

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

In the contemporary global system, nations increasingly rely on strategic alliances to advance their developmental goals, enhance security, and improve their standing in international affairs (Ogbonnaya & Aremu, 2021; Okon & Udoh, 2023). Strategic alliances—ranging from bilateral and multilateral agreements to regional and global partnerships have become essential instruments in shaping national growth trajectories, especially for countries in the Global South. For developing countries like Nigeria, which seek to achieve economic diversification, political stability, and enhanced global influence, foreign partnerships offer opportunities to attract foreign direct investment (FDI), access advanced technologies, and gain diplomatic leverage (Adeniyi, 2022; Eze & Chukwuma, 2020).

Nigeria, as Africa's most populous nation and one of its largest economies, has historically played a prominent role in regional and continental diplomacy. Since independence in 1960, the country's foreign policy has evolved—from the Afrocentric emphasis of the First Republic to more pragmatic, interest-driven approaches in recent years (Ojo & Adetula, 2019). Nigeria's active participation in organizations such as the African Union (AU), ECOWAS, the United Nations, and OPEC; its history of peacekeeping missions; and numerous bilateral trade and security agreements underscore its strategic use of diplomacy for national development objectives (Ibrahim & Onuoha, 2021).

However, despite these engagements, Nigeria continues to face critical developmental challenges, including infrastructure deficits, widespread unemployment, insecurity, and economic volatility. These persistent issues have raised concerns about the effectiveness of Nigeria's foreign policy and whether its strategic alliances have translated into meaningful national growth outcomes (Ibeanu & Ifedi, 2023; Ugwueze, 2024). While Nigeria has forged significant partnerships particularly with China, the United States, the European Union, and neighboring African states the sustainability and developmental impact of these alliances remain contested and warrant closer academic scrutiny.

This study, therefore, seeks to critically analyze Nigeria's foreign policy directions with a focus on its strategic alliances and their implications for national growth. It aims to identify the patterns, successes, and limitations of Nigeria's diplomatic engagements and assess how these alliances have influenced the nation's economic, political, and security development. By doing so, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the interplay between foreign policy and national development in a rapidly changing global order.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite Nigeria's active engagement in global and regional affairs through various strategic alliances, the country continues to grapple with slow economic growth, insecurity, poor infrastructure, and a weak industrial base. Over the years, Nigeria has entered into multiple bilateral and multilateral partnerships with global powers such as China, the United States, and the European Union, and within regional bodies like ECOWAS and the African Union. These alliances are often touted as avenues for promoting investment, securing peace, and advancing technological and diplomatic cooperation.

However, the translation of these strategic alliances into measurable national growth remains ambiguous. For instance, while the Nigeria-China partnership has led to visible infrastructural projects, it has also raised concerns about debt sustainability, job creation for locals, and policy dependence. Similarly, security alliances have not substantially curbed the persistent insurgency in the North-East or widespread banditry in other regions.

There is a noticeable gap between the formulation of foreign policy and its practical outcomes, particularly regarding how strategic international relationships contribute to domestic development. This problem is further compounded by a lack of policy continuity, limited institutional capacity, and poor monitoring and evaluation of foreign engagements. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by analyzing the directions of Nigeria's foreign policy through the lens of its strategic alliances and evaluating their actual impact on national growth. The goal is to provide evidence-based insight into how Nigeria can better align its diplomatic efforts with developmental outcomes.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- i. identify the strategic alliances Nigeria has formed with other countries and international organizations.
- ii. assess the impact of these alliances on Nigeria's economic development, political stability, and security architecture.
- iii. evaluate the effectiveness of Nigeria's foreign policy in promoting national interests through strategic partnerships.
- iv. identify the challenges and limitations facing Nigeria in leveraging foreign policy for sustainable national growth.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What are the strategic alliances Nigeria has formed in recent decades, and what are their objectives?
- ii. In what ways have these alliances influenced Nigeria's economic growth, political stability, and national security?
- iii. How effective is Nigeria's foreign policy in aligning strategic partnerships with domestic development goals?
- iv. What challenges hinder the effectiveness of Nigeria's foreign policy in achieving sustainable national development?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. From a policy standpoint, it offers critical insights for decision-makers within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other diplomatic institutions on how to structure and manage strategic alliances that yield tangible development outcomes. By analyzing Nigeria's foreign policy directions, the study contributes to reshaping national diplomacy to better reflect the country's development priorities. Academically, it fills a major knowledge gap by explicitly linking strategic alliances with national growth outcomes in the Nigerian context. This contribution not only enriches the literature on foreign policy analysis in developing countries but also opens new avenues for comparative research in international relations.

Furthermore, the study provides actionable guidance for diplomats, foreign missions, and international development practitioners by offering recommendations for evaluating the effectiveness of current partnerships and identifying areas for realignment. It also promotes public awareness and civic engagement by clarifying the impact of foreign policy decisions on national development, thereby encouraging more informed participation in international cooperation issues. Lastly, the research serves as a foundational reference for future scholarly work on foreign policy, strategic partnerships, and regional integration efforts across Africa.

1.6 Scope and Limitations

This study examines the role of strategic alliances in promoting national growth through the lens of Nigeria's foreign policy between 1999 and 2024. It focuses on Nigeria's bilateral and multilateral engagements with major global actors (such as China, the United States, and the European Union) and its participation in key regional and international organizations like ECOWAS, the African Union (AU), and the United Nations (UN). The study explores how these foreign policy directions have influenced economic diversification, security cooperation, technological exchange, and infrastructural development. The research draws on official documents, policy statements, academic literature, and relevant data to assess the extent to which these alliances align with Nigeria's national development objectives. Additionally, it incorporates perspectives from international relations theories—particularly realism and liberal institutionalism to analyze Nigeria's diplomatic strategies and their developmental implications.

Despite its broad relevance, the study faces several limitations. First, the analysis is limited by the availability and accessibility of up-to-date and comprehensive government records, diplomatic communiqués, and partnership outcome reports, which may constrain the accuracy of assessing the actual impact of foreign alliances. Second, the study does not cover every strategic alliance Nigeria has entered but focuses on selected partnerships with significant developmental implications. Third, while the research highlights foreign policy directions, it does not extensively analyze internal political, bureaucratic, or implementation challenges that may influence foreign policy outcomes. Lastly, due to time and resource constraints, primary data collection from policymakers and diplomats is limited, and the study relies primarily on secondary sources and qualitative content analysis. These limitations notwithstanding, the study offers valuable insights into the intersection of diplomacy and national development within the Nigerian context.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

- i. *Strategic Alliances*: Bilateral relations, multilateral agreements, regional partnerships (e.g., ECOWAS, AU, UN).
- ii. *Foreign Policy Directions*: Diplomatic priorities, policy implementation, leadership engagement.
- iii. *National Growth Indicators*: Economic performance, infrastructure development, political stability, national security.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews various works of Scholars on strategic alliances, foreign policy and national growth. The chapter consists of three sections, namely; conceptual and empirical reviews and the theoretical framework.

2.1.1 Conceptual Discourse

i. Strategic Alliances

Strategic alliances are defined as formal agreements between nations to pursue shared goals while retaining individual sovereignty. These may include security partnerships, economic cooperation, technology transfers, and diplomatic collaborations.

ii. Foreign Policy

According to Nye (2017), foreign policy shapes the strategic orientation of states, determining how they interact with others to achieve national objectives. Alliances serve as instruments through which states project power, secure resources, and manage geopolitical risks.

iii. Nigeria's Foreign Policy: Historical Context: Nigeria's foreign policy has evolved across different administrations. The First Republic was marked by a strong Afrocentric focus, aiming to support liberation movements and African unity (Aluko, 1981). The post-military and democratic eras saw a shift toward economic diplomacy, with emphasis on attracting foreign investment and expanding trade. Under various administrations including those of Obasanjo, Jonathan, and Buhari Nigeria has sought strategic partnerships with countries like China, the U.S., India, and multilateral bodies (Adebajo, 2014).

iv. Strategic Alliances and National Development

Ogwu (2016) argue that strategic alliances enhance a nation's ability to access foreign capital, expertise, and markets. Nigeria's collaboration with China under the Belt and Road Initiative has brought significant infrastructure investments. However, critics argue that such alliances often lack transparency and accountability, undermining their developmental potential (Okolie & Ugwueze, 2020). Furthermore, alliances in the ECOWAS region have helped in conflict resolution and peacekeeping, especially in countries like Liberia and Sierra Leone showing the link between regional diplomacy and national/regional security.

2.2 Empirical Review

Adebajo (2010) assessed Nigeria's foreign policy in West Africa and concluded that while Nigeria plays a leading role in regional peacekeeping and diplomacy, its strategic alliances often lack alignment with concrete economic development outcomes. This observation aligns with the recurring critique that Nigeria's foreign policy has been more symbolic than pragmatic. Similarly, Ogunnubi and Okeke-Uzodike (2016) examined Nigeria–South Africa relations, revealing that despite shared leadership aspirations on the continent, internal political tensions and policy inconsistencies have hindered meaningful developmental gains from this strategic partnership.

Ezirim (2021) conducted a quantitative evaluation of Nigeria–China bilateral relations, demonstrating a positive correlation between strategic Chinese investments in infrastructure and Nigeria's economic growth metrics. However, the study also raised concerns about growing debt dependency and the opaque nature of some bilateral agreements. Likewise, Omede and Bakare (2014) reviewed Nigeria–United States relations in the context of security cooperation and found that while U.S. support has strengthened Nigeria's counterterrorism capacity, gaps in mutual trust and inconsistencies in domestic policy have reduced the long-term benefits of the alliance. Beyond Nigeria, Obasi (2022) analyzed strategic alliances in the ECOWAS region and found that countries that actively engage in structured regional partnerships experience more consistent economic growth due to shared infrastructure, trade incentives, and diplomatic coordination. This finding reinforces the value of multilateralism promoted by liberal institutionalist theory.

Despite these contributions, most of the studies reviewed have focused on bilateral relations or security-oriented partnerships without a holistic analysis of how strategic alliances impact broader national development indicators such as industrial growth, technology transfer, or governance reform. Moreover, few studies integrate theoretical frameworks like realism or liberalism to interpret Nigeria's foreign policy behavior. This study, therefore, fills a crucial gap by evaluating Nigeria's strategic alliances through both empirical data and theoretical interpretation, focusing on their alignment with national development goals from 1999 to 2024.

2.3 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.

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study will adopt a descriptive research design, using both qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed-methods approach). This design enables an in-depth analysis of Nigeria’s strategic alliances and their impact on national growth, while incorporating both policy analysis and stakeholder perspectives.

3.2 Population and Sample

The study population of 180 includes personnel from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), foreign policy analysts, academics in international relations, and diplomatic corps. A purposive sampling technique will be used to select 123 participants, ensuring representation across key stakeholder groups.

3.3 Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling will be used to select knowledgeable respondents. Stratified sampling may be applied to categorize participants by affiliation (e.g., government, academia, diplomacy, policy institutes).

3.4 Sources of Data

- i. Primary Data: Structured questionnaires with foreign policy experts and government officials.
- ii. Secondary Data: Review of official documents, foreign policy white papers, MoUs, treaties, and reports from ECOWAS, AU, and other relevant institutions.

3.5 Instruments for Data Collection

A questionnaire will be developed with both closed- and open-ended questions.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

The instruments will be validated through expert review. A pilot test will be conducted with 30 respondents. Reliability will be measured using Cronbach's Alpha for internal consistency of survey items.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data from questionnaires will be analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentages, means) and inferential statistics (e.g., regression analysis using SPSS).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Informed consent will be obtained from all participants. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained. Ethical approval will be sought from a relevant institutional review board.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes the data collected in relation to the objectives of the study. The data were obtained through structured questionnaires, interviews, or other instruments as specified in the methodology. The purpose of this section is to examine the responses and patterns emerging from the data to assess their alignment with the research questions or hypotheses formulated. Descriptive and inferential statistical tools (such as frequency tables, percentages, charts, and where applicable, regression analysis) are employed to give clarity and depth to the findings. The analysis is guided by the need to draw meaningful insights into the relationship between strategic alliances, foreign policy choices, and national growth.

4.2 Data Presentation

Table 4.2.1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.892	26

The reliability result presented in the table indicates that the questionnaire, which consists of 26 items, has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.892. This value demonstrates a high level of internal consistency among the items, suggesting that they reliably measure the same underlying construct. In general, a Cronbach's Alpha value between 0.8 and 0.9 is considered good, and a value above 0.9 is regarded as excellent. Therefore, a score of 0.892 falls within the "good" range, implying that the items are well-correlated and the questionnaire is dependable for research purposes. This level of reliability supports the use of the instrument in evaluating perceptions or attitudes toward Nigeria's foreign policy, strategic alliances, or related topics.

Table 4.2.2: Strategic alliances Nigeria has formed with other countries and international organizations.

S/N	Items	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	Remark
1	Nigeria's strategic alliances with other countries have positively influenced its economic development.	29 (26.1%)	30 (27%)	6 (5.4%)	26 (23.4%)	20 (18%)	111 (100%)	Disagree

2	Partnerships with international organizations have enhanced Nigeria's global diplomatic relevance.	10 (9%)	9 (9.1%)	7 (6.3%)	59 (53.2%)	26 (23.4%)	111 (100%))	Agree
3	The Nigerian government effectively leverages strategic alliances for national security improvement.	4 (3.6%)	14 (12.6%)	4 (3.6%)	65 (58.6%)	24 (21.6%)	111 (100%)	Agree
4	Nigeria's collaborations with foreign countries align well with its national interests.	9 (8.1%)	19 (17.1%)	1 (.9%)	48 (43.2%)	34 (30.6%)	111 (100%)	Agree
5	The outcomes of Nigeria's international alliances are effectively communicated to the public.	13 (11.7%)	20 (18%)	7 (6.3%)	40 (36%)	31 (27.9%)	111 (100%)	Agree
6	Strategic alliances have led to significant technological and educational advancements in Nigeria.	28 (25.2%)	24 (21.6%)	8 (7.2%)	40 (36%)	11 (9.9%)	111 (100%)	Agree

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

The data presented in the table offers insight into respondents' perceptions of Nigeria's strategic alliances with other countries and international organizations. Out of six items assessed using a Likert scale, five were rated with an overall "Agree" remark, while one received a "Disagree" rating. Specifically, the first item, Nigeria's strategic alliances with other countries have positively influenced its economic development was disagreed with by a slight majority (26.1% strongly disagreed and 27% disagreed), resulting in a total of 53.1% negative responses, leading to a "Disagree" remark.

In contrast, all other items reflected general agreement. For instance, Item 2, which evaluates whether partnerships with international organizations have enhanced Nigeria's global diplomatic relevance, had a strong agreement level (53.2% agree, 23.4% strongly agree). Similarly, Item 3 on leveraging alliances for national security showed high agreement (58.6% agree and 21.6% strongly agree), suggesting confidence in the government's efforts in this area. Item 4, which explores alignment with national interests, also drew majority agreement (73.8% combined agree and strongly agree), as did Item 5, concerning public communication of alliance outcomes (63.9%).

However, Item 6, regarding technological and educational advancement through alliances, was more mixed, with 46.8% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing and 45.9% agreeing or strongly agreeing, yet it still received an overall "Agree" remark likely due to the relative strength of the "Agree" responses. Overall, the responses indicate a generally positive perception of Nigeria's strategic alliances, particularly in diplomacy, security, and alignment with national interests, though skepticism remains around economic outcomes and technological benefits.

Table 4.2.3: The impact of alliances on Nigeria's economic development, political stability, and security architecture

S/N	Items	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	Remark
1	Strategic alliances have contributed significantly to Nigeria's economic growth and investment opportunities.	23 (20.7%)	80 (72.1%)	4 (3.6%)	2 (1.8%)	2 (1.8%)	111 (100%)	Disagree
2	Foreign partnerships have helped stabilize Nigeria's political institutions and governance.	2 (1.8%)	13 (11.7%)	7 (6.3%)	54 (48.6%)	35 (31.5%)	111 (100%)	Agree
3	Nigeria's security architecture has improved due to international defense and security collaborations.	3 (2.7%)	7 (6.3%)	5 (4.5%)	62 (55.9%)	34 (30.6%)	111 (100%)	Agree
4	Nigeria's political system has become more resilient as a result of international diplomatic engagement.	2 (1.8%)	25 (22.5%)	6 (5.4%)	49 (44.1%)	29 (26.1%)	111 (100%)	Agree

5	Joint security operations and intelligence sharing through alliances have enhanced national security.	5 (4.5%)	17 (15.3%)	2 (1.8%)	69 (62.2%)	18 (16.2%)	111 (100%)	Agree
6	Economic policies influenced by international alliances have positively impacted local industries.	12 (10.8%)	16 (14.4%)	3 (2.7%)	50 (45%)	30 (27%)	111 (100%)	Agree

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

The data from the second table evaluates respondents' perceptions of the impact of alliances on Nigeria's economic development, political stability, and security architecture. Out of the six questionnaire items, five received an overall "Agree" remark, indicating positive perceptions, while one was rated "Disagree", highlighting concerns in a specific area.

Item 1, which states that strategic alliances have contributed significantly to Nigeria's economic growth and investment opportunities, was overwhelmingly disagreed with (20.7% strongly disagreed and 72.1% disagreed), totaling 92.8% negative responses. This suggests a strong perception among respondents that strategic alliances have not yet translated into tangible economic growth or increased investments at the national level.

Conversely, Items 2 to 6 all received predominantly positive responses. Item 2—on foreign partnerships stabilizing Nigeria's political institutions—had 80.1% agreement (48.6% agree and 31.5% strongly agree), indicating strong support for the political benefits of international collaboration. Item 3 shows that a large majority (86.5%) believe that Nigeria's security architecture has improved due to international defense and security collaborations. Similarly, Item 4 on political resilience through diplomatic engagement had 70.2% agreement, though it also saw a notable 22.5% disagreeing, suggesting some skepticism remains. Item 5, which focuses on joint security operations and intelligence sharing, was rated positively by 78.4% of respondents, reinforcing the perception that international alliances have strengthened Nigeria's security framework. Finally, Item 6, concerning the impact of international economic policies on local industries, also received an "Agree" remark, with 72% of respondents expressing agreement or strong agreement.

Table 4.2.4: 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 partnerships pursued under Nigeria's foreign policy have improved the country's global image.	5 (4.5%)	15 (13.5%)	5 (4.5%)	63 (56.8%)	23 (20.7%)	111 (100%)	Agree

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 4.2.5: 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 hinder Nigeria from fully benefiting from international partnerships.	10 (9%)	19 (17.1%)	4 (3.6%)	57 (51.4%)	21 (18.9%)	111 (100%)	Agree

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.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

Nigeria's strategic alliances reveals a largely positive perception, particularly in areas of diplomacy, security, and national interest alignment. Out of six items, five received an "Agree" rating, affirming respondents' confidence in the benefits of international cooperation. A significant proportion agreed that alliances with international organizations have enhanced Nigeria's global diplomatic relevance (76.6%), bolstered national security (80.2%), and supported national interest alignment (73.8%). These findings align with Adetula (2019) and Eze & Ukeje (2020), who argue that Nigeria's strategic partnerships especially with regional bodies like ECOWAS and global institutions such as the UN have elevated its diplomatic visibility and reinforced regional security frameworks. The public's perception that Nigeria is effectively leveraging these alliances for security gains is echoed in Akinboye & Adebisi (2021), who note that joint military training, anti-terrorism efforts, and intelligence-sharing agreements have enhanced Nigeria's internal security, especially in counter-terrorism operations. Conversely, skepticism remains about economic returns. The disagreement with Item 1 (53.1% disagreed that alliances have improved economic development) reflects wider concerns in the literature. For instance, Oni & Ayodele (2022) assert that while Nigeria has formed numerous bilateral and multilateral economic partnerships, the

impact on trade diversification and domestic industrial growth has been minimal due to policy inconsistency and corruption. This also aligns with Okonkwo (2023), who argues that Nigeria often enters economic alliances from a position of weakness, limiting the strategic advantage gained from such partnerships. Technological and educational outcomes from alliances also received mixed feedback (45.9% agreement vs. 46.8% disagreement). This ambivalence is consistent with Yahaya & Danjuma (2020), who contend that while foreign technical aid and educational exchange programs exist, their scalability and impact on national development are still constrained by domestic underinvestment and poor coordination.

Findings from objective two shows that in Nigeria's political and security partnerships through strategic alliances, but noting persistent challenges in translating these alliances into meaningful economic growth. Adeniyi and Olayiwola (2022) found that Nigeria's involvement in regional and international security frameworks, such as the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and ECOWAS-led missions, has led to improved tactical coordination and enhanced national security, echoing respondents' agreement in Items 3 and 5. They argue that these alliances have been instrumental in mitigating transnational threats like terrorism and piracy. Similarly, Okonkwo (2023) emphasized that Nigeria's diplomatic engagement especially with global bodies like the United Nations and African Union has fostered greater political legitimacy and institutional development. This reflects the 80.1% and 70.2% agreement levels seen in Items 2 and 4 on political stability and resilience.

However, Mohammed and Adebayo (2021) observed that while Nigeria continues to sign bilateral and multilateral economic agreements, the benefits have largely failed to trickle down due to weak implementation, poor infrastructure, and policy inconsistency. This supports the strong disagreement (92.8%) with Item 1 regarding the contribution of strategic alliances to economic growth. Eze and Uche (2022) assert that although foreign economic policies have occasionally provided sector-specific gains (e.g., in agriculture and technology), they are often not comprehensive enough to drive nationwide industrialization a nuance reflected in Item 6, where 72% agreed on the impact on local industries, yet broader economic transformation remains in doubt.

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 scholarly perspectives. These scholars have identified similar constraints and concerns that hinder the full potential of Nigeria's foreign policy. Adewale and Ojo (2023) discuss 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.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study explored the impact of Nigeria's strategic alliances, foreign policy effectiveness, and the challenges hindering the country's ability to leverage international relations for sustainable national growth. The findings reveal a mixed perception among respondents. While most agreed that Nigeria's international partnerships have contributed positively to diplomatic relevance, national security, and alignment with national interests, there was skepticism regarding their economic impact. Respondents felt that these alliances have not led to tangible economic growth or technological advancements. Regarding the influence of strategic partnerships, respondents generally viewed them as beneficial to Nigeria's political stability, security, and diplomatic standing. However, concerns were raised about the contribution of these alliances to economic growth and the impact on local industries.

In terms of foreign policy effectiveness, the study found that Nigeria's foreign policy is often seen as misaligned with national interests, with many respondents disagreeing that the policy effectively promotes the country's objectives. Nevertheless, there was more support for the adaptability of Nigeria's foreign policy and the proactive nature of its diplomatic engagements. The study also revealed significant challenges to Nigeria's foreign policy implementation, including inconsistent policy execution, inadequate public awareness, political instability, dependence on

foreign aid, and insufficient funding. Respondents also highlighted the role of corruption and weak institutional frameworks as barriers to fully capitalizing on international partnerships. However, despite these challenges, there was confidence in Nigeria's diplomatic capacity, indicating that improvements could be made through better governance and stronger institutional frameworks.

5.2 Conclusion

This 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. There is also a need for more transparent, consistent, and development-focused diplomacy.

5.3 Recommendations

Strategic alliances should be guided by clearly defined national priorities such as economic diversification, security enhancement, and technological advancement. This calls for close collaboration between the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget, and National Planning, and the National Economic Council to ensure that all foreign engagements directly support Nigeria's medium- and long-term development strategies. The capacity of institutions involved in foreign policy formulation and implementation must be enhanced to improve their negotiation strength, monitoring capability, and evaluation of international agreements. Key bodies such as 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 must 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. There is a need to establish a robust framework for regularly assessing the outcomes of strategic alliances and how they contribute to key national development indicators such as foreign direct investment (FDI), job creation, and infrastructure development. 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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