

THE MODERATE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP VISION ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIGITAL DIPLOMACY AND EMIRATI SOFT POWER PRACTICES

Ali Mohammed Ghdayer Suwidan Alnuaimi

School of International Studies (SoIS) International Affairs, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)
0009-0009-0955-3334

Aminurraasyid Yatiban

School of International Studies (SoIS) International Affairs, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)
0000-0002-7357-0798

Abstract

Soft power has been the most effective tool for accomplishing these objectives. Abu Dhabi uses the hosting of international events by the United Arab Emirates as a way to emphasise its use of soft power to address the present issues. In line with its goal, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) places emphasis on the history, facets, and approaches of soft power. Guided by an ambitious leadership vision, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is pursuing a soft power strategy. The goal of this approach is to create a complete system of governance that supports the creation of policies and work programmes that are sustainable on a regional and global scale. The purpose of this study project is to support the international goals and soft power initiatives of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) by conducting a thorough survey that looks at other nations' adoption of successful techniques. Finding the leadership vision's moderating influence between digital diplomacy and foreign policy, politics, and culture is the aim of the research. The study's objectives have been fulfilled through the collection of data from Ministry of Foreign Affairs personnel and diplomats serving as United Arab Emirates representatives at embassies. Using a standardised questionnaire adapted from previous research, the researcher gathered information from 370 respondents. This study discovered a strong correlation between political beliefs, foreign policy, and culture and digital diplomacy. Furthermore, a strong correlation was discovered in the current study between moderating effect 1 and culture, as well as between moderating effect 3 and political ideals. Moreover, there is a strong correlation between foreign policy and moderating effect 5.

Keywords: Culture, Digital Diplomacy, Foreign Policy, Leadership, Vision, Political Values

Introduction

The contemporary notion of soft power has undergone significant expansion, challenging the traditional understanding that a state's military capabilities alone constitute the primary and most reliable way to attain its external objectives. Instead, soft power has emerged as the preeminent instrument in achieving these goals (Tang, 2023). The United Arab Emirates' hosting of worldwide events serves as a means for Abu Dhabi to highlight its pursuit of soft power in addressing the current difficulties. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) places significant emphasis on the origins,

aspects, and methods of soft power in alignment with its vision. This objective is to foster global unity among nations while also recognizing the need of hard power (Saber, Paris, & Marochi., 2018).

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is pursuing a soft power strategy under the guidance of an ambitious leadership vision. This strategy aims to establish a comprehensive government system that fosters the development of sustainable work programs and policies with both regional and global dimensions (Asif, Asad, Bhutta, & Khan, 2021; Majali, Alkaraki, Asad, Aladwan, & Aledeinat, 2022; Asad, Majali, Aledeinat, & Almajali, 2023; Asad, Aledeinat, Majali, Almajali, & Shrafat, 2024). It encompasses various aspects of the country's economy, culture, arts, tourism, humanitarian efforts, and society, with a particular emphasis on the significance of human and cultural factors (Chethiyar, Asad, Kamaluddin, Ali, & Sulaiman, 2019). The UAE seeks to leverage its reputation and promote its civilized image, heritage, identity, and culture through modern digital diplomacy (Zaabi & Awamleh., 2019).

In recent years, the concept of soft power has gained significant importance in academic and public discourse surrounding international relations and the role of nation-states (Khan, Asad, Khan, Asif, & Aftab, 2021). Consequently, soft power remains a focal point of scholarly investigation (Beydoun & Zahawi., 2016; Akram, Shahzadi, & Davvaz., 2023).

The concept of soft power is a prominent topic in academic discourse, serving as a strategic instrument shaped by a nation's cultural, political ideals, and foreign policy orientations (Saber, Paris, & Marochi., 2018; Antwi-Boateng & Alhashmi., 2022). The significance of digital diplomacy has been evident in its contribution to the augmentation of the United Arab Emirates' soft power and its reinforcement of the country's association with its culture, political ideals, and foreign policy (Lee, 2015; Liu & Turner., 2018). Based on the findings of the 2020 Global Soft Power Index by Brand Finance, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has the greatest degree of soft power within the Middle Eastern region (Krzyszowski, 2022). Many studies have been conducted to investigate the soft power initiatives of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), as well as the soft power strategy formulated by the UAE Soft Power Council and other relevant entities.

The UAE's efficient use of soft power methods relies on key factors such as culture, political values, and foreign policy. However, there is a dearth of research examining individuals' perspectives of the most effective tactics for soft power implementation in the UAE (Krzyszowski, 2020). This research endeavour aims to support the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) international objectives and soft power endeavours by the execution of a comprehensive survey that examines the adoption of effective strategies used by other countries.

The given text is lacking in academic style and structure (Saber, Paris, & Marochi., 2018). The examination of the influence of digital diplomacy on soft power strategies poses a challenge to the

soft power framework employed by the United Arab Emirates. This challenge suggests a lack of global recognition and even scepticism towards the Emirati soft power model, as well as a reluctance to acknowledge its effectiveness. According to Wright and Guerrina, (2020), this issue serves as the focal point of the present research endeavour, aiming to provide insights and understanding.

According to Tsvetkova, (2020), the advent of digital diplomacy has brought about significant changes in the concepts and approaches of contemporary public diplomacy across nations. This transformation has had a profound impact on various aspects of soft power, including culture, political beliefs, and foreign policy. According to Antwi-Boateng and Mazrouei., (2021), the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has included digital diplomacy into its international relations strategy to promote its cultural heritage and political principles. However, the effectiveness of UAE's digital diplomacy endeavours is contingent upon addressing security issues, which will decide its outcome.

Scholars widely agree on the need of implementing a "foreign policy" centered on digital diplomacy, which serves as a non-confrontational instrument for all nations, given that no government desires to operate in full seclusion (Neack, 2018; Spry & Lockyer., 2022). A nation without a foreign policy might be associated to a vessel navigating the vast ocean without awareness of prevailing currents and patterns (Walt, 2018). This obstacle hinders the ability to offer more suitable and comprehensive interpretations of foreign policy, as well as assess its connection to contemporary technological advancements like digital diplomacy.

According to Connors (2020) political values play a significant role in a state's soft power and are subject to the impact of the state's changing position. These values may vary among countries, but they remain crucial in shaping a state's influence. Technological advancements have a significant impact on soft power, particularly in relation to the extent to which a nation embraces digital diplomacy. Political beliefs serve as a crucial conduit that fosters connectivity among individuals and facilitates the development of their soft power. The presence of many, varied, and distinct values, despite the potential for generating inconsistencies, serves as a catalyst for enhancing and fortifying the state's soft power (Alper, 2020).

According to Rabêlo Neto, Sousa-Filho, and Lima, (2022), culture plays a significant role in a state's soft power, since it allows for the comparison of societies using various criteria or dimensions, hence facilitating a comprehensive understanding from all perspectives. However, culture may also function as a barrier in some instances. According to Dan (2020), the field of intercultural communication encompasses various roles attributed to culture, which pertain to patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, standards, and symbols. These cultural elements are passed down from one generation to another, constituting a cumulative legacy that possesses a form of soft power, enabling the bridging of barriers between diverse groups of people.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has a deficiency in its soft power capabilities as a result of the ineffectiveness of conventional diplomatic efforts non enhancing the UAE's reputation and mobilizing its soft power instruments, including political ideals, culture, and foreign policy (Al Suwaidi, 2021; Krzymowski, 2022). Furthermore, there is the challenge of competing with the UAE's regional role, as articulated by the ruler. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum has made many visits to Dubai, which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has identified as a strategic objective and a significant undertaking.

Hence, the Emirates encounter challenges in effectively leveraging capabilities in cultures, political values, and foreign policies because of the perception of the embassy state as a small entity with limited influence. The main contribution of the current study is its theoretical addition to the scientific legacy of the special literature in the field of the impact of soft diplomacy on soft power and providing more clarification and explanations for this impact. A contribution will also be made to the vision of institutions working in the Emirati diplomatic field, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its embassies and consulates abroad, which makes recommendations. A process for those institutions and formulates results that contribute to clarifying a road map for advancing diplomatic work considering the age of digital technology.

Literature Review

With the withdrawal of British forces from the Middle East, seven sheikhdoms in Arabia's northeast agreed to form a federation that granted each emirate significant autonomy, with the exception of some policy areas designated by its constitution for federal control (Waxin, Lindsay, Belkhodja, & Zhao., 2018), namely (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Quwain, Ras al-Khaimah, and Fujairah), where they met in 1971.

Soft Power

The term "Power," sometimes rendered in Arabic as "وقّة" (quwwah), encompasses two distinct connotations. The first connotation pertains to the concept of physical or military strength, as shown by phrases such as "عسكرية وقّة" (quwwah askariyah) or "القوة فأكار" (afkar al-quwwah) denoting military might and power of ideas, respectively. The second definition pertains to a distinct political or legal connotation, as described by (Akram-Lodhi, Dietz, Engels, & Ben M. McKay, 2021), referred to as Power Political or Power Individual Power.

According to Nye (2004) Soft power is characterized as a potent instrument that aims to accomplish objectives by means of attraction rather than force or financial incentives. The statement refers to the ability of the state to integrate public policies and ideas in other countries (Quitow & Thielges., 2022). The ability to exert influence is contingent upon the attractiveness of a nation's social and cultural framework, with its array of institutions and principles, rather than relying on force or intimidation (Xie, S. A., L., Sulaiman, & Qureshi, 2023). This influence may be disseminated via several mediums, such as popular culture, both in private and public domains.

Diplomacy, international non-governmental organizations, civil society institutions, and all functioning and trading corporations (Nye Jr, 2003).

The capacity to exert influence on the perspectives and beliefs of others, shape their cultural inclinations, and guide their actions. One may attain their objectives without resorting to coercion or inducement. The capacity of soft power to exert influence on the decision-making processes of external actors (Keating & Kaczmarek, 2019). Soft power refers to the capacity to attract and gain compliance, beyond mere persuasion or the ability to convince others via argumentation. The concept of soft power is enhanced when individuals or entities come to embrace a certain perspective or set of policies.

The capacity to persuade others that the model, concepts, and policies has qualities that are appealing, trustworthy, and valid. The durability of soft power is contingent upon the passage of time, whereas the establishment of hard power seems to need a comparatively shorter duration due to its tangible and visible resources (Zuhaib , Wenyuan, Sulaiman, Siddiqu, & Qalati, 2022). On the other hand, the cultivation of soft power requires a significant duration since it relies on intangible assets such as cultural elements, political principles, and foreign policy, all of which need a period of maturation (Lee G. , 2009). There exists a distinction in the temporal aspect between the acquisition of hard power and soft power strategies. While military or economic coercion often yields fast but transitory outcomes, attraction and persuasion tend to engender enduring transformations (Liu & Turner., 2018). The thesis posits that individuals, when subjected to hard power, have a reluctance to deviate from their customary behaviour (Al Suwaidi, 2021).

According to Saad (2020), the concept of soft power can influence individuals' attitudes, leading them to intentionally modify their behaviour in a manner that deviates from their usual patterns. Gallarotti, (2022) posits that the use of harsh power is associated with coercive measures, whereas the application of soft power is conducive to voluntary actions. Furthermore, the author argues that the implementation of voluntarism leads to the establishment of consent, whereas coercion gives rise to conflict (Satar, Alarifi, Alkhoraif, & Asad, 2023). This elucidates the reason for the longer-lasting effectiveness of soft power solutions compared to hard power solutions. One example of the consequences of sanctions may be seen in the case of Germany during the first World War, which is said to have contributed to the outbreak of World War II. Conversely, the foundation of the European Union has been credited with fostering almost seven decades of peace in Europe (Wagner, 2014).

In conclusion, it may be argued that the exertion of influence by states on other states and populations is not a novel phenomenon (Antwi-Boateng & Alhashmi., 2022). The influence exerted by a nation's soft power is not contingent upon its military capabilities (Ta'Amnha, Magableh, Asad, & Al-Qudah, 2023). However, it is imperative to acknowledge that the nation's economic prowess, a proficient administrative framework, and a well-structured organizational

system that fosters prosperity and societal welfare are indispensable foundations (Krzyszowski, 2020). The concept of soft power is challenging to define, and it is arguable that its existence is contingent upon the presence of a political infrastructure, a robust regulatory framework, and substantial economic achievements rooted in political values, culture, and foreign policy (Krzyszaniak, 2018; Krzymowski, 2020).

Foreign Policy

Scholars widely agree that the formulation of a "foreign policy" is important for any nation, since the prospect of full isolation is undesirable (Berg & Vits, 2020). A nation without a foreign policy might be likened to a vessel navigating the vast expanse of the ocean without a clear understanding of its intended course (Walt, 2018). Foreign policy plays a crucial role in enabling a state to pursue its national objectives and establish a favorable standing among the international community (Le Pere & Nieuwkerk, 2020). One of the first challenges encountered while examining foreign policy is to the issue of defining the word and the difficulties associated with offering more precise and thorough explanations of foreign policy (Bouris & Tobias Schumacher, 2017).

The foreign policy counterpart to development policy has consistently prioritized the pursuit of national autonomy, the politicization of international economic relations, grievances regarding the preservation of the existing international power structure, and the reinforcement of alliances, particularly with other developing nations (Victor, ul Haq, Sankar, Akram, & Asad, 2021). The approach of automatic consistency was dismissed in Favor of technological nationalism (Hill, 2019). Furthermore, it is worth noting that the acknowledgment of middle powers has not been consistently defined or universally recognized within the global community. The possible avenues to attain influence and the foreign policy approaches available to middle powers exhibit significant diversity both within and across different geographical areas (Magcamit, 2020).

Political Values

The prevailing consensus among scholars upholds the conceptual definition of political values, which posits that political values are fundamental to one's identity and serve as a compass for political actions (Qalati, Ostic, Sulaiman, Gopang, & Khan, 2022). Moreover, empirical evidence has demonstrated that these values can predict individuals' stances on various issues, such as government expenditure on welfare, evaluations of political candidates, perceptions of racial equality, and assessments of tolerance (Kalmoe, 2020).

In addition to the distinctions observed among contemporary civilizations, as well as the variations in social and political systems and their respective value systems, there exist fundamental interests that are shared by all nations (Hammami , Ahmed , Johny, & Sulaiman, 2021). These interests encompass the establishment of a renewed atmosphere of peace and collaboration among countries, the establishment of a novel global political and economic framework, and the addressing of other matters that are deemed to possess global significance (Riphah, Ali, Danish,

& Sulaiman, 2022). Consequently, the affirmation and reinforcement of values become imperative in addressing these common concerns (Ullah, et al., 2021). The policy in question is widely acknowledged as a public policy, as stated by (Kolodko, 2020).

Culture

Culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes members of a group or class of people from others and provides another definition of culture, which it uses in its Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity (Ranaivoson, 2020). It states that culture should be considered as a set of spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features characteristic of a society or social group, and that it is included in systems of values, traditions, and beliefs (Anheier, 2020). Culture is what includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other abilities and customs that a person acquires as a member of society (Bilal & Sulaiman, 2021). Culture is also an aspect of our existence that makes us like some countries, but different from most people in the world.

Digital Diplomacy

The rapid advancement of technology is exerting a profound influence on several aspects of human existence, including culture, political ideals, and foreign policy. The use of social media and other digital communication platforms has brought about substantial transformations in the management of foreign policy, emerging as an indispensable element of diplomatic endeavours (Al Mazrouei, 2019). Diplomats extensively use digital technology in several facets of their professional responsibilities, including communication, policy analysis, as well as negotiation and representation. While the conventional approach to diplomacy, including interactions among official officials, is crucial, there is a growing recognition of the substantial involvement of individuals and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in global affairs (Gilboa, 2016).

The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the significance of digital technologies. Bjola and Ruben Zaiotti, (2020) argued that the epidemic has posed significant challenges to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in terms of its ability to provide timely and effective consular assistance, uphold their countries' national reputation as the crisis escalates, and counteract the spread of digital disinformation generated by both concerned individuals and strategically adept actors. Furthermore, the ongoing pandemic has served as a catalyst for the need of MFAs to effectively acclimate to a novel and evolving environment (Fadhel, Aljalahma, Almuhanadi, Asad, & Sheikh, 2022). This entails enhancing their proficiency in digital literacy and broadening their aptitude for innovative and unconventional digital thinking (Asad, Asif, Sulaiman, Satar, & Alarifi, 2023).

The digitization trend in diplomacy holds considerable importance due to its impact on the utilization of digital tools and the operational norms of diplomats and diplomatic institutions (Sulaiman & Asad, 2023). It is crucial to comprehend the influence of technological advancements on diplomacy, as well as the potential benefits and drawbacks associated with it (Qalati, Qureshi, Ostic, & Sulaiman, 2022). For instance, one positive outcome is the dissemination of political

values, culture, and foreign policy through digital means (Cyrill & Pasha, 2019). It is crucial to do an analysis on the potential displacement of traditional diplomacy by digital diplomacy (Barston, 2019). While there exists a limited body of research in this domain, doing a comprehensive analysis of the existing scholarly works from a contemporary perspective, while considering the potential impact of COVID-19 (Asad & Kashif, 2021) on diplomatic relations, will provide valuable and captivating perspectives on this issue (ALBAYRAKOĞLU, 2022). The current body of research lacks comprehensive analysis about the benefits and risks associated with digital diplomacy, as highlighted by (Alnaqbi, Yatiban, & Ramdani., 2023).

Leaders are use hashtags to promote government initiatives and disseminate information and perspectives during times of crisis, therefore enhancing their country's cultural and political significance (Asad, et al., 2021; Asif, Asad, Kashif, & Haq, 2021). There are several uses of digital diplomacy, and diplomats always strive to discover novel methods for accomplishing their goals (Pohan, Pohan, & Savitri., 2016). Defining digital diplomacy only in terms of social media is deemed untenable. As the capabilities pertaining to "digital" continue to progress, the terminology associated with it is already undergoing transformation (Damer, Al-Znaimat, Asad, & Almansour, 2021). The increasing popularity of wearable technology items, such as smartwatches and eyeglasses, may be attributed to the improvements in big data. Humanitarian organizations use technology such as crisis mapping to enhance their understanding and ability to address both natural and man-made disasters (Khushi, din, & Sulaiman, 2020). Crisis mapping involves the collection and analysis of real-time data from many sources, including social media and emails, during crisis situations (Bjola & Ruben Zaiotti, 2020).

Leadership Vision

The new UAE state recognized that, given the late Sheikh Zayed's (1918–2004) practical political acumen, a political structure that combined local autonomy and the federal government to coordinate state affairs and create a coherent foreign policy had the best potential for success in spreading UAE political values and enhance Emirati Culture (Al-Suwaidi, 2011). UAE leaders have a great vision, including Vision 2021, which aspires to make the UAE one of the finest nations in the world in time for the union's golden jubilee, have been offered by the leadership at the federation level that implement policies and plans throughout numerous sectors in the United Arab Emirates especially culture and political values field (Al Mazrouei, 2019).

The vision of the leadership of the decision makers and the political values as well as their foreign policy in the UAE was influenced by digital diplomacy and bet on its role in enhancing the soft power of the foreign of the UAE; It has drawn the necessary strategies in this regard, and the strategy of the United Arab Emirates has been developed to adopt artificial intelligence and technology of all kinds, through modern diplomatic tools, especially digital diplomacy, as the UAE

has adopted this type of emerging diplomacy in the conduct of its diplomatic work (EMIRATES, 2019; Fulton, 2019).

Theoretical Framework

More than four centuries ago, the Italian philosopher and politician (Ianziti, 2023) advised princes that being feared was more important than being loved. But it is better in our contemporary time to be the owner of these two qualities together. winning hearts and minds have always been important, but the importance is even more in the era of modern technological developments and means of communication and social media (Ullah, et al., 2021). The term soft power dates to the American professor of international relations Joseph S. Nye, who developed it in my book “Bound to Lead” which he published in 1990, and then reused it in his book “The Paradox of American Power” in 2002, and the term soft power automatically calls for its opposite to force. hard, hard, or coarse (Nye, 2004). Based on the theories related to soft power the following hypothesis has been developed.

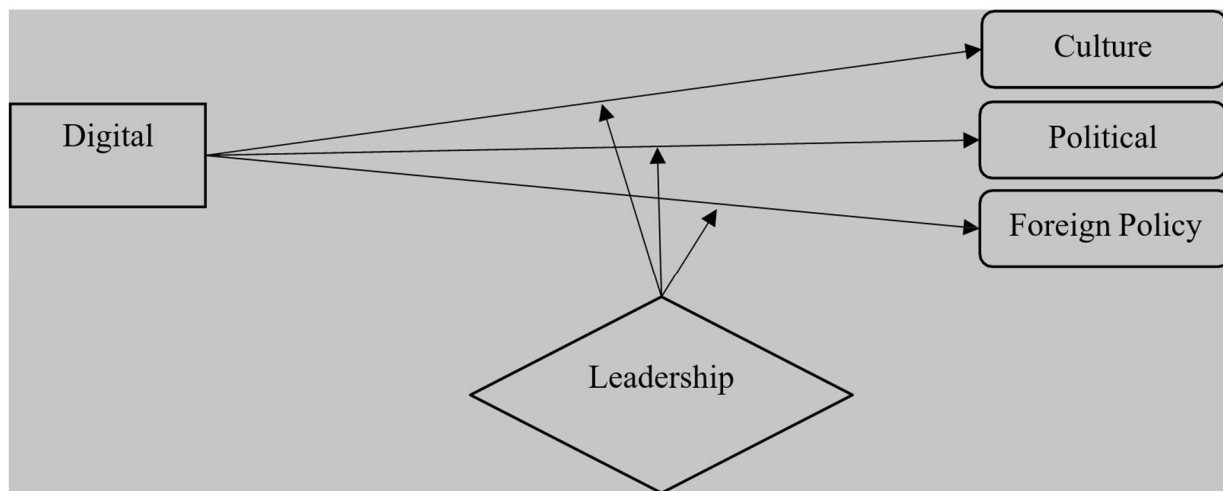


Figure 1 Research Framework

The vision of the political leadership plays a key role in drawing the relationship between digital diplomacy and soft power practices in general (Kearney, 2008). The process of achieving "political stability" requires a skilled political leadership who believes in change and is able even to confront the forces that reject change and to draw soft power strategies based on culture, political values, and foreign policy, which lead to political development (Jermisittiparsert, 2020). You can climb to the top of the political system, a political leadership that stresses the need to solve social problems and cultural affairs in society, and then it becomes the problem of community participation and the promotion of political sentiments and values, and foreign policy which is the main concern of the leadership (Ayoko & Callan., 2010; Rowold, 2011; Shin & Zhou., 2007).

Research Methodology

The purpose of the study is to identify the moderating role of leadership vision between digital diplomacy and culture, political values, and foreign policy. To meet the objectives of the study the data has been collected from the employees of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as diplomats representing the United Arab Emirates in embassies. The group consists of individuals with specialized knowledge and comprehension in the field of international relations, specifically focusing on the subject matter of digital diplomacy and its impact on the foreign policy of the United Arab Emirates. The researcher collected the data from 370 respondents with the help of a structured questionnaire that was adopted from the prior studies. The responses were gauged on a Likert scale of 5. The data has been analysed using SPSS 25 initially and after ensuring the accuracy of the data regarding nonresponse bias and common method bias, SMART PLS3 has been used.

Analysis

In this study, the analysis was initiated by calculating the individual outer loadings of items for all constructs to keep those items of variables in the analysis that had an item loading value greater than 0.7 (Zikmund, Carr, & Griffin, 2013). The item loadings for every item in the instrument are shown in Table 1. Thus, all item loading indications had specific values that ranged from a lesser bound of 0.708 to a higher bound of 0.919 as mentioned in Table 1.

Table 1 Outer Loadings

Outer Loadings	Culture	Digital Diplomacy	Foreign Policy	Leadership Vision	Political Values
Q13			0.850		
Q14			0.834		
Q15			0.847		
Q17			0.867		
Q18			0.715		
Q19			0.814		
Q20			0.815		
Q29					0.874
Q30					0.752
Q31					0.741
Q32					0.792
Q34					0.821
Q35					0.818

Q36					0.772
Q41	0.767				
Q42	0.768				
Q43	0.795				
Q44	0.844				
Q45	0.893				
Q46	0.853				
Q47	0.829				
Q51		0.943			
Q52		0.750			
Q53		0.919			
Q54		0.878			
Q56		0.912			
Q59		0.882			
Q60		0.915			
Q61				0.863	
Q62				0.791	
Q63				0.708	
Q64				0.859	
Q65				0.811	
Q66				0.868	
Q67				0.729	

Moreover, all the findings of the item loadings in Table 1 assured that all items must be kept in the model as values of item loadings have been higher than 0.7. Similarly, for additional analysis, we eliminated items with loading values below 0.7, which were below 10 percent of all items in the model. Consequently, enough items persisted even after the removal of those with outer loading values lower than 0.7.

Construct Reliability and Validity

In this study after examining the outer loadings, we evaluated Cronbach’s Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) to confirm the reliability of the culture, digital diplomacy, foreign policy, leadership vision, and political values. All variable values in the

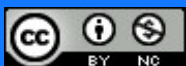
Cronbach’s alpha must be higher than the threshold level of 0.7 as stated by Asad, Asif, Bakar, and Altaf, (2021). Likewise, we also examined the indicator reliability as well as internal consistency by utilizing the composite reliability. Firstly, internal consistency mainly measures the consistency findings among the items of the similar test. Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt, (2013) demonstrated that measurements of the anticipated items must be used to analyze the variable to generate comparable outcomes. Subsequently, the composite reliability varies between 0 and 1, and the value of the construct should not be lower than 0.60 (Mendenhall, Reinmuth, & Beaver, 1993), however, those values of variables that are 0.70 or greater than 0.70 are highly substantial (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2010). An average level of internal consistency can be found in composite reliability ratings between 0.6 and 0.7. Moreover, in the current study, we calculated the convergent validity by utilizing the average internal consistency (AVE). Convergent validity is examined by utilizing the calculations of similar variables that have a theoretical correlation (Mendenhall, Reinmuth, & Beaver, 1993). Similarly, we have examined the AVE by applying a threshold level of 0.50 (Mendenhall, Reinmuth, & Beaver, 1993; Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2010). The measured values of AVE for all constructs were higher than 0.5, assuring significant validity. The outcomes of the Cronbach’s alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) of all variables are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Reliability and Validity

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Culture	0.897	0.918	0.623
Digital Diplomacy	0.954	0.963	0.788
Foreign Policy	0.919	0.935	0.675
Leadership Vision	0.910	0.928	0.650
Political Values	0.834	0.877	0.508

The measured values of Cronbach’s alpha for culture, digital diplomacy, foreign policy, leadership vision, and political values were 0.897, 0.954, 0.919, 0.910, and 0.834 respectively which were higher than the threshold level of 0.7 (Asad, Asif, Bakar, & Altaf, 2021). Likewise, composite reliability values for culture, digital diplomacy, foreign policy, leadership vision, and political values were 0.918, 0.963, 0.935, 0.928, and 0.877. Furthermore, the average variance extracted for culture, digital diplomacy, foreign policy, leadership vision, and political values were 0.623, 0.788, 0.675, 0.650, and 0.508 which were higher than the threshold level of 0.50.

Discriminant Validity by Fornell- Larcker criterion



This study examined the discriminant validity analysis for all variables culture, digital diplomacy, foreign policy, leadership vision, and political values. Likewise, this study also assured the discriminant validity in which one variable differs from the other variable. Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, and Tatham, (2010) revealed that the Fornell- Larcker criterion is the most standard approach used for analyzing the discriminant validity. Therefore, the measured values of all variables are mentioned in Table 3.

Table 3 Discriminant Validity by Fornell- Larcker criterion

Variables	Culture	Digital Diplomacy	Foreign Policy	Leadership Vision	Political Values
Culture	0.790				
Digital Diplomacy	0.766	0.888			
Foreign Policy	0.647	0.637	0.821		
Leadership Vision	0.614	0.675	0.590	0.806	
Political Values	0.618	0.616	0.608	0.572	0.713

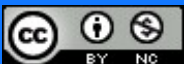
After assuring that all the results of all constructs in the structural model are reliable and valid discriminant validity has been analyzed.

Discriminant Validity by HTMT

Discriminant validity is a significant concept in structural equation modeling, which indicates the extent to which one variable differs from another variable in the model. Likewise, the discriminant validity by applying the Heterotrait- Monotrait Ratio of correlation is a criterion that can be utilized to assess the discriminant validity and to measure the average correlations of the indicators through variables whereas, if the variable value of HTMT is less than 0.90, discriminant validity has been examined among two constructs (Ab Hamid, Sami, & Sidek., 2017). As a result, the discriminant validity by using HTMT criteria for all variables of culture, digital diplomacy, foreign policy, leadership vision, and political values are mentioned in Table 4.

Table 4 Discriminant Validity using HTMT criteria.

Variables	Culture	Digital Diplomacy	Foreign Policy	Leadership Vision	Political Values
Culture					
Digital Diplomacy	0.800				
Foreign Policy	0.703	0.676			
Leadership Vision	0.653	0.713	0.624		



Political Values	0.833	0.682	0.804	0.635	
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Therefore, the above findings of discriminant validity by using HTMT criteria reveal that all construct values are reliable and valid.

Direct Effects

This study has analyzed the systematic analysis of a model of the structural model to provide a broad picture of the direct effects outcomes. The calculated values of the path coefficient direct effects implying a significant relationship are mentioned in Table 5.

Table 5 Path Coefficient Direct Effects

Path Coefficients	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Digital Diplomacy->Culture	0.768	0.773	0.057	13.449	0.000
Digital Diplomacy->Foreign Policy	0.637	0.641	0.119	5.350	0.000
Digital Diplomacy-> Political Values	0.615	0.618	0.119	5.174	0.000

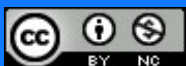
The above analysis of direct effects examines that there is a significant relationship between digital diplomacy and culture ($\beta= 0.768$, $t= 13.449$, $p= 0.000$). Likewise, the second hypothesis has a significant relationship between digital diplomacy and foreign policy ($\beta= 0.637$, $t= 5.350$, $p=0.000$). Lastly, the third hypothesis also has a significant relationship between digital diplomacy and political values ($\beta= 0.615$, $t= 5.174$, $p= 0.000$).

Moderating Effects

This study has examined the moderating effect of leadership vision between digital diplomacy and culture, political values, and foreign policy. As a result, the findings of all variable values are mentioned in Table 7.

Table 6 Moderating Effects

Path Coefficients	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Moderating Effect 1-> Culture	0.487	0.153	0.248	1.966	0.049
Moderating Effect 3-> Political Values	0.301	0.086	0.118	2.555	0.031
Moderating Effect 5-> Foreign Policy	0.405	0.089	0.163	2.485	0.019



The above analysis of moderating effects shows that there is a significant relationship between moderating effect 1 and culture ($\beta= 0.487$, $t= 1.966$, $p=0.049$), whereas there is also a significant relationship between moderating effect 3 and political values ($\beta= 0.301$, $t= 2.555$, $p=0.031$). Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between moderating effect 5 and foreign policy ($\beta= 0.405$, $t= 2.485$, $p=0.019$).

Conclusions

The purpose of conducting the study was to identify the impact of digital diplomacy adopted by UAE over culture, political values, and foreign policy. In addition to that another objective was to measure the moderating role of leadership planning by the government over the relationship between digital diplomacy and culture, political values, and foreign policy. The findings identified that digital diplomacy has a significant impact over culture, political values, and foreign policy. Which confirms that of the country strongly focus over digital diplomacy if they want to develop soft power in the region, furthermore, leadership planning by the government significantly moderates the relationship. The findings not only enrich the soft power theory of international relations but holds as a guide for the government that of they want to get the best advantage of digital diplomacy, then they should also focus over leadership planning.

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