The Use of Twitter for Diplomatic Mission and Image Portrayal: Case Study Turkish Embassies in Africa

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Abstract: **In this time of globalization, People base their perceptions and decisions toward a country on its representative (image) of different aspects. Countries are rated and compared based on their political stability, roles in international affairs, economic development, foreign policies and the attractions of a culture and its peoples. This trend has changed how diplomats engage with their foreign public in the place where they are located by incorporating social media in diplomatic mission . Twitter, in particular, is seen as a main tool which is utilized by diplomatic actors to reach their audiences. Currently, Turkey has shown purposeful and meaningful efforts to embrace Twitter as a new tool of public diplomacy to fulfil its diplomatic missions. Based on this claim, this study aimed to analyze the effectiveness of Turkish embassies in African countries in the use of Twitter to engage with foreign audience and image portraying to African countries. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were used to analyze data collected from 10 twitter accounts of Turkish embassies stationed in Africa from November 2019 to March 2020. The results show that although the average engagement across the continent is fairly high, the frequency of day to day posting by the embassies is low. This means that Turkish embassies in Africa are not using social media to their full potential to maintain a good relationship with the countries and effectively increase the visibility of a country image. Besides, Turkish embassies portray Turkey as friendly, the most generous and diplomatic country.**

Key Words**: Public diplomacy, social media, image portrayal, Turkish digital diplomacy**

I. INTRODUCTION

The invention of the internet and social media, in general, was another remarkable revolution in this information age just after the radio and TV. It has taken this advancement of information to the highest level which was never thought before. It has brought about drastic changes in all aspects of life including economy, business, culture, education, politics, military technology, and public diplomacy.

Public diplomacy scholars have claimed that the involvement of social media platform into the practice of diplomacy may create a new form of diplomatic communication which allows the diplomatic practitioners to create and maintain the long-term relationships with foreign public stationed in different countries. Since social media by its origin has a power raging from creating social interaction, facilitating win-win communication between actors and the public of the foreign country to creating dialogue and promoting a country's image. This is opposed to traditional public diplomatic practices which were attributed by monologue (Kampf et al. 2015).

On the contrary, A country image can be defined as "overall image that is constituted by variables like peculiar products, economic and political development, historical events and relationships, traditions, level of industrialization and technological development" (Bannister – Saunders 1978: 562) Szondi (2008) when he was exploring the potential relationship between Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding, stated that, according to the recent practices of Public diplomacy, it can no longer be defined as the effort of one Government to influence another Government but rather Government as a key player plus other country representatives' efforts to influence foreign Public to create a good image and promoting national interest. This has become more realistic after the invention of social media.

Turkey has been actively engaging with the foreign public through different ways such as cultural diplomacy projects, development aid, student exchanges and scholarships programs and conventional media. In the same important, the country has adopted a social media platform to speak to the foreign public of different countries. This is evidenced by different state representatives including embassies stationed in different countries (Ozkan and Akgun, 2011).

Turkish embassies and other representatives like a business, religion, humanitarian, economic and individuals in Africa like other embassies and representatives of the other countries have embraced social media, Twitter, in particular, to communicate with the foreign public to gain influence, penetrate their ideologies, promoting a good relationship and more important is a portrayal of good image of the country. So the main objective of this study was to analyze the effectiveness of Turkish digital diplomacy approaches and image portrayal to African countries.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The concept of public diplomacy

Following the long time of the public diplomacy practices, it officially coined for the first time in the 1960s, in 1963, Edward R. Murrow, who was an American broadcast journalist and war correspondent who first defined public diplomacy as an engagement not only with foreign governments, but mainly with non-governmental organizations, and individual and portraying the views of both sides. (Leonard et al, 2002:1).

Since then many scholars and practitioners started to come up with their definitions of Public diplomacy based on their experience and the nature of the practices of public diplomacy in different times. This is to say that the definition of public diplomacy has been changing along with the development of information and communication technology which highly affects the general practices and the nature of the flow of information.

Traditionally Public diplomacy has been regarded as a state-based form of communication with foreign publics, aimed at bringing about mutual understanding for its nation's ideology, its culture, institution and also its national goals and policies' (Hans Touch, 1990 cited in Renken 2014). A Government as the key player in public diplomacy practices use public diplomacy as a tool to organize three main soft powers' resources including values, culture, and policies. These resources are utilized to attract a government and its public in a foreign land over a particular country (Nye 2008:79).

On the contrary, "new public diplomacy" is a new term that was coined in recent years of the information age particularly after the invention of the internet. The internet has changed the mode of communication and the nature of the flow of information. Rhiannon Vickers as was cited by Hanson (Yun and Toth, 2009), defined new public diplomacy as "a blurring of traditional distinctions between international and domestic information activities, between public and traditional diplomacy and between cultural diplomacy, marketing and news management." This means the new public diplomacy combines traditional public diplomacy where the government develop different policies to influence foreign publics and public affairs where the government policies inform/influence its public and image management.

The new public diplomacy is no longer restricted to informing, conducting promotional campaigns and direct governmental contacts with the foreign populace. It is also about building last long relationship with civil societies and actors in other countries. More so, in the new public diplomacy, actors are required to lay down a bridge that directly connects them with non-governmental entities inside and outside the country (Gregory, 2008:284)

Diplomatic communication is no longer regarded as government-centered communication from the government to the public of the foreign country, rather is an interaction that includes the government's communication with ordinary citizens in both domestic and foreign countries Muhammad (2016:5). He further explains that this is crystal-clear from the 21st century where the development of the internet and social media led to the digitalization of public diplomacy. The internet has given the powerless power, and voiceless, voice, through social media platforms people can present their opinions of what is going on in the world, where in the past was impossible.

2.2 Country image

The portrayal of a country's image to attract the local and foreigners particularly is not a new phenomenon. It started in the 20th century when the governments began to realize the power and significance of image cultivation. Since then the governments started to develop strategies to craft and perfect their country's image which is favourable to the eyes of the foreign public. In the era of the cold, the country image was extremely important among socialist and capitalist countries as they were competing to attract other countries to be attracted with their ideologies and culture (Nye, 2008:9899).

A country image can be defined as an "overall image that is constituted by variables like peculiar products, economic and political development, historical events and relationships, traditions, level of industrialization and technological development" (Bannister – Saunders 1978: 562)) "an image of a nation constitutes the totality of attributes that a person recognizes (or imagines) when he contemplates that nation". (Kunczik, 1990 quoted in Tarasheva, 2014:12). He goes on to say that the image of a nation can be analyzed in the three social and psychological components:

Firstly, a cognitive component- this is about the knowledge that people have over the nation. Secondly, an effective component is about how people feel about the country rather than what they know. Lastly, an action component relates to the real behaviour of the country (Tarasheva, 2014:12-13).

Today, the image portrayal has become a very crucial and central component of a government agenda (Ndoye, 2009:3). In the information age, image construction has become an ever-serious practice of a government. The governments and politicians depend on a notional image to gain domestic support and increase a country's soft power. Increasingly, in the current days, the image portrayal has become even more significant as the countries use the global market and international affairs to enhance a country's status in the international arena (Leah & Chitty, 2009:1). In this case, various countries are currently ranked and compared regarding political stability, international policies, and the influence of their culture, economic performance and morality of the nation which together form a country image (Buhrmann and Ingenhoff, 2015:2).

2.3 Digital diplomacy and county image.

Different studies have revealed that the uses of social media such as Twitter and Facebook in diplomatic communication to engage with the foreign public has drastically increased. Social media plays a vital role in influencing the perception and image of a country among the target audiences (Sevin &Ingenhoff, 2018:3). In normal circumstance, people develop their perception based on what is being communicated by the government and other actors of diplomacy on the different social media platform, through its history, cultural identity, natural landscape and through the actions taken by a country in the international arena (Kaneva, 2011:7). Thereby, the digital interaction with the foreign public has a tremendous impact on the way a country is perceived (Sevin, 2017:17).

On the other side, digital diplomacy has come up as a unique and strong tool of framing a country's identity through the way various events and issues are presented on social media of the country representatives such as embassies' accounts (Manor, 2015 as cited in Basha, 2017:24). Basha further explains that digital diplomacy is an instrument that is used for image building and engaging with respective audiences at a convenient time.

In the same accord, Sevin (2017:18) in his study of digital diplomacy as a communication crisis claimed that digital diplomacy is a very powerful tool that can be used to restore a good image of the country after a crisis. For example, after the military coup attempt in 2016, one year later the Turkish government through the ministry of foreign affair took a solid step to restore the image of the country through social media campaigns. This was done successfully by optimum uses of various social media accounts and websites change the perception of foreign and even some of the local public over the whole event and the measures taken by the government to restore the normal peaceful situation.

2.4 A short history of Turkey-African relations

Turkey diplomatic communication with African countries started in the period of the Ottoman empire. The relations continued even after the decline of the Ottoman Empire which led to the formation of the Republic of Turkey. However, Turkey relations with African countries in all periods based on engagement with North African countries with little communication with Sub-Saharan African countries (Özkan and Akgün, 2011). In Justice and Development Party (AKP) era, the country entered an ideological shift which involved the redirection of the international policy which previously was directed to Western countries solely, but this time was to the more diversified and globalized world (Rudincova, 2014). Since then, the Turkish Motto for foreign policy was "zero problems" which aimed at consolidating the good relationship with neighbouring countries at the same time extending their wings far too toward African countries (Rudincova, 2014).

As part of the implementation of Turkey new foreign policy which encourages engagement with African countries, the government started to establish official embassies in many African countries. If it was enough, in 2005 Turkey announced "The year of Africa" which was followed by the official visit of Turkey's Prime Minister Recap Erdogan to Ethiopia and South Africa in March 2005. This entered in the record of Turkey-African relations as the first of Turkey's Prime minister to visit the countries under the equator since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey (Özkan and Akgün, 2011).

Turkey has been actively engaging with the foreign public through different ways such as cultural diplomacy projects, development aid, student exchanges and scholarships and conventional media. In the same important the country has adopted social media platform to speak to the foreign public of different countries as this evidenced by differently state representative including embassies stationed in different countries (Özkan and Akgün, 2011). Turkish embassies in Africa like other embassies also have embraced social media to engage with their publics to promote the Turkey image, to gain influence, penetrate their ideologies and promoting a good relationship that benefits both sides.

III. METHODOLOGY

Web content analysis has been employed to collect the data and both quantitative and qualitative content analysis methods are used to analyze the data from Twitter accounts of 10 Turkish embassies in Africa. These countries include Tanzania, South Africa, Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria, Uganda, Ghana, Ethiopia, Angola, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The selection of these countries was based on religion and political ideology, a population that can provide a foreign market of the finished goods, geographical locations of a country, natural resources of a country and economic development. Hypothetically, these factors were considered in the selection of the countries of sampling because of their roles in countries relationships.

The data was collected from November 2019 to March 2020 from 10 Turkish embassy Twitter accounts stationed in Africa. All categories of tweets including tweets, retweet, pictures, video, in reply to, hashtags and links were observed and coded. This period was the most recent time before the widely spread of **Coronavirus** which made it difficult for many activities to be implemented by either global economic recession or social gathering restrictions. Besides, this period was marked with some political occasions such as presidential special visits to some African countries including Senegal.

3.1 Methods of the study

The study used mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative analysis to answer the two main questions of the study

Q1. How Turkish embassies in Africa use social media in engaging with the foreign public?

Q2. What image portrayed by Turkish embassies in Africa / how Turkish embassies in Africa position their country

3.2 Result and discussion

The Turkish embassies in Africa started to use Twitter gradually from 2011, with that of Sudan being the first, in December 2011 followed by Tanzania in January 2012. While the Turkish embassy in South Africa is the most recently opened in this list, registered in February 2016. Between November 2019 and March 2016, 2436 posts shared by 10 Turkish embassies in Africa with Twitter accounts were collected. These included tweets and retweets with words or a picture alone, words with a picture, as well as links or movie clips.

A. Quantitative analyses

This method was employed purposely to be able to determine how Turkey is effective in the uses of social media, particularly Twitter. The effectiveness was determined by measuring the level of engagement, frequency of posting and number of followers. This involved counting the number of followers, retweets, and tweets per day plus tweets engagements (like comment and retweet from original tweets). The quantitative analysis enabled to determine how Turkey use technical Twitter features to engage with audiences and finally determined how Turkey is effective in the social media presence.

Engagement rate per original tweets

Engagement, in this case, can be defined as "any action or response from a target audience resulting from proactive communications that create a psychological motivation […] to engage through participation." (Stacks and Brown, 2013 cited in Summa, G, 2020:29). There are many ways of measuring the engagement rate of a Twitter account. However, this study adopted the one which is recommended by many social media researchers because is easy to access the data. It involves determining the number of followers, following, posts and interactions using the following formula: Average Engagement Rate (%) per post = [Engagements (Likes + Retweets) / followers/number of posts] x100**.** in the evaluation of the results from this formula, it generally agreed that an engagement rate between 0% and 0.02% is low; between 0.02% and 0.09% is good; between 0.09% and 0.33% is high; and above 0.33% is very high (Summa, G, 2020:29).

Table 1. average engagement rate by 10 Turkish embassies in African countries.

COUN TRY	FOLLOWERS	TWEET PER DAY	LIKES PER ORIGINAL TWEET	COMMENTS PER ORIGINAL TWEETS	RETWEETS PER ORIGINAL TWEET	**AVARAGE ENGAGEMENT RATE**
TANZANIA	2,591	2.6	10.3	1.1	1.9	**0.05%**
SOUTH.A	1890	2.1	8.2	0.5	0.3	**0.10%**
SUDAN	15100	2.2	70.7	3.5	20.1	**0.23%**
SOMALI	173100	0.6	232.7	13	1.9	**0.04%**
SENEGAL	2,213	1.5	3.8	0.1	0.5	**0.04%**
NIGERIA	1273	0.8	1.3	0.1	3.7	**0.08%**
ETHIOPIA	3143	1.5	12.1	0.2	3.3	**0.18%**
ANGOLA	1,803	0.6	2.5	0.1	0.4	**0.07%**
UGANDA	1,459	1.6	7.1	0.2	2.3	**0.13%**
GHANA	1,761	1.9	5	0.5	1.1	**0.12%**
TOTAL	**204,333**	**1.6**	**34.8**	**1.8**	**3.5**	**0.10%**

Source: data collected from Twitter, November 2019-December 2020.

In disregard of the number of daily messages which is not high, Turkish embassies in Africa showed a good engagement rate of 0,10% which is generally agreed to be high. This means the Turkish engagement rate is effective as a result of a good number of endorsement (likes), and distribution of their messages (retweet) by the followers to their accounts which increased the reach of the message to many people. All these four actions (to follow accounts especially to like, to comment and to retweet) highlight the self-belong and acceptance of these embassies (Turkey) among the users and contribute to increasing the total reach of their messages every day (Summa, G, 2020:16).

In all measures of engagement rate (likes, comments, and retweets), 'like' has received a high audience engagements rate of 34.8 per one original tweet. The 'like' indicates positive feedback on a post. The 'retweet' has received an engagement of 3.5 per post. The 'retweet' is the most important engagement element which helps to increase the reach and visibility of content to many people. Generally, followers share a post that they feel is worthy for others to see. However, in some rare cases, followers can share a post to spread negativity about a Twitter handle. Lastly, People rarely comment as most posts do not encourage interaction. The comment section is mostly used to wish back, ask or giving an opinion on the matter presented and sometimes answering if the post is in question form. This is important because it enables Twitter handles to understand the audiences' opinions.

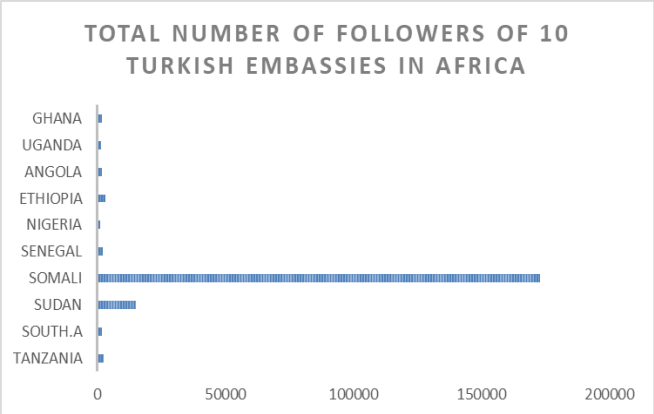
The engagement rate is contributed by many factors including the richness of content (massage, video, image, and link). Increasingly, time such as from 9 pm to 11 pm is prime time for a tweet to receive high engagement and most importantly the type of relationship between the audiences and a country matters a lot in engagement rate (Soboleva et al, 2015). For example, the top ten posts with a high level of engagement were from Somalia and Sudan which contribute a lot to the overall engagement rate of a Twitter handle. These posts were related to humanitarian assistances done in Sudan and Somalia in the period of Corona. In Senegal, South Africa, Angola, Uganda, and Nigeria, the first two posts with high engagement were related to embassy announcements while in Ghana was about the embassy's

participation in the celebration of Ghana Independence Day. In Tanzania, posts with high engagement are related to the opening of Turkish schools in different places. In Ethiopia, the highly engaged posts were related to relations and cooperation with the country. Therefore, not only is posts frequency matter but the kind of posts also matters a lot as far as the engagement rate is considered.

Number of followers

One of the most and crucial measures to gauge the effectiveness and success of the Twitter handle is the number of followers. This is because the number of followers shows the size of the audience who can see your message and redistribute your message to their networks. In other words number of followers is a sign of Twitter handles social influence (Kwak et al., 2010:3). On the contrary, the number of followers is not automatically translated as the effectiveness of the Twitter handles because not all followers are active and in other case, followers can be bought and inflated by a robot (Cha et al., 2010:8). He added that what matters is how much you deal with those passive followers by engaging with them.

Figure 3. The number of followers of 10 Turkish embassies in Africa countries



Source: data collected from Twitter, November 2019-December 2020.

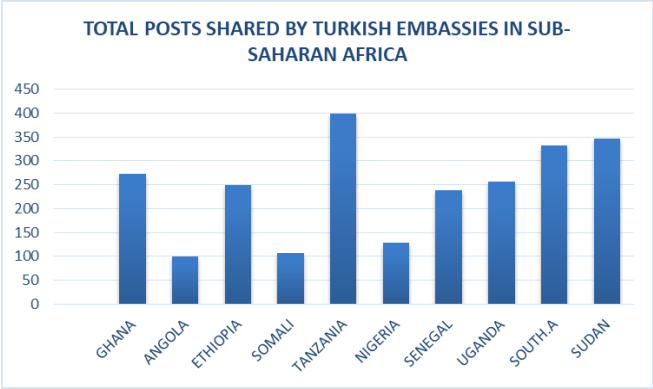
The data show the Turkish embassy in Somalia is leading by far to have many followers of 173100 which is equal to 84.7% out of 204333 of total 10 Twitter accounts' followers. The second is the Turkish embassy in Sudan which had 15100 followers and the last one which is not quite different from others is Nigeria with 1273 followers. The paradox is that Nigeria has a 0.08% engagement rate higher than Somalia which has only a 0.04% engagement rate. While Sudan has the highest engagement rate of 0.23%. This means that the number of followers does not directly affect the total engagement rate positively. Instead, what matters is how and to what extent you engage with those followers and solving the problem of passivity among the followers (Cha et al., 2010:8).

From this data, it is clear that the number of followers in Twitter accounts of the embassies is largely contributed by the relationship that a country has with the audiences of a certain country. Hence Twitter is the best tool to promote relationship which has been well established in field works and table discussions. For example, the Turkish embassies in Somalia and Sudan have many followers in their Twitter accounts by far as compared to any other embassies. This is the results of the long investment done by Turkey to develop a strong diplomatic relationship in these countries especially Somali which has 84% per cent of the total followers from ten Twitter accounts.

Frequency of posting.

The Twitter accounts of all 10 embassies differ in a day to day posting which varies between 0.6 to 2.6 as average per day. While posting frequency of all 10 Twitter handles is 1.6 post per day.

Figure 4. Posts shared by Turkish embassies in 10 different Sub-Saharan African countries.



Source: data collected from Twitter, November 2019-December 2020.

The Turkish embassy in Tanzania is much more active than any other embassy followed by Sudan and South Africa while the embassy in Somali was the last in the list of posting frequency of 0.6 posts per day *(see* Table 5). While there is still ongoing debate as to how many posts should Twitter handle shares per day. While many researchers tend to avoid this question, some research suggests that 75% of audience engagement with a tweet happens within 1.5 and almost all retweeting takes place within 4 hours. So, for active Twitter handle should post after every 1.5 to 4 hours which is not less than 6 posts per day to increase the exposure of their activities (Jansen, B et al 2011). Therefore, in line with this research Turkish embassies are less active on Twitter.

Correlation of the number of followers, posting frequency and engagement rate.

The level of engagement rate is determined by the number of followers, tweets, and the number of likes, retweets, and comments that are from original tweets. However, beyond the relationship between a Twitter handle and the audiences, the level of average engagement rate can be high only if there is a balance between the number of

tweets and followers of a Twitter handle which can be considered as active or effective. The number of followers can increase or decrease the level of engagement rate. In the same circumstance, frequently posting does not automatically increase the number of followers but the relationship of the Twitter handle and the audiences matter a lot. Therefore, in the discussion on how many posts should be posted per day, the number of followers can help to determine the number of tweets to be shared per day (Zarella, 2013:8).

In this case, for instance, the embassy in Somalia, its Twitter account has the least frequency of posting in the list with 0.6 per day but it has many followers by far than any other accounts. At the same time, it has the highest number of likes, comments, and retweets but has the lowest average engagement rate on the list. While the Twitter account in Tanzania has the highest posting frequency of 2.6 per day with 2591 followers which are the fourth in the list of having many numbers of followers, it received only 0.05 low average engagement rate.

Lastly, The Turkish embassy in Sudan has the highest average engagement rate and is the second account to have many followers. Also, it has an average of 2.2 posts per day. An account with many followers is expected to share as many posts as possible to reach many and scatted audiences. This is to ensure a high average engagement rate and increase the visibility of the image of an organization. However, types of posts also matter to the audience as far as engagement is concerned.

B. Qualitative analysis

In line with existing literature analysis on motivating factors of social media, Nadkarni and Hofmann (2012) used Facebook as an example of social media, the ended up concluding that social media are mostly used for two purposes— the need to belong and the need for self-presentation. Based on this approach, the posts were collected and separated into 9 different themes (topics) which then, basically categorized into two main groups:

• Sense of belonging, which refers to an embassy's posts which based on engagement and interaction with the local public to gain social acceptance rather than promotion, these include posts on cooperation with a country station in, a cultural event organized in the country, domestic news, international news and diplomacy and embassy activities.

• Self-presentation implies the posts which an embassy tweets or retweets to promote its own country through different sectors such as education, technology, tourism, culture, and historical facts.

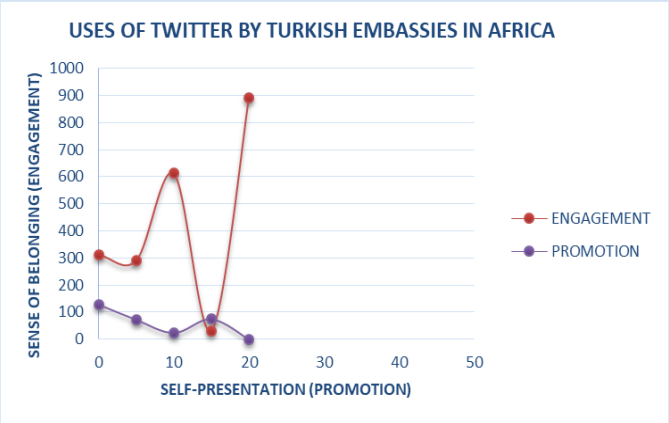
Table 2. Classification of tweets and retweets made by 10 Turkish embassies stationed in Sub Saharan Africa.

NO. EMBASSY	AGENDA-SETING				PROMOTION					
	Cooperation with a county	Embasssy activities	Demostic news	international news and diplomacy	Cultural events	Education	Tourism	Culture and Society	Philantropy	**TOTTAL**
GHANA	42	41	87	126	3	15	6	1	5	**272**
ANGOLA	6	13	35	40	0	2	3	0	0	**99**
ETHIOPIA	17	52	46	112	4	13	3	0	5	**250**
SOMALI	66	4	11	9	5	6	1	0	3	**106**
TANZANIA	4	26	148	161	0	22	3	11	24	**399**
NIGERIA	6	16	37	60	1	8	0	0	0	**128**
SENEGAL	39	22	58	112	1	3	1	2	0	**238**
UGANDA	31	60	30	69	0	11	44	0	11	**256**
SOUTH.A	31	40	99	121	10	20	7	0	15	**333**
SUDAN	68	18	61	132	7	28	7	10	15	**346**
TOTAL	**311**	**292**	**612**	**893**	**31**	**128**	**72**	**24**	**75**	**2438**

Source: data collected from Twitter, November 2019-December 2020.

Based on the total posts in the period of monitoring, both tweets and retweets which show the **need to belong** were higher than the **self-presentation's posts.** All 10 Turkish embassies' posts were 2438 where 2139 posts were related to **the need to belong** which is equal to 87.73% while 299 posts were for **self-presentation** which is equal to 12.26%**.** In the accounts of all embassies included, original tweets were 602 (24.69%) which is by far less than that the embassies retweeted from other Twitter accounts which were 1836 (75.30%). Also, a category that was leading for having many posts was international news and diplomacy with total posts 902 which is equal to 36.99%, followed by domestic news with 612 posts (25.10%). Moreover, embassies activities which are more than 80% were original tweets from the embassies. On the other hand, culture and society got only 0.98% and Cultural events 1.27%.

Figure 5. Posts shared by the 10 Turkish embassies in Africa by different categories



Source: data collected from Twitter, November 2019-December 2020.

In this regard, Turkish embassies have been using Twitter mostly to seek engagement and set the agenda through the posts of the need to belong that will result in discussions with the locals with a particular frame that in favour of their country. The embassies intend to promote good relationship at an individual and national level.

Similarly, with the low volume of country promotion-related posts, the embassies try to form and maintain a positive and favourable image of the country and its people.

Self-presentation and agenda-setting

The Turkish embassies which work together with their foreign ministry utilize Twitter frequently and effectively for setting local and international agenda for both the local and foreign public. For the embassies Twitter accounts, agenda-setting is considered to be a good opportunity to shape and promote the image of the country. Agenda setting helps to shape the public attitude on the country, where possible, the embassies refrain from posting the news which may present their county in a less favourable picture into the mind of local opinions. This means, an embassy only shares news related to international relations, cooperation with a country, domestic news, or cultural events if that particular post cannot cause any harm to the image of the country. In the same important, the news which is shared help to set an agenda that favours a particular side or an ideology or interpretation of the country.

Diplomatic communication and image portrayal

In this research, the diplomatic communication result is assessed in terms of:

- News of their state
- Notice board (announcements of events)
- Promotion (education, culture and society, language, tourism)
- A corporation with a country in which the embassy is located
- International relations

News of their state

According to the data collected, most of the embassies put much focus on tweeting about their demotic news. 25.10% of the total posts shared by the embassies were related to news of their country. In the domestic news, the embassies posted about the occurrences which got enough media coverage and grabbed the attention of both local and international audiences such as natural disasters and terrorism, commemoration events like of those national heroes and martyrs who died in wars and leaders who played a big role in the making of modern Turkey such as Ataturk (founder of the Republic of Turkey), official meetings, and long Turkish history before and after Ottoman Empire, public holidays, wishes of Islamic holidays, women development.

More so, In the period of Coronavirus, the embassies shared many posts on their Twitter accounts that show the strategies and measures adopted by the country to contain the spread of Covid 19. Besides, the embassies shared many posts related to philanthropy activities to help the victims of the different disasters. The embassies also supported a worldwide campaign that encouraged locals and Diasporas to stand up together as a sign of their unity and solidarity in all-weather by donating money to help the other citizens. The campaign was called "Milli Dayanışma Kampanyası" (National Solidarity Campaign) with hashtag #BizBizeYeterizTürkiyem (#Together we are enough my Turkey).

All the embassies are very keen on posting events that cannot tarnish the image of the country, contrarily the embassies used a segment of domestic news effectively to promote national identity based on Turkish values, culture and political ideology, religion, economic and technological development. The embassies also portray their country as democratic, transparent and a country which stands for equality of all gender. They also show strong national unity and solidarity in all-weather. These features together draw a picture of a certain country that can easily be recognized and distinguished from other countries and contribute to a country's image and soft power (David & Bar-Tal 2009:374).

A corporation with a country in which the embassy is located

The total corporations' posts with the countries were 302 posts equally to 12.63% of the total posts. Many posts were about economic policies and strategies aimed at strengthening win-win economic relationships between Turkey and Sub-Saharan African countries which seems to grow drastically. Turkey insists to improve mutual economic relations which is unique with the African countries under the principles of equality which will benefit both sides. Apart from economic cooperation, the embassies shared many posts related to social and cultural cooperation, ranging from giving the hand of support during natural disasters such as floods and other social and humanitarian problems including terrorism and poverty.

International relations and diplomacy

The embassies shared more posts related to international and diplomatic issues than any other category where 902 posts were shared which is equal to 36.99% of the total posts. The posts were related to commemorations, wishes, condolence messages, natural disasters, and other misfortunes. Also, there were posts about economic cooperation, border conflicts, terrorism attacks in different places, sport such as Olympic competition and humanitarian missions.

During the coronavirus pandemic, Turkish embassies tweeted and retweeted a lot about coronavirus related issues, from the evacuation of their citizens who stuck in different countries to providing medicines and equipment assistance to many countries in Europe, Africa, Asia, and America. In the first wave, Turkey set an example by successfully controlling the fast spread of the coronavirus. This gave Turkey a chance to help many countries worldwide including developed countries such as the USA, UK and Spain which faced a very serious crisis that even caused the decay of their national health care system.

Turkish embassies shared many posts related to terrorism that occurred in different places in the world and international meetings which Turkey's representatives had attended. The meetings aimed at finding solutions to different problems which the world, in general, has been facing for example, civil war, terrorism, border conflicts, illegal immigration, and the increasing of refugees who are seeking asylum in foreign countries.

In general, in the international arena, the embassies portray Turkey as an important player in the international peace resolutions for example, the embassies shared the posts showing Turkey is fifth among the top nations with the most diplomatic missions in the world. Besides, Turkey shows as an advocate of Islam and Muslims all over the world on different matters which directly concern the Muslims.

In addition, the embassies portray Turkey as the most generous country in the world. The embassies showed different humanitarian aids done by Turkish government agencies and Turkish non-government organization. The embassies even shared the global humanitarian assistance report 2019 which showed that the country spent $8.4 billion last year alone for humanitarian assistance which made turkey the first two times in a row in supporting humanitarian activities.

Promotion (education, culture and society, language, tourism).

According to the data collected, Turkish embassies shared quite fewer posts that directly associate with a promotion of the country as compared to the non-promotional posts. Out of 2438 total posts only 299 posts related to the promotion of the country directly which is equal to 12.26% of total posts. There were 128 posts which are equal to 42.80% of total promotional tweets and retweets concerned about education. Turkish embassies try to portray the country as a growing destination of foreign students from every corner of the world. For example, the embassies tweeted and retweeted posts of Turkish scholarship (YTB) which is the biggest scholarship in the country and one of the top scholarships in the world which attract many students from different countries, plus many others who are sponsored by other organizations such as Ibn Khaldun scholarship while others are coming as individual sponsored.

In the news posted on YTB official websites in May 2019, President of the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) Abdullah Eren stated that there are 17 thousand out of 150,000 international students in Turkey are recipients of YTB scholarships continuing with their studies. And the number of international students on scholarship is expected to increase to reach 20,000 in 2023. On the other hand, the embassies showed Turkish schools which are opened in many places in the African big cities, and they are among the best schools in the national ranks.

Turkey is one of the biggest tourist destinations in the world which endowed with countless attractions of a different type, ranging from historical sites, popular religious premises, beautiful landscapes to nice sand beaches. However, Turkish embassies shared very few posts related to tourism attraction. The embassies shared pictures of hills, mountains, rivers, lakes, rocks, beautiful beach resorts and Cappadocia. They also showed artificial landmark of bridges, historical buildings which mainly considered as whole places in both Islamic religion and Christianity, such as Hagia Sophia and the oldest church in the city of Hatay which is an important centre in the history of early Christianity where the name "Christianity" was coined.

The Turkish embassies portray Turkey as a country with a rich history of humankind and one of the earliest civilizations in the world. It showed the legacy of the ottoman empire which reigned for more than 600 years, the Turkish embassies also posted about beautiful hotels, Turkish traditional food, streets in big cities like Istanbul and warmly, and the hospitality of the Turkish people.

Also, the Turkish embassies posted about the technological advancement of the country. For example, in early 2020, Turkey unveiled a domestic electric car by TOGG a state-supported enterprise. The embassies also showed a modern and massive investment of public premises such as the biggest library in Turkey located in the country capital city of Ankara, the world largest hospitals by capacity and the biggest in Europe which was opened in April this year 2020 in Istanbul. More so the embassies showed the biggest museum in Turkey and said to be one of the biggest in the world and 2019, Turkey opened the world largest airport and one of the busiest in Istanbul which can accommodate up to 200 million a year.

On the other side of culture and society, despite the rich culture that Turkey has, there were a few posts as 0.98% of total posts shared by the embassies related to culture and society. Increasingly, most of the posts of culture retweeted from Yunus Emre Institute accounts which showed students from different countries learning and practising the language. Sometimes, the institute would share the posts of language competitions as motivation to the learners.

Besides, the embassies use the Turkish language in their tweets and then translated it in the same post or separate posts into the official language of a country. the retweeted posts mostly were in Turkish and English and hardly in other languages such as Arabic, France and Portugal.

Notice board (announcements of events).

Turkish embassies use their Twitter accounts significantly as a notice board to their citizens living in a county in which an embassy is located and sometimes to the citizen of that country. for example 292 posts equal to 11.97% of the total posts and 39.36% of the total original

tweets were announcements made by the embassies. The announcements are mostly about changing work schedules of an embassy, visa applications, Turkish public holiday and eruption of diseases, natural disaster, political instability, or any state of emergence in a country.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

It is undoubtedly that social media revolutionized a public diplomacy and communication field at large. Twitter in particular, since its launch, has been very popular among politicians and diplomats all over the world. Many global leaders have embraced Twitter and rely heavily on it than any other social media to engage with the international audience while promoting soft power. More so, this is so relevant to the international organizations particularly embassies which are official representatives of their countries abroad utilize Twitter to engage with the audience and setting their agenda.

Turkish embassies in Africa as a case study use Twitter very often to set their agenda which serve their interest through a need to belong rather than the promotion of the country directly. However, the ultimate goal is to promote the country image, increase the country soft power and promote a good relationship with a country in the form of a sense of belonging (Collins (2018).

In disregard of level engagement, which is high, the frequency of the embassies in a day-to-day posting is still low. This indicates that that the embassies do not use social media to their full potential and capacity to increase the visibility of the country image.

However, the engagement rate cannot be the best measure to evaluate the effectiveness of digital diplomacy. Sevin and Ingenhoff (2018:2) have claimed that the measurement criterion— number of likes and retweets can be good to measure the level of engagement, but it does not give a clear answer of the relationship created with the target audience and how much the posts helped to change public opinion. Hence next study should measure how social media engagement helped to change public opinion about Turkey.

On the other hand, Promotion of Culture is still relevant and crucial todays and is a core in traditional diplomacy but despite the massive culture that the country has been endowed with, yet the embassies barely share posts related to a culture which is one of the three core elements of Soft power of a nation (Nye, 2008).

In the image portrayal, the embassies portray Turkey as a friendly, modern, and most generous country which invests a lot of money for humanitarian reason and development projects in African countries. More so, the embassies also portray the country as one of s crucial global leader and an advocate of world peace.

Conclusively, it is undoubtedly that, social media provides a cheap, easier, and quicker channel of communication than mainstream media. Hence it is a relevant and most important element of public diplomacy todays. If it is used effectively may enhance the effectiveness and visibility of Turkey's actions done in the field and even contribute to the favourable image of the country. However, is hard to see social media creating meaningful dialogue rather than giving a platform for presenting antagonistic opinions of different sides and setting an agenda which social media is good at. Therefore active use of social media, of course, will not replace the traditional "handshake diplomacy".

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