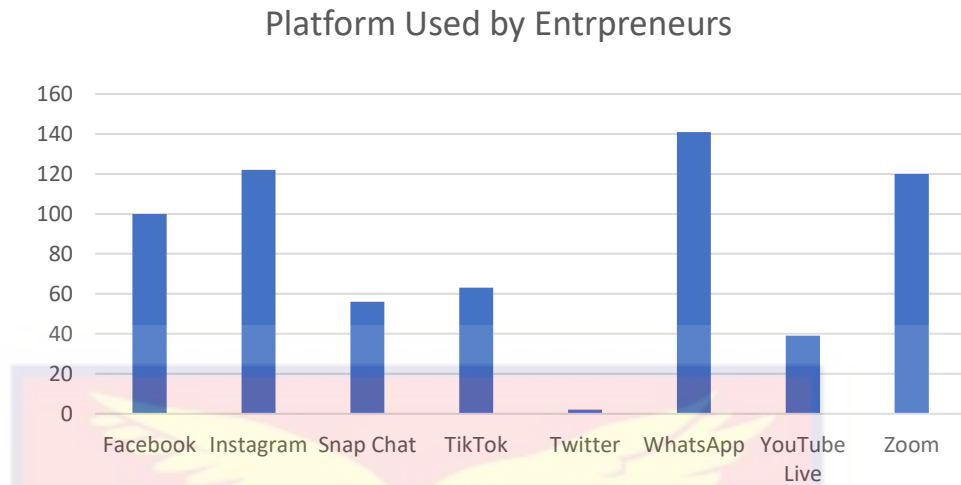


Figure 4: Platform Used by Entrepreneurs

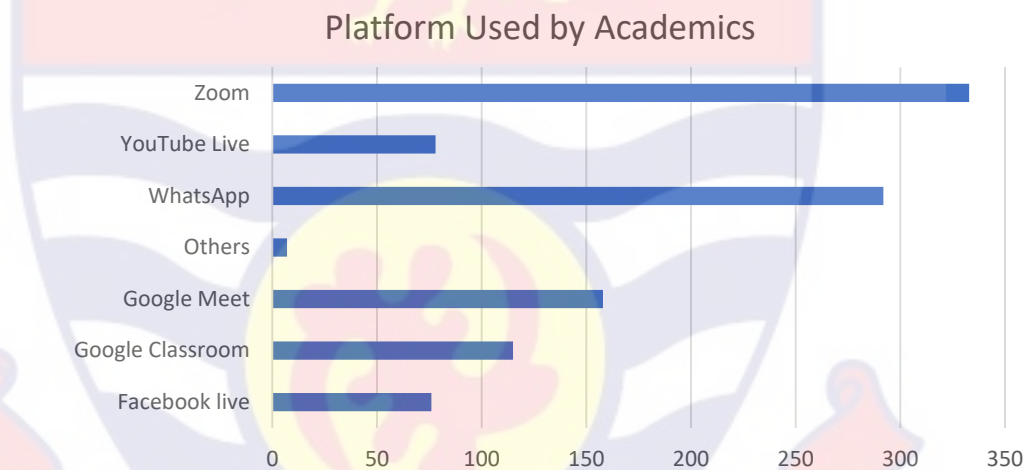


Figure 5: Platform Used by Academics

This section discusses the inferential analysis. Also, the population for the interviews were the state actors from the various ministries and consular.

### COVID-19 and Digital Diplomacy in Ghana

The first objective of this study was to test the hypothesis that the COVID-19 pandemic magnified digital diplomacy. In other words, this section focused on examining the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the conduct of diplomacy in Ghana.

**Table 5: Hypothesis Test (COVID-19 Magnified Digital Diplomacy in Ghana)**

Independent Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	Academia	Entrepreneurship
Test Statistic	499	186
Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)	0.492	0.486
Total Observation	500	187

The Kruskal-Wallis test result presented in Table 5 sought to test the hypothesis that the distribution of “Covid-19 magnified digital diplomacy” is the same across categories. That is, each of the interviewees in academia or entrepreneurship agrees that the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the use of digital diplomacy. For those in academia, the significance level of the test statistics is 0.492, which is greater than 0.05; therefore, the result is not statistically significant, and we fail to reject the null hypothesis that the distribution is the same. Similarly, the significance level of the test statistics for the entrepreneurs is 0.486, which is also greater than 0.05. Therefore, the result is not statistically significant, and we fail to reject the null hypothesis that the distribution is the same. The findings reveal that the COVID-19 pandemic magnified digital diplomacy in academia and entrepreneurship. This is because many people encountered limits in their working practices, much like many people all around the world. Parents had to work from home while home-schooling their children as a result of the closure of schools and other services, and some company owners had to discover alternative ways to operate their companies. Many interviewees, including academics and businesspeople, who were asked how COVID-19 affected their jobs noted how expensive but beneficial the situation was. This corroborates the findings

of Vadrot et al. (2021), who assert that despite the difficulties that both state and nonstate players encountered during the lockdowns, they persisted in communicating with other actors by using various communication tools in place of face-to-face meetings. The results from the interview also corroborated similar results. The MFARI mentioned that since the beginning of the pandemic, they have continued to have online meetings with stakeholders.

*Social media platforms have billions of active users worldwide, making them a powerful channel for diplomats to reach a broad and diverse audience. Because we had the systems already in place all we had to do was to get them running and make some few additions if countries did not have the kind of system. So, during the pandemic, most of our meetings with other missions were on Zoom and Microsoft Teams and this helped us respond to the global demand easily. Diplomatic missions can disseminate information, share updates, and engage with citizens, foreign audiences, and the international community more effectively (Interviewee 8, 02/05/2023).*

Also, interviewee 2 stated that,

*...the president used his social media pages (@NAkufoAddo) and other major news networks across the country to deliver messages or address the Ghanaian populace. Even now we see that whenever there is an issue, for example, the Russian-Ukraine crisis sparked, he used his social media platforms to address it. This shows that you do not have to be there in person to communicate*

*your sentiments but can go through the digital system. (Interviewee 7, 02/05/23).*

Another interviewee also highlighted that:

*These digital tools offer diplomats and governments several advantages that enhance their diplomatic efforts and communication with various stakeholders. Social media allows governments to promote their country's culture, values, and policies to a global audience. By sharing positive stories and engaging in public diplomacy efforts, diplomats can influence public opinion and build their country's soft power (Interviewee 2, 07/06/23).*

Another interviewee highlighted that several ministries, especially the tourism ministry, had promotional videos of tourist attractions, festivals, and events posted on their websites so that people from all over could go there and watch them and get a sense of the Ghanaian culture. Additionally, they have developed pages for practically all of Ghana's tourist attractions.

The study further adopted the Independent Samples Median Test, Independent Samples Mann-Whitney U Test, and Independent Samples Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test to check the level of agreement in the response between those in academia and the entrepreneurs using the median of their ranks. The results are presented in Table 2. The test statistics for all the tests are statistically significant, indicating that all the two categories agree that the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the use of digital diplomacy.

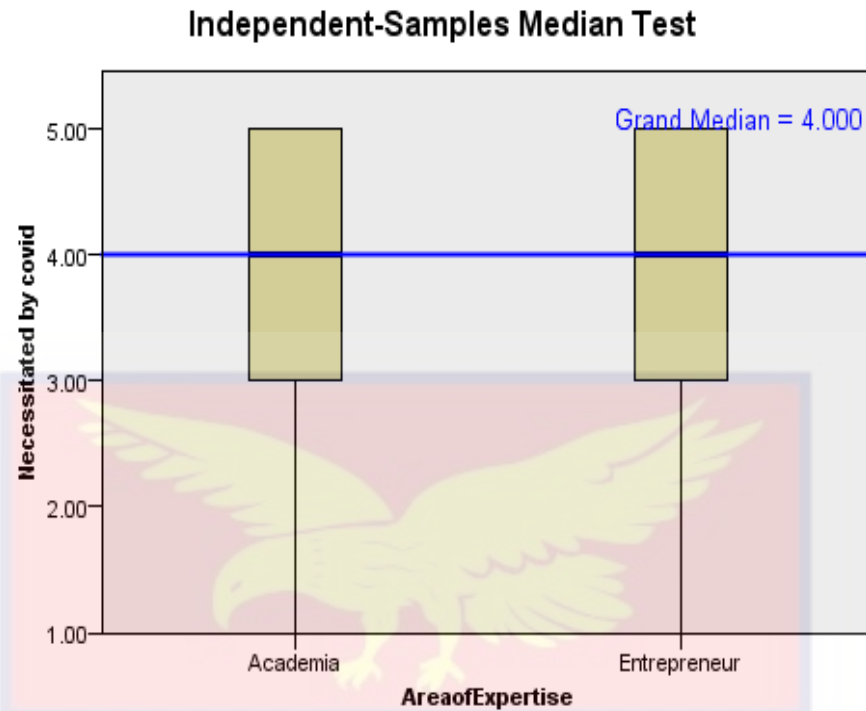


Figure 6: Distribution of Independent-Sample Median Test

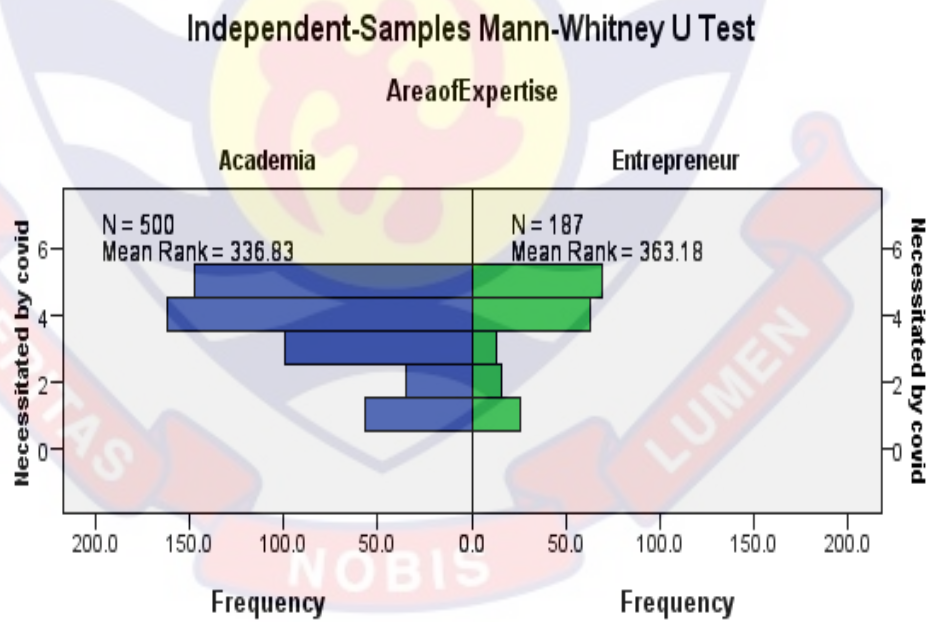


Figure 7: Distribution of Independent-Sample Mann-Whitney U Test

### Independent-Samples Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

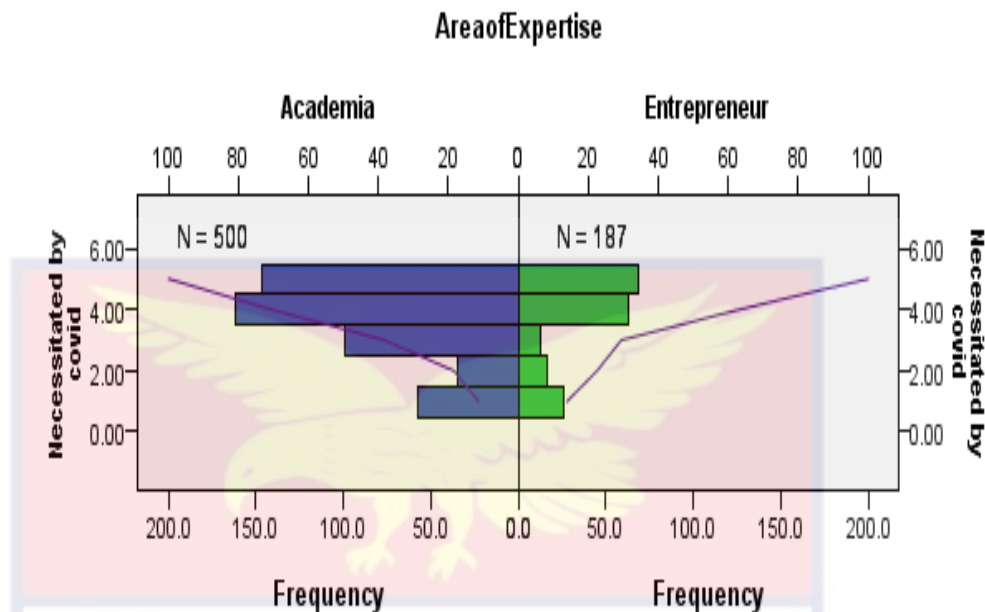


Figure 8: Distribution of Independent-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

Table 6: Level of Agreement in Responses

	Independent Samples Median Test	Independent Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	Independent Samples Kolmogorov_Smirnov Test
Test Statistic	3.211	1.609	1.025
Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)	0.73	0.108	0.244
Total N	687	687	687

The null hypothesis for each of the tests state that the distribution or median is the same across the area of expertise. For each of the tests employed, the significance values obtained, that is, 0.73, 0.108, and 0.244 for the Independent Samples Median Test, Independent Samples Mann-Whitney U Test, and Independent Samples Kolmogorov Smirnov Test, respectively, were greater than 0.05. This implies that the test result is not significant, and we fail to reject the null hypothesis. The findings indicate that across all the areas of

expertise (academia and entrepreneurship), COVID-19 magnified digital diplomacy.

### COVID-19 and the Use of Technology

The objective of this section was to test the hypothesis on whether or not the Covid-19 pandemic propelled the use of technology (i.e., hypothesis 2).

**Table 7: Paired Sample Test (Covid-19 propelled the use of Technology)**

	Academia	Entrepreneurship
Test Statistic	-13.211	-9.358
Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)	0.00	0.00
Total N	500	187

The paired sample t-test was used to compare whether there was a statistical difference in the use of technology before the COVID-19 pandemic and after the COVID-19 pandemic. For each of the areas of experience, the significance level (0.00; 0.00) was less than 0.005, indicating that there was a statistical difference in the use of technology before and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore, it can be concluded that COVID-19 propelled the use of technology among entrepreneurs and people in academia. This corresponds with the finding of Adesina (2017), who highlights that firms use digital technology to engage with overseas markets, promote their brands, and affect policy results in a study of corporate diplomacy. Multinational companies, for instance, utilise social media to advertise their goods and services in foreign markets, while business associations employ technology to advocate for favourable laws and regulations (Adesina, 2017). Digital technologies have been embraced by non-state players, such as enterprises, people, and civil society

organisations, to further their objectives in international relations. These actors may now reach a larger audience, make their views heard, and affect policy results in novel ways thanks to digital media. Also, for the state actors, one interviewee highlighted that:

*I was not very active on social media but now I check the platforms more often so that I don't miss anything important as said earlier whatever message we have we use social media to get them to people (Interviewee 6, 24/02/23).*

Another interviewee from the MOI indicated that:

*Pre-pandemic, the Ministry of Information likely used technology for communication, information dissemination, and public engagement. Websites and social media platforms were likely used to share official updates, press releases, and announcements. So, we were active but during and after the pandemic it has been a regular practice showing that there has been increased use of the digital platforms' (Interviewee 2, 07/06/23).*

The interviewees for MFARI, MOI, and MOP mentioned websites, Facebook, and X as their most-used digital media platforms. The Ghana-Germany embassy in Berlin, in addition to these platforms, used Instagram in their line of work. Also, the MOI used a YouTube channel when the trend demand was overwhelming. Newsletters and information regarding events and upcoming programmes were sent via email. This is in agreement with the survey by Bjola and Manor (2022), which found that SMEs impacted by the COVID-19 problem had a high awareness of social media and a strong

inclination to embrace it as a channel for marketing their goods and engaging with consumers.

### The Challenges of Digital Diplomacy in Ghana

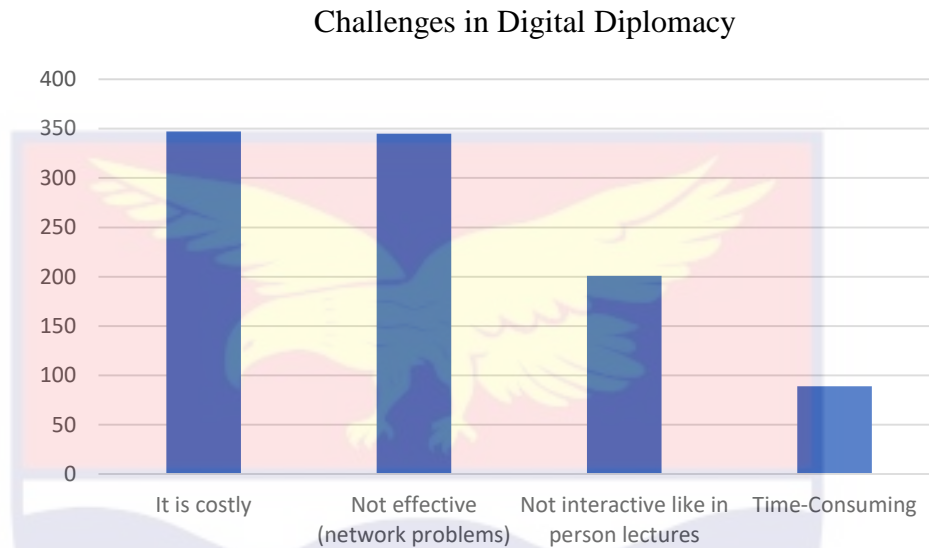


Figure 9: Challenges of Digital Diplomacy in Academia

The figure above shows the overall distribution of challenges selected by interviewees. 347 and 345 interviewees selected either ‘It is costly’, or ‘Not effective (network problems)’, respectively. This suggests that a significant portion of interviewees found this challenge to be noteworthy. While 201 and 89 interviewees chose ‘not interactive like in-person lectures’ and ‘time-consuming’. According to the figure, costly, ineffective (network problems), or both were the most frequently selected challenges, while all the challenges mentioned were chosen by the fewest interviewees. This implies that the interviewees face issues of finance (i.e., it is costly) and have network problems, which does not make it effective.

Also, the entrepreneurs mentioned that they become victims of fraudulent acts on the platform they ply their trade or ventures on, which does not make it effective. Furthermore, addiction to online platforms raises time

management issues as compared to the traditional ways of plying their trades. Objective three is to assess the challenges and prospects of digital diplomacy in Ghana. The data indicates that a substantial portion of interviewees found cost and network problems to be significant challenges in the context of digital diplomacy. Therefore, it serves as empirical evidence supporting the assessment of challenges that need to be evaluated in the broader discussion of the prospects and obstacles facing digital diplomacy in Ghana. For the state actors, the major challenges were institutional factors, internet issues, online impersonation, and privacy invasion. For example, one of the interviewees stated that:

*Some of the old officers who did not grow up with computers went to the business secretariat where they were taught to use typewriters. However, when we faced out the traditional and manual way of doing things some of them found it difficult to adjust to the use of computers so they still relied on human capacity. We also have other officers here who never bothered to learn the digitised systems so they also struggled in delivering their duties. Consequently, some superiors preferred traditional media to digital media and therefore did not pay much attention to the work when it had to do with the use of technology (Interviewee 5, 2/06/23).*

In corroboration, another official disclosed:

*...sometimes too we have situations whereby when you are looking for information it doesn't come in fast due to slow internet services. when there is an urgent situation and our internet is down or*

*information is not available, contacting the government for information becomes difficult (Interviewee 3, 01/05/23)*

This was further accentuated by Interviewee 5:

*For instance, with our embassy in Ethiopia where the internet is very unstable, sometimes you would have to wait for a while when the internet went off. Due to that, when there was an emergency, it was difficult to immediately send mail across. We also have the challenge of electricity ... Again, in Nigeria for instance, where they do not have a constant and reliable electricity supply what it means is that when the lights go off you would have to use a generator. Now between the time the lights go off and when the generator is put on if there is anything you are doing you could lose it or when transmitting any document, it might not go through. (Interviewed, 2/06/23).*

Another interviewee highlighted that, numerous phoney accounts were impersonating their organisations, and occasionally spreading untrue information about them.

*People impersonate the institutions and even some of the heads of institutions and ministries. The unfortunate thing is that they use such accounts to defraud people, kidnap people, collect money and even harm others. Some people sadly fall prey to these accounts. These days even verified accounts are sold so verification is a challenge too (Interviewee 3, 01/05/23).*

*...these fake accounts are created as representatives engaging on social media platforms and may inadvertently post content that is*

*perceived as offensive or controversial by other nations or communities. Such incidents can lead to diplomatic crises and damage international relations (Interviewee 8, 02/05/2023).*

It is also important to note that:

*Scepticism about the authenticity and reliability of digital information can affect the credibility of diplomatic efforts conducted through online channels. For instance, during COVID-19, people were posting their own COVID-19 updates on social media which contradicted what the office of the president and Ghana Health Service were updating or posting on their pages (Interviewee 7, 02/05/23).*

According to Interviewees 3 and 4,

*The spread of fake news, misinformation, and disinformation can easily occur in the digital realm. False narratives and rumours can quickly go viral, leading to misunderstandings and diplomatic tensions (Interviewed 3, 01/05/23); sometimes you realise some people try to post unnecessary things on Facebook and will tag us when there is no need (Interviewed, 10/7/23).*

Thus, despite the numerous prospects of digital diplomacy, there are equally eminent challenges that plague its efficiency both in terms of technological determinism and technical know-how.

### **Future of Digital Diplomacy in Ghana**

Among the 687 interviewees, 676 interviewees projected the direction and fate of digital diplomacy in the future through the views they shared. The views were divided into positive and negative categories, with a few having

mixed or no views on the future of digital diplomacy. The majority of interviewees gave an affirmative response, which implies that positivity is the dominant view among interviewees. The high affirmative response indicates a high level of optimism among the surveyed individuals regarding the future of digital diplomacy. This suggests that the majority of interviewees believe that digital diplomacy holds promising and potential benefits for the country or the international community. While the majority view is positive, it is important to note that some of the interviewees gave a negative response. This minority group may have concerns, reservations, or scepticism, such as fraud, cost, and internet issues, among others, about digital diplomacy. These concerns should not be dismissed and should be considered in the development and implementation of digital diplomacy strategies. State actors emphasised that traditional diplomacy cannot be eradicated with digital diplomacy. And they were more disposed towards traditional in-person meetings.

*Physical meetings are important because negotiations often take place on the sidelines of international gatherings, through impromptu discussions between global leaders at tea or lunch breaks, or a chance encounter in the corridor or rest room and so on. Also, physical meetings provide an opportunity for participants to observe and interpret the body language and emotions of the parties, which may help in decision making.’ As of now, traditional diplomacy cannot be discarded because that is what we know and have been using and I do not think digital diplomacy can fully overtake traditional diplomacy (Interviewee 8, 02/05/23).*

Another reiterated:

*When we have online meetings, people are not able to express their sentiments because they do not see yours. However, in my perspective, digital diplomacy has come to stay and will just help make traditional diplomacy easier, less costly and very quick (Interviewee 8, 02/05/23).*

Furthermore, one interviewee added:

*Again, I was asked one day if I could have meetings at home then why travel and I mentioned that it makes a difference when diplomats make eye contact. When I negotiate with you, I don't just listen to you but look at your body language. I use some kind of intimidation to look at look because I kind of want to have the upper hand since it is a negotiation so it is never the same when you have it virtually. However, for now, I think diplomats are trying to have a hybrid where you come together at the same venue while others may contribute virtually. But I tell you technology can never replace human-to-human contact (Interviewee 6, 24/02/23).*

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter examined the research objectives of the study. To determine the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic increased digital diplomacy in Ghana. To examine the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on diplomatic activities in Ghana and to evaluate the challenges and prospects of digital diplomacy in Ghana.

The chapter highlighted that COVID-19 significantly amplified the impact of digital diplomacy in Ghana. In Ghana, both state and non-state

actors have transitioned to digital platforms for their everyday activities. Nevertheless, obstacles in the form of financial, internet, and institutional difficulties hinder the seamless implementation of digital diplomacy. Nevertheless, the outlook for Ghana's digital diplomacy is optimistic and encouraging.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

The study sought to examine how the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs of Ghana, and some Ghanaian embassies and consulates abroad practised digital diplomacy during COVID-19. This chapter provides a summary of the study, conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

#### Summary of the Study

Communication is an integral part of everyday life. Its relevance to diplomacy and the international system cannot be overlooked. Diplomacy is employed to effectively handle the objectives of foreign policy, with a primary emphasis on communication. Conventional diplomacy was based on direct communication between individuals, both on a bilateral and global scale. Emerging trends exert diverse impacts on the institution of diplomacy. The Internet has provided diplomacy with a new instrument. Interference in a country's affairs is acceptable in various conditions of interdependence and reliance. The introduction of technology to diplomacy has facilitated diplomacy. Technological inventions such as emails, Skype, and telephones, to mention a few, changed the face of diplomacy and made communication easier. As the world of technology evolved, so did diplomacy. New areas in diplomacy, such as electronic or digital diplomacy, and the concept of e-governance were developed as a result, which was made possible through the use of digital media platforms such as websites, Facebook, X, Instagram,

YouTube, Google Meet, and WhatsApp, among others. To achieve the objectives of this study, three questions were asked from the beginning. To answer these questions, the relevant literature on the technology acceptance model and technological determinism theory, as well as the impacts of digitalisation on the conduct of diplomacy, the challenges, benefits, and prospects of digital diplomacy, were duly reviewed. The data for the study was based on one-on-one interviews via Zoom, face-to-face, or WhatsApp with a total of eight interviewees. These included resource personnel from MFARI, MOI, and MOPA. To add to that, there was an interview with four Ghana embassies abroad and one diplomat.

The study also used a survey to get the views of those in academia and non-state actors like entrepreneurs in Ghana. With the data collection method, the study used a mixed-method approach. For the qualitative research, the purposive sampling technique was used, while convenient sampling was used for the quantitative research method to select the various interviewees. Digital diplomacy started earlier in developed countries like the USA, the UK, and Russia, among others, to engage with both foreign and local audiences. The study revealed that African states like Ghana have not been left out. Ghana, as a country, has recognised the importance of technology. Ministries, stakeholders, and departments in Ghana have also taken to digital media platforms and do have some presence on these platforms. The COVID-19 pandemic has compelled other nations, including Ghana, to take use of this opportunity to aggressively pursue their foreign policy goals and opportunities for good change by establishing websites, blogs, and social media accounts; Facebook, X, Instagram, YouTube, Zoom, Google+, and so on. Ghanaian

MFAs used these platforms to also educate their populace on the processes to follow and how to acquire a passport or visa online in embassies abroad. They also interact with their followers to know their views on certain policies and decisions. Despite the benefits, there were challenges with digital diplomacy that the MFAs faced. Such as hacking, internet issues, institutional challenges, issues of privacy, and anonymity.

### **Key Findings**

The following are the key findings of the study:

1. The COVID-19 pandemic forced many diplomats to shift their diplomatic conduct from the traditional way to digital.
2. Many Ghanaians have come to accept the digital way of life now.
3. Digital diplomacy can never replace traditional diplomacy but the hybrid way can work.
4. Digital diplomacy is helping the president of Ghana push his foreign policies to other parts of the world.
5. Because of digital diplomacy, it is easier for the public at home and abroad to communicate and engage with the government easily.

### **Conclusion**

To be effective and efficient, digital diplomacy should align with the modern networked setting and engage in exchanges in a multi-directional way. Ghana aims to increase the use of digital diplomacy, and this involves using more than just social media platforms such as X, Facebook, Zoom, and WhatsApp, among others, to communicate official statements. It should be noted that these digital tools can be employed efficiently to help push foreign policy goals and public diplomacy. The findings of the study focused on

Ghana's MFAs during the COVID-19 pandemic, when many restrictions were put in place, especially during the lockdowns. The findings suggested that there was a significant change in Ghana's digital diplomacy from March to December 2020. This pushed the MFAs to intensify their e-diplomacy through online meetings, conferences, and other activities on social media platforms, although many of the posts and activities revolved around the pandemic. Though there were challenges that existed with digital diplomacy before the onset of COVID-19, there was a novel challenge for MFAs as they had to respond to and engage citizens at home and abroad.

This put the consular services under pressure. Based on the study, it was clear again that there was a significant increase in social media connections and public engagements during the pandemic; consequently, there was also a shift in the content from official engagements to public-centred information engagements. Ghana's MFAs altered their diplomatic conduct per the study, even though they were somewhat equipped. They were not entirely prepared to deal with the diplomatic challenges that arose as a result of the pandemic. While the study focused on Ghana's digital diplomacy during the pandemic, it suggests that despite the great potential, Ghana's MFAs have to put in more effective strategies to help push its foreign policy goals. The study recommends that there should be proper education in the use of digital platforms, and MFAs should be proactive and innovative to help confront the many challenges that will come up in digital diplomacy. This research highlighted the immense opportunities presented by digital diplomacy and the potential for social media platforms to enhance the goals of public diplomacy. It sets out to assess how Ghana conducted its digital diplomacy during the

COVID-19 pandemic and focuses on the tactics, strategies, and competencies of the MFAs, as well as the challenges that come with digital diplomacy and how the future is seen, to determine whether Ghana's digital diplomacy during the pandemic was effective and efficient.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion drawn, the study makes the following recommendations for stakeholders:

1. The government and appropriate stakeholders should educate foreign missions to use online services more and expose our clients to many of our services online too.
2. The government can enhance the digital capabilities of diplomats by providing training and resources to diplomats and officials to effectively use digital platforms for communication, outreach, and public engagement.
3. Expanding social media presence by establishing and maintaining active and official social media accounts for the ministry and Ghanaian missions abroad to share information, engage with citizens, and promote the country's interests and values.
4. It is also recommended that the government of Ghana, in partnership with the National Information Technology Agency, work towards finding a stable and reliable internet for the institutions to work with. MFARI and other stakeholders at home and abroad could also seek sponsorship from the telecommunications networks in Ghana to provide them with free internet to help lift the burden of government. MFARI and other stakeholders could also channel some of the funds

saved on their marketing and communication budget to purchase internet routers for their officers to be used solely for work on their institution's digital media platforms.

5. To reach a wider population, there is a need to direct messages in other languages apart from Arabic and English, as well as use other media and digital platforms to reach a larger audience.

### **Suggestions for Further Studies**

Examining the relationship between COVID-19 and Ghana's use of digital diplomacy offers a fascinating direction for further research. The current pandemic has brought attention to how important it is for nations to work together and communicate effectively to manage global health emergencies. A detailed understanding of the diplomatic environment would be possible by looking at how digital diplomacy affects public perception, the establishment of trust, and the general efficacy of response measures in the context of COVID-19.

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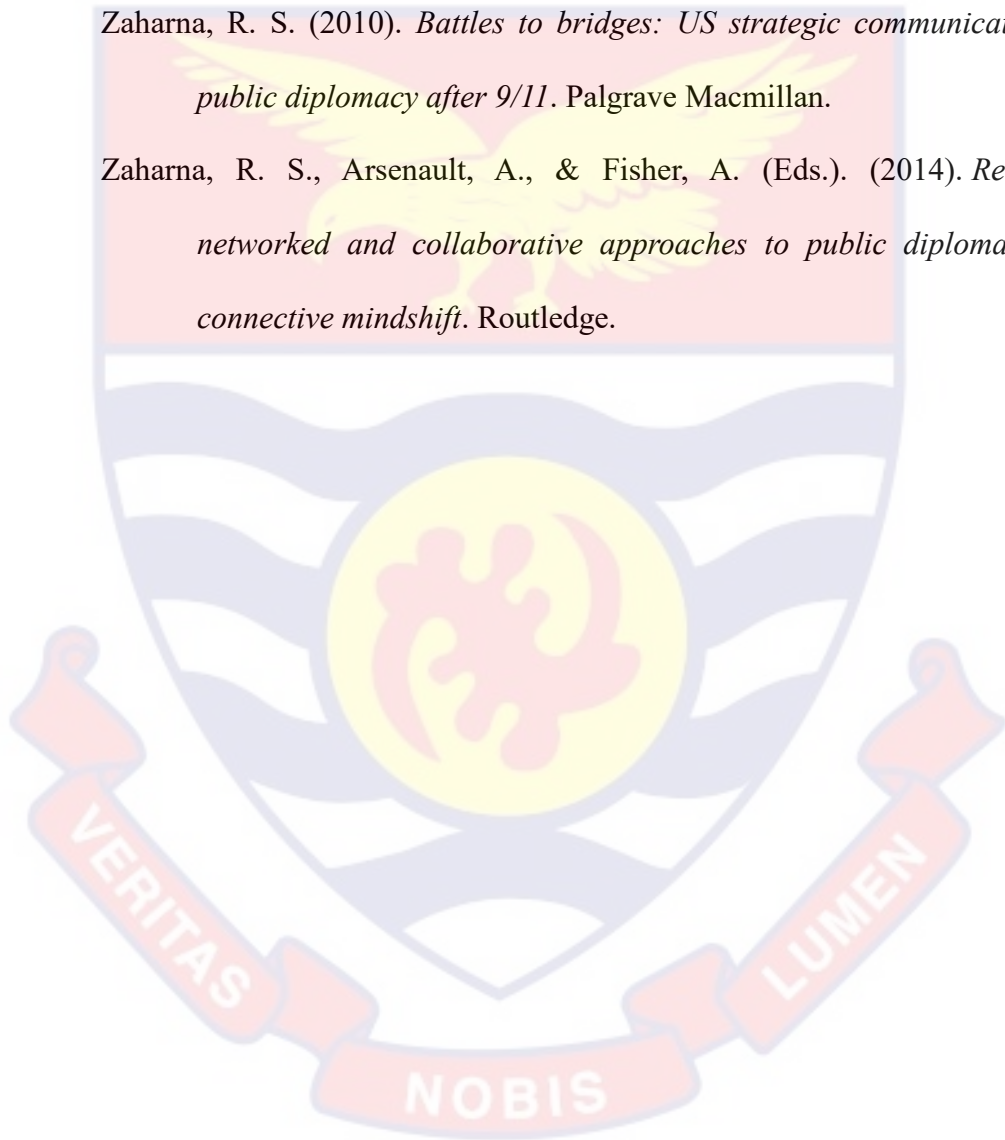
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**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**

**QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDE**

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**

**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES**

**FACULTY OF ARTS**

**CENTRE FOR AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

**Introduction**

I am Aboagye Josephine, a Master's Student at the University of Cape Coast reading MA. International Studies. I am conducting this interview to examine the extent to which State and Non-state actors employ digital diplomacy in their domestic and foreign activities and also to find out how COVID-19 necessitated a sudden migration to digital life. Please be assured that the information provided will not be linked to you and will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. This interview is entirely and strictly for academic purposes; therefore, I appeal that truthful information be provided. Thank you.

**SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF INTERVIEWEE**

1. Age of interviewee (in completed years). Tick  where applicable.

Age (years)	Tick <input type="checkbox"/>
20 years and below	
21 to 25	
26 to 30	
31 to 35	
36 to 40	
41 to 45	
46 to 50	
51 to 55	
56 to 60	
Above 60 years	

2. Sex: Male  Female

3. How many individuals are in your household, including you? .....

4. What is your marital status?

Never Married/Single  Married

Separated  Divorced  Widowed

If other(s) .....

5. What is your highest level of education?

No formal education  Basic Education

Secondary

Middle school  Tertiary

If other(s) specify.....

6. What is your employment Status?

Employed  Self-employed  Unemployed

7. If your answer to question 6 was “Employed” or “Self-employed”, what is your main occupation? .....

8. What is your household’s average monthly income? GHC .....

**SECTION B (FOR PERSONS IN ACADEMIA ONLY – TERTIARY STUDENTS AND LECTURERS)**

9. Are you a student or a lecturer?

Student  Lecturer

10. Which of the following Tertiary institutions are affiliated to?

Tertiary Institution	Tick $\checkmark$
University of Cape Coast	
University of Ghana	
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology	
University of Education Winneba	
University of Development Studies	
Others	

If others specify.....

Yes  NO

Which of the following online platforms did you use before and during the COVID-19 or are using after the COVID-19 pandemic? Choose as many as are applicable

Tertiary Institution	Tick $\checkmark$
Zoom	
Google Classroom	
Google Meet	
Facebook live	
YouTube Live	
WhatsApp	
Others	

If others specify.....

Please indicate the level of agreement or disagreement for each of the following statements by ticking (√) the response that applies to you. (1) indicates Strongly disagree; (2) indicates disagree; (3) indicates neutral or undecided (4) indicates agree and (5) indicates Strongly agree.

NB: Online Platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp, Zoom, X, Google Meet, Google Classroom)

	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Before the COVID-19 pandemic, we had online lectures (or any other academically related activity).					
2.	I was very conversant with the use of these online platforms before COVID-19.					
3.	These online platforms were more convenient than in-person meetings during COVID-19					
4.	The Covid pandemic necessitated the use of these online platforms.					
5.	These online platforms are still more convenient than in-person meetings.					
6.	I prefer in-person meetings to online meetings					
7.	I checked my e-mail often before COVID-19					
8.	COVID-19 negatively impacted academic activities					
9.	I checked my e-mail often during the pandemic					
10.	I usually check my e-mail after the pandemic					
11.	I can access opportunities I could not have accessed in person. Example; Taking or teaching online courses.					

Benefits of using these online platforms

Benefits	Tick $\checkmark$
Able to record lecture sessions	
Enhances creativity and builds presentation skills	
Interactive	
Cost-effective	
Convenient	
Others	

Challenges associated with the use of these platforms

Challenges	Tick $\checkmark$
Costly	
Not interactive	
Not effective (network problems)	
Time-Consuming	
Others	

How do you see the future of digital diplomacy in Ghana?

.....  
 .....

**SECTION C (FOR PERSONS IN OTHERS)**

Which of the following online platforms did you use before and during the COVID-19 or are using after the COVID-19 pandemic? Choose as many as are applicable

Platform	Tick $\checkmark$
Zoom	
Instagram	
Snap Chat	
TikTok	
Facebook	
YouTube Live	
WhatsApp	
Others	

If others specify.....

Please indicate the level of agreement or disagreement for each of the following statements by ticking ( $\checkmark$ ) the response that applies to you. (1) indicates Strongly disagree; (2) indicates disagree; (3) indicates neutral or undecided (4) indicates agree and (5) indicates Strongly agree

	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Before COVID-19, I was using these online platforms for advertisement and other business-related activities. Example; (customer care relationship)					
13.	Before the pandemic, I was active on social media.					
14.	I was very conversant with the use of these online platforms before COVID-19.					
15.	These online platforms were more convenient than in-person meetings during COVID-19					

16.	The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the use of these online platforms for advertisement and other business-related activities.					
17.	These online platforms are still more convenient than in-person meetings.					
18.	I prefer in-person meetings to online meetings					
19.	I checked my email/social media notifications more often before the COVID pandemic					
20.	I checked my email/social media notifications more often during the pandemic					
21.	I checked my email/social media notifications more often after the pandemic					
22.	COVID-19 negatively impacted the overall profitability of my business.					
23.	I can access opportunities I could not have accessed in person. Example; Reaching new market audience and customers					

Benefits of using these online platforms

Benefits	Tick $\checkmark$
Reaching new clients/ market segment	
Enhances creativity and builds presentation skills	
Interactive	
Cost-effective	
Convenient	
Others	

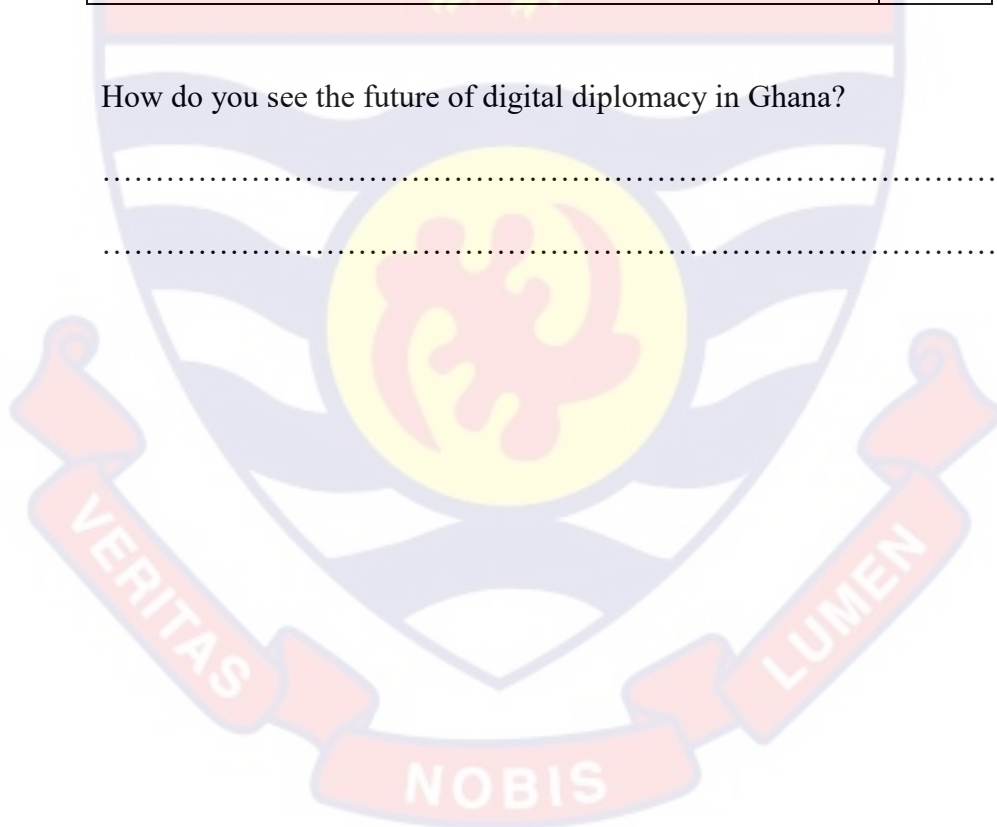
Challenges associated with the use of these platforms

Challenges	Tick
	√
Costly	
Not interactive	
Not effective (Fraud)	
Time-Consuming	
Others	

How do you see the future of digital diplomacy in Ghana?

.....

.....



## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MFARI

#### COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE PRACTICE OF DIGITAL DIPLOMACY IN GHANA

I am Aboagye Josephine, a Master's student of International Studies at the University of Cape Coast embarking on research on COVID-19 and the practice of digital diplomacy in Ghana. I appreciate your time in responding to my questions and kindly allow me to record the interview for effectiveness and efficiency.

**Research Objective: To ascertain whether COVID-19 magnified digital diplomacy in Ghana.**

1. How do you perceive digital diplomacy? (Brief overview and thoughts on digital diplomacy).
2. Digital diplomacy has become the new normal in the last few years. Does the MFARI recognise it?
3. How would you rate the Ministry's use of digital diplomacy before and after the COVID-19 pandemic?
4. In what ways do you think COVID-19 necessitated the use of digital platforms for diplomatic activities?
5. Which social media platforms do you use for your activities and how active were you before COVID-19?
6. How has COVID-19 affected the conduct of your diplomatic activities?
7. How relevant do you consider social media (Facebook, Instagram, Zoom etc) to the conduct of diplomacy?

8. Can you share cases of Ghanaian diplomats participating electronically in bilateral/multilateral relations before and during COVID-19? If not why?
9. Is digital integration relevant to the implementation of Ghana's foreign policy? If yes how?
10. Has the ministry adapted to the digital channels of diplomatic discourse or still stuck to traditional diplomacy in the wake of the pervasive use of digital platforms?
11. Does the ministry respond to questions asked on social media and has there been a surge in your online corinterviewees during the peak of COVID-19? If no why?
12. Are diplomats involved in the online dissemination of information through websites or is the role designated to the IT staff only? If yes are the personnel trained in diplomatic discourse?
13. Who reads emails directed to the ministry and how long does it take to respond to an email?
14. Does the ministry have modern conference rooms that allow for e-negotiations?
15. Is there any strategic plan to increase the use of digital diplomacy at the ministry and Ghanaian missions abroad?
16. Has the growth in the use of digital diplomacy come with any challenges and benefits that you can share?
17. How do you see the embracing of digital diplomacy going forward?

## APPENDIX C

### INTERVIEW GUIDE TO CONSULARS/ EMBASSIES

#### COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE PRACTICE OF DIGITAL DIPLOMACY IN GHANA

My name is Josephine Aboagye, a second-year M.A. in International Studies at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. I am conducting research on COVID-19 and the practice of digital diplomacy in Ghana. Therefore, I would be grateful to have any resource person from the embassy respond to a few questions about how the embassy conducted diplomatic activities during COVID-19, the challenges they faced and the prospects going forward.

The responses can be presented to me in a Word document via email. I am also available for a Zoom interview, should the need be. I have also attached my introduction letter and the open-ended questions. I will be grateful for any other information that will aid my research.

I look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you in anticipation.

**Research Objective: To ascertain whether COVID-19 magnified digital diplomacy in Ghana.**

1. How crucial is social media (Facebook, Instagram, X etc) to the conduct of diplomacy?
2. How often do you access social media before, during and after COVID-19?
3. In what ways do you think COVID-19 necessitated the use of digital platforms for diplomatic activities?
4. How long does it take the embassy to respond to email correspondence?
5. How do you see the embracing of digital diplomacy going forward?
6. Is there any strategic plan to increase the use of digital platforms at Ghanaian missions abroad?
7. Has the growth in the use of digital diplomacy come with any challenges that you can share?

## APPENDIX D

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DIPLOMAT

#### COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE PRACTICE OF DIGITAL DIPLOMACY IN GHANA

I am Aboagye Josephine, a Master of Arts in International Studies from the University Cape Coast embarking on research on COVID-19 and the practice of digital diplomacy in Ghana. I appreciate your time in responding to my questions and kindly allow me to record the interview for effectiveness and efficiency.

**Research Objective: To ascertain whether COVID-19 magnified digital diplomacy in Ghana.**

1. How crucial do you consider social media (Facebook, Instagram, Zoom etc) to the conduct of diplomacy?
2. How do you feel your presence on social media has helped you in your work?
3. How active were you on social media before COVID-19?
4. In what ways do you think COVID-19 necessitated the use of digital platforms for diplomatic activities?
5. Which social media platforms do you use for your activities?
6. Has your use of digital platforms increased during COVID-19?
7. Are diplomats involved in the online dissemination of information through websites or is the role designated to the IT staff only? If yes are the personnel trained in diplomatic discourse?
8. Who reads emails directed to the ministry/ embassy and how long does it take to respond to an email?
9. How do you see the embracing of digital diplomacy going forward?
10. Has the growth in the use of digital diplomacy come with any benefits that you can share?
11. What are some of the challenges that come with the use of digital diplomacy?

## APPENDIX E

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MOI

1. How crucial do you consider social media (Facebook, Instagram, Zoom etc) to the conduct of diplomacy?
2. Are you active on social media? Which platforms do you use?
3. How do you feel your presence on social media has helped you in your work?
4. How active were you on social media before COVID-19?
5. In what ways do you think COVID-19 necessitated the use of digital platforms for diplomatic activities?
6. Digital diplomacy has become the new normal in the last few years. Does the ministry recognise it?
7. How do you perceive digital diplomacy?
8. What are some of the challenges that come with the use of digital diplomacy?
9. What are some of the benefits?
10. Is there any strategic plan to increase the use of digital diplomacy at the ministry and Ghanaian missions abroad?
11. How do you see the embracing of digital diplomacy going forward?

**APPENDIX F**  
**INTERVIEWEES**

<b>LIST OF INTERVIEWEES</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>DESIGNATION</b>	<b>DATE OF INTERVIEW</b>
Interviewee 1	Cote D'Ivoire	Consular, Ghana Embassy, Ivory Coast	02/05/23
Interviewee 2	Namibia	High Commissioner, Accra	24/02/23
Interviewee 3	Ministry of Information	PRO, PPMBE, Accra.	07/06/23
Interviewee 4	Togo	Consular, Ghana Embassy, Togo.	07/10/23
Interviewee 5	Brussels	Head of Chancery, Ghana Embassy, Brussels	02/06/23
Interviewee 6	Germany	Ist Secretary, Ghana Embassy, Berlin	01/05/23
Interviewee 7	Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs	Director, Office of the President, Accra	02/05/23
Interviewee 8	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration	Director, PPMBE, Accra	02/05/23

APPENDIX G

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES  
FACULTY OF ARTS

CENTRE FOR AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

PHONE: (233) 332092181/0552481768

EMAIL: [cais@ucc.edu.gh](mailto:cais@ucc.edu.gh)

OUR REF: CAIS/1/3

YOUR REF:



DATE: 25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION  
(JOSEPHINE ABOAGYE - AR/ISS/21/0001)

This is to introduce the above-named M.A student from the Centre to you for your kind assistance.

Ms. Josephine Aboagye is seeking to collect data to undertake research on the topic: "*Covid-19 Pandemic and the Practice of Digital Diplomacy.*"

We would be most grateful if you could accord her the needed assistance she may require from your outfit.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Emmanuel Saboro  
Director