Perception of President Xi Jinping's Diplomatic Style and Artistry in Nigeria

A 2026 Report

By

Center for Contemporary China-Africa Research in Nigeria

Contemporary.chinaafrica@gmail.com

Preamble

China as an emerging global power has greatly challenged the unipolar world as well as its accompanying perpetual tendencies in international relations, most especially looking for ways to strengthen the developing nations. Under Xi Jinping political leadership, China employed a diplomatic model of economic cooperation, strategic partnership, non-interference in domestic affairs, and mutual development. One of the key aspects of his foreign policy is his focus on economic integration and cooperation, including the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which aims to expand China's economic influence in the countries involved. This strategy has enhanced China's footprint in Africa, putting Nigeria among China's major strategic partners in Africa.

Pragmatic engagement, economic diplomacy, multilateral cooperation and a shared future among nations are the essence of Xi Jinping's diplomatic style. The diplomacy of Xi is more focused on the principles of mutual respect, sovereignty, and non-interference, while also rejecting the imposition of political conditions on aid and investment as done in the West. Such a diplomatic approach has helped China develop close ties with numerous African nations, such as Nigeria, where its bilateral ties have grown in transportation, energy, telecommunications, manufacturing and trade. As such, the significance of knowing the nature of Xi's diplomacy is taken into consideration to understand its impact on Nigeria's foreign policy and developmental agenda.

The diplomatic artistry of Xi Jinping is his ability to utilize political engagement, economic incentives, cultural exchanges and strategic partnerships in a balanced manner, in order to promote China's interests while providing development opportunities for partner countries. This is where the artistry of diplomacy has manifested in Nigeria with several infrastructure investments such as railway rehabilitation, airports development, power generation projects and industrial investments supported by Chinese investments and loans. The engagements have made the relations between the two countries even closer and enhanced the presence of China in Nigeria's development agenda. It is also due to the growing cooperation that people-to-people relations, educational exchanges, and technological cooperation between the two countries have been improved.

In addition, Xi Jinping's diplomacy has contributed to the enhancement of economic growth and development in Nigeria. Chinese investments have played a vital role in establishing key infrastructure to enable economic operations and improve

connectivity among various parts of the country. The positive developmental impacts of the China-Nigeria relations in contemporary Xi's era encompass the development of transportation infrastructure, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), job creation, technology transfer and many others. With Nigeria, China is among the foremost trading partners due to several bilateral and economic partnerships that offer opportunities for economic expansion and industrial growth.

Xi's diplomatic skills embody effective strategic communication, economic engagement, ideological narrative, and institutional diplomacy, all aimed at reshaping China's position in international governance. It has been successful that Xi has been able to shift the policy of China's foreign relations from mostly being reactive to more proactive and assertive in engaging with the world since 2013. His diplomatic virtuosity manifests itself in the fact that he works with statecraft instruments like economic incentives, infrastructure diplomacy, cultural exchange and multilateral cooperation to promote China's national interest in a way that appears to be beneficial for the partner states (Shambaugh, 2020).

One of Xi's signature traits as a diplomat has been the role of economic diplomacy in advancing foreign policy. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has connected China with Asia, Africa and Europe in many different ways – funding and building transportation, energy, telecommunication and industrial infrastructure. This demonstrates the financial power being converted to political leverage, establishing a more profound mutual dependence between China and the countries concerned and laying the groundwork for long-term strategic partnerships, which will help strengthen China's influence and power. This way, economic opportunities turn into diplomatic capital.

The other characteristic of Xi's diplomacy is his use of the concept of a "Community with a Shared Future for Mankind." This vision was meant to help convey the sense of a need for collective action to deal with problems such as poverty, climate change, terrorism and pandemics. Through this narrative, Xi helps to convey a message that China is a responsible world player that is dedicated to an inclusive development path and global peace. Such ideological positioning builds up China's soft power, and assists the domestic legalization of China's growing international presence, especially among developing countries which are looking for alternative development partners.

China's policy of diplomacy is centered around sovereign equality, non-intervention, cooperation based on mutual interest, and transferring infrastructure, trade and technology. This has coincided with massive investments in railways, ports, energy and telecommunication infrastructure in Nigeria, which has helped to boost economic activities and connectivity. China has enhanced bilateral ties and enhanced its influence in West Africa through carefully negotiated agreements and a persistent diplomatic effort,

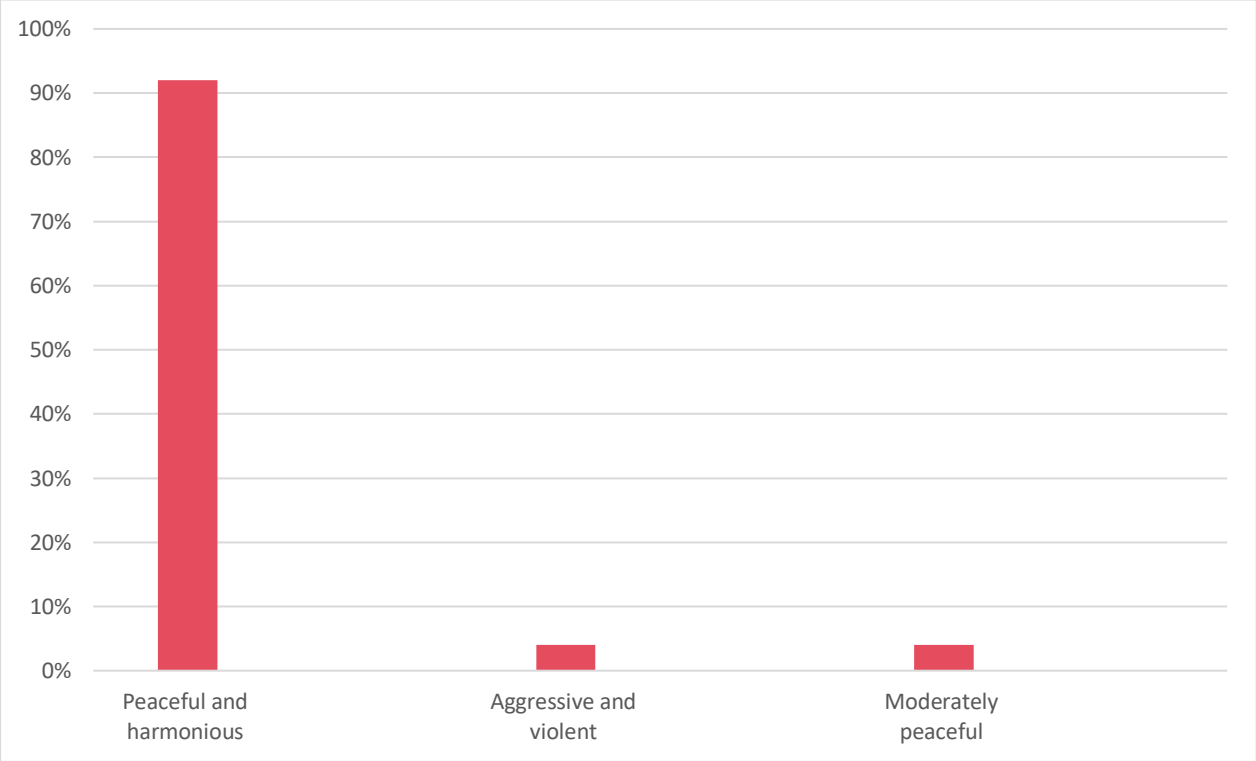
President Xi's diplomatic prowess is also demonstrated in his active participation in multilateral institutions and in reform of global governance. China has been more prominent in the United Nations, BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the G-20, and has advocated for reform of the international governance structures that are more in tune with the developing world interest. The multilateral interaction will be helpful for China's legitimacy and extends its bilateral relationship from multilateralism.

Analogical Presentation of Data Obtained

Nature of Xi Jinping's Diplomatic Style

How would you Describe the Key Characteristics of Xi Jinping's Diplomatic Approach in Contemporary International Relations?

Fig 1.1

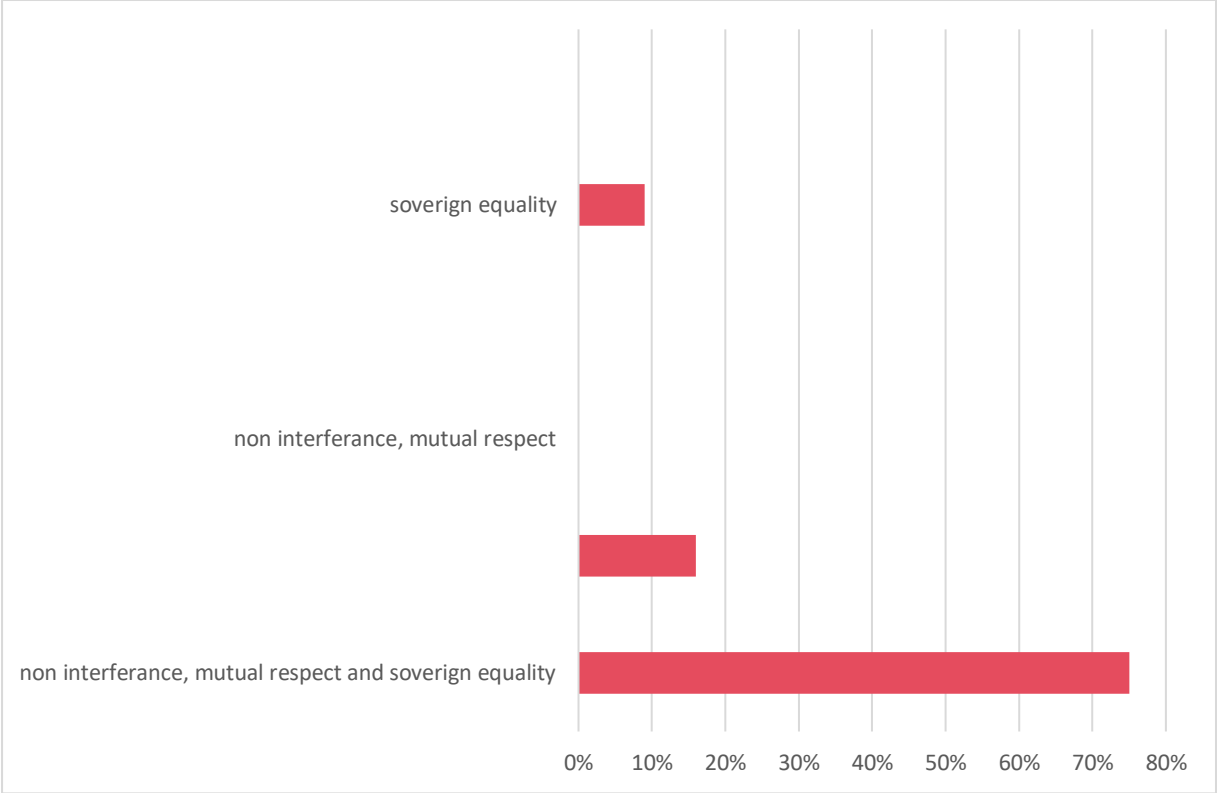


Source: Field work, 2026.

Fig 1.1 shows that 92% of the respondents describe Xi Jinping's diplomatic approach as peaceful and harmonious, suggesting a strong perception that his foreign policy emphasizes cooperation, dialogue, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence. Conversely, only 4% viewed it as aggressive and violent, while another 4% considered it moderately peaceful, indicating minimal divergence in respondents' perceptions.

In Your View, What Principles Guide China's Diplomacy under President Xi Jinping?

Fig 1.2

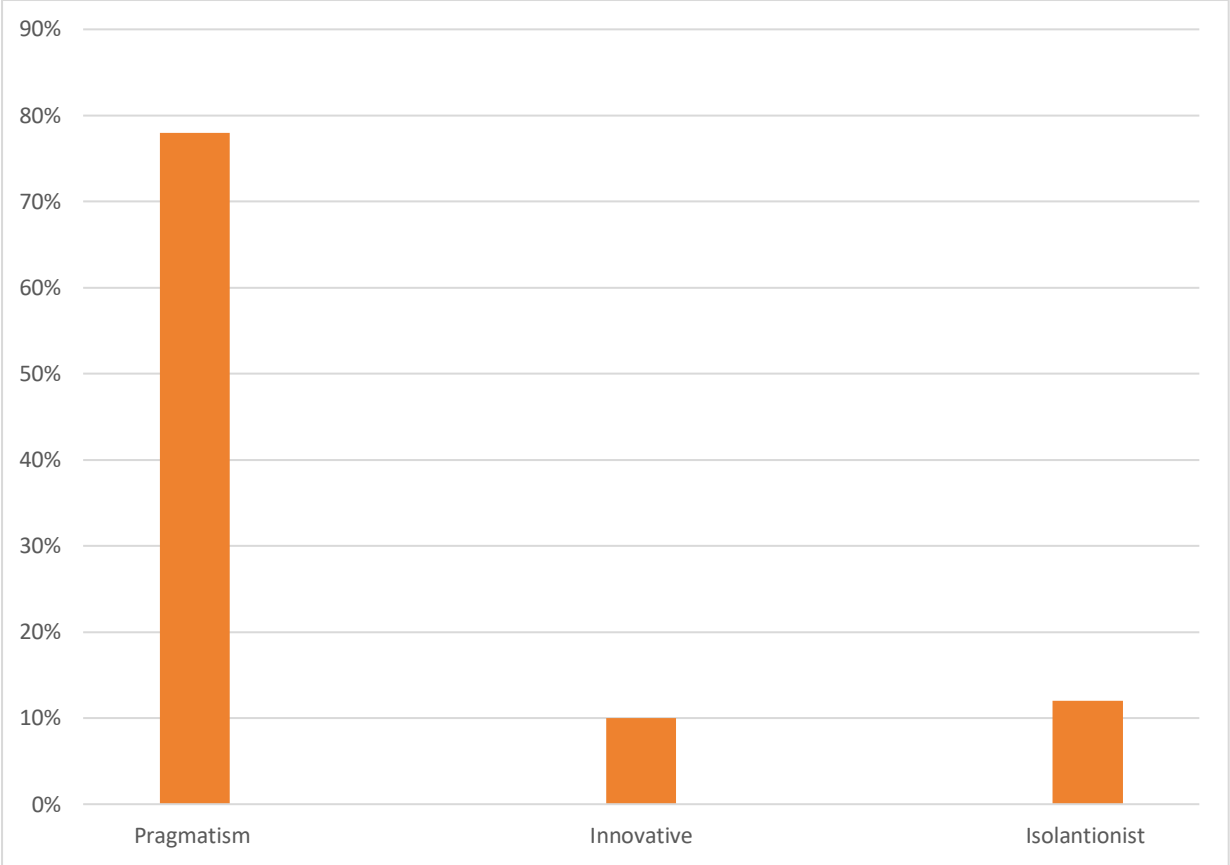


Source: Field work, 2026.

Fig 1.2 indicates that 75% of respondents consider non-interference and mutual respect, coupled with sovereign equality, as the variables that describe Xi's diplomatic style. At the same time, 16% only stressed on non-interference and mutual respect, while 9% only stressed on sovereign equality. This indicates that the key attitude of respondents towards Xi's diplomacy is his balance between the cultivation of respect for national sovereignty and the development of mutually beneficial international relations.

How does Xi Jinping's Diplomatic Style Differ from Previous Chinese Leadership Approaches?

Fig 1.3



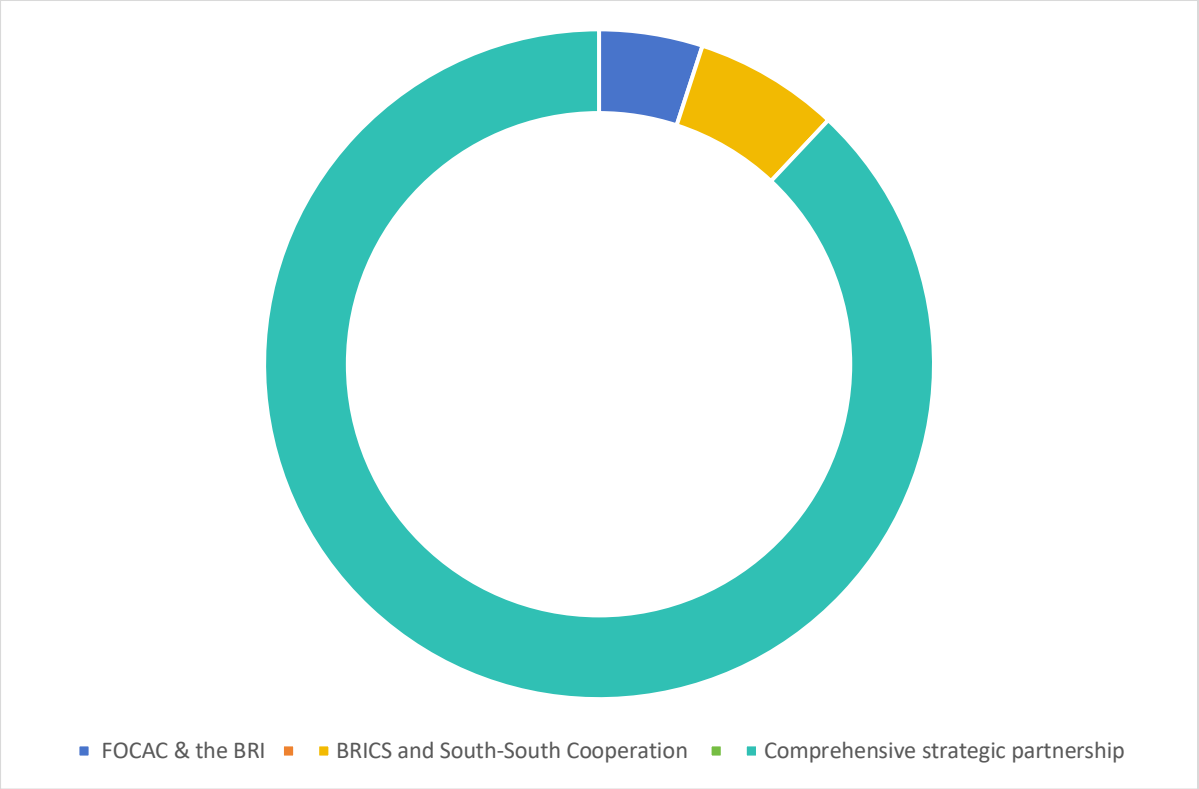
Source: Field work, 2026.

The results from fig 1.4 show that 78% of respondents considered Xi Jinping's diplomatic approach as pragmatic, implying that his foreign policy is practical, flexible and aimed at mutually beneficial results. 12%, by contrast, saw it as isolationist, which shows that few people believe that China's diplomacy is inward-focused or disengages from the international arena.

How Xi Jinping's Diplomatic Artistry Impacts Nigeria

In What Ways China's Diplomatic Engagement under President Xi Jinping Influences Nigeria's Foreign Relations?

Fig 1.5

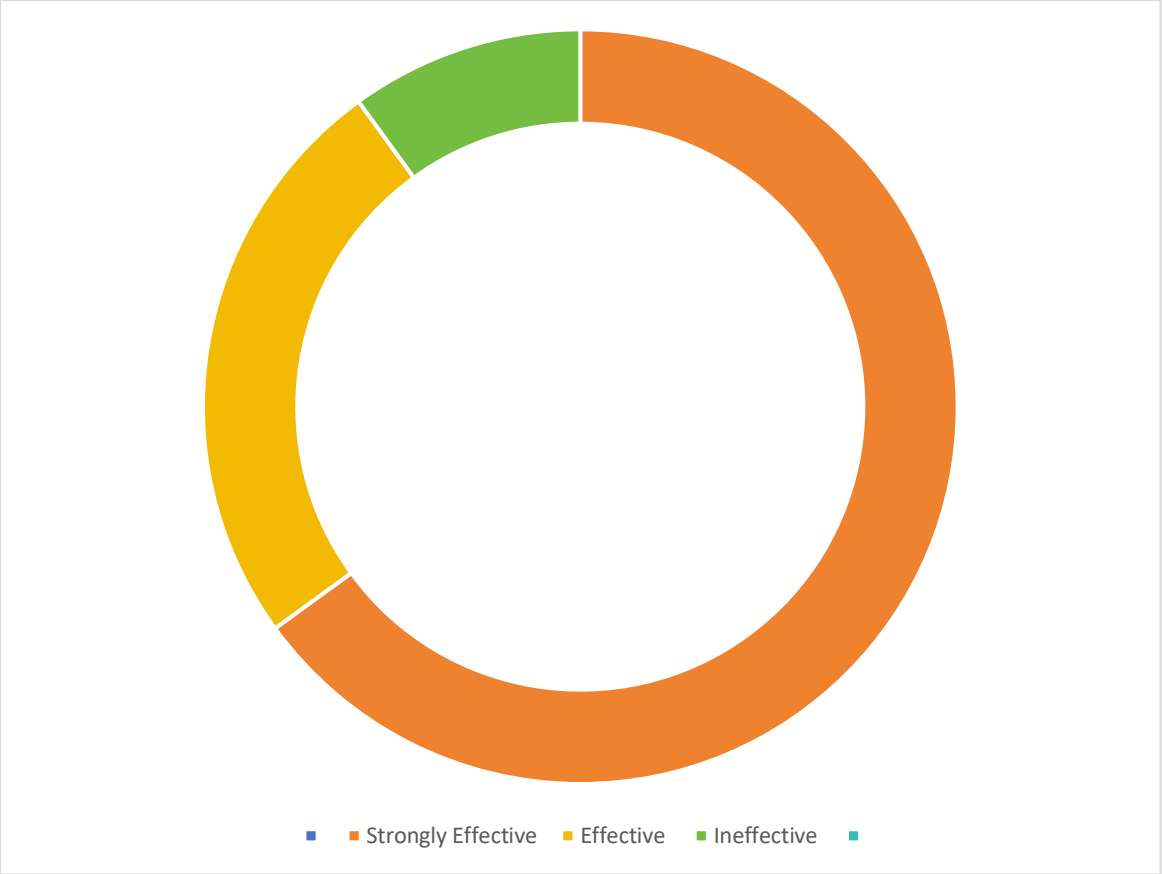


Source: Field work, 2026.

The results indicate that the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership has been a principal tool with which Nigeria has been affected by President Xi's diplomatic engagement with 88% of the respondents stating that the policy had done so. Meanwhile, 7% mentioned BRICS and South-South Cooperation, and 5% mentioned Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), indicating that these are seen as complementary mechanisms, which can complement the overall China-Nigeria diplomatic relationship.

How Would You Assess the Role of China–Nigeria Diplomatic Ties in Shaping Bilateral Cooperation?

Fig 1.6

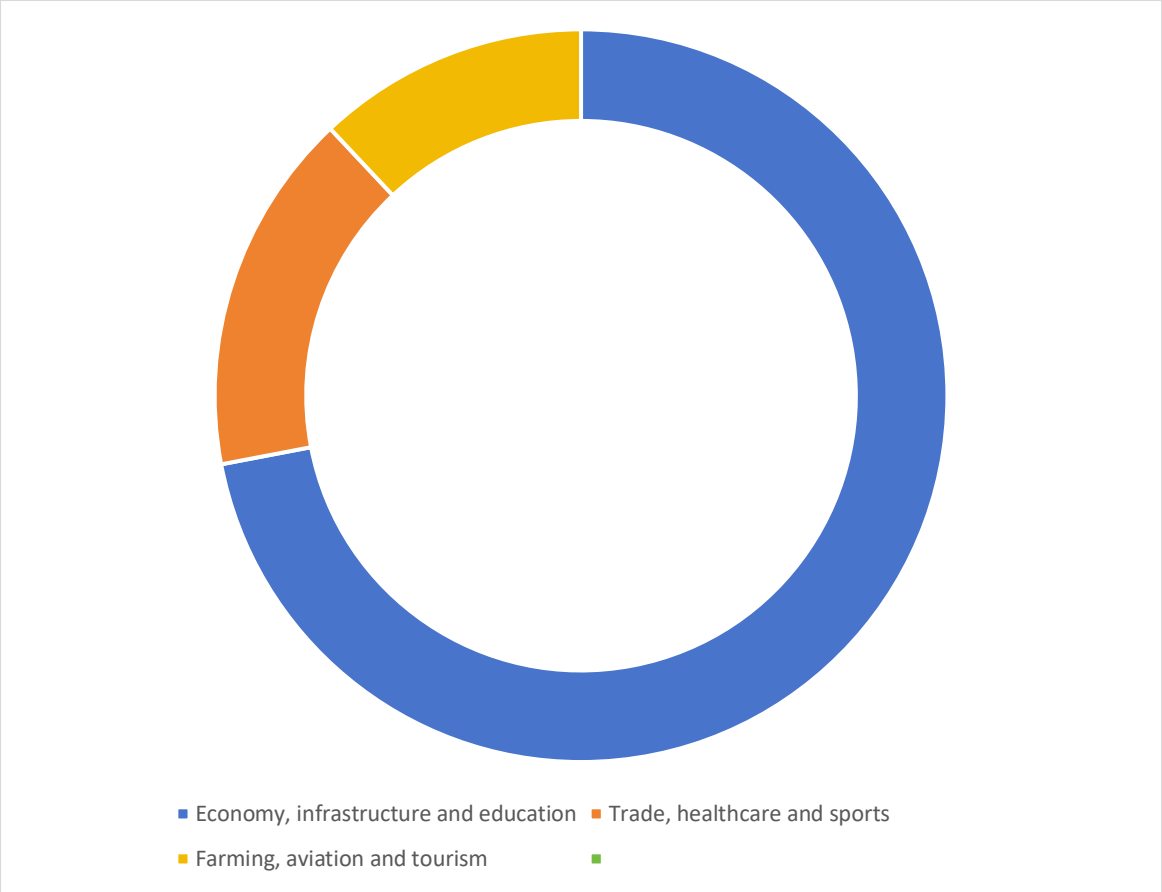


Source: Field work, 2026.

The results also show that 65% of the respondents rated Xi Jinping's diplomatic engagement as very effective in shaping Nigeria's foreign policy and 25% rated it as effective. This indicates a resounding positive evaluation of China's diplomatic approach under Xi. But 10 % saw it as ineffective, which was attributed to concerns regarding the level of its influence on Nigeria's foreign policy and international relations.

What specific areas in Nigeria have benefited most from China's diplomatic initiatives under President Xi Jinping?

Fig 1.7

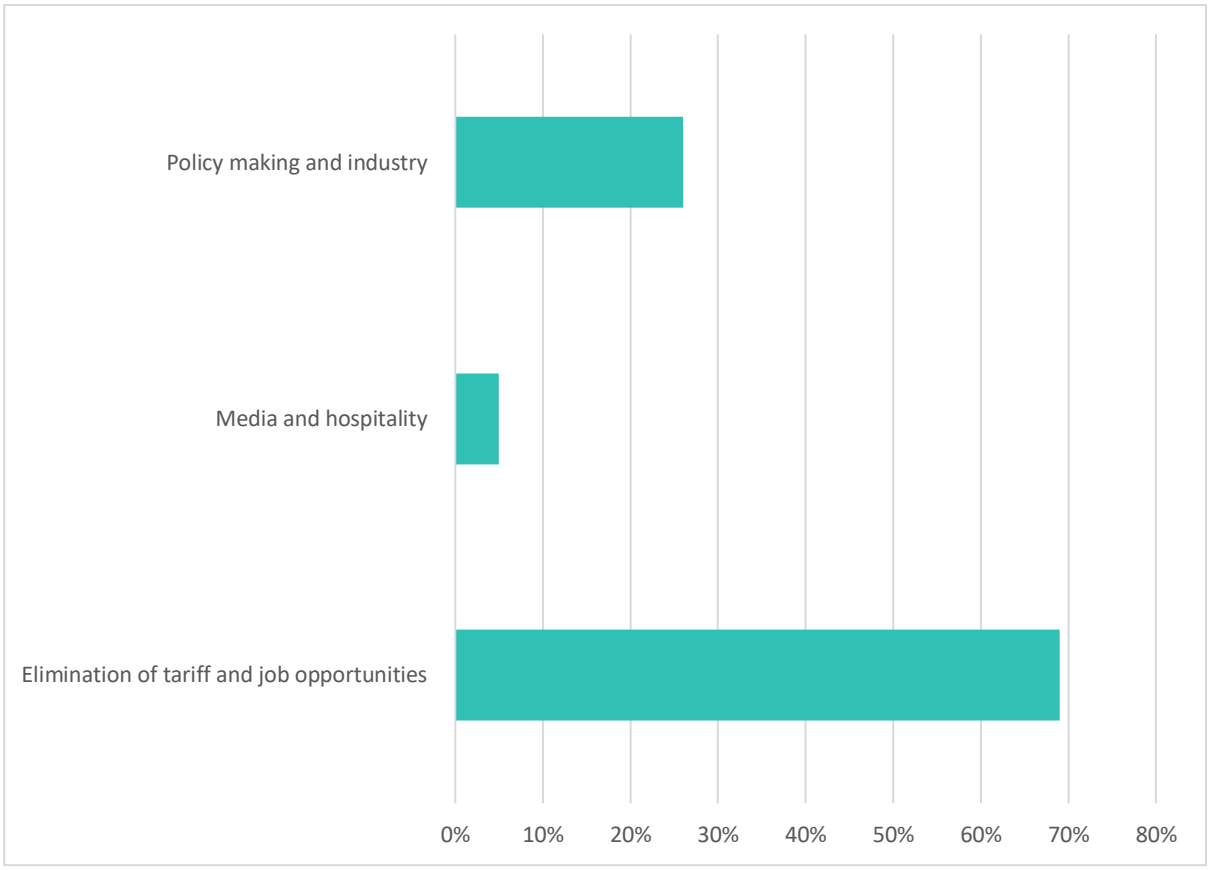


Source: Field work, 2026.

The results indicate that 72% of the respondents are of the opinion that Xi Jinping's diplomacy has had a positive effect on Nigeria's foreign relations mostly through economic cooperation, infrastructure development and education cooperation. At the same time, 16% were of the view that trade, healthcare and sports as its areas, and 12% viewed farming, aviation and tourism as its areas. This indicates that economy and infrastructure partnership are the most important areas of China–Nigeria diplomacy in the era of President Xi Jinping.

How Xi Jinping's Diplomatic Style Improves Nigeria's Economic Growth and Development?

Fig 1.8



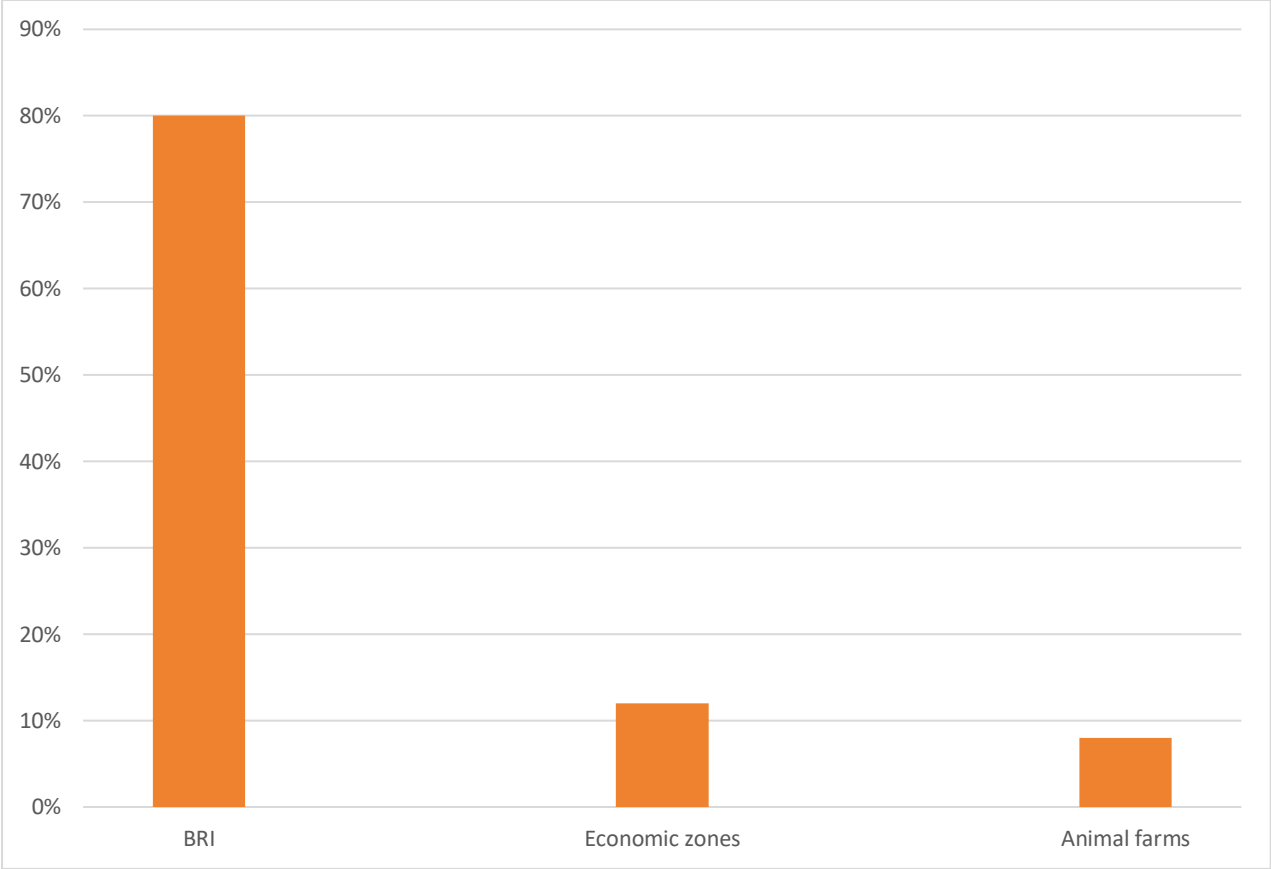
Source: Field work, 2026.

The results show that 69% of the respondents agreed that the diplomatic style of President Xi Jinping contributes to the economic growth and development of Nigeria due to zero tariff and job opportunities China provides to Nigeria. This was considered as the major economic advantage. In the meantime, policy making and industrial development was identified as the major areas of contribution by 26%, with only 5% citing the media and hospitality sector.

How has Chinese Diplomatic Engagement Contributed to Infrastructure Development in

Nigeria?

Fig 1.9

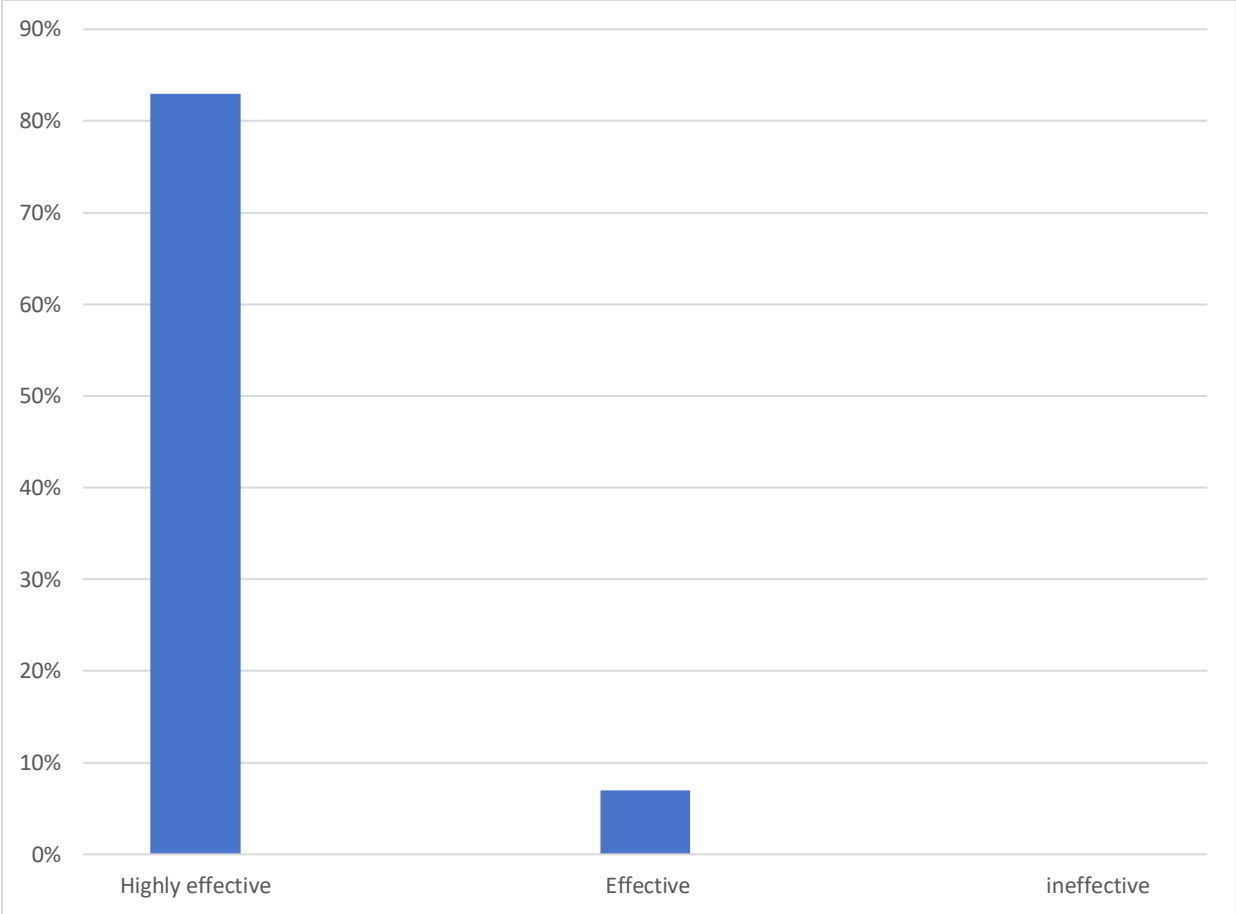


Source: Field work, 2026.

The study shows that 80% of the respondents believe that the Chinese government has played a major role in the development of infrastructure in Nigeria through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), an initiative that is the main source of funding and implementation of massive infrastructure projects in Nigeria. Meanwhile, 12% mentioned economic zones, and 8% mentioned animal farms, which are seen as relatively unimportant contributions.

What is the Impact of China–Nigeria Relations on Trade, Investment, and Industrial Development in Nigeria?

Fig 10

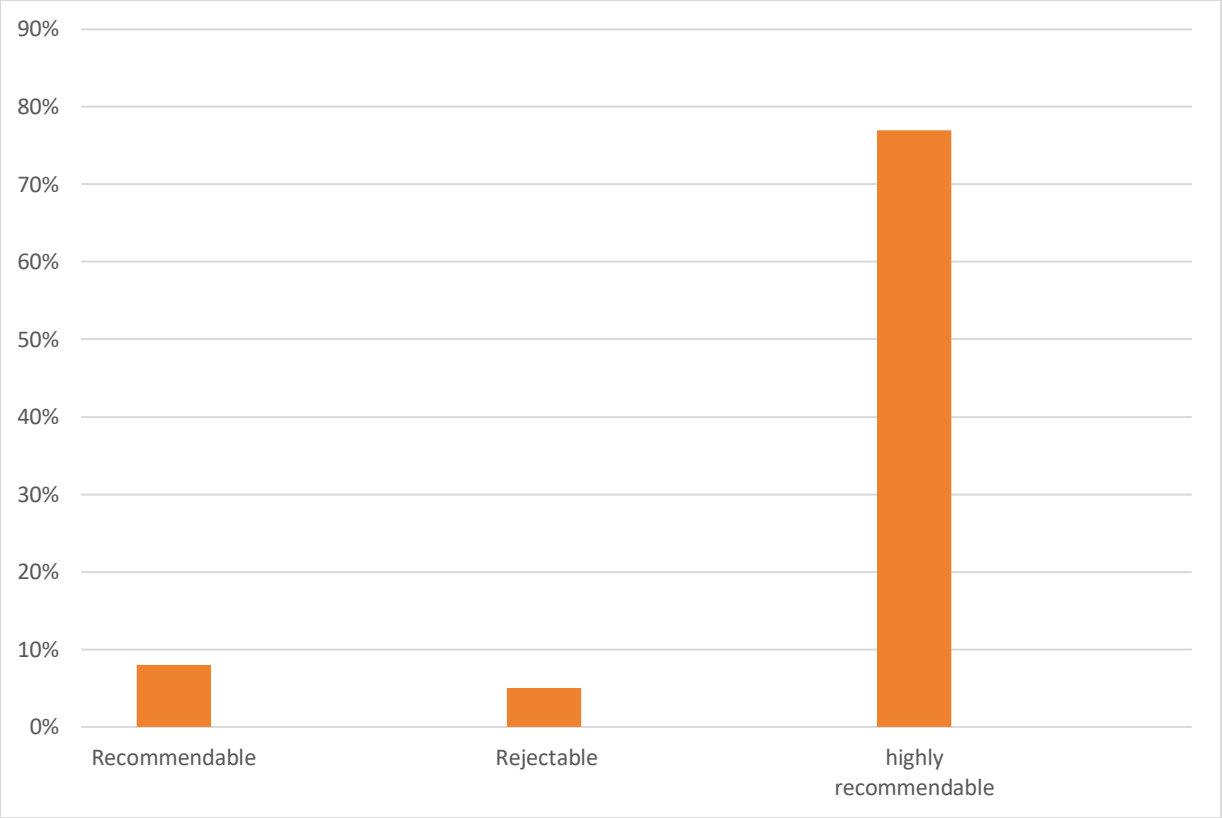


Source: Field work, 2026.

The results indicate that a high percentage (83%) of the respondents perceived the China–Nigeria partnership as highly effective in facilitating trade and investment, and industrial development. Another 7% thought the impact was effective with 0% saying it was ineffective, indicating a strong level of agreement that China's diplomatic relations with Nigeria have benefited Nigeria's economic and industrial development.

To What Extent has China's Diplomatic Partnership Supported Nigeria's Economic Diversification Efforts?

Fig 1.11

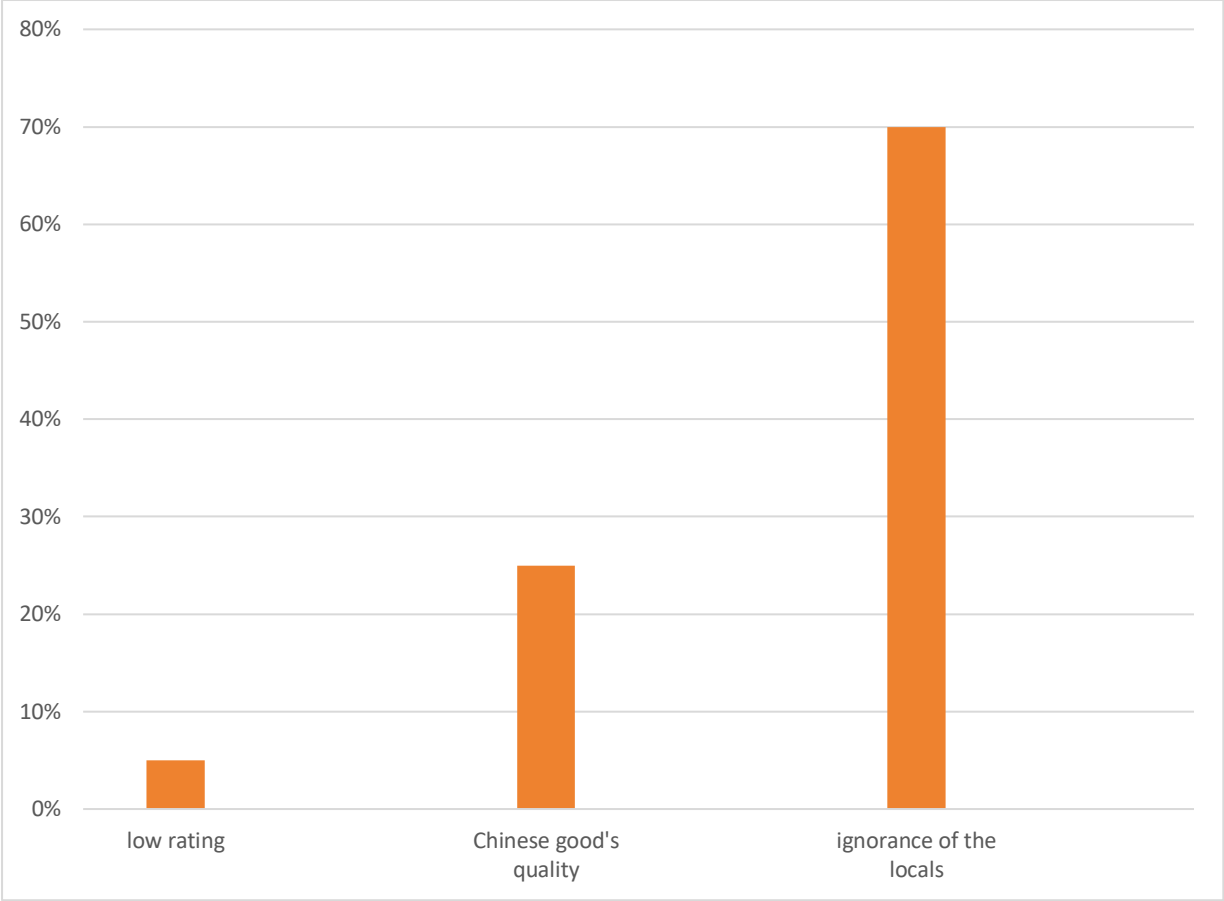


Source: Field work, 2026.

The results show that 77% of the respondents found the activities of Nigeria's diplomacy with China in its development very recommendable in the area of economic diversification. Furthermore, 8% said it was recommendable and 5% said it was rejectable, indicating that a small minority doubted its effectiveness in promoting Nigeria's economic diversification goals.

Challenges Faced by Xi Jinping's Diplomatic Style in Nigeria

Fig 1.12

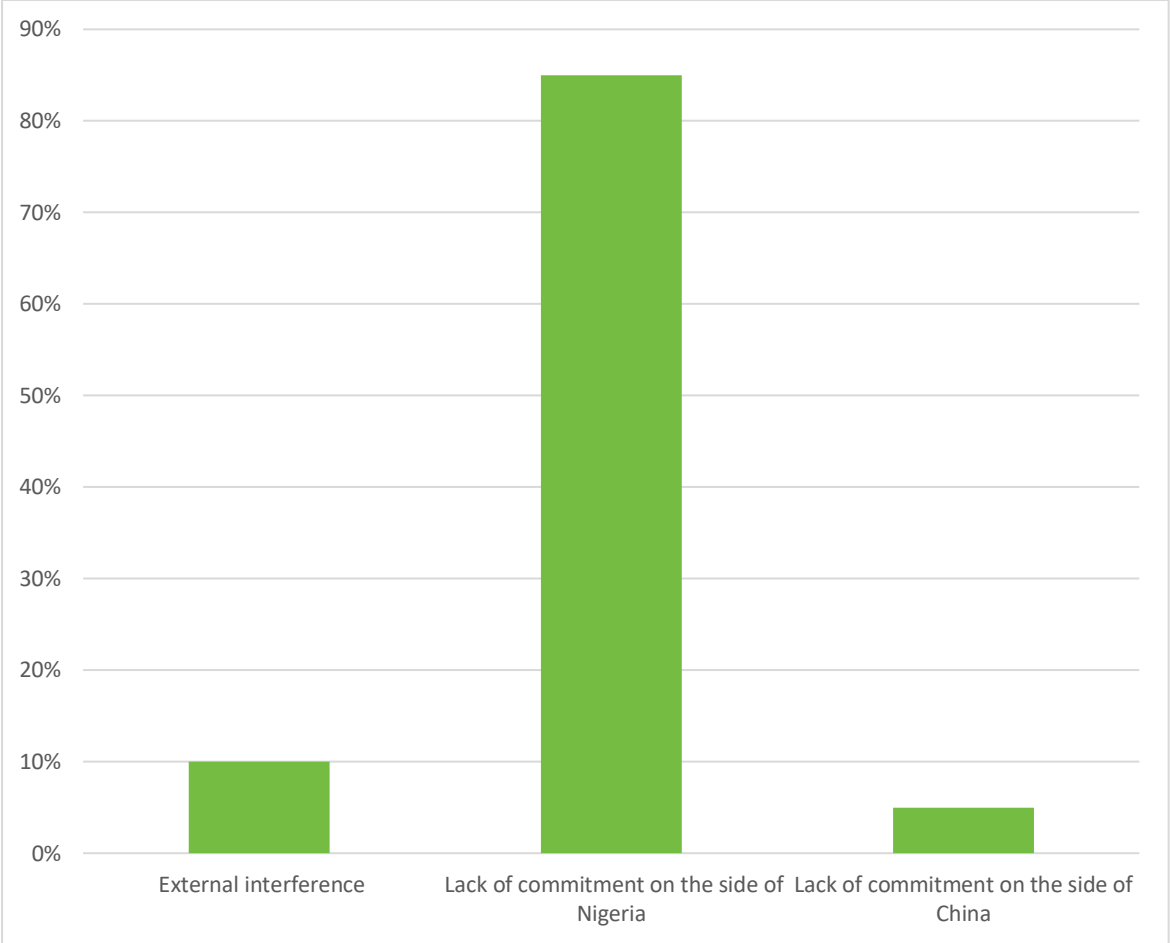


Source: Field work, 2026.

The results indicate that 70 % of the respondents pointed to the ignorance of the locals on President Xi and his diplomatic styles, which require more public diplomacy and creation of awareness in Nigeria, thus indicating the need for further expanding public diplomacy and awareness creation on President Xi and his diplomatic style. Further, 25% referred to the quality of Chinese products and 5% to the lower ratings of Chinese engagements, suggesting that ignorance of the locals in Nigeria is seen as the most important problem.

What Challenges have Emerged in the Implementation of China–Nigeria Diplomatic and Economic Agreements?

Fig 1.13

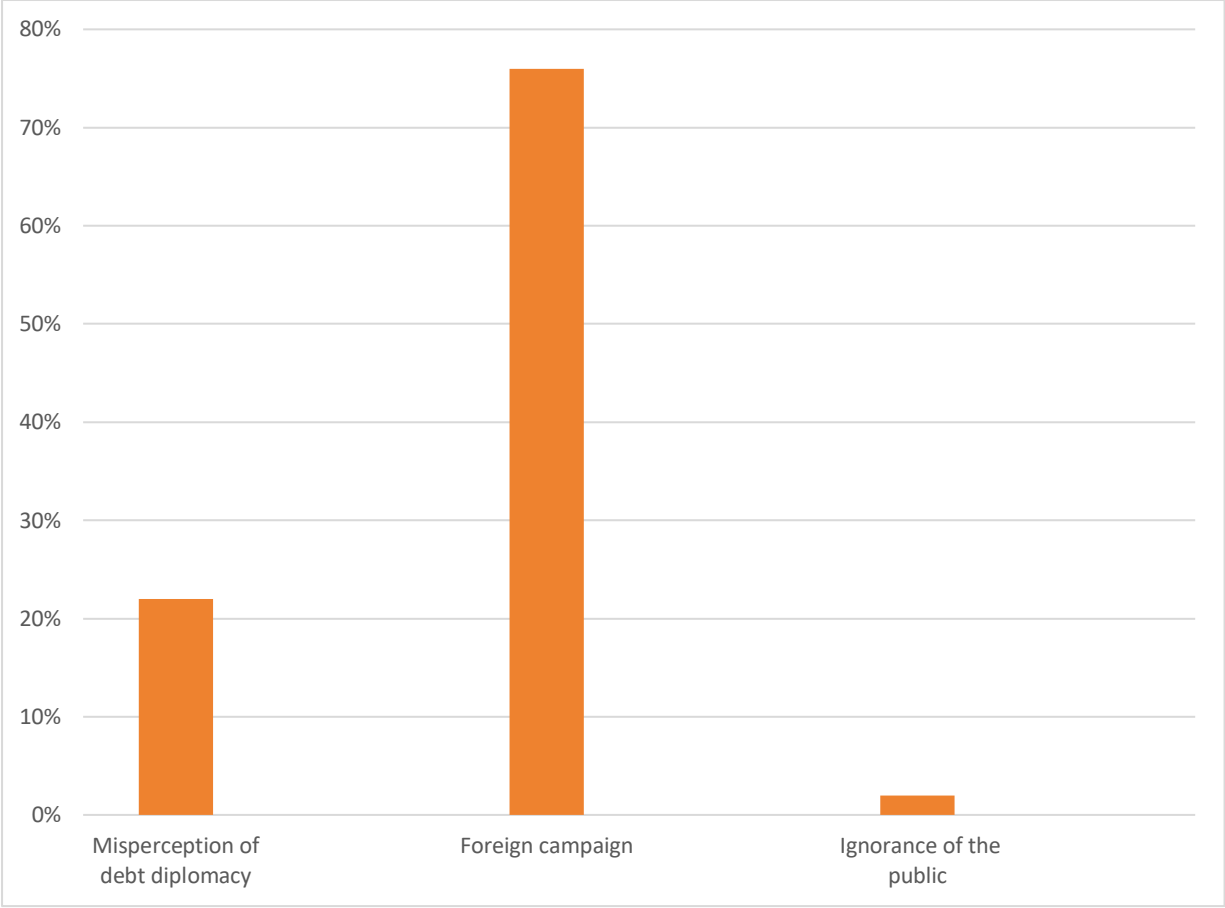


Source: Field work, 2026.

The result shows that the major challenge that affects the implementation of China-Nigeria diplomatic and economic agreements is lack of commitment on Nigeria's part as identified by 85% of the respondents. In the meantime, 10% blamed outside interference and five percent blamed China's lack of commitment. This indicates that the main limitation for effective bilateral cooperation is the domestic implementation constraints.

How do Issues such as Debt Sustainability and Project Transparency Affect China's Diplomatic Relations with Nigeria?

Fig 1.14

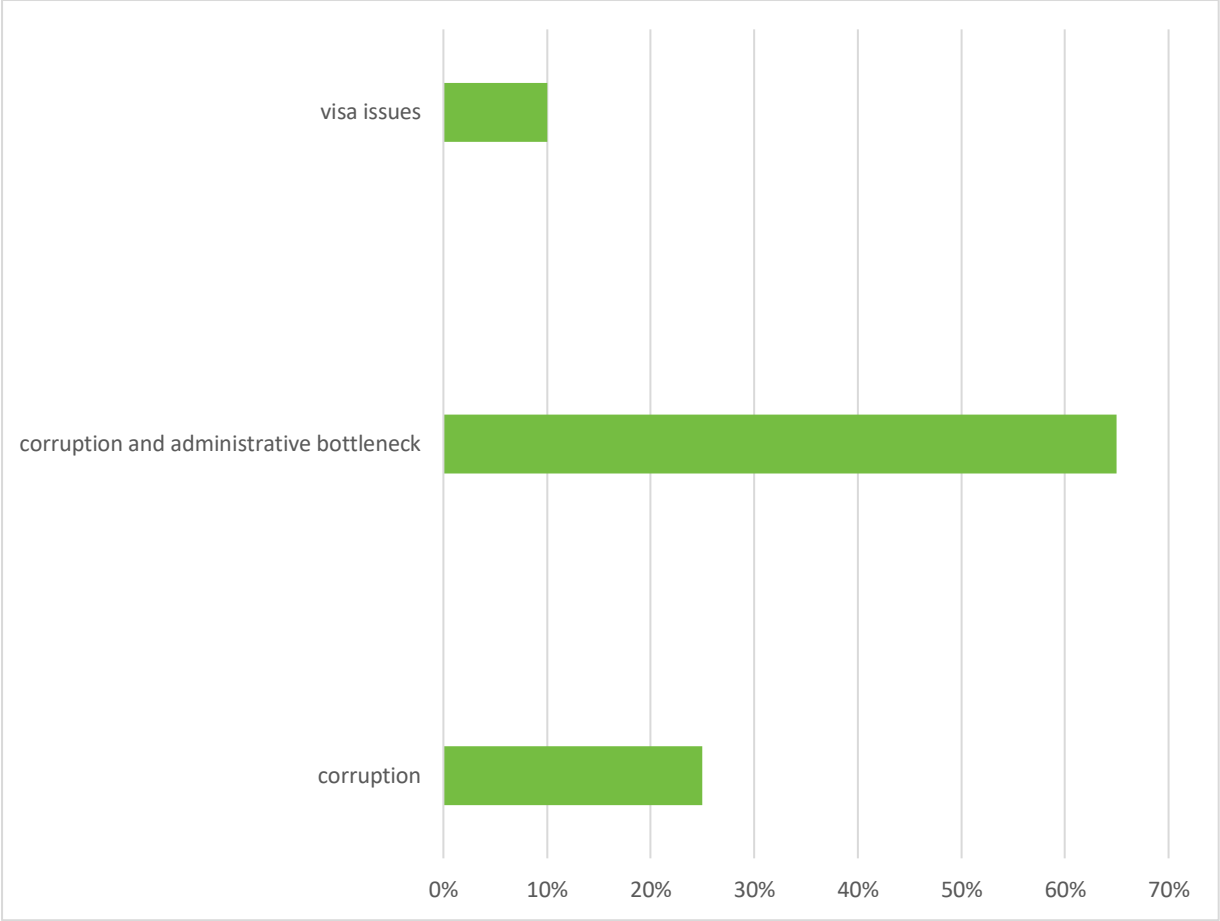


Source: Field work, 2026.

The results show that 76% of the respondents feel that foreign campaigns are the most influential source of perceptions of Nigeria's debt sustainability and project transparency, which influences China's diplomatic relationship with Nigeria. Furthermore, 22% mentioned misinformation on the subject of debt diplomacy, and 2% said that the problem was due to the public's lack of knowledge, indicating that external narratives have a great influence on the perception of the public on this issue.

What Institutional or Policy Constraints Limit the Effectiveness of China's Diplomatic Engagement in Nigeria

Fig 1.15



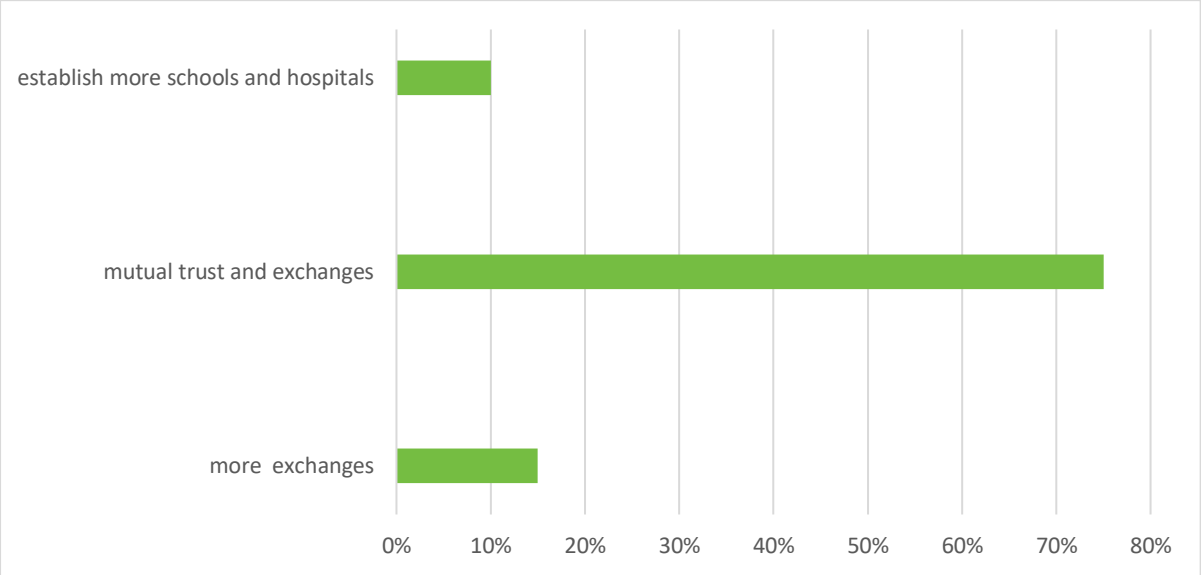
Source: Field work, 2026.

The results show that 37% of the respondents considered corruption and administrative bottleneck the biggest institutional challenge to the effectiveness of China's diplomatic engagement in Nigeria. This was closely followed by administrative bottlenecks (25%) and visa related issues (10%). The findings indicate that corruption and bureaucratic inefficiency are the main challenges to the effective implementation of China–Nigeria diplomatic efforts.

These Challenges Can be Overcome in Nigeria

What Policy Measures can Nigeria adopt to Improve the Effectiveness of its Diplomatic and Economic Relations with China?

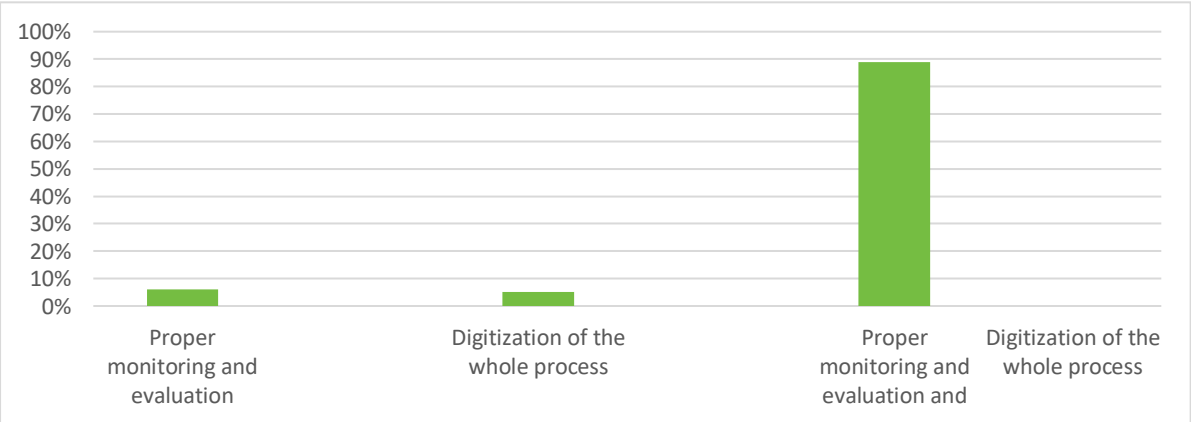
Fig 1.16



The results show that 75% of the respondents think mutual trust and exchange would promote investment and job creation, which would have a positive impact on Nigeria's diplomatic and economic relations with China. In addition, 15% said that Chinese schools and hospitals should be established, and 10% said that it is necessary to increase bilateral exchanges, which indicates that economic cooperation is the policy measure that is most likely to be effective.

How can Accountability and Transparency be Strengthened in China–Nigeria Bilateral Projects?

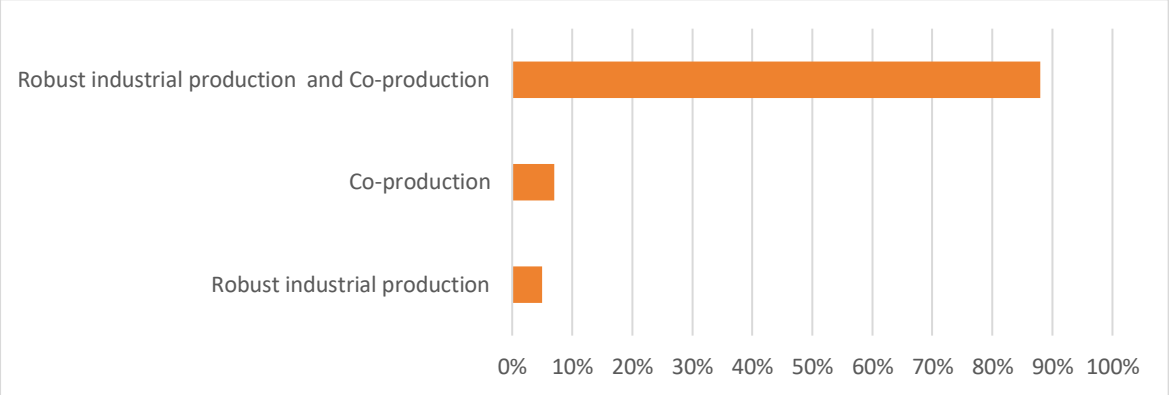
Fig 1.17



The findings show that 89% of the respondents agree that a combination of good monitoring and evaluation and digitization of project processes is the most effective means of enhancing the accountability and transparency of the project in China–Nigeria bilateral projects. Conversely, 6% indicated a preference for monitoring and evaluation only, 5% said it had stated a preference for digitization only, highlighting an overall preference to support both measures to improve project governance.

What Role Should Nigerian Institutions Play in Ensuring Mutually Beneficial Outcomes from China's Diplomatic Engagements?

Fig 1.18



The results also showed that 88% of the participants felt that the Nigerian institutions should encourage strong industrial production and co-production with the Chinese partners to produce some good outcome from the diplomatic engagement with China. At the same time 7% highlighted only co-production and 5% only strong industrial production. This indicates that the most common approach that is recognized as the best way is the integration of industrial capacity and collaborative production.

Discussion of Findings

The findings indicate that Xi Jinping's diplomatic approach is generally considered peaceful, pragmatic and based on the principles of non-interference, mutual respect and sovereign equality. His diplomacy was seen by respondents as 'cooperation and dialogue in action' rather than confrontation, which was in line with China's foreign policy tenets and its drive towards mutually beneficial international relations.

The study also revealed that Nigeria-China relations have improved considerably, largely as a result of the artistry of President Xi Jinping, under which Nigeria has now declared itself to be in the process of achieving a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, which has brought about better cooperation between the two countries, most especially in the areas of infrastructure, trade, education and economic development. In terms of enhancing bilateral relations and fruitful cooperation between both sides, respondents viewed China's diplomacy as very effective.

Through the findings, it was established that Xi Jinping's diplomatic style is responsible for Nigeria's economic growth by supporting trade facilitation, employment creation, industrial development, infrastructure development and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The finding indicated that these diplomatic engagements have helped Nigeria's economy diversify, created more investment opportunities and boosted the country's productive capacity and development prospects.

Nevertheless, the finding revealed the problems that face Xi Jinping's diplomacy in Nigeria, such as ignorance of the locals, lack of institutional commitment from the Nigerian authorities, corruption, administrative delays, and the negative foreign narratives about debt diplomacy. These factors pose a challenge to the successful

implementation of bilateral agreements and restrict the comprehensive benefits of partnership.

Conclusion

The diplomatic style of President Xi Jinping has brought about a better China-Nigeria relationship based on peaceful cooperation, respect and mutual-benefitial partnership. It has helped in the development of infrastructure, trade and investments as well as economic diversification for Nigeria. However, its effectiveness is hindered by factors like weak institutional commitment, corruption, administrative bottlenecks and worries about ignorance of the locals.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made;

The Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs should hold regular dialogue forums between the people of China and Nigeria to facilitate understanding of Xi's principles of diplomacy, particularly those of peaceful coexistence, mutual respect and non-interference in others' affairs, to enhance the dialogue between the two nations' diplomatic elites.

The federal Government of Nigeria should maximize the potentials of the China-Nigeria Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, which includes infrastructure, education and technology transfer, cultural exchange, and other fields to increase the diplomatic and socio-economic benefits of the partnership.

The Federal Government should focus on policies that will facilitate the active involvement of local content in the manufacturing, industrial parks and value added production with the objective of drawing more Chinese investment to the country for faster economic growth, job creation and technology transfer.

The federal Government of Nigeria should enhance institutional capacity, curb corruption, streamline administrative procedures and strictly implement bilateral pledges to resolve implementation hurdles to deepen the effectiveness of China-Nigeria diplomatic cooperation.

Nigeria Government should create a joint China-Nigeria Monitoring and Evaluation Committee to supervise the projects, build transparency in project management by means of digital systems, and implement project-related local workforce and industrial co-production policies in the implementation of bilateral projects.