

Indonesia's Digital Diplomacy Analysis Towards African Region Countries

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses Indonesia's digital diplomacy towards countries in the African region, emphasizing the use of Instagram as social media platforms by Indonesian diplomatic representatives. With qualitative approach, this research analyzes how Indonesia's digital diplomacy supports efforts to promote national interests, strengthen bilateral relations, and enhance cooperation with African region countries. The research combines Digital Diplomacy Theory, PESTEL Analysis, and the Concept of Diplomatic Missions to evaluate Indonesia's digital engagement. The findings reveal that the economic sector dominates Indonesia's digital diplomacy efforts compared to other sectors. Furthermore, the analysis shows that the "promoting" mission plays the most dominant role in Indonesia's digital diplomacy towards African region countries. This research also highlights the importance of increasing digital activity by Indonesia's newly established diplomatic representatives in the region and also expanding Indonesia's presence by establishing diplomatic representatives in other potential African region countries. This paper contributes to a deeper understanding of how digital diplomacy can be utilized to advance Indonesia's foreign policy goals and strengthen its presence in emerging markets, particularly in the African region.

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1. Introduction

"Africa gives you the knowledge that man is a small creature, among others creatures, in a large landscape"

African Stories by Doris Lessing

Africa does matters. When we talk about Africa, we have to admit how beautiful the region is given its nature and cultural heritage as well as all the wealth of resources within it. Africa is dynamic, diverse and offers numerous potentials that can be explored for the benefit of all parties, particularly the development of the countries in the African region itself. As the

world economy suffered due to the COVID-19 pandemic hit all parts of the world back in 2020, the African region is demonstrating that they remain a resilient collection of nations by becoming the second fastest growing region in the world behind Asia. 40 countries will reach higher growth in 2024 compared to 2023, and 15 countries are projected to grow by more than 5 percent in 2024. Furthermore, 10 African countries will enter it into the top 20 fastest-growing economies in the world¹.

Africa is wealthy in natural resources ranging from fertile soil, oil, natural gas, minerals, forests and wildlife. The region holds most of the world's natural resources, both renewable and non-renewable. Moreover, Africa is home to about 30% of the world's

mineral reserves, 8% of the world's natural gas, and 12% of the world's oil reserves. The continent possesses 40 percent of the world's gold and up to 90% of chromium and platinum. The world's largest reserves of cobalt, diamonds, platinum and uranium are also found in Africa. The continent has about 65% of the world's arable land and 10% of the world's renewable freshwater resources².

In addition to being known as a complicated region due to uncertain political stability, Africa is also the most underdeveloped region in the world and is home to various forms of extreme poverty. Most poverty is concentrated in the Sub-Saharan Africa region. Central Africa has the highest extreme poverty rate at 54.8%, followed by Southern Africa at 45.1%. The poverty rates in West and East Africa are 36.8% and 33.8% respectively. While Northern Africa has already met the SDG target of having a poverty rate below 3% by 2019. These conditions add to the complexities of engaging with countries in Africa³.

Africa region is considered one of the largest regional voting groups in the United Nations (UN) and other multilateral bodies. With a percentage of 28%, the region has influence for countries that aim to hold strategic positions in UN bodies⁴. However, despite the abundance of Africa's natural resource that can be further explored for the benefit of the society, Africa is unfortunately regarded as a complicated region with uncertain political stability. For instance, the Arab Spring and the political transition in Egypt in 2011, the raging war in Libya in 2014 and the horizontal conflict in Sudan in 2022. It becomes a challenge for countries, including Indonesia, to optimize cooperation with countries in the African region.

As a matter of fact, Africa is a promising prospect for Indonesia to establish a strong presence in the region. The African region itself is a significant market that can be considered for Indonesia to expand its trade diplomacy, not to mention that African countries also wish to diversify their trading partners⁵. Currently, Indonesia is not yet a major preference for countries in the African region in terms of trade. The EU is currently the largest trading partner in the African region, followed by China and then intra-African trade. While the US and the UK plays a big role in regional trade, countries with rising economies such as India, Brazil, and Turkey are also listed as significant trade partners for African countries⁶.

In order to compete with such great powers, Indonesia needs to be extra creative in addressing the complexities and challenges of competition in the African region. Innovation must be a pillar that can be used in penetrating the African region. One such

innovation is the use of data, big data analysis, and evidence-based diplomacy that can be the key in making more informed and effective decisions. Such innovation is not without its challenges, as digitalization is seen to help bridge the information gap within and outside the region, the region suffers from the lowest internet penetration of around 30 percent. The figure is far below the global average, which is set to double by 2020⁷. Thus, Indonesia to really use their digital diplomacy in the African region effectively in order to accurately reach audiences and leaves a positive lasting image in African region countries.

2. Theoretical Framework

This research is based on theories and concepts to examine Indonesia's digital diplomacy in African region countries, namely: Digital Diplomacy Theory, PESTEL Analysis, and Diplomatic Mission Concept. Each approach offers a unique perspective that complements each other in understanding the dynamics of the use of digital technology in diplomacy, identifying dominant sectors, and analyzing the main roles of diplomatic representatives.

Digital Diplomacy Theory serves as the principal analytical framework for this research. Digital diplomacy is defined as the use of information and communication technology (ICT) by diplomatic actors to enhance interstate relations and communicate with global audiences through digital platforms such as social media⁸. The role of digital technology has become increasingly important in diplomacy, enabling states to convey diplomatic messages to the global public more quickly and directly, while also enhancing engagement with the international community. Manor emphasizes that digital platforms not only able to help expand the reach of diplomacy but as well as create new spaces for negotiation and political interaction, particularly in countries that are less accessible through traditional diplomatic⁹.

In the context of digital diplomacy, Seib asserts that modern diplomacy no longer takes place solely in physical meetings but also in digital spaces, where nations compete to win the "*hearts and minds*" of the global public through digital communication strategies¹⁰. Therefore, in this research, digital diplomacy theory is used to understand how Indonesia's representatives in Sub-Saharan Africa leverage digital technology to promote national interests, build a positive image, and establish diplomatic relations with these countries.

Furthermore, this research applies PESTEL Analysis to examine the main sectors highlighted in Indonesia's digital diplomacy in countries in the African region. PESTEL stands for Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal factors. This analytical tool is often used to assess the context of developing a particular policy or strategy¹¹. By employing PESTEL, the research can identify how various sectors building Indonesia's digital diplomacy efforts in the region.

Complementing digital diplomacy theory and PESTEL is the Diplomatic Mission Concept. The diplomatic mission in this context focuses on five primary functions: 1.) Promoting; 2.) Communicating; 3.) Protecting; 4.) Representing; and 5.) Reporting¹². Jentleson outlines these five functions as essential pillars in the execution of foreign policy. In digital diplomacy, these functions are not only carried out in physical spaces but also in digital environments, where diplomatic representatives actively use social media to promote national interests, communicate with the global public, and report developments from the host countries¹³.

In this research, theories and concepts are applied to analyze how Indonesia's digital diplomacy is conducted through the Instagram accounts of its diplomatic missions in African region countries. By integrating Digital Diplomacy Theory, PESTEL Analysis, and the Diplomatic Mission Concept, the research aims to identify the dominant sectors discussed in Indonesia's digital diplomacy and evaluate the diplomatic mission in the digital platform used by Indonesian representatives in African countries in an effort to fulfill the core functions of modern diplomacy.

3. Research Method

This research adopts an interpretive approach to explore Indonesia's digital diplomacy with accreditation countries in the African region. The interpretive method was chosen to uncover the underlying meanings behind digital interactions facilitated through social media, particularly Instagram, which serves as a vital platform for diplomatic communication. Holliday explains that this approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the social context and dynamics embedded in digital diplomacy, which is especially pertinent in the contemporary era of technology-driven diplomacy¹⁴.

Data collection was carried out using an internet-based data collection method through use of the

Apify application, focusing on posts from the official Instagram accounts of Indonesia's diplomatic missions, which include 17 Indonesia embassies (Kedutaan Besar Republik Indonesia/KBRI) and one Indonesia consulate general (Konsulat Jenderal Republik Indonesia/KJRI) in African region countries. The data encompasses various forms of content such as text, images, and videos related to Indonesia's digital diplomacy activities. Instagram was selected as the primary data source due to its ability to provide rich and contextually relevant insights into diplomatic interactions in the digital realm, as supported by Burnap et al¹⁵.

This research employs qualitative analysis. Silverman asserts that qualitative analysis can provide in-depth insights into social phenomena¹⁶. Furthermore, the qualitative data analysis focuses on primary data collected from Instagram posts from 20 August 2023, to 4 September 2024. This period was chosen as 20 August 2023, marks President Joko Widodo's visit to African region countries, while 4 September 2024, is the last day of the Indonesia-Africa Forum (IAF) 2024 held in Bali, Indonesia. In this research, the MAXQDA application was used to code and identify Instagram content themes and trends into graphic form, while the Gephi application was used to analyze the social networks formed through these digital interactions.

The subject of this research focuses on the official Instagram accounts of 17 Indonesian Embassies and one Indonesian Consulate General in African region countries, while the object of research is the digital content published by these accounts during the period from 20 August 2023 to 4 September 2024. By using this approach, this research aims to make a significant contribution to the understanding of Indonesian digital diplomacy in African countries, especially in terms of how Instagram functions as a strategic tool in Indonesian diplomatic engagement in the digital era.

4. Result And Discussion

a. Indonesia's Presence in The African Region

The relations between Indonesia and African countries have been established since the beginning of independence. Egypt became the first country in the African region and even the world to acknowledge Indonesia's independence back in 1946 which was followed by the signing of a recognition from the Egyptian Prime Minister in 1947. That moment mar-

ked the beginning of bilateral relations between the two countries until present day¹⁷. The historical bond between Indonesia and African countries was further strengthened by The Asia-Africa Conference held in Bandung in 1955. The conference, which was attended by 29 countries from both continents, became a momentum for the awakening of colonized countries to proclaimed the Ten Principles of Bandung which essentially emphasized the spirit and commitment of all countries to abolish all forms of colonialism on earth¹⁸.

The Asia-Africa Conference was not only used by the countries of the two regions to promoting peace and resistance to colonialism, but also to discuss the socio-economic development among Asia and Africa countries. The 1950s were not an easy period for them in terms of economy. This can be seen from the GDP of Asia and Africa being the lowest in the world. The GDP of Asian countries in 1952 was 15% of world GDP, while at the same time the GDP of African countries was 10% of world GDP¹⁹.

In terms of maintaining regional peace, Indonesia has deployed of peacekeepers under the United Nations flag since 1957. At that time, Indonesia deployed 599 troops as part of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) to Egypt in order to maintain peace at the Suez Canal. As of today, Indonesia has deployed its peacekeepers to several countries in the African region, such as Congo (1960-1963 and 2004-2005) as well as Egypt (1973-1978) where Lieutenant General Rais Abin was trusted to be the Commander of the UNEF Forces to supervise the withdrawal of Egyptian and Israeli troops²⁰. In the African region, Indonesia currently deploys its peacekeepers to the MONUSCO mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, MINUSCA in the Central African Republic, UNMISS in South Sudan, MINURSO in Western Sahara, and UNSOM in Somalia²¹.

On a bilateral basis, Indonesia's efforts in fostering relations with countries on the African region are led by two Directorates in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – the Directorate of African Affairs and the Directorate of the Middle East, within the Directorate General of Asia, Pacific and Africa. The Directorate of African Affairs and the Directorate of Middle East are responsible for formulating, implementing and coordinating policies in the field of organizing foreign relations and foreign policy within the scope of bilateral interests in accredited countries located in the region²².

Furthermore, the Directorate of African Affairs is in charge of the aforementioned responsibilities of 46

countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa region, covering among others Nigeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Ghana, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Liberia, Niger, São Tomé and Príncipe, Togo, Chad, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Senegal, Cabo Verde, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi, Djibouti, Tanzania, Eritrea, Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, Mauritius, Seychelles, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Malawi, Comoros, Madagascar, South Africa, Lesotho, Eswatini, Botswana, Namibia, Angola, Zambia, dan Zimbabwe.

On the other hand, African countries located in the northern part of Africa such as Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Egypt, Sudan, South Sudan, and Tunisia are covered under the Directorate of Middle East. Based on this, Indonesia officially established relations with all 54 countries in the African region that are members of the United Nations²³. Besides in form of bilateral, Indonesia also coordinates policies in the field of organizing foreign relations and foreign policy within the scope of the interests of intra-regional and inter-regional cooperation in the African region under the Directorate of Asia-Pacific and Africa Intra and Interregional Cooperation. Indonesia remains involved in organizations and forums in the region through Function III of the Directorate, which is responsible for the Indian Ocean, Middle East and Africa regions²⁴.

Pursuant to Indonesia's independent and active foreign policy as stipulated in Article 3 of Law Number 37 of 1999 on Foreign Relations, Indonesia is entitled to determine its stance on foreign policy and participate in the international community to fulfill its national interests as mandated in Paragraph IV of the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution. In establishing strong relations with countries in the African region, Indonesia first established its representation in the African region in Cairo, Egypt in 1949²⁵. As of today, Indonesia has established 17 KBRI and one KJRI in the African region with expectations of strengthening Indonesia's presence in the African region²⁶.

Indonesia also massively performs “*Diplomasi Tangan di Atas*” by providing assistance to countries in the African region countries in various forms, especially through Indonesian Agency for International Development or Indonesian AID. This is a manifestation of the Indonesia government involvement in supporting international development through economic cooperation and sustainable growth. Currently, Africa region countries is considered one of the Indonesia government priorities in implementing

its foreign policy. This is demonstrated by the Indonesian foreign policy objectives in the “4+1 Priorities” set out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. One of the priorities referred to is economic diplomacy focused on penetrating non-traditional markets, such as those in the African region countries²⁷.

Indonesia has made many attempts to penetrate non-traditional markets, in this case Africa, for example by organizing the IAF in 2018 with the participation of 47 African countries and produced business deals worth USD 586 million²⁸. Furthermore, the IAF in 2024 also succeeded in becoming a platform for 40 Indonesian companies to form strategic cooperation with various parties in the African region²⁹. Indonesia also hopes to play a major role in Africa's development, and vice versa. Therefore, Indonesia organized the Indonesia-Africa Infrastructure Dialogue (IAID) in 2019 as a follow-up to IAF 2018 which discussed concrete efforts that can be made in the fields of strategic industry and economic diplomacy, social infrastructure and tourism, energy and mining, financing schemes, trade cooperation, and development cooperation³⁰. Indonesia is encouraging market expansion in the African region through Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) with various countries. Mozambique is now the first African country to have a PTA with Indonesia. Indonesia is currently pushing for the establishment of PTAs with SACU, ECOWAS, and EAC³¹.

Seeing the modalities and historical ties of Indonesia with countries in the African region, strengthening cooperation in various crucial sectors with countries in the African region is considered as a priority going forward. The potential of both Indonesia and countries in the African region needs to be explored and developed in order to realize Indonesia's national interests as well as the interests of countries in the African region. In the coming years, Indonesia is projected to establish a representative office in the form of KBRI in Ghana following Cameroon, which will be inaugurated in the near future as part of the real commitment of Indonesia to strengthen its presence in the African region³².

b. Indonesia's Digital Diplomacy in African Region Countries: An Analysis

Digital diplomacy has become a crucial component of modern international relations strategy. The advancement of information technology has facilitated cross-border communication, thereby enhancing traditional diplomacy—which previously relied

on face-to-face meetings—through the integration of digital diplomacy via social media platforms. Countries are increasingly leveraging social media such as Instagram, X (previously known as Twitter), and Facebook to reach a global audience. According to Cull, social media enables governments to convey diplomatic messages more rapidly, effectively, and interactively, particularly when engaging with non-state audiences such as civil society and diaspora³³.

The Indonesian government has also embraced this approach, using Instagram as a key platform to strengthen bilateral relations and promote national interests. In the African region, for example, the use of Instagram accounts by Indonesian diplomatic representatives underscores the growing importance of digital diplomacy in reinforcing relationships with friendly nations in the region. By utilizing this platform, Indonesia reaches a broader audience and enhance their bilateral connections. In this context, Table 1 presents 18 official Instagram accounts managed by Indonesian representatives in African region countries.

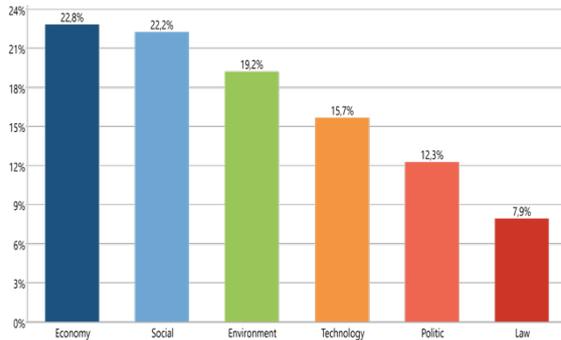
Table 1. Official Instagram Accounts Managed by Indonesian Representatives in African Region Countries

No.	Representation Embassy of Indonesia	Areas of Coverage and International Organizations	Instagram Account
1.	Abuja, Republic of Nigeria	Republic of Benin, Republic of Ghana, Republic of Niger, Republic of Liberia, Republic of Burkina Faso, Republic of Togo, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)	@indonesianabuja
2.	Addis Ababa, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	Republic of Djibouti, State of Eritrea, and African Union (AU)	@indonesiaaddisababa
3.	Algiers, Democratic Republic of Algeria	-	@indonesiaalnager
4.	Antananarivo, Republic of Madagascar	Republic of Mauritius, Republic of Seychelles, and Comoros	@indonesiaantananarivo
5.	Cairo, the Arab Republic of Egypt	-	@indonesiaincairo
6.	Dakar, Republic of Senegal	Republic of Cabo Verde, Republic of Gambia, Republic of Guinea, Republic of Guinea-Bissau, Republic of Mali, Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, and Republic of Sierra Leone	@indonesiaindakar
7.	Dar-Es-Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania	Republic of Burundi dan Republic of Rwanda	@indonesiaindressalaam
8.	Harare, Republic of Zimbabwe	Republic Zambia	@indonesiainharare
9.	Khartoum, the Republic of Sudan	-	@indonesiainkhartoum
10.	Maputo, Republic of Mozambique	Republic of Malawi	@indonesiainmaputo
11.	Nairobi, Republic of Kenya	Democratic Republic Congo, Federal Republic of Somalia, Republic of Uganda, United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), and United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)	@indonesiainnairobi
12.	Pretoria, Republic of South Africa	Republic of Botswana, Kingdom of Lesotho, dan Kingdom of Eswatini, Southern African Development Community (SADC)	@indonesianembassyza
13.	Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco	Islamic Republic of Mauritania	@indonesiainrabat
14.	Tripoli, State of Libya	-	@indonesiaintripoli
15.	Tunis, Republic of Tunisia	-	@indonesiaintunis
16.	Windhoek, Republic of Namibia	Republic of Angola	@indonesiainwindhoek
17.	Yaounde, Republic of Cameroon	Republic of Chad, Republic of Equatorial Guinea, Gabonese Republic, Republic of Congo, and Central African Republic	@indonesiainyaounde
No.	Consulate General of Indonesia	Areas of Coverage	Instagram Account
1.	Cape Town, Republic of South Africa	Northern Cape, Western Cape, and Orange Free State Province	@indonesiacape town

Source: Compiled by Authors, 2024.

understanding of the important sectors that are consistently highlighted in every post published by Indonesian diplomatic accounts in Instagram. By examining these sectors, this research seeks to uncover the strategic priorities reflected in Indonesia's digital diplomacy efforts in African countries.

Figure 3. Dominant Sectors in Instagram Post of Indonesian Representatives in African Region Countries



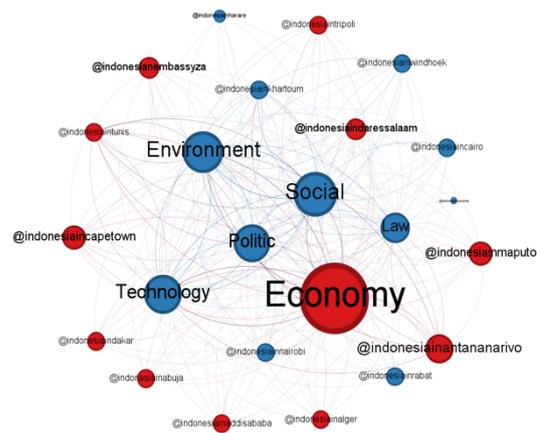
Source: Processed by Authors, 2024.

In a PESTEL analysis of Indonesia's digital diplomacy in the African region, the distribution of content across various sectors in diplomatic social media posts appears to be quite diverse. The economic sector holds the largest share, accounting for 22,8%. This indicates that digital diplomacy is primarily focused on strengthening economic relations, such as promoting investment, trade, and bilateral economic cooperation. The social sector ranks second, contributing 22,2%. This highlights a focus on social issues, including education and culture, which play a significant role in building a positive image of Indonesia in African countries. Environmental issues are in third place, contributing 19,2%, indicating that sustainability and environmental preservation are also concerns in Indonesia's diplomatic communication.

Content related to innovation and technology receives 15,7% of the focus, underlining the role of technology as a major driver of development between Indonesia and African countries. On the other hand, the political and legal sectors receive attention of 12,3% and 7,9%, respectively, reflecting the focus on governance and regulatory aspects within Indonesia's digital diplomacy strategy. This demonstrates a multi-faceted approach to Indonesia's digital diplomacy in African countries, where economic and social initiatives are highly prioritized, while environmental sustainability and technological innovation remain important. Meanwhile, political and legal issues, although less widely discussed, are also

discussed as part of a broader framework for cooperation and governance in Indonesia's engagement in African countries.

Figure 4. Dominant Sector Networks in Instagram Posts of Indonesian Representatives in African Region Countries



Source: Processed by Authors, 2024.

Using network analysis, we can identify the Dominant Sector Network in Instagram posts of Indonesian representatives in African countries. Based on the nodes and edges in the network, it is known that every Indonesian representative in the region is actively involved in digital diplomacy through Instagram. Interestingly, the economic sector emerged as the main theme highlighted in most of the content uploaded by Indonesian diplomatic missions on Instagram. These posts clearly show that diplomacy that focuses on economic interests is a top priority in strengthening bilateral relations with countries in the African region. This network map ultimately shows that, even diplomacy that emphasizes economic interests remains at the forefront, Indonesia is utilizing its digital platform to promote a diverse diplomatic agenda in African region. By addressing sectors such as Social, Environmental, Technology, Politics, and Law, Indonesia is signaling its intention to build a comprehensive partnership with African countries, which contributes to regional and global conversations.

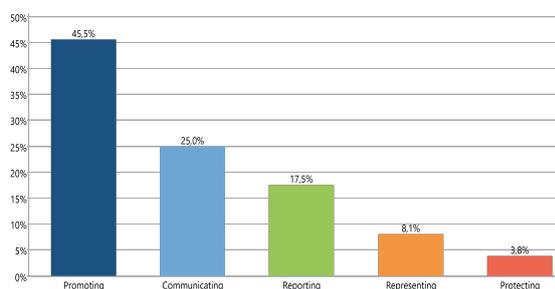


Figure 5. Post from KBRI Antananarivo Instagram Account Related to the Economic Sector
Source: Instagram, 2024.

Furthermore, by examining the Dominant Sector Network on Instagram posts from Indonesian diplomatic missions across African nations, it becomes evident that the Instagram account of the KBRI in Antananarivo stands out as the most active in addressing economic matters within the given period. This observation highlights Madagascar's significant role in Indonesia's economic diplomacy in the African region, underpinned by its unique and strategic economic potential. The prominence of the KBRI Antananarivo in promoting economic issues reflects Indonesia's growing interest in fostering stronger economic ties with Madagascar, leveraging its position as a gateway to broader African markets. Through Instagram, KBRI Antananarivo has shared content that showcases various forms of economic cooperation, such as trade relations, investment opportunities, and collaborations aimed at developing strategic sectors. These posts not only emphasize the dynamic nature of Indonesia-Madagascar relations but also serve as a tool for enhancing public diplomacy efforts by engaging a broader audience on social media platforms.

This research not only focuses on conducting a comprehensive PESTEL analysis to identify the dominant sectors in Indonesia's engagement in African region countries, but also seeks to thoroughly examine the multifaceted diplomatic missions carried out by Indonesia's representatives. By delving deeper into the context of digital diplomacy, this research aims to uncover and analyze the specific roles, objectives, and strategic missions pursued by Indonesia's representatives in African region countries.

Figure 6. Diplomatic Missions in Indonesia Digital Diplomacy Toward African Region Countries



Source: Processed by Authors, 2024.

Based on the analysis of Indonesia's diplomatic missions through the Instagram platforms of Indonesia representatives in African region countries, Figure 6 shows that “promoting” is the dominant mission, accounting for 45,5% of the total content. This reflects the primary focus of Indonesia's digital diplomacy in Africa region, which is to introduce and promote Indonesia's image, culture, and interests to both the local and international communities. This mission is closely tied to showcasing Indonesia's tourism potential, investment opportunities, and economic cooperation with countries in the region.

Following this, the “communicating” mission ranks second, with 25,0%. This indicates that Indonesia's diplomatic representatives are actively engaging in communication through Instagram. Such communication includes not only the dissemination of official information but also direct interaction with local and global audiences, aimed at fostering ongoing dialogue and strengthening diplomatic relationships.

The “Reporting” mission is in third place, with 17,5%. This shows that reporting on political, economic, and bilateral developments between Indonesia and African countries is a significant focus. It is then known that the “representing” mission covers 8,1%, indicating the official presence of Indonesian diplomats at official events or ceremonies. Finally, the “protecting” mission is ranked the lowest with only 3,8%. This mission is related to the protection of Indonesian citizens in Africa, which usually involves legal assistance, consular services, and addressing urgent safety and welfare issues for Indonesian citizens abroad.

This research also highlights the network of diplomatic missions in digital diplomacy carried out by Indonesian representatives in the Africa region countries. Figure 7 provides a clear visualization of the roles and missions carried out by Indonesian representatives in this region.

platforms allow countries to communicate directly with foreign audiences, bypassing traditional media channels and allowing for more flexible and continuous communication with various stakeholders. In the context of Indonesia's approach to the African region, this direct communication is crucial to promoting Indonesia's economic agenda and building partnerships in sectors such as trade, investment, infrastructure, and technology, particularly in the areas of health, energy, banking, and others.

Indonesia's digital diplomacy in the African region countries is increasingly focused on promoting bilateral trade agreements, facilitating market access, and encouraging investment flows. Indonesia's trade volume with Africa has grown steadily in recent years, with exports of palm oil, textiles, and automotive products being the backbone of its trade relations³⁶. Indonesian representative in the African region countries have utilized digital platforms to broadcast trade opportunities, announce trade exhibitions, and facilitate virtual business cooperation forums between Indonesian and African companies. For example, the Forum on economic cooperation opportunities between Indonesia and African countries such as IAF, is often widely promoted through online platforms to maximize reach and engagement.

Infrastructure development is another significant focus area. Indonesian infrastructure companies, particularly in the construction and energy sectors, are keen to participate in Africa's growing infrastructure needs. Digital diplomacy enables Indonesian diplomats to effectively communicate these opportunities to governments and private sector actors in Africa. IAID, for instance, has been a key platform where digital diplomacy is used to promote Indonesia's role as a potential partner in Africa's infrastructure development³⁷. By leveraging social media, Indonesian embassies and consulates amplify their messages, ensuring Indonesia's expertise in infrastructure reaches a wide and diverse audience.

The use of digital diplomacy in Indonesia's engagement with Africa extends beyond promoting bilateral trade and infrastructure. It also serves as a platform for knowledge-sharing and technological cooperation. Indonesia's experience with digital technologies and its growing digital economy offers valuable lessons for African countries seeking to enhance their technological capabilities. Through digital diplomacy, Indonesia has promoted collaboration in areas such as e-commerce, fintech, and digital payment systems. These initiatives are facilitated through digital networking platforms, allowing Indonesia to

position itself as a strategic partner in Africa's digital transformation

Figure 9. Post from KBRI Tunis Instagram Account Related to Knowledge-Sharing and Technological Cooperation



Source: Instagram, 2024.

KBRI and KJRI in Africa region countries have actively utilized social media and digital content to highlight Indonesia's engagement in the region. This aligns with Manor's observation that digital diplomacy enables countries to interact with multiple actors simultaneously, increasing the reach and impact of diplomatic initiatives.

The success of Indonesia's digital diplomacy in Africa also depends on its ability to effectively communicate with local communities. Digital platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook allow Indonesian diplomats to engage directly with African businesspeople, civil society, and the general public, facilitating people-to-people connections. These interactions are crucial for building trust and promoting economic partnerships. This is in line with Rana which explains that the role of representatives has evolved in the digital era to include managing social media and other digital channels to achieve economic and diplomatic goals³⁸. This new approach to diplomacy reflects Indonesia's broader strategy to leverage digital tools to foster economic cooperation with African countries.

Overall, it can be understood that the economic sector plays a central role in Indonesia's digital diplomacy towards the African region. By focusing on trade, infrastructure, and technology cooperation, Indonesia has effectively harnessed digital platforms to enhance its diplomatic and economic influence in the region. As digital diplomacy evolves, Indonesia's economic ties with Africa are likely to deepen, with

digital tools playing an increasingly vital role in nurturing these relationships.

Conclusion

Indonesia has adopted digital diplomacy as a strategy to strengthen bilateral relations with countries in the African region. Through Instagram, Indonesian diplomatic representatives have been able to disseminate information related to national interests, bilateral programs, and economic promotion, while fostering closer relations with African countries. The main focus of this digital diplomacy is reflected in the increasing cooperation in the economic sector, including investment promotion, trade, and infrastructure development. While it covers various sectors, the economic and social sectors remain dominant. Indonesia also emphasizes the importance of “promoting” and “communicating” through social media as a tool to expand its diplomatic reach in the digital era. With an increasingly robust diplomatic network, Indonesia is expected to enhance its role as a strategic partner in the African region, expand into non-traditional markets, and encourage more comprehensive cooperation across various sectors, especially in economics, technology, and infrastructure sectors.

To further optimize this digital diplomacy, Indonesia needs to increase the activity of its newly established diplomatic missions on social media, particularly in the African region. Providing adequate training and resource allocation for social media management can enhance the effectiveness of digital communication. Additionally, the government is encouraged to establish new diplomatic missions in potential African countries where Indonesia currently lacks representation, to expand its diplomatic reach and seize economic opportunities in regions with significant growth potential.

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