

An Evaluation Of Covid-19 Pandemic And Nigeria's Diplomatic Relations With China

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ABSTRACT

The research basically evaluates Covid-19 pandemic and Nigeria's diplomatic relations with China. Dependency theory was used as theoretical framework. With the use of mixed research design and both primary and secondary sources of generating data, findings from the study reveals that the outbreak of the novel corona virus has significantly altered the relationship between Nigeria and China. The COVID-19 Pandemic has had effects on the political and economic relations between China and Nigeria. The Pandemic has exposed the overreliance of Nigeria on Chinese goods to sustain its manufacturing sector. It was also discovered that the emergence and quick spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted the focus and dynamics of the debates about global health to include the discrimination, stigma and political tension that characterized the nature of Covid-19 pandemic and the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China. This shift has overshadowed many of the other controversies in the international sphere. The study strongly recommends that the ultimate aim is to ensure an improved Sino-Nigeria political and economic relationship after the Pandemic by rebuilding the doubted trust and discrimination.

KEYWORDS: COVID-19, Pandemic, Diplomatic, Relations, Nigeria and China.

Date of Submission: 13-02-2022

Date of Acceptance: 28-02-2022

I. INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is a disease that assumed a pandemic status on 11 March 2020 (WHO, 2020). The pandemic since its outbreak in Wuhan, China, had severely threatened human existence. It is a virus that knows no border or person, nor does it discriminate based on nationality. It affects all humans, countries and economies. COVID-19 has been declared a "public health emergency of international concern" by the World Health Organization. As of recent estimates, there are about fifteen million cases in the world with over half a million deaths. This global pandemic has led to market failure in most countries around the world and a decline in global economic growth prospects. It poses a threat to international trade and diplomacy (Woods, 2020).

The Peoples' Republic of China is sometimes referred to as a modern day miracle and continues to draw the attention of the entire world for the remarkable progress it has made in economic development (Rose, 2014). Given the political complexities and the emergence of china as a great economic world power, it becomes important for us as scholars of international relations to study the strategic relationship between a "democratic" Nigeria and "undemocratic" China as well as how the COVID-19 pandemic affect their diplomatic relations.

Put differently, following China's economic growth in the 1980s, Nigerian leaders began to look forward to a more serious economic engagement with China (Bukaremba, 2005). The relationship between Nigeria and China was cooperative and cordial, especially between 1999 and 2009. Prior to this time, Nigeria as a country was basically pro-western. Thus, had little or nothing diplomatically to do then with China. Nigeria's first contact with China took place in 1960 when a Chinese delegation, on the invitation of the Nigerian government, attended Nigeria's independence celebrations. The delegation brought a message from Chinese leaders congratulating Nigeria on the victory won by the Nigerian people in their struggle against colonialism. In February, 1971, Nigeria finally established diplomatic ties with China more than a decade after independence. Both countries opened embassies in each other's capital within the year. The Chinese government has described this relationship as a "win-win" situation (Agubamah, 2014).

Nigeria and China share a lot in common from ethnic diversities to rich endowment of mineral and human resources. China is the largest single market in the world with a population of 1.3 billion, while Nigeria

is the largest single market in Africa with a population of more than 140 million. Unlike Nigeria, China has been able to harness its vast demographic, human and material resources to build a strong and virile domestic economy which has impacted positively on its citizenry (Agbu, 1994).

In addition, Nigeria and China are burdened by destiny in their respective regions. In terms of population, one of every three Asians is Chinese, so also one in every four persons in Africa is a Nigerian. With a population of 1.3 billion, China is in fact the most populous nation in the world. Nigeria on the other hand, with a population of over 140 million people is the largest concentration of black people in the world. In terms of mineral resources China, like Nigeria, is well endowed (Oche, 2001).

The lack of cooperation between countries to tackle this COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated the economic situation of the world, in turn, adding to geopolitical tensions and distrust between trading partners. In the midst of such challenges and uncertainty, countries are faced with a dichotomous set of choices, they can either retreat into overt geopolitical competition or build a world that is divided, uncertain, hostile and protectionist, or they can call upon the international community to overcome this crisis through collective action. Today, we see an apparent shift from 'hyper-globalization' towards state-led nation-building and self-sufficiency to protect from future vulnerabilities. However, this seems like a short-term solution to the problem; in the long-run countries are bound to re-approach the pragmatism of international cooperation and interdependence. This long-term solution requires smaller-subsequent steps towards building a common contingency plan and persuasion of shared norms and treaties (Adekoya, 2020).

Despite the protectionist measures implemented by several countries, many countries around the world continue to believe that international trade and supply chains must be protected during this COVID-19 pandemic for shared benefits across the global community. Countries have sent proposals and declarations to the World Trade Organization to ensure open and free trade as well as to build resilience of international production networks in case of future crises. These declarations form a series of best practices that have set the stage for global recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic (Barrios & Hochberg, 2020).

One of the earliest initiatives taken was in the form of a joint declaration by Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Laos, Myanmar, Singapore and Uruguay that guaranteed continuous commitment to preserve supply chain connectivity by refraining from application of new tariff or non-tariff barriers and supporting the transportation network. Two weeks later, member states of the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) emphasized on community response to the pandemic by strengthening cooperation between ASEAN members on matters of public health, regional epidemic preparedness, openness of regional markets for trade and investment, and recovery of ASEAN economies post COVID-19. A similar declaration on maintaining regional supply chain connectivity was also made by members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) that focused on coordination in information-sharing on policies for economic recovery. It also highlighted the need to harness the digital economy to advance regional economic growth (Zhihua and Douglas, 2020). It is against this background that the study evaluates Covid-19 pandemic and Nigeria's diplomatic relations with China based on the following specific objectives:

- i. To examine the nature of Covid-19 pandemic and the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China;
- ii. To examine the effect of Covid-19 pandemic on the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China;
- iii. To assess the measures put in place to overcome Covid-19 pandemic and strengthen the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the theory of dependency. The major proponents of the Dependency school are (Frank, 1976; Sunkel, 1979; Furtado, 1964; Dos Santos, 1970; Emmanuel, 1972; Ake, 1981; Onimode, 1982).

Dependency theorists opined that what is causing the under development in poor countries is the exploitative relationship that have characterised the interactions between the poor nations and the developed ones right from the colonial times till date. They hold that the present economic and socio-political conditions prevailing in the periphery (Third World Countries) are the result of a historical international process. It is a known fact that China is among the biggest economy in the world. Sequence to that is the issue of trade imbalance and huge Chinese loans that is gradually sinking Nigeria into an abyss of debt. This precarious trend if not speedily checked will eventually make China to condition the development of Nigeria.

The theorists argued that underdevelopment and dependency is not the Third World Countries (TWCs') fault but rather the result of foreign domination and exploitation. Hence, TWCs' backwardness is due to exploitative and unequal relationships that exist between the TWCs and the developed countries. Consequently, the underdevelopment of the TWCs is as a result of the dependence on the developed countries who exploit them and their resources for selfish development of the developed countries. Dependency theorists recommend that if these unequal and exploitative relationship continue, TWCs will remain backward except they sever the link either by delinking or breaking away the relationship with the advanced countries.

The principal criticism of dependency theory has been that the school does not provide any substantive empirical evidences to support its arguments. It has also been said that dependency theories are highly abstract and tend to use homogenizing categories such as developed and underdeveloped, which do not fully capture the variations within these categories. Another point of criticism is that the dependency school considers ties with multinational corporations as detrimental, while one view has been that they are important means of transfer of technology (Aliyu, Mukthar and Adoga, 2010).

Focusing on Nigeria's diplomatic relations with China, dependency theory enables scholars explore how Nigerian leaders should consciously and effectively use the Nation's foreign policy to construct a self-reliant and just society. The failure of the leadership to conduct foreign policy for economic development and the inappropriate development path pursued by them in the past are blamed for the country's continued state of dependence and underdevelopment.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study area is Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria. The basis for choosing Abuja is that it is part of the affected cities with high COVID-19 cases after Lagos, Ogun and Kano states. Also, it houses the ministry, embassy and institute that constitute the targeted population of the study. The study adopted both primary and secondary methods. The instruments for data collection are; questionnaires, interview and information from extant literature. Historical descriptive research design is chosen because it helps in looking into the past documents on the Nigeria-China diplomatic relations with a view to understanding what it was in the past for a better understanding of what it is today and making useful predictions for the future. Population of the study is eight thousand three hundred and five (835). The selected institutions in Nigeria for this study are: Department of Information and Overseas Communication, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja with 410, Chinese Embassy, Abuja with 21 and National Institute for International Affairs (NIIA), Abuja with 404. Aside this population, six (6) respondents who are senior staff of the selected ministerial department and institutes and are part of the sampled respondents, were purposively selected for interview to supplement and elaborate views gotten from questionnaires to assess thought, opinions and feelings about the Covid-19 pandemic and Nigeria's diplomatic relations with China. The reason for this cross section is that the department in the institutions are not only key bodies when it comes to the topic of study, but that they can provide useful insight on the issues regarding Covid-19 pandemic and Nigeria's diplomatic relations with China.

The importance of sampling is to reduce the population under study to a manageable size and to meet up with the stipulated study period. In determining the sampling technique used, the study took into cognizance of the technical nature of the investigation and required the response from the population with adequate and relative knowledge of the subject matter. To achieve this, purposive and judgmental sampling techniques was employed in the selection of the sampling. However, in selecting the sample size, the study adopted the determination formulas in social sciences as proposed by Yamane (1967) to arrive at 400 sample size. Out of four hundred (400) questionnaires distributed, three hundred and eight-seven (387) were retrieved. Therefore, the following analysis is based on the 387 retrieved.

III. RESULTS OF THE FINDINGS

Table 1: Responses on the Nature of COVID-19 Pandemic and the Diplomatic Relations between Nigeria and China

Responses	SA	A	D	SD	U	Total
Discrimination	200 (51.6%)	142 (36.6%)	5 (3.8%)	- (-%)	40 (10.3%)	387 (100%)
Stigmatization	159 (41%)	151 (39%)	31 (8%)	26 (5.9%)	20 (5.1%)	387 (100%)
Socio-political tensions	163 (42.1%)	175 (45.2%)	13 (3.3%)	13 (3.3%)	23 (5.9%)	387 (100%)

Source: Field Survey February, 2022

Majority of the respondents agree to the question that Discrimination is the nature of Covid-19 pandemic and the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China. In numerical terms, respondents who agree account for one hundred and forty-two (142) or thirty-six point six percent (36.6%) and those who strongly agree stood at two hundred (200) or fifty-one point six percent (51.6%). On the other hand those who disagree stood at five (5) or three point eight (3.8%), none of the respondent strongly disagree while forty respondents (40) accounting for ten point three percent (10.3%) were undecided.

On the view that Stigmatization is the nature of Covid-19 pandemic and the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China, respondents who agree and strongly agree are in the majority having recorded the

highest numbers of one hundred and fifty-one (151) or thirty-nine percent (39%) and one hundred and fifty-nine (159) or forty-one percent (41%). Those who disagree are thirty-one (31) or eight percent (8%), twenty-six (26) or five point nine percent (5.9%) strongly disagree while nine (20) respondents representing (5.1%) were undecided.

It was discovered from the respondents that the view that socio-political tensions is the nature of Covid-19 pandemic and the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China. This is so because the data analysis shows that one hundred and sixty-three respondents (163) representing forty-two point one percent (42.1%) strongly agree, one hundred and seventy-five respondents (175) accounting for forty-five point two percent (45.2%) agreed, while those undecided are twenty-three (23) or five point nine percent (5.9%). While those who disagreed and strongly disagreed are tied to twenty-six (26) accounting six point nine (6.9%). It is therefore safe to conclude that nature of Covid-19 pandemic and diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China are characterized of discrimination, stigmatization and socio-political tensions which had almost ousted China's diplomatic success. The above responses are supported by the interview result generated from Chinese Embassy:

Given the recent events and actions taken by the Chinese people against Nigeria nationals, Sino-Nigeria diplomatic relations are put to the test and could in the long run be shaken. Nigeria nationals claim to have been discriminated against in China's fight against the COVID-19 epidemic. There were mass images of Nigeria evicted from their apartments, forced to sleep on the streets, unable to rent hotel rooms online. In addition, Black people have been prohibited from entering certain businesses, including a McDonald's restaurant in China. All these discriminatory situations have affected the diplomatic relations between Beijing and Nigeria (Interviewed February, 2022).

The acts of discrimination presented above, given the strong ties established between China and Africa, cannot be justified. These racial discriminations could suggest that China is lagging behind on the issue of equality for all people. The danger would be that such a vision of Sino-Nigeria relations would strengthen the position which supports the thesis of an unequal alliance between both actors. Indeed, China's internationalization in Nigeria has not always been viewed favorably by all Nigerians, some Nigerians remain skeptical of the alliance. According to them, this alliance benefits China much more than Nigerians: China imports natural resources (oil and minerals) and exports manufactured products, which constitutes a significant financial loss for the Nigerian state in so far as the revenues generated by these massive exports are not redistributed to Nigerians.

Table 2: Responses on the Effect of COVID-19 Pandemic on the Diplomatic Relations between Nigeria and China

Responses	SA	A	D	SD	U	Total
Doubt and Mistrust	170 (43.9%)	172 (44.4%)	18 (4.6%)	15 (3.8%)	12387 (3.1%)	100%
Denigration	185 (47.8%)	151 (39%)	19 (4.9%)	19 (4.9%)	13 (3.3%)	387 (100%)
Stagnated Development	163 (42.1%)	175 (45.2%)	19 (4.9%)	16 (4.1%)	14 (3.6%)	387 (100%)

Source: Field Survey February, 2022

Analyzing the responses of the respondents on the view that Doubt and Mistrust is the effect of Covid-19 pandemic on the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China, the data supplied by respondents shows that the majority of one hundred and seventy-two respondents (172) accounting for forty-four point four percent (44.4%) agree, one hundred and seventy (170) respondents or forty-four percent (43.9%) strongly agree. Those who disagree and strongly disagree represent four point six percent (4.6%), and three point four percent (3.8%) respectively while twelve respondents representing (3.4%) were undecided

On the proposition whether denigration is the effect of Covid-19 pandemic on the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China, the above data showed that one hundred and eighty-five (185) representing forty-seven point eight percent (47.8%) strongly agreed while one hundred fifty-one respondents (15) accounting for thirty-nine percent (39%) agreed. Respondents who disagree are nineteen (19) or (4.9%) and those who strongly disagree were tied at nineteen (19) or three point three percent (4.9%) while thirteen (13) representing (3.3%) were undecided. It is therefore safe to conclude that Covid-19 pandemic has affected the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China.

On the view that stagnated development is the effect of Covid-19 pandemic on the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China, respondents who agree and strongly agree were in the majority, representing one hundred and sixty-three (163) or forty-two point one percent (42.1%) and one hundred and seventy-five (175)

respondents accounting for forty-five point two percent (45.2%) respectively. This is against the sixteen (16) or four point one percent (4.1%) and nineteen (19) or four point nine percent (4.9%) and fourteen (14) accounting for four point zero (3.6%), of those who strongly disagree, disagree and undecided respondents. From the foregoing analysis, it proves that Covid-19 pandemic has adverse effect on the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China. In an interview with an official of National Institute for International Affairs (NIIA) on the effect of Covid-19 pandemic on the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China, he maintained that:

Over the course of the past decade, the relationship between China and Nigeria has evolved into a bilateral pragmatism called “win-win,” which had clearly favored the rise and power of China in the international scene, boosting its economic growth while driving Nigeria towards emergence with the development of its domestic infrastructures that had not been previously seen. However, in the first quarter of 2020, the relationship of China with its “African friends” had been tinted with socio-political tensions. As it placed itself first in line for supporting Africans in the struggle against the COVID-19 pandemic, China had not escaped allegations of racism: some Africans of Nigerian nationality had been tested positive for Corona virus but escaped their quarantine. The effect of this situation has been considerable on the African community in Canton, who were victims of reprisals and all forms of discrimination and stigmatization, bordering xenophobia. These socio-political tensions, which had almost ousted China’s diplomatic success, could affect the economic relations between the two actors and strongly harm their common interests (Interviewed February, 2022).

Interview with a staff of the Department of Information and Overseas Communication, Ministry of Foreign Affairs also proves that:

The economic toll of the COVID-19 pandemic has been considerable. It stems from the cumulative effect of public health measures, such as the shuttering of certain businesses, confinement orders, travel bans, and the closing of borders. Nigeria economy has also been hurt by falling global demand for many commodities and for tourism, and by a sharp decline in income from remittances, as diasporas suffer from the pandemic and associated economic effects in their countries of residence (Interviewed February, 2022).

Table 3: Responses on the Measures put in place to Overcome COVID-19 Pandemic and Strengthen the Diplomatic Relations between Nigeria and China

Responses	SA	A	D	SD	U	Total
Monetary Donations	180 (43.9%)	162 (44.4%)	9 (4.6%)	5 (3.8%)	31 (3.1%)	387 (100%)
Protective Suits, Respirators and Screening Kits	129 (33.3%)	131 (33.8%)	101 (26%)	26 (6.7%)	- (-%)	387 (100%)
Debt Relief	143 (36.9%)	195 (50.3%)	12 (3.1%)	16 (4.1%)	21 (5.4%)	387 (100%)

Source: Field Survey February, 2022

Majority of the respondents agreed that monetary donations are the measures to overcome Covid-19 pandemic and strengthen the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China. In numerical terms, respondents who agree account for one hundred and sixty-two (162) or forty-four point four percent (44.4%) and those who strongly agree stood at one hundred and eighty (180) or fifty-three point nine percent (43.9%). On the other hand those who disagree are nine (9) representing four point six (4.6) while those who strongly disagree are five (5) or three point eight percent (3.8%) and thirty-one (31) or three point one percent (3.1%) is undecided.

Similarly, respondents who agree on protective suits, respirators and screening kits as the measures put in place to overcome Covid-19 pandemic and strengthen the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China account for one hundred and twenty-nine (129) or thirty-three point three percent (33.3%) while those who strongly agree stood at one hundred and thirty-one (131) or thirty-three point eight percent (33.8%). Those who strongly disagree stood at twenty-six (26) or six point seven percent (6.7%), those who disagreed recorded one hundred and one (101), representing twenty-six percent (26%), while those undecided stood at zero (0).

On the view that debt relief is the measures put in place to overcome Covid-19 pandemic and strengthen the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China, respondents who agree and strongly agree are in the majority having recorded the highest numbers of one hundred and ninety-five (195) or fifty point three percent (50.3%) and one hundred and forty-three (143) or thirty-six point nine percent (36.9%). Those who disagree are twelve (12) or three point one percent (3.1%), sixteen (16) or four point one percent (4.1%) strongly disagree while twelve (12) respondents representing five point four percent (5.4%) remain undecided. An interview result from Chinese embassy shows that:

It is important to recognize that China has proven to be a valuable ally of Nigeria during the COVID-19 health crisis that has affected both countries. The West, itself totally destabilized by the health crisis and predicting the flood to Africa, had mobilized an aid fund of nearly 15 million Euros for vulnerable countries. This fund considered by the United Nations as the first COVID-19 response mechanism almost went unnoticed due to China's support in Nigeria's fight against COVID-19. In fact, China was able to be at the bedside of Nigeria by multiplying donations that could help Nigeria cope with the pandemic and, as a result, made its aid more noticeable than that of Westerners. For example, more than 8 million kits, including pallets of masks, protective suits, respirators and screening kits have been offered to African States, Nigeria inclusive (by China) demonstrating that in these times of global crisis, China seems to be a powerful, supportive and important player for Nigeria. In the end, Africa seems to have missed the "flood" that was initially predicted, mainly due to its younger demographic structure (Interviewed February, 2022).

Consequently, an interview with an official of National Institute for International Affairs (NIIA) explained that:

Nigerian government relied solely on health care and pharmaceutical services from other countries across the globe. But with the raising COVID-19 cases in Nigeria, there is now more investment in domestic technology by the federal government. Indigenous companies and academic research institutions are racing to develop effective Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) that can support the treatment of COVID-19 patients. In the past, Nigeria depended largely on China for API. Even other Personal Protection Equipment (PPEs) like face mask, hand sanitizer are now produced locally in a cottage industry in Calabar, and by the Nigeria Defense Academy (NDA) Kaduna. Even ventilators are now locally manufactured in Nigeria by the various science and technological institutions in the country. Currently, the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria has commenced the production of ventilators. These ventilators are used for COVID-19 patients to help them breath by sending air in and out their lungs.

China has been the most active player on the international scene concerning COVID-19 and claims have set "a new standard for the global efforts against the epidemic". Beating the virus at home, Beijing embarked on a wide program of international humanitarian assistance to rescue others. Notably, it rescued Italy. When Italian leaders approached the EU's Emergency Response Coordination Center for help, when it became apparent that it could not cope with the emerging virus situation, it was rebuffed. Germany and France also imposed limits on the export of protective medical equipment. The United States was likewise slow in acting. China quickly stepped in to fill this leadership vacuum in Europe. It sent experts to Italy accompanied by the Chinese Red Cross, providing 31 tons of medical equipment. Beijing also offered COVID-19 help to Spain and other countries that had even fallen out with China, including Estonia and Lithuania. Aid was channeled across Europe by Chinese private companies and individuals such as Ali baba and the Jack Ma Foundation in Beijing's name. Many European countries big and small were all on the list of Chinese assistance (Woods, 2020). China extended similar assistance to Africa. China-aided medical suppliers arrived in Ghana to be distributed to 17 other countries. Beijing waived some African loan payments due in 2020, extended loan maturities, and urged creditors to expedite debt reliefs to Africa (Woods, 2020).

China cast itself as emerging from the immediate health crisis and rising rapidly to prominence. It not only rescued others via humanitarian assistance but organized institutions and other governments through videoconferencing. This powerful international campaign is, of course, a veritable fig-leaf for image building and global influence. Chinese Communist Party publicity officials have tried hard to spin the crisis as evidence of Chinese strength and claim a victory for the authoritarian regime. The interest seems to be geared toward rewriting the COVID-19 narrative and, in doing so, broadly exercising soft power.

A strong post-COVID-19 alliance implies, for China, to take into account how they are perceived by Nigerians. Indeed, China will not be able to meet the challenges the country faces on the African continent if the country continues to ignore the discriminatory treatment inflicted to Africans within China's borders. Due to these concerns raised by African governments and, so as to perpetuate the Sino-African relationship, the Chinese authorities have promised to improve their methods towards Africans who are ill-treated. Concrete actions must be taken to ensure better treatment of Africans in China. The statements of the spokesperson of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Zhao Lijian, remain a first step towards the achievement of this objective. He has emphasized the importance of Sino-African friendly relations and has asserted that "African friends will be treated fairly, justly and amicably in China". China-Africa relations should, therefore, continue on their course as Moussa Faki Mahamat, describes a "strong and fraternal" relationship between China and Africa, assuring that measures had been taken to end all forms of racial discrimination against Africans (Interviewed result from National Institute for International Affairs (NIIA), February 2nd 2022).

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

i. Finding shows that the emergence and quick spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted the focus and dynamics of the debates about global health to include the discrimination, stigma and political tension that characterized the nature of Covid-19 pandemic and the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China. This shift has overshadowed many of the other controversies in the international sphere. Therefore, the nature of Covid-19 pandemic and Nigeria's diplomatic relations with China are characterized of discrimination, stigmatization and socio-political tensions which had almost ousted China's diplomatic success.

ii. It was revealed that the outbreak of the novel corona virus has significantly altered the relationship between Nigeria and China. The COVID-19 Pandemic has had effects on the political and economic relations between China and Nigeria. The Pandemic has exposed the overreliance of Nigeria on Chinese goods to sustain its manufacturing sector.

iii. It was discovered that in China, political decisions and basic public health measures were added to previous experiences and modern technology for a rapid response. Its strict lockdown measures and aggressive testing, aided by technology at home, enabled it to prevent a larger outbreak and extended a helping hand to other countries including Nigeria which helped in curtailing the spread of Covid-19 pandemic and strengthen the diplomatic relations between them and Nigeria.

V. CONCLUSION

No doubt, China has contributed immensely to the economic growth and development of Nigeria by way of supply of manufactured goods. However, the COVID-19 Pandemic has had effects on the political and economic relations between China and Nigeria. Undoubtedly, the outbreak of the novel corona virus has significantly altered the relationship between countries, and this can be seen in the ties between China and Nigeria. The Pandemic has exposed the overreliance of Nigeria on Chinese goods to sustain its manufacturing sector. The decline of the global supply chain has adversely affected Nigerian traders as they are unable to access products from China, hence affecting the economic relationship of the two countries. However, the Pandemic has illuminated the need for Nigeria to realign its trade networks and for China to stem out harassment.

One of the fundamental objective and principle of Nigeria's foreign policy in this 21st century is the promotion and protection of the national interest. With the first index case of COVID-19 infection in Lagos, Nigeria in February, 2020, which later spread to other parts of the country and in upholding Nigeria's foreign policy of national interest, she closed her borders with neighbouring West African countries, and lockdown the commercial capital, Lagos and neighbouring Ogun as well as the FCT, Abuja to curtail the spread of COVID-19 in the country. It is imperative to state that the COVID-19 has brought new dimensions in Nigeria's foreign policy. The corona virus pandemic and the subsequent lockdown are an indication of how the consequences of such risks can go beyond control. The impact of COVID-19 Pandemic has affected the global supply chain in the world, and China as a significant supplier of raw material for manufacturing firms in Nigeria has reduced its production capacity. Many service providers and manufacturers in Nigeria are already feeling a steep shortage of intermediate inputs and raw materials. This occurrence has consequences for employment creation and retention, the suitability of the supply of products to Nigeria's market, and capacity utilization.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. The ultimate aim is to ensure an improved Sino-Nigeria political and economic relationship after the Pandemic by rebuilding the doubted trust and discrimination.

ii. COVID-19 Pandemic can be mitigated through various ways like adaptability, which needs all the elements of the supply chain to share a similar inclination and place effort towards the same goals hence becoming better placed to react towards a particular crisis. Another way of managing the unknown is to increase the velocity in detecting and responding, thus helping a company to bypass unanticipated supply issues like the COVID-19 Pandemic.

iii. China can use its role in pandemic assistance, among other things, to maximize its edge in its international order-building efforts thereby, strengthening the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China.

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OGAH, MUSA ARI Ph.D. "An Evaluation Of Covid-19 Pandemic And Nigeria's Diplomatic Relations With China." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 27(02), 2022, pp. 38-45.