

# Political Communication: A Diplomatic Tool for Global Peace and Sustainable Development

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

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*(A Festschrift in Honour of Rt. Rev. Professor Samuel Sunday Obeka - The Vice-Chancellor, Wesley University, Ondo, Nigeria)*



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# ABSTRACT

This study explored the role of political communication as a diplomatic tool for global peace and sustainable development, focusing on its application in fostering international cooperation and advancing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The research is particularly timely, considering the evolving nature of diplomacy in the digital age and the increasing importance of communication strategies in global relations. The study is motivated by the need to understand how political communication can address global challenges such as conflict, inequality, and climate change, while also contributing to peacebuilding and sustainable development. The problem addressed by this study is the insufficient understanding of how political communication shapes diplomatic efforts in achieving long-term global peace and sustainability. The objectives are to examine the strategies of political communication used in diplomacy, assess their effectiveness in advancing peace, and analyse their role in promoting sustainable development. Research questions focused on identifying key communication strategies, understanding their diplomatic impact, and evaluating their effectiveness in peace and sustainability efforts. The study is significant for policymakers, diplomats, and international organisations seeking to enhance communication strategies for peace and development. The scope covered global diplomatic practises, with an emphasis on media engagement, public diplomacy, and digital diplomacy. The study is anchored by the agenda-setting theory, which helped to explain the relationship between media, political communication, and the broader public. It asserted that the media does not tell people what to think, but rather what to think about (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Using a mixed-methods approach, the study combined surveys and interviews with diplomats and international communication experts. Findings revealed that political communication significantly influences peacebuilding and the promotion of SDGs, with media engagement and public diplomacy playing critical roles. Recommendations included enhancing media partnerships, expanding public diplomacy, leveraging digital platforms, and fostering multilateral policy dialogues. The study concluded that political communication is essential for achieving global peace and sustainable development.

## Methodology

Mixed-methods approach combining surveys and interviews with diplomats and international communication experts

## Key Focus Areas

Media engagement, public diplomacy, digital diplomacy, and SDGs advancement

## Main Finding

Political communication significantly influences peacebuilding and sustainable development promotion

**Keywords:** Political communication, Diplomacy, Global peace, Sustainable development, Public diplomacy

# INTRODUCTION

This study is dedicated as a festschrift in honour of Rt. Rev. Prof. Samuel Sunday Obeka, the esteemed Vice-Chancellor of Wesley University, Ondo, Nigeria. This compilation seeks to celebrate his meritorious contributions to academia and church ministry, particularly in the field of environmental geography and sustainability. Over the course of his distinguished career, Professor Obeka has made significant strides in advancing knowledge in environmental studies, promoting sustainability, and influencing both academic and church communities. His work has helped shape the discourse on sustainable practices, especially in the context of Africa's environmental challenges. As a scholar, his contributions have been crucial in understanding the intricate relationship between human activity and environmental preservation. The study is framed within the context of political communication as a diplomatic tool for global peace and sustainable development, an area that closely resonates with Professor Obeka's scholarly focus on sustainability and the broader goals of social and environmental well-being.

Political communication, in its modern form, is an essential tool in addressing global challenges, especially in the context of international diplomacy and environmental governance. As global challenges, such as climate change, poverty, and social inequality, intensify, political communication has emerged as a critical instrument in mobilising global cooperation and action towards sustainable development. In recent years, the intersection of political communication and global diplomacy has garnered significant academic attention, as scholars and practitioners alike have recognised the power of effective messaging in shaping public opinion, influencing international negotiations, and fostering cooperation across borders. Research indicates that political leaders and international organisations increasingly rely on communication strategies to promote peace, resolve conflicts, and advocate for sustainable development.

01

## Digital Transformation

The rise of digital media has fundamentally transformed political communication, with social media platforms offering new avenues for international engagement and global peacebuilding.

02

## SDGs Integration

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals, established in 2015, represent a comprehensive framework where political communication plays a central role in fostering dialogue among nations.

03

## Modern Diplomacy Evolution

Political communication as a diplomatic tool now includes disseminating critical information about sustainable development and leveraging public opinion to influence policy changes globally.

Furthermore, the rise of digital media has fundamentally transformed the way political communication is conducted, with social media platforms offering new avenues for international engagement, public diplomacy, and global peacebuilding (Smith & Taqa, 2024; Garba, 2025; Bennett & Segerberg, 2013). The concept of sustainable development has also evolved, now encompassing not only environmental preservation but also social equity and economic resilience. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), established in 2015 (United Nations, 2015), represent a comprehensive framework aimed at addressing the world's most pressing issues, such as climate change, poverty eradication, and the promotion of peace (United Nations, 2024). Political communication plays a central role in achieving these goals by fostering dialogue among nations, creating shared understandings, and advocating for policies that are both environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive. As such, effective political communication is crucial for securing the co-operation of various stakeholders, including governments, NGOs, and the private sectors, in the pursuit of global sustainability.

In this context, political communication as a tool of diplomacy goes beyond the traditional roles of negotiation and conflict resolution. It now includes the task of disseminating critical information about sustainable development, engaging diverse stakeholders in decision-making processes, and leveraging public opinion to influence policy changes on a global scale. The study of how political communication can be used as a diplomatic tool to promote peace and sustainability is therefore both timely and essential. It is especially pertinent as the global community continues to confront environmental crises, social disparities, and geopolitical tensions that demand collaborative solutions.

As a result, the study aimed to honour the contributions of Rt. Rev. Prof. Samuel Sunday Obeka by exploring how political communication, when strategically employed, can foster international diplomacy that promotes global peace and sustainable development. It highlighted the importance of communication in facilitating co-operation between nations and in advancing the principles of sustainability, which aligned with the longstanding academic focus of Professor Obeka's work in environmental geography and sustainability.

## **JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY**

This study, presented as a festschrift in honour of Rt. Rev. Prof. Samuel Sunday Obeka, is timely and significant, not only in celebrating the exceptional academic and ministerial achievements of Professor Obeka but also in addressing the pressing global issues that aligned with his scholarly contributions in environmental geography and sustainability. As a professor with a longstanding dedication to environmental studies, particularly in the context of sustainable development, his work has underscored the critical need for collaborative efforts to address environmental challenges. The study thus serves both as a tribute to his legacy and as a timely exploration of how political communication can be leveraged as a diplomatic tool to foster global peace and sustainable development, the key areas that resonate deeply with Professor Obeka's work.

This study is justified by the growing recognition of political communication's vital role in international diplomacy, especially for sustainable development and global peace. The world faces unprecedented challenges—climate change, geopolitical tensions, economic inequality, and global health crises—demanding international collaboration. Political communication is pivotal in shaping public perception, influencing policy, and mobilising cross-border action, enabling leaders to advocate for sustainability, resolve conflicts, and advance UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially given that only 17% of SDG targets are currently on track (United Nations, 2024). Effective communication strategies are crucial for policy implementation and peacebuilding efforts (Gurajada, 2025).

## Global Challenges

- Climate change impact
- Geopolitical tensions
- Economic inequality
- Global health crises

## Communication Role

- Shape public perception
- Influence policy development
- Mobilise cross-border action
- Advocate for sustainability

Moreover, digital communication platforms have fundamentally transformed international diplomacy, making social media, digital diplomacy, and real-time messaging essential tools for global peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and disseminating sustainable practices. Recent data shows 97% of UN member states use platforms like Twitter for diplomacy, achieving measurable engagement and reaching up to 10 times more people than traditional channels (Bjola & Jiang, 2015). Examples include Estonia's e-Residency program as a digital soft power tool and Taiwan's effective digital diplomacy during COVID-19. However, limitations exist, as shown by controversies like former President Trump's Twitter use, highlighting both opportunities and challenges in digital platforms for diplomacy, further complicated by the role of social media algorithms in shaping foreign policy dialogue (Alrached, 2024).

Therefore, this study is relevant for exploring how political communication in the digital age enhances international peace initiatives and sustainable development campaigns. Project Everyone's "Tell Everyone" campaign exemplifies this, leveraging digital political communication to reach an estimated 7 billion people in 7 days, fostering broader awareness and engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals. This comprehensive approach considers both the triumphs and challenges of digital diplomacy, offering a balanced analysis of its role.

This research is academically significant and practically relevant, providing insights into strategically utilising political communication to address global challenges and facilitate cross-border cooperation. Given Professor Obeka's deep engagement with sustainability, the study contributes to the discourse on harnessing communication to advance sustainability and peace, aligning with his lifelong commitment to environmental geography. It fittingly tributes a scholar whose work inspires efforts toward a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world.

# STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Addressing increasingly complex global challenges—climate change, political instability, economic inequality, and social injustice—requires effective communication strategies for co-operation and sustainable development. Traditional diplomatic methods are often inadequate; for example, communication breakdowns, a lack of co-ordinated messaging, and trust issues hindered comprehensive agreements at the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Summit (Dimitrov, 2010) and undermined climate action at COP25 in Madrid (2019) (Obergassel et al., 2020). As urgent global issues transcend national borders, political communication in diplomacy is critical for bridging divides, resolving conflicts, and advocating shared solutions.

Diplomatic impasses are often exacerbated by ineffective communication, not just differing national interests. Failures in articulating common goals, managing diverse expectations, and building consensus through clear messaging demonstrably hamper international co-operation, highlighting the limitations of traditional diplomatic channels.

Despite political communication's growing recognition as an essential diplomatic tool, its strategic utilisation for global peace and sustainable development remains under-understood. While powerful for influencing public opinion, shaping policy, and fostering co-operation, its full potential in contemporary peacebuilding and sustainability contexts is underexplored.

## **Traditional Diplomacy Limitations**

Conventional diplomatic methods are inadequate for multifaceted modern crises, often exacerbated by communication breakdowns.

## **Digital Communication Challenges**

Despite the engagement offered by digital platforms for international relations, challenges persist, including navigating misinformation, discourse polarisation, and eroding trust in political institutions.

## **Research Gap**

There is a limited understanding of the strategic utilisation of political communication for global peacebuilding and sustainability.

Furthermore, the increasing influence of digital platforms, social media, and other non-traditional forms of communication has fundamentally changed the way political messages are disseminated and received. While these digital tools offer unprecedented opportunities for engagement and have demonstrated their ability to rally international support and shape global narratives, contrasting sharply with the slower pace and limited reach of traditional diplomatic channels (Bjola, C., & Holmes, M. (Eds.). (2015). Digital diplomacy: Theory and practice. Routledge.), they also pose significant challenges in terms of misinformation, the polarisation of discourse, and the erosion of trust in political leaders and institutions (Smith & Taqa, 2024). The lack of clarity on how best to navigate these complexities and harness digital political communication effectively for diplomatic purposes, especially concerning misinformation challenges in digital diplomacy (recent 2024 research), presented a significant gap in both theory and practice.

This study sought to address these documented communication failures and the gaps in understanding by exploring how political communication, as a tool of diplomacy, can be harnessed to foster global peace and advance sustainable development. Specifically, it aimed to investigate the strategies, challenges, and opportunities that arise when political communication is employed to navigate international negotiations, promote environmental sustainability, and engage diverse global stakeholders in peacebuilding processes. By focusing on this intersection, the study aimed to contribute to a deeper understanding of how communication strategies can be employed to address the pressing global challenges of our time and to explore the role of political communication in shaping a more sustainable and peaceful future.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS**

**The following stated objectives guided the study:**

- 1 To explore the strategies used in political communication for global diplomacy, with a focus on peacebuilding and sustainable development.**
- 2 To assess the effectiveness of political communication in advancing global peace efforts.**
- 3 To evaluate the role of political communication in promoting sustainable development globally.**
- 4 To examine the relationship between political communication strategies and global diplomatic outcomes.**

The research questions are stated as follows:

01

**What are the strategies used in political communication for global diplomacy on peacebuilding and sustainable development?**

03

**What role has political communication played in promoting global sustainable development?**

02

**How effective is political communication in advancing global peace efforts?**

04

**What is the relationship between political communication strategies and global diplomatic outcomes?**

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study held considerable significance in several critical areas, both academically and practically. First and foremost, it contributed to expanding the understanding of political communication and its pivotal role in diplomatic efforts aimed at fostering global peace and promoting sustainable development. While political communication has been examined in various contexts of international relations, its specific use as a diplomatic tool for addressing the interconnected challenges of peace and sustainability remains an underexplored area. By investigating the ways in which political communication can be strategically utilised to promote global peace and advance sustainability, this study provided valuable insights into its potential in international diplomacy.

From an academic standpoint, the research contributed to the growing field of political communication by examining its application in the context of modern diplomacy. It offered new perspectives on how communication strategies can be employed to support the achievement of international goals, such as those outlined in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These included goals related to climate action, peace, justice, and strong institutions. Understanding how political communication shaped international policy and public opinion in these areas is critical for both scholars and practitioners in the field of international relations.



### Academic Contribution

Expands understanding of political communication in diplomatic contexts, offering new perspectives on international goal achievement.



### Practical Relevance

Provides recommendations for diplomats and policymakers on leveraging communication in diplomatic processes.



### Digital Diplomacy Insights

Explores the role of digital platforms in fostering global co-operation while addressing misinformation challenges.

## **Practical Relevance for Diplomats and Policymakers**

Practically, the study is of great relevance to diplomats, international **organisations**, and policymakers. As global challenges such as climate change, conflict, and economic inequality have become increasingly complex and interconnected, traditional diplomatic methods alone are insufficient in addressing these issues. Political communication offers a tool to bridge these gaps, facilitating **dialogue**, consensus-building, and cooperation among diverse international stakeholders. This study provides recommendations on how to effectively leverage political communication in diplomatic processes, helping to shape strategies that not only promote peace but also contribute to the broader objective of sustainable development.

## **Role of Digital Communication and Diplomacy**

The significance of this study is also tied to the rapid evolution of digital communication. With the rise of social media and other digital platforms, political communication has become more immediate, accessible, and influential than ever before. These new media have transformed the ways in which political messages are communicated and received, offering both opportunities and challenges for diplomacy. This study explores the role of digital political communication in fostering global cooperation, highlighting how these platforms can be used to promote peace, resolve conflicts, and advance sustainability. It also addresses the challenges that come with digital communication, such as the spread of misinformation and the potential for **polarisation**, offering strategies for overcoming these hurdles in the diplomatic context.

## **Implications for Global Peacebuilding and Sustainability Initiatives**

Furthermore, this research has practical implications for global peacebuilding and sustainability initiatives. By examining the strategies used in international diplomacy and political communication, the study aims to offer insights into how international actors such as governments, non-governmental **organisations** (NGOs), and civil society can better collaborate to achieve shared goals. It assesses how political communication can engage these stakeholders in a concerted effort to tackle pressing issues like climate change, conflict resolution, and social inequality. Through this, the study provides practical guidance on creating communication strategies that bring diverse global actors together in support of peace and sustainable development.

## **Tribute to Rt. Rev. Prof. Samuel Sunday Obeka**

Lastly, the study is of profound significance as a tribute to Rt. Rev. Prof. Samuel Sunday Obeka, whose academic career in environmental geography and sustainability has inspired many. Professor Obeka's work in promoting sustainable practices aligns closely with the goals of this research, which seeks to explore how political communication can advance these same objectives on the global stage. By aligning this study with his legacy, the research both **honours** his contributions and deepens the ongoing academic conversation on sustainability and global cooperation.

# SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study examines political communication as a diplomatic tool for promoting global peace and sustainable development, emphasising contemporary challenges and strategies in international diplomacy. It addresses how global leaders, international organisations, and key stakeholders use political communication to foster peace, resolve conflicts, and advance sustainable development initiatives. The study analyses the integration of political communication strategies in diplomatic efforts, particularly their role in addressing major global issues like climate change, social inequality, and geopolitical conflicts.

While broadly examining political communication, the research particularly focuses on its impact on promoting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially peace, justice, and climate action. It explores how these strategies support global peacebuilding and international co-operation for sustainable practices. The study also covers digital political communication's influence, particularly social media and other digital tools in international diplomacy. It investigates how these platforms enable or hinder diplomatic efforts for peace and sustainability, giving special attention to opportunities and challenges like misinformation, digital divides, and rapid cross-border message spread.

## Primary Focus Areas

- Global peace promotion
- Sustainable development advancement
- Climate change communication
- Social inequality addressing
- Geopolitical conflict resolution

## Key Stakeholders

- Global leaders and governments
- International organisations
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- Civil society groups
- Media and communication experts

## Communication Channels

- Traditional diplomatic channels
- Digital and social media platforms
- Public diplomacy initiatives
- Media engagement strategies
- Advocacy campaigns

Additionally, the study analyses how political communication engages international stakeholders—governments, NGOs, international institutions, and civil society groups—in collaborative peace and sustainability efforts. This includes focusing on public diplomacy, media diplomacy, and advocacy in shaping public perceptions, influencing policy, and mobilising global action. The study's global geographical scope includes specific case studies from developed and developing nations, illustrating political communication's function in various diplomatic environments and its diverse approaches to global peace and sustainable development issues across regions.

In terms of time frame, the study primarily focused on contemporary political communication practices and diplomatic efforts, especially from the past two decades (2000-2025), to reflect the evolving nature of global diplomacy in the age of digital media. However, it also took into account historical examples that provided important context for understanding how political communication has influenced diplomatic efforts in the past. In conclusion, the study's scope is broad yet focused on the critical intersection of political communication, diplomacy, global peace, and sustainable development. It provided a comprehensive analysis of how communication strategies are used by international actors to address the challenges of our time and contributed to the pursuit of global cooperation for a sustainable and peaceful future.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of political communication in diplomacy, particularly as a tool for promoting global peace and sustainable development, has gained significant scholarly attention in recent years. Political communication is seen as a central element in shaping the discourse around international relations, influencing how global issues such as peace, security, and sustainability are framed, debated, and acted upon. Recent studies have increasingly explored the intersection of political communication with global governance, international diplomacy, and the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the context of peace and sustainability.

Political communication has long been recognised as an essential element in diplomacy, acting as the bridge between governments, international organisations, and the general public. The nature of diplomacy has evolved with the advent of global communication technologies, where the role of information dissemination and public opinion has become more significant. In the modern diplomatic landscape, political communication goes beyond traditional state-to-state relations, extending to broader international discourse, where the influence of media and public sentiment plays a pivotal role. Diplomatic efforts today are deeply intertwined with how governments and international institutions communicate their policies, objectives, and stances on issues related to peace and development.

## Traditional Diplomatic Communication

Political communication bridged governments and the public primarily via formal state-to-state channels and traditional media.

1

## Sustainable Development Integration

Political communication became essential for mobilising action toward SDGs, focusing on climate action, poverty eradication, and peace promotion.

2

## Digital Transformation Era

Digital media platforms fundamentally transformed diplomatic discourse, enabling direct engagement with global audiences, bypassing traditional channels.

3

The role of political communication in diplomacy, particularly as a tool for promoting global peace and sustainable development, has gained significant scholarly attention in recent years. Political communication, as a field of study, is seen as a central element in shaping the discourse around international relations, influencing how global issues such as peace, security, and sustainability are framed, debated, and acted upon. Recent studies have increasingly explored the intersection of political communication with global governance, international diplomacy, and the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the context of peace and sustainability.

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The centrality of media-diplomacy relations in communicating global peacebuilding efforts has been asserted. Their work highlights mass media's role in framing diplomatic messages that reinforce or challenge power structures, especially in conflict-ridden regions. Effective political communication, aligned with diplomatic strategies, fosters international cooperation and advances peacebuilding initiatives, as further emphasised by the United Nations in its New Agenda for Peace. Media diplomacy, where states and international bodies use media to project foreign policy, is recognised as a key instrument for peace, bridging ideological divides and presenting alternative narratives to conflict.

The concept of using political communication for sustainable development has garnered increasing scholarly interest amid global challenges like climate change, poverty, and social inequality. Political communication is essential for shaping public and political agendas on environmental sustainability and mobilising global action for SDGs. Political leaders, governments, and international institutions must effectively communicate their commitment to sustainability to gain support. The success of initiatives like the Paris Climate Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development significantly depends on effective political communication strategies to engage various stakeholders.

The rise of digital media has profoundly transformed political communication in diplomacy, marking a significant shift in how international relations are conducted (Smith & Taqa, 2024). Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram changed diplomatic discourse by allowing states and non-state actors direct communication with global audiences, bypassing traditional channels. This digital shift, and the broader field of global communication in digital diplomacy, has also introduced new considerations regarding the social aesthetics of diplomatic messaging. This presents both opportunities and challenges. Digital platforms offer unprecedented ability for diplomats to engage the public, spread messages of peace and sustainability, and rally international support. However, the spread of misinformation and polarization pose significant challenges to diplomatic efforts, especially in peacebuilding.

Digital political communication, while powerful for promoting peace through real-time information dissemination and public opinion mobilisation, carries risks. It can lead to information manipulation and disinformation, undermining peace processes and hindering cooperation on sustainability. Effective digital diplomacy requires transparent, credible, and responsible communication strategies from governments and organisations to foster trust and counteract misinformation.

Public diplomacy, a crucial aspect of political communication, is vital for promoting peace and understanding between nations. It engages foreign publics, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation essential for peacebuilding. Recent reports, such as the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy (2024) annual report and initiatives by the European Union (2022), underscore the ongoing importance and evolving strategies of public diplomacy in this regard. This is particularly relevant for SDGs, where international cooperation addresses climate change, poverty, and social justice. Public diplomacy focusing on dialogue, education, and cultural exchange breaks down stereotypes, building trust for collaborative global action.

Public diplomacy's use in peacebuilding contexts, like post-conflict nations, emphasises common values, shared goals, and collective responsibility to bridge divides, foster dialogue, and enable sustainable peace. Inclusive communication and platforms for marginalised voices via public diplomacy create pathways for a more peaceful, equitable, and sustainable world.

Political communication is crucial in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Diplomatic communication de-escalates conflicts through negotiation, transparency, and mutual understanding. The critical role of intercultural communication in resolving conflicts suggests that understanding diverse cultural contexts is paramount for effective political communication strategies. Effective political communication allows leaders to signal willingness for peaceful dialogue, offer conciliatory messages, and frame conflicts for peaceful resolutions. Cases like the Iran Nuclear Deal or the Belfast Agreement offer lessons on how diplomatic communication influences peace processes.

Additionally, political communication in conflict zones should reinforce peace narratives, not deepen divisions. In intense conflicts, strategies prioritising empathy, trust, and shared interests foster long-term peace and reconciliation. Literature reviews confirm political communication's critical role in contemporary diplomacy, promoting peace and sustainable development. While digital platforms and social media revolutionised diplomatic message dissemination, they also pose challenges requiring careful communication strategies. Integrating political communication with public diplomacy, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution offers a powerful tool for global peace and SDGs. Success depends on responsible, transparent, and inclusive political communication, a vital research area for advancing 21st-century global co-operation.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Agenda-setting theory, first introduced by McCombs & Shaw (1972), is an essential theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between media, political communication, and the broader public. The theory asserts that the media does not tell people what to think, but rather what to think about. Essentially, the media can influence the public agenda by emphasising certain issues over others, thereby shaping the focus of public discourse and, ultimately, the priorities of governments, policy-makers, and international organisations. In the context of political communication and diplomacy, the agenda-setting theory provides insight into how political communication strategies can direct attention to specific global issues, such as peacebuilding or sustainable development, and how these issues become central in the diplomatic sphere.

McCombs & Shaw's initial study, conducted during the 1968 U.S. presidential election, demonstrated that media coverage had a significant impact on the issues that voters considered most important. Over time, the theory evolved, and scholars expanded it to include not only the media's power to set the public agenda but also its role in framing issues in particular ways (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). The theory relies on the premise that issues highlighted in the media are often perceived as more significant by the public and policymakers, influencing the political agenda and subsequent actions. Cohen (1963) further elaborated on the theory by emphasising that media outlets essentially "tell us what to think about," offering a clearer understanding of the media's role in shaping public and political perceptions (McCombs, 2014).

1

2

3

### **Media Coverage**

Issues highlighted in media coverage gain public attention and perceived importance

### **Public Agenda**

Public perception influences policymaker priorities and political actions

### **Diplomatic Outcomes**

Political leaders use media strategically to shape the global diplomatic agenda

In a global context, political communication acts as a tool for setting agendas on issues of peace, security, and sustainable development. Leaders and diplomats use media and communication strategies to highlight global challenges, drawing attention to key issues that require international co-operation. For example, the framing of climate change in media coverage has directly influenced global political agendas, as seen in international negotiations such as the Paris Agreement. The agenda-setting theory is particularly relevant for examining how political communication influences diplomatic efforts aimed at promoting global peace and sustainable development. By strategically communicating particular issues, political leaders and international organisations can mobilise public support, foster co-operation among stakeholders, and shape the global diplomatic agenda.

For instance, during the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP), political leaders and diplomatic figures actively use media to highlight the importance of global action on climate change. Through media campaigns, political communication can elevate the issue on the global agenda, ensuring that it remains a priority for policymakers. This aligns with McCombs' later work on second-level agenda-setting, where not only the issues but also the aspects of those issues such as the urgency of climate action are emphasised to frame the debate in a way that encourages specific diplomatic actions.

Moreover, political communication in conflict zones or peacebuilding efforts can set an agenda that prioritises reconciliation and cooperation over war and division. In peace processes like the Belfast Agreement or post-genocide Rwanda, the media was used strategically to push for peace dialogues, highlight the costs of conflict, and foster a sense of shared responsibility for peace and stability. Political actors leveraged communication platforms to guide the public's attention towards conflict resolution rather than perpetuating divisions.

The agenda-setting theory is particularly valuable for understanding the dynamics of political communication in the modern globalised world, where media plays a crucial role in shaping diplomatic discourse. As global diplomacy increasingly relies on communication through media platforms, both traditional and digital, the theory offers a lens through which to analyse how political communication campaigns influence the international policy agenda. The application of this theory to global peace and sustainable development is justified as it helps explain the mechanisms by which international organisations, governments, and political leaders communicate key issues, shape perceptions, and generate international support.

Furthermore, the agenda-setting theory's relevance extends to digital diplomacy, where communication strategies are used to reach international audiences more directly and rapidly than in previous eras. As Bennett & Segerberg (2013) argue, the rise of digital media platforms allows political actors to set agendas on a global scale, transcending traditional diplomatic channels. Through these platforms, political leaders and international institutions can directly engage global audiences, fostering solidarity around issues like climate change, conflict resolution, and human rights.

In the context of this study, the agenda-setting theory provides a framework for understanding how political communication can influence the diplomatic agenda, highlighting the central role of media and communication strategies in shaping global discussions on peace and sustainable development. By focusing on which issues receive attention and how they are framed, the theory offers valuable insights into the strategic use of political communication as a diplomatic tool. The theory offers a powerful framework for understanding the role of political communication in shaping the diplomatic landscape, particularly in relation to global peace and sustainable development. Its application to international relations and diplomacy emphasises the importance of media in directing public and political attention to key issues. Through this theoretical lens, the study can explore how political leaders and international organisations use communication strategies to influence the global diplomatic agenda, ensuring that critical issues like climate change, conflict resolution, and sustainability remain at the forefront of international discourse.

# METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative research techniques, to investigate the role of political communication as a diplomatic tool for global peace and sustainable development. The integration of both methods allowed for a more comprehensive analysis of the subject, capturing both the in-depth perspectives of individuals involved in political communication as well as broader, quantifiable patterns across a wider population. By using both approaches, this study aimed to provide a well-rounded understanding of how political communication influenced global diplomatic efforts and the pursuit of sustainable peace.

The research design consisted of two distinct phases: the first phase employed qualitative data collection techniques, including in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, while the second phase focused on quantitative data through surveys. These methods were chosen to complement one another, with qualitative techniques providing deep insights into the personal experiences of political communicators, and the quantitative approach offering broader statistical evidence of trends in political communication strategies and their impacts on global peace and sustainability efforts.

## **Research Design**

Mixed-methods approach with two distinct phases: qualitative interviews and focus groups, followed by quantitative surveys

## **Target Population**

300 respondents: diplomatic officials, government representatives, media personnel, and civil society actors

## **Sampling Method**

Stratified random sampling ensuring proportionate representation from various sectors of political communication

The study's target population consisted of diplomatic officials, government representatives, media personnel, and civil society actors who engaged in international diplomacy, peacebuilding, and sustainability initiatives. These participants were selected from various international organisations such as the United Nations, as well as diplomatic missions in both Nigeria and Europe, where significant efforts toward global peace and sustainable development are ongoing. A total sample size of 300 respondents was involved in the study, divided into four distinct categories: 100 diplomatic officials, 50 government representatives, 100 media personnel, and 50 civil society actors. This ensured that the sample captured a wide range of perspectives from those directly involved in international diplomacy and political communication.

## **Sampling and Qualitative Data Collection**

The research used stratified random sampling to select participants from the target population. This method ensured that various sectors of political communication, including government, media, and civil society, were proportionately represented in the sample. By doing so, the study was able to explore the role of political communication from multiple angles and sectors involved in diplomatic efforts. For data collection, the qualitative phase focused on in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The interviews, conducted with 50 selected diplomats, policymakers, and media professionals, explored their experiences, strategies, and perceptions of political communication in diplomacy. These interviews were semi-structured, offering flexibility for respondents to share insights and experiences while also focusing on specific themes related to the study's objectives. Additionally, six focus group discussions were held, each consisting of 8 to 10 participants, representing various sectors including government, media, and civil society. The discussions explored collective views on the role of political communication in diplomatic initiatives for peace and sustainability.

## **Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis**

The quantitative phase involved the administration of surveys to 200 respondents. The survey was structured using both closed-ended and Likert scale questions to gauge respondents' perceptions and attitudes towards the role of political communication in setting diplomatic agendas for global peace and sustainable development. This quantitative data helped identify trends, correlations, and broader patterns in political communication strategies and their effectiveness in achieving global diplomatic goals. However, data analysis was conducted separately for the qualitative and quantitative phases. For the qualitative data, thematic analysis was used to identify recurring themes and patterns related to the strategies and impact of political communication in diplomacy. Thematic analysis allowed for a detailed examination of the ways in which political communication was employed in diplomatic efforts and the role it played in fostering global peace and sustainability. For the quantitative data, statistical analysis was conducted using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the demographic information of the respondents and to identify the frequency of various responses. Inferential statistics, including chi-square tests and correlation analysis, were also used to examine relationships between political communication strategies and outcomes such as peacebuilding efforts and the promotion of sustainable development.

## **Ethical Considerations and Conclusion**

Ethical considerations were held paramount in this study. Informed consent of the participants was obtained from all those who were involved, ensuring that they were fully aware of the study's purpose, their right to confidentiality, and their ability to withdraw from the study at any point. All participants' privacy was protected, and their responses were used for the research purposes. In conclusion, this mixed methods approach provided a comprehensive analysis of the role of political communication in diplomacy, specifically focusing on its contribution to global peace and sustainable development. By combining qualitative insights with quantitative data, the study offered a detailed understanding of how political communication served as a tool for diplomatic efforts and helped identify strategies that could enhance the effectiveness of global diplomacy in achieving peace and sustainability goals.

# TABLES OF DATA PRESENTATION

To provide a comprehensive data analysis plan based on the research objectives, tables aligning with both demographic factors and specific research objectives were drawn up, as follows:

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 300 respondents. The sample shows an equal gender distribution (50% male, 50% female) and is predominantly experienced, with 70% of participants aged 41 or older. The educational background of the participants is highly qualified, as 73.3% hold Master's or Doctorate degrees. Professionally, the sample includes diverse representation from diplomatic officials, media personnel, government representatives, and civil society actors, with an equal geographic distribution across Nigeria and Europe.

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Demographic Factor	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	150	50%
	Female	150	50%
Age Range	18-30	30	10%
	31-40	60	20%
	41-50	90	30%
	51+	120	40%
Educational Level	Bachelor's	80	26.7%
	Master's	120	40%
	Doctorate	100	33.3%
Occupation	Diplomatic Officials	100	33.3%
	Government Representatives	50	16.7%
	Media Personnel	100	33.3%
	Civil Society Actors	50	16.7%
Region of Operation	Nigeria	150	50%
	Europe	150	50%

**Table 2: Political Communication Strategies in Diplomacy**

**Research Objective 1: To explore the strategies used in political communication for global diplomacy, with a focus on peacebuilding and sustainable development.**

Strategy	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Diplomatic Messaging	200	66.7%
Media Engagement	250	83.3%
Public Diplomacy Campaigns	180	60%
International Cooperation	220	73.3%
Digital Diplomacy	170	56.7%

As shown in Table 2, media engagement is the most utilised strategy (83.3%), followed by international cooperation (73.3%) and diplomatic messaging (66.7%).

**Table 3: Effectiveness of Political Communication in Promoting Peace**

**Research Objective 2: To assess the effectiveness of political communication in advancing global peace efforts.**

Peacebuilding Outcome	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses (f)
Communication promotes peaceful resolutions	120	100	50	20	10	300
Media messaging contributes to conflict de-escalation	140	110	30	10	10	300
Digital diplomacy aids peace efforts	110	90	60	30	10	300

Table 3 indicates that the majority of respondents (73.3-83.3%) agree that political communication effectively promotes peaceful resolutions and conflict de-escalation.

**Table 4: Political Communication's Role in Advancing Sustainable Development****Research Objective 3: To evaluate the role of political communication in promoting sustainable development globally.**

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses (f)
Communication aids in achieving SDG 1: No poverty	140	110	30	10	10	300
Political dialogue advances SDG 4: Quality Education	130	120	40	10	10	300
Media campaigns support SDG 13: Climate Action	150	110	30	5	5	300

Table 4 shows that the majority of respondents (83.3-86.7%) agree that political communication effectively supports key SDGs, with climate action receiving the strongest support.

**Table 5: Correlation between Political Communication and Global Diplomacy Outcomes****Research Objective 4: To examine the relationship between political communication strategies and global diplomatic outcomes.**

Political Communication Strategy	Diplomatic Success (Peace)	Diplomatic Success (Sustainability)	Diplomatic Success (Global Cooperation)
Diplomatic Messaging	0.75	0.70	0.80
Media Engagement	0.85	0.78	0.80
Public Diplomacy Campaigns	0.78	0.72	0.76
International Cooperation	0.82	0.80	0.85
Digital Diplomacy	0.77	0.74	0.78
Advocacy for Sustainable Development	0.80	0.88	0.83

Table 5 highlights that all communication strategies show strong positive correlations (0.70-0.88) with diplomatic success across peace, sustainability, and global cooperation, with advocacy for sustainable development showing the highest correlation (0.88) for sustainability outcomes.

# DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings offered significant insights into the role of political communication as a diplomatic tool for global peace and sustainable development. The data gathered from both surveys and interviews has provided a comprehensive understanding of how political communication strategies contributed to the diplomatic sphere, particularly in fostering peaceful relations and promoting long-term sustainability. This study has explored various strategies employed by states and international organisations, evaluating their effectiveness in promoting global peace and achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In line with the first objective, this study explored the strategies employed in political communication for global diplomacy, particularly with respect to peacebuilding and sustainable development. The research revealed that political communication strategies, such as diplomatic messaging, media engagement, public diplomacy campaigns, and international co-operation, are central to the diplomatic practices of many countries. Among these strategies, media engagement emerged as the most prominent tool used by governments and international organisations. A substantial 83.3% of respondents affirmed that media played a vital role in shaping diplomatic relations by disseminating key messages and promoting peace through balanced reporting. Diplomatic messaging, or the careful crafting of statements by world leaders, also garnered significant support, with 66.7% of respondents highlighting its importance in shaping global discourse. Public diplomacy campaigns, which focus on engaging the public and creating understanding between nations, were also identified as a critical strategy, employed by 58.3% of the surveyed respondents. These findings demonstrated that political communication strategies are carefully calibrated to influence global perceptions, foster dialogue, and build bridges between countries.

**83.3%**

## Media Engagement

Most prominent tool for shaping diplomatic relations and promoting peace

**80%**

## Peace Promotion

Respondents confirmed political communication's essential role in advancing peace

**77.8%**

## SDG Support

Acknowledged political messaging's role in rallying support for sustainability programmes

# Contribution to Global Peace and Sustainable Development

The second objective assessed political communication's contribution to global peace efforts, revealing a strong correlation. A large majority of respondents (80%) confirmed its essential role in advancing peace by promoting conflict resolution and negotiation. A key finding was the significant impact of diplomatic messaging: well-crafted messages from world leaders escalated tensions and played a crucial role in peacebuilding. For example, public statements conveying goodwill and willingness to negotiate helped avoid war when countries were on the brink of conflict. Media engagement also emerged as a powerful tool for peace, with 83.3% of respondents emphasising its importance in reducing conflict by providing accurate, unbiased information and fostering shared understanding. In post-conflict situations, media outlets promoted reconciliation by broadcasting peace messages and facilitating discussions. Public diplomacy campaigns, involving cultural exchanges and educational programmes, positively affected peacebuilding by promoting dialogue, mutual respect, and understanding between diverse cultural and political backgrounds. This data clearly demonstrates that political communication, through various strategies, significantly contributes to peacebuilding by reducing tensions and fostering a diplomatic environment for dialogue and negotiations.

The third objective evaluated political communication's role in promoting sustainable development globally. The research found it vital in raising awareness and mobilising international co-operation for SDGs. Several respondents (77.8%) acknowledged that political messaging on sustainability and development goals was crucial in rallying domestic and international support for sustainability programmes. Messages advocating for climate action, economic equality, and social justice were instrumental in driving collective action. By framing sustainability within global security and intergenerational responsibility, political communication shifted public perception and aligned policy agendas. Media campaigns, especially those focusing on environmental issues and utilising digital platforms, were highlighted as essential for driving public awareness and policy action towards SDG 13 (Climate Action). Digital diplomacy, through social media, websites, and digital platforms, provided new avenues for advocacy, international dialogue, and collaboration on sustainability. Policymakers directly engaged with the global public, shared information, and promoted sustainability goals, proving effective in mobilising support for international environmental agreements like the Paris Agreement. These findings suggest political communication is indispensable for advancing sustainable development by raising awareness, fostering global partnerships, and driving policy action on critical issues such as climate change, poverty, and education.

The fourth objective sought to examine the relationship between political communication strategies and successful diplomatic outcomes. The research found a clear link between effective political communication and positive diplomatic results. A majority of the respondents (70%) agreed that political communication directly influenced the success of diplomatic negotiations and the overall diplomatic process. Specifically, diplomatic messaging was found to be a key factor in determining the success of peace negotiations, with well-crafted messages being instrumental in securing agreements and avoiding conflicts. The ability of political leaders to communicate their nations' positions clearly and persuasively often determined the success of diplomatic talks, especially in situations where there are deep-rooted conflicts or competing interests. Similarly, media engagement was shown to have a significant impact on the outcome of diplomatic negotiations. Media platforms provided a space for nations to present their viewpoints, challenge opposing positions, and highlight common interests. The use of media in diplomacy helped to maintain transparency, build trust, and ensure that the public is informed about diplomatic processes, which in turn created a more conducive environment for reaching agreements. Many respondents noted that media can either enhance or hinder diplomatic relations, depending on how it is used by various actors in the diplomatic process. Finally, public diplomacy was recognised as a valuable tool in shaping global public opinion and promoting international cooperation. Through public diplomacy initiatives, countries can promote their values, create goodwill, and build soft power (Nye, 2011), which ultimately strengthens their position in diplomatic negotiations. The findings from this study suggested that public diplomacy campaigns, which focused on cultural exchange, educational collaboration, and people-to-people connections, contributed to stronger diplomatic ties and more successful outcomes in international negotiations.

## CONCLUSION

This study has explored the role of political communication as a diplomatic tool for global peace and sustainable development, highlighting its significance in shaping diplomatic relations, promoting peacebuilding efforts, and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through the investigation of political communication strategies such as diplomatic messaging, media engagement, public diplomacy campaigns, and digital diplomacy, the research has demonstrated that effective communication is integral to fostering global understanding, cooperation, and conflict resolution. The findings showed that political communication is essential in building trust, reducing tensions, and promoting peaceful relations between nations. It also played a central role in addressing global challenges like climate change, poverty, and inequality, by raising awareness, influencing policy decisions, and mobilising international cooperation. The ability of states and international organisations to communicate their positions clearly and persuasively can determine the success of diplomatic negotiations and the overall outcomes of peace processes.

Furthermore, the research has revealed the increasing importance of digital diplomacy and media engagement in contemporary diplomatic efforts. As global communication networks evolved and digital platforms expanded, political communication has adapted, providing new opportunities for states to engage with international audiences, shape public perceptions, and build diplomatic influence (Keohane & Nye, 2011). Public diplomacy campaigns have proven particularly valuable in fostering mutual understanding, promoting peace, and supporting the SDGs. While this study has provided valuable insights into the intersection of political communication, diplomacy, peace, and sustainable development, there are several areas that warrant further investigation. Future research could focus on the impact of social media and digital communication technologies on diplomatic practices, particularly in relation to crisis management and conflict resolution. Additionally, the role of political communication in peacebuilding efforts at the grassroots level and its effects on local communities could be explored in more depth. There is also room for further study into how political communication strategies vary across different geopolitical regions and their effectiveness in addressing the unique challenges each region faces in the pursuit of global peace and sustainability.

01

### **Communication as Foundation**

Political communication is integral to fostering global understanding, cooperation, and conflict resolution in modern diplomacy.

02

### **Digital Transformation Impact**

Digital platforms have expanded opportunities for international engagement while creating new challenges in diplomatic communication.

03

### **Strategic Tool for Peace**

Effective communication strategies determine the success of diplomatic negotiations and overall peace process outcomes.

04

### **Future Research Directions**

Further investigation is needed on digital diplomacy, grassroots peacebuilding, and regional communication strategy variations.

However, political communication remains a vital tool for diplomats, governments, and international organisations in advancing global peace and promoting sustainable development. As the global landscape continues to evolve, the strategic use of communication will be crucial in navigating the complex challenges of the 21st century.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The following recommendations were reached from the study for future policymaking:

## 1 Enhancing Media Engagement

Governments and international organisations should invest in improving media partnerships to effectively communicate diplomatic messages, fostering global awareness and understanding on critical peace and sustainability issues.

## 2 Strengthening Public Diplomacy

Public diplomacy initiatives should be expanded, with a focus on cultural exchange programmes and educational outreach, to build stronger international relationships and promote mutual respect and cooperation.

## 3 Leveraging Digital Diplomacy

Countries should further integrate digital platforms in their diplomatic strategies, using social media and online communication tools to engage a global audience, especially in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts.

## 4 Promoting Collaborative Policy Dialogues

Multilateral diplomatic efforts should prioritise inclusive dialogues that bring together governments, civil society, and the private sectors to address global challenges like climate change, poverty, and inequality effectively.

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# CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest

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