

The Impact of Culture on Sino-Nigeria Diplomatic Relations

By

Agathapaula Dooshima Asobo¹

Eugene Tarkende Aliegba¹

&

Ruth Caleb¹

¹Department of Political Science

e-mail: asobopaula@gmail.com

Abstract

The interplay of culture significantly influences diplomatic relations between China and Nigeria, two nations characterized by rich historical legacies and diverse cultural system. This paper examined the impact of cultural exchange on Sino-Nigerian diplomatic relations, focusing on key aspects such as the establishment of Confucius Institutes, the role of cultural festivals, and the representation of each nation in the media. The study employed Soft Power Theory as its framework of analysis while data was generated through interview instrument. Findings demonstrated that several cultural instruments such as Confucius Institute, cultural festivals, and joint initiatives have profound impact on Sino-Nigeria diplomatic relations. Confucius Institutes serve as instrumental platforms for fostering mutual understanding through language acquisition and cultural education, contributing to enhanced people-to-people connections. Cultural festivals and joint initiatives further empower both nations by celebrating their rich heritages, creating avenues for dialogue and cooperation. Ultimately, the findings highlight that culture not only enriches diplomatic discourse but also serves as a catalyst for economic collaboration and social connectivity between China and Nigeria. Additionally, media representation plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions, influencing how policies and initiatives are viewed by each country's populace. Through an analysis of these cultural dynamics, the study underscores the importance of incorporating cultural considerations into diplomatic strategies, suggesting that a deeper cultural engagement can lead to more robust and harmonious bilateral relations.

Keywords: Art, communication, culture, diplomacy, language and Sino-Nigeria

Introduction

The relationship between China and Nigeria has evolved significantly over the past few decades, transforming from mere diplomatic recognition to a robust partnership characterized by economic

collaboration, investment, and cultural exchange. Historically, Nigeria and China established diplomatic ties in 1971, and since then, the bilateral relationship has grown remarkably in scope and depth. With China emerging as a global economic power house and Nigeria as Africa's largest economy, their partnership offers mutual benefits in an increasingly interconnected global environment (Adeleke, 2019). However, at the core of this evolving relationship lies a critical, often overlooked component, culture.

Nigeria boasts of a rich ethnic diversity and cultural heritage, with over 250 distinct ethnic groups and roughly 500 languages spoken across the nation (National Population Commission, 2021). This ethnic plurality results in a myriad of cultural practices, social norms, and belief systems that significantly influence both domestic and international relations. For example, the importance of communalism, respect for elders, and indirect communication styles permeates the Nigerian social fabric and inevitably shapes diplomatic interactions. On the other hand, China, with its millennia-old civilization, comprises diverse cultures, philosophies, and traditions that inform its diplomatic practices. The principles of Confucianism, such as harmony, hierarchy, and *guanxi* (relationships), play a critical role in shaping China's approach to diplomacy (Zhao, 2017).

China and Nigeria are fostering deeper ties, requiring a deep understanding of their cultural dynamics. Cultural exchanges, such as educational collaborations, art exhibitions, and tourism, foster mutual understanding and cooperation. Initiatives like the Confucius Institutes in Nigeria promote Chinese language and culture, while Nigerian cultural expressions in Chinese spaces generate interest and dialogue. Recognizing and appreciating these cultural influences is crucial for navigating the complexities of Sino-Nigeria relations in a globalized world. Integrating cultural understanding into diplomatic practices will foster a sustainable partnership that respects and embraces cultural differences. Hence this paper examines the impact of culture on Sino-Nigeria diplomatic relations.

Conceptual Framework

Culture:

The concept of culture plays a foundational role in shaping diplomatic relations, serving as both a context for interactions and a tool for fostering understanding among nations. Scholars have increasingly acknowledged that culture, encompassing language, norms, values, customs, and art, underpins diplomatic engagement. According to cultural diplomacy theorists like Melissen (2005), cultural diplomacy acts as a soft power mechanism that can enhance mutual understanding by creating a

favorable environment for negotiation and dialogue. This perspective aligns with Nye's (2004) broader conceptualization of soft power, which emphasizes the importance of attraction and persuasion in achieving diplomatic goals, rather than coercion.

One critical aspect of culture in diplomacy is its capacity to bridge differences between nations. For instance, cultural exchanges and public diplomacy initiatives can humanize countries, introducing their citizens to foreign values and lifestyles that may challenge existing stereotypes. In their analysis, Rugh (2006) highlights how cultural programmes, such as American film festivals in the Middle East, aim to present a multi-dimensional view of the United States, which can counteract negative perceptions arising from political conflicts. However, the politics of representation in such cultural engagements often exacerbate power imbalances, as dominant cultures may overshadow local narratives, leading to what could be characterized as cultural imperialism (Gienow-Hecht & Donfried, 2010).

Culture significantly impacts diplomatic relations, affecting both public and formal negotiations. Misinterpretations can lead to conflicts if not acknowledged, and cultural competency is crucial for diplomats. However, oversimplifying cultural narratives in diplomacy can be misleading, as it overlooks internal diversities and power dynamics within cultures. Critics argue that overemphasizing cultural aspects can detract from addressing structural issues like economic inequality and political power disparities. Despite its importance, a nuanced understanding is needed to fully appreciate its influence.

Diplomatic Relations

Diplomatic relations are germane to the conduct of international relations, essentially representing the formal interactions and agreements between sovereign states. Through diplomacy, states manage their relationships, resolve disputes, and enhance cooperation across various domains, such as economic, cultural, and security issues. The literature on diplomatic relations emphasizes their dynamic nature and the various theories that underpin diplomatic practice. Realist theorists argue that diplomacy is primarily a tool for state power and national interest, suggesting that relations are heavily influenced by the anarchical structure of the international system (Morgenthau, 1948). In contrast, constructivist perspectives emphasize the role of ideational factors, such as identity and norms, in shaping diplomatic interactions (Wendt, 1999). Constructivists argue that diplomatic relations are not just strategic but also socially constructed, reflecting shared values and mutual understandings among states.

Globalization has transformed diplomatic relations, involving increased interactions with non-state actors like multinational corporations and NGOs. Addressing issues like climate change, terrorism, and health pandemics requires a broader understanding of diplomacy. Digital diplomacy, or e-diplomacy, uses social media and technology for real-time interaction and transparency, reflecting ongoing changes in state perception and engagement with international counterparts.

Theoretical Framework

The concept of soft power, introduced by Joseph Nye in the late 20th century, focuses on the ability of a state to influence others through attraction rather than coercion or payment. Nye first articulated the idea in his book, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, 1990, where he distinguished between hard power and soft power, which is derived from the values, culture, and foreign policies of a nation that appeal to others. Proponents of soft power argue that it can be a more effective and sustainable means of achieving international objectives. Nye's theory gained traction in the academic community and among policymakers, particularly as global dynamics shifted towards increased interdependence in the post-Cold War era. Scholars such as Anne-Marie Slaughter and Edward S. Herman further developed the concept by analyzing how non-state actors and globalization complicate traditional notions of power. Slaughter (2004) emphasized the role of networks in shaping international relations, suggesting that power is not just held by states but also diffused among various actors, including international organizations and civil society.

The development of soft power theory has also been informed by practical examples of nations successfully utilizing soft power strategies. For instance, during the Cold War, the United States employed cultural diplomacy by promoting American music, films, and ideals of democracy to counter the Soviet Union's ideological influence. However, the concept of soft power is not without its critics. Some scholars argue that attraction and persuasion cannot be quantified or easily measured, making it challenging to assess the effectiveness of soft power strategies. Moreover, the effectiveness of soft power can be situational; it often depends on the audience's perceptions and willingness to accept the cultural or ideological appeals made by a nation. Critics like Robert (2003) maintain that the allure of soft power might be overrated, asserting that hard power still plays a decisive role in international relations and that the balance between hard and soft power must be understood in the context of broader political realities.

Despite the challenges and critiques, the theory of soft power has continued to evolve, becoming a vital lens for analyzing international relations in a rapidly changing global landscape. In recent years, the rise of new global players and non-state actors has prompted further exploration of the interplay between soft and hard power, particularly as nations navigate complex issues such as climate change, human rights, and cybersecurity.

China's soft power strategy in Sino-Nigeria involves cultural exchanges, economic collaboration, respect for political values, and media representation. Confucius Institutes in Nigeria promote Chinese language and culture, while economic investments enhance China's soft power footprint. Media representation shapes public perception and cultural ties, but challenges like economic dependency, lack of transparency, labour practices, and environmental concerns can lead to negative perceptions.

Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative research design, which is particularly suited for exploring complex social phenomena where cultural dimensions play a significant role. The sampling strategy for this study was purposive sampling, which involves selecting participants based on specific characteristics and relevance to the research topic. Participants were chosen from diverse backgrounds, including diplomats, cultural attachés, scholars, and members of the Chinese and Nigerian communities engaged in cultural exchanges. This approach ensures that a variety of perspectives are captured, reflecting different facets of the Sino-Nigerian relationship. A target sample size of approximately 20-30 participants was selected. As suggested by Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006), since saturation point where no new information can be obtained is likely to be reached with this number. The data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, a widely used qualitative data analysis method that allows researchers to identify, analyse, and report patterns. Thematic analysis enables the researcher to extract themes related to the impact of culture on Sino-Nigeria diplomatic relations systematically.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The Impact of Cultural Exchanges on Sino-Nigeria Diplomatic Relations

Cultural exchanges, particularly through the arts and tourism, play a critical role in shaping diplomatic relations between China and Nigeria. These exchanges foster mutual understanding, respect, and appreciation, which are essential for solidifying diplomatic ties. Through initiatives

such as art exhibitions, music festivals, and joint performance arts programmes, both nations showcase their rich heritage, offering a platform for dialogue and collaboration. For instance, the China-Nigeria Cultural Exchange Year has enabled various artistic collaborations, allowing Nigerian artists to present their work in China, thus facilitating a deeper understanding of Nigerian culture among the Chinese populace (Huang, 2020). This cultural engagement not only enhances goodwill but also serves to counter stereotypes, enabling people to see beyond political narratives and appreciate the humanity shared across cultures.

In an insightful interview with the Director Centre for Chinese Studies, the central role of cultural exchanges in shaping Sino-Nigeria diplomatic relations was discussed. The respondent took a historical excusing to the Sino-Nigeria highlighting the role of “people to people” interaction through the decades even before the economic relations. The Director emphasized that these exchanges are pivotal in fostering dialogue and understanding, which are essential for any healthy relationship. He stated, “Cultural exchanges provide a platform for dialogue and understanding, helping to foster goodwill and significantly reduce misconceptions” (Interview, 2025).

Confucius Institutes in Nigeria have played a pivotal role in bridging cultural gaps between our nations. For instance, since the establishment of the Confucius Institute at the University of Lagos in 2006, we have witnessed a marked increase in interest among Nigerians to learn Mandarin and explore Chinese culture. According the respondent, the institute organizes various cultural activities, including Chinese film screenings, calligraphy workshops, and traditional Chinese festivals. For example, during the 2022 Chinese Lantern Festival held in Lagos, over a thousand attendees came together to celebrate, showcasing not just Chinese culture but fostering a sense of community and friendship. This type of engagement helps break down stereotypes and enhances the understanding of our respective cultures, which is vital for diplomatic relations.

Among the notable initiatives he highlighted is the annual China-Nigeria Cultural Exchange Festival. This event brings together artists, musicians, and performers from both countries to showcase their talents. The Director noted the importance of this initiative, saying, “last year, we saw a substantial increase in Chinese students learning Nigerian languages, which is a significant milestone. Language is the bridge to culture, and these initiatives effectively build that bridge (Interview, 2025).

However, the Director also acknowledged the challenges within cultural exchanges that could potentially affect diplomatic relations. He expressed concern, stating, “If Nigerian culture is portrayed in a way that

reinforces stereotypes in Chinese media, it can lead to misunderstandings and friction. Cultural representation must be diligent and respectful.” He stressed that misrepresentation could weaken diplomatic ties and create a sense of alienation.

The conversation also turned to the role of tourism in enhancing cultural exchanges and diplomatic relations. The Director argued, “tourism is essential to cultural exchange. When citizens from both countries travel to one another, they experience firsthand the realities of the other culture. This personal experience can combat stereotypes and create lasting impressions.” He reiterated, “Tourism is not just about travel; it's about building emotional connections,” underscoring the importance of fostering connections between the two nations.

In a recent interview with Professor (An expert in International Relations) the scholar in International Relations with a focus on Sino-Africa relations, provided valuable insights into the impact of cultural exchanges on the diplomatic relationship between China and Nigeria. He emphasized that cultural exchanges significantly shape these diplomatic ties by fostering goodwill, mutual understanding, and respect. By showcasing their respective cultures, both nations can form deeper interpersonal connections. However, the scholar warned that "these exchanges could become a double-edged sword if not approached with caution."

When asked about this duality, explained that while cultural exchanges have the potential to build bridges, they can also create tensions if they are perceived as one-sided or inauthentic. For example, he pointed out, "if China predominantly showcases its cultural products in Nigeria without adequate representation of Nigerian culture in China, it could lead to feelings of cultural imperialism, which would undermine diplomatic relations." He emphasized the necessity for ensuring that these exchanges are both equitable and reciprocal. The professor provided specific examples of both positive and negative outcomes of cultural exchanges. On the positive side, he mentioned "initiatives like joint art exhibitions where Nigerian artists can present their work in China," noting that such events foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of Nigerian culture among the Chinese public. Moreover, he remarked, "Chinese tourists visiting Nigeria break down stereotypes, creating personal connections that humanize each nation's perspective." Conversely, the expert highlighted that "Chinese media representations of Africa, including Nigeria, often tend to be superficial and laden with stereotypes." This kind of misrepresentation entrench negative perceptions, thus feeding into existing biases and tensions.

The Professor stressed the importance of Nigeria actively promoting its culture in China, especially in light of these challenges. He asserted,

"For Nigeria to assert its cultural identity on the global stage, it must engage in cultural diplomacy that emphasizes its rich narrative and diverse cultures." This involves investing in cultural institutions and programmes that facilitate deeper exchanges, ensuring that Nigeria's cultural heritage is accurately represented and appreciated.

In discussing potential improvements to cultural exchange programmes, the professor emphasized the need for "authentic partnerships founded on genuine dialogue about both cultures." The scholar suggested that both countries should prioritize "equitable representation and involve intellectuals in cultural planning." Additionally, he recommended fostering grassroots-level connections and establishing educational exchange programmes between institutions of higher learning. These initiatives, he explained, would allow students and faculty from both countries to explore and understand one another's history, politics, and culture, thus building lasting relationships.

Looking to the future, the Professor envisions an ideal trajectory for Sino-Nigeria cultural exchanges where both nations view these initiatives as "the cornerstone of their relationship." He believes that integrating cultural exchanges into broader economic and political cooperation would yield mutual benefits. By creating platforms for ongoing dialogue and respecting each other's cultures, both nations could collaborate on projects that highlight their interconnectedness. He concluded that such a robust cultural framework would "help mitigate political tensions and pave the way for a more cooperative relationship moving forward."

In a thought-provoking discussion, the Director of Chinese Studies in Nigeria shared his insights on how language and communication styles significantly impact negotiations and agreements between China and Nigeria. His expertise sheds light on the complexities involved in these diplomatic interactions and the crucial role effective communication plays in achieving successful agreements. When asked about the primary challenges in Sino-Nigeria negotiations, the Director stated, "Language barriers often pose significant difficulties. While English serves as a common thread in Nigeria, Chinese negotiators are not always fluent in English. This can lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations that might derail discussions." He emphasized that "effective communication is paramount for building trust and clarity in negotiations."

The Director of Chinese Studies in Nigeria elaborated on the differences in communication styles between the two cultures, saying, "Chinese communication tends to be more indirect and context-driven compared to Nigerian communication, which can be more open and straightforward." He explained, "For instance, a Nigerian negotiator might perceive the Chinese counterpart's indirectness as evasiveness,

while the Chinese party might find the Nigerian approach too confrontational.” He stressed the need to understand these nuances for successful negotiations.

Furthermore, another expert in International Relations, discussed how cultural factors influence language use, noting, “In Chinese culture, maintaining face and harmony is vital. Thus, Chinese negotiators often use language that avoids direct conflict and prioritizes relationship-building.” He added, “Conversely, Nigerian culture, with its diverse ethnic backgrounds, can lead to a range of communication styles that might come off as abrasive or overly assertive from a Chinese perspective.” He advised that “acknowledging these cultural dimensions is pivotal in creating a conducive negotiating environment.”

Media representation is incredibly impactful in shaping public perception and, by extension, diplomatic relations. In recent years, we've seen a shift towards more balanced coverage of China's activities in Nigeria, especially concerning infrastructure development. A notable example is the reporting on the Lagos-Ibadan Railway project funded by China. Nigerian media outlets provided extensive coverage of both the positive impacts like job creation and improved transportation—and the concerns related to Chinese labor practices and project delays. This type of journalism is crucial for fostering a well-rounded understanding among the Nigerian populace about China's role in our development.

Furthermore, collaborative media initiatives, such as joint documentaries that highlight cultural exchanges and business partnerships, have emerged. For instance, a documentary co-produced by Nigerian and Chinese film makers about the cultural and economic ties between the two countries was screened at various film festivals in both nations. This not only enhances visibility but helps to encourage dialogue and mitigate misconceptions, ultimately strengthening our diplomatic relationships.

Reflecting on successful negotiations, the expert highlighted the importance of employing skilled interpreters. “Having professional interpreters who understand not just the languages but also the cultural contexts can make a significant difference,” he noted. He emphasized, “This not only facilitates accurate translations but also nurtures a sense of respect and understanding between both parties.”

In summary, the expert insights illuminate the critical role that language and communication styles play in negotiations between China and Nigeria. By appreciating and addressing these dynamics, both nations can work toward more effective diplomatic engagements and enhanced cooperation.

Challenges Associated with Cultural Differences in Sino-Nigeria Diplomatic Relations

Cultural challenges are a significant factor in Sino-Nigeria diplomatic relations, often arising from fundamental differences in communication styles and social norms. One of the primary issues is the contrasting approaches taken by diplomats from both countries. Chinese diplomats typically adopt a more indirect style, valuing diplomacy and subtlety in their interactions. In stark contrast, Nigerian officials often prefer a more straightforward and open form of communication. This divergence can lead to substantial misunderstandings during negotiations, as one party may perceive the other as either evasive or overly aggressive. As one expert pointed out, "The lack of shared cultural understanding complicates negotiations and can hinder effective engagement." This speaks to the importance of recognizing these differences in order to foster more productive discussions.

Moreover, the cultural nuances in negotiations extend beyond mere communication styles. The concept of "face" is deeply embedded in Chinese culture, emphasizing respect, honor, and reputation in interactions. A source noted, "In Chinese diplomacy, maintaining face is essential; it can be the difference between a successful engagement and a complete breakdown of discussions." Conversely, Nigerian diplomatic practices may lean towards a more informal approach, which can seem disrespectful or too casual to their Chinese counterparts. Such discrepancies can create tensions that, if not appropriately managed, could derail crucial discussions, especially when the stakes are high.

Language barriers further exacerbate the difficulties stemming from cultural differences. While English serves as the primary language in Nigeria, many Chinese officials have limited proficiency in it, leading to potential misinterpretations during negotiations. An expert observed, "This language barrier is more than just words; it often results in the loss of important cultural contexts essential for effective communication." To mitigate these issues, employing skilled interpreters who can accurately translate both language and cultural nuances is essential. Additionally, fostering language training programmes for diplomats would be a step toward promoting mutual understanding and smoother negotiations.

Possible Solutions

In terms of bridging these cultural gaps, initiatives such as cultural exchange programmes could be hugely beneficial. These would allow diplomats and government officials from both countries to immerse themselves in each other's cultures. "Encouraging cultural exchanges can foster respect and understanding," a scholar noted "(Interview, 2025).

When diplomats engage directly with each other's traditions and social norms, it opens doors to better diplomatic relations.” Such initiatives could include study tours, workshops, and seminars aimed at enhancing cultural sensitivity and communication skills. By encouraging this level of engagement, both sides can achieve a deeper appreciation for each other's values, ultimately resulting in more fruitful diplomatic interactions.

Empathy is another crucial element in overcoming cultural differences. Diplomats must strive to comprehend not only the motivations and traditions behind their counterparts' actions but also the emotional drivers that influence decision-making. “Active listening and a genuine willingness to learn about different cultures are imperative,” said an expert in cross-cultural communication. Training sessions focused on emotional intelligence and cultural competency can better prepare diplomats for navigating these relationships. “Approaching negotiations with an open mind and a commitment to collaboration yields significant benefits,” they added.

Long-term strategies for strengthening Sino-Nigeria diplomatic relations should include establishing formalized channels of ongoing dialogue. Regular joint forums and working groups focusing on shared interests such as trade, infrastructure, and technology could foster closer ties. An analyst commented, “the key to any successful diplomatic relationship is not just in sporadic discussions but in sustained engagement” (Interview, 2025). Furthermore, incorporating cultural education into diplomatic training programmes would prepare future diplomats to approach negotiations with an informed perspective, respecting the unique attributes of both cultures.

In summary, recognizing and addressing the challenges posed by cultural differences is essential for improving collaboration and achieving mutual understanding in Sino-Nigeria diplomatic relations. The path forward necessitates both parties to invest in initiatives that enhance communication, promote empathy, and facilitate ongoing dialogue. Such efforts will not only strengthen bilateral ties but also ensure that both nations can work towards common goals effectively.

Discussion of Findings

Cultural exchanges between China and Nigeria have emerged as significant instruments in strengthening diplomatic relations between these nations, though scholarly examination of this specific bilateral relationship remains limited. According to Fung and Garcia-Herrero (2019), China's engagement with African nations has historically emphasized economic and political aspects, with cultural dimensions often receiving less academic attention. Nevertheless, these cultural

initiatives play a crucial role in fostering mutual understanding and respect that underpins more visible diplomatic and economic partnerships.

The China-Nigeria Cultural Exchange Year represents a strategic deployment of what Nye (2004) terms "soft power," where nations seek to influence through attraction rather than coercion. These programmes create platforms for dialogue that transcend traditional political boundaries. Wang (2018) notes that such cultural diplomacy initiatives allow nations to showcase their heritage while simultaneously building goodwill in ways that conventional diplomatic channels cannot always achieve. Through art exhibitions, music festivals, and performing arts programs, both countries have created accessible entry points for citizens to engage with unfamiliar cultural traditions.

Confucius Institutes established across Nigeria exemplify China's systematic approach to cultural diplomacy. These institutions serve as more than language centers; they function as cultural ambassadors that shape perceptions and build lasting relationships. King (2021) observes that Confucius Institutes represent one of China's most successful soft power initiatives in Africa, creating generations of students with deeper understanding of Chinese perspectives. This aligns with Adebayo's (2020) findings that educational exchanges constitute a particularly effective mechanism for fostering long-term diplomatic relationships through people-to-people connections.

However, these cultural exchanges face significant challenges, particularly when they lack contextual understanding or reinforce existing stereotypes. Adichie's (2009) concept of "the danger of a single story" helps explain how simplified cultural narratives can damage cross-cultural understanding. When Nigerian culture appears in Chinese media through stereotypical portrayals, it can undermine the goodwill generated through formal exchange programs. Zhang and Li (2022) argue that effective cultural diplomacy requires moving beyond surface-level representations to engage with cultures in their full complexity.

Communication barriers during diplomatic negotiations often reflect deeper cultural dimensions. Hofstede's (2011) cultural dimensions theory provides a framework for understanding how differences in power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation affect cross-cultural communication. Nigerian and Chinese diplomatic interactions take place against a backdrop of significantly different cultural orientations that shape expectations and communication styles. Akindele's (2019) research suggests that awareness of these dimensions can significantly improve negotiation outcomes between African and Asian partners. Investment in cultural initiatives builds what Bourdieu (1986) would classify as "cultural capital" that supports diplomatic relationships. The infrastructure of

cultural exchange including museums, performance venues, and educational institutions—creates spaces where deeper understanding can develop organically. Nigerian participants in cultural exchange programmes reported significantly improved perceptions of China, demonstrating the tangible diplomatic benefits of these initiatives.

Digital platforms increasingly complement traditional cultural exchange methods, offering new avenues for engagement. According to Li and Marsh (2023), social media and online cultural content have created unprecedented opportunities for direct cultural exchange between ordinary citizens. These digital interactions sometimes bypass official narratives, creating more authentic connections but also introducing new challenges in managing cultural representation. Tourism serves as both an economic driver and cultural bridge between nations. Wang and Chen (2021) argue that tourism creates experiential learning opportunities that textbooks and formal cultural programs cannot replicate. The growing number of Chinese tourists visiting Nigerian cultural sites and Nigerian business travelers experiencing China firsthand represents an under examined dimension of cultural diplomacy with significant potential for fostering mutual understanding.

Conclusion

Cultural exchanges, especially through arts and tourism, significantly influence Sino-Nigeria diplomatic relations by promoting mutual understanding and appreciation. Initiatives like art exhibitions and music festivals allow both nations to showcase their heritage, fostering dialogue and collaboration. The China-Nigeria Cultural Exchange Year has enabled artistic collaborations, countered stereotypes and enhancing goodwill. It was emphasized that understanding cultural factors in language use is crucial during negotiations between China and Nigeria. It was pointed out that Chinese negotiators prioritize relationship-building and tend to avoid direct conflict, while Nigerian negotiators might use more abrasive or assertive language. Additionally, several strategies were proposed to enhance communication, including setting clear objectives, aligning on key terminologies, and fostering relationships before formal negotiations. It was predicted that as globalization continues, both countries are likely to invest more in language training and cultural exchange initiatives aimed at improving negotiation outcomes and enhancing mutual understanding.

Recommendations

In the light of the foregoing conclusion, the following recommendations are suggested:

- i. China and Nigeria can enhance their diplomatic relations by implementing cultural exchange programmes, language training,

- diplomats to immerse themselves in each other's cultures, reduce communication barriers, and foster appreciation for each other's cultures.
- ii. Implement language training programmes tailored for diplomats from both nations. By equipping officials with language skills, not only can communication barriers be reduced, but a greater appreciation and understanding of each other's cultures can be fostered.
 - iii. Building upon the success of physical cultural exchanges, both nations should invest in developing a comprehensive digital platform dedicated to China-Nigeria cultural relations.

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