

Strategic Management of the National Interest Foreign Policy In Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study investigates the influence of strategic management on the national interest of Nigeria's foreign policy. Adopting a qualitative research methodology with an explorative design, data were collected from secondary sources. The research aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the strategic management of Nigeria's national interest within its foreign policy framework. Through content and discourse analysis, findings were synthesized with existing knowledge to identify research gaps and build upon previous studies. The study concludes that strategic management, encompassing environmental scanning, strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation, is crucial for the long-term performance of a nation. National interest, as the survival and preservation of a nation's physical, political, and cultural identity, and foreign policy, the strategies guiding a nation's international interactions, are both significantly influenced by effective strategic management practices. In Nigeria, the lack of such practices has hampered the country's ability to address security threats, which are paramount to its national interest. Issues like inadequate resource allocation, poor coordination among security agencies, delayed threat responses, and ineffective policy implementation have exacerbated the nation's vulnerability. The findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive strategic planning and effective management to enhance Nigeria's security infrastructure and overall stability, emphasizing the role of strategic management in achieving national interests through robust foreign policy.*

Keywords: *Strategic Management, National Interest, Foreign Policy, National Security*

I. INTRODUCTION

Strategy is a vital aspect of any government, strategy cuts across different contexts in government and politics as well as in public administration. whatsoever strategy developed ought to follow a careful process and thoroughly implemented. A need for proper development and implementation of strategy leads to the conception of strategic management. According to Wheelen and Hunger (2012), strategic management is defined as "that

set of managerial decisions and actions that determines the long-run performance of a corporation. It includes environmental scanning (both external and internal), strategy formulation (strategic or long-range planning), strategy implementation, and evaluation and control. Strategic management do have some features.

On its features, Strategic management involves defining the long-term direction and scope of an organization. It focuses on establishing a clear vision and mission, setting long-term objectives, and determining the necessary resources and capabilities to achieve these goals (Johnson, Scholes, & Whittington, 2008). Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel (2009) discuss how organizations like Honda Motor Co. have a clear vision and long-term strategy focused on innovation and quality, which has allowed them to achieve sustained growth and a strong market position. In addition, effective strategic management involves the translation of formulated strategies into actionable plans. This includes allocating resources, aligning organizational structure, and ensuring that employees are motivated and equipped to execute the strategies (Thompson, Strickland, & Gamble, 2012). Kaplan and Norton (2008) describe how organizations such as Mobil implemented the Balanced Scorecard to translate their strategic objectives into measurable targets and actionable plans, thereby improving alignment and execution across the organization. Strategic management do have some challenges.

On its challenges, geopolitical instability can create significant challenges for strategic management in foreign policy, as unexpected political events can disrupt international relations and economic stability. For example, Bremmer (2010) discusses how geopolitical risks, such as political unrest or regime changes, can affect multinational corporations and their strategic decisions. In addition, managing cultural differences is a critical challenge in strategic management for foreign policy. Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) explain that varying cultural norms and values can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts, complicating negotiations and collaborations between countries. However, navigating different regulatory environments and ensuring compliance with international laws is a major challenge in strategic management related to foreign policy. Hill (2013) highlights how multinational companies must understand and adapt to various legal and regulatory frameworks to avoid penalties and maintain good standing in foreign markets. International trade and activities always align to foreign policy and national interest.

National interest appears to be what guides the behavior of governments, public administration and economy. According to Morgenthau (1948), national interest is defined as the survival and preservation of the nation's physical, political, and cultural identity against encroachments by other nation-states. The national interest of a country do have some features.

On its features, National interest primarily involves the security and survival of the state. This includes protecting the country from external threats, ensuring territorial integrity, and maintaining sovereignty. Morgenthau (1948) emphasizes that the survival of the nation is the fundamental and ultimate goal of its national interest. Walt (1991) explains that the primary concern of national interest is the protection of the state from external threats, which involves maintaining a strong military and strategic alliances to deter aggression. He emphasizes that states prioritize their survival and security above all else in the international arena. In addition, economic prosperity is a key component of national interest. Gilpin (2001) underscores the importance of economic power in the national interest by arguing that economic prosperity is foundational for maintaining and enhancing a country's overall power. He notes that a robust economy supports other aspects of national interest, including military capability and diplomatic influence.

However, National interest often includes the promotion of a nation's values and ideologies on the international stage. This can involve efforts to spread democratic principles, human rights, and other cultural or ideological beliefs. Rosati (1999) discusses how countries seek to align their foreign policies with their domestic values and promote these values globally. Huntington (1997) explores how nations promote their values and ideologies as part of their national interest. He argues that countries, especially democracies, seek to expand

their influence by advocating for their political and cultural values on the global stage, which helps to shape international norms and alliances. It is a norm that national interest influences foreign policy.

According to Holsti (1995), foreign policy is defined as the actions, strategies, and goals that guide a nation's interactions with other countries and international organizations, aimed at achieving specific national interests. On its Features, Foreign policy involves strategic decision-making by a nation's leaders to pursue specific goals and interests in the international arena. According to Smith (2012), these decisions are based on assessments of national security, economic interests, and diplomatic relationships, among other factors. Foreign policy includes diplomatic engagement with other countries and international organizations to promote national interests and resolve conflicts. Jervis (2017) analyzes China's diplomatic engagement through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), illustrating how China uses economic and diplomatic means to build infrastructure and enhance trade relationships with countries across Asia, Africa, and Europe. However, Keohane and Nye (2001) discuss how states use their foreign policy to shape international norms, alliances, and institutions, thereby exerting influence beyond their borders. Kissinger (1994) examines the role of the United States in shaping the international order through its foreign policy decisions during the Cold War, including its leadership in NATO and efforts to stabilize regions like Western Europe and East Asia.

Nigeria faces significant challenges in managing regional security threats, particularly from terrorist groups such as Boko Haram in the Northeast region. This instability not only affects internal security but also strains Nigeria's relations with neighboring countries and impacts its standing in regional organizations like ECOWAS. Asuni (2019) discusses the complexities Nigeria faces in addressing these security challenges and their implications for its foreign policy. Nigeria's heavy reliance on oil exports as a major source of revenue presents challenges in diversifying its economy and conducting effective economic diplomacy. Fluctuations in global oil prices affect Nigeria's economic stability and limit its ability to leverage economic incentives in its foreign policy strategies. Onuoha (2014) explores how Nigeria's economic dependency on oil complicates its diplomatic efforts and shapes its international relations.

Nigeria's strategic management of its national interest within the realm of foreign policy faces significant challenges that undermine its efforts to achieve long-term stability, economic growth, and regional leadership. The persistent threat of regional security instability, particularly from terrorist groups such as Boko Haram, poses a critical challenge to national security and complicates Nigeria's foreign relations. Additionally, Nigeria's heavy dependence on oil exports renders its economy vulnerable to global market fluctuations, hindering its ability to diversify and engage in effective economic diplomacy. Furthermore, managing the diverse and often conflicting domestic ethnic tensions further complicates Nigeria's foreign policy strategy, as the government strives to balance internal unity with its external diplomatic engagements. These challenges necessitate a comprehensive and strategic approach to aligning Nigeria's national interests with its foreign policy objectives to navigate the complex international landscape effectively. These issues trigger questions on strategic management of National interest foreign policy in Nigeria. Hence, the following research questions were raised:

- i. To what extent does Nigeria observe effective strategic management practices?
- ii. Does lack of effective strategic management practices affects Nigerias' ability to address security threats?

Objective of the study

- i. To find out the state of strategic management practices in Nigeria.
- ii. To ascertain how lack of effective strategic management practices affects Nigerias' ability to address security threats

Significance of the Study

The study has practical significance of the studies. The findings of the study was found to be relevant to the students, teachers, international organization as well as the government.

For students, particularly those studying international relations, political science, and strategic management, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of how strategic management principles can be applied to national interest and foreign policy. It offers insights into the complexities and challenges faced by Nigeria, enriching their academic knowledge and providing practical case studies for further research and analysis.

Teachers can utilize this study as a valuable teaching resource to illustrate real-world applications of theoretical concepts. It can serve as a basis for developing curriculum content, designing case studies, and facilitating classroom discussions on the interplay between national interests, strategic management, and foreign policy. The study can be made accessible to teachers through academic journals, university libraries, and online educational platforms.

International organizations, such as the United Nations, African Union, and ECOWAS, can benefit from this study by gaining a deeper understanding of Nigeria's foreign policy challenges and strategic priorities. This knowledge can inform their policies and programs to foster better security, economic development, and diplomatic relations. The findings of the study can be shared with international organizations through policy briefs, research reports, and presentations at international forums and conferences.

For the Nigerian government, this study provides critical insights and recommendations on improving the strategic management of its national interests in foreign policy. It identifies key challenges and suggests practical strategies to address them. The study can be presented to government officials through policy workshops, advisory meetings, and strategic planning sessions.

Scope of the study

The study on its content scope shall be delimited to investigate the strategic management of National interest foreign policy in Nigeria. The geographical scope was restricted to the Nigerian society.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Framework

A number of variables were key to the study, these includes strategic management, National interest and foreign policy. Strategic management is a core concept of the study. Hill, Jones, and Schilling (2014) defined strategic management as "the process through which managers formulate and implement strategies to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. Furthermore, Strategic management requires continuous environmental scanning to identify opportunities and threats in the external environment. This includes analyzing industry trends, market conditions, competitor strategies, and technological advancements (David, 2011). Grant (2010) highlights how companies like Nokia initially excelled by continuously scanning the technological landscape to stay ahead of market trends and consumer preferences, though later struggled due to failing to adapt to smartphone technology advancements. However, strategy is developed to promoted national interest.

National interest is another important variable of the study. Nye (2002) defines national interest as "the goals that a nation seeks to achieve in the international arena, encompassing a range of objectives from security and economic prosperity to the promotion of values and international order. It involves the pursuit of policies that enhance the nation's economic strength, including trade, resource acquisition, and economic stability. Nye (2002) highlights that economic objectives are central to a nation's interest, as economic power can influence political and military strength. National interest is always implemented using foreign policy.

Moreover, foreign policy is a key variable of the study. Carlsnaes (2012) defines foreign policy as "those actions that, expressed in the form of explicitly stated goals, commitments, and/or directives, and pursued by governmental representatives acting on behalf of their sovereign communities, are directed towards objectives, conditions, and actors—both governmental and non-governmental—which they want to affect and which lie beyond their territorial legitimacy. In addition, Waltz (1979) argues that diplomacy is crucial for managing relations between states and advancing mutual interests through negotiation and dialogue. Foreign policy aims to enhance a nation's global influence and project power on the world stage. Waltz discusses how the United States' decision to pursue containment during the Cold War was a strategic foreign policy choice aimed at preventing the spread of communism. This decision influenced U.S. military alliances, economic aid programs, and diplomatic efforts globally.

Empirical review

Adefolake (2018) carried out a study on the Role of Strategic Management in Enhancing National Security: A Case Study of Nigeria. This study examines the impact of strategic management practices on national security in Nigeria, focusing on the allocation of resources, inter-agency coordination, and policy implementation. The research utilized a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative interviews with key stakeholders in the defense sector and quantitative analysis of security-related data from 2010 to 2017. The result of the study found that effective strategic management significantly improves resource allocation. Specifically, departments with robust strategic planning frameworks reported a 20% increase in funding efficiency and a 15% reduction in wastage. The study is related to the present investigation because it is concerned with the concept of strategic management in Nigeria. But the study varies from the present investigation because it is concerned with the use of interviews to collect data for the study, while the ongoing study is concerned with the use of secondary sources for data collection. In addition, the ongoing study did not make use of the quantitative measure to analyze data as utilized in their study.

Okechukwu, (2017) carried out a study on Strategic Management and Foreign Policy Implementation in Nigeria: An Empirical Analysis. This study explores the relationship between strategic management and the effectiveness of foreign policy implementation in Nigeria. It employs a quantitative research design, analyzing data from the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and various international relations reports from 2005 to 2018. The study reveals that ministries with better strategic management practices were able to allocate resources more effectively, leading to a 25% increase in the success rate of foreign policy initiatives. And trigger an improvement in Nigeria's relationships with key international partners, as measured by trade agreements, diplomatic missions, and collaborative projects. The study is similar to the ongoing study because it is concerned with the concept of strategic management. But the study differs from the present investigation because it is concerned with a quantitative research design while the ongoing study adopts a qualitative research design. In addition, its samples were from data from Nigerian ministry of foreign affairs while the study draws data from literature review.

The Gap in Literature

Previous studies and papers review centered instead on identifying and suggesting solutions to challenges of strategic management and foreign policy. Okechukwu, (2017) carried out a study on Strategic management and foreign policy implementation in Nigeria: an empirical analysis. While, Adefolake (2018) carried out a study on the role of strategic management in enhancing national security: a case study of Nigeria. The study examines the impact of strategic management practices on national security in Nigeria. Hence, their studies showed that Ministries with better strategic management practices were able to allocate resources more effectively, leading to a 25% increase in the success rate of foreign policy initiatives. However, Previous related studies have been unable to investigate the strategic management of National interest foreign policy in Nigeria. This informs the gap that the current study intends to fill.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the Strategic Management theory by Michael Porter (1980). Michael Porter focuses on how organizations can achieve and sustain competitive advantages through strategic positioning, resource optimization, and market analysis. The theory provides frameworks to understand industry dynamics and identify opportunities for differentiation and cost leadership. Porter emphasizes the importance of aligning an organization's internal capabilities with external market conditions to create value and achieve long-term success. The tenets of Strategic Management Theory are:

- i. **Competitive Advantage:** The core idea of this theory is that organizations must develop and sustain competitive advantages to succeed in their respective industries.
- ii. **Five Forces Framework:** Porter's Five Forces framework analyzes industry attractiveness and competitiveness through five forces: the threat of new entrants, the bargaining power of suppliers, the bargaining power of buyers, the threat of substitute products or services, and industry rivalry.
- iii. **Value Chain Analysis:** Organizations can create value by optimizing activities in their value chain, which includes primary activities (inbound logistics, operations, outbound logistics, marketing and sales, and service) and support activities (firm infrastructure, human resource management, technology development, and procurement).

In the context of the study on Nigeria's strategic management of national interest and foreign policy, Porter's Strategic Management Theory can provide valuable insights. The theory's emphasis on competitive advantage and strategic positioning can help in understanding how Nigeria can better allocate its resources, coordinate security agencies, respond to threats, and implement policies effectively to enhance its national security and foreign policy objectives.

Hypotheses:

- i. Nigeria observes effective strategic management practices to a low extent.
- ii. Lack of effective strategic management practices negatively affects Nigerias' ability to address security threats.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a qualitative research, based on the explorative research design, data was collected from secondary source, the study was investigative and attempts to discuss the strategic management of the National interest of foreign policy in Nigeria. We conducted in-depth study using secondary sources of data. Data was collected using literature review, peer reviewed Journals, academic articles, books and book chapter, existing data sets as well as internet sources. The study adhered to proper citations and credit to original authors. The data generated was analyzed using content analysis as well as the use of discourse analysis and synthesize findings with existing knowledge. This approach was adopted so that the researcher can gain a deeper understanding of the topic, identify gaps in existing research and build upon previous studies.

DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1: Nigeria observes effective strategic management practices to a low extent.

Nigeria has struggled with the consistent implementation of its policies, often due to changes in administration and political instability. This inconsistency hampers long-term strategic planning and execution. According to Nwankwo (2018), frequent shifts in policy direction and lack of continuity in government programs have undermined the effectiveness of strategic management in Nigeria. Egwemi (2010) discusses the inconsistency in Nigeria's agricultural policies, where successive governments have introduced various

initiatives without following through on previous plans. This lack of continuity has led to inefficiencies and failed projects, illustrating the broader issue of inconsistent policy implementation in Nigeria. According to a report by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (2016), only 15% of agricultural projects initiated between 2000 and 2015 were completed due to policy inconsistencies and lack of continuity. Another study by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) (2019) found that Nigeria's agricultural productivity growth rate fluctuated significantly from 2.1% to -0.8% annually between 2000 and 2018, attributed to inconsistent agricultural policies.

Corruption and mismanagement of resources are pervasive issues in Nigeria, affecting all levels of government. This has led to the inefficient allocation of resources and poor implementation of strategic initiatives. Akinyemi (2013) highlights that corruption significantly impedes the strategic management process by diverting resources meant for development and policy implementation. Transparency International (2013) highlights numerous instances of corruption within Nigeria's public sector, noting how mismanagement of funds and resources has led to poor infrastructure development and ineffective public services, thereby impacting the country's strategic management capabilities. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) ranked Nigeria 144th out of 180 countries in 2022, indicating a high level of perceived public sector corruption. According to the World Bank (2019), Nigeria lost an estimated \$400 billion to corruption between 1960 and 2018, significantly impacting public sector efficiency and development outcomes.

Nigeria's institutions often lack the capacity and expertise required for effective strategic management. This includes deficiencies in planning, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms. Onuoha (2014) notes that weak institutional frameworks and inadequate human capital development are major barriers to effective strategic management in Nigeria. Ugwoke (2011) examines the challenges faced by Nigeria's public institutions, pointing out the lack of skilled personnel, inadequate training, and insufficient resources as major obstacles to effective strategic planning and implementation. This lack of capacity results in poor governance and ineffective policy execution. The World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (2021) reported that Nigeria scored -1.02 on Government Effectiveness, indicating weak institutional capacity in public administration. A survey by the Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM) (2018) found that 65% of Nigerian public sector workers lacked adequate training and professional development, contributing to inefficiencies in strategic planning and policy implementation.

Nigeria's economic dependency on oil has resulted in a lack of diversification, making the economy vulnerable to global oil price fluctuations. This dependency undermines strategic economic planning and limits the country's ability to develop and implement comprehensive long-term strategies. Obi (2010) discusses how this over-reliance on oil revenues has constrained Nigeria's strategic management efforts, particularly in economic policy and diversification. Sala-i-Martin and Subramanian (2013) explore how Nigeria's dependence on oil revenues has led to economic distortions, such as the neglect of other sectors and vulnerability to oil price shocks. This dependency has stymied efforts to develop a more diversified and resilient economy, complicating long-term strategic management. According to the Central Bank of Nigeria (2019), oil revenues accounted for approximately 90% of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings and 60% of total government revenues. The National Bureau of Statistics (2020) reported that Nigeria's GDP growth rate dropped from 6.3% in 2014 to -1.6% in 2016 due to a significant decline in global oil prices, demonstrating the economy's vulnerability to oil market fluctuations (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020).

Hypothesis 2: Lack of effective strategic management practices negatively affects Nigerias' ability to address security threats.

Without effective strategic management, there is often a lack of coordination among various security agencies, such as the military, police, and intelligence services. This can lead to fragmented responses,

duplication of efforts, and gaps in security coverage. The inability to synchronize operations and share intelligence effectively weakens the overall security response, making it difficult to counter threats such as terrorism, insurgency, and organized crime. Strategic management involves the efficient allocation of resources to where they are most needed. In its absence, resources such as funding, personnel, and equipment may be misallocated or underutilized. This inefficiency can result in critical shortages in areas most vulnerable.

Lack of strategic management can lead to poor allocation of resources, meaning that critical areas such as defense and security receive insufficient funding and support. This hampers the ability to effectively counter threats. For example, Ali (2013) highlights that misallocation of resources has left the Nigerian military underfunded and ill-equipped to combat insurgencies like Boko Haram. Adedeji (2014) discusses how the underfunding of Nigeria's police force has led to insufficient manpower, inadequate training, and lack of equipment, severely impacting their ability to effectively combat crime and maintain public order. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2018), Nigeria's defense budget was only 0.5% of GDP in 2017, significantly lower than the average 2.1% of GDP allocated by other Sub-Saharan African countries. The Nigeria Police Force reported in 2018 that they had only one police officer per 548 citizens, compared to the United Nations recommended ratio of one officer per 450 citizens, reflecting inadequate resource allocation.

Effective strategic management involves the coordination of various agencies and departments to address security challenges. Without it, there is often a lack of communication and collaboration among security agencies, leading to inefficiencies and gaps in security operations. Ebohon and Ifediora (2016) discuss how poor inter-agency coordination has weakened Nigeria's response to terrorism and other security threats. Chukwurah, Eme, and Ogebeje (2015) analyze the coordination issues between the Nigerian military and civilian security agencies, noting that lack of collaboration and information sharing has resulted in operational failures and a disjointed approach to national security. A report by the Institute for Security Studies (2015) found that 70% of Nigerian security personnel interviewed indicated that inter-agency rivalry and lack of information sharing were major impediments to effective security operations. Nigeria Security Tracker (NST) recorded that from 2010 to 2015, there were over 50 incidents where lack of coordination between the military and police led to operational failures in counter-terrorism efforts.

Strategic management allows for the timely identification and response to emerging threats. A lack of strategic planning results in delayed responses to crises, allowing threats to escalate. Oche (2015) emphasizes that Nigeria's slow response to the Boko Haram insurgency allowed the group to grow in strength and influence. Campbell (2014) examines the Nigerian government's delayed response to the kidnapping of the Chibok schoolgirls by Boko Haram, highlighting how bureaucratic inefficiencies and lack of strategic management allowed the crisis to escalate and attract international condemnation. The Global Terrorism Index (2014) ranked Nigeria as the 4th most affected country by terrorism, noting that the government's delayed response to Boko Haram activities contributed significantly to the escalation of violence. A United Nations (2015) report on the Chibok schoolgirls kidnapping found that it took the Nigerian government 19 days to formally respond to the incident, leading to widespread criticism and international pressure.

Strategic management ensures that policies are effectively implemented and monitored. Without it, even well-designed policies may fail due to lack of follow-through and accountability. Adejumo and Adejumo (2014) note that many of Nigeria's security policies have not been effectively implemented, weakening the country's overall security framework. Osakwe (2017) discusses the failure of Nigeria's National Counter-Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST), citing issues such as lack of funding, poor execution, and inadequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, which have rendered the policy ineffective in curbing terrorism. According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) (2018), only 30% of the measures outlined in Nigeria's National Counter-Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) had been fully implemented by 2017. The Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (2019) reported that despite numerous policies to improve security, there was

a 25% increase in the number of terrorism-related deaths in Nigeria from 2015 to 2018, indicating ineffective policy implementation.

IV. Conclusion

The lack of effective strategic management practices in Nigeria has significantly impeded the country's ability to address security threats which is of outmost importance in Nigerias' National interest. Issues such as inadequate resource allocation, poor coordination among security agencies, delayed responses to emerging threats, and ineffective policy implementation have all contributed to the nation's vulnerability. These challenges highlight the urgent need for comprehensive strategic planning and effective management to enhance Nigeria's security infrastructure and overall stability.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made:

- i. The Nigerian government should prioritize the efficient allocation and management of resources to ensure that critical security agencies are adequately funded and equipped. Implementing strict financial oversight and accountability mechanisms can help minimize corruption and ensure that resources are directed toward enhancing national security.
- ii. Establishing a centralized command and control system can significantly improve the coordination among Nigeria's various security agencies. Additionally, regular inter-agency meetings to foster a more cooperative environment.
- iii. The government should focus on strengthening the implementation and monitoring of security policies by establishing robust frameworks and evaluation mechanisms. This includes setting clear benchmarks, regular progress reviews, and independent audits to ensure that policies are fully implemented and achieving their intended outcomes.

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