

ENHANCING PUBLIC DIPLOMACY DURING THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS, GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES, AND RELEVANCE FOR VIETNAMESE YOUTH IN SAFEGUARDING NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY OVER SEAS AND ISLANDS

Nguyen M.H.

Nguyen Minh Hong - PhD Candidate,
FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE,
VNU UNIVERSITY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES;
Lecturer,
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES,
HANOI METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY,
HANOI, VIETNAM

Abstract: *this article examines the role of Vietnamese youth in safeguarding national sovereignty over seas and islands through public diplomacy, particularly in the context of digital transformation. It analyzes theoretical frameworks of public diplomacy, best practices from major powers, and the contributions of Vietnamese youth. The study also identifies gaps in awareness among youth and proposes solutions to address these challenges. By providing objective insights and emphasizing the significance of education and engagement, the research highlights practical recommendations to enhance youth participation in public diplomacy and to promote Vietnam's image as a peace-loving, law-abiding nation.*

Keywords: *public diplomacy, digital transformation, sovereignty over seas and islands, Vietnamese youth.*

УСИЛЕНИЕ ОБЩЕСТВЕННОЙ ДИПЛОМАТИИ В ПЕРИОД ЦИФРОВОЙ ТРАНСФОРМАЦИИ: ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКИЕ ОСНОВЫ, ПЕРЕДОВОЙ МИРОВОЙ ОПЫТ И АКТУАЛЬНОСТЬ ДЛЯ ВЬЕТНАМСКОЙ МОЛОДЕЖИ В ДЕЛЕ ЗАЩИТЫ НАЦИОНАЛЬНОГО СУВЕРЕНИТЕТА НАД МОРЯМИ И ОСТРОВАМИ

Нгуен М.Х.

Нгуен Минь Хонг - докторант,
факультет политологии,
Университет социальных и гуманитарных наук ВНУ;
Преподаватель,
Факультет социальных и гуманитарных наук,
Ханойский столичный университет,
г. Ханой, Вьетнам

Аннотация: *в этой статье рассматривается роль вьетнамской молодежи в защите национального суверенитета над морями и островами посредством публичной дипломатии, особенно в контексте цифровой трансформации. В ней анализируются теоретические основы публичной дипломатии, передовой опыт крупных держав и вклад вьетнамской молодежи. Исследование также выявляет пробелы в осведомленности среди молодежи и предлагает решения для устранения этих проблем. Предоставляя объективные идеи и подчеркивая важность образования и вовлеченности, исследование выделяет практические рекомендации по расширению участия молодежи в публичной дипломатии и продвижению имиджа Вьетнама как миролюбивого, законопослушного государства.*

Ключевые слова: *публичная дипломатия, цифровая трансформация, суверенитет над морями и островами, вьетнамская молодежь.*

1. Introduction

Entering the 21st century during a period of explosive digital transformation, Vietnam has devised strategies to enhance its economic potential, with a focus on the sea due to its immense development opportunities. However, mastering the sea and islands requires the collective effort of the entire Party, the people, and the military. The youth, as future intellectuals, play a significant role in this mission.

Globalization and the international context have facilitated the development of public diplomacy. By leveraging the theoretical foundations of public diplomacy in the digital era, experiences from major powers, and the practical roles of Vietnamese youth, we aim to engage them in preserving, protecting, and affirming Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoang Sa (Paracel) and Truong Sa (Spratly) archipelagos, thus harnessing the country's potential.

2. Theoretical Basis

- Theoretical Basis of Public Diplomacy and Public Diplomacy in the Digital Transformation Era
- Theoretical Basis of National Sovereignty, Maritime and Island Sovereignty
- The Role of Vietnamese Youth in Protecting the National Sovereignty over Seas and Islands

3. Research Methods

3.1. Purpose

The primary aim of this study is to explore the theoretical underpinnings of public diplomacy in the digital transformation era and its application to maritime sovereignty. Specifically, it focuses on how Vietnamese youth can engage in protecting the nation's sovereignty over the Hoang Sa (Paracel) and Truong Sa (Spratly) archipelagos through public diplomacy initiatives. This involves identifying awareness gaps, assessing the impact of digital tools, and proposing actionable strategies for effective youth participation.

3.2. Methods

This research employs a combination of document analysis and sociological surveys. Document analysis involves reviewing previous studies, policy documents, and academic resources related to public diplomacy, digital transformation, and maritime sovereignty. Sociological surveys were conducted among youth participants to gather data on their awareness and involvement in public diplomacy. These methods were complemented by interdisciplinary approaches to ensure comprehensive insights.

4. Research Results and Discussion

4.1. The Purpose

The primary purpose of this section is to analyze the effectiveness of public diplomacy during the digital transformation era and its application in safeguarding Vietnam's sovereignty over seas and islands. By presenting theoretical insights and survey results, this section seeks to address gaps in awareness among Vietnamese youth and provide actionable recommendations for enhancing their role in public diplomacy.

4.2. Research Results

1) Some Theories on Public Diplomacy and Public Diplomacy in the Digital Transformation Era

The term "Public Diplomacy" is a scholarly consensus term announced by Edmund Gullion, the dean of the Fletcher School (USA), in 1965, when the Edward R. Murrow Center for Public Diplomacy was established. Gullion defined "Public Diplomacy" as handling issues related to the impact of public opinion on the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. Public diplomacy encompasses aspects of international relations outside the framework of traditional diplomacy; the orientation of government opinion towards public opinion in other countries; the interaction of non-governmental interest groups of one country with another; reporting on foreign affairs and policy impact; information exchange between diplomats and foreign media; and the cultural exchange process. The core of public diplomacy is the flow of information and ideas across nations. (Nancy Snow and Philip M. Taylor (Ed.), 2009, p.19)

In 1987, the U.S. Department of State defined "Public Diplomacy" in the Dictionary of International Relations as *"government-sponsored programs intended to inform or influence public opinion in other countries through tools such as publications, films, cultural exchanges, and broadcasting."*

The concept introduced by Gullion establishes a relationship between the formulation and implementation of foreign policies on one hand, and public attitudes (especially international public opinion) towards diplomatic and foreign policy issues on the other. The definition by the U.S. Department of State also implies that public diplomacy addresses the increasing role of behavioral and ideal factors in international relations (Glen H. Fisher. 1988). In this context, traditional diplomatic actions are seen as insufficient to address international issues. Public diplomacy thus involves many non-state actors whose attitudes influence diplomatic decisions made at the government level (Jan Melissen, 2005)

In the 21st century, the "New Public Diplomacy" policy (Melissen, 2005) can be understood as an approach to public diplomacy in the current digital transformation era. It is not just a one-way communication process aimed at promoting a country's image. It is crucial to establish genuine dialogue and build relationships through the exchange of people, ideas, culture, and the support of information technology tools. Mark Leonard's development of the concept of public diplomacy may be one of the most comprehensive and pedagogical approaches (Eytan Gilboa, 2008). He divides "Public Diplomacy" into three areas: managing information, promoting a positive national image, and building long-term relationships to create a favorable environment for pursuing foreign policies.

The first area of public diplomacy involves information transmission and news management. Public diplomacy supports traditional diplomacy and ensures national interests in the realization of foreign policies. This aspect operates on the logic of spreading and clarifying political information and policy decisions made domestically and internationally. The methods used include television, radio, and various digital media channels (both real and virtual), which are considered useful and essential tools for public diplomacy. The second area involves creating a favorable image of a certain country. The main goal is to convey strategic messages that help promote the country internationally through cultural events, often grouped under the term "cultural diplomacy" (Antonio de Lima, 2017) or through campaigns that aim to promote the country's brand abroad and to the international public. The third area of public diplomacy includes activities aimed at building long-term relationships with important partners in international cooperation. Activities aimed at this purpose include educational cooperation, seminars, conferences, language teaching, scholarships, as well as educational and cultural exchanges (Mark et al Leonard, 2002, pp.8-21)

Studies on the concept, impact, and role of information technology on diplomacy in the early 21st century mainly view the "digital" aspect as a supporting tool for implementing diplomacy. This allows diplomats and foreign affairs agencies to actively listen and respond appropriately to changes in the international system (Corneliu

Bjola & Marcus Holmes, 2015). However, researchers of this period noted that although the tools for transmitting foreign policy messages have been upgraded, the core content of the messages has not changed. In other words, traditional foreign policy lines remain fundamentally intact, only implemented on new technological platforms. Public diplomacy in the digital transformation context is understood as a way of using new media to reach foreign publics through official diplomatic channels or through people-to-people diplomacy channels to create a favorable environment for national interests.

2) International Experiences of Countries in Implementing Public Diplomacy during the Digital Transformation Era

a. United States

Historically, the United States is considered the country that laid the foundation for the development of the Internet and is the birthplace of social media platforms popular with the public. The role of information technology in implementing public diplomacy was mentioned at the end of the 20th century. According to author Allen Hansen in "Public Diplomacy in the Computer Age" (Allen Hansen, 1984) the implementation of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War took advantage of computer connectivity through the United States Information Agency (USIA). By expanding the operations of Voice of America (VOA), this agency significantly bolstered America's advantage in the propaganda front.

In the current information technology era, with its superpower status, the United States continues to lead the development of digital diplomacy. By establishing and operating a standard digital diplomacy apparatus, the United States has enhanced its national image, expanded its influence, and spread American cultural values globally. As former French Foreign Minister remarked, the United States is powerful because it can "stimulate the dreams and aspirations of others through globally iconic images portrayed in movies, which in turn attracts many international students to study in the United States." (Joseph S. Nye Jr. 2008, pp. 94-109).

Since 2002, the U.S. Department of State, under Secretary Colin Powell, became the first national foreign affairs agency in the world to establish a specialized department for digital diplomacy called the "Taskforce on eDiplomacy" later renamed the "Office of eDiplomacy" (United States Department of State, 2006). Upon taking office in 2005, Secretary Condoleezza Rice expanded the scale of the Office of eDiplomacy from 8 to 60 personnel and implemented several new initiatives, such as establishing the Virtual Presence Post...

Under the "21st Century Statecraft" strategy during Secretary Hillary Clinton's tenure (2009-2013) (United States Department of State, 2009), U.S. digital diplomacy marked a new strategic mindset on implementation methods. By fully utilizing the advantages of the connected world, the United States aimed to supplement traditional foreign policy tools with those adapted to the new context. Using information technology to reach target audiences in strategically important areas worldwide, the U.S. not only used information technology as a tool for existing policies but also adjusted policies based on digital diplomacy as a new component. For example, in the Middle East, the region most mentioned in the "tweets" from the U.S. Department of State's Twitter account. The content focused on improving relations with Iran, promoting the peace process between Israel and Palestine (Corneliu Bjola & Marcus Holmes, 2015, p.87) and supporting the democratic aspirations of the Egyptian people as part of the Arab Spring campaign (Corneliu Bjola & Marcus Holmes, 2015, p.88). Secretary John Kerry frequently used Twitter to update on foreign affairs and emphasized digital diplomacy in his first post on "DipNote" titled "Digital Diplomacy: Adapting Our Diplomatic Engagement" (John Kerry, 2013). This also demonstrates the policy priorities of the United States and the importance of public diplomacy in the digital era right from the start.

In addition to a systematic and strategic public diplomacy style based on national foreign policy, individual leadership roles were also evident in the U.S.'s digital diplomacy activities. President Obama was the first incumbent head of state in the world to create a Twitter account, attracting very high interaction levels (Stan Schroeder, 2012). During President Trump's tenure, his straightforward populist interaction style, which deviated from traditional diplomacy, had positive effects such as increasing closeness with his supporters. However, it also somewhat negatively impacted the image and implementation of U.S. soft power globally (Mary Dejevsky, 2017) due to the transmission of messages from far-right groups, attacks on opponents, or self-praise. Despite this, the U.S. Department of State's top position on social media presence among foreign affairs agencies worldwide, with 344 Facebook pages, 351 Twitter accounts, and 173 YouTube channels in 2021 (Global Social Media Presence, United States Department of State) remains undeniable.

b. China

In the early 21st century, China's strategy focused on alleviating Southeast Asian countries' concerns about its rise, creating a peaceful and stable environment for economic development. China also adopted flexible measures in resolving border, territorial, and maritime disputes; continued efforts to build a "China impression" in Southeast Asia through cultural aid and funding activities to improve trust and reduce public reactions to maritime disputes.

Currently, China continues to enhance this approach by flexibly using three main channels: media, cultural diplomacy, and economic cooperation, leveraging national cultural characteristics, economic needs, and developmental ideologies of each country to create psychological trust and curiosity towards China within each country's community. China has engaged governments and private enterprises with close ties to governments worldwide; continuously advertising and propagandizing about China while mobilizing diplomats and scholars to write articles on its policies in international media (Vietnam News Agency, 2016).

China maintains cultural exchanges with over 160 countries, has signed governmental cultural cooperation agreements with 145 countries, and has about 800 annual cultural exchange programs. The establishment of Confucius Institutes, Confucius Classrooms, and overseas cultural centers has created comprehensive and widespread foreign cultural exchanges. China also frequently organizes cultural festivals or youth festivals with neighboring countries, provides scholarships to attract Southeast Asian students to study in China, utilizes Chinese-language television and media, and leverages the voice of the Chinese community in host countries to promote and export cultural products like films to Southeast Asia. Television dramas, one of the most effective cultural dissemination tools, are also extensively used by China.

In addition to traditional methods, since 2019, as the world began undergoing significant changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic, China adopted new highlights in its approach to Southeast Asia. With travel restrictions due to the pandemic, China chose classic methods like telephone and letter diplomacy. Among ASEAN countries, President Xi Jinping had the most phone conversations with Indonesian President Jokowi (three times in February, April, and September 2020) (Vietnam News Agency, 2020). The frequency of these calls could be related to the 70th anniversary of China-Indonesia relations. Xi also had phone conversations with leaders of two other countries celebrating 70 years of diplomatic relations with China, Myanmar and Vietnam. In May 2020, Xi reiterated the importance of building a "China-Myanmar Community of Shared Destiny" and promoting projects within the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor with Myanmar President U Win Myint. In January 2020, Xi sent Lunar New Year greetings to General Secretary Nguyễn Phú Trọng of Vietnam. In August 2020, Xi sent condolences to Nguyễn Phú Trọng on the passing of former General Secretary Lê Khả Phiêu. Yang Jiechi also visited the Vietnamese Embassy in China to pay respects and sign the condolence book. Xi Jinping also communicated with the leaders of the Philippines and Thailand, two countries with which China will celebrate 45 years of diplomatic relations. Besides discussing continued cooperation in combating COVID-19, he emphasized promoting the China-Thailand railway project during his phone call with General Prayut. Xi also called to congratulate Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on his victory in the July 2020 election (ISEAS – Yusok Ishak Institute, 2020). The two leaders also agreed to strengthen cooperation within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) through the new International Land-Sea Trade Corridor, a multimodal transport route connecting Chongqing with Qinzhou Port in Guangxi, and from there to other places in Southeast Asia and the world.

Notably, China has also leveraged new digital diplomacy to extend its reach to Southeast Asia. China and ASEAN have transitioned to online meetings such as the ASEAN+3 Special Summit and other ASEAN conferences. Chinese and ASEAN health experts have also held online conferences to share experiences in testing, contact tracing, prevention, and control of COVID-19. The Health Silk Road, initiated in 2017, is now more relevant as countries in the region become more aware of it, providing China an opportunity to further promote it. China's efforts to incorporate intangible aspects to regain lost trust in Southeast Asia demonstrate the success of its soft power foreign policy as the pandemic situation gradually comes under control. This move reaffirms China's presence as a global leader in a new multipolar world order.

The end of the Cold War and Joseph Nye Jr.'s introduction of the "soft power" theory in 1990 brought new energy to the development of public diplomacy theory and practice. Digitization has opened up opportunities for studying "Public Diplomacy 2.0," integrating new information and communication technologies and social media with international broadcasting and cultural and educational exchanges in the context of digital transformation. Public diplomacy is a crucial element that constitutes a nation's "soft power." It can be said that as a tool for conveying messages and developing and spreading resources, public diplomacy plays a role in creating "soft power" based on those resources' legitimacy (in policy) and attractiveness (in cultural values).

Alongside the trends of integration, cooperation, and connection mentioned above, the post-Cold War world also witnesses the trend of independence and autonomy of nation-states in establishing and creating their values and identities to counteract the negative impacts and consequences of globalization. If fully understood and given a deserving place in a country's foreign policy, public diplomacy can make significant contributions to building a country's identity, image, prestige, and influence on the international stage.

The cultural diplomacy activities of the world's major powers, through public diplomacy, are being implemented in diverse forms in Southeast Asia. These activities not only promote the culture of these countries to spread everywhere, helping Southeast Asian countries gradually develop a clear perception of a friendly major power image, but also facilitate the further expansion of these countries' cultural diplomacy, thereby enhancing soft power in the future.

3) The Role of Vietnamese Youth in Protecting National Sovereignty over Seas and Islands through Public Diplomacy during the Digital Transformation Era

Modern Vietnamese diplomacy is closely linked to the significant ideas of Ho Chi Minh, who laid the foundation for public diplomacy in Vietnam, known as "diplomatic persuasion." This approach involves winning hearts with justice, humane treatment, and convincing with reason and ethics (Nguyễn Thuỳ Linh, 2013). From the early days of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Vietnam's diplomacy gained support from progressive people worldwide and international organizations.

Vietnam's modern diplomacy comprises three components: the Party's external affairs, state diplomacy, and people-to-people diplomacy, with the latter being unique and effective. In the early years of the resistance against

the French, diplomatic missions, although few, traveled abroad to introduce the struggle and seek support. Examples include the 1947 Asian youth congress in India and the 1950 World Peace Council (Cà Mau Provincial Union of Friendship Organizations, 2015). Over 30 years of renovation have positioned Vietnam as a middle-power nation. The 30th Diplomatic Conference (2018) and the 13th National Party Congress emphasized Vietnam's growing international prestige and influence (Government Newspaper, 2018; Nhân Dân Newspaper, 2021). Vietnam is a member of significant regional and international organizations and has strategic partnerships with G7 countries and 16/20 G20 economies, entering a new phase of international integration.

Since 1930, under the Party's leadership and Ho Chi Minh, youth have been crucial in revolutionary tasks. The resolution of the 5th National Party Congress emphasized mobilizing youth in labor, culture, education, science, technology, and defense (Communist Party of Vietnam, 1982, p.131). Public diplomacy in Vietnam, especially during international integration, has effectively used cultural diplomacy and external information, promoting "soft power" (Vũ Khoan, 1995, p.205).

Vietnam's seas and islands hold a strategic position and are closely tied to the nation's industrialization and modernization. Vietnamese youth play a vital role in maintaining sovereignty and promoting accurate information about national sovereignty through public diplomacy, spreading "soft power," and depicting Vietnam as a nation that values independence, peace, and international law.

4) The Awareness of Vietnamese Youth on National Maritime and Island Sovereignty, and Public Diplomacy in the Context of Digital Transformation

To understand the awareness of Vietnamese youth regarding national sovereignty over the Hoang Sa (Paracel) and Truong Sa (Spratly) archipelagos in the context of digital transformation, we conducted a survey among students and young workers under 35. The study, while limited in scale and potentially lacking full objectivity, was carried out with enthusiasm and a spirit of inquiry by our independent research group. We decided to publish the preliminary results from surveys conducted between February 1-28, 2023, in Da Nang, and March 31-April 20, 2023, in Hanoi.

Using a sociological survey method, we distributed 450 questionnaires (300 to students and 150 to young workers) equally in Hanoi and Da Nang. Each city received 225 questionnaires, with 75 for young workers and 150 for students. Hanoi and Da Nang were chosen for their large number of universities, colleges, and dynamic industrial zones, and because Da Nang is directly associated with the Hoang Sa archipelago, part of Vietnam's national maritime sovereignty.

From the collected survey results, we present the following data tables:

Table 1. Knowledge about Hoang Sa and Truong Sa Measurement Unit: Percentage (%).

Issue	Wrong Responses (%)		
	Compared to Total	Students	Workers
<i>Historical Basis for Sovereignty Assertion</i>	74,67% (336/450 respondents)	63,33% (190/300 students)	97,33 % (146/150 workers)
<i>Countries and Territories in Dispute Over the Two Archipelagos</i>	98,22% (442/450 respondents)	98% (294/300 students)	98,67 % (148/150 workers)
<i>Natural Resources and Wealth in the Sea and Two Archipelagos</i>	63,11% (284/450 respondents)	54% (162/300 students)	78% (117/150 workers)

Table 2. Knowledge about Declarations Related to Hoang Sa and Truong Sa Measurement Unit: Percentage (%).

Issue	Compared to Total			Students			Workers		
	Don't Know	Hear d Of	Know Clearly	Don't Know	Hear d Of	Know Clearly	Don't Know	Hear d Of	Know Clearly
<i>Declaration on China's Nine-Dash Line Claim</i>	68,89	22,44	9,56	58,33	28,33	14	90	10,67	0,67
<i>Declaration on the DOC ⁽¹⁾ Signed Between ASEAN and China in 2002</i>	58	31	11	38,5	45	16,5	97	3	0
<i>United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982</i>	63,7	29	7,3	46,5	42,5	11	98	2	0

Table 3. Information Channels for Issues Related to Hoang Sa and Truong Sa Measurement Unit: Percentage (%).

Information Channel	Total	Students	Workers
---------------------	-------	----------	---------

¹ DOC (Declaration of Conduct: Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea)

<i>Internet</i>	36,89	40,33	30
<i>Television</i>	51,11	46,67	60
<i>Books and Newspapers</i>	8,67	12	1
<i>Radio</i>	6	5,67	6,67
<i>Other Sources</i>	9,55	4,67	0,97

President Ho Chi Minh taught, “Our people must know our history to understand the roots of our country.” Vietnam's history includes the undeniable sovereignty over the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagos. However, a majority of young respondents lack knowledge about when this sovereignty was first established, with 74.67% answering incorrectly. This ignorance is concerning, especially given the ongoing sovereignty disputes in the East Sea (South China Sea). According to our survey, 98.22% of young people do not know which countries dispute Vietnam's sovereignty over these archipelagos, with most only aware of China and unaware of other disputing nations. Additionally, more than half of the respondents are unaware of the rich natural resources in Hoang Sa and Truong Sa, viewing them merely as distant names.

The lack of basic knowledge about national sovereignty over these islands stems from ineffective information dissemination and education. Students and young workers have not had consistent access to this information. Our survey found that 82.7% of respondents believe current education programs on maritime and island issues are inadequate, and 92% think it is essential to include Hoang Sa and Truong Sa in the curriculum at all educational levels.

The younger generation needs to be informed about national sovereignty over the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagos. Current education lacks comprehensive content on maritime sovereignty. The sensitivity of the issue leads to reluctance in addressing it publicly. Many media and state agencies avoid discussing it, and we faced challenges during our investigation due to the political sensitivity of the information. Therefore, disseminating information and implementing public diplomacy related to national sovereignty disputes over these archipelagos is crucial.

4.3. Discussion

4.3.1. Level of Awareness of Information Related to National Maritime and Island Sovereignty Among Youth

Affirming national sovereignty over seas and islands, Hoang Sa and Truong Sa belong to Vietnam, an undeniable historical truth. Our Party and State consistently assert Vietnam's sovereignty over these archipelagos with sufficient historical evidence and legal grounds. However, many young people have limited knowledge about national maritime sovereignty. For example, the 2022 "Knowledge Competition on Vietnam's Seas and Islands" and the virtual exhibition "The Homeland on the Waves" aimed to enhance awareness among students about the importance of Vietnam's seas and islands. Yet, our survey revealed that 53.77% of students were unaware of the competition, and 43.5% knew but did not participate. This indicates insufficient education on maritime issues and ineffective communication efforts, leading to low student engagement.

Most young people recognize Hoang Sa and Truong Sa as parts of Vietnam but lack detailed knowledge. They are unaware of key issues like the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, China's nine-dash line, or ASEAN's efforts in the South China Sea disputes. Without a comprehensive understanding, it's difficult to assert Vietnam's sovereignty effectively. Regarding information channels, 36.89% received information via the internet, 51.11% via television, 8.67% from books and newspapers, 6% from radio, and 9.55% from other sources. Students primarily use the internet, while workers rely more on television. Limited exposure to print media suggests incorporating maritime sovereignty education into general programs to increase accessibility.

This issue requires immediate attention. We hope relevant agencies will incorporate maritime and island sovereignty education into the school curriculum, ensuring all social strata have basic knowledge about national maritime sovereignty, leading to informed actions in asserting and preserving it. Overall, youth awareness about Hoang Sa and Truong Sa remains very limited. Relevant agencies need to enhance communication effectiveness to raise awareness among youth about maritime sovereignty.

4.3.2. Solutions for Protecting National Sovereignty over Seas and Islands through Public Diplomacy in the Digital Transformation Era: Implications for Vietnamese Youth

Public diplomacy serves national interests through both state and non-state actors, including private organizations, interest groups, and citizens. These actors' goals often align with public diplomacy and propaganda, benefiting the practitioners and the entities they represent. This research emphasizes the role of Vietnamese youth, including students and young workers, in public diplomacy. Vietnamese youth can engage in public diplomacy by:

- Grasping accurate information about maritime and island sovereignty to provide honest presentations and explanations of foreign policies and strategic orientations to the public and overseas citizens. Many students have limited awareness about maritime sovereignty, leading to indifference and a lack of interest in maritime issues. Raising awareness among students about maritime sovereignty is crucial for them to understand their roles and responsibilities in protecting national sovereignty.

- Encouraging understanding and respect for international law, engaging in dialogue on international forums. Maintaining stability in maritime areas is essential for economic and social development and protecting maritime sovereignty. Resolving maritime disputes should be based on international law, as shown by the successful negotiation between Indonesia and Vietnam over overlapping exclusive economic zones in the South China Sea.

- Showcasing Vietnam's national achievements and spreading the image of a peace-loving and law-abiding nation to the international community. Vietnam has utilized bilateral and multilateral channels to communicate its stance on sovereignty and expose wrongful actions in the South China Sea conflict. The diplomatic efforts have yielded positive results, demonstrating Vietnam's perseverance in protecting its sovereignty.

In the current global context, respecting international law and engaging in dialogue on international forums are urgent needs. Forums like ASEAN meetings and youth volunteer forums provide opportunities for youth to practice public diplomacy, exchange experiences, and share official information about national sovereignty with the international community.

5. Summary of Key Points

Conclusion

Vietnam's national sovereignty over the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagos faces significant challenges, including misinformation and biased narratives by other countries. Vietnamese youth must be equipped with accurate knowledge and tools to engage effectively in public diplomacy. By leveraging digital platforms, promoting international law, and showcasing Vietnam's commitment to peace, youth can play a pivotal role in asserting sovereignty and enhancing the nation's global image. This study underscores the importance of education, strategic communication, and the active participation of youth in preserving maritime sovereignty.

Policy Recommendations

First, strengthen the role of Party Committees, government, and organizations, especially the Youth Union, in grassroots political systems for propaganda and education on national maritime sovereignty. Party committees should lead and direct ideological work, while government bodies such as People's Councils and People's Committees should develop content, planning, and activities. Local committees and governments should support continuous, synchronized propaganda and education about maritime sovereignty. Financial support is crucial; sufficient funds should be allocated for successful propaganda and education efforts, and the People's Council should monitor activities, address difficulties, and improve future efforts.

Second, implement diverse and rich propaganda and education measures, including training courses, cultural events, study tours, donation drives, press conferences, articles, films, newsletters, and posters. Combine internal and public information on mass media, and enhance propaganda through theatrical forms during major holidays and local events. Increase practical activities like fundraising for remote island communities, organizing contests on maritime sovereignty, and effectively using print and audiovisual media provided by the government.

Third, establish and train a team of young researchers specializing in maritime and South China Sea studies, focusing on areas such as history, law, international relations, and policy. This team will research and advise on policies to strengthen Vietnam as a maritime nation and protect its sovereignty in the South China Sea.

References / Список литературы

1. Allen Hansen. Public Diplomacy in the Computer Age. USIA, 1984.
2. Antonio de Lima. Public Diplomacy: concept and instruments, 2017. Url: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/public-diplomacy-concept-instruments-antonio-de-lima-jr->
3. Cà Mau Provincial Union of Friendship Organizations. Miscellaneous Thoughts on People-to-People Diplomacy, 2015. Url: <https://cufo.camau.gov.vn/wps/portal/>
4. Communist Party of Vietnam. Documents of the Fifth National Congress of the Party, Volume 1. Hanoi: Truth Publishing House, 1982.
5. Corneliu Bjola & Marcus Holmes. Digital Diplomacy: Theory and Practice, Routledge, 2015.
6. Eytan Gilboa. Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy. The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. Volume 616, Issue 1. 2008.
7. Glen H.F. Public Diplomacy and the Behavioural Sciences. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1988.
8. Global Social Media Presence, United States Department of State. Url: <https://www.state.gov/global-social-media-presence/>
9. Government Newspaper. Vietnamese Diplomacy: Proactive, Creative, Effective Implementation of the Resolution of the 12th Party Congress, 2018. Url: <https://baochinhphu.vn/ngoi-giao-viet-nam-chu-dong-sang-tao-hieu-qua-thuc-hien-thang-loi-nghi-quyet-dai-hoi-dang-lan-thu-xii-102243098.htm>
10. ISEAS – Yusok Ishak Institute. China's Southeast Asian Charm Offensive: Is It Working? 2020 No. 108. Url: https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/ISEAS_Perspective_2020_108.pdf
11. Jan Melissen (Ed.). The New Public Diplomacy - Soft Power in International Relations. New York, N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
12. John Kerry. Digital Diplomacy: Adapting Our Diplomatic Engagement. United States State Department, 2013. Url: <http://2007-2017-blogs.state.gov/stories/2013/05/06/digital-diplomacy-adapting-our-diplomatic-engagement.html>
13. Joseph S., Nye Jr. Public Diplomacy and Soft Power. The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. 2008, No. 616, pp. 94-109.
14. Mark et al Leonard. Public Diplomacy. London: Foreign Policy Centre, 2002.

15. *Mary Dejevsky*. In defence of Donald Trump's Twitter diplomacy. The Guardian, 2017. Url: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/feb/05/in-defence-of-twitter-diplomacy>
16. *Nancy S. and Philip M.T.* (Ed.). Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy. New York: Routledge, 2009.
17. *Ngo Phuong Nghi*. Introduction to International Politics. Hanoi: National Political Publishing House - Truth, 2015.
18. *Nguyen Thuy Linh*. Ho Chi Minh's "Heartfelt Diplomacy": Inheriting and Developing the Nation's Diplomatic Tradition. Ethnic Magazine Component Portal, 2013. Url: <http://tapchidantoc.ubdt.gov.vn/2013-11-08/69ebcf8041bf73bbb4fcbff3cdfbfc57-cema.htm>
19. *Nhân Dân Newspaper*. Resolution of the 13th National Congress, 2021. Url: <https://nhandan.com.vn/chinhtri/nghe-quyet-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-toan-quoc-lan-thu-xiii-636568/>
20. *Stan Schroeder*. Obama's 'Four More Years' Tweet is Most Popular of All Time. Url: <https://mashable.com/2012/11/07/obama-four-more-years-tweet/>
21. United States Department of State. 21st Century Statecraft. Url: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/statecraft/overview/index.htm>
22. United States Department of State. Transformational Diplomacy. Url: <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/59339.htm>
23. Vietnam News Agency. Is China's Campaign to Attract Southeast Asia Successful? Special Reference Material. 9/10/2020.
24. Vietnam News Agency. Ten Characteristics of Chinese Diplomacy under Xi Jinping. Special Reference Material. 29/02/2016.
25. *Vu Khoan*. Security, Development, and Influence in Foreign Activities, in International Integration and Preserving Identity. Hanoi: National Political Publishing House, 1995.