
The challenges of Nigeria in leveraging foreign policy for sustainable national growth

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Abstract

The study examined the challenges of Nigeria's strategic alliances on national growth using a descriptive mixed-methods research design that integrates qualitative and quantitative approaches. Realism theory was adopted. A total of 123 participants, purposively selected from a population of 180 foreign policy stakeholders including officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NIIA, diplomatic corps, and academia provided insights through structured questionnaires but 111 were retrieved and analyzed. Secondary data were drawn from treaties, white papers, and institutional reports from ECOWAS, AU, and others. Findings revealed that while Nigeria's foreign policy is adaptive and proactive in international engagement, it often lacks coherence, long-term strategic focus, and effective implementation factors that diminish its capacity to yield tangible economic and security benefits. The study identified challenges include inconsistent policy across administrations, political instability, weak institutions, corruption, overreliance on foreign aid, and inadequate funding. The study recommended that The Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA), and National Intelligence Agency (NIA) should be equipped with modern tools, training, and resources to ensure effective and professional diplomacy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and Development Partners Coordination Units, should lead this process by producing annual foreign policy performance reviews.

Keywords: Challenges, Foreign Policy, Nigeria, Sustainable National Growth.

1. Introduction

In today's interconnected global landscape, nations increasingly depend on strategic alliances to pursue developmental objectives, bolster national security, and elevate their influence in international affairs (Ogbonnaya & Aremu, 2021; Okon & Udoh, 2023). These alliances spanning bilateral, multilateral, regional, and global frameworks have become vital instruments for shaping national growth trajectories, particularly among countries in the Global South. For developing nations such as Nigeria, strategic partnerships present pathways to attract foreign direct investment (FDI), acquire

advanced technologies, and strengthen diplomatic leverage (Adeniyi, 2022; Eze & Chukwuma, 2020). As Africa's most populous country and one of its leading economies, Nigeria has long been a key player in regional and continental diplomacy. Since gaining independence in 1960, its foreign policy has evolved from the Afrocentric ideals of the First Republic to a more pragmatic, interest-driven orientation in contemporary times (Ojo & Adetula, 2019). Nigeria's involvement in global and regional bodies including the African Union (AU), ECOWAS, the United Nations, and OPEC as well as its participation in

peacekeeping missions and numerous bilateral agreements, illustrates the country's strategic use of diplomacy to advance national development goals (Ibrahim & Onuoha, 2021). Nevertheless, despite these diplomatic efforts, Nigeria continues to grapple with significant developmental challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, high unemployment, insecurity, and economic instability. These persistent issues raise important questions about the efficacy of Nigeria's foreign policy and whether its strategic alliances have yielded tangible national development outcomes (Ibeanu & Ifedi, 2023; Ugwueze, 2024). Although the country has forged prominent partnerships with global actors including China, the United States, the European Union, and neighboring African states, debates persist regarding the sustainability and developmental impact of these alliances. This study, therefore, aims to examine the challenges of Nigeria's diplomatic engagements and evaluate how these strategic alliances have influenced its economic, political, and security development.

Statement of the Problem

Despite Nigeria's active participation in global and regional affairs through various strategic alliances, the country continues to face persistent challenges such as sluggish economic growth, insecurity, inadequate infrastructure, and a fragile industrial base (Okolie & Edo, 2023). Over the years, Nigeria has engaged in numerous bilateral and multilateral partnerships with major global actors including China, the United States, and the European Union as well as regional organizations such as ECOWAS and the African Union. These alliances are often promoted as vehicles for attracting investment, enhancing security, and fostering technological and diplomatic collaboration.

However, the extent to which these strategic partnerships have translated into

tangible national development remains unclear. For example, while Nigeria's alliance with China has resulted in visible infrastructural projects, it has simultaneously sparked concerns over debt sustainability, limited local employment benefits, and increased policy dependency (Brautigam & Huang, 2020). Likewise, security collaborations have yet to significantly reduce the persistent insurgency in the North-East or the growing incidence of banditry across other regions. A significant disconnect appears to exist between foreign policy formulation and its domestic outcomes, particularly in leveraging strategic international relationships for sustainable development (Akinola & Okeke-Uzodike, 2021). This challenge is further exacerbated by factors such as weak policy continuity, insufficient institutional capacity, and inadequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Objectives of the Study

- i. evaluate the effectiveness of Nigeria's foreign policy in promoting national interests through strategic partnerships.
- ii. identify the challenges facing Nigeria in leveraging foreign policy for sustainable national growth.

4. Research Questions

- i. How effective is Nigeria's foreign policy in aligning strategic partnerships with domestic development goals?
- ii. What challenges hinder the effectiveness of Nigeria's foreign policy in achieving sustainable national development?

2. Literature Review

Conceptual Discourse

i. Strategic Alliances

Hoffmann, Lavie, Reuer, and Shipilov (2018) describe strategic alliances as purposeful arrangements between firms that involve the sharing or co-development of capabilities, products, or services, primarily to strengthen

competitive positioning or achieve innovative outcomes. Similarly, Contractor (2019) emphasizes that strategic alliances may be either formal or informal collaborative agreements, often aimed at creating synergy by leveraging complementary strengths, particularly within global or technologically complex markets. Zeng and Glaister (2021) define strategic alliances as long-term inter organizational collaborations pursued to achieve mutual strategic objectives, such as expanding into new markets, sharing knowledge, and sustaining competitive advantage. Bouncken, Fredrich, Kraus, and Ritala (2023) conceptualize strategic alliances as collaborative arrangements that enable firms to combine diverse resources and capabilities, often across industries, in order to co-create value and navigate environmental uncertainties.

ii. Foreign Policy

Hill (2003) views foreign policy as the sum of official external relations conducted by an independent actor in international relations. Carlsnaes (2013) defines it as the actions and strategies pursued by state actors to achieve specific objectives in the international arena, shaped by both domestic politics and global structures. Alden and Aran (2017) define it as a constantly negotiated practice balancing domestic priorities with the constraints and opportunities of the international system. Foreign policy refers to the strategies and decisions formulated by policymakers to shape a state's relations with the outside world and safeguard or promote its national interests (Ambali, Amin & Ambali, 2020). Hook, Spanier, and Towner (2020) posit foreign policy as a dynamic process through which states manage external challenges and opportunities in an increasingly interconnected world. Carlsnaes (2021) underscores foreign policy as a set of actions and decisions driven by domestic and international structures, where agency and context continuously interact. Foreign

policy as the purposeful framework of principles, strategies, and actions by which a state engages with other nations and global institutions to protect national interests, advance values, and achieve objectives in a complex international environment. It encompasses diplomacy, trade, defense, and security, shaped both by domestic political dynamics and the shifting global order (Nwala, 2024).

iii. National Development

National development is a broad concept that captures the overall progress of a nation in terms of economic growth, social welfare, political stability, and institutional capacity. Seers (1969) argues that the essence of development lies in addressing fundamental challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and inequality, which determine whether a country is truly progressing. Rodney (1972) views national development as the process by which a society increases its capacity to deal with its environment. Goulet (1992) frames it as a process of improving the quality of life through equity, self-reliance, and sustainability, highlighting both economic and ethical dimensions. Sen (1999) conceptualizes development as the expansion of substantive freedoms; political, economic, and social that enable individuals to lead the kind of lives they value. Todaro and Smith (2015) define national development as a multidimensional process involving changes in structures, attitudes, and institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of absolute poverty. Vision 2030 Jamaica (2022) defines it as a sustainable and inclusive pathway that balances present needs with long-term viability while relying on participatory and evidence-based strategies.

Empirical Review

Ogujiuba, Ehigiamusoe and Ugwuoti (2013) examined how economic, social, and natural capital interact in shaping

sustainable development in Nigeria. The study employed a descriptive and analytical approach. Findings revealed deterioration of social infrastructure and natural ecosystems across Sub-Saharan Africa, compounded by weak policy responses. Persistent obstacles include extreme poverty, rapid population growth, uncontrolled urbanization, deforestation, environmental harm from extractive industries, slow economic expansion, inadequate rural development, climate variability, and recurring natural hazards. Nigeria's efforts are further hindered by inconsistent government policies and weak enforcement, threatening progress toward global post-2015 sustainability targets. The study recommended creating a Sustainable Development Trust Fund (SDF) to finance and monitor integrated social, economic, and environmental projects; strengthening governance and policy coherence across all levels of government; promoting inclusive economic growth through poverty-reduction, rural development, and job-creation programs; enforcing stricter environmental protections and reforestation efforts; and investing in population management and urban planning to meet the demands of rapid growth.

Omede and Bakare (2014) assessed Nigeria–United States relations with a focus on security cooperation. The study adopted a qualitative research approach, relying on extensive document review and content analysis. The findings showed that U.S. support including intelligence sharing, military training, and counterterrorism assistance has significantly enhanced Nigeria's capacity to combat terrorism, particularly in addressing the Boko Haram insurgency. Nevertheless, the study highlighted persistent challenges such as gaps in mutual trust, differing strategic priorities, and inconsistencies in Nigeria's domestic security policies, all of which have limited

the long-term effectiveness of the bilateral alliance. The study recommended strengthening institutional frameworks for cooperation, improving policy coherence within Nigeria's security sector, and fostering transparent communication between both nations to build sustained trust and maximize the benefits of the partnership.

Fagbemi and Osinubi (2020) studied on leveraging foreign direct investment for sustainable human development in Nigeria. The study utilized a combination of nonlinear autoregressive distributed lag (NARDL) modeling, linear ARDL bounds testing for co-integration, and the Vector Error Correction Model (VECM) Granger causality technique. Findings show that FDI exerts a positive and significant influence on human capital development in the short term, while its long-run effect is generally insignificant unless inflows reach a critical threshold, at which point substantial improvements in human capital occur. The causality analysis further revealed that persistent structural bottlenecks and widespread insecurity, however, continue to limit Nigeria's ability to maximize the benefits of FDI. The study recommended greater investment in education, vocational training, and technology-transfer initiatives to enhance workforce quality; the promotion of high-value, technology-intensive FDI through targeted incentives; consistent and stable macroeconomic and investment policies to bolster investor confidence; and decisive action to improve infrastructure, governance, and security. It also urges the integration of FDI with local capacity-building requirements, such as joint ventures and local content policies, to ensure technology transfer and long-term human capital development.

Ambali, Amin & Ambali, (2020) examined the challenges confronting Nigeria's external relations under President Muhammadu Buhari's

administration. The study adopted content analysis. The study revealed that Nigeria's foreign policy challenges are predominantly driven by internal rather than external factors. Issues such as weak institutional capacity, political interference, corruption, poor policy coordination, and inconsistent leadership commitment have undermined the effectiveness of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Unlike the founding fathers of Nigeria's diplomacy who served with professionalism and integrity, recent administrations have allowed political considerations and personal interests to overshadow national objectives. The study recommended that the Nigerian government should strengthen institutional independence and professionalism within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to ensure that foreign policy decisions are guided by expertise rather than political expediency. There is a need to establish a consistent and clearly defined foreign policy framework anchored on Nigeria's core national interests. Adequate funding, training, and motivation should be provided for diplomatic personnel to enhance efficiency and global competitiveness.

Ezirim (2021) evaluated the impact of Nigeria-China bilateral relations on Nigeria's economic performance. The study employed a quantitative research design, applying econometric analysis of trade, investment, and debt-service data. The findings revealed a strong positive correlation between Chinese strategic investments in key infrastructure sectors such as transportation, power, and telecommunications and Nigeria's economic growth indicators, including GDP expansion and improved industrial output. However, the study also underscored significant risks, particularly the rising debt dependency and the opaque nature of several bilateral agreements, which threaten Nigeria's fiscal sustainability and policy autonomy. The

study recommended strengthening institutional oversight of foreign loans and investment agreements, enhancing transparency in contract negotiations, and diversifying external financing sources. It advocated for policies that promote domestic capacity building and mandate technology transfer and local content development in future agreements to safeguard long-term economic sovereignty and support sustainable growth. Obasi (2022) assessed the impact of strategic alliances within the ECOWAS region. The study employed a qualitative analytical approach. The study found that member states engaging in structured regional partnerships benefit from more consistent economic growth, facilitated by shared infrastructure projects, trade incentives, and coordinated diplomatic efforts. The study recommended that ECOWAS countries deepen regional integration through stronger policy harmonization, enhanced cross-border infrastructure development, and improved trade facilitation measures to sustain economic growth and regional stability.

Anam, Ijim, Ironbar, Otu, Duke and Eba (2023) investigated on the economic recovery and growth plan, economic sustainability plan and national development plan under President Muhammadu Buhari. The study examined Nigeria's experience with the ERGP through desk research, drawing on secondary data and applying content analysis. Findings revealed that lack of policy continuity, weak institutions and corporate governance, and inadequate funding of policy objectives affect effective policy implementation. Consequently, the contribution of these policies to Nigeria's overall development has been limited. The study recommended that the current administration prioritize funding for policy goals and strengthen bureaucratic structures to ensure the National Development Plan achieves

meaningful and sustainable economic outcomes.

Okolie and Edo (2023) studied on issues and failure of infrastructure project implementation in Nigeria. The study utilized a documentary research design, collecting data from secondary sources. Data were analyzed using a content analysis. The findings revealed that project failures are widespread and stem from multiple interrelated factors, including weak financial capacity, inaccurate cost estimation, corruption, inadequate planning, contractor inefficiencies, poor communication, frequent design changes, leadership deficiencies, and socio-cultural and political interference. The study recommended a comprehensive reform of oversight bodies such as the National Council on Public Procurement, the Bureau of Public Procurement, and the Due Process Office to strengthen transparency, enhance monitoring, and ensure ethical practices. The study also advocated for stronger financial planning, accurate cost estimation, improved contractor management, and effective leadership to curb corruption, facilitate timely project delivery, and enhance the quality of infrastructure development across Nigeria.

Ogunleye (2024) examined how Nigeria's economic ties with the United States influence its development trajectory and policy autonomy. The study employed a historical and exploratory research design. Guided by dependency theory. Findings revealed that post-independence economic policies have entrenched a mono-economy centered on oil exports, leaving Nigeria highly vulnerable to global market fluctuations. While bilateral relations with the United States have provided notable benefits such as foreign investment, expanded market access, and technology transfers these gains are offset by reduced policy independence and heightened exposure to external economic shocks.

The study recommended economic diversification through investments in agriculture, manufacturing, and knowledge-based industries; strengthening regional trade partnerships by deepening engagement with African trade blocs such as ECOWAS and the AfCFTA to reduce overreliance on the United States; and enhancing governance and policy autonomy to safeguard national interests in future bilateral negotiations. It further advocates investment in technology and workforce development to reduce dependence on external technological transfers and to foster sustainable, self-reliant economic growth. Nwala (2024) assessed foreign policies and diplomacy of African states in an era of globalization. The study employed a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach. Data were thematically analyzed to reveal the interaction between globalization and African foreign policy choices, while historical analysis provided essential context for contemporary diplomatic practices. Findings showed that African states continue to face structural challenges such as economic dependency, weak institutional capacity, and political instability, all of which limit the effectiveness of their foreign policies. The influence of external factors including major powers and multilateral institutions further constrains autonomous decision-making. Nonetheless, emerging regional cooperation, exemplified by initiatives like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and AU-led peace efforts, demonstrates growing collective action and increased diplomatic leverage. Opportunities presented by globalization, such as expanding digital economies, South-South cooperation, and diversified trade partnerships, offer tangible prospects for economic growth and technological advancement. The study also found that states investing in professional diplomatic training and coherent policy frameworks, such as Rwanda and Ghana, enjoy

improved international visibility and bargaining power. The study recommended strengthening institutional capacity through professional foreign service training and better policy coordination to enhance proactive diplomacy. It urges diversification of economic partnerships beyond traditional Western allies by expanding trade and investment ties with Asia, Latin America, and other African markets. Greater regional integration through bodies like the AU and AfCFTA should be prioritized to amplify Africa's collective bargaining power in global forums. In addition, governments should leverage technology and innovation to advance economic and public diplomacy and to support conflict-prevention initiatives.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts realism theory. Realism, a dominant theory in international relations, posits that the international system is anarchic, and that states act primarily in pursuit of power and national interest to ensure their survival and security (Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1979). The theory assumes that states are rational, unitary actors operating in a self-help system where power is the primary currency. From a realist perspective, alliances are not formed out of goodwill or shared values but are instead strategic moves aimed at gaining advantages in the global power structure. Nigeria's foreign policy direction exemplifies these realist assumptions, as its alliances with global powers such as China and the United States are often driven by practical interests such as accessing foreign investment, enhancing military capacity, and strengthening diplomatic leverage

(Akinola & Obadare, 2020; Eze, 2021). Through realism, Nigeria's engagement with international organizations like ECOWAS and the African Union can also be viewed as strategic efforts to maintain regional dominance and manage external threats.

The relevance of realism to this study lies in its ability to explain Nigeria's foreign partnerships as pragmatic responses to economic and security pressures rather than ideological commitments. However, realism has been criticized for its state-centric focus, its neglect of non-state actors and transnational forces, and its limited consideration of cooperation, values, and global norms (Dunne & Schmidt, 2017). Despite these limitations, realism remains applicable to this study by providing a grounded understanding of how Nigeria uses strategic alliances to pursue national growth objectives in a competitive international system.

3. Research Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive mixed-methods research design to analyze Nigeria's strategic alliances and their impact on national growth, integrating policy analysis with stakeholder insights. The population comprises 180 individuals from foreign affairs ministries, diplomatic corps, policy institutes, and academia. Using purposive sampling, 123 participants were selected, with possible stratification by affiliation. Data collection involve structured questionnaires (primary data) and analysis of official documents, treaties, and reports from institutions like ECOWAS and the AU (secondary data).

4. Results and Discussion

Table 9.1: The effectiveness of Nigeria's foreign policy in promoting national interests through strategic partnerships.

| S/N | Items | SD | D | U | A | SA | Total | Remark |
|-----|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Nigeria's foreign policy has effectively promoted national interests through strategic international partnerships. | 14 (12.6%) | 66 (59.5%) | 4 (3.6%) | 21 (18.9%) | 6 (5.4%) | 111 (100%) | Disagree |
| 2 | Foreign policy decisions are aligned with Nigeria's long-term economic, political, and security goals. | 10 (9%) | 18 (16.2%) | 9 (8.1%) | 45 (40.5%) | 29 (26.1%) | 111 (100%) | Agree |
| 3 | There is consistent evaluation and adjustment of foreign policy to reflect Nigeria's evolving national interests. | 11 (9.9%) | 10 (9%) | 1 (.9%) | 77 (69.4%) | 12 (10.6%) | 111 (100%) | Agree |
| 4 | The current foreign policy framework ensures mutual benefits in Nigeria's international alliances. | 32 (28.8%) | 19 (17.1%) | 7 (6.3%) | 26 (23.4%) | 27 (24.3%) | 111 (100%) | Strongly Disagree |
| 5 | Nigeria's diplomatic engagements are proactive and strategically beneficial. | 11 (9.9%) | 10 (9%) | 8 (7.2%) | 57 (51.4%) | 25 (22.5%) | 111 (100%) | Agree |
| 6 | Strategic | 5 | 15 | 5 | 63 | 23 | 111 | Agree |

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| | partnerships pursued under Nigeria's foreign policy have improved the country's global image. | (4.5%) | (13.5%) | (4.5%) | (56.8%) | (20.7%) | (100%) | |
|--|---|--------|---------|--------|----------------|---------|--------|--|

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

The table presents respondents' views on the effectiveness of Nigeria's foreign policy in promoting national interests through strategic partnerships. Out of six items, four were rated "Agree," one "Disagree," and one "Strongly Disagree," indicating a mixed perception overall. Item 1 reveals a largely negative sentiment, with 72.1% (12.6% strongly disagree, 59.5% disagree) rejecting the idea that Nigeria's foreign policy effectively promotes national interests through strategic partnerships. This resulted in an overall "Disagree" remark, signaling concern over how foreign policy is aligned with national priorities. Similarly, Item 4, which posits that the current foreign policy framework ensures mutual benefits in international alliances, had 45.9% disagreement (28.8% strongly disagree, 17.1% disagree), making it the

only item marked "Strongly Disagree." This indicates a significant lack of confidence in the reciprocal value of Nigeria's international engagements.

In contrast, Item 2, on alignment of foreign policy with long-term goals, had a positive majority (66.6% agreed or strongly agreed), showing some confidence in the strategic direction of Nigeria's foreign engagements. Item 3 was even more strongly supported, with 80% agreement (69.4% agree, 10.6% strongly agree), reflecting belief in the adaptive nature of Nigeria's foreign policy. Item 5 suggests that 73.9% believe Nigeria's diplomatic engagements are proactive and beneficial. Item 6, which assesses the impact of strategic partnerships on Nigeria's global image, also received strong support (77.5% agree or strongly agree).

Table 9.2: Challenges and limitations facing Nigeria in leveraging foreign policy for sustainable national growth

| S/N | Items | SD | D | U | A | SA | Total | Remark |
|-----|--|---------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------|
| 1 | Inadequate implementation of foreign policy limits Nigeria's ability to achieve sustainable national growth. | 26 (23.4%) | 5 (4.5%) | 5 (4.5%) | 42 (37%) | 33 (29.7%) | 111 (100%) | Agree |
| 2 | Foreign policy inconsistencies across different administrations reduce long-term strategic impact. | 9 (8.1%) | 18 (16.2%) | 3 (2.7%) | 57 (51.4%) | 24 (21.6%) | 111 (100%) | Agree |



| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|----------|
| 3 | Political instability within Nigeria undermines the credibility of its foreign policy initiatives. | 6 (5.4%) | 19 (17.1%) | 4 (3.6%) | 60 (54.1%) | 22 (19.8%) | 111 (100%) | Agree |
| 4 | Dependence on foreign aid and external influence weakens Nigeria's autonomy in international decision-making. | 26 (23.4%) | 4 (3.6%) | 6 (5.4%) | 45 (40.5%) | 30 (27%) | 111 (100%) | Agree |
| 5 | Limited funding and poor budgetary allocation affect Nigeria's ability to execute foreign policy initiatives effectively. | 9 (8.1%) | 18 (16.2%) | 3 (2.7%) | 57 (51.4%) | 24 (21.6%) | 111 (100%) | Agree |
| 6 | There is insufficient public awareness and engagement with the goals and benefits of Nigeria's foreign policy. | 26 (23.4%) | 5 (4.5%) | 5 (4.5%) | 42 (37.8%) | 33 (29.7%) | 111 (100%) | Agree |
| 7 | Nigeria lacks the diplomatic capacity to effectively negotiate favorable international agreements. | 22 (19.8%) | 54 (48.6%) | 7 (6.3%) | 19 (17.1%) | 9 (8.1%) | 111 (100%) | Disagree |
| 8 | Corruption and weak institutional frameworks | 10 (9%) | 19 (17.1%) | 4 (3.6%) | 57 (51.4%) | 21 (18.9%) | 111 (100%) | Agree |

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|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | hinder Nigeria from fully benefiting from international partnerships. | | | | | | | |
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Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

The data in the table assesses respondents' views on the challenges and limitations facing Nigeria in leveraging foreign policy for sustainable national growth. Out of the eight items, seven were rated "Agree" and one was rated "Disagree", indicating that respondents largely recognize and acknowledge substantial obstacles affecting the effectiveness of Nigeria's foreign policy implementation. Notably, Items 1 and 6 which both emphasize inadequate implementation and poor public awareness received strong agreement, with 66.7% each affirming these as significant constraints. Item 2, on inconsistencies in foreign policy across administrations, had 73% agreement, suggesting that frequent shifts in strategy hinder the ability to maintain long-term impact. Likewise, Item 3 highlights how internal political instability negatively influences Nigeria's foreign policy credibility, with 73.9% of respondents agreeing.

Item 4, which discusses Nigeria's dependence on foreign aid and external influence, also received 67.5% agreement, pointing to concerns about compromised autonomy in international decision-making. Item 5 reinforces the problem of poor funding, echoed by 73% of respondents, aligning with broader structural weaknesses in policy execution. Item 8 on the role of corruption and weak institutions garnered 70.3% agreement, underlining systemic barriers to maximizing foreign partnerships. The only item to receive a "Disagree" rating was Item 7, which stated that Nigeria lacks the diplomatic capacity to negotiate favorable agreements. With 68.4% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, the data suggests that respondents believe

Nigeria has sufficient diplomatic expertise, even if broader systemic issues remain.

Discussion of Findings

Findings on the effectiveness of Nigeria's foreign policy in promoting national interests through strategic partnerships Adebayo and Olusola (2023) discuss how Nigeria's foreign policy, while adaptive, struggles with consistent alignment to national priorities. They argue that despite its proactivity in engaging with international organizations and strategic partners, Nigeria's foreign policy often falls short in translating these engagements into tangible benefits, particularly in terms of national economic growth and political stability. This reflects the negative sentiment observed in Item 1, where 72.1% of respondents disagreed with the idea that foreign policy effectively promotes national interests. In agreement with the finding in Item 3, Akinyele (2022) highlights that Nigeria's foreign policy has become more adaptive in response to changing global dynamics, particularly in areas of security and political resilience. Akinyele suggests that the flexibility of Nigeria's foreign policy allows it to better adjust to new global challenges, such as terrorism and regional instability, which aligns with the strong support (80%) for the adaptive nature of Nigeria's foreign policy in the survey.

On the disagreement with the reciprocal value of international alliances, Ibrahim (2021) points out that Nigeria's foreign policy framework often lacks the necessary coherence and long-term strategy to guarantee mutual benefits from its international alliances. This criticism aligns with the findings of Item 4, where 45.9% of respondents disagreed with the

notion that the current foreign policy framework ensures mutual benefits, particularly with respect to economic and security outcomes. In contrast, Odumosu and Asante (2022) underscore the positive impact of Nigeria's diplomatic engagements on its global image and political influence. They argue that Nigeria's active participation in the African Union, ECOWAS, and the United Nations has enhanced its global standing and influence, echoing the strong support seen in Items 5 and 6, where respondents agreed that Nigeria's diplomatic engagements were proactive and beneficial, and that these alliances have positively impacted Nigeria's global image.

The findings on the challenges and limitations facing Nigeria in leveraging foreign policy for sustainable national growth align with several recent Adewale and Ojo (2023) posits that the ineffective implementation of foreign policy and the lack of public awareness as significant barriers to achieving sustainable growth. They emphasize that Nigeria's foreign policy strategies often lack consistent follow-through, and there is insufficient effort to communicate the policy goals and outcomes to the public. This mirrors the findings in Item 1 and Item 6, which emphasize inadequate implementation and poor public awareness.

Similarly, Okafor (2022) explores the issue of foreign policy inconsistencies between administrations, a challenge highlighted in Item 2. Okafor argues that frequent shifts in foreign policy priorities across different government administrations have resulted in a fragmented approach that hampers Nigeria's ability to build long-term strategic relationships. This inconsistency undermines the effectiveness of foreign policy and its impact on sustainable development. On political instability, Ibrahim (2021) points to the detrimental effects of internal political crises on

Nigeria's foreign policy credibility. The study highlights that political instability not only weakens Nigeria's internal governance but also erodes its standing in international relations, echoing the concerns raised in Item 3 regarding how internal instability damages Nigeria's international image. Regarding dependence on foreign aid, Adedeji (2022) discusses how Nigeria's reliance on external funding often leads to compromised sovereignty in decision-making processes. This concern reflects the sentiment expressed in Item 4, where 67.5% of respondents agreed that Nigeria's dependence on foreign aid limits its autonomy in global negotiations and decision-making. Funding and resource constraints are also a common theme in recent literature.

Chijioke (2023) underscores that poor funding and budgetary allocations negatively impact the execution of foreign policy, with insufficient resources often leading to the ineffective implementation of key initiatives. This aligns with the finding in Item 5, where 73% of respondents agreed that inadequate funding is a critical issue. On corruption and weak institutions, Eze (2022) highlights how systemic issues such as corruption, lack of accountability, and weak governance structures significantly hinder Nigeria's ability to fully capitalize on its international engagements. Eze argues that these weaknesses prevent Nigeria from effectively leveraging foreign partnerships to foster national development, mirroring the findings in Item 8, where 70.3% of respondents identified these issues as major limitations. Nwachukwu (2023) addresses the idea that Nigeria's diplomatic capacity is often underestimated. He argues that despite systemic issues, Nigeria does possess competent diplomats who can negotiate favorable agreements. This view counters the perception in Item 7, where 68.4% of respondents disagreed with the

idea that Nigeria lacks the diplomatic capacity to effectively negotiate international agreements.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study set out to analyze Nigeria's foreign policy directions with a focus on strategic alliances and their contribution to national growth. It found that while Nigeria has been actively involved in numerous strategic partnerships bilaterally and multilaterally the actual developmental benefits of these alliances are mixed. Although there have been notable gains in infrastructure, diplomacy, and regional security contributions, challenges such as poor policy implementation, lack of accountability, and inadequate domestic capacity have limited the full realization of these benefits. The study concludes that a stronger alignment between foreign policy objectives and domestic development plans is essential for Nigeria to maximize the value of its strategic alliances.

Recommendations

The Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA), and National Intelligence Agency (NIA) should be equipped with modern tools, training, and resources to ensure effective and professional diplomacy. Nigeria should build institutional mechanisms to maintain consistency in foreign policy across successive administrations. This can be achieved through the Presidency, National Assembly Committees on Foreign Affairs, and the National Council on Foreign Policy, which should work collectively to develop binding foreign policy blueprints that transcend political transitions and safeguard long-term diplomatic goals.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and Development Partners Coordination Units, should lead this process by producing annual foreign policy performance reviews. Bodies such

as the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC), Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC), Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), and relevant chambers of commerce should be engaged systematically in international dialogues to represent Nigeria's economic interests more robustly.

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