



## The utilization of digital diplomacy in post-pandemic Korean tourism recovery efforts

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### ABSTRACT

Tourism is one of the country's revenues sectors that was most affected after the outbreak of the COVID-19. This phenomenon has caused many countries to make efforts to recover the tourism sector to attract foreign tourists again. Each country has its own way of recovering the tourism sector after Covid-19. The strategy of recovering depends on the potential of each country. In this recovery effort, South Korea is utilizing digital diplomacy through the release of the tourism campaign 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024' which is a form tourism promotion effort in the transition period. This research focuses on analyzing how South Korea utilize digital diplomacy to recover the South Korea tourism sector. The research method applied is descriptive-qualitative based on literature studies and interviews. The research results show that there is an effective use of digital diplomacy to recover the South Korea tourism sector through social media by implementing the components of engagement, listening real time dialogue, as well as the use of connected and collaborative promotions.

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article History:

Received 06 Jan 2024

Revised 07 March 2024

Accepted 14 March 2024

Available online 30 March 2024

#### Keywords:

digital diplomacy;

post-pandemic;

South Korea;

tourism

## 1. INTRODUCTION

For many looking for holiday leisure activities, tourism might be a great option. Not only providing personal fulfillment, the growing popularity of tourism is also a major economic factor that rapidly increases foreign exchange. Yakup & Hartanto (2021) explain that the tourism sector has significantly provided rapid development and become a strategic sector to support economic growth and contribute to a country's national income. This phenomenon has had an impact on many countries in the world, carrying out massive tourism development and creating tourism promotion strategies to attract the attention of foreign tourists. In responding to this phenomenon, South Korea stands as an example of a country that has succeeded in developing its tourism sector significantly.

South Korea has achieved remarkable feats by becoming one of the most visited countries by travelers in the Asia region. This assertion is proven by the statistical data on the number of foreign tourists visiting South Korea, which increased by an average of 7.9% per year from 2010 to 2019 (Invest Korea: 2020). Furthermore, Invest Korea (2020, <https://www.investkorea.org/ik-en/cntnts/i-322/web.do>) also highlighted South Korea as a country that succeeded in attracting the attention of around 17.5 million foreign tourists with a total of 67.8% in 2019. The large number of tourists entering South Korea has triggered an increase in South Korea's GDP income as affirmed by the OECD Tourism Trends and Policies report (2020) which states that there was an increase in GDP in the tourism sector in 2019 amounting to 4.2% of the total economy (KRW 81.4 billion).

The outbreak of the global infectious disease COVID-19 in early 2020 has had a major setback impact on the development of the tourism sector throughout the world. The spread of the COVID-19 outbreak, which was declared a global pandemic by WHO, has in fact not only affected the health aspect, but also affected the tourism aspect, marked by a drastic decline in the number of foreign tourists due to the implementation of travel restriction policies (Komite Penanganan COVID-19 dan Pemulihan Ekonomi Nasional, 2020, <https://covid19.go.id/tanyajawab?search=Apa%20yang%20dimaksud%20dengan%20pandemi>). South Korea is one of the countries experiencing major losses in the tourism sector due to the significant decline in the number of visitors, this is evidenced by the decline in the country's GDP from USD\$73.2 billion (4.4%) in 2019, to USD\$39.9 billion (2.4%), in just 12 months in 2020 (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2021, <https://wttc.org/Portals/0/Documents/Press%20Releases/Travel-Tourism-sectors-contribution-to-South-Koreas-GDP-dropped-by-33-billion-in-2020.pdf?ver=2021-06-01-082753-437>). Furthermore, the World Travel & Tourism Council (2021, <https://wttc.org/Portals/0/Documents/Press%20Releases/Travel-Tourism-sectors-contribution-to-South-Koreas-GDP-dropped-by-33-billion-in-2020.pdf?ver=2021-06-01-082753-437>) also reported that a total of 84,000 jobs in the Travel & Tourism sector disappeared in South Korea during the implementation of travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The substantial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has urged the South Korean government to perform rapid steps in dealing with the crisis in the tourism industry. In response to this situation, the government implemented recovery efforts that focused on the utilization of digital diplomacy. Conceptually, digital diplomacy harnesses advancements in information and communication technology to advance a country's national interests (Ramadhan & Sari, 2022). Following over three years of global COVID-19 spread, the Prime Minister of South Korea officially announced the lifting of all travel restrictions to South Korea for unvaccinated foreign tourists on June 8, 2022 (Nikkei Asia, 2022, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Coronavirus/South-Korea-reopens-to-overseas-tourists-after-two-years>). Subsequently, this ban heralded the launch of South Korea's latest tourism campaign, titled 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024: Ride The Korean Wave'. The Korea Tourism Organization (2023, <http://kto.visitkorea.or.kr/eng/tourismStatics/keyFacts/KoreaMonthlyStatistics/eng/inout/inout.kto>) designated 2023-2024 as the Visit Korea year, during which KTO unveiled a myriad of travel packages, events, and promotional campaigns utilizing K-culture as a medium to bolster foreign tourist influx to South Korea (Visit Korea, 2023, <https://korean.visitkorea.or.kr>).

In order to promote South Korea tourism through the 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024' campaign, the South Korean government, in collaboration with the KTO organization, is making extensive use of online mass media by carrying out massive publications and disseminating them through various leading social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, etc. Publication activities via digital media carried out in the 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024' campaign underscore concerted efforts to use digital diplomacy to recover South Korea's tourism sector. Based on data searching on previous research on Korean digital diplomacy in tourism sector, the author found that academic attention to this topic is quite diverse. From the result of research by Anggraini (2017), it is known that Korea has experience in dealing with pandemics, namely 2015-2016 Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) virus pandemic. This research focuses on the use of Korean public diplomacy to handle the tourism sector. From this research, it is known that Korea uses public diplomacy to focus on implementing three dimensions, namely reactive, proactive, and building relationship. South Korea's reactive dimension focuses on news management to spread information that Korea is safe. In the proactive dimension, South Korea focuses on establishing a positive image international campaigns and activities, both domestically and internationally. While for the relationship building, South Korea focuses on maintaining international community relations through community networks with websites, discussions, seminars and joint projects.

Aristyani (2021) shows South Korea's attention in expanding tourism promotion in Southeast Asia, exclusively toward Indonesia. For this, Korean Tourism Organization (KTO) tried to analysis public diplomacy between South Korea and Indonesia during 2018 to 2019. The research shows that KTO effectively has used daily communication as important tools and strategy to build relationship between countries. In another words, from this research we can understand

the important of communication as soft power to support creation of public image on South Korea.

The use of digital diplomacy is always accompanied using social media. In this case, research was found by [Kinasih \(2022\)](#) shows the utilization of social media namely Instagram as implementation of digital diplomacy of Japan in Indonesia. Japan uses Instagram account of Japanese Ambassador namely Masafumi Ishii from 2018 to 2020. Research results shows that Indonesian people **respond positively to the topics presented in the Japanese ambassador's account**. This note also give us an understanding that social media become an effective tool as a bridge to create direct communication between a government of country and public or society in large capacity. Besides those research, digital diplomacy especially in tourism aspect is researched by [Putri, et. al \(2019\)](#), [Lee & Shahin \(2023\)](#), while [Lee \(2022\)](#) and Ismail's research showed that cultural aspects become a strategy to promote Korean tourism, and [Lee & Kim \(2021\)](#) analysed South Korea's public diplomacy about nation branding after Covid-19.

This research is complementary to previous research, especially in the utilization space and type of social media and the subject of perpetrator for digital diplomacy of Korea on tourism sector post Covid-19. On the other hand, this research will emphasize the role and creativity of subjects involved in tourism. For this reason, by emphasizing role collaboration, the idea of actor in digital diplomacy, it is hoped this research will be able to show different point of view in the implementation of South Korean digital diplomacy.

## 1.1. RESEARCH PURPOSE

Drawing from the preceding exposition, it becomes proven that the tourism sector serves as a spearhead for countries in the world, including South Korea, to recover their country's economy post-COVID-19. One of South Korea's endeavour to rejuvenate its tourism is by utilizing digital diplomacy as reflected in the launching of the 'Visit Korea Year 2022-2023' campaign. Therefore, predicated on the background above, the problem formulation of this research is: how does South Korea utilize digital diplomacy in efforts to recover the tourism sector post-COVID-19? Furthermore, informed by the background and problem formulation, the researcher formulated objectives related to the research topic, specifically aimed at analyzing the utilization of digital diplomacy in efforts to recover the South Korea tourism sector post-COVID-19.

## 2. METHOD

This research employed a literature study research method which was augmented by interview techniques. The literature study method aims to examine the utilization of digital diplomacy in efforts to restore the South Korean tourism sector post-COVID-19. The procedure involved a literature study regarding the concept of digital diplomacy and tourism, focusing on South Korea tourism. Additionally, data sources were also collected from posts and programs released on five social media channels related to the 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024' campaign, which including Instagram ([visitkorea\\_travel](#)), Twitter ([@KoreanTravel](#)), Facebook (Korean Tourism), YouTube

(Imagine Your Korea, VISIT KOREA), as well as the official Visit Korea website (korean.visitkorea.or.kr, english.visitkorea.or.kr, and visitkorea.or.id) which were retrieved for the period spanning from 12 December 2022 – 31 October 2023. Furthermore, interview techniques were employed to enrich research insights regarding information on the 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024' campaign. Interviews were conducted online via email, targeting public relations representatives from the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) Indonesia, the organization responsible for spearheading the 'Visit Korea 2023-2024' campaign.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Digital diplomacy initiatives within the 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024' campaign frequently entail collaboration involving diverse groups of non-state actors, both individuals and groups. Moreover, through digital diplomacy, South Korea is not only strengthening the role of its national actors but is also actively collaborating with other countries. Thus, the findings of this research, which examines South Korea's digital diplomacy strategy in the tourism sector not only emphasize the importance of the collaborative role of state and non-state actors in digital diplomacy, but also collaborative initiatives with other countries.

#### 3.1. Digital Diplomacy in South Korea Tourism

Digital diplomacy has emerged as a relevant diplomatic strategy in the era of modern globalization which offers countries a way to promote their tourism sectors. [Suryanti \(2023\)](#) defines the significant impact of employing digital diplomacy to enhance the economy. Economic progress can not solely be evaluated based on the capacity to import and export goods but can also be evaluated through the development of the tourism sector. This correlation builds a significant correlation between digital diplomacy and the tourism sector.

Digital diplomacy, an extension of public diplomacy ([Bahari, 2023](#)), is defined as a form of diplomacy that utilizes social media and has the potential to change the way diplomacy is carried out by involving information management, public diplomacy, international negotiations, strategic planning, and even handling crisis situations ([Bjola & Jiang, 2015](#)). Moreover, [Kampf, et. al \(2015\)](#) explained that the use of digital diplomacy can support a country to communicate their foreign policy messages to local communities through social media which are connected to aspects of culture, history and traditional values. Social media platforms, such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, serve as determining tools in the implementation of digital diplomacy.

In practical terms, the implementation of digital diplomacy involves several key components, these refer to [Manor \(2016\)](#) through his book "Are We There Yet? Have MFAs Realized the Potential of Digital Diplomacy". One such component is Engagement and Listening, as articulated by [Metzgar \(2012\)](#). Engagement refers to the urgency to communicate with the public through digital (online) media gathered in various networks. Engagement is a relational and multidimensional concept that reflects psychological and behavioral attributes related to

relationships, interactions, participation and involvement. This concept is designed to achieve or obtain results at the individual, organizational, or social context.

Moreover, the concept of Listening, within the term of digital diplomacy, refers to the use of social media (SNS) to identify the perspectives and needs of foreign publics, thereby assisting in the formulation of appropriate foreign policies. Listening identifies the act of attentively observing the discourse of foreign social media users, which serving two primary purposes: (1) to enable state actors to understand their perception in the eyes of foreign publics and (2) to plan the creation of social media content that can help manage their image effectively (Kinasih, 2022). By implementing the engagement and listening aspects, practitioners will have the ability to understand people's preferences, enabling them to adapt social media messages or content to suit the specific characteristics of the target audience (Manor, 2016).

The second component of diplomacy digital is selfie diplomacy. Selfie diplomacy is related to nation branding, as nation branding serves as a term that describes a nation's efforts to portray its self-portrait with the intention of managing the country's image and achievements on social media (Kampf, et. al, 2015). The portrayal of a self-image is known as a selfie, so selfie diplomacy can be defined as the depiction of a country's self-portrait using social media (Manor, 2016). Selfie diplomacy is actively employed as a common practice among diplomatic representatives as it offers them to promote their country in an interconnected network (Stein, 2011).

Thirdly, dialogue plays a crucial role. Manor (2016) explains that Engagement and Listening as basic components of digital diplomacy, highlight that the effectiveness of digital diplomacy cannot be measured by the number of likes on social media profiles, but can be measured through the results of evaluating the scope of dialogue between countries related to foreign publics on social media. Leveraging social media platforms in diplomatic endeavors offers an opportunity for a country to create communication with their followers on social media to create sustainable relationships (Kampf, et. al, 2015).

Fourthly, Framing the Nation encompasses the strategic manipulation of narratives within the realm of digital diplomacy. Framing, in this sense, refers to the skillful use of social media as a news source by governments, allowing them to convey their own interpretation of events to their social media (SNS) followers, potentially diverging from the narratives delivered by traditional news channels (Manor, 2016). Furthermore, Natarajan (2014) stated that framing visualizes competitive effort when individuals or groups who have social influence try to convince the general public that their view of an event is the most correct.

Fifthly, Overcoming the limitations of traditional diplomacy serves as a fundamental aspect of digital diplomacy. The utilization of digital diplomacy offers new benefits in the implementation of diplomacy, namely the presence of social media which complements the tools of traditional diplomacy (Zaharna et al, 2013; Zaharna & Rugh, 2012). Additionally, digital diplomacy can facilitate a country to re-establish contact with its diaspora, thereby being able to overcome space limitations in diplomatic efforts. This aligns with the objectives of diaspora diplomacy, which aims to involve foreign communities in a country to create relations with foreign countries (Rana, 2013).

The sixth component of digital diplomacy includes a networked and collaborative approach to diplomacy. The concept of Networked Diplomacy through networks is based on the argument that the globalized world is a world of complex realities with challenges that exceed the limits of capabilities therefore no single country is able to face them independently (Copeland, 2013). Moreover, the formation of networked diplomacy is also underpinned by the acknowledgment that interconnected networks have become the organizing structure of modern society (Castells, 2010). This networked diplomacy approach offers valuable relationships between governments, companies, organizations and individuals participating in global activities (Slaughter, 2009). Additionally, Williamson & Kelly (2012) explained that the collaborative approach is based on the concept that society is no longer just a passive audience in diplomacy, but also actively contributes to content creation on social media (SNS) by collaborating with a country's stakeholders.

As one of the countries recognized for its "most connected" status, the creation of strong connectivity between the online world and the real world illustrates the internet as an integral element that cannot be separated in South Korea technological culture (Ok, 2011). Melissen & Keulenaar (2017) assert that the South Korean government has invested in fostering new technological fields for collective purposes and societal benefits. The creation of this new technology can then be implemented in the use of internet networks via social media to promote the tourism sector. The first traces of using digital media in South Korea tourism promotion efforts began in 2009, which coincided with the inauguration of the 'Visit Korea Year 2010-2012' campaign. This campaign marked the inaugural utilization of social media to engage with the global community, exemplified by the establishment of the official Twitter account @KoreanTravel for promotional activities, followed by the introduction of the Korea Tour Organization's Facebook account in March 2010. Social media involvement further evolved with the establishment of YouTube (Imagine Your Korea) in 2011 and Instagram @visitkorea\_travel in 2017. Melissen & Keulenaar (2017) stated that these establishments of social media assert that the South Korean government has invested in fostering new technological fields for collective purposes and societal benefits.

Each social media platform presents its unique characteristics in promoting South Korea tourism. For instance, activities carried out through the Facebook platform at the beginning of its formation were focused on promoting community activities by sharing stories of experiences of foreign tourists who had visited South Korea. This narrative sharing initiative aims to foster dialogue and solicit opinions from followers, thereby facilitating two-way interaction. On the other hand, the Instagram platform emphasizes developing an aesthetic image by displaying the beautiful scenery of South Korea. Through captivating visual content, Instagram followers are enticed to explore and appreciate the beauty that South Korea has to offer.

Meanwhile, the Youtube platform is predominantly focused more on tourism promotion in the form of commercial advertising videos and campaign contents featuring various aspects of South Korean tourism and trivia. In the process, the videos published on the Imagine Your Korea Youtube platform involve a lot of collaboration with non-state figures in South Korea. The figures in question are singers, actors/actresses, influencers and historical figures from South Korea who

wield significant influence on the international stage. One noteworthy example is the collaborative video between the 'This is My Korea' campaign and soccer athlete Son Heung Min, titled 'This is my Korea. What's yours?'. In the video, Son Heung Min describes the seven unique charms that South Korea has, namely Passionate, Fast, Creative, Smart, Fun, Lovable and Spectacular. The video not only features audio narration by Son Heung Min elucidating on South Korea's attributes but also showcases the beauty of various locations and tourist activities available in South Korea.

### **3.2 The Utilization of Digital Diplomacy in Korean Tourism Recovery Efforts Post-COVID-19**

The spread of the infectious virus COVID-19 throughout the world has prompted the government's urgency for recovery involving various sectors, particularly the tourism sector, aiming to recover the economy and ensure sustainable recovery to maintain global economic stability. In response to this pressing challenge, governments worldwide implemented various methods and involved many parties in recovery efforts. One of which was South Korea by collaborating closely with the Korea Tour Organization as the institution that played the biggest role in organizing South Korea tourism promotion activities.

The Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) has accomplished innovative and creative strategies to attract foreign tourists to travel to South Korea, one of which is by actively utilizing digital diplomacy to engage people worldwide. The use of digital diplomacy carried out by KTO to restore South Korea's tourism sector can be identified in the establishment of the 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024' campaign at the end of 2022. Through this campaign, KTO is taking big steps in promoting Korean destinations South, namely by carrying out tourism publication activities involving various social media platforms to reach a wider audience and increase global awareness about the allure of South Korea tourism.

### **3.3 'Visit Korea 2023-2024' Campaign as a Promotional Campaign for South Korea Tourism Recovery Post-COVID-19**

In the fourth quarter of 2023, the South Korean tourism industry continued the recovery process after the COVID-19 pandemic. Jongwon Park, as director of the Korea Tour Organization (KTO) international cooperation team, expressed his optimism regarding this effort. According to him, the Asia Pacific region, including South Korea, is experiencing recovery in the tourism sector after experiencing a significant impact due to the pandemic. This trend is expected to encourage increased tourist visits to South Korea and its surroundings (Deccan Herald, 2023, <https://www.deccanherald.com/world/fireworks-fest-to-snow-events-s-koreas-calendar-to-wo-foreign-tourists-in-winter-2727507>). In addition, Widyanti (2023, <https://travel.kompas.com/read/2023/08/25/110800827/korea-selatan-targetkan-300.000-lebih-wisatawan-indonesia-pada-2024?page=all>) reports that 2023 is considered a period of recovery for the South Korean tourism sector. Novi Nursyahbani as PR & Media Executive of KTO Indonesia provided data, until the middle of the year the number of visitors from Indonesia to South Korea



was still around 70,000 to 100,000 people because 2023 was still considered a year of recovery. During this period, South Korea actively sought to restore pre-pandemic levels of foreign tourists, which had declined significantly due to travel restrictions implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The recovery phase for the tourism sector post-COVID-19 pandemic served as an initiation for the launch of the 'Visit Year Korea 2023-2024' campaign. The 'Visit Year Korea Year 2023-2024: Ride the Korean Wave' campaign is part of a series of 'Visit Korea' campaigns managed by the Visit Korea Committee, Korea Tour Organization (KTO), and the first South Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, which was officially declared on December 12, 2022 (KTO Indonesia, 2023). 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024' marks the third installment in a series of 'Visit Korea' campaigns, following the previous series: 'Visit Korea Year 2010-2012' and 'Visit Korea Year 2016-2018' (Visit Korea Committee, 2023, <https://vkc.or.kr/en/visit-korea-committee/compliment/>). Introducing a rebranding initiative as part of its promotional strategy, South Korea revamped its slogans, transitioning from the pre-pandemic 'Imagine Your Korea' and pandemic-era 'Feel The Rhythm of Korea' to the new slogan 'Ride the Korean Wave', which is featuring a change to the emblem designed with traditional hanbok and gat (traditional hat) motifs, and featuring the words "VISIT KOREA YEAR" (Visit Korea English, 2023, <https://english.visitkorea.or.kr/svc/contents/infoHtmlView.do?vcontsId=136376>).

The initiation of the 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024' campaign began as an effort to start global tourism industry activities by combining South Korean culture (K-Culture) and tourism (Visit Korea Committee, 2023, <https://vkc.or.kr/en/visit-korea-committee/compliment/>). This initiation was formed as a campaign projected to be able to lead the global tourism arena in the midst of the post-COVID-19 recovery period and to increase competitiveness. strategy tailored to prevailing market dynamics (Interview with KTO Indonesia Public Relations, October 17, 2023). Consequently, the establishment of the 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024' campaign reflects several updates to the goals and strategic orientation of South Korea tourism promotion during the recovery period. This is evidenced by the objectives of the 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024' campaign which includes efforts to improve national tourism promotion, encourage the development of the tourism sector, and strengthen economic stability (Visit Korea Committee, 2023, <https://vkc.or.kr/en/visit-korea-committee/compliment/>).

In addition to the rebranding efforts, the 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024' campaign by South Korea unveils its latest tourism focus by unveiling a map featuring 100 must-visit tourist destinations. These destinations are categorized into 61 historical and architectural sites, along with 39 natural spots scattered across South Korea. This unveiling coincides with the 'K-Culture Travel Events 100' event series scheduled to occur throughout South Korea during 2023-2024. Both initiatives aim to promote updated tourist destinations and introduce new cultural festivals across Korea during this period (Interview with KTO Indonesia Public Relations, October 17, 2023).

Furthermore, this campaign also places special emphasis on promoting foreign tourist visits during the winter season. This focus is manifested through the promotion of various activities that can be enjoyed in South Korea during the winter, one of which is through the 'GoGo Ski In Korea'

event. South Korean tourism has prepared a series of events to attract foreign tourists in the winter as a recovery effort after being badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (Hindustan Times, 2023, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/travel/from-fireworks-to-snowflakes-south-korea-winter-calendar-appeals-to-international-tourists-101697359321375.html>). With the launch of this campaign, South Korea has set an ambitious target of attracting 10 million foreign tourist visits by 2023. Additionally, as a long-term target, they aim to achieve a total of 30 million tourist visits by 2027.



Picture 1. Map of 100 Must-Visit Destinations 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024'

Source: Korea.net, 2022

The renewal of South Korea's tourism campaign through 'Visit Korea 2023' involves various promotional activities, both offline and online promotions. In the field of online promotion, the 'Visit Korea 2023-2024' initiative is concentrated across all media platforms, with significant emphasis placed on social media channels (Interview with KTO Indonesia Public Relations, 17 October 2023). This includes active use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube used to drive engagement with audiences captivating them with engaging content and immersive experiences aimed at inspiring travel to South Korea during the campaign period.

In his book "Are We There Yet? Have MFAs Realized the Potential of Digital Diplomacy", Manor (2016) outlines the components of digital diplomacy practices aimed at analyzing the utilization of digital diplomacy in revitalizing the tourism sector post-COVID-19 through the 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024' campaign divided into five discussion focuses: Engagement & Listening. Listening, dialogue, Collaborative and Networked Promotion. The application of engagement and listening concepts in promoting the tourism sector is a strategy long employed by

South Korea, predating the COVID-19 outbreak. Overtime, these concepts have continued to evolve and adapt, thus it is re-applied as a very relevant strategy for restoring the tourism sector. In pursuit of this goal, South Korea has implemented various adjustments and innovations discernible in the execution of the 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024' promotional campaign across affiliated social media platforms.

Digital diplomacy practices through the application of engagement and listening manifested in various forms of social media activities promoting the 'Visit Korea 2023-2024' campaign. Firstly, engagement is identified through interactions in the comments section on Instagram. Secondly, through the weekly online event, 'Korea Bucket List: Make it Happen!' on [visitkorea.or.kr](http://visitkorea.or.kr), South Korea offers special offerings and discounts at South Korea tourist attractions that suit user preferences. Thirdly, the Travel Planner feature on the official Visit Korea website provides personalized recommendations and information on attractions, ticket prices, and travel distances which is evident in the listening efforts of digital diplomacy. Fourthly, real time dialogue effort evidenced the live streaming activity '2023 Kfriends Mojja Market Live Broadcast' on the VISITKOREA Youtube channel which introduces various products from South Korea by inviting two foreign influencers as hosts. Fifthly, networked and collaborative promotions are executed through the 'Kfriends' online community platform, which provides a platform to engage korea enthusiasts worldwide to promote South Korean tourism and culture. This community proves networked efforts to participate involving the preferences and opinions of the world public and designing appropriate content and tourism offers to attract the interest of foreign tourists to visit South Korea.

Digital diplomacy activities involving collaboration are commonly found in the 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024' campaign involving many groups of non-state actors, both individuals and groups. A notable example is the collaborative tourism video promotion activity with TripZilla Company. TripZilla is a tourism media company from Singapore which provides guides and information about tourist destinations, as well as tips and tricks for interesting tourist experiences for travelers (Glints, 2023, <https://glints.com/id/en/companies/tripzilla/0dd80d2a-2dae-4063-9ba4-40eb92cdbcdd>). TripZilla has emerged as one of the largest tourism media platforms in Southeast Asia, reaching over 25 million users every month.

The Korean Tour Organization (KTO) is collaborating with the TripZilla company to promote South Korean tourism videos on the official TripZilla YouTube page. Up to the time of this research, two collaborative videos have been published, namely the videos 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024: Discover Korea's Five Tourism Hub Cities' and 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024: Experience Winter Wonderland in Korea'. In the promotional video 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024: Discover Korea's Five Tourism Hub Cities', viewers are invited to explore the various natural wonders and cultural riches found in five major cities in South Korea (Gangneung, Andong, Jeonju, Mokpo, and Busan) as the video showcases beaches and mountains, culinary experiences, and opportunities to immerse in the rich and unique traditional culture of South Korea.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The restoration of South Korea's tourism campaign which is manifested in the 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024' initiative involves a number of online promotional activities centered on the use of various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and others with the main aim of broadening the reach of promotions to the entire global community. The utilization of digital diplomacy in this campaign promotion is seen to be effective as it involves the public through the implementation of Engagement and Listening which is proven by small but informative interactions with social media followers, resulting in positive impressions that encourage the public to visit South Korea. Additionally, other initiatives can also be identified by holding events and features that involve the preferences and opinions of the world public in order to attract foreign tourists to visit South Korea.

The utilization of digital diplomacy in efforts to restore South Korea's tourism sector through the 'Visit Korea Year 2023-2024' campaign is highly facilitated by technological advancements which result in enabling effective and sustainable two-way communication. Moreover, networked and collaborative promotional activities involving non-state actors also contribute to the effectiveness of the 2023-2024 Visit Korea campaign.

The government's strategy in creating connected promotional activities indicates an effort to create a process for conveying South Korea tourism information among global civil society and encourage them to a cohesive understanding and experience. The implementation of a collaborative tourism strategy identifies the government's efforts to diminish the influence of state actors and increase the involvement of civil society in promoting South Korea tourism. The strategy of involving civil figures and institutions for collaboration represents an effective action taken by the government to ensure South Korea tourism information to convey evenly worldwide.

Digital diplomacy and tourism are not only related to relations between nations, but also related to the creative culture of a nation. Therefore, further discussion about tourism and digital diplomacy can be developed into other concepts, one of which is creative culture.

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