Title

An appraisal of Nigeria's foreign policy role in Africa's development, 2010-2022

Nzewigbo, Adaora Appolonia, Researcher at University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria

Abstract

Nigeria's foreign policy is a strategic instrument intricately woven into the fabric of its national interests. Since its independence in 1960, Nigeria has steered an external strategy with the African continent at its nucleus, emblematic of its steadfast commitment to nurturing stability and prosperity across Africa. Through varying administrations, the Nigerian government has consistently upheld the core tenets of its foreign policy, steadfastly adhering to its Afrocentric orientation. This study examined Nigeria's foreign policy's role in the developmental trajectory of Africa during the period from 2010 to 2022. Employing a qualitative methodology, it harnesses secondary data from a comprehensive review of esteemed academic sources, including textbooks, scholarly journals, authoritative reports, and online repositories. Systems theory was applied to guide the research. The findings clearly illustrate Nigeria's pronounced contributions through its Afrocentric foreign policy paradigm – engendering unity, catalysing collaboration, nurturing peace and stability, and directing developmental resources to regions characterized by harmonious relations. Ultimately, this study illuminates the comprehensive spectrum of Nigeria's impact on Africa's developmental odyssey, ranging from active regional leadership participation to counter-terrorism endeavours and poverty abatement. Consequently, this research advocates for a sustained optimization of Nigeria's contributions, thereby fortifying internal tranquillity and urging a meticulous evaluation of the underlying socio-political tensions within Nigeria.

Key words

Foreign Policy, Afrocentrism, National Interest, Development, Diplomacy, Stability

Key dates

How to cite this article using ASWNet style

Introduction

Sufficient truth exists in the aphorism that a large number of Nigerians are persistently trapped in chronic, long-term unemployment and poverty transmitted from generation to generation. A nation's foreign policy, the compass guiding its interactions with other states and global entities, is a multifaceted tapestry woven from strategic objectives, geopolitical considerations, and the pursuit of national interests. It serves as the bridge connecting domestic imperatives to the intricate landscape of international affairs, shaping a country's role on the global stage. This dynamic interplay between a state's internal dynamics and external engagements forms its foreign policy's essence.

Distinct from its internal governance strategies, a government's foreign policy draws from an intricate web of factors that traverse beyond its borders. These factors include internal dynamics, the actions and policies of other nations, and the pursuit of strategic interests in a rapidly evolving global milieu. Through its foreign policy, a nation seeks to project its identity, protect its sovereignty, and assert its influence, all while engaging in a delicate dance of diplomacy and negotiation.

One common denominator among nations is the pursuit of national interests, which often governs the course of their foreign policy initiatives. These interests encompass a broad spectrum, ranging from economic growth and security to ideological propagation and fulfilling regional or global responsibilities. A nation's foreign policy reflects its aspirations, values, and ambitions, shaped by a blend of historical narratives, contemporary challenges, and future aspirations.

Against this backdrop, Nigeria's foreign policy, a nation with a rich history and a multifaceted regional identity, emerges as a compelling case study. Since attaining independence in 1960, Nigeria has artfully wielded its foreign policy as a strategic instrument to serve its national interests. The nation's trajectory has showcased a consistent commitment to an Afrocentric approach, focusing on the African continent as a fulcrum of its external strategy. This approach, often characterized by shifts in governance, has given Nigeria a distinctive role as a regional leader and a key proponent of stability and prosperity within Africa.

This study embarks on a journey to delve into the pivotal role of Nigeria's foreign policy in shaping Africa's development between 2010 and 2022. It employs a qualitative research methodology, drawing insights from various secondary sources, including academic literature, reports, and online repositories. Guided by the Systems theory within political science, the study aims to unravel the intricate threads connecting Nigeria's foreign policy principles to its concrete contributions to the African continent's development, unity, and security.

By examining the interplay of forces between Nigeria's foreign policy and Africa's development trajectory, this study offers a retrospective analysis and a forward-looking perspective. Exploring Nigeria's commitments to unity, stability, and growth within Africa provides insights beyond national borders. The lessons gleaned from this investigation hold the potential to shape policy decisions, influence diplomatic strategies, and foster a deeper understanding of the symbiotic relationship between a nation's foreign policy and its regional and global impact.

Conceptual review

The concept of foreign policy refers to a strategic framework established inside institutions to guide decision-makers in their activities within the global arena, with the ultimate aim of attaining the national objectives of a country (Ota & Ecoma, 2015). It may also be described as the responses and behaviours of a nation in response to events occurring in the global arena and internal conditions leading to the development of policies. According to Ota and Ecoma (2015), it is contended that a State within the international system can either initiate an event in the external environment, prompting reactions from other players or respond to events initiated by other state or non-state actors. Frankel (1975) opined that a county's foreign policy encompasses its general commitments and attitudes toward the international environment and the country's strategy to realize both internal and external aspirations and objectives.

According to Enuka and Odife (2009), foreign policy is influenced by external and internal determinants. Adeniji (2000) emphasised that the foreign policy of developing countries is essentially determined by the external element, namely the form of the international system in which states function. He further articulated that African nations must adapt to this principle. Tyoden (1989) states that the socio-political domestic environment significantly shapes foreign policy. This suggests that in addition to the influence of foreign policy apparatus, other domestic elements have relevance in foreign policy development. These factors encompass the structure and characteristics of the organization and administration, the political institutions, and the desired implementation of socio-political customs within the society (Enuka & Odife, 2009).

In Nigeria, the 1999 Constitution under Chapter 2, Section 19(a-e) stated the fundamental objectives and principles of Nigeria's foreign policy to include: promotion and protection of the national interest; promotion of African integration and support for African unity; promotion of international cooperation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations, and elimination of discrimination in all its manifestations; respect for international law and treaty obligations as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication; and, promotion of just world order (Saliu, 2013). Thus, the objectives above of Nigeria's foreign policy have been

constantly adhered to by the government in its actions and reactions within the African continent (Ayam, 2010).

Furthermore, Akinboye (2013) posited that there exists a discernible continuity across different political regimes, notwithstanding variations in the methods employed to pursue national interests. In other words, Nigeria's foreign policy aims and international relations have exhibited a consistent trajectory from the civilian rule of Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa to President Muhammadu Buhari. Moreover, it can be rightly said that the current Nigerian administration led by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is pursuing comparable goals in terms of the nation's interactions within Africa and the global community, especially with his led ECOWAS interference in the recent coup d'état in Niger Republic.

Theoretical framework

The systems theory will guide this research to further understand Nigeria's foreign policy.

Systems theory

This theory examines the potential rationale and role of Nigeria's Afrocentric foreign policy in the broader African continent. Systems theory is an established framework that examines the interrelationships and interactions among various components within a system. The origins of this concept may be traced back to the field of biological sciences, as established by its founders Ludwiglanffy Ludwing and Maturana Humberto (Boulding, 1956; Von Bertalanffy, 1974). Subsequently, this approach was adopted by several academic fields to examine phenomena from a comprehensive standpoint. Scholars who adhere to a systemic approach in analyzing events contend that comprehending an event or issue is unattainable through dissecting it into discrete components. Instead, it was considered that a comprehensive evaluation is necessary to comprehend the phenomena.

According to Hester, Adams, Hester, and Adams (2017), the researchers perceived an individual or a group as an ecosystem of interconnected components that mutually influence one another. The theory comprises a collection of components collaborating to form a cohesive entity. It is further characterised as possessing a clear demarcation that separates the system from external components and differentiates between inputs, factors that influence the system, outputs, outcomes, and products (Mele, Pels & Polese, 2010).

The systems theory emphasizes the interconnectivity between all components within a given system. This implies that if any region of the human body experiences discomfort or a lack of proper functioning, it could impact the overall functioning of the entire body. Hence, the theory has significance in the context of this study as it elucidates that Nigeria's foreign policy is deliberately crafted to prioritize its engagement with events occurring inside the African continent. This is due to the potential irrationality of Nigeria's lack of care towards any problems or difficulties that may arise in African nations, particularly those adjoining Nigeria (Ashaver, 2014; Dauda, Sakariyau, & Ameen, 2018). In addition to the irrationality of Nigeria disregarding the challenges faced by other African nations, it is essential to acknowledge that the consequences of such difficulties on Nigeria would be more significant than the potential costs associated with timely intervention to assist a country in crisis (Wapmuk, 2014).

Therefore, an additional significance of systems theory concerning the research is its function as a safeguard for Nigeria. This is because the idea aids Nigeria in maximizing its advantages or benefits to other African nations while simultaneously safeguarding the country from the repercussions of such crises, such as refugees, insurgency, terrorism, and other social problems, originating from other countries.

Application of the theory

Applying systems theory to Nigeria's foreign policy towards the African continent entails the examination of the interplay, reciprocal influences, and evolving patterns that contribute to the formation of Nigeria's diplomatic connections with other African nations and the wider global environment. Systems theory offers a conceptual framework for understanding the interplay and mutual effect of many elements within intricate systems, such as foreign policy. Nigeria has strategically positioned itself as a central focus of its foreign policy within the African continent.

Consequently, Nigeria perceives any issues occurring within any region of Africa as a collective burden for the whole continent, prompting swift intervention to restore stability and functionality to the affected systems. An illustrative instance pertains to the intervention led by Nigeria inside the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to reinstate constitutional governance in Niger Republic after a coup d'état that resulted in the dissolution of the nation's constitution and the establishment of a military junta government on July 26, 2023.

However, systems theory emphasizes the interconnectivity among various components within a given system. Africa is a big continent, just like other continents such as Europe and others; therefore, from the standpoint of Nigeria, African nations must have effective governance systems to foster unity, promote progress, and facilitate development throughout the continent. The primary rationale behind Nigeria's selection of Africa as its focal point in foreign policy is a significant contributing factor. Nevertheless, if any disruption occurs in a particular country or territory, Nigeria promptly takes action to reinstate stability within that country or region.

The historical context of Nigerian's Afrocentric foreign policy (1960-date)

The historical context of Nigerian foreign policy and Africa's centerpiece policy is of significant academic interest. The genesis of Nigeria's foreign policy may be traced back to its attainment of independence in 1960. The articulation and elaboration of Nigeria's foreign policy objectives and principles were, however undertaken by the first and only Prime Minister, Alhaji (Sir) Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, during his address at the United Nations General Assembly on October 8, 1960, which coincided with Nigeria's admission as the 99th member of the organisation (Ota & Ecoma, 2015).

Similarly, the selection of Jaja Wachukwu as Nigeria's inaugural Minister of Foreign Affairs and Commons (later renamed External Affairs) solidified Africa as the primary focal area of the country's foreign policy. The core tenets of Nigeria's foreign policy were subsequently reaffirmed and elucidated by Jaja Wachukwu on September 4, 1961, during his address to the Federal House of Representatives. Thus, the principles encompassed in Nigerian foreign policy are as follows: (a) the promotion of national interest and global peace; (b) the prioritisation of Africa as the focal point of Nigerian foreign policy, aiming to foster cooperation and progress among African nations and attain complete independence for all African states; (c) the advancement of international friendship, cooperation, and neutrality; (d) the recognition of the sovereign equality of all states, regardless of their size, and the adherence to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries (Ota & Ecoma, 2015).

According to Gambari (1989) and Agbu, Okereke, Wapmuk, and Adeniyi (2013), Nigeria's foreign policy has experienced several transformations since gaining independence, although its underlying principles have remained unchanged. The alterations in Nigeria's foreign policy were driven mainly by shifts in the country's leadership or head. However, despite the alterations in Nigeria's leadership, the nation is committed to an Afrocentric foreign policy prioritizing political collaboration, economic advancement, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts within the African continent (Folarin, 2013). Arguably, the personality traits, interests, and influence of leaders in Nigeria, whether they are under military or civilian leadership, have a significant role in determining the country's relationships with nations outside of Africa. These relationships, in turn, profoundly impact shaping Nigeria's foreign policy directions (Ajayi, Njoaguani, Olorunyomi & Folarin, 2015).

Furthermore, the influence of a leader's personality and interests in a country is of utmost importance in shaping the objectives of foreign policy (Levy, 2013). According to scholarly discourse, it has been posited by Gambari (2017) and Adebajo (2008) that Nigerian politicians tend to embrace the concept of four concentric circles of national interest. The initial circle is characterised as the central core, encompassing the safeguarding of Nigeria's security and the well-being of its population. Additionally, it encompasses preserving a spirit of amicable relations with neighbouring states like Chad, Benin, Niger, and Cameroon. The second circle pertained to Nigeria's diplomatic ties with West African nations within the ECOWAS subregion. Thirdly, Nigeria demonstrates a significant interest and unwavering dedication to the entirety of the African continent. Lastly, the country's engagement with organisations beyond Africa reflects its global concerns.

Under the leadership of Alhaji (Sir) Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Nigeria's inaugural Prime Minister, the country's foreign policy was strategically designed to prioritise Africa as the focal point of its diplomatic endeavours. Balewa's government implemented a foreign policy aligned with Western interests, influenced by Nigeria's historical colonial relationship with Britain (Wogu, Sholarin, & Chidozie, 2015). However, the administration of Balewa was toppled by a military regime in a coup d'état on January 15, 1966, under the leadership of General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi. The military administration led by Aguiyi-Ironsi too was overthrown after six months through a subsequent military coup, resulting in the ascension of General Yakubu Gowon as the new head of government in Nigeria (Ajayi, Njoaguani, Olorunyomi & Folarin, 2015).

During Gowon's administration, the government used a foreign policy approach similar to Balewa's pro-West stance. This involved entering treaties with several Western nations, including Britain and the United States. However, it is worth noting that Nigeria's government did not establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, as seen by the prevention of the Soviet Union from establishing an embassy in the country (Oni & Taiwo, 2016). In 1975, General Murtala Ramat Mohammad, General Olusegun Obasanjo, serving as his Chief of Staff, orchestrated a coup that resulted in the overthrow of the Gowon regime. The administration implemented a novel initiative in Nigeria's international affairs (Ewoh, 2014).

Furthermore, the administration led by General Murtala demonstrated a keen awareness of the imperialistic intentions of Western powers, particularly the United States. This led the administration to prioritize efforts to eliminate neo-colonialism, racism, and apartheid in Africa, focusing on some Portuguese colonies (Dauda et al., 2018). The commitment of Nigeria to eradicating racism during Murtala's administration was exemplified in his speech delivered at the extraordinary meeting of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) held in Addis Ababa on January 11, 1976. In his address, Murtala emphasised the profound impact of apartheid, expressing deep empathy and solidarity with fellow Africans. Hence, instead of aligning themselves with the entities advocating for self-determination and opposing racism and apartheid, the United States' policymakers deliberately prioritized the preservation of white supremacy and minority governments in Africa (Dauda et al., 2018).

According to Dickson and Ezirim (2017), the foreign policy approach implemented under Murtala's administration resulted in Nigeria's elevation as a regional force and

enhanced its significance in Africa. After the murder of General Murtala, General Obasanjo, who served as the Chief of Staff, assumed the role of Head of State in Nigeria (Folarin, 2013). According to Onyekpe (2015), the General Obasanjo government oversaw an election in 1979, resulting in the election of Alhaji Shehu Shagari as the newly elected president of Nigeria.

The Shagari government maintained adherence to the established principles of Nigerian foreign policy. Nonetheless, a further coup was orchestrated under the leadership of Generals Muhammadu Buhari and Tunde Idiagbon. On December 31, 1983, the military assumed control of the government from the Shagari administration to enhance Nigeria's international standing and diplomatic ties with other nations. In the same vein, the administration of Generals Buhari and Idiagbon was overthrown by General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida through another military coup (Dauda et al., 2018).

As submitted by Olowu (2017), the government of General Babangida was characterised by specific challenges that impacted Nigerian foreign policy. The policies implemented by the government of General Babangida, such as the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), have been deemed detrimental to Nigeria's economy. In 1993, the administration conducted an election widely regarded as accessible, fair, and legitimate. However, the outcome of this election was invalidated by the dictatorship led by General Babangida. Consequently, only Nigerians, both within the country and outside, expressed their discontent through large-scale protests and demonstrations (Adegoju, 2014).

As a result, on August 26, 1993, the regime then transferred authority to Chief Ernest Shonekan, who assumed the role of an interim administration. According to Yunusa (2016), the interim administration was ousted by a subsequent military regime under the leadership of General Sani Abacha. The government of Abacha has played a significant role in the decline of Nigeria's reputation, mainly due to its notable levels of corruption. However, the untimely demise of General Abacha on June 8, 1998, resulted in the ascension of General Abdulsalam Abubakar to power. The General presided over a general election, resulting in the election of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as the President of Nigeria on May 29, 1999 (Collier & Vicente, 2014).

During President Obasanjo's tenure, the administration engaged in a series of diplomatic visits to the world community to address Nigeria's tarnished reputation (Durotoye, 2015). Furthermore, the shuttle diplomacy conducted under Chief Obasanjo's administration provided significant assistance to Nigeria in several aspects, including the restoration of the country's reputation, the alleviation of debt by waving or cancellation, and the chance to preside over meetings of organizations such as the African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Group of 17 (G-17) (Lanre & Olumide, 2015). This opportunity supports the practice of Nigeria's foreign policy principles.

However, following Chief Obasanjo's administration, another civilian government led by Alhaji Umaru Yar'adua/Dr. Goodluck Jonathan assumed power in 2007. The administration led by Dr. Goodluck Jonathan prioritized the promotion of Nigeria's positive worldwide image before transferring power to another democratically elected government (Okeke & Anicthe, 2013). When the president assumed office in 2015, the government consistently upheld the established tenets of Nigerian foreign policy, emphasizing the need to foster peace and stability within the African continent and globally (Amuwo, 2016).

In February 2023, Nigeria had another presidential election that ushered in the current administration of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who was sworn in on May 29, 2023. The current administration promised to hit the ground running. A few months into the president's office, Asiaju Bola Ahmed has been showing interest in the Afrocentric nature of Nigeria's foreign policy. First, he was appointed s the Chairman of the West Africa regional organization, ECOWAS. Additionally, his role in the intervention of the ongoing military coup in the Niger Republic cannot be overemphasized.

Hence, from the analysis above, the consistent implementation of the ideas of Nigerian foreign policy, namely the four concentric circles, by successive governments in the country from 1960 till date serves as evidence supporting the concepts and suppositions of systems theory. Nigeria's recognition of the necessity to assist African nations or surrounding states during times of need stems from the understanding that failure to do so would impede the achievement of its national interests. Furthermore, the dedication and determination of Nigeria in achieving a portion of its foreign policy's goal of promoting peace and stability in Africa can be observed by its substantial contribution during the transition from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union (AU) among other contributions to Africa's development.

Methodology

This study adopted the explanatory qualitative research approach, The selection of this methodology is grounded in its inherent aptitude for facilitating a comprehensive exploration of the research topic, which centres on Nigeria's foreign policy and its pivotal role in African development. The rationale for employing an explanatory qualitative research approach, is rooted in its ability to delve into the complexities of the phenomenon under investigation. This aligns seamlessly with the study's aspiration to uncover the intricate nuances that define Nigeria's foreign policy stance and its influence on the developmental trajectory of Africa.

The documentary method of data collection and analysis, which entails intensive scrutiny of existing textual sources, is an effective conduit to unearth a wealth of insights and analyses. This approach is congruent with the extant body of

literature on Nigeria's foreign policy and resonates harmoniously with the study's mission to illuminate the multifaceted aspects of the subject matter. As prescribed by Creswell (2014), quoted in Ezeibe, Aniche and Iwuoha (2015) a systematic search strategy was meticulously employed to curate a corpus of materials directly relevant to the research focus. Employing a systematic search strategy is integral to ensuring the comprehensiveness and rigour of the data collection process, aligning seamlessly with the study's aspiration for depth and accuracy.

The strategic selection of search terms, such as "Nigeria foreign policy," "Africa as centrepiece of Nigeria foreign policy," "Nigeria national interest in Africa," and "foreign policy and African development," is informed by their inherent capacity to yield materials that are germane to the research objective. This aligns seamlessly with the study's commitment to tapping into a spectrum of sources that effectively address the research questions.

Source	*Title*	*Summary of Relevant Content*
Adebajo, A. (2008) Google scholar	Hegemony on a shoestring: Nigeria's post-Cold War foreign policy	Examines Nigeria's foreign policy in the post-Cold War era.
Adeniji, O. (2000) Google scholar	Essay on Nigerian foreign policy, governance, and international security	Explores Nigerian foreign policy, governance, and international security concerns.
Agbu, O., Okereke, E., Wapmuk, S., & Adeniyi, B. (2013) Researchgate	The foreign policy environment in Nigeria and implications for Nigeria-South Africa relations: Baseline study	Discusses the foreign policy environment in Nigeria and its implications for relations with South Africa.
Ajayi, L., Njoaguani, T., Olorunyomi, B., &	Nigeria's Foreign Policy and Codification of National Interest: A Prescriptive Analysis	Analyzes Nigeria's foreign policy and its alignment with national interests.
Folarin, S. (2015) Google Scholar		
Akinboye, S. O. (2013) Google Scholar	Beautiful abroad but ugly at home: Issues and contradictions in Nigeria's foreign policy	Examines issues and contradictions in Nigeria's foreign policy.
Amuwo, A. S. (2016) Researchgate	Nigeria's foreign policy before Buhari: Global expectations amid domestic and regional challenges	Discusses Nigeria's foreign policy prior to President Buhari's tenure and global expectations.
Ashaver, B. T. (2014) Academia	Concentricism in Nigeria's foreign policy	Explores the concept of concentricism in Nigeria's foreign policy.
Dauda, M., Ahmad, M. Z., & Keling, M. F. (2019) Google Scholar	Foreign policy and Afrocentrism: An appraisal of Nigeria's role	Examines Nigeria's foreign policy from an Afrocentric perspective.
Durotoye, A. (2015)	Obasanjo's personal diplomacy, the Liberian civil war and Charles Taylor's asylum in Nigeria	Focuses on Obasanjo's personal diplomacy and Nigeria's role in the Liberian civil war.
Okeke, B. V., & Aniche, E. (2014) Google Scholar	Internal political environment of Nigerian foreign policy and implementation of citizen diplomacy under Yar'Adua/Jonathan administration (2007-2011): A	Focuses on the internal political environment of Nigeria's foreign policy and citizen diplomacy under Yar'Adua/Jonathan administration.

	linkage political approach	
Lanre, A. G., & Olumide, O. A. (2015) Google Scholar	The pursuance of Nigeria's domestic and foreign policy in the Fourth Republic: complementarity or contradiction?	Examines the alignment of Nigeria's domestic and foreign policies in the Fourth Republic.

In summation, the adoption of an explanatory qualitative research approach, intertwined with the documentary method of data collection and analysis, is buttressed by the guidance of established scholars in the field. This methodological framework, reinforced by systematic search strategies and precision-selected search terms, culminates in a holistic approach to exploring the interplay between Nigeria's foreign policy and Africa's developmental trajectory.

Nigeria's foreign policy role in Africa's (2010-2022)

For many years, Nigeria has exerted a substantial influence on the trajectory of Africa's growth using its foreign policy endeavors. A combination of favorable circumstances and obstacles characterised this. Nigeria's endeavors demonstrated its dedication to maintaining peace within the continent, fostering economic development, and assuming a diplomatic leadership role. One area of focus in this regard is the area of regional leadership and mediation. Nigeria has demonstrated its commitment to regional leadership by actively engaging in conflict mediation and resolution efforts. Furthermore, Nigeria's engagement in conflict mediation, shown by its role in addressing the crises in Mali, Libya, the Central African Republic, and the current Niger Republic ongoing coup, demonstrates its dedication to fostering peace and stability within the African continent. Also, the contributions made by Nigeria to the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU) exemplify the country's commitment to addressing security concerns via joint efforts.

In terms of economic diplomacy, the Nigerian government has acknowledged the significance of economic diplomacy as a means of fostering growth. The nation aimed to strengthen its trading links with other African countries by implementing strategies such as the African Continental Free Trading Area (AfCFTA). Furthermore, Nigeria's objective in supporting economic integration was to enable intra-African commerce and stimulate economic growth throughout the continent.

In the areas of counterterrorism and security cooperation, Nigeria has contributed to Africa's development. The endeavors undertaken by Nigeria to address the challenges of terrorism and extremism were of paramount importance. The nation's proactive involvement in countering Boko Haram in the Lake Chad area demonstrates its dedication to tackling security concerns. Nigeria has always tried to strengthen regional security coordination through collaborative alliances with neighboring nations and multilateral organisations. Similarly, Nigeria has actively provided development aid to several African states. The country has actively engaged in several endeavors, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), to promote effective governance, sustainable economic advancement, and inclusive societal progress throughout the African continent.

Consequently, Nigeria maintained its engagement in many international organisations, including the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Nigeria's participation in these organisations facilitated its ability to champion regional interests, exchange optimal strategies, and engage in cooperative endeavours for development. Lastly, Nigeria has acknowledged the potential of its diaspora in making significant contributions to development endeavours. Several initiatives have been introduced to involve the Nigerian diaspora to leverage their skills, investments, and remittances to promote economic and social development in Nigeria and other African countries.

In summary, Nigeria's foreign policy has assumed a varied role in the growth of Africa for many years now. It is also important to note that despite encountering domestic issues that periodically impacted its diplomatic efficacy, Nigeria has shown a solid dedication to fostering a wealthy and secure Africa through its active engagement in conflict resolution, economic integration, and security cooperation.

Recommendations

Drawing upon the comprehensive findings and cogent conclusions elucidated within this study, several imperative recommendations emerge to guide Nigeria's foreign policy trajectory and engender congruence with the discernible themes permeating the abstract, introduction, and conclusion.

Nigeria must unwaveringly commit to optimizing its contributions to the African continent, catalysing regional advancement, and cultivating internal tranquillity. This mandate underscores Nigeria's pivotal role as a catalyst for regional stability, echoing the essence of its Afrocentric foreign policy. The imperative of harmonizing domestic stability with continental progress stands vividly illuminated across the study's narrative.

Equally pivotal, the Nigerian government is entreated to proactively identify and ameliorate the fundamental underpinnings that foment socio-political tensions within its national fabric. This resonates seamlessly with the conclusion, encapsulating the imperative of fostering internal unity while furthering Africa's developmental trajectory. By orchestrating pragmatic and resolute measures, Nigeria's standing on the global stage can be fortified, attesting to its

unwavering commitment to the ideals enshrined within its foreign policy.

Moreover, the thrust of Nigeria's foreign affairs institutions and embassies stationed abroad must remain steadfast in consistently advancing Nigeria's foreign policy objectives. This concerted pursuit aligns seamlessly with Nigeria's constitutional aims, enshrining the nation's influence within the international order. Resonating with the core premise of sustained contributions to Africa's development, these foreign missions are Nigeria's diplomatic legacy custodians.

In closing, the holistic orchestration of Nigeria's foreign policy endeavours necessitates the fusion of pragmatic economic diplomacy. The concentric circles that underpin Nigeria's strategic foreign policy architecture ought to harmonize with economic imperatives, seamlessly interwoven into the fabric of diplomatic engagements. This fusion augment Nigeria's capacity to harness its potential as a regional leader and foster holistic development, thereby attaining congruence with the multifaceted contributions discerned within this study.

Conclusion

Nigeria's foreign policy serves as a strategic instrument the nation employs to pursue its national interests. However, the concentric structure of Nigeria's foreign policy has influenced the trajectory of its policy to be Afrocentric, resulting in the country consistently prioritising Africa's interests in all its domestic and international affairs and decision-making processes. Consequently, Africa has emerged as the focal point of Nigeria's foreign policy, leading the country to demonstrate a steadfast dedication to advancing and maintaining security and development within the African continent. Additionally, Nigeria has accomplished significant accomplishments with its Afrocentric foreign policy towards the continent, including fostering unity and collaboration, promoting peace and stability, and providing developmental resources primarily to regions characterised by harmonious relationships. This has facilitated the achievement of some African Union (AU) objectives across the continent. Nigeria's decision to engage in this action might be seen as a means of safeguarding itself against the potential repercussions of war zones, including challenges related to refugees, social issues, militancy, and insecurity, among other factors. This paper concluded that Nigeria's contribution to Africa is all-encompassing, ranging from active participation in regional leadership, economic diplomacy, counterterrorism, security cooperation, poverty eradication, and membership maintenance in international organisations.

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