

Tribhuvan University Journal
Vol. 40, No. 1: 77-94, June 2025
Research Directorate, Tribhuvan University (TU),
Kathmandu, Nepal
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/tuj.v40i1.80098>



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons CC BY-NC License.
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

EDUCATION DIPLOMACY: KEY SOFT POWER IN NEPAL-AUSTRALIA RELATIONS

Binod Khanda Timilsana

*Central Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, TU, Kathmandu
Corresponding author: binod.757738@dird.tu.edu.np*

Received date: 25 Aug. 2024 – Accepted date: 10 Feb. 2025

ABSTRACT

Many of the prospective students of Nepal in their pursuit of higher education choose colleges and universities in rich industrialized countries in Europe and North America. In recent decades, students equally prefer Australia and New Zealand. By analyzing the network environment of educational exchange and student migration, this study seeks to shed light on the dynamics and intricacies of diplomatic engagement in Nepal-Australia relations. In fact, education diplomacy is a strategic tool that utilizes educational exchanges, collaborations, and partnerships to foster bilateral relations. It has emerged as a crucial component of soft power in Nepal-Australia relations as its exerting influence to rank Nepal the third largest international student community in Australia. Using qualitative approach based on empirical secondary data, this paper answers the question of how education diplomacy of Nepal-Australia maintains, advances, and become successful to robust bilateral relations. In addition, aspects of Nepal's soft power resources, instruments, receptions and outcomes linked to education diplomacy are studied. For the understanding of the research findings the soft power theories and small states perspectives in bilateral relations with soft power superpower Australia and small power Nepal are used critically. Findings suggests that the education diplomacy remains as key instrument of soft power that leverage the scholar potentialities, population dividend, and thirst of quality education of small power like Nepal in bilateral relations with soft power superpowers like Australia. This paper explores the status of education diplomacy as soft power of Nepal in Nepal-Australia relations.

Keywords: soft power, education diplomacy, Nepal-Australia relations

INTRODUCTION

In the international politics, soft power is the ability to co-opt rather than coerce with means of persuasion and attraction (Nye, 2004). It helps preparing the preferences of others through appeal, attraction, openness, kindness and softness. This can be facilitating in practice by diplomacy as source of soft power. International education is viewed as a good public diplomacy tool that showcases a countries strength and spreads its values as an important soft power in international affairs (Nye, 2005; Li, 2023). Thus, education diplomacy is linked with soft power and deserves role in bilateral relation. Similarly, soft power is a key source of survival for disproportionate small states in a globalizing context in international relations (Chong, 2007). Soft power helps small states to enlarge their political economy potential, creates models of good governance and bridges for diplomatic mediation to address their problems in multilateral and bilateral fora (Stringer, 2013; Timilsana, 2024). So, mobilization of soft power under the framework of foreign policy objective and national interests is demanded and growing day by day. Such mobilization relies on capacity of formal and public diplomacy of country. As key means of public diplomacy, the education diplomacy has been creating positive circumstances in mobilization of soft power means of small state Nepal to robust bilateral relations with other powers. In this line, education diplomacy is accompanying as key soft power means and resource in bilateral relations of small power Nepal with soft power superpower Australia.

Nepal Australia diplomatic relation was established on 15 February, 1960 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA, n.d.). Australia opened its residential Embassy in Kathmandu at the level of Chargé d'Affaires in 1984 which was upgraded to the ambassadorial level in 1986. Nepal established its residential embassy in Canberra in March 2007 which was formally inaugurated in September 2007. The relationship between Australia and Nepal is built on a long-standing history of development cooperation and close people-to-people connections (Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT, n.d.).

Soft power was the foremost entity in this relation rather than hard power. Nepal is low ranked small soft power and Australia is a top ranked soft power superpower (Brand Finance, 2021; Brand Finance, 2022; Brand Finance, 2023; Brand Finance, 2024). However, Nepal Australia has a friendly diplomatic and bilateral relationship without notable differences. They both experienced six and half decades of diplomatic relations.

According to Diane Johnstone the pioneer residential Ambassador of Australia to Nepal, the formal relation was emergence to address mountaineering tourism, facilitate exchange of visits and cultural connections between Australia and Nepal (D. Johnstone, personal communication, June 5, 2023). After the experience of more than six decades, the present dynamism of diplomatic engagement between Nepal Australia has filled by multifaceted connections including high level exchange of visits, Bilateral Consultation Mechanism (BCM), development cooperation, education exchange, people-to-people connection, technology transfer and welfare of diaspora. Remarkably, education exchange and research collaboration has become an inevitably growing phenomenon as soft power in the contemporary international relation and diplomacy discourses vis-à-vis Nepal-Australia relations. As such education diplomacy becomes mandatory to robust Nepal-Australia bilateral and diplomatic relations.

The multifaceted engagement between Nepal-Australia has created opportunities. With the rapid growing number of Nepalese students and diaspora in Australia, education diplomacy has become a cornerstone of Nepal-Australia relations. Besides, education diplomacy is itself a soft power which fostering economic, cultural, and political values in addition to academic connections for mutual benefits. Kailash Raj Pokhrel, Ambassador of Nepal to Australia mentions that Government of Nepal and Government of Australia, both have supported educational diplomacy by fostering policies that enhance student mobility and facilitate academic cooperation (personal communication, June 5, 2023). He further elaborates that regular diplomatic dialogues in BCM and trade missions often include discussions on how to enhance educational ties, with a focus on improving access to quality education and facilitating research partnerships. In this regard the contemporary educational ties between Nepal and Australia have been focused on student exchanges, scholarships, academic partnerships, and government support for mutual benefits to both.

However, constructive efforts are needed to leverage the opportunities created by huge exchanges and to address the challenges for ensuring sustainable growth in this sector. Ghimire (2019) have mentioned there is a noticeable increase in the number of Nepali students studying abroad, especially in Australia, the US, and Japan, more of them have also fallen victim to frauds and dishonest due to lack of proper guidance and protection mechanism.

In this context, it is mandatory to analyzing the network environment of educational exchange and student migration on the dynamics and intricacies of diplomatic engagement in Nepal-Australia relations. So, key soft power instrument education diplomacy is a prominent strategic tool that justifies educational exchanges, collaborations, and partnerships to foster bilateral relations in light of welfare of diaspora and mutual interests of Nepal and Australia. So, the study has taken place in this form.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study is to explore the status of education diplomacy as soft power of Nepal in Nepal-Australia relations. Further it is to outline the suggestive measure for effective education diplomacy and prospective soft power strategies of Nepal and Australia to robust bilateral relations. To attain aforementioned objectives, the study has set following key research questions. What is the status of education diplomacy as soft power of Nepal in Nepal-Australia relations? Why and how education diplomacy of Nepal-Australia maintains, advances, and become successful to robust bilateral relations.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study provides a summary of the systemic discourse and qualitative research technique used in the analysis of secondary literature gathered from various sources. In the theoretical frameworks of soft power and education diplomacy, the rapidly increasing trends of student migration from Nepal to Australia have been analyzed on the basis of empirical secondary data. The researcher evaluates education diplomacy as a crucial soft power that is intertwined to gaining a comprehensive understanding of the diplomatic relations in light of the shifting dynamics and increasing trends of student exchanges, research, education collaboration, and education exchange between Nepal and Australia. It has also tried to discourse the multifaceted trends of education diplomacy as a crucial soft power in Nepal-Australia relations, given that Nepal is the third-largest source of overseas students for Australia. In sum, using qualitative method based on empirical secondary data, this paper examines education diplomacy as soft power in Nepal-Australia relations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Articulating Education Diplomacy as Soft Power

Education diplomacy is a form of soft power which refers to the use of educational exchanges, collaborations, and capacity-building

initiatives as a strategic tool to influence other countries and foster positive relations (Khan *et al.*, 2020). It is key soft power instrument of countries which promote global image, strengthen cultural ties, and builds mutual understanding to robust relations in individual and systemic level of international relations.

Scholars have used education diplomacy as soft power resource in international relations. “A country’s soft power rests on its resources of culture, values, and policies” (Nye, 2008, p. 94). Nye mentions literature, art and education as high culture and are noticeable soft power resources in international relations. In the similar vein, the education diplomacy serves as a cornerstone of soft power in bilateral relations by fostering mutual trust, building sustainable and trusted partnership, maintaining academic networks, and enhancing national image of host country in the destination country through non-coercive culturally resonant means.

Ohnesorge (2020) has given taxonomy of soft power which includes resources; culture, values, policies and personalities, instruments; public and personal diplomacy, receptions; attractions, apathy and repulsion, and outcomes; compliance, neutrality and opposition as measuring indicators. In which he highlighted education and educational exchange as key component of public diplomacy and mentions education as prominent instrument of soft power. Indeed, education diplomacy amplifies soft power of countries by building people-to-people connections through attraction and persuasion through legitimate networks for addressing common challenges and fulfilling shared interest.

Wojciuk *et al.* (2015) founds education as a source and tool of soft power amid the growing trends of internationalization of education and provides a theoretical conceptualization of educational soft power along with three mechanisms: education as a carrier of genuine values, as a resource possesses in countries, and as a tool in achieving certain foreign policy goals. Furthermore, they have explained these three mechanisms by showing how increasing internationalization brings more direct connections between education, international relations, and foreign policy. They found education diplomacy as prominent soft power in international relations and foreign policy.

The successful evidences of education systems practicing by super powers like the US, the UK, Australia, China and others in the achievement of foreign policy goals and national interests, the international education system have emerged as major contributors to soft power (Vaxevanidou,

2018). Accordingly, education diplomacy as an important area of public diplomacy which produce commercial value to promote a nation's foreign policy priorities and interests and to contribute to a country's economic development and investment. Education soft power help to transform positive experiences from student mobility, academic collaboration, joint research projects in addition to intellectual and social relationships at academic levels into exploring values, culture and ideas on the global stage in order to enforce a country's image and its vital interests.

The soft power superpowers like United States, United Kingdom and Australia have identified the provision of education opportunities as one of the effective instruments of soft power (Soomro *et al.*, 2018). After receiving scholarships, the students return home and take up senior roles where they put the skills they gained studying abroad has great influential role in bilateral relations. Indeed, skilled education diplomacy helps countries to make them educational hubs like the U.S., UK, Canada, and Australia, and attract skilled individuals from all over the world to contribute their economy and innovation ecosystem. Furthermore, this enhance the appeal and reputation of country and builds soft power to gather global talent for further development. Thus, education diplomacy bolsters the international reputation of country and promotes cultural and political values, create lasting diplomatic ties, and foster innovation and economic growth. Similarly, Khan *et al.* (2020) observed that small, middle or great power player in the contemporary international politics, educational exchanges and scholarships play a pivotal role in promoting soft image in addition to culture and history at systemic and individual level of international relations.

Similarly, Ohnesorge (2022) summarizes that the soft power is a relatively new phenomenon in international relations heavily dependent on resources like education and educational exchanges under public diplomacy, culture, foreign and domestic policies, reputation, innovations, engagement, preferences, community unity, and institutional support. Further, education diplomacy facilitates inter-cultural communication and flourishes cordial relationship among the bilateral and multilateral partners.

Education diplomacy facilitates education collaboration, student exchanges, research collaboration and cultural exchanges. When countries invite students from abroad to study in their institutions or send their own students to foreign universities, they build long-term connections that foster goodwill and basis to foster bilateral relations. In other words,

knowledge and education diplomacy assist governments in recognizing the potential of higher education and research institutions to address global concerns and quietly influence international relationships. It is a bridge for promoting peace, global security, and sustainable solutions to complex human problems by stringing common knowledge, skill and attitude under academic framework in the world. The growing trend of international education exchange and research collaboration demands the broader diplomatic framework. In the connection, students international out migration is common phenomena in contemporary Nepal.

In addition, student who are key welfare recipients of education diplomacy often become cultural ambassadors to promote understanding and image of the host country in home country and vis-a-vis to build image of home country in host country. Which is true in Nepal-Australia ties as well. Indeed, education diplomacy impact to enhance the soft power rank of country in international phenomenon.

Soft Power Ranking and Education Diplomacy

There are various research attempts in soft power ranking. McClory (2019) has ranked global 30 powers on the basis of the soft power measuring six sub-indices of soft power like enterprise, culture, digital, government, engagement, and education in which the weightage of education is about fifteen percentages. Similarly, the Brand Finance (2021, 2022, 2023, 2024) has been publishing Global Soft Power Index by evaluating the soft powers of countries based on; Familiarity, Reputation, Recommendations, Influence, Perception, Business and trade, Governance, International Relations, Culture and heritage, Media and communication, Education and Science, Sustainable future, People and values and COVID-19 responses. Those soft power index reports of Brand Finance were based on 75,000 interviews across the 102 countries with the sample size of 800 respondents in 2021, 100,000 views of stakeholders across the 120 nation brand countries in 2022, 110,000 responses gathered from people across more than 100 countries, surveying perceptions among general publics and experts of 121 nation brands in 2023, and 170,000 interview responses gathered from people and experts across more than 193 countries intending to include all United Nations countries in 2024. The ranking was made on various pillars of soft powers including education as a key indicator.

The global soft power ranking reports published by Brand Finance (2021, 2022, 2023, 2024) have described the status of Australia and Nepal. Accordingly, in soft power ranking published in 2021, Australia and Nepal

have secured the 10th and the 95th positions, respectively. Similarly, in the ranking of 2022, Australia and Nepal have reserved the 13th and 102nd positions, followed by the report published in the soft power ranking 2023, with Australia and Nepal in the 14th and 91st positions, respectively. At last, the soft power ranking report published in 2024 has found Australia in the 13th and Nepal in the 105th positions. The findings published in those reports were on the basis of research carried out by Brand Finance. It is worth noting that all reports had included education as a key soft power indicator.

It is evident from examining aforementioned perspectives that the articulating education diplomacy as soft power is justifiable. However, it is challenging to describe the current status and function of education diplomacy in connection to Nepal-Australian relations outside of official diplomatic missions and government websites, and it might be argued that education diplomacy activities are still in their infancy. Nonetheless, scholarly conversations and stakeholder debates can delve into some possible conclusions.

South Asia, Nepal and Australia

Soft power ranking status of South Asia is comparatively low with comparison to Australia. There are various indicators to fix the status in the ranking of soft powers. However, education status and academic standing with ranked higher education institution has great influence in the ranking. India has always been remaining in higher status among South Asian countries. Table 1 reveals the soft power ranking status of South Asian countries along with Australia in the consecutive years 2021 to 2024.

Table 1

Global Rank Status of Soft Powers of South Asia with Australia

S.N.	Name of the State	Rank 2021	Status 2022	Rank 2023	Status 2024
1.	Afghanistan	--	--	--	152
2.	Bangladesh	78	105	97	96
3.	Bhutan	--	--	--	123
4.	India	36	29	28	29
5.	Maldives	--	52	59	55
6.	Nepal	95	102	91	105
7.	Pakistan	63	83	84	81
8.	Sri-Lanka	70	73	115	98
9.	Australia	10	13	14	13

Source: Adopted from Brand Finance; 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024.

As per soft power ranking, the soft power superpower Australia hosts large numbers of Indian and Nepali students from South Asia. Mammen *et al.* (2022) found that the majority of international students including Indians choose Australia happily because of safety reason and tolerance towards multilateralism in Australia. Besides, there are top global ranked Universities such as University of Melbourne, Monash University, University of Sydney, Australian National University, University of Queensland, UNSW, and University of Western Australia for quality higher education opportunities (Times Higher Education, 2023).

Australia and India have signed an Education Agreement targeting to mutually recognize qualifications in both nations for the purpose of access to higher education on 2 march 2023 (Australia Government Department of Education, n.d.). However, there is lack of such agreement between Nepal and Australia to address the problems of steadily increasing Nepali students in Australia. The academic equivalence certification to Nepali students who graduated from Australia and vice-versa still have to follow long procedure. Education diplomacy and bilateral agreements are demanding to resolve the problem regarding academic equivalence among the stakeholders which need to consider from diplomatic mechanisms of both countries.

There is a long history of education collaboration between them particularly with a strong focus on policy dialogue, information sharing and creating partnerships under bilateral relations (Australian Government Department of Education, 2024). Globally, Nepal is the 10th largest student sending country and Australia is 3rd largest host for international students in the year 2021 (Chanakya, 2024; Guillerme, 2023). Moreover, as Nepali students are increasing year by year in Australia, Nepal has been ranked the third largest student sending country in Australia.

Education Diplomacy and Nepal-Australia Relations

Soft power occurs when one country gets other countries to want what it wants. Soft power getting others to want what you want with the resources such as cultural attraction, ideology, and international institutions are crucial in power dynamics and diplomatic relations. Because, soft power works in contrast with the hard or command power of ordering others to do what it wants (Nye, 1990). Additionally, the taxonomy of soft power includes resources (culture, values, policies and personalities), instruments (public and personal diplomacy), receptions, and outcomes as key indicators in diplomatic engagements and foreign policy objective

attainment (Ohnesorge, 2020). Indeed, Nepal and Australia gets counterpart to want what they want from each other on the basis of engagement of their soft power in the journey of their bilateral relations. Education diplomacy as representative of soft power has been playing crucial role by virtue in Nepal-Australia relations.

The role of education and academic exchange in building international relationships has been characterized by the term of soft power and higher education is an ideal vehicle for it (Peterson, 2014). Similarly, Gauttam *et al.* (2024) found that "the role of higher education is expanding from domestic to the international arena and has become an indispensable part of the foreign policy of states for conducting international relations" (p.17). The Fulbright Program sponsored by the US Department of State, the British Council constituted by the Government of the United Kingdom for scholarships and sponsorships in educational exchanges, the German Academic Exchange Service by the German Government, and Confucius Institutes by the People's Republic of China (PRC) are excellent examples of public diplomacies that are being furthered through higher education. As same example in particular, DFAT has been providing scholarships for Nepalese students, researchers and professionals to study in Australia through the Australia Awards initiative that reflects the Australian education diplomacy in Nepal (DFAT, n.d.(a)). As such, education diplomacy creates networks of alumni and institutions to advocate host country, explores the values, culture and innovations in either of the parties, promotes goodwill, and help to address shared interests.

In another context, Australian Government (2021) recognizes that the international education is a key contributor to the Australian economy and international recognition that planned to enhance quality targeting global competitiveness. In which Nepal is the third largest international student contributor to Australia for six years with the rapid increasing trend. Rapid increase trend in Nepalese student migration to Australia confirms Australia's status as a preferred destination for Nepalese students seeking quality education and migration. The influx of students not only improves the economy, but it also promotes people-to-people relationships.

Besides, there is track record of Australian University graduates in Nepal. Australian universities have strong alumni networks creating conducive circumstances in Nepal to maintain connections between graduates and Australian institutions. Alumni such as Australia Awards

Alumni Network Nepal of Australian institutions also hold influential positions in Nepal's government, private sector, and civil society, contributing to long-term educational and diplomatic ties (Center, 2017; Hsien & Edwards, 2023). In this context, key focus of diplomatic relations of Nepal with Australia are Nepali students, workers and youths residing in Australia and their welfare. Indeed, these student and Nepali diaspora are paramount Nepal's image builder in Australia for Nepal.

Jones *et al.* (2021) finds that the higher education institutions of Australia have two folded responsibilities to contribute to the global common good as actor of internationalization and to bare social responsibility developing the sustainable communities at home. As such the academic advancement in Australia equally important to global common and intertwined with Nepalese academic stakeholders in Australia. In this context, there should be network of eminent person groups of Nepali origin in Australia and vice-versa under education diplomacy framework in academic, economic, employment and research collaboration sectors in Australia and should have an institution to organize retained from Australia in Nepal to leverage from education diplomacy. However, the role of diplomacy as catalyst is always mandatory to escalate opportunities from bilateral relations.

In consequence, academic collaboration, student migration, and diasporic engagement are hugely connected to enhance a strong and trusted relationship in Nepal-Australia bilateral ties. The growing academic ties—in parallel to increasing public engagements—are moving Nepal closer to diplomatic relations with Australia; an ongoing increasing trend of student migration to Australia from Nepal that has impacted on the people-to-people connection as soft power well beyond the geographical remoteness (Baral *et al.*, 2024). It is primary concern that how and when the policy shift will occur to address the changing dynamics of exchanges, as bilateral relation and BCM would able to successfully prioritize mutual interests over welfare of the participants—students and institutions—of academic exchanges.

Rapidly increasing number of Nepali students in Australia has multifaceted consequences in education, socio-economic, cultural and political conditions of both countries. The concern of welfare of migrant students, pedagogical concern, research collaboration, scholarship, safety,

security, job opportunities etc. are the concerns of academic community demanded to address from education diplomacy initiatives.

Table 2

Top 15 Ranked International Students Studying in Australia

Nationality	No of Students (2005 to 2022)	No of Students (2023)	Total
China	660,587	153,921	814,508
India	371,707	124,829	496,536
Nepal	115,308	59,580	174,888
Korea, Republic of (South)	134,506	12,394	146,900
Brazil	115,796	22,788	138,584
United States of America	130,597	6,277	136,874
Malaysia	113,275	15,653	128,928
Thailand	92,453	24,224	116,677
Vietnam	85,611	30,858	116,469
Colombia	70,308	35,800	106,180
Japan	91,047	10,582	101,629
Indonesia	76,406	20,122	96,528
Philippines	46,345	32,696	79,041
Pakistan	48,050	23,322	71,372
Germany	57,388	4,031	61,419

Source: Australian Government, Department of Education (n.d. (a))

Table 2 reveals that the Number of Nepali students in Australia has increased about more than half in 2023 only comparing the number of students from 2005-2022. Which is the highest ratio of increment in the table. China is in the first position with 814,508 total numbers of students followed by India with 496,536, whereas Nepal is in the third position with 174,888. It is remarkable that China has total population 1,410,710,000 India has 1,428,627,000 and Nepal has 3,089,659 (World Bank Group, 2023). When calculated the ratio of number of students sending to Australia by the total respective population of country then Nepal is in the top rank 0.05660 followed by China with 0.00057 and India with 0.00034. In this regard, Nepal has been sending largest ratio of students to Australia. Nepali students not only are acquiring quality international education from Australia, they also have been playing the role of revenue generator in Australian economy. It is worthy to note here that the contribution has made due the population dividend of Nepal. On the one hand, the context of student fee as revenue

in Australian education economy, the growing number of Nepali students are soft power of Nepal in Australia. On the other, the growing attraction of Nepali students towards Australian education is soft power of Australia.

In this connection, Chowdhury (2022) confirms that the export of international education of Australia has been contributing significantly and positively in Australian economy, however the excessive reliance on a specific sector especially south Asia and China is a challenging factor. In this connection, Australia also has emergence to regulate international education export with appropriate education diplomacy. In this connection the following table explains the status of Australian education export income by countries.

Table 3

Australia's Top 10 Education Export Income by Country (A\$ million)

Country	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
China	10434	6109	4230	8727
India	6542	5309	3729	5930
Nepal	2954	2522	2002	3428
Vietnam	1396	1170	958	1481
Colombia	849	756	580	1130
Philippines	866	784	556	1113
Indonesia	982	753	632	1086
Thailand	706	525	450	1080
Pakistan	825	699	549	983
Malaysia	1250	904	683	965
Rest of the World	10534	8023	6407	10500

Source: Australian Government, Department of Education (n.d. (b))

Table 3 reveals that Nepal is again the third largest revenue provider to Australia by means of Australian international education import. Further, it explains that Nepal is the country whose contribution is increased gradually from 2020 to 2023 followed by Colombia and Philippines. As fast as number of Nepali students grow in Australia, the role of education diplomacy is highly grow, demanded and essential for the welfare of students as well as to robust bilateral relation.

Besides student exchange and education collaboration, education diplomacy also covers cultural programs, language training, and short-term exchanges that expose participants about the value, foreign policy and

culture as soft power to the host and sending country. As such there is huge responsibilities and obligation of education diplomacy intertwined with formal diplomatic mechanism as soft power in the contemporary context of Nepal-Australia bilateral relations. In this connection, both governments, diplomatic missions, Embassy of Nepal in Canberra, Embassy of Australia, Kathmandu, Nepali diasporic community in Australia, think tanks, academics, students and all stakeholders have to focused their attention towards matured and operational educational diplomacy to robust Nepal-Australia ties.

CONCLUSION

Education diplomacy is a key soft power mean or instrument in the changing dynamics and huge academic engagements between Nepal and Australia. The taxonomy of soft power and soft power index to rank countries recognizes education diplomacy as a prominent component under the public diplomacy. The soft power status of Nepal is remarkable and strong in terms of instrument (public and personal diplomacy) and resources (culture, values, policies and personalities) in relations with Australia however lacking in soft power receptions (attractions, apathy and repulsion), and outcomes (compliance, neutrality and opposition) under taxonomy of soft power. Nepal-Australia has crossed more than six decades of formal diplomatic relations and it is the time of multifaceted engagement with student migration, exchange of visits, trade, development cooperation, climate change issue and many more. However, student migration and education exchange appears as key component under multilayered educational engagement. Third largest international student status of Nepali in Australia has not only creating opportunity of technology transfer to Nepal from Australia in addition this also has made status of Nepal in revenue generation for Australian education economy; even in small scale. Which is great soft power of Nepal in Australia. This has created new circumstances and demanded new dynamism of education diplomacy towards strong, friendly and cordial relationship. Furthermore, large scale academic collaboration, Nepal-Australia ties has been demanding matured, sustainable and farsighted education diplomacy targeting the welfare of academic community beyond regular diplomatic accomplishments. Nonetheless, the future prospect of Nepal-Australia ties demands the education agreements between two countries targeting academic equivalence. In sum, the education diplomacy remains as key instrument of soft power that leverage the scholar potentialities, population

dividend, and thirst of quality education of small power Nepal in bilateral relations with soft power superpower Australia.

REFERENCES

- Australian Government (2021). *Australian strategy for international education 2021-2030*. Canberra: DESE. <https://www.education.gov.au/australian-strategy-international-education-2021-2030>
- Australian Government, Department of Education (2024). *Priority partner countries*. <https://www.education.gov.au/international-education-engagement/priority-partner-countries>
- Australian Government Department of Education (n.d.). *Australia India education partnership*. <https://www.education.gov.au/newsroom/articles/education-agreement-between-australia-and-india>
- Australian Government Department of Education (n.d. (a)). *International students studying in Australia (2005–2023)*. <https://www.education.gov.au/international-education-data-and-research/resources/international-students-studying-australia-2005-2023>
- Australian Government Department of Education (n.d.(b)). *Education export income by country*. <https://www.education.gov.au/international-education-data-and-research/education-export-income-financial-year>
- Baral, E., Adhikari, B. P., & Gurung, R. (2024). Unveiling motivational factors driving Nepali students to pursue higher education abroad. *OCEM Journal of Management, Technology & Social Sciences*, 3(1), 18-25.
- Brand Finance. (2021). *Global Soft Power Index 2021*. <https://brandirectory.com/globalsoftpower/download/brand-finance-global-soft-power-index-2021.pdf>
- Brand Finance. (2022). *Global Soft Power Index 2022*. <https://static.brandirectory.com/reports/brand-finance-soft-power-index-2022.pdf>
- Brand Finance. (2023). *Global Soft Power Index 2023*. <https://static.brandirectory.com/reports/brand-finance-soft-power-index-2023-digital.pdf>
- Brand Finance. (2024). *Global Soft Power Index 2024*. <https://static.brandirectory.com/reports/brand-finance-soft-power-index-2024-digital.pdf>

- Cankaya, I. (2024). Systematic review of international student mobility in higher education. *European Journal of Educational Sciences*, 11(1), 54-70. <https://esipreprints.org/index.php/esipreprints/article/download/736/739>
- Center, D. D. N. (2017). *Australia awards global tracer facility*. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/nepal-alumni-case-study.docx>
- Chong, A. (2007). The foreign policy potential of "small state soft power" information strategies. *Singapore: National University of Singapore*. <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=41edd4c92c1b7a2067f5b21acd02d74bff3c60bc>
- Chowdhury, M. B. (2022). Internationalisation of education and its effect on economic growth and development. *The World Economy*, 45(1), 200-219. <https://doi.org/10.1111/twec.13174>
- DFAT (n.d. (a)). *Australia awards in Nepal*. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/nepal/development-assistance/australia-awards-nepal>
- DFAT (n.d.). *Nepal country brief*. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/nepal/nepal-country-brief>
- Gautam, P., Singh, B., Singh, S., Bika, S. L., & Tiwari, R. P. (2024). Education as a soft power resource: A systematic review. *Heliyon*. [https://www.cell.com/heliyon/fulltext/S2405-8440\(23\)10944-3](https://www.cell.com/heliyon/fulltext/S2405-8440(23)10944-3)
- Ghimire, B. (2019, March 1). As study abroad numbers rise, Nepali students land in trouble. *University World News*. <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20190301101826555>
- Guillermé, G. (2023). International student mobility at a glance 2023. *Global Analysis*. https://timeassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Global_analysis_data_Oct_2023_G_Guillermé.pdf
- Hsien, M., & Edwards, D. (2023). *Australia awards alumni global tracer survey 2022*. <https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1040&context=tracer>
- Jones, E., Leask, B., Brandenburg, U., & De Wit, H. (2021). Global social responsibility and the internationalisation of higher education for society. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 25(4), 330-347. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10283153211031679>
- Khan, M. M., Ahmad, R., & Fernald, L. W. (2020). Diplomacy and education: A systematic review of literature. *Global Social Sciences Review*, V(III), 1-9. [https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2020\(V-III\).01](https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2020(V-III).01)

- King, R. N. (2020). *Parents as protection from the market: How social class protects Nepali international students in Australian housing, work, and education markets*. Master dissertation, Macquarie University. <https://figshare.mq.edu.au/ndownloader/files/36372144>
- Li, M. (2023). The soft power of international education: A theoretical framework. In *The Routledge Handbook of Soft Power*. Routledge, pp. 143-154.
- Mammen, J. T., Dinoop, K., Jayakumar, M. S., & Kumar, G. (2022). Education as soft power: Migration of students from India to Australia. *Journal of Polity and Society*, 12(2), 69-88. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/360412937>
- McClory, J. (2019). The Soft Power 30: The global ranking of soft power 2019. *The Soft Power 30*. <https://softpower30.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/The-Soft-Power-30-Report-2019-1.pdf>
- MoFA (n.d.). *Nepal Australia relations*. <https://mofa.gov.np/nepal-australia-relations/>
- Nye Jr, J. S. (2008). Public diplomacy and soft power. *The annals of the American academy of political and social science*, 616(1), 94-109. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207311699>
- Nye, J. S. (1990). Soft power. *Foreign Policy*, 80, 153–171. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1148580>
- Nye, J. S. (2004). *Soft power: The means to success in world politics*. Public affairs.
- Nye, J. (2005). Soft power and higher education. *Harvard University*, 14. https://www.academia.edu/download/36246953/soft_power_university.pdf
- Ohnesorge, H. W. (2020). *Soft power: The forces of attraction in international relations*. Springer.
- Ohnesorge, H. W. (2022). Personal diplomacy. In *The Routledge Handbook of Diplomacy and Statecraft*. Routledge, pp. 397-408.
- Peterson, P. M. (2014). Diplomacy and education: A changing global landscape. *International Higher Education*, (75), 2-3. <https://ejournals.bc.edu/index.php/ihe/article/download/5410/4848>
- Rijal, A. (2022). *Understanding the impact of education agent services on Nepalese students' study experiences in Australia*. Master's thesis, Charles Darwin University, Australia.

https://acquire.cqu.edu.au/articles/thesis/Nepali_business_students_in_one_Australian_university_an_ethnographic_case_study/24966186/1/files/43965909.pdf

- Soomro, N. N., Siddiqui, S., & Khoso, G. M. (2018). Achieving soft power goals through education diplomacy by southeast Asian nations. *Asia Pacific*, 37, 21-34. <https://doi.org/10.47781/asia-pacific.vol37.Iss0.689>
- Stringer, K. (2013). Sovereign Liechtenstein: The soft power projection of a very small state. *Centre for Small State Studies, Institute for International Affairs*. https://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/pdf/research/books/soft_power/Sovereign_Liechtenstein_-_Kevin_D._Stringer.pdf
- Times Higher Education (2023, September 27). *Best Universities in Australia 2024*. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/best-universities-australia>
- Timilsana, B. K. (2024). Soft power and small states: A theoretical discussion. *Journal of Political Science*, 24(1), 139-158. <https://doi.org/10.3126/jps.v24i1.62860>
- Vaxevanidou, M. (2018). Education as public diplomacy: How to build an international image in education. *Journal of Media Critiques*, 4(14), 55-70. <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=697532>
- Wojciuk, A., Michałek, M., & Stormowska, M. (2015). Education as a source and tool of soft power in international relations. *European Political Science*, 14, 298-317. <https://doi.org/10.1057/eps.2015.25>
- World Bank Group (2023). *Population Total*. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>