Proficiencies in business diplomacy: A comprehensive literature review

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Abstract: Business diplomacy enables organizations to effectively influence international entities, navigate geopolitical and economic challenges, and engage in negotiations with diverse corporate and non-business stakeholders. Despite the emerging nature of business diplomacy and its significant implications for enterprises and international relations, there has been limited research focused on the business diplomacy competencies of tourism managers in Kenya. The research employed a meta-analysis of studies on business diplomacy competencies, conducted through an extensive literature review. The study sample comprised 26 research outcomes closely associated with business diplomacy and the tourism sector. The focus was on categorizing the research themes, identifying the locations of the studies, and examining the methodologies employed. The investigation yielded three primary findings. Previous studies were conducted outside of Africa and did not concentrate on tourism. The majority of studies employed desk research methodologies, including questionnaires, case studies, interpretive exploratory techniques, and literature reviews. The limited number of survey research studies accompanied by interview guides restricts managers' ability to innovate in business diplomacy and hinders the acquisition of new empirical data necessary for enhancing the existing literature. The report concludes by identifying several areas that may necessitate further research to develop a competency model aimed at enhancing the business diplomacy competency of managers, particularly in the Kenyan tourism industry.

Keywords: Business diplomacy competences, Business diplomacy, Diplomacy, Kenyan tourism industry, Managerial business diplomacy competences.

1. Introduction

The intricacies of international relations are increasingly woven into the business landscape due to heightened intercontinental connections and the forces of globalizations. Organizations are consistently broadening their international presence and facing diverse local requirements and challenges [1, 2]. They are required to navigate a global market economy that is largely unregulated and filled with political and financial challenges [3]. Furthermore, due to their less developed institutions and distinct cultural factors, entering the markets of developing nations may prove to be relatively expensive for them. Muldoon [3] asserts that economic sectors can sustain their status as global actors only if they successfully develop their own representational systems to manage complex interactions with governments, multilateral organizations, and international social movements.

Employing competencies that cultivate lasting relationships with stakeholders, such as government bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), serves as a strategy to enhance economic vitality and drive corporate success Saner and Yiu [2] and Muldoon [3]. Schuler, et al. [4] indicate that businesses that capitalize on these opportunities can achieve a competitive advantage. Goerzen [5] network perspective suggests that businesses can enhance their competitive position by establishing unique connections with other global network participants. These recommendations are consistent with the principles of international business diplomacy, necessitating that companies dedicate themselves to fostering lasting relationships with a diverse array of stakeholders.

Establishing diplomatic relations can be a costly and time-intensive endeavor, making it essential for businesses to assess the potential value of their investments. The existing and expected business aptitude competencies of managers responsible for overseeing the operations of these organizations, particularly within the tourism sector for enhanced business performance, have not been comprehensively explored in the literature. A limited number of adequate studies have been conducted in the field of corporate diplomacy, as indicated by a review of relevant literature. Most of the current literature on diplomacy, as noted by Batora [6] primarily examines various aspects of diplomacy, including the negotiation process, diplomatic functions, culture, customs, and history, while insufficiently addressing the business diplomacy skills required by managers in the tourism industry.

This study posits that corporate diplomacy remains in its early stages and emphasizes the need for additional research to analyze and consolidate the existing body of knowledge in this area. The objective of this paper is to provide a comprehensive review of the latest research on corporate diplomacy and related competencies. This was achieved through the implementation of a systematic literature review strategy, wherein all available studies were meticulously examined and classified based on their relevance to the field of study, the methodologies employed, and the countries in which they were conducted.

2. Literature

2.1. Overview of Kenyan Tourism Industry

Kenya is one of the world's most popular tourist destinations because of its natural charms, rich historical and archeological sites, enhanced touristic infrastructure, and its heritage of hospitality. Kenya's economic growth in recent decades has been mostly fueled by the tourism sector, which has improved the nation's balance of payments, increased GDP, and decreased unemployment. After tea and horticulture, tourism is Kenya's third-largest source of foreign exchange earnings. It also employs a significant number of people, making up roughly 12% of all wage employment and 13.7% of the country's GDP [7]. The impact of Covid-19 cannot be overstated, as the decline in the number of tourist arrivals is glaring. At the time, the main barrier was the limited tourist attractions and lodging options, both on the shore and inland in animal parks and reserves.
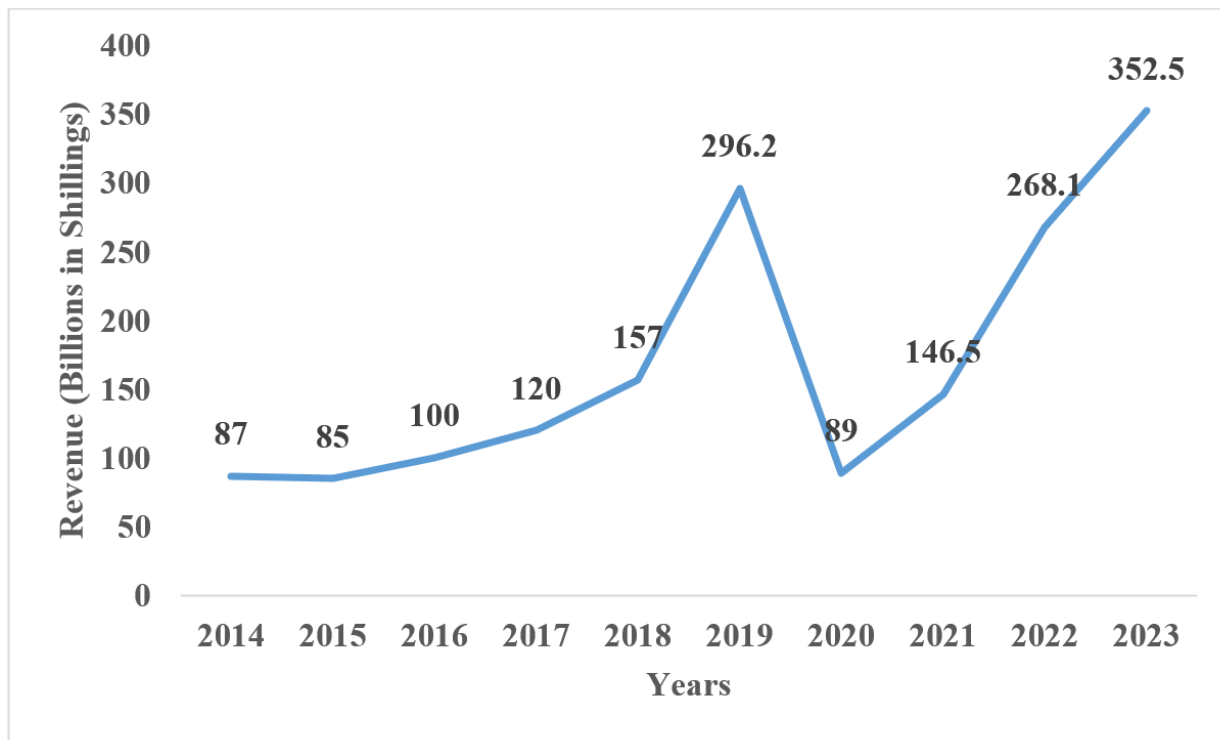
Figure 1.
Annual Tourism Sector Performance Report 2014-2023.
Source: Cowling [8].

According to Cowling [8] in 2023, revenue generated from international arrivals in Kenya reached 352.5 billion Kenyan shillings (KSh), approximately 2.7 billion U.S. dollars. This indicated an increase of approximately 32 percent compared to the prior year. In 2020, there was a significant decline in the number of international visitor arrivals in Kenya, resulting in a decrease in the sector's revenue to 89 billion KSh (686 million U.S. dollars). The decline disrupted a positive trend that had been established since 2015. Since that year, the nation's tourism sector has experienced a consistent increase in annual revenue, following a period of decline attributed to a rise in violent terrorist incidents in 2012.

The tourism industry experienced significant impacts globally due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In Kenya, the sector experienced a contraction, resulting in its contribution to the nation's GDP being approximately halved in 2020 compared to 2019. By the end of 2021, signs of recovery within the tourism industry were already evident. In December of that year, the monthly arrivals at both Jomo Kenyatta and Moi International Airports were approximately 70 percent of the figures recorded in December 2019. Furthermore, as of March 2022, the bed occupancy rate in Kenyan hotels reached 57 percent, compared to 23 percent in March 2021 [8].

Kenya is widely recognized for its abundant natural beauty and diverse wildlife. The nation boasts Mount Kenya, the second-highest peak on the African continent, and is home to seven UNESCO World Heritage sites, including the Lake Turkana national parks and Lamu Old Town. It is evident that travel and tourism significantly contribute to the Kenyan economy. In spite of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the industry continued to serve as a significant source of employment. In 2020, tourism accounted for approximately 6.4 percent of total employment in Kenya [8].

The tourism sector in Kenya is a vital part of the country's economy, but it has faced difficulties recently because of unfavorable events like the Covid-19 Pandemic, terrorist threats (such as the attacks in Nairobi in 2013), the ongoing drought, and other issues. These factors have combined with a lack of

competition in the supply of tourism products with other African regions to result in decreased levels of demand for travel. The result of considerable stakeholder interaction and participation is this National Tourism Strategy. Additionally, it satisfies Section 3 of the Tourism Act of 2011. The main goals of the strategy are to solve the domestic problems facing Kenya's tourism industry and direct industry participants toward sustainable tourism [7].

According to Kabii, et al. [9] there has been a notion that graduates from different training institutions do not meet the industry expectation in Kenya. The same feelings have been documented by other scholars such as De Villiers [10] and Huang, et al. [11] who have suggested that there is a need for the continuous expansion of training in the field of hospitality and tourism industry that meets the ever-changing consumer desires. Sisson and Adams [12] opined that educators should run away from teaching the traditional old curriculum and include modern customer and demand-driven curriculum that meets the industry expectation. Doe [13] suggested that training should have more emphasis on modern courses such as meetings, events, conventions, festivals, recreation, gaming, cruise management and business diplomacy among others. Such courses would meet the demands of modern customers and improve business performance.

2.2. Business Diplomacy

Although there is currently no universally accepted definition of business diplomacy, Saner and Yiu [2] define it as an activity that deals with managing interfaces between a multinational corporation and its numerous non-business counterparts. In order to establish and maintain legitimacy (protect corporate image and reputation) in a foreign business environment, business diplomacy entails top executives or their representatives building and maintaining positive relationships with foreign government representatives and nongovernmental stakeholders, both economic and noneconomic Ruël and Wolters [14]. Small [15] asserts that the short-term alignment of the company's financial interests with the long-term national goals of the home government is what sets business diplomacy apart from other similar concepts like public affairs, public relations, and lobbying.

Furthermore, the primary feature that sets corporate diplomacy apart from other ideas, according to Ruël and Wolters [14] is its emphasis on forging long-term, constructive relationships with foreign governments and non-governmental organizations, as well as establishing legitimacy and a license to operate as a goal. According to Saner, et al. [16] managing multiple stakeholders both domestically and internationally necessitates that global organizations develop their business diplomacy skills. They cite three reasons why business diplomacy is important: securing foreign assets; emerging markets, security concerns, and power politics; and growing public scrutiny and the drive for accountability.

Muldoon [3] contends that companies must engage with governments and international governmental and non-governmental organizations on a wide variety of topics and compete in a global market that is mostly unregulated. Global corporations must create their own diplomatic representational apparatus to handle intricate relationships with governments, multilateral organizations, and international social movements in order to survive in the current global context. Because researchers and practitioners have defined corporate diplomacy and determined its main research objectives, the subject is expanding, claims [17].

2.3. Competency

Floh [18] defines job competency as a set of activities along with a collection of associated knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are linked to performance. Various scholars have categorized these competencies into hard skills and soft skills. Hard competencies encompass a range of technical skills, whereas soft competencies focus on personal behavioural attributes, values, communication skills, leadership, and interpersonal and teamwork abilities [19, 20]. The acquisition of both categories of skills is crucial for college graduates. Connolly and McGing [21] proposed that the curriculum and courses in tourism and hospitality training should encompass both practical skills and people management skills, which are often overlooked. The observation indicates that this combination has the

potential to enhance the employability of graduates and equip them to address the diverse needs of the hospitality and tourism sector.

Guthrie [22] suggested that a proper balance between personal and job competencies is essential, considering that these competencies can often be interrelated and that employers frequently seek employees capable of multi-tasking. The globalization of the hospitality market, advancements in technology and the presence of cultural diversity have significantly influenced consumer needs, which may subsequently affect the curriculum content provided by educators [23]. The tourism sector necessitates particular management competencies that industry recruiters regard as essential for achieving success within the field. Wood [24] indicates that leadership is regarded as the most essential skill for tourism and hospitality students, with employee relations following closely, and problem resolution ranked third.

Petrova and Mason [25] indicate that industries possess varying viewpoints and occasionally struggle to comprehend one another's perceptions. Research conducted by Kang, et al. [26] and Petrova and Mason [25] has raised concerns regarding the preparedness of students for employment in the tourism and hospitality sectors, highlighting shortcomings in the education provided by educators in this field. A similar situation has been observed in Kenya where the content delivered by educators in the classroom often fails to align with current industry trends, which can hinder employment opportunities for graduates in hospitality and tourism [27, 28].

The tourism industry is highly dynamic, with the expectations of industry operators evolving alongside those of consumers as they strive to meet shifting consumer demands [29, 30]. All stakeholders in the tourism industry recognize the shifts in consumer behaviours, highlighting the necessity for educators to stay informed about these dynamics in order to meet visitors' expectations. This expansion necessitates that educators and industry demonstrate a commitment to identifying and concentrating on emerging areas and consumer trends. Whitelaw, et al. [23] indicate that the globalization of the market, advancements in technology and increasing cultural diversity will persist in influencing visitors' needs. It is essential for graduates to be adequately prepared for these evolving dynamics.

There is a significant transformation in response to global advancements in technology. Jamali, et al. [31] posited that the future of tourism hinges on the integration of technology in the collection and application of Big Data, the adaptation and utilization of the Internet of Things (IoT), which encompasses the extension of internet connectivity to everyday objects, devices, and appliances, as well as the implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Recognition technology represents a significant emerging trend, utilizing visitors' biometrics for authentication purposes [32]. For instance, Marriott hotels in China, fingerprint and facial recognition technology is utilized for the check-in and check-out processes, as well as for unlocking rooms [33].

Innovative technology is currently being implemented in the tourism and hospitality sector. Currently, there are smart devices like internet-enabled thermostats that automatically adjust room temperatures during check-in and checkout times, responding to temperature fluctuations caused by sunlight or open windows. The identical model is being employed for lighting purposes, enhancing energy efficiency, and minimizing light intensity during daylight hours. Graduates are now required to be equipped to adjust to the emerging trends within the industry. The future of the tourism industry will be shaped by technological innovation that prioritizes customer expectations, needs, and desires. As noted by Ghazali [34] the integration of artificial intelligence and robotic employees may soon lead to the replacement of certain jobs within the sector, exemplified by the Henn Na Hotel in Japan [9]. The implementation of robotics services will ultimately reduce expenses, leading to lower labour costs and overall expenditures in the tourism industry.

Kabii, et al. [9] emphasize that new graduates need to be aware of this and ready to compete for the same positions alongside these robots. Training institutions must conduct research, foster innovation, and prepare graduates with the necessary skills and competencies to thrive in the industry, keeping future demands in perspective. It is essential to recognize that the responsibility of assessing training

needs should involve not only the educators but also the industry stakeholders. To address the skills gap, certain tourism establishments have implemented in-house programs designed to equip recruits with knowledge of organizational culture, objectives, expectations, and diplomacy.

It is imperative for educators in the hospitality and tourism sector to consistently explore and pinpoint the critical knowledge, skills, competencies, and attitudes required by consumers. This can be accomplished through research that identifies new training needs and trends, addressing the evolving requirements and capturing emerging trends in the industry to enhance business performance.

2.4. Business Diplomacy Competency Model

As reflected by Muldoon [3] 'the new global challenges facing international businesses are matters of diplomacy'. Diplomats and authors posit the importance of diplomacy to business given that diplomats are well versed with a variety of competence compatible with businesses and managers [3, 16]. So far, there is limited practical research. There is evidence that the studies conducted so far on the topic is largely theoretical [3, 15, 16, 35]. The importance of developing Competency Models and establishing desirable skills has long been recognized by the Kenyan Hospitality industry. However, numerous businesses are still plagued by poor performance due to lack of Business Diplomacy management skills and the non-existence competency model that would be useful in propelling the hospitality industry to higher levels of performance.

3. Methodology

A systematic literature review was used as the method for this study. The approach is primarily aimed at providing a comprehensive summary of current literature that is relevant to the research topic, business diplomacy competency. In general, the first phase of a systematic review involves searching for the literature for relevant papers in all relevant academic databases such as Web of Science and Scopus or general search engines such as Google/Google Scholar [36]. In addition, given the embryonic state of a research field such as business diplomacy competency of managers in the Kenyan tourism industry, manual searches for individual papers, articles, reports, websites and books is important to ensure that no key works are missed in the study [37]. The methodology adopted in this paper is illustrated in the diagram below:
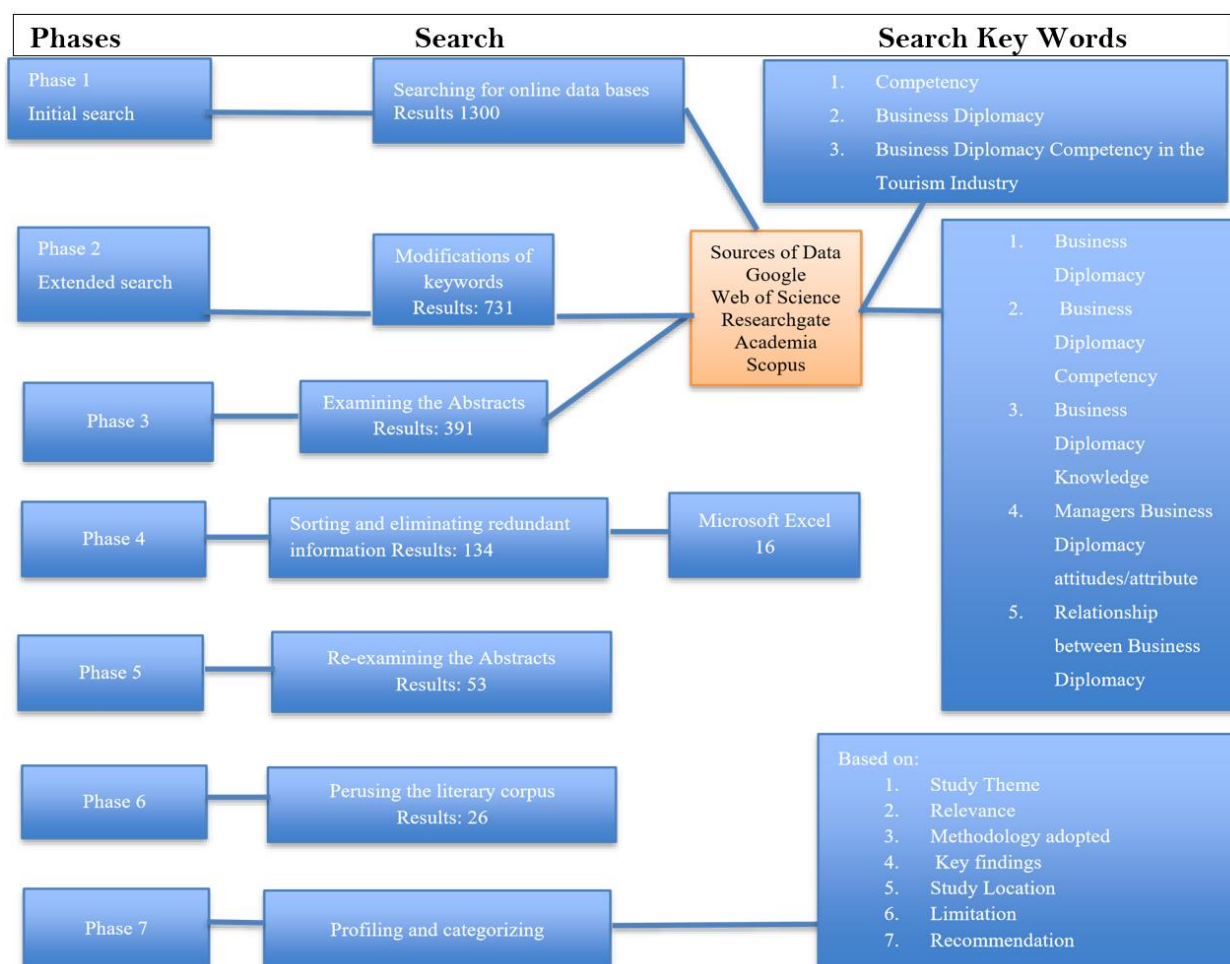
Figure 1.
Schematic Presentation of the Research Methodology.

Considering the information presented in Figure 1, the research methodology, grounded in a systematic literature review, can be articulated as follows: Phase 1 (Initial search): Approximately 1300 results were identified utilizing three key terms: competency, business diplomacy and business diplomacy competency in the tourism industry. Phase 2 (Modification of the key terms): Following the initial screening, it was determined that only 731 of the papers identified in phase 1 were pertinent to the study, as they fell within the defined scope or context. A more targeted search was conducted utilizing specific combinations of keywords as illustrated in figure 1 above. Phase 3 (examining the abstracts): The initial 731 results were refined to 391 through a thorough analysis of the documents' abstracts. Only pertinent studies were taken into account. Phase 4 involved the utilizations of Microsoft Excel for sorting and eliminating redundancies. The outcomes from this phase totaled 134. Phase 5 (Re-examining the abstracts): Following this exercise, 53 sources were identified as pertinent to the study. Phase 6 (Perusing the literature corpus): During this phase, the primary texts from the 53 sources were examined, resulting in the identification of 26 sources that were deemed relevant to the research topic. Phase 7 (Profiling and Categorizing): A profiling table was developed to summarize the conclusions drawn from the 26 sources.

4. Results

The findings indicate that only 26 resources were considered relevant and valuable to the topic of business diplomacy competencies, as demonstrated in the preceding section. The studies are organized into categories based on the methodology employed, the thematic focus of the research, and the geographical context of the investigation, all of which illustrate the interrelationships among the study variables. Below is a comprehensive list of publication categories.
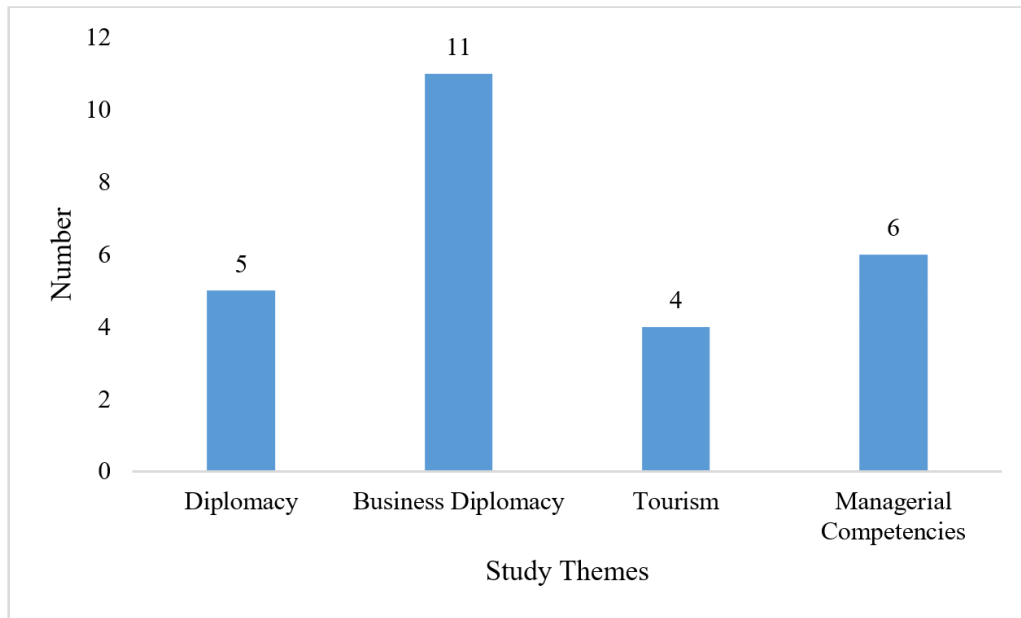

Figure 2.
Categorization of existing related studies.

The findings presented in Figure 2 reveal that five out of the twenty-six resources are allocated to the conceptualization of diplomacy. Eleven publications have explored business diplomacy as a strategy for managing and resolving conflicts, as well as fostering connections to enhance corporate performance across local, national, regional, and international levels. Four of the studies did not specifically focus on business diplomacy competency; rather, they offered an overview of the tourism industry, emphasizing its performance and contribution to the national GDP. Ultimately, six of the studies focused on managerial competencies. Figure 2 below illustrates the distribution of countries or regions in which the studies were conducted.
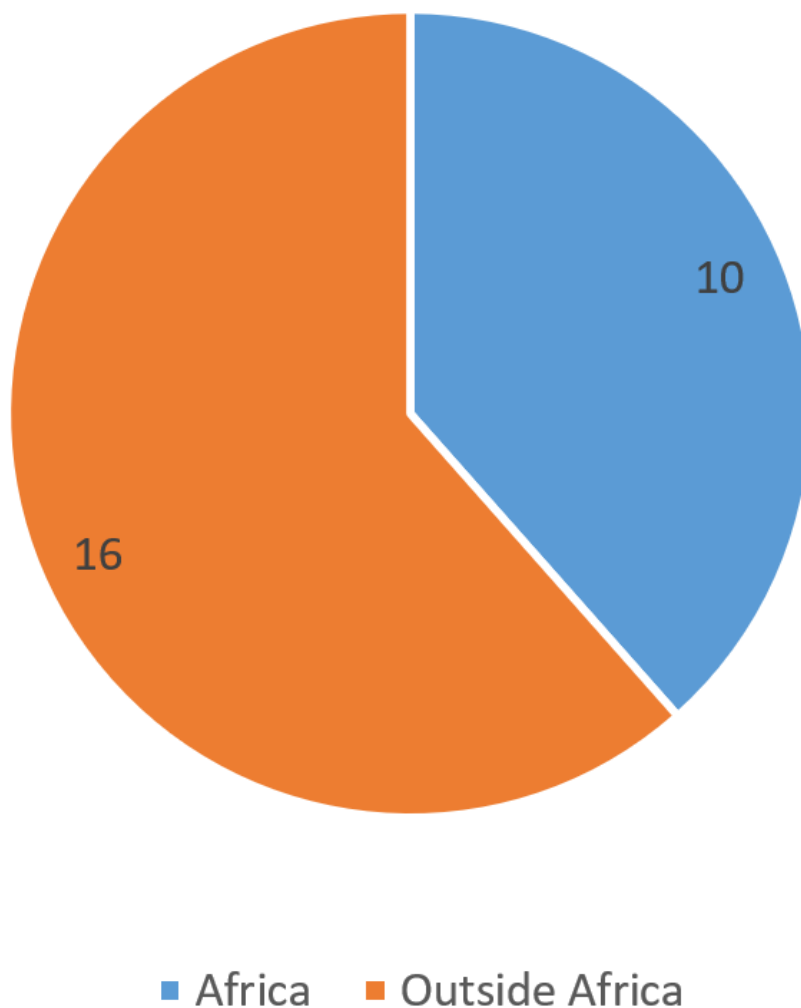
Figure 3.
Locations where studies were conducted.

According to Figure 3, only nine studies were conducted in Africa, including those from Kenya, Niger, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda and Egypt. The majority of the seventeen studies originated from locations beyond Africa, including New Zealand, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, and Belgium. Figure 3 presented below illustrates the methodology employed in the studies.
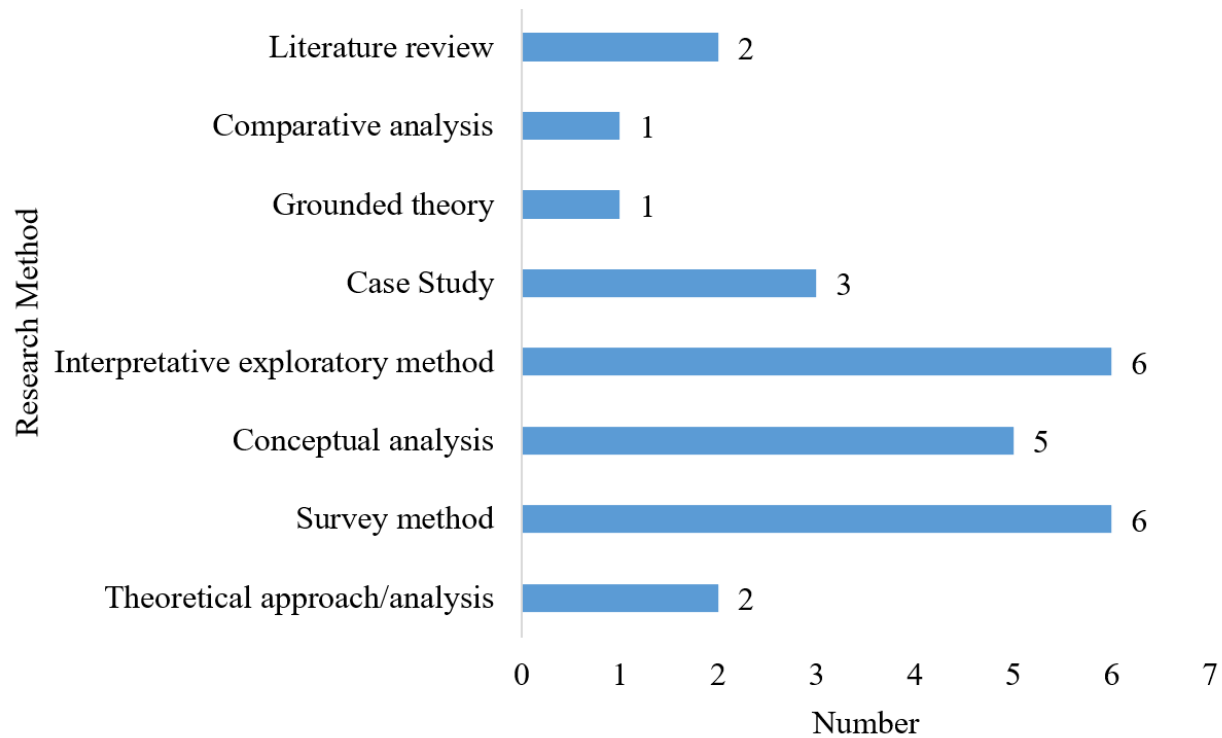
Figure 4.
Methodology.

Figure 4 illustrates that of the twenty-five studies reviewed, three employed a case study research approach, five utilized a survey method that integrated both quantitative (observation and questionnaires) and qualitative (interview) techniques. Six scholars adopted an interpretative exploratory study that offered a narrative interpretation of specific theories; only two authors employed a literature review method similar to a theoretical approach and analysis, while two scholars utilized comparative analysis and grounded theory, respectively. Among the systematic reviews, approximately five studies integrated literature into their methodology, thereby enhancing and substantiating concepts through previously published research documents. The primary results of each study are outlined in the profiling table below.

Table 1.
Profiling table.

S/N	Author (Year)	Relevance	Methodology Adopted	Key Findings
1	Igarabide [38]	Examines international political economy theories and business diplomacy	Theoretical analysis	Business diplomacy is a nascent discipline with a worldwide economic influence
2	Mogensen [39]	Studies business diplomacy changes post COVID-19	Conceptual analysis	Organizations must adapt their diplomatic strategies to navigate the competitive landscape in the post-pandemic era
3	Wanjala [7]	COVID-19 impact on Kenya's tourism and trade	Comparative analysis	Emphasizes the economic implications and suggests policy measures
4	Falcão, et al. [40]	Role of business diplomacy in stakeholder management	Case study	Business diplomacy enhances relationships and reduces conflicts
5	Westermann-Behaylo, et al. [41]	Examines business diplomacy for conflict resolution	Literature review	Business diplomacy promotes advantages for both the public and private sectors while facilitating peaceful conflict resolution.
6	Alammar [42]	Examines business diplomacy in practice	Grounded theory	Provide insight on the development of strategies for enhancing business diplomacy and strengthening international relationships and trade
7	Pantoja [43]	Investigates vested interests and business diplomacy	Case study	Illuminates the complexities of business diplomacy within the framework of emerging technologies
8	Sidibe [44]	Examines business diplomacy in the context of diplomacy and international negotiations	Case study	Highlight the tactics used by parties to fulfill their goals in the realm of business diplomacy and international negotiations
9	Xuclā Pomés [45]	Business diplomacy	Interpretative exploratory method	Business diplomacy is a strategic instrument for multinational corporations
	Nwafor and Chima [46]	Examines effectiveness of leadership and diplomacy in promoting good governance and sustainable economic development	Survey method	Underline various leadership styles, diplomatic initiatives, economic strategies, and suggested actions
10	Bolewski [47]	Examines corporate diplomacy as global management	Interpretative exploratory method	Emphasize the importance of strategic communication, negotiation, and problem-solving as essential methodologies in the realm of business diplomacy
11	Nobre [48]	Examines the historical development and challenges of business diplomacy within a global context	Theoretical approach	Highlight the progression of business diplomacy and the current obstacles
12	Ciravegna, et al. [49]	Examines the connection between corporate diplomacy and the sustainability of family-owned enterprises.	Interpretative exploratory method	Business diplomacy develops business environments and strengthens ties with key stakeholders.
13	Salvi [50]	Analyzed corporate diplomacy as a tactic for stakeholder management within the framework of sustainable company internationalization	Interpretative-exploratory method	Details techniques for organizations to adeptly manage stakeholder interactions, so mitigating disputes, bolstering their reputation, and raising overall performance
14	Sidibé and Saner [51]	Analyses business diplomacy in developing markets	Interpretative exploratory method	Stresses the necessity for firms to customize their tactics to local circumstances and to engage with governmental agencies diplomatically to attain success in these markets

15	Stümke and Ruël [52]	Examines the role of business diplomacy in multinational firms operating in challenging environments	Survey method	Improves the understanding of the intersection between business and diplomacy, particularly in contexts marked by conflict and development
16	Bayne and Stephen Woolcock [53]	Analyses the emerging landscape of economic diplomacy: Decision-making and negotiation in global economic relations	Conceptual analysis	The components of business diplomacy are essential for understanding the importance of economic diplomacy in international relations
17	Tubey, et al. [54]	Investigates the relationship between environmental conservation and community-based tourism	Survey method	Underscores the essential value of community involvement and environmental responsibility in safeguarding natural resources and cultural heritage.
18	Simonneau and Bernard [55]	Analyze the concept of business diplomacy in relation to economic, intellectual, and international relations	Conceptual analysis	Offer valuable insights into the intricacies of business diplomacy and its influence on global interactions and business performance
19	Ashipala [56]	Explores international diplomacy and big business	Interpretative exploratory method	Provide insight on the consequences of government entities, international corporations, and local stakeholders engaged within economic and diplomatic framework
20	Hassan, et al. [57]	Analyses the economic ramifications of the tourist industry in Kenya, providing significant insights into its expansion, obstacles, and contributions to national progress	Conceptual analysis	Provided substantial insights for policymakers, corporations, and stakeholders in tourism in order to promote sustainable economic growth
21	Çizel, et al. [58]	Identify the managerial competency prerequisites in the tourist sector.	Survey method	Provided a thorough comprehension of the fundamental skills and information required for proficient management in the tourist sector, aimed at tourism managers and policymakers
22	Othman, et al. [59]	Analyses the essential managerial competences required for graduates in tourism and hospitality	Survey method	Highlights the importance of certain skills and knowledge necessary for graduates to succeed in the tourism sector
23	Zimik and Barman [60]	Examines the evolving competencies and expertise requisite for effective tourist management in the 21st century	Conceptual analysis	Provides insightful viewpoints for professionals, educators, and politicians to refine their tactics in tourist management
24	Saner, et al. [16]	analyses the importance of business diplomacy management as a crucial competency for global organizations	Conceptual Analysis	By mastering business diplomacy, organizations may seize new possibilities, mitigate risks, and achieve their strategic objectives in an increasingly linked world
25	Alammar and Pauleen [61]	Analyses the concept of business diplomacy within the context of global business dynamics	Survey method	Provided significant insights for company executives and managers seeking to augment their global participation to better business performance
26	Mungai, et al. [62]	Examines the disparities between tourism education and the tourism industry	Literature review	Point to the importance of vocational and liberal approaches in tourism teachings, using a systematic approach. This study's ideologies help the tourism curriculum developers, and tourism stakeholders harmonize their persuasions for satisfaction on both ends.

5. Discussion of Results

The current literature review indicates that business diplomacy has undergone substantial changes over the past few decades. The observed changes can primarily be linked to the growth in research and development aimed at enhancing diplomacy to achieve greater business success, alongside the increasing interest among professionals. A systematic literature review methodology was employed to attain the results of this study. Twenty-six publications were examined with a focus on their relevance, the countries in which the studies were conducted, and the methodologies employed in these investigations. A profiling table was developed to address the reasons. The findings indicate that most of the research on business diplomacy competency has taken place in regions beyond Africa, particularly in Kenya. There is a notable scarcity of studies addressing this subject within Africa and specifically in Kenya.

The limited studies undertaken primarily concentrate on conceptualizing business diplomacy in contexts that do not address the current and desired competencies of managers within the tourism sector. Rather, they emphasize the importance of business diplomacy and the necessity for its adoption to enhance diplomatic business performance. This study has recognized this as a deficiency in both content and location. The methodology employed by most of the studies relied on qualitative methods, utilizing case studies, interviews, and literature reviews for the purpose of generalization. Most of the studies reviewed utilized qualitative methods rather than quantitative approaches like surveys. This indicates a preference among researchers in the field of business diplomacy for qualitative methodologies, as supported by grounded theory, which frequently results in the development of new theoretical models. The profiling table presented numerous findings. The document presented a concise overview of each study, highlighting its relevance, identifying areas of limitation, and offering recommendations for future research endeavours. Several of the studies relied on a case study approach, which is inherently restricted to a small population.

A significant number of the studies relied on literature reviews, which were deficient in empirical evidence to substantiate the theory. The findings suggest that recommendations for future studies can be categorized into four primary areas. The objective is to enhance the research on business diplomacy competency through empirical evidence, utilizing multiple case studies to attain generalizable outcomes. The study aims to explore various dimensions of business diplomacy competency, including skills, knowledge, and attitudes, while also underpinning the findings with relevant theories or models, such as core competency theory. For example, the necessity for empirical evidence, as outlined by Hassan, et al. [57] can be further developed by substantiating theories with evidence through methods such as interviewing diplomats, conducting surveys, and analyzing relevant case studies. Furthermore, Stümke and Ruël [52]; Bayne and Stephen Woolcock [53] and Tubey, et al. [54] provide extensive discussions and recommendations that can be adapted to various contexts (i.e., different countries) and substantiated with empirical data obtained from interviews and/or surveys.

Furthermore, while Zimik and Barman [60] presents a comprehensive study, it could be further enriched by conducting interviews with managers in the tourism sector. This would allow for an exploration of the current and desired business diplomacy competencies, ultimately leading to the development of a new model that offers valuable insights for managers seeking to enhance business performance through effective business diplomacy. Ciravegna, et al. [49] indicate that Salvi [50] has explored the connection between corporate diplomacy and the sustainability of family-owned enterprises in their research. Corporate diplomacy serves as a stakeholder management strategy for sustainable business internationalization. The argument is supported by the observation that, despite the absence of a comprehensive theory or study identifying the key factors influencing diplomats' adoption of business diplomacy, as well as the factors affecting its implementation across various companies and countries, similar methodologies can be applied across different sectors of the economy in diverse regions worldwide.

This is particularly relevant given that Batora [6] focused solely on two European countries and one North American country. As previously indicated, numerous studies Igarabide [38]; Mogensen [39]; Wanjala [7]; Falcão, et al. [40]; Alammar [42]; Sidibe [44]; Xuclā Pomés [45]; Bolewski [47];

Nobre [48]; Ciravegna, et al. [49]; Ashipala [56] and Çizel, et al. [58] focused on a single case study, with the exception of Lloyd and Chima [63] and Sidibé and Saner [51] who examined multiple cases across countries with varying diplomatic and economic frameworks. Due to the scarcity of literature specifically focused on business diplomacy competency for managers within the tourism sector, the findings may not be relevant on a wider scale. Consequently, these studies could be improved by examining additional cases and/or countries to determine the relevance of business diplomacy in various sectors of the economy and to illustrate the connection between business diplomacy and business performance, serving as a crucial resource for managers in the tourism industry. The study aims to analyze the current and desired business diplomacy competencies for managers within the Kenyan tourism industry, while also developing a competency model to enhance business performance for these managers.

Transparency:
The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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