

## Understanding the Role of Culture and Behavior in Mongolia's Foreign Policy

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**Abstract:** This study explores how Mongolia, a small state located between Russia and China, integrates cultural and behavioral factors into its foreign policy. With a deep-rooted nomadic heritage and strong spiritual traditions, Mongolia emphasizes national identity, respect, and consensus in its diplomatic conduct. The research applies Hofstede's cultural dimensions, the Big Five personality traits model, and a systematic literature review of Mongolian, Russian, and foreign sources to assess the role of culture and behavior in foreign policy. Findings reveal that Mongolia leverages cultural diplomacy by promoting its heritage through festivals, exhibitions, and international cooperation in culture, education, and science. These efforts also support tourism and foster soft power. Mongolia's openness to other cultures, combined with values such as unity, justice, and respect, informs a diplomatic style focused on mutual understanding and balanced engagement. Behavioral coherence

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*and intercultural sensitivity enhance Mongolia's ability to navigate international relations despite limited economic or military power. The study underscores that Mongolia's foreign policy is shaped not only by strategic interests but also by deeply ingrained cultural and behavioral traits. As global dynamics shift, Mongolia's unique approach helps it maintain sovereignty, build partnerships, and strengthen its international presence.*

**Keywords:** International relations, foreign policy, diplomacy, culture, behavior and personality

## 1. Introduction

In today's interconnected world, small states like Mongolia play a significant role in international relations despite limited resources. Mongolia, historically an "observer," now navigates complex global dynamics shaped by major powers. Mongolia's nomadic heritage has shaped values like adaptability and solidarity, which persist through its political shifts. This research explores how Mongolia's unique culture and behavior of the people influence its foreign policy and diplomacy in a rapidly changing global environment (Zuo et al., 2023).

Culture is a set of norms, values, and symbols formed through human creativity and reflects the level of societal development. Behavior refers to stable psychological traits that shape how individuals interact with their environment, stemming from the Greek word for "character". This research highlights the role of cultural and personality differences in international relations, stressing the need for cultural awareness and competence to prevent bias and conflict. It emphasizes using cultural diversity as soft power through sensitive diplomacy, urging policymakers to foster

mutual understanding while avoiding cultural imperialism (Dashnyam and Tsend, 2022).

Research on the role of culture and behavior in foreign policy, though limited internationally, bridges international relations and political psychology. Mongolia's unique nomadic heritage and strategic location between Russia and China suggest a strong link between its cultural traits and diplomatic practices. Global leaders increasingly acknowledge culture's influence in foreign policy discourse.

Mongolia's nomadic culture, shaped over thousands of years, underwent dramatic transformation during the 20th century. From 1921 to 1990, the country experienced a communist regime, followed by a transition to a democratic political system and free-market economy.

This exposure to diverse political, social, and economic systems has uniquely influenced the cultural identity and behavioral patterns of the Mongolian people. The interplay between traditional nomadic values and modern ideologies has created a distinct cultural dynamic.

This study explores how these historical shifts have contributed to shaping Mongolia's national behavior, with implications for its societal development and international engagement.

Overall, this study aims to understand how Mongolia's national behavioral character and cultural aspects shape its foreign policy as a small state between two major powers. We use the Big Five behavioral model, Hofstede's cultural framework as a theoretical background, and integrative literature review analysis

using over fifty literature including academic research papers, books, online resources, grounded in theories of international relations, diplomacy, behavior, and culture.

The study finds that Mongolia's foreign policy is shaped by its cultural and behavioral heritage, promoting tradition through arts, education, and tourism, while its behavioral focus on unity, fairness, and respect enhances international relations and global standing.

## 2. Literature Review

Ang et al. (2018) argues that cultural diplomacy advances national interests while fostering mutual understanding and trust, enhancing intercultural dialogue and strengthening international relations through soft power and cultural exchange. Wiarda (2016) argues that culture plays a significant yet overlooked role in shaping foreign policy, influencing national worldviews, values, attitudes, and actions in international relations.

Afoaku (2000) argues that authoritarian leaders centralize power, influencing foreign policy with rigid or aggressive approaches. Bethke (2016) highlights how cultural and national traits shape foreign policy responses. Gravelle et al. (2020) emphasize that political leaders' personal traits affect policy choices, while Hussain (2011) examines how domestic politics influence foreign policy decisions, showing the link between internal and external policy dynamics.

Mondak (2010) reaffirms the enduring

premise that individual personality significantly shapes political attitudes and decision-making, a view long acknowledged in studies of public opinion and voter behavior. Culture, as it is defined by Hofstede (2004), is the collective mindset distinguishing social groups, encompassing shared values and practices.

Anna (2016) highlights that while culture is crucial in international relations, its role in public diplomacy is underexplored. Culture, shaped by political, economic, social, and historical factors, forms a nation's identity and influences its diplomatic policies. This study argues that diplomacy protects state interests while promoting global norms for cooperation. Contemporary diplomacy is a structured system of communication, negotiation, and representation, governed by rules to prevent or resolve conflict.

Wiarda, (2016) argues that diplomatic engagement involves interactions shaped by cultural "programming," with

each party's background influencing communication style and negotiation outcomes, increasing the risk of miscommunication. Schoen (2007) argues that an individual's role in foreign policy is shaped by their personality, especially in authoritarian regimes. Personality influences decisions during crises or when institutional pressures are minimal, with the "right person at the right time" affecting outcomes.

Studies note that bilateral diplomacy, the oldest form, involves interactions between two states, while multilateral diplomacy involves three or more states. States also use alternative methods, such as special envoys, for cost-effective

international engagement. Campi (2022) defines diplomacy as the use of intelligence and tact in official relations between states, while Lebow (2018) calls diplomacy "the brain of national power," emphasizing its role in defending national interests peacefully. Also, he highlighted that newly independent states seek diplomatic recognition as a symbol of legitimacy.

Overall, the literature reveals a gap in exploring how cultural and behavioral factors shape small states' foreign policy. This research fills that gap by integrating cultural studies and political psychology to analyze Mongolia's diplomatic practice.

## ***2.1 Mongolia's Foreign Policy and Diplomacy***

Small states, like Mongolia, face limited resources, a narrow influence base, and vulnerability to external pressures, often shaping their foreign policy through compensatory strategies that leverage non-material assets. Mongolia, with its small population and economy, has pursued a balanced foreign policy focused on national sovereignty, multilateral engagement, and soft power. Its "third neighbor" policy diversifies diplomatic ties beyond Russia and China, aiming for relationships with countries like the United States (US), Japan, and European states. This strategic balancing reflects both pragmatism and Mongolia's historical pursuit of independence.

The concept of the "small state" in international relations focused on Mongolia. This foundational work offers both conceptual insights and practical analysis of foreign policy mechanisms

in small states and has been officially summarized in this handbook for academic reference (Tumurchuluun, 2006).

Fox (2023) analyzes the diplomatic strategies of small and medium-sized European states during World War II, showing how internal and external factors shaped their foreign policies. Her work was pivotal in shifting the focus from great-power narratives to the foreign policy behavior of small states, broadening international relations scholarship.

Björk and Lundén (2021) argue that great powers seek expansion, while small states aim to preserve the status quo, often existing under the influence of larger powers. Studies argued that large states shape international order and regional security. However, neorealism framework overlooked the complexities

of contemporary international relations, where both large and small states, like Mongolia, engage in more balanced interactions, emphasizing the importance of cooperative, flexible, and mutually beneficial diplomacy for regional security and sustainable development (Soni, 2015; Janar, 2016).

## **2.2. Historical Evolution of Mongolian Diplomacy**

Mongolia's diplomatic practice reflects its historical trajectory, starting with the Mongol Empire's focus on meritocracy, fluid alliances, and cultural respect, influencing modern diplomacy. Fiaschetti (2020) highlights Genghis Khan's impact, reshaping geopolitical boundaries and establishing lasting systems of diplomacy and trade. Genghis Khan's merit-based system, religious freedom, international postal system, and diplomatic immunity set enduring precedents, including protection for enemy envoys during wartime. These contributions laid the foundation for modern international relations.

Mongolia's democratic revolution in the early 1990s marked a turning point in its foreign policy, shifting from a centrally planned system to a market-oriented democracy. New documents like the National Security and Foreign Policy Concepts emphasized independence, neutrality, and international engagement. Early diplomacy focused on securing recognition, particularly from Russia and China, with the 1912 Treaty of Friendship affirming Mongolia's international status. The 1921 People's Revolution, backed by Soviet support, established the People's Government and a formal Ministry of

Mongolia's foreign policy emphasizes international law and multilateral institutions. Despite limited resources, it actively participates in global governance through organizations like the UN and peacekeeping operations, reinforcing its image as a responsible global actor.

Foreign Affairs, playing a key role in state-building. The post-WWII collapse of the bipolar world order highlighted the need for active, flexible diplomacy (Batsaikhan, 2002).

In 1992, Mongolia adopted a new Constitution, affirming its democratic, independent status and outlining principles for national security and sovereignty. This reform, amid economic challenges, reshaped its foreign policy. The National Security Doctrine focuses on balancing relations with Russia and China while diversifying ties with "third neighbors" like the US, Japan, and the European Union (EU). Diplomacy remains central to Mongolia's foreign policy. Through balanced bilateral, multilateral, and cultural diplomacy, Mongolia aims to enhance its international standing and ensure sovereignty (Soni, 2015; Dolgorsuren, 2019).

Mongolia's diplomatic evolution includes key milestones such as the "third neighbor" policy, diplomatic service modernization, and the creation of new bilateral and multilateral partnerships. Diplomatic reforms, including professionalization and exposure to Western education, created

a more globally informed corp. Over time, Mongolia shifted from reliance on external patronage to pursuing an independent path in international affairs, evident in its increased peacekeeping participation, support for democratic values, and balancing relations with Russia and China. This transformation

reflects both institutional change and the adaptation of enduring cultural values. In summary, Mongolia's diplomacy post-1990s has focused on strengthening sovereignty, balancing neighbors, broadening engagement, and asserting its national interests.

### ***2.3. Mongolia's Contemporary Diplomacy and Foreign Policy***

Mongolia's diplomatic practice today is defined by a multi-vector strategy to maximize national interests while mitigating vulnerabilities. Key initiatives include:

1. Multilateralism: Mongolia actively participates in the United Nations (UN) and other forums, strengthening its voice beyond its material power and upholding international legal norms and treaties.
2. "Third Neighbor" Policy: To reduce dependence on Russia and China, Mongolia strengthens bilateral relationships with diverse countries, enhancing strategic autonomy and international credibility.
3. Cultural Diplomacy: Mongolia promotes its rich heritage-nomadic traditions, Buddhist values, and historical pride-through cultural festivals, exhibitions, and educational exchanges as a form of soft power.

Following World War II and the collapse of the Cold War system, a new international order emerged, driven by economic and technological integration.

Mongolia's foreign policy is shaped by historical, cultural, and geopolitical factors, balancing external pressures from Russia and China with its cultural heritage to protect sovereignty, a challenge rooted in past subordination. In the post-communist era, Mongolia adopted its "Concept of Foreign Policy" in 2011 and developed the "Third Neighbor" policy, initially aimed at countering pressure from the US and later expanded to include economically promising nations. Mongolia's geographic position necessitates strong ties with Russia and China, with China's Tianjin port and Russia providing access to Europe (Soni, 2015).

Mongolia's foreign policy includes several orientations: fostering bilateral relations with Asian countries to enhance regional security in West and Central Asia, deepening cooperation with international financial institutions like the UN, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and Asian Development Bank (ADB), and cultivating friendly relations with post-socialist and newly independent states. In 2015, Mongolia reaffirmed its permanent UN General Assembly seat and has actively engaged in disarmament since its 1992 declaration of non-nuclear

status. Historically, Mongolia's foreign policy has focused on balancing Russian and Chinese influences, a challenge that persists today. The 1990s National Security Concept adopted a 30:30:40 ratio for relations with Russia, China, and third neighbors, reflecting a strategic balance in economic engagement (Batzaya, 2003; Bazarov, 2016; Denzenlkham, 2021).

Cultural factors significantly influence Mongolia's foreign policy, with pride in its heritage shaping its international image and diplomatic engagement, including cultural initiatives to enhance global relations. Mongolia also uses its historical legacy, especially Genghis Khan and the Mongol Empire, to strengthen its national identity and global standing. During the socialist era, Mongolia's foreign policy was analyzed through Realist, Liberal, and Marxist lenses. Morozova (2009) argues that aligning with The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) rather than China preserved sovereignty and positioned Mongolia as a buffer state. Later studies reassessed this from a Realist viewpoint, while other studies noted USSR influence in shaping Mongolia's foreign policy (Beitz, 1999;

Dzhagaeva, 2006).

Modern analyses of Mongolia's foreign policy highlight its evolving relations with major powers and strategic balancing. Studies emphasize Mongolia's commitment to an independent and balanced foreign policy. These studies show that Mongolia actively participates in global politics, relying on favorable conditions in Russia and China, while using the "Third Neighbor" policy to balance external influences. In today's complex global environment, Mongolia must maintain regional dialogue to safeguard national security and promote sustainable development (Bayarkhuu, 2016; Campi, 2022).

Mongolia's diplomatic stance today blends assertiveness with conciliatory measures for effective crisis management and conflict resolution. Diplomats prioritize national interests while avoiding confrontation, supported by transparency, open communication, and consensus-driven decision-making that aligns with both traditional values and modern democratic norms.

### **3. Theoretical Basis**

This research applies Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the Big Five personality traits to understand the role of cultural and behavioral aspects in Mongolia's foreign policy, highlighting its high-power distance, rooted in historical hierarchies, and collectivist tendencies, which shape its preference for multilateral diplomacy and peaceful negotiation.

In 1965, Hofstede founded IBM

Europe's personnel research department and conducted a survey of 117,000 employees across 40-50 countries, identifying four cultural dimensions: power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity. Later studies expanded this model to include long-term orientation and indulgence versus restraint (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede, 2004).

Hofstede's cultural dimensions:

1. Power Distance Index (PDI): Reflects societal acceptance of unequal power distribution. High PDI societies show strong hierarchical structures, while low PDI societies favor equality;
2. Individualism vs. Collectivism: Prioritizes either individual rights or group loyalty. Mongolia's traditionally collective society emphasizes group welfare;
3. Masculinity vs. Femininity: Distinguishes societies focused on achievement and competition (masculine) versus those valuing relationships and quality of life (feminine);
4. Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI): Indicates tolerance for ambiguity. High UAI cultures prefer structured environments; low UAI cultures are more adaptable;
5. Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation: Long-term cultures value tradition and perseverance, while short-term ones focus on innovation and immediate results;
6. Indulgence vs. Restraint: Differentiates societies based on the degree of freedom in satisfying human desires;

The Big Five personality traits—openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism—offer insights into national behavior patterns (Costa and McCrae, 2010). In Mongolia's case, a blend of assertiveness, national pride, hospitality,

and consensus-building shapes a diplomatic persona that is both strong and accommodating.

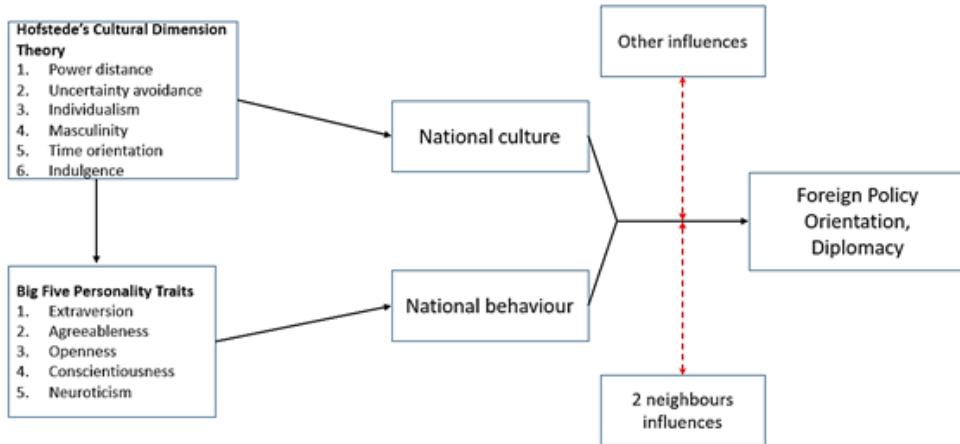
The study uses qualitative content analysis of official documents, speeches, and academic literature, alongside comparative case studies of other small states, to provide a nuanced understanding of how culture and behavior shape Mongolia's foreign policy.

The Big Five personality traits:

1. *Openness to Experience: Inclination toward novelty and diversity;*
2. *Conscientiousness: Organization and reliability;*
3. *Extraversion: Sociability and assertiveness;*
4. *Agreeableness: Compassion and cooperation;*
5. *Neuroticism: Emotional instability and sensitivity;*

This study investigates how Mongolia's national behavioral traits and cultural dimensions shape its foreign policy as a small state positioned between two major powers. It draws on the Big Five personality model and Hofstede's cultural framework as theoretical foundations within a qualitative research design. The methodology incorporates a integrative literature review of over fifty documents and materials (see Table 1) from sources that indexed by international databases (such as Google Scholar, ProQuest, Scopus, Web of Science), grounded in theories of international relations, diplomacy, behavioral science, and culture. Employing a longitudinal perspective, the study traces Mongolia's

Figure 1. Theoretical framework



diplomatic evolution over the past century, supported by archival research, interviews with diplomats, and analysis of international media. Methodological triangulation is used to strengthen the validity and reliability of the findings.

An integrative review critically assesses and synthesizes literature to generate new theoretical insights or frameworks. Unlike semi-structured reviews, it aims to reinterpret existing knowledge or conceptualize emerging topics. Often used in mature fields to reconceptualize theories, or in new areas to propose initial models, this method values depth and innovation over exhaustive coverage. It draws from diverse disciplines and research traditions, encouraging creative integration of perspectives. Though less common in business research, examples exist (e.g., Gross, 1998; Covington, 2000). Integrative reviews are particularly suited for advancing theory by connecting fragmented findings into a cohesive, evolving understanding of a topic (Snyder, 2019).

The model "The Influence of Culture and Behavior on the Foreign Policy and Diplomacy of Small States: The Case of Contemporary Mongolia" (Figure 1) illustrates how cultural and behavioral factors shape small states' foreign policy. Rooted in Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, it identifies key cultural traits-power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity, time orientation, and indulgence-that influence national identity and behavior. These traits, conceptualized through the Big Five Personality Traits, reflect the dispositions of political elites, diplomats, and institutions.

National culture and behavior shape a country's foreign policy, as seen in Mongolia's multi-vector diplomacy and Third Neighbor Policy. The model also considers external factors, such as geopolitical pressure from Russia and China, and global influences like international norms and soft power. It emphasizes that small states' foreign policies are shaped not only by external constraints but also by internal cultural

*Table 1. Literature category*

Literature category	Number of resources
1 Foreign policy and diplomacy	13
2 Mongolian foreign policy and diplomacy	23
3 Behavior, personality, and decision making	13
4 Culture and decision making	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>

and behavioral frameworks.

Gravelle et al. (2020) suggest that individual personality traits influence a state's foreign policy. Applied to Mongolia, its emphasis on unity, cautiousness, openness, and democratic values reflects the population's personality traits. These traits align with Mongolia's diplomatic preference for peaceful cooperation, careful evaluation of agreements, and respect for public

opinion. However, other structural and institutional factors also shape foreign policy. They argue that individual personality traits shape political behavior, including foreign policy. In Mongolia, the personal characteristics and values of key political figures likely influence the country's diplomatic direction and international engagement, highlighting personality's role in shaping both domestic and foreign policy decisions.

### ***3.1. Influence of Culture and Behavior on Foreign Policy and Diplomacy***

Culture significantly influences international relations, with "soft power" emphasizing the role of culture, values, and ideas in shaping state preferences without coercion. In Mongolia's case, cultural heritage is vital to its state identity and international legitimacy. Cultural factors affect foreign policy and diplomacy, influencing cooperation and security decisions. Mongolia leverages soft power by promoting its heritage through cultural diplomacy, educational exchanges, and peace initiatives, enhancing its global image and supporting foreign policy goals (Nye, 1990; Buzan, 2010; Adiya, 2022).

Cultural interdependence, driven by international exchanges, promotes mutual

understanding and influences foreign policy decisions, balancing national interests with shared values. Mongolia actively engages in cultural diplomacy through festivals, art exhibitions, and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) collaborations, leveraging its historical legacy to strengthen regional ties. Constructivist theories suggest that state behavior is shaped by cultural norms and social values, not just material interests. Mongolia's "Third Neighbor" policy, reflecting democratic principles and human rights, exemplifies this approach, balancing Russian and Chinese influence. Cultural diplomacy is used strategically to enhance national image and influence public opinion, with Mongolia's Ministry

*Table 2. Political culture of Mongolia*

Period	Great Mongol Empire	Period of rule of Manchuria	The period of the planned economy	Market economy
Culture	Nomadic	Nomadic mixed	Mixed	Mixed
Religion	Faith in Blue Sky (Tengerism) Shamanism	Buddhism	Forbidden	Free
Form of government	Imperialism	Vassalage	Socialist system	Parliamentary-republic

of Foreign Affairs promoting art festivals, student exchanges, and heritage projects (Barghoorn, 2015; Fiaschetti, 2020; Ageeva, 2021).

Hofstede's cultural dimensions highlight how national culture influences behavior, with Mongolia exhibiting a high-power distance, reflecting respect for hierarchy and authority, and collectivist tendencies prioritizing communal decision-making and social harmony. Cultural influence is crucial

in shaping Mongolia's foreign policy and diplomatic engagement, supporting its national security and development goals. This research argues that cultural factors are intrinsic to Mongolia's foreign policy, driven by the legacy of the Mongol Empire, nomadic traditions, and Buddhist ethics, which continue to shape its interactions on the global stage. These cultural influences emphasize the preservation of national identity and the promotion of international cooperation.

### ***3.2 Cultural Influence on Mongolia's Foreign Policy and Diplomacy***

Mongolia's culture and traditions-shaped by its geography, climate, nomadic lifestyle, and historical interactions with powerful neighbors like Russia and China-profoundly influence its foreign policy by reinforcing national identity and shaping its international image. Core nomadic values such as hospitality, solidarity, respect for elders, and a close connection to nature guide Mongolia's diplomatic approach, fostering cooperative and balanced relationships with both neighboring and distant states. Historically, the legacy of the Mongol Empire and Genghis Khan continues to underpin Mongolia's

statecraft and diplomatic ethos. This cultural foundation is actively projected through participation in international cultural exchanges, art festivals, educational initiatives, and collaborations with UNESCO, which strengthen Mongolia's global presence and soft power (Tumurchuluun, 2006; Fiaschetti, 2020).

The Mongolian people have been nomadic since ancient times and this factor cannot be neglected in modern culture. Four periods of cultural development in Mongolia, according to studies (Narantuya, 2020).

Nomadic culture has long shaped

Mongolian identity and remains central despite the pressures of globalization. Over the past 24 years, Mongolia's peaceful shift from a communist system to a market-based democracy was driven by an early consensus on the need for deep political and economic reforms. Constructivist theories emphasize that state behavior is shaped by cultural norms as well as material interests (Coborn, 1993). Mongolia's "Third Neighbor" policy reflects this, seeking balanced relations beyond Russian and Chinese influence while promoting democratic values and human rights. This strategy is reinforced by culturaldiplomacy, which builds trust and international cooperation (Allsen, 2004).

### ***3.3 Planned Behavior Theory Illustrated by Mongolia's Diplomacy***

Mongolia's culture-shaped by its nomadic lifestyle, geography, and ties with powerful neighbors-deeply influences its foreign policy by reinforcing national identity and protecting sovereignty. Core values like hospitality, solidarity, and respect for elders guide its diplomatic engagements, especially with Russia and China. Additionally, Mongolia's historical legacy from the era of Genghis Khan remains a foundational element in its diplomatic strategy and international image (Tumurchuluun, 2006; Tsend, 2019).

After gaining independence, Mongolia incorporated its traditional cultural identity into a diplomatic approach centered on multilateralism, economic cooperation, and the "Third Neighbor" policy to diversify partnerships. Cultural values influence foreign policy by encouraging peaceful,

Mongolia's tradition of intercultural dialogue, shaped by nomadic and Buddhist values, supports its pragmatic engagement in global affairs and reinforces national security through soft power strategies. Its foreign policy is grounded in a strong cultural identity and historical legacy, which helps preserve sovereignty and promote regional stability. Cultural diplomacy-through exchange programs, festivals, and cultural center-strengthens Mongolia's soft power and enhances its international image by sharing its heritage with global audiences (Morozova, 2009; Gantuya and Zaya, 2020).

cooperative engagement and shaping international agreements. The Theory of Planned Behavior explains how intentions, norms, and perceived control guide diplomatic decisions-foreign policy goals reflect intended outcomes, while norms stem from international and domestic expectations. Strategic action becomes more likely when a state feels it has adequate resources (Ajzen, 1985; Schoen, 2007; Batbayar, 2014; Soni, 2015).

Applying the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to Mongolia's diplomacy shows that its strategy reflects both material conditions and cultural-historical context, requiring diplomats to balance national goals with international expectations through flexible methods (Ajzen, 2011). Mongolia builds ties with both Western and Asian partners to diversify resources while sustaining

equilibrium with Russia and China. Global issues like climate change and economic instability highlight the growing importance of integrating cultural diplomacy into national strategy (Batbayar, 2003).

Mongolia's foreign policy is deeply rooted in its cultural heritage and historical experience, using traditional values and analytical tools like the Theory of Planned Behavior to secure national

interests and enhance global standing. Its adaptability-shaped by centuries of nomadic life-enables swift strategic shifts in response to regional challenges, particularly in balancing ties with Russia and China. This convergence of cultural and behavioral influences forms a unique diplomatic identity, allowing Mongolia to pursue sustainable, principled, and globally engaged foreign policy.

### ***3.4 Influence of Mongolian Leaders' and Diplomats' Behavior and Communication on Foreign Policy and Diplomacy***

Mongolia's foreign policy is strongly influenced by the personal behavior and traits of its leaders, with historical figures like Genghis Khan and more recent leaders such as Tsedenbal and Ochirbat shaping diplomatic decisions. Genghis Khan's strategic vision and charisma expanded Mongolia's borders, while later leaders like Natsagdorj D. and Ochirbat P. played key roles in establishing diplomatic ties and diversifying Mongolia's foreign relations. Leaders' personal values and experiences are essential in balancing national interests with those of powerful neighbors and responding to international challenges (Demberel, 2013; Bayarbat, 2023).

Mongolia's diplomatic practice is shaped by its rich cultural heritage, including traditional values like hospitality, consensus-building, and respect for elders, which guide both domestic and international relations. Cultural exchanges, such as language and culinary traditions, enhance Mongolia's soft power and international image. Leadership styles also play a crucial

role; for example, Khurelsukh Ukhnaa, a President of Mongolia, with his focus on economic development and sovereignty, influences relations with neighboring countries, while Battulga Khaltmaa's more liberal approach emphasizes social justice, democracy, and fostering cooperation with Western nations (Batmunkh et al., 2022; Dashdorj, 2023).

Battsetseg Batmunkh, appointed Mongolia's Foreign Minister in 2021, plays a key role in shaping and strengthening Mongolia's foreign policy and international relations. Mongolia's foreign policy is deeply linked to its cultural values and leadership qualities, with historical legacy reinforcing sovereignty and global standing (Dovchin, 2010).

In summary, the personal attributes of Mongolia's leaders, such as their worldview, integrity, and communication skills, significantly shape foreign policy. Post-1990 leaders with democratic values have fostered effective, open diplomacy. Strong leadership, leveraging personal strengths like networking and

multilingualism, enhances diplomatic success, while weaknesses like corruption can hinder foreign relations. The human

element remains crucial in Mongolia's foreign policy, complementing cultural and structural factors.

## 4. Insights and Discussion

Mongolia's foreign policy is deeply influenced by its nomadic traditions, Buddhism, and shamanism, which shape its values of respect, trust, and adaptability. Aligning diplomacy with these cultural foundations strengthens its credibility and soft power. Cultural exchanges, educational outreach, and cultural centers abroad promote mutual understanding and national identity. Mongolia's sovereignty-driven, multi-pillar foreign policy-engaging platforms like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and ADB-reflects historical lessons and

geopolitical realities. Cultural diplomacy through music, craftsmanship, and tourism enhances international presence, while eco-innovation supports global sustainability aligned with traditional values. Cultural frameworks like Hofstede's dimensions and the Big Five personality traits offer tools for enhancing intercultural effectiveness. As globalization and youth engagement rise, digital tools and people-to-people ties will further boost Mongolia's soft power and global influence (McAdams and Pals, 2006; Hofstede, 2004; Tamir, 2013; Adesina, 2017).

### 4.1 Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions and Big Five Traits: A Comparative Study in Mongolia's Foreign Policy

Understanding cultural change and its influence on the foreign policy and diplomacy of small states is vital. Hofstede's cultural theory and the Big Five personality model offer different yet complementary approaches for analyzing how culture affects human behavior and international relations. While Hofstede focuses on cross-national cultural differences, the Big Five emphasizes individual traits shaped by cultural environments. This dual perspective enables deeper insights into Mongolia's hybrid cultural landscape, where tradition and modernity intersect.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions help explain how cultural frameworks

shape organizational behavior and diplomacy. Mongolia, situated between China and Russia, offers a unique case where high-power distance may stem from its hierarchical historical context, influencing expectations in diplomatic relations. Traditional nomadic values and collectivism affect foreign policy strategies and decision-making, where elites often dominate strategic directions. Conversely, the Big Five personality model, rooted in psychology, offers an individual-level perspective on cultural change (Costa and McCrae, 2010).

Mongolia's foreign policy is shaped by both traditional and modern factors, with traits like openness enabling

flexible diplomacy and conscientiousness ensuring adherence to international norms. Leaders' personality traits, such as openness, influence Mongolia's proactive international engagement. The 1990s transition to a market economy fostered individualism and international cooperation, enhancing Mongolia's global adaptability. Comparing Hofstede's and Big Five models highlights how internal traits, such as agreeableness and neuroticism, impact diplomatic strategy and decision-making (Hong, 2022).

Cultural change strengthens Mongolia's image as a democratic partner, with increased individualism enhancing its international reputation. Mongolia's foreign policy, particularly with China and Russia, balances cultural and individual factors, as seen in its participation in the SCO and The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Public participation fosters transparency and responsiveness in policy. Hofstede's and the Big Five models highlight different

levels—national and individual—in shaping diplomacy, offering insights into hierarchical structures and interpersonal leadership traits. Integrating both theories helps inform Mongolia's strategic approach to foreign policy (Tsend, 2019; Kotkin and Elleman, 2015).

Mongolia's foreign policy reflects a mix of cultural values and behavioral traits, such as respect, consensus, and stability. Its support for global peace, disarmament, and democracy stems from a history valuing peace and cultural agreeableness, with open, conscientious leaders pushing these initiatives. Diplomatically, Mongolia combines politeness (agreeableness) and firmness (assertiveness) to protect its sovereignty, driven by both cultural and personal traits. Using Hofstede's and Big Five models helps explain Mongolia's multilateral, rule-following diplomacy, which balances tradition with modern challenges, allowing it to navigate between powerful neighbors effectively.

#### ***4.2 Shaping the Image of Mongolia's Foreign Policy Through Cultural and Behavioral Influence***

Mongolia's foreign policy image is shaped by cultural and behavioral factors, contributing to its soft power identity. Since its democratic transition in the 1990s, Mongolia has evolved both politically and culturally, shifting from traditional to modern communication and governance. Its nomadic heritage fosters adaptability, essential for balancing external interests with strategic flexibility. The rise in individual freedom post-reforms enhances Mongolia's global reputation as an open and cooperative

partner (Kotkin and Elleman, 2015).

Mongolia's power distance has decreased since democratization, promoting political participation, but traditional elements remain, leading to mixed perceptions abroad. Its nomadic heritage, once fostering tolerance for uncertainty, now contributes to an image of reliability in global systems. Mongolia showcases its rich culture—Genghis Khan's legacy, nomadic traditions, and art—building a unique international identity. Increased female participation in politics

aligns with global gender equality, enhancing its human rights profile. Leaders also project cultural values like hospitality and respect for diversity, weaving Mongolia's heritage into global discourse at forums like the UN.

Mongolia's openness, as seen through the Big Five model, enhances its image as innovative and globally engaged. Its reliability in commitments strengthens global partnerships. Through its "Third Neighbor" policy, Mongolia diversifies ties with the US, Japan, South Korea, and the EU, aiming for global integration. Active participation in international forums highlights its commitment to cooperation and environmental action, with sustainability as a priority.

Culturally, influenced by Buddhism, Mongolia positions itself as a peace-loving nation, neutral in certain respects, and a mediator in global dialogue, contributing to regional stability and global peace (Soni, 2015).

Agreeableness shapes Mongolia's foreign policy through peace-driven diplomacy and active peacekeeping, enhancing global credibility and attracting investment. Neuroticism can signal both instability and responsible governance by showing awareness of national issues. Overall, cultural and behavioral traits-like openness, cooperation, and flexibility-are key to Mongolia's global appeal and effective diplomacy in a shifting international landscape.

### ***4.3 Influence of Cultural and Behavioral Factors on Mongolia's Diplomacy***

Cultural and behavioral factors directly impact Mongolia's daily diplomatic practices. As a small state with a unique heritage, Mongolia balances tradition and modern global demands. Public opinion-shaped by strong national identity-actively influences diplomacy through civic engagement and media. Mongolia's geopolitical position and nomadic-spiritual traditions also shape its strategic responses, requiring alignment between cultural values and foreign policy in a globalized world (Morozova, 2009).

Mongolia's "Third Neighbor" policy strengthens ties with the US, Japan, and the EU to reduce reliance on neighbors and promote peaceful cooperation. Cultural values like trust shape diplomacy, shown in student exchanges and festivals. Historical emphasis on independence supports

multipolar engagement. Mongolia also prioritizes sustainability and global climate action, reflecting cultural respect for nature. Participation in forums helps build credibility, using nomadic heritage as a soft power tool for sustainable development.

Mongolia modernizes its diplomacy through digital platforms and social media to promote its culture and interests globally. Tourism supports cultural exchange and boosts its image via local engagement and infrastructure. Flexible strategies like virtual exhibitions and global education programs expand Mongolia's influence. Dialogue based on respect and global participation enhances mutual understanding. Promoting traditional arts and crafts strengthens cultural diplomacy. Cultural events and centers abroad reinforce Mongolia's role

in climate action and sustainable growth (Baatar, 2009; Bjola, 2018).

Mongolia's diplomacy thrives on adaptability and e-diplomacy, using digital tools to promote heritage and global ties. Education and research exchanges further international collaboration and academic growth. Cultural identity, supported by tech and outreach, enhances engagement. Mongolia's diplomatic style-cooperative and persuasive-helps it gain respect

globally. While courtesy may be misread as weakness, skilled diplomats maintain firmness with respect (Fish, 2001).

Cultural and behavioral factors strongly shape Mongolia's diplomacy. By blending tradition with modern needs, Mongolia enhances its global cooperation. Its unique identity influences everything from negotiation style to hospitality, making its diplomacy both distinctive and effective.

#### ***4.4. Comparing Cultural and Behavioral Influences on Mongolia's Foreign Policy with other Small State***

Comparing Mongolia's foreign policy with other small states shows both shared and unique traits. Like others, Mongolia uses culture to boost diplomacy, but its nomadic traditions make its approach distinctive. These traditions foster independence and harmony with nature, influencing Mongolia's strategic goals. Through cultural diplomacy and engagement in forums like the UN and SCO, Mongolia projects its identity globally.

Mongolia's nomadic heritage and imperial legacy make its foreign policy uniquely assertive and proud compared to cautious states like Laos. Its landlocked position between Russia and China drives a balancing strategy through the "Third Neighbor" policy-unlike island or European microstates. Cultural identity in Mongolia acts as both soft power and a political buffer. While other small states like Nepal use culture similarly, Mongolia's ability to maintain independence and diplomatic relevance stands out. In contrast, the Vatican uses

religious heritage for peace-driven diplomacy, showing how diverse histories shape distinct strategies (Morozova, 2009).

Bhutan's foreign policy, like Mongolia's, emphasizes peace, sovereignty, and cultural identity rooted in Buddhism. However, Bhutan remains less globally engaged than Mongolia. Small states like Singapore and Luxembourg also rely on rule-based diplomacy. Singapore's pragmatic and disciplined approach differs from Mongolia's more modest but similarly careful style. While Singapore and Malaysia use multiculturalism in diplomacy, Mongolia leverages its ethno-cultural unity. Both strategies highlight how cultural identity shapes small state diplomacy (Hong, 2022).

Baltic states like Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia emphasize sovereignty and EU and The North Atlantic Treaty Organization integration due to historical trauma, like Mongolia's focus on independence but differing in alignment

choices. Latvia leverages its dual heritage for Euro-Atlantic ties, while Slovenia boosts its profile through cultural diplomacy. Lithuania's Germanic and Russian influences shape its Western integration, contrasting with Mongolia's neutral, multi-vector policy (Busygina and Klimovich, 2017).

Estonia's cultural reassertion after Soviet rule mirrors Mongolia's preservation of traditions, embedding cultural identity into diplomacy to maintain autonomy. Unlike the Baltic states, Mongolia avoids military alliances, instead using cultural diplomacy and international law, exemplified by its "Third Neighbor" policy. Pacific Island states emphasize community and consensus in diplomacy, like Mongolia's

approach in the Non-Aligned Movement. However, Mongolia engages more with great powers due to its geopolitical position, necessitating broader cultural diplomacy (e.g., language skills), while Pacific microstates focus regionally (Busygina and Klimovich, 2017).

In conclusion, while many small states use culture and diplomacy strategically, Mongolia's unique history-spanning empire, communism, and democracy-shapes its distinct approach. Mongolia's nomadic diplomacy, balancing giants, and democratic identity set it apart, though it still aligns with broader small-state behaviors. Understanding these cultural contexts enhances our grasp of small states' global strategies.

## 5. Conclusion

This study comprehended how Mongolia's national behavioral traits and cultural dimensions influence its foreign policy as a small state positioned between two major powers. Grounded in a rich nomadic heritage and spiritual traditions, Mongolia places strong emphasis on national identity, mutual respect, and consensus-building in its diplomatic practices. This research draws on Hofstede's cultural dimensions, the Big Five personality traits model, and a comprehensive review of Mongolian and international literature to understand how cultural and behavioral factors influence Mongolia's foreign policy and diplomacy.

The findings indicate that cultural and behavioral factors have played a significant role in shaping Mongolia's foreign policy and diplomatic strategy.

Its nomadic heritage, traditional values-such as hospitality, respect, and unity-and collectivist mindset support a multilateral, dialogue-focused approach. These traits promote trust-based cooperation and enhance Mongolia's standing in global affairs.

As a small state, Mongolia leverages its cultural identity to pursue sovereignty, regional ties, and multilateralism. Its adaptability and use of cultural diplomacy enhances its global outreach. In a shifting world, these cultural assets offer a strategic edge, setting Mongolia apart from other small states.

Comparative analysis shows that Mongolia's unique history and cultural values shape a distinctive diplomatic approach rooted in tradition and

multilateral engagement. By integrating behavioral and cultural frameworks—such as the Big Five personality traits and Hofstede's cultural dimensions—Mongolia can enhance its foreign policy effectiveness and strengthen its global presence. For small states, cultural identity is not only symbolic but also a vital strategic asset in international diplomacy.

Mongolia's future in foreign policy lies in balancing tradition with modernity, adapting to global shifts while preserving identity. As global challenges grow, Mongolia must strengthen its soft power and cultural diplomacy to safeguard its

interests, build international partnerships, and promote mutual understanding through dialogue and cooperation.

In summary, Mongolia's foreign policy is shaped by its cultural heritage and national behavioral traits, including nomadic traditions, Buddhist ethics, and collective personality. Mongolia's distinct use of cultural diplomacy enhances its soft power and global standing. Institutionalizing this approach and adapting to cultural shifts will be key for future success. Overall, Mongolia offers a strong model for small states leveraging culture and behavior in global diplomacy.

### Authors' Contributions

**Ayslan Khomushku:** writing – original draft, doing literature review, collecting data and materials. **Munkh-Ulzii Batmunkh:** Development and conceptualization of research argument and theoretical framework, formal analysis. **Sharad Kumar Soni:** Theoretical and practical advice in development of theory and conceptualization.

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