



REVISTA INCLUSIONES

INVESTIGACIÓN Y CIENCIA DESDE EURASIA

Revista de Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales

Volumen 7 . Número Especial

Julio / Septiembre

2020

ISSN 0719-4706

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**EDUCATION AS A VIABLE SOFT POWER INITIATIVE IN NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY
IMPLEMENTATION: THE NIGERIAN FOREIGN SERVICE ACADEMY AS A CASE STUDY**

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Fecha de Recepción: 26 de enero de 2020 – **Fecha Revisión:** 02 de abril de 2020

Fecha de Aceptación: 02 de junio de 2020 – **Fecha de Publicación:** 01 de julio de 2020

Abstract

The paper examines education as an instrument of soft power. It offers the Nigeria's Foreign Service Academy (FSA) as useful instrument for analysing geopolitical and soft power dynamics which influence and attraction transcend national boundaries, with the aim of ensuring peaceful coexistence across national frontiers. It examines Nigeria's Afrocentric posture in Africa and its effects particularly on Nigerian citizens abroad. Methodologically, it employs the use of descriptive analysis relying solely on secondary information for data generation and analysis. It concludes that, it would be of Nigeria's interest to train selected diplomats and young leaders in Africa at the FSA on a short-term basis, by extension provides the needed opportunity for Nigeria to transport and impact ideas of African unity, as well as serve as viable channel for transmitting Nigeria's national interest in ensuring Africa's unity and the value of peace and stability in Africa to young African diplomats/leader.

Keywords

Education – Soft Power – Foreign Service Academy – Decolonization – Geopolitics – Foreign Policy

Education as a viable soft power initiative in Nigeria's foreign policy implementation: the Nigerian foreign service... pág. 34

Para Citar este Artículo:

Idahosa, Stephen Osaherumwen; Makpah, Oyeinbiyeridei Joy; Ikhidero, Solomon Ijeweimen; Afolabi, Gbadebo y Adebayo, Kafilat Motunrayo. Education as a viable soft power initiative in Nigeria's foreign policy implementation: the Nigerian foreign service academy as a case study. Revista Inclusiones Vol: 7 num Especial (2020): 33-47.

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Introduction

In recent years, the clarion call for the adoption and application of soft power in the advancement of national interest and attainment of desired hegemonic status has become the watchword of states in the diplomatic arena. Joseph Nye has noted that the foundation of power is gradually and steadily shifting from the emphasis on military force and conquest to non-coercive capabilities that engender other state's attraction, admiration and aspirations¹

An exploration of Nigeria's diplomatic behavior all down the ages reveals its messianic quest for the socio-economic and political development of Africa. Indeed, literatures on Nigeria's foreign policy and regional powerhood note that Nigeria has significant hard power capabilities and thus exerts considerable regional influence². These as reflected in the works of Nweke³ and Ogunnubi & Uzodike⁴ have been displayed in its active commitment to the eradication of slavery, colonialism, apartheid and all forms of racial oppression, and to continental transformation. Recent literatures have drawn attention to Nigeria's credentials that displays considerable application of soft power in its diplomatic relations. For example, Muhammad Juma Kuna⁵ and Eme & Okeke⁶ aptly state that Nigeria over the years has constructed the identity of a peace builder.

The fusion between policy and practice in the articulation and implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy (often at the expense of its own people) reflects the sacrifices the country has made in its dedication to the continent. This assumption of the Africa's 'big brother' role is anchored on its assurance that it is able to tackle Africa's problems through its enormous human and material resources, wealth and strong military. Driven largely by altruistic concerns about the sociopolitical and economic challenges facing the continent, Nigeria's Afrocentric policy has often been criticized⁷ at home for relegating Nigerians to the background in pursuit of continental advancement.

The attacks against and ill-treatment of Nigerians in Africa, especially the recent attack on Africans particular Nigerians in South Africa continue to question the price Nigeria has paid both in human, capital and material resources to ensuring peace and stability in the world, especially in Africa. Hence, pertinent questions that deserve attention include: why are Nigerians and Nigeria treated with iron fist in host countries? With the current economic and security challenges being faced by Nigeria, how relevant is the concept of

¹ J. S. Nye, *Hard and Soft Power in America Foreign Policy (Paradox of American Power)*, 2002), 110.

² O, Tella, "Is Nigeria a soft power state?" *Social Dynamic* Vol: 44 num 2 (2018): 376–394.

³ R. C. Nweke, *The Role of Nigeria in Restoring Peace in West Africa: a dissertation presented to The Faculty of Arts. University of Malta. 2010. Retrieved from: <https://www.diplomacy.edu/sites/default/files/30112010145910%20Nweke%20%28Library%29.pdf>*

⁴ O. Ogunnubi y U. Okeke-Uzodike, "Can Nigeria be Africa's hegemon?", *African Security Review* Vol: 25 num 2 (2016): 110-128.

⁵ M. J. Kuna, *The Role of Nigeria in Peace Building, Conflict Resolution, and Peacekeeping since 1960*. Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University. 2005. Retrieved from: https://www.academia.edu/255514/The_Role_of_Nigeria_in_Peace_Building_Conflict_Resolution_and_Peacekeeping_in_Africa_since_1960

⁶ O. Eme y M. Okeke, "The Role of Nigeria in Promoting Preventative Diplomacy in Africa: (1999 – 2008)", *Nnamdi Azikiwe University Journal of International Law and Jurisprudence* Vol: 2 (2011): 279-293.

⁷ A. Olumuyiwa y N.U.O. Uzodike, "Nigeria, Afro-centrism and Conflict Resolution: After Five Decades—How Far, How Well?", *African Studies Quarterly* Vol: 15 num 4 (2015): 1-23.

"Afrocentrism"? What are measures and roles taken by the Federal Government by extension the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the protection and defence of Nigerians abroad? What policies do the Nigeria government need to handle or address in order to halt the proliferation of xenophobic attacks and threats against Nigerians abroad? The action Nigeria takes hence forth will surely pass a message to Nigerians home and abroad, including the international community on whether or not Nigerian policy makers are in comatose.

It is pertinent to note that, one of the areas we might not have exploited over the years is education - by using the Foreign Service Academy as a veritable tool of soft power in Foreign policy implementation. As the term 'soft power' in international relations (IR) was coined by Joseph Nye a quarter of a century ago, it has gained a great response and initiated numerous debates. A high-quality education sector is one of the significant factors that contribute to a country's soft power. Thus, an important soft power tool instrument for Nigeria in the wake of recent attacks against it and its citizens in South Africa is the Foreign Service Academy.

Theoretical Framework/Conceptualizing Soft Power

First, it should be noted that power, ordinarily is the ability of one actor to change the behavior of another actor through any means. Soft power as coined by Professor Joseph Nye Jr. is a post-Cold concept used as Yulia Kiseleva observes to promote the "power of attraction."⁸ Rothman has also emphasized that attraction has become a key word in diplomatic interactions amongst nation-states and peoples around the globe through Joseph Nye's formulation of soft power.⁹ The concept of soft power is aptly captured in Joseph Nye's remarks thus:

When you can get others to admire your ideals and to want what you want, you do not need to spend as much on sticks and carrots to move them to your direction.¹⁰ Power is the ability to influence the behavior of others to get the outcomes one wants.¹¹ Soft power entails getting others to want what you want.¹²

The idea of soft power as inferred from the above remarks rest on the ability of a state to set the political agenda in a way that shapes the preference of others. Nye noted as cited in Ogbonna, and Ogunnubi¹³ that contemporary international realities with regard to the costs and consequences of military interventions, coercive diplomacy and economic sanctions have made hard power to lose its attractiveness as an operational instrument in influencing states behaviour. In his illustration, Nye explains that wise parents know that if they have brought up their children with the right beliefs and values, their power will be greater and will last longer than if they have relied only on spankings, cutting of allowances, or taking away the car keys.¹⁴

⁸ Y. Kiseleva, "Russia's Soft Power Discourse: Identity, Status and the Attraction of Power", *Politics Vol: 35 num 3-4 (2015): 317.*

⁹ B. S. Rothman, "Education as a Soft Power Resource to Promotion of Immigration and Assimilation in Japan", *Analysis & Alternatives Vol: 2 (2018): 126-215.*

¹⁰ J. S. Nye, *Soft Power, the Means to success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

¹¹ J. S. Nye, *Soft Power, the Means to success in World Politics...*

¹² J. S. Nye, *Hard and Soft Power in America Foreign Policy...* 110.

¹³ N. Ogbonna y O. Ogunnubi, "Rethinking the Role of Nigeria's Technical Aid Corps as Soft Power: Rough Diamond or Fools' Gold", *UBUNTU: Journal of Conflict and Social Transformation Vol: 7 num 2 (2018): 121-141.*

¹⁴ J. S. Nye, *Hard and Soft Power in America Foreign Policy...*

Similarly, in Nye's assertion, "if I can get you to want to do what I want, then I do not have to force you to do what you do not want to do".¹⁵ He thus defines soft power as the "ability to get what one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payments. This entails that a country gets what it wants through the attractiveness of its culture, political ideals, and policies"¹⁶ By implication therefore, soft power is a persuasive approach to international relations. Indeed having the ability and capacity to control or influence the action and excesses of other as Professor Joseph Nye has argued, is a phenomenon of universal concern to man and nations of the world. 'Power according to Matteo Pallaver'¹⁷ is an essential element of human existence and we can find signs and manifestations of power in every dimension of social life, from interpersonal relations through economic relations, to religious and political differences.

Soft power as a policy terminology is sometimes also referred to as public diplomacy depending on the context and way in which it is used.¹⁸ This type of power differs from hard power, the ability to use the *carrots* (inducement) and *sticks* (threat) of economic and military might to make others follow your will. It is about a state's ability to win others over, ensuring support for their agendas in international relations. It is about how states demonstrates' their cultural and moral values, their policies' appeal, and the efficiency of their political institutions for the purpose of influencing other states to dance to their diplomatic tunes. Soft power as a strategy is built on certain instruments that help a country position itself on the world stage such as exporting education, promoting their language and disseminating national cultural values. In soft power, a state may achieve its desired objectives in relation to other states through intangible resources. This is primarily because other states admire its values, culture, and policies and aspire to be like it. In other words, in order to influence other states in international relations, a state cannot only rely on threats of economic sanctions and military force. It must be equipped with the resources such as culture, political values, and foreign policy – as identified by Nye – that attract other states.¹⁹

A review of the Nigerian polity reveals that the elements of soft power aptly highlighted by scholars and authorities are inherent in its diplomatic missions. Tella for example observes that Nigeria has indeed penetrated the African continent, thanks to its cultural exports in the form of music and movies (Nollywood), which are widely admired. Its idealistic and multilateral foreign policy is worthy of emulation and its political values, particularly as the largest democracy in Africa may be attractive to other states hence, are viable soft power endowments²⁰.

Education as a Soft Power Instrument

Education system has undeniably been a viable instrument of prosperity of nations and states.²¹ States has been able to show considerable achievements in the level of

¹⁵ J.S. Nye, *Hard and Soft Power in America Foreign Policy...* 110.

¹⁶ J.S. Nye, *Soft Power, the Means to success in World Politics...* 10.

¹⁷ M. Pallaver, *Power and Its Forms: Hard, Soft, Smart: a thesis submitted to the Department of International Relations of the London School of Economics* (London, 2011).

¹⁸ J.S. Nye, *Propaganda Isn't the Way: Soft Power*. *International Herald Tribune*. 2003. Retrieved from: <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/propaganda-isnt-way-soft-power>

¹⁹ O. Tella, "Is Nigeria a soft power state?", *Social Dynamic Vol: 44 num 2* (2018): 376–394.

²⁰ O. Tella, *Is Nigeria a soft power state?...*

²¹ A. Amirbek y K. Ydyrys, "Education as a Soft Power Instrument of Foreign Policy", *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences Vol: 143* (2014): 501-503.

prosperity by the help of the viable mechanism of educational system.²² According to Rothman B. Steven, education is an important yet under explored avenue for soft power influences. Emphasizing the vital significance of education as a soft power tool, Anatoly Torkunov, citing V.V. Putin remarks thus;

[...] This is not about empire, but rather cultural progress. Exporting education and culture will help promote Russian goods, services and ideas; guns and imposing political regimes will not... We must work to expand Russia's educational and cultural presence in the world, especially in those countries where a substantial part of the population speaks or understands Russian²³

Altbach and McGill²⁴ affirm the above assertion in their remark that education is an international force that influences intellectual and scientific development and spreading ideas worldwide. As a viable soft power instrument, education influences the domestic political culture and interaction among states. It has been revealed through scholarly studies that Germany and Japan through positive educational reforms during and after World War II greatly influence the attitudes of individuals and perception of their countries.²⁵ Russia according to Tareva and Tarev²⁶ also relies on education to encourage economic development and transmit particular cultural values to the domestic population. According to Ilesanmi Bakare²⁷, Soft power lies in the ability to attract and persuade rather than coerce. Soft power is about influence, examples are, credibility, and reputation. These studies show little doubt that education is an important state tool towards conditioning domestic populations with particular ideological and cultural identities.

In Nigeria, education has also been used as a key soft power endowment. Nigeria has aptly been tagged by David Tobenkin²⁸ as the 'awakening giant' of the African continent in the landscape of international education. This is not unconnected with the fact that it is the dominant source of international students studying abroad and a force within the higher education sector throughout Africa. And as Tobenkin observes, Nigeria's role will only expand in coming years, as its population is expected to eclipse that of the United States by 2050.²⁹ He recalls also that Nigeria boasts of one the most educated populations in the African continent', and Nigerians rank among the most qualified professionals in Africa.³⁰ According to reports from the Institute of International Education as cited in Tobenkin,

²² A. Amirbek y K. Ydyrys, "Education as a Soft Power Instrument..."

²³ V. V. Putin, Russia and the Changing World. Rossiiskaya Gazeta. February 27, 2012. Cited in Anatoly Torkunov, Education as a Soft Power Instrument of Russia's Foreign Policy Available at: <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/education-as-a-soft-power-instrument-of-russia-s-foreign-pol/>

²⁴ P. G. Altbach y P. McGill-Peterson, Higher Education as a Project of America's Soft Power. In Y. Watanabe & D. L. McConnell (Eds.), Soft power superpowers: cultural and national assets of Japan and the United States (UK: M.E. Sharpe, 2008).

²⁵ S. B. Rothman, "Education as a Soft Power Resource to Promotion of Immigration and Assimilation in Japan", Analysis & Alternatives Vol: 2 (2018): 126-215.

²⁶ E. G. Tareva y B.V. Tarev, "Intercultural Education as a 'Soft power' Tool", Journal of Siberian Federal University Vol: 3 num 10 (2017): 432-439.

²⁷ I. A. Bakare, "Soft power as a means of fighting international terrorism: a case study of Nigeria's Boko Haram Vestnik RUDN", International Relations Vol: 16 num 2 (2016): 285-295.

²⁸ D. Tobenkin, Africa's Education Evolution: Nigeria, the Awakening Giant. NAFSA. Retrieved from: <https://www.nafsa.org/ie-magazine/2019/5/1/africas-education-evolution-nigeria-awakening-giant>

²⁹ D. Tobenkin, Africa's Education Evolution: Nigeria, the Awakening Giant...

³⁰ D. Tobenkin, Africa's Education Evolution: Nigeria, the Awakening Giant...

Nigerian international students in the United States numbered 12,693 in the 2017–18 academic years, up to 8.4 percent from the previous year, and represented 1.2 percent of all international students.³¹ Many recruiters say Nigeria should be one of the primary, if not the first, ports of call for Western institutions recruiting students from sub-Saharan Africa, given the country's size and proximity to other key markets. Additionally, EducationUSA³² has a more robust presence in Nigeria than in most other African countries, which can provide logistical support.

Tobenkin observe as well that, as Nigeria continues to send large numbers of students abroad to study, it strengthens its position as a key player in the landscape of international education. An increasing middle class, strong economy, and growing youth population means more students are keen to pursue higher education at home and abroad. Today Nigerians rank among the most qualified professionals in Africa^{33,34}. It is on record that, the South African health and education sectors benefit immensely from Nigerian personnel.³⁵ For example, there is perhaps no public hospital or university in South Africa without a Nigerian doctor or lecturer (from senior lecturer to professor). To support this claim, the database of the Nigerian Union in South Africa indicates that there are at least two medical doctors and a university lecturer in every branch of the association spread across the nine provinces in South Africa.³⁶ This was further verified from the database of the Association of Nigerian Residents in the South African city of Umhlathuze (ANRU)³⁷.

Nowadays, the number of countries that regard education as the best way to promote their national interests on the world stage is increasing. Especially big powers (such as the People's Republic of China, United States, Britain, France, Russia, etc.) have started to pay special attention and importance to the use of education as an effective instrument/source of soft power. Several countries are apt to using soft power aiming to achieve their foreign policy objectives. The main reasons behind this tendency are associated with the increase of interdependence among states and the heavy price that nations pay for achieving foreign policy objectives with the use of hard power. In this context, soft power instruments started to occupy a more effective position in the foreign policy of states, and beyond doubt this position will continue to rise in the coming period. Considering the role that soft power and education play in the foreign policy of the countries, it is imperative to note that soft power is a concept developed in 1990 by political theorist Joseph Nye of Harvard University to describe the ability to attract and co-opt rather than coerce, and use economic, cultural and political force as means of persuasion.

Methodology

The paper used qualitative research method. It is, firstly, a process of systematic examination of an account and descriptive in nature as it seeks to understand education as

³¹ D. Tobenkin, *Africa's Education Evolution: Nigeria, the Awakening Giant*. NAFSA. Retrieved from: <https://www.nafsa.org/ie-magazine/2019/5/1/africas-education-evolution-nigeria-awakening-giant>

³² EducationUSA Opportunity Funds Program (OFP). U.S. Embassy & Consulate in Nigeria. Retrieved from: <https://ng.usembassy.gov/education-culture/exchange-programs/opportunity-fund/>

³³ Association of Nigerian Residents in Umhlathuze. Executive Committee, Past Executive Committees, Members and Constitution. 2014. Retrieved from: <http://anrusa.weebly.com/>

³⁴ O. Ogunnubi y C. Isike, "Nigeria's Soft Power Sources: Between Potential and Illusion?", *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* Vol: 26 num 3 (2013): 1-22.

³⁵ O. Ogunnubi y C. Isike, *Nigeria's Soft Power Sources...*

³⁶ O. Ogunnubi y C. Isike, *Nigeria's Soft Power Sources...*

³⁷ O. Ogunnubi y C. Isike, *Nigeria's Soft Power Sources...*

an instrument of soft power and the Nigerian Foreign Service Academy as a veritable tool of soft power in Foreign policy implementation.

Nigeria Foreign Service Academy as a Viable Soft Power Conduit

No doubt countries around the world have over the years adopted foreign policies as measures for cooperation and as a basis upon which to build the foundation for a working partnership on global matters. The term “Foreign Service” according to the American Heritage Dictionary refers to the diplomatic and consular personnel of a nation's foreign office.³⁸ Foreign Service Academy (FSA) or Foreign Service Institute (FSI) as it is called in some countries is thus the diplomatic training institute of a country's Foreign Affairs Ministry. Its basic goal is to deliver world-class diplomatic training and provide the career-long learning opportunities that the government foreign affairs professionals need in order to advance their country's Foreign Policy in the global arena. To help them carry out these critical responsibilities, the Foreign Service Professionals are trained to acquire the required combination of specialized expertise, operational skill sets, and a broad capacity for innovative and visionary leadership.³⁹

FSA training and resources promotes substantive, regional, and linguistic expertise, leadership finesse, personal resilience and problem-solving techniques geared towards peace-building in the global diplomatic arena.⁴⁰ Personnel of country's FSA are deployed as consular officers, economic specialists, management officers, political analysts and public diplomacy experts. They are trained to be culturally adaptable and creative problem-solvers who can remain unflappable in the face of challenges and crises.⁴¹

The Nigeria's Foreign Service Academy as well trains diplomats or would be diplomats so that they can ably represent Nigeria's interest in the global arena. This is affirmed in the statement of Dr. Cyprian Heen as cited in Giwa Shile that Nigeria's FSA training is to enhance Nigerian foreign policies and represent Nigerians adequately wherever they (Foreign Service Officers) found themselves.⁴² The Idea of a Nigeria's Foreign Service was birthed at the opening of the Second Session of the House of Representatives on February 26, 1956 when the then British Governor General, while presenting the usual Speech from the Throne, among other things, expressed the wish to establish a Nigerian Foreign Service, which will be equipped to staff, in a manner creditable to Nigeria's reputation overseas.⁴³ This dream came to reality in 1957 when the first recruitment was made into the service. Those recruited that year (twelve in number) became known as the *Twelve Disciples* who formed the foundation staff of the Nigerian Foreign

³⁸ American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. 2016. Retrieved from: <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/Foreign+Service>

³⁹ Foreign Service Institute. U.S. Department of State. Retrieved from: <https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-management/foreign-service-institute/>

⁴⁰ Foreign Service Institute. U.S. Department of State. Retrieved from: <https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-management/foreign-service-institute/>

⁴¹ How to Become a Foreign Service Officer. Study.com. 2019. Retrieved from: https://study.com/articles/How_to_Become_a_Foreign_Service_Officer.html

⁴² G. Shile, Nigerian Foreign Service Academy committed to producing “Nigeria First” officers – Director. TbiAfrica. September 19, 2018. Retrieved from: available at: <https://tbiafrica.com/2018/09/19/nigerian-foreign-service-academy-committed-to-producing-nigeria-first-officers-director/>

⁴³ G Olufemi, The Evolution, Structure and Functions of the Nigerian Foreign Service (Lagos: 23rd Regular Course of the Foreign Service Academy, 2018).

Service. This, according to Emmanuel I. Umeonyirioha⁴⁴ serves as ground-preparation for the take-off of Nigeria's diplomatic practice as well as getting the nation ready for its initial foreign representation⁴⁵ after independence. Umeonyirioha⁴⁶ adds that another round of recruitment into the Foreign Service was conducted in 1958 and 1959. These new set of officers were deployed to British university for one-year training. And among the officers who serve as pioneer staff of the Nigeria's Foreign Service were Omotayo Ogunsulire; Philip Asiodu; Dickson Igwe; Leslie Harriman; Aminu Sanusi; Adedokun Haastrup; Chike Chukwurah; Chukwuemeka Ifeagwu; Soji Williams; John Mamman Garba; Olujimi Jolaoso; Olumide Omololu; John Ukegbu; Olusola Sanu; Ignatius Olisaemeka; Victor Adegoroye; Edward Enahoro; Sule Kolo and George Dove-Edwin⁴⁷

In Nigeria, the Foreign Service Academy (FSA) is the Training arm of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs created by order in council in 1982. The establishment of the Nigerian Foreign Service Academy places a very high premium on the education and training for adequate representation. This is captured in Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa's address articulated in 1958 for the recruitment of the first batch of Nigerian diplomats during a debate on foreign policy in the House of Representatives in Lagos. In this address Balewa⁴⁸ reiterates the reality that as a new independent state, Nigeria will largely be judged by the quality of its representation overseas. Hence, in determining the qualifications for the Foreign Service Academy, the Nigerian Government ensures that the candidate should first be well educated. Olufemi George adds in this regard that, the hopes and aspirations of the government in embarking on the proper training of its Foreign Service personnel is to effectively represent her national interest overseas and efficiently run her overseas Missions so that an independent Nigeria can be positively judged by the international community.⁴⁹

The Nigeria's FSA contributions to the country are in no doubt invaluable. The academy organizes courses of the Foreign Service to train officers of the Ministry, which in normal case should include other Home Ministries, as well as junior Foreign Service officers from other countries. Over the years, through the input of trained Foreign Service personnel, Nigeria has dutifully been playing its role in the international arena.⁵⁰

For example, in the Nigerian situation, such academy can serve as a good platform for Nigeria's Foreign Service Officers to better educate and enlighten regional diplomatic neighbours on the Afrocentric basis of Nigerian Foreign policy. It is an avenue to showcase the altruistic roles Nigeria has played in the process of promoting the decolonization of African continent; its immense efforts in ensuring peace and security in and among African states, its messianic efforts in helping to redeem regional neighbours from their politico-economic quagmire.

Nigeria's Foreign Service Academy could be used as a veritable tool to attract and co-opt as means of persuasion and understanding rather than coerce or force. The FSA could be used to arrange special courses not only for mid-career diplomats, but to also

⁴⁴ E. I. Umeonyirioha, "Diplomacy at Crossroads: Challenges of Nigeria's Foreign Service", *World Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* Vol: 6 num 1 (2020): 8-14.

⁴⁵ J. Aremu, "Structure and Challenges of Nigeria's Overseas Diplomatic Missions", *European Scientific Journal* Vol: 12 num 11 (2016): 525-538.

⁴⁶ J. Aremu, *Structure and Challenges of Nigeria's Overseas Diplomatic...*

⁴⁷ O. Jolaoso, *In the Shadows: Recollections of a Pioneer Diplomat* (Lagos: Malthouse Press, 1991).

⁴⁸ O. Jolaoso, *In the Shadows: Recollections of a Pioneer...*

⁴⁹ G. Olufemi, *The Evolution, Structure and Functions of the Nigerian...*

⁵⁰ G. Olufemi, *The Evolution, Structure and Functions of the Nigerian...*

include foreign diplomats, Regional Cooperation, in particular special courses for African diplomats. The Foreign Service Academy as a carrier of genuine values, as a resource that countries possess, and as a tool in achieving certain goals, could serve as a tool and mechanism to show how increasing internationalization brings more direct connections between education, international relations, and foreign policy.

Education as an Instrument of Geopolitical Strategy for Nigeria

The geo-strategic imperative and endowment of Nigeria informs its foreign policy goals and pursuit in relating with other nation states and in the comity of nations, and cannot be oversimplified, especially in West Africa. Nigeria is geographically positioned leveraging on its endowment – Territory, Population, Natural resources, Military, Sovereignty. The Foreign Service has successfully used these to leverage on the handling and projecting of Nigeria's Foreign Policy issues such as the decolonization of Africa, etc. Their effort in the formation of the then Organization of African Unity (OAU) now the African Union (AU) cannot also be overemphasized.⁵¹ Nigeria has been able to play a leading role on behalf of Africa in multilateral institutional arrangements such as the UN, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU, now the AU) and ECOWAS. Consequently, Nigeria's foreign policy was conceptualized not purely for Nigeria but rather in service of Africa and its overall development. The feeling at the time of inception was that Nigeria could not properly enjoy its own independence and freedom when any other African country remained shackled by colonial rule, apartheid or racism. In this way, Nigeria's national interest was intrinsically woven into Africa's interest. In retrospect, while policy may have changed due to prevailing issues, the principles behind Nigeria's commitment to Africa have remained largely the same since 1960.

A nation's population, territory, natural resources, military, sovereignty among other features are essential ingredients in the calculation of the importance and power with which a nation can engage with other nation-states and actors in the international political system. Nigeria has all these important features which to a very large extent have informed how it pursues its foreign policy and projects itself in the international system particularly within West Africa⁵². It is these features leveraging on the Foreign Service Academy that this paper is laying its argument on. It posits that Nigeria through its FSA should propagate its influence in building Africa, particularly West Africa to focus and prioritize Nigeria's foreign policy on regional concerns in terms of soft power.

It is imperative to underscore that the educational system today is closely entangled with the concept of politics and/or geopolitics⁵³. Graduates that studied in foreign countries become not only highly qualified personnel in their countries, but they also may become a so-called "Trojan horse"⁵⁴. The FSA by implication would be able to address the fears and phobia of fellow Africans through its educational system. As unfolding political events have demonstrated, political leaders may show sympathy and favor to the countries where they studied. So therefore, when considering the mechanisms (FSA) by which the Nigerian foreign policy is to be implemented in the context of education, it is necessary to immediately

⁵¹ O. Tella, "Is Nigeria a soft power state?", *Social Dynamic* Vol: 44 num 2 (2018): 376–394.

⁵² J. P. Ochogwu, *The Role of Nigeria in Building Peace and Security in West Africa* (Abuja- Nigeria: 24th Regular Course of The Foreign Service Academy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020).

⁵³ A. Amirbek, & K. Ydyrys, "Education as a Soft Power Instrument of Foreign Policy", *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences* Vol: 143 (2014): 501-503.

⁵⁴ A. Amirbek & A. Ydyrys, *Education as a Soft Power Instrument...*

determine a working taxonomy. Countries such as the United States, China, Russia, Germany, France, United Kingdom, etc are perfectly informed about the fact that the education system as well as their Foreign Service Academy/Institutes is one of the most essential instruments in terms of dominance in the global political arena. Everyone knows that the educational system allows the improvement of economic and political situation of the country. Therefore, if one country is dominating in some part of the world both politically and economically, it means that it is also dominant in the geopolitical aspect in the given part of the world. So, Nigeria undoubtedly is a dominant actor politically and economically in its sub-region and sphere of influence, but however, need to dominate in the area of education as well.

There is no denying the fact that Nigeria is the main peace builder on the continent and the globe at large. Nigeria’s peace keeping role in Africa such as in Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Mali and Sierra Leone, etc⁵⁵ has significantly boosted its soft power in Africa. Furthermore, it is a major aid donor and big brother in its commitment towards other African countries and has provided aid to African, Caribbean and Pacific states as a means to strengthen South-South cooperation⁵⁶ through four main technical cooperation programmes: Directorate of Technical Cooperation in Africa (DTCA), the Directorate of Technical Aid Corps (TAC), the Nigerian Trust Fund (NTF) and the Nigerian Technical Cooperation Fund (NTCF). These are government initiatives to institutionalize Nigeria’s development assistance and foreign aid programmes through the demonstration of its commitment to the human capital development of countries in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) regions⁵⁷. Ogbonna, and Ogunnubi recall that through the Technical Aid Corps Nigeria has and continue to render intellectual supports and expertise to other African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries.⁵⁸ Consequently and more recently, these have been listed as part of Nigeria’s soft power potentials which has increased Nigeria’s goodwill in African and can be leverage upon to advance its interest not just in African but in the global political arena⁵⁹.

Year	Number
1987–1990	102
1990–1992	103
1992–1994	190
1994–1996	280
1997–1999	195
1999–2001	254
2002–2004	382
2004–2006	617

⁵⁵ I. Omoruyi; S. O. Idahosa; M. M. Mugadam & O. Sidibe, “Nigeria — South Africa Rivalry in Quest for Regional Power Status: from Material Potential to UN Security Council Membership”, Vestnik RUDN. International Relations Vol: 20 num 1 (2020): 147-157.

⁵⁶ O. Tella, “Attractions and Limitations of Nigeria’s Soft Power”, Journal of Global Analysis Vol: 7 num 2 (2017): 113.

⁵⁷ M. M. Daura, Beyond twenty-two years: a prospective analysis of the Technical Aid Corps. In O.C. Eze (Ed.), Beyond 50 years of Nigeria’s foreign policy: Issues, challenges and prospects (pp. 109–126). (Lagos: Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), 2010).

⁵⁸ N. Ogbonna y O. Ogunnubi, “Rethinking the Role of Nigeria’s Technical Aid Corps as Soft Power: Rough Diamond or Fools’ Gold”, UBUNTU: Journal of Conflict and Social Transformation Vol: 7 num 2 (2018): 121-141.

⁵⁹ N. Ogbonna y O. Ogunnubi, Rethinking the Role of Nigeria's Technical Aid Corps...

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2006–2008	744
2008–2010	800

Table 1
TAC deployment from 1987 to 2010⁶⁰

The Foreign Service Academy can also be used to train professionals of the Technical Aid Corps for one (1) or two (2) months before departing to various countries for assignment. This would assist in shaping the kind of information and training to be impacted or transferred abroad titled in favor of a policy that will promote domestic economic development, protection of Nigerian citizens abroad to enhance the quality of citizen towards effectively competing in the international domain. Consequently, Nigerian leaders believe that the country's security is tied to that of African states because of cultural and historical experiences, and because of transnational security issues which are defined by the way in which the security of a nation is affected by what happens in contagious countries around its neighbourhood⁶¹. So therefore, the need to take advantage of the Foreign Policy tools of the Foreign Service Academy (FSA) to change the political, economic and security dynamics to the favor of Africa's unity and development and particularly the protection of Nigerians abroad and the security of the Nigerian state is now.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, Nigeria has unarguably experienced the good, bad and ugly in its diplomatic, trade, defence and socio-cultural relations over the years. Thus, necessity is upon the Federal government vis-a-vis MFA to do the needful and respond to the new dynamics by coming up with policies on the approach that would change the current narrative in favour of Nigeria's national interest via-a-vis protecting its citizens abroad. Consequently, Soft Power in terms of education can serve as a viable tool of foreign policy implementation. The Foreign Service Academy (FSA) can be used as an educational instrument to share, train and impact our ideas and roles it has and continue to play on young Africans. It's pertinent to note that the child given birth to in 1993/1994 at the death of Apartheid, will be 27 years old in 2020. Similarly, a child given birth to in 1975/1976 in Angola during Nigeria's assistance to the former would be 45 years old in 2020. These are the young diplomats in their various Missions abroad and unarguably, also occupy some leadership, businesses and decision-making positions in their respective countries. They may certainly not be privy to what countries like Nigeria have done in and for Africa.

To this effect, it would be of Nigeria's interest to use the FSA in training selected diplomats and young leaders in Africa on a short-term basis. This will provide the needed opportunity for Nigeria to bring and impact its ideas of the need for African unity and what countries, especially Nigeria has sacrificed to achieve decolonization, as well as peace and stability in Africa to young African diplomats/leaders. This could positively affect governmental policies towards Africans in host countries. By implication and extension in the nearest future Nigeria with FSA as tool would be able to get others to admire her ideals and to want what she wants, without spending as much on sticks and carrots to move them in her direction. By this, Nigeria's FSA as a viable soft power instrument would have achieved its aim of influencing the behavior of others to get the outcomes Nigeria wants.

⁶⁰ M. M. Daura, Beyond twenty-two years: a prospective análisis... y O. Ogunnubi y C. Isike, "Nigeria's Soft Power Sources: Between Potential and Illusion?" *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* Vol: 26 num 3 (2013): 1-22.

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