

Digital Information Dissemination and User Engagement on Social Media: Evidence from Saudi–India Digital Diplomacy

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Abstract

This study investigates how digital information is disseminated and how users engage with social media communication within the context of Saudi–India digital diplomacy. Attention is given to whether digital information communication, user information engagement, information transparency and source credibility, and strategic digital information dissemination are associated with information reach, access, reception and engagement. A quantitative cross-sectional approach was adopted, with primary data obtained through a structured questionnaire administered to social media users who had encountered diplomatic information concerning Saudi Arabia and India. Following data screening, 192 valid responses were included in the analysis. Structural equation modelling was applied to evaluate a newly developed measurement scale and examine the proposed relationships. The findings demonstrate positive and statistically significant associations between all four examined dimensions—digital information communication, user information engagement, information transparency and source

credibility, and strategic digital information dissemination—and information reach, access, reception and engagement. These results underscore the role of credibility, transparency, interactivity, and strategically managed information dissemination in strengthening contemporary digital diplomatic communication. The study further extends the digital diplomacy literature by bringing communication-related and audience-centred dimensions together within an integrated analytical framework.

Keywords: Digital Diplomacy, Social Media, Digital Information Communication, User Information Engagement, Information Transparency, Source Credibility, Strategic Information Dissemination.

Introduction

The expansion of social media has fundamentally reshaped how governments communicate, distribute information, and establish connections with audiences beyond their national boundaries (Augustine et al., 2026). Rather than functioning solely as channels for publishing information, digital platforms have developed into strategically important communication environments through which states articulate policy positions, communicate national narratives, and interact directly with foreign publics (Reveillac and DePaula, 2025). Their extensive reach provides governments with opportunities to connect with broader audiences (Guo et al., 2026), improve access to information, facilitate its reception, and encourage active user participation. Consequently, the effectiveness of digital diplomacy cannot be understood merely in terms of whether information

is available online. Equal consideration must be given to how diplomatic information is communicated, encountered, interpreted, and ultimately engaged with by digital audiences.

Within bilateral relationships, digital information dissemination has acquired particular significance (Barman, 2024), including in the context of Saudi–India digital diplomacy. Relations between Saudi Arabia and India extend across economic, political, cultural, and people-to-people domains, creating a substantial need for effective communication between institutional actors and their digital audiences. Social media can reinforce these interactions (Frey, 2024) by providing accessible and timely channels for communicating diplomatic activities, bilateral initiatives, cultural exchanges, economic cooperation, and national priorities. Nevertheless, the mere presence of such information on digital platforms does not necessarily mean that intended audiences will access, receive, trust, or meaningfully engage with it. Understanding digital diplomatic communication therefore requires attention both to the characteristics of the information being disseminated and to the responses generated among its users.

In an increasingly networked information environment, digital information communication provides an important mechanism through which diplomatic content can reach relevant audiences (Ghosh and Karmakar, 2026; Preston et al., 2009). Effective communication can increase the visibility and accessibility of information while creating opportunities for audiences to interact with diplomatic content (Barman, 2024). However, communication constitutes only one dimension of this process. User information engagement is equally important because individuals operating within social media environments are not simply passive recipients of information (Yee, 2023). Their reactions, interactions, and engagement behaviours can influence both how information is received and how it subsequently circulates across digital networks. Examining digital information communication alongside user information engagement is therefore essential for understanding the mechanisms through which digital diplomacy may facilitate information reach, access, reception and engagement.

The outcomes of digital information dissemination may also depend considerably on information transparency and source credibility (Khademi Gerashi et al., 2023; Safaeian, 2025). Social media environments

expose users to substantial volumes of rapidly circulating information, making the perceived transparency of content and credibility of its source potentially important considerations when users evaluate diplomatic messages. Communication that is clear and unambiguous can support audiences in developing a more accurate understanding of the information conveyed (Orzeață, 2022), while credible sources can strengthen confidence in the material being communicated. Such characteristics may consequently shape whether information distributed through official digital channels is accessed, received, and engaged with by users. Digital diplomacy should therefore be examined not only through the communication process itself but also through the informational qualities that may influence audience responses.

Strategic digital information dissemination represents another important component of this communication environment (Anggraeni et al., 2024). When employed purposefully, social media can provide governments with an effective communication mechanism (M. W. Graham, 2014) for delivering targeted messages, strengthening information visibility, sustaining interaction with audiences, and supporting diplomatic objectives. A strategically organised approach to dissemination may therefore facilitate broader information reach while strengthening opportunities for access, reception and engagement. Its effectiveness, however, needs to be considered within the wider digital communication environment, where communication practices, user engagement, transparency, and source credibility operate alongside one another.

Against this background, the present study investigates digital information dissemination and user engagement within Saudi–India digital diplomacy. It specifically examines the relationships of digital information communication, user information engagement, information transparency and source credibility, and strategic digital information dissemination with information reach, access, reception and engagement. Four hypotheses are formulated to investigate these relationships systematically. By bringing these dimensions together within a structured analytical framework, the study provides an integrated perspective on how diplomatic information is communicated, encountered, and engaged with through social media. In doing so, it seeks to advance understanding of the role of digital information in contemporary diplomacy and of how social media facilitates communication both

between governments and between governments and international audiences.

Literature Review

Information Reach, Access, Reception and Engagement

Information reach, access, reception and engagement collectively describe the extent to which digital diplomatic information becomes visible and available to social media users, is received by them, and generates subsequent interaction (Singh Chauhan et al., 2025). Within the present study, information reach captures the breadth and diversity of online audiences exposed to information concerning Saudi–India digital diplomacy. Information access concerns the extent to which users are able to locate, obtain, and view diplomatic content through social media platforms (Park and Lim, 2014). By contrast, information reception represents the process through which digitally communicated information is received, interpreted, and responded to by users (Hrytsak et al., 2025). Information engagement extends beyond reception to encompass users’ active involvement with such content, including viewing, communicating, sharing, commenting, and other forms of participation in digital communication (Mann, 2026). Considered together, these interconnected dimensions provide an indication of how effectively digital information progresses from dissemination and audience exposure to reception and active interaction.

Digital Information Communication

Digital information communication encompasses the creation, transmission, and delivery of information to audiences through digital platforms (Ghosh and Karmakar, 2026). Within Saudi–India digital diplomacy, this process involves the use of social media and other digital communication channels to communicate diplomatic messages, bilateral activities, institutional communications, and related information to international audiences. Its effectiveness extends beyond the simple publication of content, as the characteristics of digital communication can shape the extent to which users notice, comprehend, and respond to the information presented (Farid et al., 2025). Effective diplomatic communication through digital networks therefore requires information to be conveyed in a clear, timely, accessible, and audience-

oriented manner. Accordingly, the present study conceptualises digital information communication as an important mechanism through which diplomatic information can achieve broader reach and greater accessibility while facilitating its reception and engagement among users.

User Information Engagement

User information engagement reflects the extent to which individuals interact with, respond to, and become actively involved in information communicated through digital channels (Benz et al., 2024). In the context of this study, the concept captures how social media users interact with information disseminated through Saudi–India digital diplomacy. Such involvement may take various forms, including listening to diplomatic information, interacting with digital content, responding to messages, sharing information, posting comments, and participating in online discussions concerning the communicated material (Dvir, 2020). User information engagement is particularly relevant to digital diplomacy because communication within social media environments is inherently interactive, allowing audiences to consume, respond to, and circulate information simultaneously. Users therefore function not merely as recipients of diplomatic messages but as active participants in their reception and further dissemination. Through such participation, engagement may facilitate the circulation and reception of information while expanding opportunities for access and interaction. Accordingly, the present study examines user information engagement as a factor associated with information reach, access, reception and engagement.

Information Transparency and Source Credibility

Information transparency and source credibility represent two interrelated characteristics that may shape how users respond to diplomatic information disseminated through digital platforms. Information transparency concerns the extent to which information is presented openly and clearly in a form that users can readily access, understand, and interpret (Héritier, 2003). Source credibility, in contrast, relates to users’ perceptions of the trustworthiness, reliability, and legitimacy of the source from which the information originates (Keshavarz, 2020). These characteristics are particularly relevant within Saudi–India digital

diplomacy, where social media users encounter substantial volumes of information originating from numerous sources. Transparent communication can facilitate users' understanding of and access to diplomatic information, while credible sources can strengthen confidence in the information being communicated (Al-Sartawi, 2019; Bertot et al., 2010). When considered jointly, information transparency and source credibility may shape how audiences accept, access, receive, and interact with diplomatic information. Accordingly, the present study examines their relationship with information reach, access, reception and engagement.

Strategic Digital Information Dissemination

Strategic digital information dissemination refers to the deliberate and purposeful use of digital media to distribute information to intended audiences in pursuit of defined communication objectives (Anggraeni et al., 2024; Udoh et al., 2020). Within Saudi–India digital diplomacy, it involves the planned use of social media platforms to communicate diplomatic information in ways that can strengthen its visibility, accessibility,

reception, and audience engagement. Strategic dissemination extends beyond the frequency with which information is published. It also encompasses decisions concerning the selection, organisation, communication, and distribution of content so that diplomatic information remains relevant and accessible to digital audiences (Ridho and Purwanto, 2026). In contemporary diplomacy, such an approach can support sustained communication between diplomatic institutions and international publics while facilitating the circulation of bilateral information across digital networks. Accordingly, the present study treats strategic digital information dissemination as an explanatory construct and examines its relationship with information reach, access, reception and engagement. Drawing on the preceding discussion, the present study examines the relationships of information transparency and source credibility, digital information communication, user information engagement, and strategic digital information dissemination with information reach, access, reception and engagement. These proposed relationships are represented in the conceptual framework presented in Figure 1.

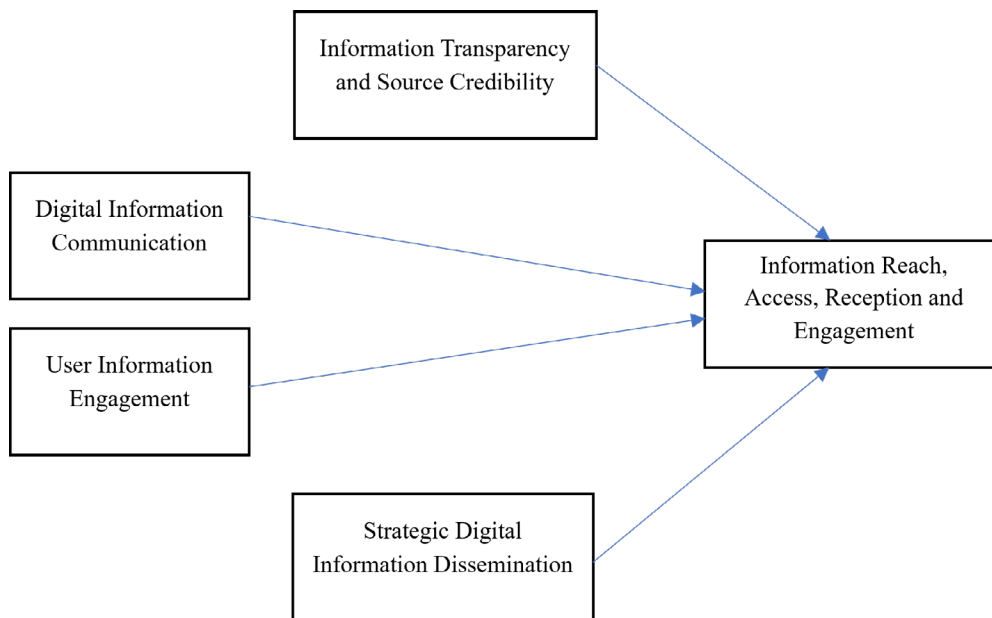


Figure 1: The Relationship Between Information Transparency and Source Credibility, Digital Information Communication, User Information Engagement, Strategic Digital Information Dissemination and Information Reach, Access, Reception and Engagement.

Hypotheses Development

Digital information communication provides a

fundamental mechanism through which diplomatic information is conveyed to international audiences (S. E. Graham, 2014). Within social media environments,

this communication extends beyond the one-directional provision of information by creating opportunities for greater visibility, accessibility, reception, and interaction (McGowan, 2025). Research on digital diplomacy further demonstrates the growing presence of embassies on social media as a means of distributing relevant information and communicating directly with foreign publics (Ammar, 2026). The effectiveness of such communication may depend on the use of relevant, transparent, personalised, and interactive content, which can shape how diplomatic institutions communicate with stakeholders, although barriers may continue to constrain their ability to connect with broader audiences. Similarly, Khan et al. (2021) suggests that publishing engaging content and facilitating interaction can contribute to expanding the audiences reached by diplomatic accounts. Collectively, these observations indicate that the manner in which diplomatic information is communicated may shape its visibility and accessibility while creating opportunities for audiences to receive and interact with the information. On this basis, the following research hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Digital information communication has a relationship with information reach, access, reception and engagement.

User information engagement describes the active involvement of audiences with information communicated through digital channels (Dvir, 2020). In contrast to conventional communication models, social media enables users to respond to, interact with, share, and redistribute information, thereby positioning audiences as active participants in digital communication processes (Stone and Wang, 2019). Research within public diplomacy further demonstrates that social media can facilitate networked forms of communication in which audience interaction becomes an integral component of diplomatic communication (Park and Lim, 2014). A comparative examination of public diplomacy in South Korea and Japan, for example, identified differences in the ability of diplomatic institutions to attract and engage foreign publics through social media (Park and Lim, 2014). Research addressing digital diplomacy in Africa has similarly reported variations in public interaction across diplomatic topics, particularly those concerning trade, investment, education, technology, and state visits. Taken together, previous studies indicate that user engagement may contribute to the

visibility, circulation, and reception of diplomatic information while simultaneously reflecting how audiences respond to such content. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): User information engagement has a relationship with information reach, access, reception and engagement.

Information transparency and source credibility constitute important characteristics of digital information, particularly within the rapidly changing and information-intensive environment of social media, where users continuously encounter and evaluate diverse forms of content. Transparency can facilitate users' understanding of communicated information (Yan et al., 2026), whereas source credibility concerns perceptions regarding the reliability and trustworthiness of the information provider. Within digital diplomacy, transparency has been identified as an important communication strategy for diplomatic institutions (Strauß et al., 2015). Research examining Western embassies in GCC countries found that their communication demonstrated a relatively high degree of transparency, although interaction with broader stakeholder groups remained limited (Strauß et al., 2015). More broadly, social media research indicates that users form credibility judgements by considering the characteristics and presentation of information as well as the source from which it originates. Evidence from digital diplomacy further suggests that source credibility can contribute to trust and users' intentions to interact with diplomatic media content. Taken together, these observations suggest that information characterised by transparency and credibility may facilitate its access and reception while encouraging greater audience engagement. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Information transparency and source credibility has a relationship with information reach, access, reception and engagement.

Strategic digital information dissemination involves the deliberate use of digital media to communicate institutional information to specifically identified audiences (Anggraeni et al., 2024; Udoh et al., 2020). This approach has particular relevance to digital diplomacy (Göksu and Özkan, 2021), as social media enables governments to establish direct communication with international publics while extending the reach of diplomatic information. Research

examining diplomatic communication on Twitter has identified several strategies as important to social-media diplomacy, including relevant, personalised, interactive, positive, and transparent communication (Chen et al., 2025). Evidence further suggests that greater posting activity by diplomatic accounts may contribute to follower growth, while higher-quality content can support the expansion of their audiences. These findings indicate that both diplomatic content and the strategies adopted for its communication may generate different levels of public engagement. Strategically disseminated information may therefore enhance the visibility and accessibility of diplomatic content while creating greater opportunities for its reception and audience engagement. Accordingly, the present study proposes that:

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Strategic digital information dissemination has a relationship with information reach, access, reception and engagement.

Methodology

Research Design and Data Collection

A quantitative cross-sectional research design was adopted to examine the relationships among digital information communication, user information engagement, information transparency and source credibility, strategic digital information dissemination, and information reach, access, reception and engagement within Saudi–India digital diplomacy. Individual social media users who had encountered and interacted with digital diplomatic information concerning Saudi Arabia and India constituted the unit of analysis. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire administered to respondents familiar with social media platforms used for diplomatic communication. A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed to potential respondents. Following their return, the questionnaires were screened for completeness and response quality, resulting in 192 valid responses being retained for the analysis. This

represented a valid response rate of 54.86%. Given the relatively limited number of latent constructs and structural relationships incorporated into the proposed model, the retained sample was considered adequate for model estimation. Moreover, the final sample exceeded the minimum sample size commonly recommended for PLS-SEM, providing a sufficient basis for estimating the hypothesised relationships while remaining appropriate for the context of a digital diplomacy study.

Scale Development

Given the specific focus of the present study on information dissemination and user engagement within Saudi–India digital diplomacy, a new measurement scale was developed rather than relying on a single existing instrument. The scale-development procedure followed established guidelines encompassing construct conceptualisation, item generation, content validation, pilot testing, and empirical validation (Churchill Jr, 1979). The development process began by establishing conceptual definitions for each construct based on the literature concerning digital communication, social media engagement, information credibility, transparency, and digital diplomacy. An initial pool of measurement items was subsequently generated to ensure adequate representation of each construct. These items were then evaluated by academic experts with relevant expertise in digital communication, diplomacy, information management, and social media research. Items considered ambiguous, repetitive, or insufficiently aligned with their respective constructs were either revised or removed. The resulting questionnaire was subsequently pre-tested using a small group of respondents whose characteristics were comparable to those of the target population. Feedback obtained during this pilot stage was used to refine item wording, improve clarity, and enhance the overall flow of the questionnaire. The final instrument employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The proposed measurement items are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Questionnaire Items.

Variable	Code	Proposed Scale Item
Information Reach, Access, Reception and Engagement	IRARE1	Digital diplomatic information reaches a broad range of social media users.
	IRARE2	I can easily access Saudi–India diplomatic information through social media.
	IRARE3	I can understand and receive the diplomatic information communicated through social media.
	IRARE4	I interact with Saudi–India diplomatic information when it appears on social media.
	IRARE5	Social media enables diplomatic information to reach audiences beyond traditional communication channels.

Variable	Code	Proposed Scale Item
Digital Information Communication	DIC1	Saudi–India diplomatic information is communicated clearly through social media.
	DIC2	Digital platforms provide timely communication of Saudi–India diplomatic information.
	DIC3	Diplomatic information communicated through social media is presented in an understandable manner.
	DIC4	Social media facilitates direct communication between diplomatic institutions and audiences.
	DIC5	Digital communication makes Saudi–India diplomatic information more accessible to users.
User Information Engagement	UIE1	I actively pay attention to Saudi–India diplomatic information on social media.
	UIE2	I interact with Saudi–India diplomatic content on social media.
	UIE3	I share or circulate relevant Saudi–India diplomatic information with others.
	UIE4	I participate in discussions concerning Saudi–India diplomatic information online.
	UIE5	I seek additional information after encountering Saudi–India diplomatic content.
Information Transparency and Source Credibility	ITSC1	Saudi–India diplomatic information communicated through social media is transparent.
	ITSC2	The source of Saudi–India diplomatic information is clearly identifiable.
	ITSC3	I consider the sources of Saudi–India diplomatic information to be trustworthy.
	ITSC4	The information provided through official digital channels is reliable.
	ITSC5	Transparent communication increases my confidence in diplomatic information.
Strategic Digital Information Dissemination	SDID1	Saudi–India diplomatic information is strategically disseminated through social media.
	SDID2	Digital platforms are effectively used to distribute diplomatic information to intended audiences.
	SDID3	Diplomatic information is disseminated through social media in a timely manner.
	SDID4	Social media content is strategically designed to increase audience attention.
	SDID5	Digital dissemination facilitates the wider circulation of Saudi–India diplomatic information.

Data Analysis and Scale Validation Process

Following data collection, the newly developed scale was subjected to empirical validation using PLS-SEM. The assessment proceeded in two stages, beginning with an examination of the measurement model. Indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were evaluated using factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity was further assessed through the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT). After establishing satisfactory measurement quality, attention shifted to the structural model and the hypothesised relationships among the constructs. This stage involved examining path coefficients and bootstrapping results, together with the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect sizes (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2). By evaluating the measurement and structural models sequentially, the procedure provides empirical evidence regarding the reliability and validity of the newly developed scale for capturing the proposed dimensions of the Saudi–India digital diplomacy framework.

Data Analysis and Findings

The demographic profile of the 192 valid respondents is presented in Table 2 and Figure 2. The sample comprised 71.9% male and 28.1% female respondents. In terms of age, the largest proportion belonged to the 26–35-year category (34.9%), followed

by those aged 36–45 years (25.5%). The educational profile indicates a substantial representation of respondents with postgraduate qualifications, including 40.6% holding a master's degree and 10.9% possessing a doctorate. Regarding patterns of social media use, 53.6% of participants reported spending at least four hours per day on social media platforms. Furthermore, 58.4% indicated that they accessed diplomatic information through social media often or very often.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=192).

Demographic Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	138	71.9
	Female	54	28.1
Age	18–25 Years	43	22.4
	26–35 Years	67	34.9
	36–45 Years	49	25.5
	46–55 Years	25	13.0
	Above 55 Years	8	4.2
Education	Undergraduate	31	16.1
	Master's Degree	78	40.6
	Doctoral Degree	21	10.9
	Other	62	32.3
Social Media Use	Less than 1 Hour/Day	19	9.9
	1–3 Hours/Day	72	37.5
	4–6 Hours/Day	68	35.4
	More than 6 Hours/Day	33	17.2
Exposure to Diplomatic Information	Rarely	21	10.9
	Occasionally	59	30.7
	Frequently	76	39.6
	Very Frequently	36	18.8

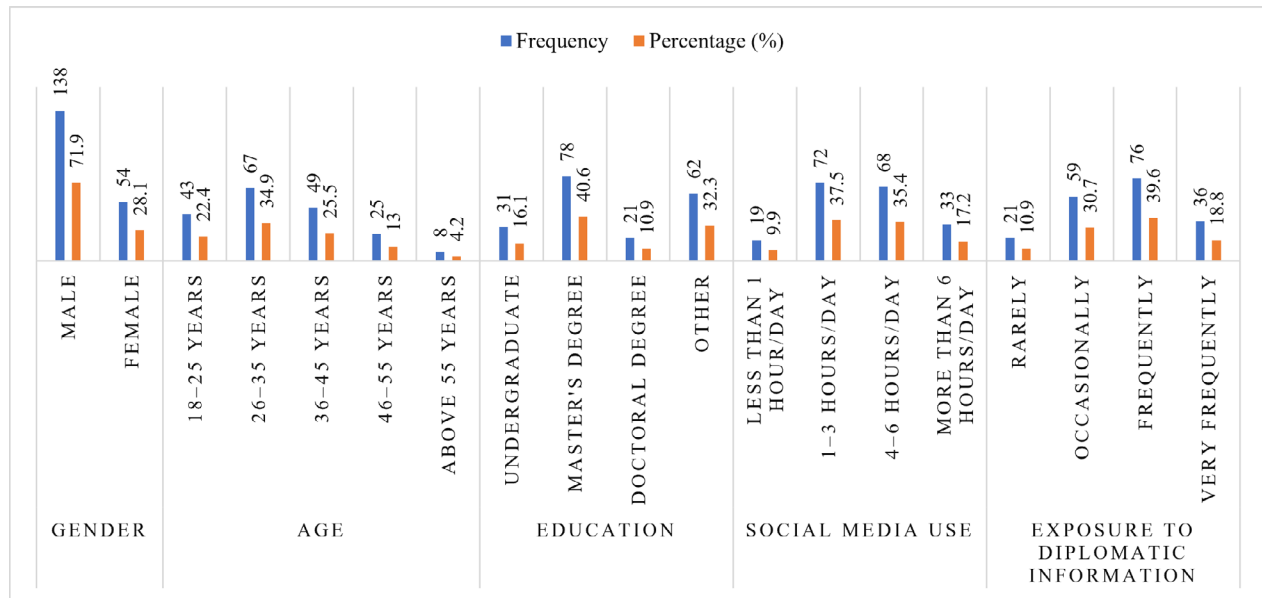


Figure 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=192).

Table 3: Measurement Model: Factor Loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, CR and AVE.

Construct	Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Information Reach, Access, Reception and Engagement (IRARE)	IRARE1	0.812	0.887	0.918	0.692
	IRARE2	0.841			
	IRARE3	0.836			
	IRARE4	0.823			
	IRARE5	0.842			
Digital Information Communication (DIC)	DIC1	0.819	0.875	0.908	0.663
	DIC2	0.801			
	DIC3	0.833			
	DIC4	0.814			
	DIC5	0.802			
User Information Engagement (UIE)	UIE1	0.817	0.882	0.913	0.678
	UIE2	0.844			
	UIE3	0.825			
	UIE4	0.806			
	UIE5	0.818			
Information Transparency and Source Credibility (ITSC)	ITSC1	0.831	0.891	0.919	0.695
	ITSC2	0.846			
	ITSC3	0.857			
	ITSC4	0.812			
	ITSC5	0.825			
Strategic Digital Information Dissemination (SDID)	SDID1	0.824	0.884	0.914	0.681
	SDID2	0.839			
	SDID3	0.812			
	SDID4	0.827			
	SDID5	0.819			

Table 3 presents the findings from the measurement model assessment. Indicator loadings ranged from 0.801 to 0.857, with all values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017; Razzaq and Hamzah, 2024), thereby providing evidence of satisfactory indicator reliability. Internal consistency was also supported, as Cronbach's alpha

values ranged between 0.875 and 0.891. Composite reliability produced similarly strong results, with values ranging from 0.908 to 0.919 and remaining above the recommended minimum of 0.70 (Aljumah et al., 2026). Convergent validity was further demonstrated by AVE values between 0.663 and 0.695, all of which exceeded the minimum acceptable

threshold of 0.50. This indicates that each construct accounted for more than 50% of the variance in its respective indicators. Collectively, these findings provide satisfactory evidence of internal consistency reliability and convergent validity for the newly developed measurement scale.

Table 4 reports the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) results used to assess discriminant validity. The HTMT values ranged from 0.684 to 0.827, with every value remaining below the conservative threshold of 0.85 (Hair et al., 2021; Razzaq et al., 2026). The strongest association was observed between

strategic digital information dissemination and information reach, access, reception and engagement, with an HTMT value of 0.827. Although this represents the highest value among the construct pairs, it remains within the recommended limit. These findings demonstrate sufficient empirical separation among the constructs, indicating that their respective items capture conceptually distinct dimensions. The HTMT assessment therefore provides satisfactory evidence of discriminant validity for the newly developed measurement model.

Table 4: Discriminant Validity: HTMT.

Constructs	DIC	UIE	ITSC	SDID	IRARE
Digital Information Communication (DIC)	—				
User Information Engagement (UIE)	0.716	—			
Information Transparency and Source Credibility (ITSC)	0.684	0.702	—		
Strategic Digital Information Dissemination (SDID)	0.739	0.721	0.753	—	
Information Reach, Access, Reception and Engagement (IRARE)	0.781	0.814	0.768	0.827	—

Table 5 presents the structural model results for the hypothesised relationships. All four explanatory constructs demonstrated positive and statistically significant relationships with information reach, access, reception and engagement (IRARE). Digital information communication was positively associated with IRARE ($\beta = 0.241$, $t = 3.394$, $p < 0.001$), providing support for H1. Similarly, user information engagement exhibited a significant positive relationship with IRARE ($\beta = 0.287$, $t = 3.878$, $p < 0.001$), thereby supporting H2. A positive and statistically significant

relationship was also identified between information transparency and source credibility and IRARE ($\beta = 0.196$, $t = 2.841$, $p = 0.005$), supporting the corresponding hypothesis. Finally, strategic digital information dissemination was positively related to IRARE ($\beta = 0.318$, $t = 4.184$, $p < 0.001$), providing support for the final hypothesis. Moreover, none of the confidence intervals included zero, offering additional evidence for the statistical significance of all proposed relationships.

Table 5: Structural Model Results.

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	SD	t-value	p-value	95% CI	Decision
H1	DIC $\rightarrow$ IRARE	0.241	0.071	3.394	<0.001	[0.104, 0.378]	Supported
H2	UIE $\rightarrow$ IRARE	0.287	0.074	3.878	<0.001	[0.141, 0.430]	Supported
H3	ITSC $\rightarrow$ IRARE	0.196	0.069	2.841	0.005	[0.062, 0.331]	Supported
H4	SDID $\rightarrow$ IRARE	0.318	0.076	4.184	<0.001	[0.169, 0.466]	Supported

Note: DIC = Digital Information Communication; UIE = User Information Engagement; ITSC = Information Transparency and Source Credibility; SDID = Strategic Digital Information Dissemination; IRARE = Information Reach, Access, Reception and Engagement. HTMT values below 0.85 indicate satisfactory discriminant validity.

Table 6 reports the assessment of the structural model in terms of its explanatory and predictive capabilities. The model produced an R^2 value of 0.587, indicating that digital information communication, user information engagement, information transparency and source credibility, and strategic digital information dissemination collectively

explained 58.7% of the variance in information reach, access, reception and engagement. This result demonstrates a meaningful level of explanatory power for the proposed model. The f^2 values ranged from 0.048 to 0.138, demonstrating that each predictor made an individual contribution to explaining the endogenous construct. Strategic digital information

dissemination produced the largest effect size ($f^2 = 0.138$), followed by user information engagement ($f^2 = 0.104$), digital information communication ($f^2 = 0.071$), and information transparency and source credibility

($f^2 = 0.048$). In addition, the Q^2 value of 0.394 was greater than zero, providing evidence that the model possesses predictive relevance for information reach, access, reception and engagement.

Table 5: Coefficient of Determination, Effect Size and Predictive Relevance.

Endogenous Construct	R ²	Interpretation	Predictor	f ²	Interpretation	Q ²
Information Reach, Access, Reception and Engagement	0.587	Moderate	Digital Information Communication	0.071	Small	0.394
			User Information Engagement	0.104	Small	
			Information Transparency and Source Credibility	0.048	Small	
			Strategic Digital Information Dissemination	0.138	Small	

Discussion

This study examined how digital information communication, user information engagement, information transparency and source credibility, and strategic digital information dissemination relate to information reach, access, reception and engagement. The empirical evidence provides support for H1, with digital information communication demonstrating a positive and statistically significant relationship with information reach, access, reception and engagement ($\beta = 0.241$, $t = 3.394$, $p < 0.001$). This result indicates that the manner in which Saudi–India diplomatic information is communicated through digital channels is associated with how extensively it reaches audiences, how readily it can be accessed and received, and the extent to which users interact with it. Such evidence corresponds with the broader transformation of public diplomacy from predominantly one-directional communication towards interactive practices centred on relationship building.

Zhong and Lu (2013) observed that social media altered diplomatic communication by placing greater emphasis on relationship-building processes. Similarly, Strauß et al. (2015) identified relevance, transparency, personalisation, and interactivity as important strategies for digital diplomatic communication, while also noting that embassies had not fully utilised the interactive capabilities offered by social media. The present study develops this body of knowledge by empirically linking digital information communication to the combined dimensions of reach, access, reception, and engagement. Digital communication can therefore be understood not merely as a channel through which diplomatic information is distributed but as an important component of how

audiences encounter, access, and interact with such information.

Support was also obtained for H2, as user information engagement exhibited a positive and statistically significant relationship with information reach, access, reception and engagement ($\beta = 0.287$, $t = 3.878$, $p < 0.001$). This finding reflects the increasingly participatory position occupied by social media users within contemporary digital diplomacy. Rather than functioning exclusively as recipients, users can respond to, interact with, share, and redistribute diplomatic information, thereby contributing to its circulation and reception within digital networks. This interpretation corresponds with the networked public diplomacy perspective, which places interaction and relationships between diplomatic institutions and their publics at the centre of communication. Park and Lim (2014), for example, identified differences in the effectiveness with which public diplomacy organisations attracted and engaged foreign audiences through digital media. Spry (2018) similarly conceptualised social media diplomacy as a communication environment in which audiences should be regarded as active participants rather than simply recipients of institutional messages. The increasing importance of audience engagement within contemporary public diplomacy was also emphasised by Zhong and Lu (2013). The current findings therefore reinforce the view that user information engagement constitutes an important dimension of digital diplomatic communication and is associated with the broader circulation, accessibility, reception, and interaction of diplomatic information.

The empirical results further provide support for H3, demonstrating a positive and statistically significant relationship between information transparency and source credibility and information

reach, access, reception and engagement ($\beta = 0.196$, $t = 2.841$, $p = 0.005$). This association suggests that audience responses to diplomatic information are related to both the transparency of the communicated content and perceptions concerning the credibility of its source. Such considerations are particularly relevant within social media environments, where users encounter substantial quantities of information originating from institutional and non-institutional sources. Under these conditions, credibility becomes an important consideration when users evaluate the information presented to them. Shah and Wei (2022) demonstrated the importance of source credibility in information assessment and reported a positive relationship between online public engagement, source credibility, and information quality. In the context of diplomatic communication, Strauß et al. (2015) likewise identified transparency as an important element of diplomatic organisations' social media practices. The present evidence extends these observations to Saudi–India digital diplomacy by demonstrating an empirical association between transparent and credible information and audience-related outcomes. When diplomatic information is communicated clearly and originates from a recognisable and reliable source, users may be more receptive to the content and more inclined to access and interact with it.

H4 was also supported, with strategic digital information dissemination showing a positive and statistically significant relationship with information reach, access, reception and engagement ($\beta = 0.318$, $t = 4.184$, $p < 0.001$). Among the relationships examined in the proposed model, this construct produced one of the largest standardised coefficients, indicating the relevance of strategic dissemination within the empirical framework. The result corresponds with research emphasising that effective social media diplomacy requires more than the routine publication of information. Thapar and Thapar (2026) identified relevance, transparency, personalisation, and interaction as important strategic communication attributes of digital diplomacy. Similarly, Spry (2018) emphasised the importance of incorporating users and their engagement when examining the Facebook activities of diplomatic missions. Previous digital diplomacy research has also identified considerable variation in the frequency and consistency of diplomatic missions' online activities and in their communication practices, with some institutions

continuing to rely substantially on informative and one-directional approaches (Habibullah and Xiguang, 2022). The present findings indicate that strategically disseminating diplomatic information through digital platforms is associated with broader audience reach, greater accessibility, improved reception, and increased engagement. Strategic digital information dissemination therefore represents a significant component of contemporary Saudi–India digital diplomacy.

Taken together, the empirical findings provide support for all four proposed hypotheses. The results are broadly consistent with existing digital diplomacy literature emphasising communication, audience interaction, source credibility, information transparency, and the strategic use of social media. By examining these dimensions within a unified empirical framework, the study demonstrates their respective relationships with the reach, accessibility, reception, and engagement of diplomatic information in the context of Saudi–India digital diplomacy.

Conclusion

The present study examines digital information dissemination and audience engagement in relation to information reach, access, reception and engagement within Saudi–India digital diplomacy. To investigate this process, an integrated framework was developed around four dimensions: digital information communication, user information engagement, information transparency and source credibility, and strategic digital information dissemination. Empirical analysis revealed positive and statistically significant relationships between each of these dimensions and information reach, access, reception and engagement. The findings demonstrate the relevance of how diplomatic information is communicated digitally to its visibility and accessibility, while user information engagement reflects the active role audiences assume in receiving and interacting with such content. Information transparency and source credibility further emphasise the importance of clearly communicated and trustworthy information, whereas strategic digital information dissemination highlights the purposeful delivery of diplomatic content to intended audiences. Collectively, the study contributes to digital diplomacy literature by conceptualising social media communication as an interactive, two-way information process that extends beyond the predominantly one-directional communication associated with traditional diplomatic practices. The

proposed framework consequently provides a structured basis for understanding how diplomatic institutions can disseminate information and facilitate audience engagement within contemporary digital environments.

Implications

The study generates several theoretical and practical implications. From a theoretical perspective, it extends the digital diplomacy literature by integrating communication, user engagement, transparency, source credibility, and strategic information dissemination within a single analytical framework. Whereas much of the existing discussion has centred on the adoption and use of social media by diplomatic institutions, the present study shifts attention towards the information processes through which diplomatic content becomes accessible to audiences, is received by them, and generates subsequent interaction. The framework also advances an audience-centred understanding of digital diplomacy by conceptualising social media users as active participants in diplomatic communication rather than as passive recipients of institutional information.

From a practical perspective, the findings have implications for diplomatic institutions involved in Saudi–India relations. Digital communication practices should prioritise clarity, accessibility, relevance, and timeliness to facilitate the reach and reception of diplomatic information. Meaningful audience engagement may also be strengthened by providing content that creates opportunities for users to interact, respond, and participate in digital conversations. Furthermore, transparency and source credibility should remain central to digital information practices, particularly because social media users encounter diplomatic information originating from multiple sources. Strategic dissemination can further support the systematic delivery of relevant diplomatic information through appropriate digital channels. Accordingly, diplomatic institutions may strengthen their social media communication by adopting audience-oriented approaches, maintaining regular communication, ensuring transparency regarding information sources, and facilitating interactive exchanges. Collectively, these practices can reinforce both the informational and interactive dimensions of contemporary digital diplomacy.

Limitations and Future Directions

Several limitations of the present study provide

opportunities for future investigation. First, the empirical setting is confined to Saudi–India digital diplomacy, which may limit the extent to which the findings can be generalised across other bilateral relationships, geographical regions, or diplomatic environments. Future studies could therefore apply and test the proposed framework across different country pairs or comparative diplomatic settings. Second, the cross-sectional research design captures the examined relationships at a single point in time and consequently does not establish their temporal development or causal direction. Longitudinal studies could address this limitation by examining changes in digital diplomatic communication and user engagement over time or during specific diplomatic events. Third, reliance on self-reported data means that the findings may be influenced by respondents' perceptions and response tendencies. Subsequent research could strengthen the evidence base by integrating survey data with social media analytics, engagement metrics, and content analysis. Finally, extending the framework to incorporate additional factors, such as digital trust, cultural differences, political interest, algorithmic visibility, and perceived relevance, may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how diplomatic information reaches and engages international audiences.

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