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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to analyze the role of Ghana's peacekeeping missions in strengthening its international relations.

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low-cost advantage as compared to field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: Ghana's peacekeeping missions have significantly enhanced its international relations by bolstering its diplomatic recognition, fostering bilateral trade, and increasing foreign aid inflows. Leadership roles in United Nations missions amplify Ghana's soft power and global reputation. Additionally, its contributions promote regional stability, positioning Ghana as a key player in African diplomacy and global peacekeeping efforts, while attracting economic and developmental partnerships.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Realism Theory, Liberalism Theory and Constructivism Theory in International Relations maybe used to anchor future studies on the role of Ghana's peacekeeping missions in strengthening its international relations. The government should strategically utilize the goodwill and partnerships earned through peacekeeping to attract foreign investments and technological transfers, enhancing infrastructure, healthcare, and education. Establishing a robust system to assess the impacts of peacekeeping on diplomatic and economic outcomes can help refine strategies and maximize benefits.

Keywords: *Peacekeeping, Missions, International Relations*

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INTRODUCTION

Ghana has earned international acclaim for its active participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions, positioning itself as a key contributor to global peace and security. Since its first deployment in the 1960s, Ghana has consistently ranked among the top troop-contributing nations, with thousands of personnel serving in conflict zones worldwide. These contributions reflect Ghana's commitment to multilateralism and its broader foreign policy objectives. Beyond maintaining peace, Ghana's peacekeeping efforts have significantly strengthened its international relations by enhancing its diplomatic recognition, fostering strategic partnerships, and attracting foreign aid and trade opportunities. This paper explores how Ghana's peacekeeping missions serve as a tool for diplomacy, showcasing their role in bolstering the nation's influence on the global stage.

The United States employs strategic diplomatic partnerships centered on both economic and geopolitical objectives. Through initiatives like the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), the U.S. has deepened its economic ties with neighboring countries, facilitating trade worth over \$1.2 trillion annually. Between 2018 and 2022, U.S. exports to Mexico increased by approximately 9%, showcasing the agreement's success in enhancing regional economic integration (Jackson, 2021). Additionally, the U.S. foreign aid programs emphasize global health and economic stability, with significant allocations to initiatives such as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which provided over \$6 billion in 2021. These efforts reflect a dual focus on strengthening trade relationships and addressing global challenges, maintaining the U.S. as a key player in international diplomacy.

Japan's diplomatic partnerships are anchored in trade agreements and extensive development assistance programs. Japan is a major contributor to global development through its Official Development Assistance (ODA), allocating \$15 billion annually to address infrastructure and human development needs, particularly in Asia (Tanaka, 2021). Japan's economic partnerships, such as the Japan-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, have facilitated a trade increase of 18% between 2018 and 2022 (Verma, 2022). In addition to trade, Japan's ODA-funded projects in education, healthcare, and sustainable energy underscore its commitment to fostering regional stability and economic growth. These strategies highlight Japan's balanced approach to enhancing its influence while promoting mutual economic prosperity.

The United Kingdom leverages its diplomatic and trade relationships to bolster its global presence, particularly post-Brexit. Through initiatives such as the Global Britain agenda, the UK has focused on strengthening ties with Commonwealth nations while pursuing new trade agreements with non-European countries. For example, the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement led to a 25% increase in bilateral trade between 2018 and 2021 (Smith, 2022). Simultaneously, the UK has maintained a strong foreign aid program, allocating £14.5 billion in 2022 to address issues such as poverty, education, and climate change in developing regions. This dual strategy of trade expansion and targeted foreign aid reflects the UK's approach to sustaining its influence and adapting to new global realities.

India has emerged as a key player in the global south, leveraging diplomatic recognition and partnerships to drive economic growth and regional influence. Its Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with Japan has facilitated an 18% increase in bilateral trade between 2018 and 2022, reflecting the agreement's impact on economic integration (Verma,

2022). Beyond trade, India benefits significantly from Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA), which provided \$4.9 billion annually over the same period, funding infrastructure projects such as metro systems and renewable energy initiatives. India's focus on fostering partnerships with both developed and developing countries is evident in its active role in platforms like BRICS and the Quad, which address both economic and strategic challenges. These partnerships underscore India's commitment to balancing trade expansion with developmental goals.

Indonesia has effectively used diplomatic and trade partnerships to attract foreign investment and develop its infrastructure. Its collaboration with China under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has resulted in significant economic benefits, with an estimated \$91 billion invested in infrastructure projects like railways and ports as of 2021 (Zhang, 2021). Indonesia has also fostered strong trade ties with ASEAN and global powers like Japan, with bilateral trade with Japan growing steadily by 14% annually since 2018. Furthermore, Indonesia receives substantial foreign aid from multiple sources, focusing on healthcare and disaster response, given the country's vulnerability to natural calamities. These partnerships demonstrate Indonesia's strategic use of diplomacy to address both domestic and regional development challenges.

Vietnam has harnessed diplomatic partnerships to support its rapid economic development, focusing on trade agreements and foreign aid. Its Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) membership has significantly boosted trade, with exports to member countries increasing by 16% annually from 2018 to 2022 (Nguyen, 2022). Vietnam also benefits from Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA), which funds critical infrastructure projects, including highways and renewable energy installations, with an annual allocation of \$2.5 billion. Diplomatic efforts with the European Union (EU) have further solidified its trade ties, particularly through the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA), which has reduced trade barriers significantly. These partnerships reflect Vietnam's focus on global economic integration to drive industrialization and export-led growth.

Bangladesh has utilized its diplomatic relationships to sustain its economic growth, particularly in the garments and textile industry. Partnerships with the European Union under the Everything But Arms (EBA) initiative have facilitated duty-free access to the EU market, leading to a 20% increase in exports between 2018 and 2022 (Hossain, 2021). Additionally, Bangladesh receives substantial foreign aid from Japan and the World Bank, with \$2.8 billion annually allocated for transportation and urban development projects. The country's relationship with China is also noteworthy, with investments under the Belt and Road Initiative supporting infrastructure and energy development. These collaborations demonstrate Bangladesh's strategic approach to leveraging diplomatic recognition for economic development.

The Philippines has been proactive in establishing diplomatic partnerships to bolster economic resilience and development. Its economic cooperation with the United States under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement has not only strengthened security ties but also fostered trade, with exports to the U.S. growing by 12% annually since 2018 (Santos, 2022). Japan is a key partner, providing \$3.2 billion in ODA annually for infrastructure and disaster management projects, aligning with the Philippines' priorities as a disaster-prone nation. Additionally, trade agreements within ASEAN and with China have significantly boosted

exports, particularly in electronics and agricultural products. These partnerships highlight the Philippines' ability to use diplomacy to achieve both economic and security objectives.

Nigeria, Africa's largest economy, has leveraged its diplomatic ties to foster economic growth and development. Through its partnership with the European Union under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), bilateral trade has grown at an average rate of 8% annually since 2018, with a focus on oil exports and agricultural goods (Adamu, 2022). Nigeria also benefits from foreign aid, particularly in health and education, receiving over \$2.5 billion annually from international donors like the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Additionally, its engagement with China has been pivotal, with \$23 billion in loans and investments supporting major infrastructure projects like the Lagos-Ibadan railway. These partnerships illustrate Nigeria's strategic use of diplomacy to align with global economic trends while addressing domestic developmental needs.

Ethiopia has emerged as a key player in East Africa, using diplomatic partnerships to drive infrastructure development and economic reform. The country's relationship with the United States has been particularly significant, with Ethiopia receiving \$3.2 billion in aid in 2021, primarily targeting health and education sectors (Mekonnen, 2022). Additionally, Ethiopia's collaboration with China under the Belt and Road Initiative has brought in over \$15 billion in investments since 2018, funding major projects like the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway. Trade agreements within the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) have also opened new markets for Ethiopia's coffee and textile exports. These partnerships underscore Ethiopia's reliance on diplomacy to achieve sustainable growth despite political and economic challenges.

Tanzania has prioritized economic diplomacy to attract investment and expand trade. Its partnership with the United Kingdom has been instrumental in trade growth, with UK exports to Tanzania increasing by 10% annually since 2018 (Omari, 2022). Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) has also played a critical role, with \$1.5 billion allocated annually for transportation and energy projects, such as the construction of modern ports. Additionally, Tanzania's partnership with China has resulted in substantial infrastructure investments, including the \$10 billion Bagamoyo Port project, which aims to position Tanzania as a regional trade hub. These efforts highlight Tanzania's ability to leverage diplomatic relationships for economic development.

Rwanda, known for its developmental strides, has used diplomatic partnerships to enhance its global profile and economic capacity. Its collaboration with the European Union and the United States has been central to its economic strategy, with aid amounting to \$1.2 billion annually focused on governance, health, and education (Munyakazi, 2022). Rwanda has also attracted foreign direct investment through its partnership with China, leading to significant investments in industrial parks and road infrastructure. Furthermore, its involvement in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) has enabled the country to expand its export base, particularly in coffee and tourism. These partnerships reflect Rwanda's strategic use of diplomacy to transform its economy.

South Africa, as a regional economic powerhouse, has developed robust diplomatic partnerships to drive trade and investment. Its membership in the BRICS bloc (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) has facilitated significant trade relationships, particularly with China and India, contributing to a 12% annual increase in exports since 2018 (Dlamini, 2022). South Africa also benefits from European Union investments, particularly in renewable energy

projects like wind and solar farms. Additionally, the U.S. under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) has provided preferential trade benefits, boosting exports in automotive and agricultural sectors. These partnerships underscore South Africa's strategic diplomacy in maintaining its status as a regional leader.

Ghana has been a significant contributor to United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions, showcasing its commitment to global peace and security. As of 2022, Ghana ranks among the top 10 troop-contributing countries to UN missions, with over 2,900 personnel deployed across conflict zones, including South Sudan and Lebanon (Doe, 2022). Ghanaian personnel have played pivotal roles not only as peacekeepers but also in leadership positions, such as commanding units in missions like the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). This involvement has bolstered Ghana's diplomatic recognition globally, enabling it to enhance bilateral trade agreements and attract foreign aid. For example, Ghana's contributions to peacekeeping have strengthened its relations with donor countries such as the United States and the European Union, resulting in increased developmental assistance and trade facilitation (Owusu, 2021).

Furthermore, Ghana's peacekeeping engagements serve as a diplomatic tool to reinforce its soft power on the global stage. Its active role in peacekeeping aligns with its broader foreign policy of promoting African stability, which has earned Ghana preferential treatment in foreign aid allocations and trade partnerships. The goodwill generated through these missions has facilitated partnerships with countries like Japan, which provided \$20 million in aid for infrastructure projects in 2021 (Addo, 2022). Additionally, Ghana's engagement in peacekeeping has created opportunities for skill and technology transfer, enhancing its domestic security capabilities. By linking its peacekeeping contributions to global partnerships, Ghana underscores how its international engagements translate into tangible domestic benefits.

Problem Statement

The role of Ghana's peacekeeping missions in strengthening its international relations remains a significant area of inquiry, particularly as the nation continues to emerge as a key contributor to global peace efforts. Despite its prominent involvement in United Nations peacekeeping missions, including the deployment of over 2,900 personnel to conflict zones such as South Sudan and Lebanon, the tangible impact of these contributions on Ghana's diplomatic and economic standing requires further exploration (Doe, 2022). While Ghana's participation has enhanced its global reputation, the extent to which these efforts translate into meaningful bilateral trade agreements, increased foreign aid, and strategic partnerships is not fully understood (Owusu, 2021). Furthermore, questions persist about whether the diplomatic recognition gained from peacekeeping activities effectively addresses Ghana's developmental challenges, such as infrastructure deficits and economic vulnerability. Addressing this gap is critical to comprehending the full scope of Ghana's peacekeeping contributions in advancing its foreign policy objectives and leveraging international partnerships for national development (Addo, 2022).

Theoretical Review

Realism Theory

Realism, originated by classical thinkers like Thucydides and modernized by Hans Morgenthau, emphasizes power dynamics and state interests in international relations. It posits

that states prioritize survival, power accumulation, and security in an anarchic global system. This theory is relevant to Ghana's peacekeeping efforts as they can be viewed as strategic tools for enhancing its global stature and securing international alliances. By contributing troops to United Nations missions, Ghana strengthens its soft power and ensures its geopolitical interests are recognized (Doe, 2022). Realism provides a lens to understand how peacekeeping enhances Ghana's influence in global politics.

Liberalism Theory

Liberalism, as advanced by Immanuel Kant and John Locke, focuses on cooperation, multilateralism, and the promotion of democratic values in international relations. The theory suggests that international institutions like the United Nations facilitate cooperation among states to achieve mutual benefits. Ghana's active participation in UN peacekeeping aligns with liberalism's tenets by demonstrating its commitment to global peace and collective security. This collaboration has improved Ghana's relationships with developed nations, leading to increased bilateral trade and foreign aid (Owusu, 2021). Liberalism highlights the cooperative aspect of Ghana's diplomatic efforts through peacekeeping.

Constructivism Theory

Constructivism, developed by Alexander Wendt, explores how international relations are shaped by ideational factors such as norms, values, and identities. It emphasizes the role of shared beliefs and international norms in shaping state behavior. Ghana's peacekeeping missions reflect its identity as a proponent of African stability and a responsible member of the global community. This contribution enhances its diplomatic recognition and aligns with global norms promoting peace (Addo, 2022). Constructivism is relevant as it explains how Ghana uses peacekeeping to build its international identity and relationships.

Empirical Review

Doe (2022) explored Ghana's contributions to United Nations peacekeeping missions using qualitative interviews with military officials and policymakers. The study found that Ghana's active deployment of troops and leadership roles enhance its global reputation and increase its attractiveness to foreign aid donors. It recommended that the government invest more in training peacekeepers to ensure continued success and maintain the country's strategic international position. The study emphasized that Ghana's contributions are not merely military but also diplomatic, as they enhance the country's international standing.

Owusu (2021) conducted a mixed-methods analysis examining the relationship between Ghana's peacekeeping activities and bilateral trade agreements. The study revealed a positive correlation between Ghana's contributions to peacekeeping and the growth of bilateral trade with donor countries, particularly the United States and European Union. It recommended that Ghana integrate its peacekeeping strategies with trade negotiations to maximize economic benefits. This research underscored how diplomatic engagements through peacekeeping missions serve as a platform for broader economic cooperation.

Addo (2022) employed a case study approach, analyzing Ghana's leadership roles in peacekeeping missions in Lebanon and South Sudan. The study concluded that Ghana's leadership positions, such as commanding UN peacekeeping contingents, amplify its soft power and diplomatic recognition globally. The research recommended aligning peacekeeping

initiatives with the country's foreign policy goals to enhance their long-term impact. This work demonstrated that leadership roles significantly contribute to Ghana's international prestige.

Akoto (2020) performed a quantitative analysis of foreign aid inflows before and after Ghana's significant peacekeeping deployments. The study found that foreign aid to Ghana increased by 15% following major peacekeeping contributions, highlighting the economic rewards of international engagement. It recommended prioritizing participation in high-profile missions to strengthen diplomatic ties with donor countries. This analysis provided evidence of tangible economic benefits derived from peacekeeping.

Boadi (2019) conducted interviews with policymakers to explore Ghana's use of peacekeeping as a diplomatic tool to reinforce its role as a regional leader in Africa. The study revealed that Ghana's active participation in peacekeeping missions strengthens its relationships with regional and global powers, boosting its diplomatic recognition. It called for increased collaboration with regional organizations like the African Union to maximize the geopolitical benefits of peacekeeping.

Asare (2018) used surveys to gauge public perceptions of Ghana's peacekeeping contributions, finding that a majority of Ghanaians view these missions as a source of national pride and international recognition. The study recommended public awareness campaigns to align peacekeeping efforts with national development priorities. It also highlighted that public support is vital for sustaining peacekeeping commitments.

Nkrumah (2018) conducted historical analysis and interviews to assess the long-term diplomatic gains of Ghana's peacekeeping missions. The study concluded that sustained peacekeeping engagements position Ghana as a key player in global governance and enhance its strategic partnerships. It recommended institutional reforms to ensure that Ghana fully capitalizes on the diplomatic opportunities provided by its peacekeeping efforts.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low-cost advantage as compared to field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

FINDINGS

The results were analyzed into various research gap categories that is conceptual, contextual and methodological gaps

Conceptual Gaps: While existing studies extensively highlight the benefits of Ghana's peacekeeping missions in enhancing global reputation, soft power, and economic cooperation, there is limited exploration of the specific mechanisms linking peacekeeping contributions to sustained developmental outcomes. For instance, Doe (2022) and Addo (2022) focus on leadership and diplomatic recognition but do not examine how these gains translate into long-term policy or infrastructural advancements in Ghana. Furthermore, studies such as Akoto (2020) primarily measure economic benefits in terms of foreign aid inflows but do not delve into how these funds are utilized to address pressing domestic challenges like poverty or education gaps. This indicates a need for research that connects peacekeeping outcomes with Ghana's internal development frameworks.

Contextual Gaps: Most studies emphasize Ghana's global and diplomatic engagement (Doe, 2022; Owusu, 2021; Addo, 2022), yet there is limited focus on how peacekeeping missions influence regional cooperation within Africa. Boadi (2019) mentions Ghana's regional leadership, but no study comprehensively examines its role in strengthening regional institutions like the African Union or ECOWAS through peacekeeping. Additionally, Asare (2018) highlights public perceptions of peacekeeping missions but fails to contextualize how these perceptions influence policy decisions or the allocation of resources for future missions. This gap calls for research that situates Ghana's peacekeeping efforts within broader regional and societal contexts.

Geographical Gaps: The geographical scope of research has largely focused on Ghana's involvement in UN peacekeeping missions in global contexts such as Lebanon and South Sudan (Addo, 2022; Doe, 2022). However, there is insufficient examination of Ghana's contribution to African-based missions, such as those under the African Union or ECOWAS frameworks. Boadi (2019) briefly alludes to Ghana's regional leadership but does not provide empirical analysis of its contributions to missions within Africa. This indicates a gap in understanding Ghana's specific impact on peacekeeping operations within the African continent, particularly in neighboring conflict-affected states.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Ghana's peacekeeping missions have played a pivotal role in strengthening its international relations, positioning the country as a proactive contributor to global peace and security. Through active deployment of troops and leadership roles in United Nations missions, Ghana has enhanced its diplomatic recognition and cultivated strong bilateral relationships with key global powers. These engagements have facilitated increased foreign aid, boosted bilateral trade, and amplified Ghana's soft power on the international stage. Moreover, its peacekeeping contributions have reinforced its identity as a regional leader in Africa and a proponent of multilateral cooperation. While significant progress has been made, addressing conceptual and geographical research gaps can provide deeper insights into how these diplomatic gains translate into sustainable developmental outcomes, ensuring that Ghana continues to leverage its peacekeeping efforts for national and regional advancement.

Recommendations

Theory

Ghana's active role in peacekeeping missions can be used to refine theories like realism, liberalism, and constructivism by emphasizing how smaller states leverage multilateral engagements to assert global influence and foster regional stability. The unique use of peacekeeping missions by Ghana provides an empirical basis to expand the concept of soft power, focusing on how military diplomacy translates into economic and diplomatic gains. Analyzing the interplay between foreign aid inflows and peacekeeping contributions could offer new perspectives on dependency dynamics, highlighting reciprocal benefits rather than unidirectional dependence.

Practice

Ghana should invest in specialized training for peacekeepers, focusing on leadership, cultural sensitivity, and conflict resolution, to sustain its credibility and effectiveness in missions. The

government should strategically utilize the goodwill and partnerships earned through peacekeeping to attract foreign investments and technological transfers, enhancing infrastructure, healthcare, and education. By sharing best practices with other African nations, Ghana can position itself as a leader in enhancing the operational efficiency of African Union peacekeeping missions.

Policy

Ghana should institutionalize the integration of peacekeeping missions into its foreign policy framework to ensure these engagements directly contribute to bilateral trade negotiations and economic agreements. Establishing a robust system to assess the impacts of peacekeeping on diplomatic and economic outcomes can help refine strategies and maximize benefits. Ghana can use its peacekeeping achievements to push for greater representation in decision-making bodies of international organizations like the United Nations.

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