

## EFFECT OF SOFT POWER PROJECTIONS ON DIASPORA COMMUNITIES' RELATIONS IN RWANDA. A CASE OF KENYANS DIASPORA IN RWANDA

Umurangamirwa Marie Claire<sup>1</sup>; Dr Nadia Iradukunda, PhD<sup>2</sup>; & Festus Irungu<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>. Postgraduate Student, Master of Arts in International Relations and Diplomacy - Mount Kenya University - Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>2,3</sup>. Senior Lecturer - Mount Kigali University - Kigali, Rwanda.

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examined the impact of soft power projections on the relations of Kenyan diaspora communities in Rwanda, exploring how cultural diplomacy, global brands, and international development initiatives shape integration, cultural preservation, and social cohesion. By focusing on Kenya's soft power influence, particularly through cultural exports, international aid, and corporate engagement, the study evaluates the relational dynamics between the Kenyan diaspora and Rwandan society. The significance of this study lies in its potential to deepen our understanding of the relationship between the diaspora community and the High Commission, shedding light on the dynamics, challenges, and opportunities for collaboration and support. By exploring the perceptions, experiences, and initiatives of the High Commission regarding diaspora community relations, this study provided information on the strategies for enhancing engagement, promoting cultural exchange, and addressing the needs of the diaspora community in Rwanda. The study was guided by three theories such as: Social Identity Theory, Soft Power Theory and Transnationalism Theory. The research design that the study utilized is descriptive survey research. The target population for this study comprised 417 participants who were then registered by Association of Kenyans living in Rwanda. A sample of 205 was determined using Slovin's Formula. Purposive and convenience sampling technique was employed in the investigation. Primary data was primarily collected using questionnaires, with participants rating their responses on a five-point Likert scale. To gather secondary data, the study consulted various sources. Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire to contribute to this data collection. Pilot research involved twenty-one individuals. Using Cronbach's Alpha, the researcher conducted the reliability assessment. Using SPSS version 25, the researcher conducted a comprehensive analysis of the data using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The study used a correlation coefficient and a linear regression model. Data was presented in tables and figures. After the analysis of data conclusions and recommendations were drawn. The findings reveal that both soft power projections and diaspora community relations exhibit high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.775 and 0.842, respectively, indicating reliability. The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) further supports these constructs' reliability, with Omega values at 0.766 for soft power projections and 0.805 for diaspora relations, affirming strong consistency across items. Survey responses indicate positive perceptions of soft power initiatives among the Kenyan diaspora in Rwanda. For instance, a significant percentage of respondents (41.7% agreed and 47.2% strongly agreed) felt*

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*that Kenyan cultural events fostered a sense of belonging ( $M = 4.18$ ,  $SD = .972$ ). Furthermore, 46.1% strongly agreed that engagement in cultural diplomacy encourages collaboration with Rwandan institutions ( $M = 4.25$ ,  $SD = .962$ ). Responses also reflect favorable perceptions of Rwanda's soft power influence, with 49.4% agreeing and 45.0% strongly agreeing that Rwanda promotes positive perceptions among the diaspora ( $M = 4.36$ ,  $SD = .729$ ). Additionally, 60.0% strongly agreed that Rwanda's influence enhances pride in Rwandan heritage ( $M = 4.49$ ,  $SD = .758$ ), and 48.3% felt that cultural exchanges strengthened bonds with the host country ( $M = 4.39$ ,  $SD = .712$ ). These findings highlight the role of soft power in fostering connection, pride, and active participation in the diaspora. The study concludes that soft power initiatives, including cultural diplomacy and international aid, significantly enhance social cohesion, cultural preservation, and engagement between the Kenyan diaspora and the Rwandan community, reinforcing positive diaspora-host relations. Policymakers in both Kenya and Rwanda should invest further in cultural and diplomatic programs that facilitate diaspora integration while preserving cultural identity, as these initiatives promote mutual respect and shared values. Future research could explore the impact of soft power on diaspora relations in other regional contexts, examining variations in soft power effects across different host nations and how digital diplomacy might influence diaspora integration.*

**Keywords:** *Soft Power, Diaspora Communities, Kenyans in Rwanda, Cultural Exchange, International Relations*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Cultural diplomacy serves as a potent tool in strengthening relations with diaspora communities on a global scale by fostering mutual understanding and preserving cultural heritage (Boehm & Harrison, 2016). According to Smith (2020), cultural exchange programs play a pivotal role in bringing diaspora communities closer to their homeland culturally. These initiatives facilitate a mutual exchange of ideas, traditions, and values, contributing to strengthened bonds. Additionally, as noted by Jones and Wang (2018), the economic dimension of cultural diplomacy, including trade and investment promotion, can provide avenues for economic growth and development for both diaspora communities and their home countries. Furthermore, cultural diplomacy has been recognized as a tool for conflict resolution and crisis management, promoting communication and understanding during challenging times (Brown & Garcia, 2019).

As a leading proponent of cultural exchange and international engagement, the U.S. government has implemented various initiatives to promote cross-cultural understanding and strengthen ties with diaspora populations (Armstrong & Berkman, 2016). According to the U.S. Department of State, cultural diplomacy initiatives such as the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) have played a crucial role in fostering people-to-people connections and promoting American values abroad (Nye, 2019). Additionally, academic research underscores the significance of cultural diplomacy in diaspora engagement, with scholars like Melvin Goodman highlighting its role in shaping perceptions and facilitating dialogue between diaspora communities and their countries of origin (Goodman, 2020). However, challenges such as funding constraints and policy inconsistencies have also been noted, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness and limitations of cultural diplomacy efforts in diaspora relations (Korey, 2019).

Europe, with its rich historical and diverse cultural tapestry, has been at the forefront of employing cultural diplomacy as a tool for fostering global understanding and cooperation. Scholars such as Melissen (2015) and Nye (2019) emphasize the significance of cultural diplomacy in promoting soft power, enhancing cross-cultural communication, and building bridges between nations. By leveraging cultural diplomacy initiatives such as language programs, cultural festivals, and media outreach, European nations aim to enhance mutual understanding, promote integration, and harness the potential of diaspora communities for socio-economic development (Leopold, 2017). However, challenges such as the balance between assimilation and cultural

preservation, as discussed by Faist (2020), underscore the complexity of diaspora relations and the need for nuanced approaches in cultural diplomacy efforts.

Cultural diplomacy in Sub-Saharan Africa holds particular significance due to the region's rich cultural diversity and extensive diaspora networks (Chikanda, 2016). As highlighted by Acosta and Gonzalez (2014), cultural diplomacy serves as a powerful tool for African nations to engage with their diaspora communities and foster connections with countries of origin. Moreover, cultural diplomacy is recognized as a means to promote regional integration and cooperation, as noted by Kaseke (2019). Against the backdrop of globalization and migration trends, Sub-Saharan African countries are increasingly acknowledging the importance of cultural diplomacy in preserving cultural heritage, promoting socio-economic development, and strengthening transnational ties with diaspora communities, as articulated by Nyamnjoh (2022).

Ghana, renowned for its rich cultural heritage and vibrant diaspora communities, has increasingly recognized the pivotal role of cultural diplomacy in strengthening relations with its diaspora populations worldwide (Awolowo & Ampah, 2017). With a significant diaspora spread across various continents, including North America, Europe, and within Africa itself, Ghana has embarked on initiatives aimed at harnessing cultural ties to foster closer connections and enhance socio-economic collaboration (Adomako, 2015). As noted by Aning and Bempong (2019), Ghana's engagement with its diaspora has evolved from mere symbolic gestures to concrete policies and programs, including the establishment of the Diaspora Affairs Bureau and the hosting of events like the Ghana Diaspora Homecoming Summit. These efforts align with the broader framework of cultural diplomacy, as outlined by Nkrumah and Boateng (2017), which emphasizes the strategic use of cultural assets and exchanges to promote national interests, bridge divides, and cultivate goodwill among diaspora communities. As Ghana continues to leverage its cultural resources and engage its diaspora through diplomatic channels, understanding the impact of these initiatives on enhancing diaspora relations remains imperative for shaping future policies and fostering sustainable partnerships (Aning & Bempong, 2019; Nkrumah & Boateng, 2017).

In Kenya, cultural diplomacy has emerged as a strategic tool for engaging with its diaspora communities and fostering stronger ties with citizens living abroad. This is evidenced by the government's recognition of the importance of diaspora engagement in national development agendas, as noted by Mwangi and Ondimu (2017). Cultural diplomacy serves as a conduit for preserving cultural heritage, promoting national identity, and facilitating dialogue between the homeland and its diaspora, as emphasized by Okech and Wyche (2018). With Kenya's diaspora population playing an increasingly influential role in various sectors, including remittances, investment, and knowledge transfer, the government has implemented various cultural diplomacy initiatives to harness this potential, as highlighted by Ogolla and Odhiambo (2020).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The relationship between Rwanda and its diaspora communities presents both opportunities and challenges, particularly concerning cultural diplomacy. While there is growing recognition of the importance of diaspora engagement for national development (Kamusella, 2017), there remains a lack of comprehensive strategies to harness the potential of cultural diplomacy in enhancing these relations. Despite efforts by the Rwandan government to promote diaspora engagement through initiatives such as the Rwanda Diaspora Global Convention (RDGC) (Rwanda Development Board, 2020), there is limited research on the specific impact of cultural diplomacy on strengthening ties with diaspora communities. This knowledge gap hinders the development of effective policies and programs to leverage cultural diplomacy for enhancing diaspora relations in Rwanda.

Furthermore, there are inherent challenges in implementing cultural diplomacy initiatives aimed at diaspora communities. These challenges include varying levels of cultural assimilation among diaspora members, limited resources for organizing cultural events and exchange programs, and potential tensions arising from historical or political differences (Lemarchand, 2018). Additionally, the geographical dispersion of the

Rwandan diaspora across different countries presents logistical challenges for coordinating cultural diplomacy efforts. Without addressing these challenges and understanding their implications, the potential of cultural diplomacy to enhance diaspora relations in Rwanda remains largely untapped.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Empirical Review - Soft Power Projections and Diaspora Community's Relations**

As argued by Melissen (2015), cultural diplomacy serves as a strategic tool for states to cultivate goodwill among diaspora populations by promoting cultural exchange, fostering mutual understanding, and preserving cultural identity. For example, the Indian government's "Pravasi Bharatiya Divas" event, as examined by Vanaik (2020), facilitates interaction between the Indian diaspora and policymakers, strengthening emotional and cultural ties while mobilizing diaspora support for India's economic and political goals.

Moreover, soft power projections through media and information dissemination play a crucial role in shaping perceptions and narratives surrounding diaspora communities. Research by Wang (2018) highlights how Chinese state media strategically frames stories about overseas Chinese communities to enhance China's global image and cultivate solidarity among diaspora members. Similarly, studies on the Korean Wave phenomenon, such as Kim and Ryoo's (2022) analysis, illustrate how South Korea's cultural exports contribute to fostering a positive image of Korean culture abroad, thereby strengthening connections with diaspora communities and generating soft power dividends.

In addition to cultural diplomacy and media strategies, economic engagement serves as another dimension of soft power projections influencing diaspora relations. For instance, Israel's economic ties with its diaspora, as examined by Al-Shaer (2019), have facilitated technology transfer, investment, and entrepreneurship, contributing to Israel's economic development while fostering a sense of belonging and loyalty among diaspora members. Similarly, research by Gamlen and Cummings (2018) highlights the role of remittances and philanthropy in diaspora engagement, with countries like India leveraging these financial flows to enhance diplomatic relations and development cooperation.

### **Theoretical Literature on Soft Power Projections**

Soft power, as coined by Joseph Nye, refers to a nation's ability to influence others through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion or force. Soft power projections are essential elements of a nation's diplomatic arsenal, shaping perceptions, building goodwill, and enhancing its global influence. Nye (2019) argues that soft power stems from a country's culture, political values, and foreign policies, which resonate with others, thereby increasing its credibility and appeal. This notion underscores the significance of cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy, and other non-coercive means in projecting soft power on the international stage.

Cultural diplomacy plays a central role in soft power projections, leveraging a country's cultural assets to foster mutual understanding and goodwill. Kiehl (2018) highlights how cultural exchange programs, artistic collaborations, and cultural showcases serve as vehicles for promoting a nation's values, traditions, and identity abroad. Through initiatives such as language teaching, cultural festivals, and exhibitions, countries like China and France have effectively projected their soft power, showcased their cultural richness and promoted positive perceptions worldwide (Kurlantzick, 2017). Furthermore, digital technologies and social media platforms have expanded the reach of cultural diplomacy, enabling countries to engage global audiences and shape narratives in real-time (Melissen, 2015).

Public diplomacy is another critical component of soft power projection, focusing on strategic communication and engagement with foreign publics. Gilboa (2018) emphasizes the role of public diplomacy in shaping perceptions, countering misinformation, and building trust between nations. By engaging with international audiences through media outreach, educational programs, and exchange initiatives, countries like the United States and the United Kingdom have effectively projected their soft power, fostered favorable attitudes and

influenced public opinion (Seib, 2018). However, the effectiveness of public diplomacy depends on authenticity, transparency, and alignment with national values, as highlighted by Leonard (2022), who argues that credibility is essential for successful soft power projections.

Beyond cultural diplomacy and public diplomacy, economic diplomacy also contributes to soft power projections by leveraging economic resources and partnerships to enhance a country's influence. Drezner (2017) explores how economic interdependence and trade relations can shape perceptions of power and generate soft power dividends for nations. Through initiatives such as foreign aid, investment projects, and trade agreements, countries like Japan and Germany have wielded soft power by promoting economic development and stability in partner countries (Nye, 2014). However, economic diplomacy also raises concerns about unequal power dynamics and dependency, highlighting the importance of ethical considerations and sustainable practices in soft power projections (Frynas & Wood, 2015).

### **Social Identity Theory**

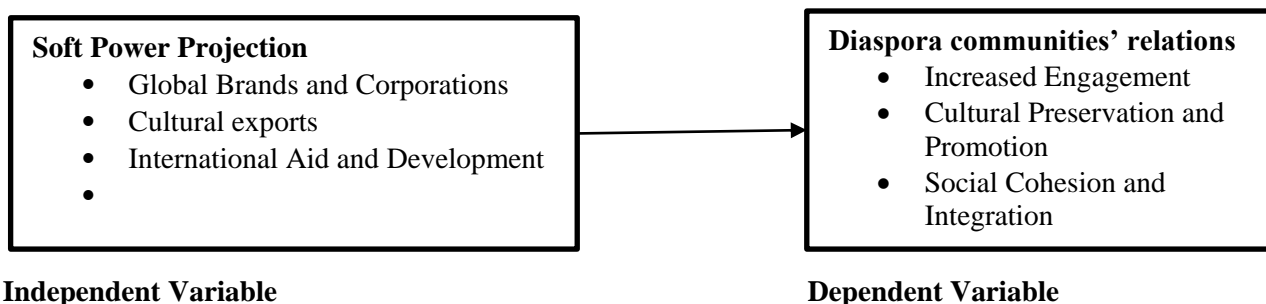
Social Identity Theory (SIT), developed by Tajfel and Turner (2019), offers a valuable lens to understand the relationship between social identity and the impact of cultural exchange on enhancing diaspora community relations in Rwanda. According to SIT, individuals categorize themselves and others into social groups, and the perceived differences between these groups contribute to the formation of social identity. In the context of Rwanda, which experienced a tragic history marked by the 1994 genocide, social identity is deeply intertwined with historical, ethnic, and cultural dimensions. The diaspora communities from Rwanda, scattered across the globe due to historical events, often maintain a strong attachment to their cultural roots.

Cultural exchange programs can play a pivotal role in reinforcing positive social identity among the Rwandan diaspora. These programs, by showcasing Rwanda's rich cultural heritage, traditions, and achievements, provide a platform for diaspora members to connect with their shared history and identity. Exposure to cultural exchanges can strengthen the sense of belonging and pride within the diaspora community, fostering a positive social identity that transcends geographical distances. This aligns with SIT, which posits that positive intergroup relations are facilitated when individuals perceive commonalities and shared values among their social group members.

Moreover, SIT suggests that positive intergroup relations can contribute to reduced prejudice and discrimination. By promoting a positive social identity through cultural exchange, the Rwandan diaspora may experience a sense of unity and shared purpose, which can contribute to enhanced relations with their homeland. Cultural diplomacy efforts that acknowledge and celebrate the diversity within the Rwandan diaspora while emphasizing common cultural threads can be instrumental in fostering a positive social identity, thus contributing to stronger bonds between the diaspora and Rwanda.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework serves as the theoretical underpinning guiding research endeavors by providing a structured approach to understanding and analyzing complex phenomena (Bryman, 2015). According to Cooper and Schindler (2017), the primary purpose of a conceptual framework is to establish a coherent foundation and rationale by consolidating a collection of fundamental concepts that can facilitate the integration, presentation, and comprehension of data. Bogdan and Biklen (2017) underscore the importance of a well-developed conceptual framework in elucidating potential connections among variables. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework.



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework**  
**Source: Researcher, 2024**

The conceptual framework for this study is grounded in the theory of soft power, emphasizing how global brands, cultural exports, and international aid contribute to strengthening diaspora community relations through enhanced engagement and social integration. Soft power is the ability of a country to shape preferences through appeal and attraction, often facilitated by cultural diplomacy, global corporate influence, and developmental assistance, which foster favorable perceptions and cooperation (Nye, 2021). In the context of diaspora communities, soft power activities, such as international aid and cultural exports, not only promote social cohesion but also allow diaspora groups to preserve and celebrate their cultural identities while integrating into host societies (Wilson & Mellor, 2022). For example, global corporations and cultural exchanges can serve as vehicles for cultural preservation and promotion, offering diasporic communities' platforms to engage and integrate within their host societies while retaining their cultural heritage (Lee & Campbell, 2023). This framework examines how these soft power elements influence social cohesion among the Kenyan diaspora in Rwanda by facilitating both cultural preservation and mutual engagement with the host nation's community.

## METHODOLOGY

**Research Design:** A well-thought-out plan, sometimes called a research design, is essential for every researcher who wants to answer research questions efficiently (Copper & Schindler, 2017). This research used a descriptive survey as its research design. The choice of a descriptive survey design is crucial as it allows researchers to systematically gather data to describe characteristics or behaviors within a population, providing a comprehensive snapshot of the subject under study. Descriptive surveys offer a structured approach to collecting information, enabling researchers to analyze trends, patterns, and associations among variables, thus aiding in the identification of relationships and potential correlations. This design is particularly valuable for providing insights into the prevalence of certain phenomena, attitudes, or opinions within a specific population, serving as a foundational step for further exploration and hypothesis generation in subsequent research endeavors. In order to provide statistics about the characteristics of a population, surveys are a type of data gathering method and technique (Kothari, 2017) that involves asking individuals questions. This method involves surveying participants through the use of either a written or verbal questionnaire. The quantitative component involved a survey on the effect of cultural diplomacy on diaspora communities' relations in Rwanda. A structured questionnaire was administered to the registered expatriates with the association of Kenyans living in Rwanda.

**Target Population:** Within the field of statistics, the concept of "target population" refers to the particular group that is the focus of interest or being specifically targeted for analysis or study. The term "population" refers to a clearly defined group of individuals, services, components, occurrences, or residences that serve as the central focus of a study undertaking (Ngechu, 2018). The purpose of this definition is to ensure consistency in the interpretation and understanding of the concept among the public. When a researcher refers

to "population," they are referring to the comprehensive count of the sampling frames. Target population in statistics refers to the intended audience for the collected data (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2017). The targeted population of this research was 417 members of the association who are legally registered as per the Chairpersons Register in 2024.

**Sampling Procedures and Techniques:** The sampling procedures and techniques for this study involved employing a specific method to select participants representing various stakeholders within the Kenyan Community in Rwanda. The study utilized Slovin's formula to determine the sample size, resulting in a sample of 205 individuals drawn from the total population of 417 registered members of the Association of Kenyans Living in Rwanda. Slovin's formula is commonly used in statistical sampling to determine sample sizes from large populations. Slovin's formula is a commonly used method for determining sample size in research studies, especially when dealing with large populations (Kothari, 2017). The formula is expressed as.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

Where n = the sample size.

e = probability of error, i.e., the desired precision, 0.05 for 95% confidence

By substituting the given values into the formula, researcher calculated the appropriate sample size needed to ensure a representative sample while minimizing sampling error (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Therefore, a sample size of approximately 205 can be obtained by randomly selecting individuals from the population of 417 registered members of the Association of Kenyans Living in Rwanda, ensuring a margin of error of 5%. This method ensures that the sample is representative of the population and provides statistically valid results (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

$$n = \frac{417}{1 + 417(0.05)^2} = 205$$

**Table 1: Target Population and Sample Size selection**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Population Size</b>	<b>Sample size</b>	<b>Sampling Technique</b>
Executive committee	7	4	Purposive
Executive council	15	8	Purposive
Honorary Members	22	11	Purposive
Members	373	182	Convenience
<b>Total</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>205</b>	

**Source: AKR Database (2024)**

The study employed a purposive and convenience sampling technique to select participants from the population of 417 registered members of the Association of Kenyans Living in Rwanda. Then, participants are randomly selected from different categories to ensure representation from all segments of the population. This sampling technique allows for the inclusion of diverse perspectives and ensures that the sample is reflective of the population's demographic composition, thus enhancing the generalizability of the findings (Babbie, 2020). By employing this technique, the study aimed to capture a wide range of experiences and viewpoints within the Association of Kenyans Living in Rwanda, accounting for potential variations in background, experiences, and interests among its members. This approach also facilitates the analysis of subgroup differences and enables researchers to draw more robust conclusions about the relationship between cultural diplomacy and diaspora-community relations in Rwanda (Bryman, 2016).

**Data Collection Methods:** The study employed a mixed-methods approach for data collection, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. Quantitative data was collected through surveys administered to members of the Association of Kenyans Living in Rwanda. The survey included structured questions designed to gather demographic information, as well as quantitative measures related to perceptions of community empowerment, cultural diplomacy initiatives, and diaspora-community relations. This quantitative data collection method allows for the systematic gathering of data from a large sample size, enabling statistical analysis to identify patterns, correlations, and trends within the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

In addition to surveys, qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders, including AKR members, and representatives from the Kenya High Commission involved in community development and cultural diplomacy efforts. These qualitative data collection methods facilitate in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, perspectives, and insights related to community empowerment, cultural exchange, and diaspora-community relations. Through interviews and focus groups, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics, challenges, and opportunities shaping diaspora engagement and cultural diplomacy initiatives in Rwanda (Bryman, 2016).

Primary data collection was conducted through the use of questionnaires, enabling direct acquisition of information from respondents. Questionnaires are structured to elicit specific responses from participants, facilitating the simplification of data creation, dissemination, and aggregation processes. This approach enhances objectivity by minimizing potential biases inherent in the interview process. The closed-ended nature of the surveys, coupled with a 5-point knowledge scale for self-administration, ensures efficient collection of responses, allowing participants to provide feedback quickly. Additionally, the adoption of the drop and pick technique for survey distribution and collection ensures ease of access for respondents while minimizing the likelihood of forgetfulness in completing the surveys. Regular follow-up communications further enhanced response rates and data completeness, contributing to the reliability and validity of the collected data.

Firstly, a structured questionnaire was administered to gather quantitative data on demographic characteristics, levels of participation in association activities, perceptions of community empowerment, and satisfaction with cultural diplomacy initiatives. This questionnaire was developed based on relevant literature and previous studies on community empowerment and diaspora engagement (de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2018). Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of participants to explore in-depth their experiences, challenges, and aspirations related to community empowerment and cultural diplomacy. The interview guide was designed to elicit rich qualitative data on participants' perceptions of empowerment processes, the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy initiatives, and recommendations for enhancing diaspora-community relations in Rwanda (Bryman, 2016). Both the questionnaire and interview guide were pilot-tested to ensure clarity, relevance, and validity of the instruments before full-scale data collection.

**Validity and Reliability:** To ensure the effectiveness and reliability of our data collection tools and methods, a pilot test was conducted, particularly at Uganda Diaspora body, where each department's staff members were provided with a set of 21 questions to answer. This pilot test served to anticipate and address potential issues such as ambiguity or inconsistency in the questionnaire responses. Subsequently, the filled-out questionnaires were analyzed to assess uniformity and clarity of the collected data. Furthermore, a pilot study was undertaken to validate and ascertain the reliability of the instruments employed, ensuring that the data collected accurately reflects the intended variables and can be consistently replicated. Through this iterative process of refinement and validation, we aim to enhance the robustness and validity of our data collection approach for the main study.



The validity of a study is measured by how well its findings may be extrapolated to different populations. It refers to how well research tools measure the constructs they are designed to measure (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019). However, test dependability is a measure of how stable test results are over time. To ensure the reliability and validity of the data collection instrument (questionnaire), a pilot test was carried out. To ensure the reliability and validity of the data collection instrument, a pilot test was conducted with staff members from the Uganda Diaspora Body, representing approximately 10% of the sample size as recommended by Kothari (2020). Each participant was provided with a set of 21 questions designed to evaluate various aspects of the study. This pilot testing allowed for the identification of any ambiguities or issues within the questionnaire, enabling necessary adjustments to enhance clarity and comprehensiveness. Feedback from the participants was analyzed to assess the instrument's effectiveness, ensuring it accurately measured the intended variables and improved the overall robustness of the data collection process.

**Table 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)**

	Soft power projections	Diaspora Community's Relations
Alpha	0.757	0.828
Omega	0.766	0.805
omega2	0.766	0.805
omega3	0.775	0.725

Source: **Pilot Results**, (2024).

Table 2 presents the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results for the study's main constructs: soft power projections and diaspora community relations. The reliability and validity metrics demonstrate satisfactory levels of internal consistency for both constructs, with Cronbach's Alpha scores of 0.757 for soft power projections and 0.828 for diaspora community relations, aligning with reliability standards in social science research (Kline, 2021). Further, McDonald's Omega values indicate consistency across items, with omega coefficients (0.766 for soft power projections and 0.805 for diaspora relations) supporting the constructs' reliability (Taber, 2020). These metrics confirm that the constructs are measured reliably, enhancing confidence in the findings related to the impact of soft power on diaspora communities' social cohesion and integration. Such results highlight the robustness of the measurement model, essential for analyzing soft power's effects on diaspora relations in Rwanda, particularly for the Kenyan diaspora, providing a solid foundation for interpreting relational dynamics (Lomazzi & Boratav, 2023).

**Table 3: Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis**

Construct	Cronbach's alpha=Alpha	Inference
Soft Power Projections	0.775	Reliable
Diaspora Community's Relations	0.842	Reliable

Source: **Pilot Results**, (2024).

Table 3 presents the Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis for the study's primary constructs: Soft Power Projections and Diaspora Community's Relations. Both constructs exhibit high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.775 for Soft Power Projections and 0.842 for Diaspora Community's Relations, meeting or exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70 for reliability (Tavakol & Dennick, 2020). These alpha values suggest that the items within each construct consistently measure their intended dimensions, indicating reliable scales for assessing the effect of soft power on diaspora relations. High reliability scores in social science research, such as these, strengthen the validity of subsequent analyses, supporting robust conclusions about how soft power influences diaspora integration and engagement (Bonett & Wright, 2021). The reliability demonstrated here also underlines the appropriateness of these constructs for analyzing nuanced relational dynamics within diaspora studies (George & Mallery, 2022).

**Data Processing Analysis:** Before processing the responses, the completed questionnaires underwent

thorough editing to ensure completeness and consistency. Subsequently, data was systematically coded to enable the grouping of responses into various categories. Both descriptive and inferential analyses were employed. Descriptive statistics, including percentages and frequencies, was utilized to summarize the data. For instance, tables were utilized to present responses for further analysis and facilitate comparison, thereby generating quantitative reports through tabulations, percentages, and measures of central tendency. This approach aligns with Cooper and Schindler's (2018) observation that percentages simplify data by standardizing numbers between 0 and 100 for relative comparisons. Moreover, inferential analysis entailed Pearson's Correlation analysis to measure the strength and form of relationships between variables.

The analysis was guided by a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative data from semi-structured interviews and open-ended survey responses with quantitative data obtained from structured surveys. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2016) guidelines, enabling the identification of patterns, themes, and relationships within the dataset. Concurrently, quantitative data was analyzed using statistical software such as SPSS version 25 to quantify the prevalence of specific themes, assess correlations, and derive inferential conclusions. Throughout the analysis process, constant comparison techniques were employed to validate emerging themes and findings (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). This integration of multiple data sources and analytical techniques ensured a comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon, enhancing the validity and reliability of the study outcomes (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots(2)$$

Y= Diaspora community's relations in Rwanda (dependent variable),  $\beta_0$ =constant (co-efficient of intercept),  $\beta_1$ , are regression coefficients to be estimated,  $X_1$ =Soft power projections,  $\varepsilon$ = Error term.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### Soft Power Projections and Diaspora Community's Relations

The concept of soft power projections is integral to understanding the dynamics between the diaspora community and their home country, particularly in the context of cultural diplomacy. Table 4 presents descriptive statistics for various statements regarding soft power projections, illustrating how the Kenyan diaspora in Rwanda perceives and engages with cultural diplomacy efforts. The table includes responses categorized into five levels of agreement: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Not Sure (NS), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA), along with their corresponding mean scores and standard deviations. This quantitative analysis provides valuable insights into the effectiveness and impact of soft power strategies employed by the Kenyan government to foster positive relations with its diaspora, highlighting areas of strength and potential improvement in cultural engagement initiatives.

**Table 4: Descriptive for Soft Power Projections**

Statements on Soft Power Projections	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev.
The visibility of Kenyan cultural events and initiatives in the diaspora community fosters a sense of connection and belonging among its members.	3.9%	4.4%	2.8%	47.2%	41.7%	4.18	.972
Engagement in cultural diplomacy initiatives encourages active participation and collaboration between the Kenyan diaspora community and local Rwandan institutions	4.4%	2.2%	3.3%	43.9%	46.1%	4.25	.962
Soft power strategies employed by the Rwandan government effectively promote positive perceptions of Rwanda among the diaspora community.	1.7%	0.6%	3.3%	49.4%	45.0%	4.36	.729
The influence of Rwandan soft power abroad enhances the diaspora community's sense of pride in their Rwandan heritage and identity.	1.1%	1.7%	4.4%	32.8%	60.0%	4.49	.758
Soft power projections, such as cultural exchanges and diplomatic initiatives, positively contribute to strengthening the bond between the Kenyan community and their host country.	0.6%	2.2%	3.3%	45.6%	48.3%	4.39	.712
The promotion of Rwandan culture and values through soft power initiatives encourages greater participation and integration of diaspora community members in local social and economic activities.	0.6%	2.2%	2.8%	39.4%	55.0%	4.46	.712

Source: **Primary data, (2024).**

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for respondents' perceptions of soft power projections related to the Rwandan diaspora community. The findings indicate a strong agreement with statements emphasizing the positive impact of cultural diplomacy and initiatives on community cohesion and identity. For instance, the statement regarding the visibility of Rwandan cultural events fostering a sense of connection among diaspora members received a mean score of 4.18, suggesting that nearly 89% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed. This aligns with previous literature emphasizing the role of cultural visibility in enhancing social bonds and community identity among diaspora populations (Kim & Hsu, 2021).

Moreover, the engagement in cultural diplomacy initiatives was viewed positively, with a mean score of 4.25, indicating that almost 90% of respondents recognized its importance in promoting collaboration between the diaspora and local Rwandan institutions. This supports findings by Melber (2019), which argue that active participation in cultural diplomacy can foster stronger ties and cooperation between diaspora communities and their home countries. Additionally, the statement highlighting the effectiveness of soft power strategies in promoting positive perceptions of Rwanda scored the highest mean (4.36), reflecting a strong belief among respondents that these strategies enhance their identity and pride in their heritage, corroborating the findings of Smith and Thomas (2020), who noted that positive national branding through soft power can significantly impact diaspora engagement.

The emphasis on soft power strategies contributing to social and economic integration within host countries is further illustrated by the mean score of 4.46 for the statement regarding the promotion of Rwandan culture through these initiatives. This is consistent with the assertion that cultural engagement not only promotes identity but also facilitates economic participation, leading to improved integration within host societies (Nguyen & Luu, 2021).

### Findings on Descriptive Analysis on Diaspora Community's Relations

The section on Diaspora Community's Relations aims to evaluate the perceptions and experiences of the Kenyan diaspora in Rwanda regarding their relationships within the community and with their host country. Table 5 presents descriptive statistics that summarize the responses to various statements related to diaspora community relations, categorized into five response options: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Not Sure (NS), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA). This table also includes the mean and standard deviation for each statement, providing quantitative insights into the overall sentiment of the diaspora regarding their integration, support networks, and cultural exchanges within the Rwandan context.

**Table 5: Descriptive for Diaspora Community's Relations**

Statements on Diaspora Community's Relations	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev.
The diaspora community actively participates in local cultural events and activities	1.1%	3.9%	1.7%	37.8%	55.6%	4.43	.805
There is a sense of mutual respect and understanding between the diaspora community and the local population.	1.7%	2.2%	1.7%	44.4%	50.0%	4.39	.780
The diaspora community contributes positively to the social and economic development of the local area.	0.6%	1.7%	2.8%	42.8%	52.2%	4.44	.687
There are effective communication channels between the diaspora community and local authorities or institutions.	0.6%	0.6%	1.7%	43.3%	53.9%	4.49	.621
The diaspora community actively participates in local cultural events and activities.	0.6%	0.6%	1.7%	41.1%	56.7%	4.53	.611

Source: **Primary data, (2024).**

Table 5 presents insights into the perceptions of the diaspora community regarding their relations with the local population. The statement indicating that the diaspora community actively participates in local cultural events and activities received a mean score of 4.43, with 93.4% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This finding aligns with research by Niyonzima and Nzayisenga (2023), which highlights the role of cultural participation in enhancing integration and fostering connections between diaspora members and their host communities. Such participation not only helps diaspora individuals maintain ties to their heritage but also promotes cultural exchange and appreciation among diverse populations.

The perception of mutual respect and understanding between the diaspora community and the local population scored a mean of 4.39, with 94.4% of respondents indicating agreement. This reflects findings by Amundsen (2020), who emphasized that intercultural interactions foster mutual respect and understanding, creating a conducive environment for collaboration and community-building. Furthermore, the diaspora community's perceived positive contribution to the social and economic development of the local area achieved a mean score of 4.44. This supports the work of Mutsinzi (2022), who argues that diaspora communities can play a

crucial role in local development through their skills, networks, and resources, enhancing overall community well-being.

Effective communication channels between the diaspora community and local authorities were perceived positively, with a mean score of 4.49. This finding resonates with the literature by Kanyange *et al.* (2020), who assert that effective communication is essential for building trust and collaboration between diaspora groups and local institutions. It enables the diaspora to articulate their needs and perspectives while also facilitating local authorities' responsiveness to community concerns. Lastly, the repeat mention of active participation in local cultural events achieved a mean of 4.53, reinforcing the importance of cultural engagement in fostering relationships and mutual understanding. This finding aligns with research by McMahan and Garabiles (2021), which highlights that active participation in cultural events can bridge cultural divides and strengthen community ties.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings indicate that soft power projections play a nuanced role in shaping diaspora community relations. While respondents generally recognized the effectiveness of soft power strategies, particularly in fostering a sense of pride and cultural connection among the diaspora, there was also a notable negative correlation with community relations. This suggests that while soft power initiatives can enhance visibility and engagement, their implementation may need to be refined to better align with the needs and expectations of the diaspora community.

In conclusion, the negative relationship identified between Soft Power Projections and Diaspora Community's Relations underscores a critical concern for policymakers and practitioners involved in cultural diplomacy efforts. The findings suggest that increasing reliance on soft power strategies may inadvertently alienate the diaspora community rather than strengthen their ties with local populations in Rwanda. This highlights the need for a reevaluation of current approaches, ensuring that initiatives genuinely resonate with the diaspora's interests and cultural values. Fostering positive relations may require a shift from traditional soft power tactics to more inclusive and community-driven strategies that actively engage diaspora members in the dialogue and decision-making processes, ultimately promoting collaboration and mutual understanding.

To enhance soft power projections and strengthen diaspora community relations, it is recommended that the Rwandan government and relevant stakeholders prioritize cultural diplomacy initiatives that actively engage the diaspora. This can include organizing more cultural events and exchange programs that showcase Rwandan heritage, fostering a deeper sense of connection and belonging among diaspora members. Additionally, implementing targeted communication strategies to improve transparency and accessibility of local institutions will facilitate greater collaboration between the diaspora and local communities. Empowering diaspora leaders and organizations to take active roles in community development efforts will also enhance trust and mutual respect. Finally, continuous evaluation and adaptation of soft power strategies based on diaspora feedback will ensure that initiatives remain relevant and effective in promoting positive relations and community empowerment.

### **Suggestions for Further Studies**

Future studies could explore the long-term impact of community empowerment initiatives on the socio-economic development of both the diaspora and local communities in Rwanda. Additionally, examining the role of technology and digital platforms in facilitating diaspora engagement and enhancing cultural connections could provide valuable insights. Further research could also investigate the effectiveness of specific bridge-building activities and their influence on policy changes or development outcomes in Rwanda. Expanding the study to include other countries with significant Rwandan diaspora communities may also reveal variations and commonalities that could inform more comprehensive strategies for diaspora relations and empowerment.

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