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# NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND NATIONAL INTEREST UNDER THE MUAHMMADU BUHARI ADMINISTATION, 2015-2023

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**ABSTARCT**
This paper assessed Nigeria's foreign policy and national interest under the Muhammadu Buhari Administration from 2015 to 2023. The study objectives were to examine the impact of foreign policy on Nigeria's national interest under the Muhammadu Buhari administration, ascertain the challenges that the implementation of Nigeria's policy under the Muhammadu Buhari administration and proffer solutions to the challenges faced by the Muhammadu Buhari administration with regards to Nigeria's foreign policy. This research addresses national interest, foreign policy, and external relations gaps, omissions, and issues raised by scholars and policymakers under the Muhammadu Buhari administration. The social constructivism theory served as theoretical framework while descriptive research design was adopted while the social constructivism theory served as theoretical framework. The finding reveals. Data for the study were obtained from secondary and primary sources. The sample size of the study was 400. A total of 400 questionnaire copies were administered to respondents and 317 were returned. The paper identified a number of challenges in Muhammadu Buhari's foreign policy. These bottle necks were lack of institutional capacities, inadequate monitoring, political intervention, lack of well-defined policy frameworks, insurgency, terrorism and corruption, the study recommends improved institutional capacity and bureaucratic efficiency to overcome institutional insufficiency and inefficiency. Also, to improve poor public and stakeholder engagement, the government must actively include citizens, civil society, and key stakeholders in policymaking and execution.
**Keywords**: Diplomatic Relations; Foreign Policy; Global Influence; Institutional capacity; National Interest.

## Introduction

Foreign policy is mostly driven by national interest. Foreign policy cannot be conducted in a vacuum since it is fundamentally concerned with defending and advancing the national interests of a nation. Every country's foreign policy serves or should serve its own interests (Eze 2010). Foreign policy is regularly regarded as the basis upon which all global international relations are carried out. It also formulated to fulfill the dreams of national interest, which in an actual sense relates to those interests which can be basic to the all-round development politically, economically, socio-culturally and psychologically of the precise state or country (Adeniran, 2007).

Both Levy (2013) and Aning, Abdallah, and Kofi (2017) agree that a state's foreign policy is a vital tool for interacting with both other state and non-state entities in the global arena. The broad strategy that a country utilizes to promote and safeguard its own national interests is known as its foreign policy. Over the course of several administrations and changes in leadership, Nigeria's foreign policy has evolved repeatedly. Levy (2013), Fawcett (2016), and Musa, Bashir, and Bello (2017) all claim that the characteristics of the government and the leader of the country have a major role in shaping this occurrence.

The principles governing Nigeria's international relations have changed throughout the country's history since 1960, yet they have remained constant (Gambari, 2015). When it comes to international politics and diplomacy, every country has its own unique set of national interests that it actively pursues (Folarin, 2010; Morgenthau, 1989). Aspiring global giants like Nigeria and others should have clear goals in mind.

This paper is meant to serve as a roadmap for their future actions. In addition, it is crucial that these countries clearly articulate their national commitments and interests. Ambitious nations with substantial worldwide influence, such as the United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China, sometimes issue formal texts outlining their national ambitions in international affairs. Major political parties, NGOs, and individual people all have well-defined plans in place. Many people believe that Nigeria should keep moving forward because of the positive impact it has had on Africa and the globe and because of the lofty goals it has set for its foreign policy.Each country is a prominent participant in international politics and pursues its own unique set of national interests in its dealings with other countries (Folarin, 2010; Morgenthau, 1989). If Nigeria and other countries want to join the ranks of the world's elite, they will need a strategy to get there.

President Buhari earned the nickname "Jet-Setting President" due to his shuttle diplomacy between various nations shortly after taking office in 2015. This was primarily due to the fact that he spent 25 percent of his first 100 days in office travelling to different nations to advance the national economy. Immediately after taking office, the president accepted the role of serving as the nation's top diplomat and foreign policy advisor in order to reposition Nigeria in the world. This is largely attributable to the international landscape in which Buhari found himself; according to Aning et al. (2017), this environment was marked by declining oil prices, terrorism and counterterrorism, nuclear accords, and neo-liberalism, among other things. Maintaining positive ties with Nigeria's neighbours while pursuing economic growth has been President Muhammadu Buhari's top priority when it comes to foreign policy. This research examines Nigeria’s foreign policy and national interest under the erstwhile Muhammadu Buhari administration.

**Statement of the Problem**

Numerous studies have demonstrated that governments may successfully manage their international relations and protect their vital national interests by developing and implementing foreign relations strategies. National interests include protecting a nation's boundaries, achieving its economic, military, diplomatic, and strategic goals, and upholding any other ideals deemed important by the government (Folarin, 2014). Nigeria's global actions will likely be determined by its national interests.The disorganized Nigerian public doubts prior presidents' national interest proclamations.

Since 1960, Nigerian governments have pledged to advance national interests in international affairs with focus on the country’s socioeconomic status or self-interest. As long as the state is a society with different social classes, the ruling class's interests will remain the state's national interests, according to Igwe (2007). Since independence, Nigeria's foreign policy has been ineffective due to a lack of skilled leadership, according to Orizu (1996). This research addresses national interest, foreign policy, and external relations gaps, omissions, and issues raised by scholars and policymakers.

In light of the foregoing, this study aims to investigate Nigeria’s foreign policy and national interest under the erstwhile Muhammadu Buhari administration.

**Research Questions**

(a) What was the impact of foreign policy on Nigeria’s national interest under the Muhammadu Buhari administration?
(b) What were the challenges in the implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy under Muhammadu Buhari administration?
(c) What was the solution to the challenges faced by the Muhammadu Buhari administration with regards to Nigeria's foreign policy?

**Research Objectives**

The objectives of this study is to investigate Nigeria’s foreign policy and national interest under the Muhammadu Buhari Administration, while the specific objectives were to:

(a) Examine the impact of foreign policy on Nigeria's national interest under the Muhammadu Buhari administration.
(b) Ascertain the challenges that the implementation of Nigeria's policy under the Muhammadu Buhari administration
(c) Proffer solutions to the challenges faced by the Muhammadu Buhari administration with regards to Nigeria's foreign policy

**Significance of the Study**

The study on foreign policy and Nigeria's national interest, specifically focusing on the appraisal of the Muhammadu Buhari administration, holds significant importance for several reasons. Here are some key points to consider:

Examining the foreign policy pursued by the Buhari administration provides insights into Nigeria's approach to international relations during his tenure. It helps to analyze the goals, priorities, and strategies adopted by the Nigerian government to safeguard and promote the country's interests on the global stage.
The study allows for an evaluation of the extent to which the Buhari administration's foreign policy decisions were aligned with Nigeria's national interests. This assessment helps to gauge the effectiveness of the government's efforts in protecting and advancing Nigeria's economic, political, security, and developmental objectives on the international arena.

The study provides an opportunity to evaluate the diplomatic engagements undertaken by the Buhari administration by assessing Nigeria's bilateral relations with key countries, its participation in regional and global organizations, and its role in mediating conflicts and fostering regional stability.

**Scope of the Study**

This study examined the foreign policy and Nigerian national interest under the Muhammadu Buhari administration, from 2015 to 2023. However, the research was limited to the foreign policy under President Buhari administration.

**Literature Review**

**Foreign Policy**

In the disciplines of politics, history, international relations, and diplomacy, "foreign policy" is frequently used to describe the relationships and exchanges that occur between nations. Adnan (2014) contends that the concept should be divided down into its component parts foreign and policy for a fuller understanding. In light of this, she defines policy as "a deliberate choice or a set of guidelines for making strategic decisions in order to achieve one's objectives."

The term "foreign" is used to characterize areas that are not governed by a particular nation's government. Adnan (2014) asserts that Ibrahim & Ibrahim (2017) propose expanding the definition of "policymakers" to include NGOs, commercial corporations, and individuals operating at both the local and international levels.

Ezirim (2010), a nation's foreign policy is its approach to national security, diplomatic relations, and economic globalization as a whole. Diplomacy is the practice of negotiating relationships among states, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and individuals. Three pillars comprise a state's foreign policy, (Adeniran, 2007). It is essential to consider a nation's global perspective and policy objectives in relation to another nation. The second aspect relates to a nation's administration or international relations objectives. The third aspect of foreign policy concerns the means by which particular objectives are attained. A nation's foreign policy comprises the concepts, objectives, and specific instruments that it employs to develop and maintain relationships with other nations. The interaction of domestic and international factors leads to the formulation of foreign policy. The promotion and defence of national interests are typically its

primary objectives. These interests include maintaining national sovereignty, protecting territorial integrity, advancing economic, military, and diplomatic interests, and preserving power and prestige to demonstrate one's ability to engage with potential allies and genuine adversaries in international affairs (Daud, 2014).

**National Interest**

The term "national interest" has been defined in a variety of ways by researchers of foreign policy. Considering the existing state of affairs, there is no agreed upon definition of the term. Rosati (2006) gargues against the idea that anything may be generally considered "national." The acknowledgement of competing private, social, economic, and national interests within any particular state forms the basis of this analysis. As was initially envisioned (Rosati, 2006, as mentioned in Folarin, 2014), the goal of this effort is to harmonize the several competing conceptions into a single concept of "national" interest.

An independent nation's top priority is to advance its own economy and society, for the sake of raising the nation's standing and prestige at home and abroad. Echikwonye (2013), national interest is comprised of international peace, political independence, geographical completeness, national defence, and economic development. The above discussion relates to the innate belief that all nations have a strong desire to maintain their political independence, defend their land, and advance their economic interests in order to better the lives of their citizens and ensure the survival of their nation. In this sense, national interest may be seen as the guiding principles behind a country's internal and foreign policy (Rosati, 2006).

Folorin (2014), Asobie (2007), and Atim (2006) all argue that "national interest" may be understood to include the shared goals of citizens and businesses inside a given country. When considered in its traditional context, the idea of national interest comprises the different methods governments use in their dealings on the international arena to safeguard predetermined societal objectives. Therefore, it is clear that national interest serves as a conduit via which foreign policy is generally created. Sklenka (2007) claims that it is more of a means to an end than the other way around.

**Nigeria's Foreign Policy and National Interest**

Since October 1960, Nigeria's foreign policy has been based on a set of key ideas (Ashiru, 2013). Since 1960, Olukoshi (1992) and Eze (2010) say it's been hard to define Nigeria's national interest. Nigerians' extensive embrace of diplomatic ideals and procedures may explain the result. Ashiru (2013), Ade-Ibijola (2013), Eze (2010), and Agreen (2010) concur that Nigeria's national interests have been shaped by its leaders. Nigerian foreign policy has emphasized decolonization, pan-African unity, and international peace since Tafawa Balewa's administration. Nigeria's 1979 and 1999 constitutions sought to state its foreign policy aims. African unity, full political, economic, social, and cultural autonomy, and international collaboration were conceivable consequences.

This paper breaks down Nigerian foreign policy aims like others. International cooperation to promote global peace and mutual respect, the cessation of all military conflict, adherence to international law and treaty commitments, and dialogue, mediation, conciliation, and arbitration to resolve international issues are supported.

A historical review of Nigeria's foreign policy illuminates its underlying values and worldview in the current international situation. Self-determination and self-government shaped the country's foreign policy throughout decolonization. Enlightened national interest, African solidarity, interdependence, internationalism, an asymmetric global order, and supranational authority were additional philosophical conceptions that developed throughout Nigeria's march to independence and sovereignty (Ogwu, 2005). Chapter 2, Section 19 of Nigeria's 1999 constitution outlines its foreign policy objectives. Sections 19(a)–(e) promote international collaboration to consolidate universal peace and eliminate all types of international conflict and preserve the national interest. Nigeria's foreign policy hasn't changed since independence (Akinboye, 2013). Personality, focus, institutional transformation, and historical factors inside and outside

Nigeria account for most variances. Akinboye (2013) boldly reiterates: despite national interest shifts, regime continuity is clear.

**President Muhammadu Buhari Foreign Policy (2015 - 2022)**

In 2015 president Muhammadu Buhari was elected. According to its campaign promises, the administration's foreign policy was to help fight Boko Haram, enhance the economy to attract FDI, and promote global corruption cooperation (Bello, Dutse, & Othman, 2017; Odubajo, 2017). In politics, Buhari's honesty is well-known. According to Agbu (2015), the public views him as capable of ending insurrections and stopping terrorist threats due to his military experience and his anti-corruption attitude. After understanding that Boko Haram threatened national security, the new administration launched military and diplomatic campaigns to combat it. Buhari's efforts to enlist the Lake Chad Basic Commission members, Nigeria's northern-eastern neighbours, are proactive steps in fighting terrorism (Uduma & Nwosu, 2015). Odubajo (2017), claims that such diplomatic efforts led to the creation of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to fight Boko Haram in Lake Chad. Bello et al. argue that the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) was unable to combat Boko Haram in 2017. Boko Haram has targeted MNJTF member nations in response to their comprehensive campaign. This payback may be for supporting Nigeria's battle on terrorism. Boko Haram's actions now have an international influence (Bello et al., 2017).

The Buhari government, like its predecessors, viewed economic diplomacy as a vital foreign policy tool. After assuming office, Buhari used shuttle diplomacy, which harmed him. President Buhari visited the US, China, the UAE, Germany, France, Saudi Arabia, and other countries with whom Nigeria has good relations to attract foreign direct investment (FDI). The Buhari administration's participation in the G7 and G20 Summits, diplomatic receptions in international capitals, and absence of foreign policy missteps support the country's economic foreign policy. Adekaiyaoja (2017) claims the Buhari-led economic team worked hard to attract foreign investments. Finance during economic turmoil may depend on Eurobond sales. Nigeria's adoption of the Chinese Renminbi Yuan is crucial. After the two nations improved their ties. Buhari accepted Xi Jinping's invitation to visit China a year after assuming office.

Bello et al. (2017), the voyage produced a strategy to enhance Nigeria's infrastructure and industrial productivity. The Chinese National Development Reform Commission and the Nigerian Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Investment signed the agreement. The trip also facilitated research and technological cooperation between both countries. The journey took a week. After the visit, Nigeria received a portion of the loan for infrastructure development, particularly rail transportation, as well as other projects and to make up the 2016 budget gap. Odubajo (2017), alleges that $6 billion in Chinese government and private company investments secured the loans.

Buhari was closer to the White House than his predecessor. Bello et al. (2017) noted that high-level talks between President Obama and President Buhari started diplomatic relations under Buhari. The President requested Oval Office meetings on July 20, 2016. President Obama pledged U.S. help to Nigeria in the fight against Boko Haram and violent extremism.The then Nigerian President Buhari requested the Obama administration’s assistance in fighting corruption. He also encouraged the government to assist to strengthen the economy by reforming the energy sector to reduce oil theft. The visit's aims included President Buhari's meetings with Vice President Joe Biden, Treasury Secretary Loretta E. Lynch, Attorney General Jeff Sessions, and Deputy Defence Secretary Bob Work (Bello et al., 2017).

President Buhari's April 2016 visit to China enabled the mobilization of large financial resources for infrastructure development, which greatly aided road, rail, and port projects. The People's Bank of China and Central Bank of Nigeria's CNY 15 billion premium times (2023) currency swap deal was approved. They revived American anti-corruption and security measures. Nigeria would get 12 new Super Tucano

aircraft and 12 new AH-1Z Attack Helicopters, as well as the repatriation of looted funds and assets stashed in the US. The 2018 African Land Forces Summit was held in Abuja. This US-Nigeria-organized gathering was Africa's largest that year. UK and Nigeria established a $13 million educational initiative and economic growth conference in 2018. This programme sought to protect 100,000 Northeast schoolchildren who have suffered Boko Haram attacks. By equipping instructors, stocking facilities, and increasing safety, this will be achieved. Nigeria received the 4.2 million British pounds the UK took from the Ibori family in 2021. Premium Times (2023), the Presidential Fertilizer Initiative (PFI) revitalized around 40 mixing facilities in Nigeria. The project simplified property purchase, joint venture share distribution, and gas supply contracts. Nine UAE-country bilateral agreements and memorandums of understanding have been signed, while eight more are being developed. Nigeria and the UAE have a signed and authorized extradition agreement for Nigerian people who fled to the UAE after committing crimes in Nigeria and were detained there. Saudi Arabia's Future Investment Initiative (FII) created a Saudi-Nigerian Strategic Council in 2019. This council promotes economic growth, development, oil and non-oil investments, and security cooperation between the two states. Germany contributed to Nigeria's Presidential Power Initiative (PPI), a six-year energy industry revamp. Nigeria and Germany collaborate according to a government arrangement. In September 2022, Nigeria received the Public-Private Partnership Initiative's first transmission equipment shipment (Premium Times, 2023).

**Challenges of President Muhammadu Buhari Foreign Policy**

President Buhari's diplomatic inconsistency is a serious issue. Nigeria has sometimes taken strong positions on regional and global problems and sometimes being seen as quiet or indecisive. Nigeria's allies are confused by this discrepancy. Nigerian investors have a lot to look forward to, (Buhari, 2016). Buhari (2016) says Nigeria's social stability would improve if security, corruption, and crime are reduced. These initiatives may enable Nigeria, Europe, and the world reestablish full commercial relations. Boko Haram's conflict in northeastern Nigeria and Niger Delta insurgency severely strained President Buhari's foreign policy. The extremist group's violence and instability have strained Nigeria's relations with its neighbours, compromising regional security. Insecurity may also explain Nigeria's GCI underperformance (Onuoha et al., 2015).

President Buhari's foreign policy faced security dangers, economic dependence, regional diplomacy, and human rights issues. Regional cooperation, a proactive approach, and an emphasis on diversifying the economy while maintaining human rights and the rule of law are needed to overcome these barriers.

**Theoretical Framework**

The social constructivism theory was used to guide this study. This theoretical framework in international relations studies how people categorize and rank their national interests, evaluate threats to those interests, and interact. The research on international relations is placed in a larger social framework in this study. The claim implies that a mix of social interactions and material elements shapes the preferences and needs of states. Therefore, this theory contends that states' flexible identities and interests have an impact on their behaviour (Weber, 2005). Constructivism acknowledges the existence of power in the global system while emphasizing perception-influenced social relations, (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2011).

Jackson and Sorensen (2006), social constructivism, often known as constructivism, prioritizes personal experience and understanding above global issues. According to one theory, the international system may be understood in terms of a common global consciousness where the importance of ideas outweighs that of physical forces. Immanuel Kant, a well-known supporter of this theory, said that while it is possible for people to learn about the cosmos, whatever information they do acquire about it must unavoidably be subjective since it is filtered via human perspective. Human life depends on being able to

comprehend and interpret one another's acts and behaviours (Hacking, 1991, quoted in Jackson and Sorensen, 2006).

A state's interactions with other states may have an impact on its identity and interests, according to the constructivist theory. Institutions, regimes, norm shifts, and identity changes are more thorough explanations of change than power dynamics, political forces, anarchy, or military force, (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2011). The constructivist theory is said to be based on the following tenets, which Alexander Wendt (1995), originally stated, (Weber, 2005).

Examining Nigeria's national interests and foreign policy under President Muhammadu Buhari is the goal of this research. The way other nations see a state may change when it uses social constructivism to change the dynamics of its ties within the international system. To be more precise, if Nigeria can successfully portray a favourable picture of itself via social interactions, its standing in the eyes of the international community would rise.The Buhari government in Nigeria placed a high priority on the welfare of its citizens above a variety of other considerations in its pursuit of foreign policy. The idea of individual responsibility served as the driving force for the change in policy. The international community has to take full responsibility for all of its interactions with the Nigerian people, both good and bad.

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study used a descriptive survey design method used to asses respondents'socio demographic profile, which are sex, age, occupations, religion, and educational attainment to determine the assessment of the foreign policy and Nigerian national interest under the Muhammadu Buhari Administration.

### Population of the Study

"Population" refers to the complete group of people or items that share a set of traits, making it easier to gather relevant information about them. The research population in this study therefore is as presented in the table below:

**Table 1: Population of the Study**

| S/N | Group | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Civil Servants | 12,000 |
| 2 | Politicians | 10,000 |
| 3 | Applicants | 10,100 |
| 4 | Students in Nigeria /Students Abroad In Holiday In Nigeria | 16,000 |
| 5 | NGO's | 3000 |
| 6 | Artisans / Traders | 6000 |
| | Total | 57,100 |

Sources: Field Survey 2023

### Sample Size Determination

The calculation of the sample size that is needed to make statistically significant claims about the population of Abuja was determined using the Taro Yamene formular.

$n=N/N+1(e)^2$

n=Sample Size

N=Population Size

1=is constant

e = Margin of error

$n=57,100/57,100+ 1(0.05)^2$

n=57,100/57,100+ 1 (0.0025)
n=57,100/57,101 X 0.0025
n= 57,100/142.75 = 400

**Sampling technique and procedure**

Sampling selects a representative sample from a broader population to find general trends and outliers. Probability and non-probability sampling methods wree used. The population was too large to poll everyone. The stratified random sample contained 57,100 study participants. Table 1 illustrates the plan. Bourley's proportional allocation technique divided the 400-person sample into study groups.
Bourley's proportionate allocation approach allotted 400 participants to four research groups.

$$nb = \frac{n(n)}{N}$$

Where;
nb = Bourley formula

**Research Instrument and Administration**

In order to collect information for this research, a questionnaire was developed. In-person meetings were used to hand out the questionnaire. The technique was used to help cut down on cases of unanswered questionnaires. The researchers framed the study's goals and importance in terms of interactions between humans

**Method of Data Collection**

The researchers' primary data collection instrument was the questionnaire. In addition, secondary data sources such as books, journals, and the Internet were employed. The questionnaire was selected due to its primary benefit of collecting information from a specified population.

**Method of Data Analysis**

The data analysis involved describing collected information. To ascertain the opinions of respondents, the terms Agree, Disagree, and Neutral were employed. The analysis utilized the frequency and percentage of responses. The findings summarize the investigation. Each table supplied the percentage for simple-percentage-based statistical analysis.

**Data Presentation and Analyses**

The questionnaire data is shown below using frequency and percentage estimates.

**Table 2: Sampling Distribution using Bourley's Proportional Allocation Technique**

| S/N | Group | Population | Sample size distribution using Bourley's technique |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Civil Servants | 12,000 | $nb = \frac{12,000 \times 400}{57,100} = 84$ |
| 2 | Politicians | 10,000 | $nb = \frac{10,000 \times 400}{57,100} = 70$ |
| 3 | Applicants | 10,100 | 10,100 X 400 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | nb= $\frac{}{57,100} = 71$ |
| 4 | Students in Nigeria /Students Abroad In Holiday In Nigeria | 16,000 | nb= $\frac{16,000 \times 400}{57,100} = 112$ |
| 5 | NGO's | 3,000 | nb= $\frac{3000 \times 400}{57,100} = 21$ |
| 6 | Artisans / Traders | 6,000 | nb= $\frac{6000 \times 400}{57,100} = 42$ |
| | Total | 57,100 | 400 |

Source: Field survey 2023.

Table 2 displays the sample distribution of Bourley's Proportional Allocation Technique across demographic categories. Taking into account each group's proportion of the population, the preceding procedure determines the size of its sample. Utilizing Bourley's Proportional Allocation Technique, the population is sampled proportionally.

**Table 3: Distribution and Return Rate**

| N/S | Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Returned | 317 | 79% |
| 2 | Not returned | 46 | 12% |
| 3 | Invalid | 37 | 9% |
| 4 | Total | 400 | 100% |

Source: Field survey 2023.

Table 3 provides the distribution and return rate of the survey responses. The table indicates the number of survey responses that fall into each category. In this case, 317(79%) responses were returned. Additionally, 46(12%) responses were not returned, and 37(9%) responses were considered invalid. This indicated that majority of the respondents returned and participated in the research.

**The Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the respondents**

**Table 4. The Demographic Characteristics of the respondents**

| S/N | Variables | Frequency | Percentage(%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Gender** | | |
| | Male | 182 | 57 |
| | Female | 135 | 43 |
| | **Total** | 317 | 100 |
| 2 | **Age** | | |
| | 20-29 | 90 | 28 |
| | 30-39 | 136 | 43 |
| | 40 & Above | 91 | 29 |
| | **Total** | 317 | 100 |
| **3** | **Religion** | | |
| | Christianity | 187 | 59 |
| | Islam | 125 | 39 |
| | Others | 5 | 2 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Total** | 317 | 100 |
| **4** | **Educational Qualification** | | |
| | Diploma | 70 | 22 |
| | HND | 32 | 10 |
| | B.Sc | 123 | 39 |
| | Other Qualifications | 92 | 29 |
| | **Total** | 317 | 100 |
| **5** | **Occupation** | | |
| | Civil Servants | 92 | 29 |
| | Politicians | 82 | 26 |
| | Applicants | 51 | 16 |
| | Students | 48 | 15 |
| | Artisans / Traders | 44 | 14 |
| | **Total** | **317** | **100** |

**Source: Field Work (2023)**

Table 4 presents information about the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including gender, age, religion, educational qualification, and occupation. The table shows that the majority of the respondents were male (57%), while the female respondents accounted for 43% of the total. The age distribution of the respondents indicates that 43% of them were in the age group of 30-39, making it the largest age group. The age group 20-29 accounted for 28%, and respondents aged 40 and above constituted 29% of the total. Majority of the respondents identified themselves as Christians (59%), followed by Muslims (39%). A small proportion of respondents (2%) indicated other religious affiliations. The educational qualification of the respondents varied significantly. The largest proportion held a Bachelor of Science degree (39%), followed by "Other Qualifications" (29%). Diploma and HND graduates accounted for 22% and 10%, respectively. The respondents' occupations were diverse. Civil Servants and Politicians were the two most common occupations, comprising 29% and 26% of the respondents, respectively. Applicants, Students, and Artisans/Traders accounted for 16%, 15%, and 14%, respectively.

**Answering of Research Questions**

**Table 5: The Impact of Foreign Policy on Nigeria's National Interest under Muhammadu Buhari Administration**

| S/N | Question | Agree | Disagree | Neutral | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The foreign policy initiatives pursued by Muhammadu Buhari's administrations have positively contributed to Nigeria's national interest. | 70 (22%) | 195 (62%) | 50(16%) | 317(100%) |
| 2 | Nigeria's engagement with other countries during Muhammadu Buhari's administrations has resulted in improved economic growth and development. | 52 (16%) | 222 (70%) | 43(14%) | 317(100%) |
| 3 | The foreign policy decisions made under Muhammadu Buhari's administrations have effectively addressed Nigeria's security concerns and helped combat terrorism. | 12 (3%) | 300 (75%) | 5(2%) | 317(100%) |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | The foreign policy approach of Muhammadu Buhari's administrations has strengthened Nigeria's diplomatic relations with key regional and international partners | 62 (20%) | 451 (79%) | 4(1%) | 317(100%) |
| 5 | The foreign policy decisions made under Muhammadu Buhari's administrations have effectively promoted Nigeria's image and influence on the global stage. | 78(25%) | 210 (66%) | 29(9%) | 317(100%) |

**Source: Researcher's field survey, 2023**

Data from table 5, indicate the impact of Foreign Policy on Nigeria's National Interest under Muhammadu Buhari Administration. 62% of the respondents disagree that Muhammadu Buhari's foreign policy has benefited Nigeria. 22% agree and 16% are indifferent. Nigeria's international engagement under Muhammadu Buhari boosted economic growth. According to data analysis, 70% of participants disagree with the assertion that Muhammadu Buhari's diplomatic policies' improved on Nigeria's economic growth,16% agree while14% are indifferent. 75% of participants disagree with Muhammadu Buhari's foreign policy decisions in tackling Nigeria's security issues and terrorism. 3% of people agree, and 2% are neutral. As to whether or not Muhammadu Buhari's foreign policy has improved Nigeria's relations with major regional and international allies. 79% of respondents disagree with Muhammadu Buhari's foreign policy approach to strengthening Nigeria's diplomatic ties with key partners. 20% of people agree, whereas 1% are indifferent. With regards to whether or not Muhammadu Buhari's foreign policy improved Nigeria's global standing, 66% of participants disagree that Muhammadu Buhari's foreign policy actions have improved Nigeria's global image and effect. A quarter of respondents agree, while 9% are indifferent.

**Table 6: Challenges in the Implementation of Nigeria's Policy under Muhammadu Buhari Administration**

| S/N | Question | Agree | Disagree | Neutral | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Insufficient financial resources have been a significant challenge in the effective implementation of Nigeria's policies under Muhammadu Buhari's administration | 112(35%) | 196(62%) | 9(3%) | 317(100%) |
| 2 | Political interference and\ 44 lack of continuity in policy implementation have negatively impacted the effectiveness of Nigeria's policies under Muhammadu Buhari's administration | 298 (94%) | 14 (4%) | 5(2%) | 317(100%) |
| 3 | Inadequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms have hampered the assessment and improvement of policy | 274(86%) | 38 (12%) | 5(2%) | 317(100%) |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | implementation under Muhammadu Buhari's administration | | | | |
| 4 | Insufficient coordination and collaboration among different government ministries and agencies have impeded the smooth implementation of Nigeria's policies under Muhammadu Buhari's administration | 300(94) | 12(4%) | 5(2%) | 317(100%) |
| 5 | The absence of clear policy frameworks and guidelines has created, corruption, insurgency and terrorism challenges in effectively implementing Nigeria's policies under Muhammadu Buhari's administration. | 278(88) | 32(10%) | 7(2%) | 317(100%) |

**Source: Researcher's field survey, 2023**

The data from Table 6 on challenges to the implementation of Nigeria's policy under Muhammadu Buhari Administration**,** inidicated that 62% of participants disagree that financial constraints hindered Nigeria's program implementation under Muhammadu Buhari. However, 35% agree, and 3% are neutral. The data show that 95% of respondents think that institutional capability and bureaucratic inefficiencies hampered Nigeria's endeavours under Muhammadu Buhari. 3% of people disagree, and 2% are neutral. Similarly, 94% of respondents feel that political involvement and policy inconsistency, have hurt Nigeria's policies under Muhammadu Buhari, 4% disagree and 2% are indifferent. During Muhammadu Buhari's presidency, 81% of participants feel that public and stakeholder participation impeded policy implementation. 15% disagree, 4% are indifferent.

Findings from table 6 indicated that 86% of the participants think that insufficient monitoring and evaluation processes hindered policy review and improvement under Muhammadu Buhari. 12% disagreed, while 2% were indifferent. Simlarly, 94% of participants think that poor coordination, corruption, insurgency, terrorism and collaboration among government departments and agencies hampered Nigeria's policy implementation under Muhammadu Buhari. 4% disagree and 2% are indifferent. Statistics show that 88% of participants agree that the lack of well-defined policy frameworks and procedures hindered Nigeria's policy implementation under Muhammadu Buhari. 10% disagree, 2% are indifferent.

**Table 7: Solutions to Challenges Faced by Muhammadu Buhari Administration on Nigeria's Foreign Policy**

| S/N | Question | Agree | Disagree | Neutral | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Increasing the allocation of financial resources towards Nigeria's foreign policy initiatives would help overcome the challenges faced by Muhammadu Buhari's administration. | 305(96%) | 10(3%) | 2(1%) | 317(100%) |
| 2 | Strengthening institutional capacity and improving | 298 (94%) | 8(3%) | 11(3%) | 317(100%) |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | bureaucratic efficiency would contribute to the successful implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy faced under Muhammadu Buhari's administration | | | | |
| 3 | Ensuring policy continuity across different administrations would enhance the effectiveness of Nigeria's foreign policy faced under Muhammadu Buhari's administration | 310 (97%) | 5 (2%) | 2(1%) | 317(100%) |
| 4 | Enhancing coordination and collaboration among different government ministries and agencies would help overcome challenges in implementing Nigeria's foreign policy faced under Muhammadu Buhari's administration | 302(95) | 13(4%) | 2(1%) | 317(100%) |
| 5 | Developing clear policy frameworks and guidelines would provide a solid foundation for the effective implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy faced under Muhammadu Buhari's administration | 312(98) | 3(1%) | 2(1%) | 317(100%) |

**Source: Researcher's field survey, 2023**

Table 7 describes how the present government can overcome Muhammadu Buhari administration's foreign policy challenges. Increased funding for Nigeria's foreign policy may help the government administration. A total of 96% responders supported raising Nigeria's foreign policy budget. This action is vital to addressing the current government's international relations issues. In the same vein, 94% of the participants agreed that institutional capability and bureaucratic efficiency will improve Nigeria's foreign policy while 97% agreed that policy continuity between administrations would improve Nigeria's foreign policy. In a similar vein, 97% of participants said that increasing public involvement and stakeholder engagement would help Nigeria's foreign policy succeed. From the table under review, 95% of the participants agreed that improving coordination and collaboration across government ministries and agencies could help Nigeria's foreign policy, while 98% of the participants agreed that well-defined policy frameworks and processes would support the current administration's foreign policy.

**Discussion of Findings**

This research investigated foreign policy and Nigeria's national interest under the erstwhile Muhammadu Buhari Administration. Three research questions were raised and analyzed in this study.
Table 6, provided a clear picture of the demographic characteristics of the respondents. It showed the distribution of respondents across gender, age groups, religious affiliations, educational qualifications, and

occupations. This information is essential for understanding the profile of the study participants and helped the researchers draw meaningful conclusions and insights from the data.

Table 7 showed that a considerable number of participants saw foreign policy's impact on Nigeria's national interest during Muhammadu Buhari's administrations negatively. The individuals dispute the possible benefits to the nation's interests, economic growth, security, diplomatic connections, and global influence.

Data from table 8 revealed that Muhammadu Buhari's initiatives faced several challenges, among which were financial resources, institutional capabilities, political intervention, stakeholder participation, monitoring, coordination, corruption, insurgency, terrorism, and well-defined policy frameworks are these issues. The replies address important policy implementation difficulties.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, they were expressed dissatisfaction with Muhammadu Buhari's foreign policy during his administration, citing its impact on economic growth, security, diplomatic relations, and global standing. The data suggests a need for critical evaluation and adjustments in Nigeria's foreign policy strategies to align with national interests and public sentiment. Institutional, bureaucratic, political, and coordination-related challenges were identified as significant impediments to policy implementation during Buhari's administration. The lack of financial constraints and well-defined policy frameworks were also a concern. This paper can be used as feedback for future policy-making and implementation efforts in Nigeria, emphasizing the need to address these challenges to enhance policy effectiveness and public satisfaction. Key actions include increasing funding for foreign policy, improving institutional capability and bureaucratic efficiency, ensuring policy continuity, involving the public and stakeholders, enhancing coordination and collaboration among government entities, and establishing well-defined policy frameworks and processes.

For Nigeria to surmount its current foreign policy obstacles, it must employ strategic approaches that are informed by a comprehensive analysis of its historical context and present circumstances. This may pave the way for future efforts to strengthen diplomatic ties. Issues of national interest and foreign policy must receive deserved attention from the prospective administrations in Nigeria by aligning the nation's course with altering international political and economic trends.

To safeguard the interests and security of Nigeria, the country must implement a comprehensive national policy. A country must first pursue its own interests in order to successfully navigate and govern future regional and global affairs. It must also build trustworthy diplomatic relationships among nations to ensure global stability presents significant obstacles.

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