Xenophobia and Nigeria-South Africa Diplomatic Relations: A Critical Analysis of Measures to Strengthen Diplomatic Ties, 2008-2024.

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ABSTRACT

Xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa have posed significant challenges to diplomatic relations between the two countries. Despite these challenges, both governments have implemented measures to strengthen bilateral ties. This paper provides a critical analysis of these measures, exploring their effectiveness in promoting diplomatic relations and limitations and challenges faced by these measures in consolidating, strengthening and promoting the diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobia. The frustration – aggression and constructivism postulations were used as frameworks of analysis. However, the constructivism postulation was adopted in the study. Methodologically however, descriptive research design was used as a tool of analysis. Purposive sampling method was adopted in order to solicit necessary information from respondents who are knowledgeable or familiar with the topical issue under discourse. However, findings reveal dialogue and mutual understanding were the measures implemented to strengthen diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobic attacks. The study also discovered, high level diplomatic engagements, citizen diplomacy, cultural exchange, economic cooperation and conflict resolution mechanisms were employed in addressing xenophobic attacks and improve diplomatic relations between Nigeria and South Africa during of xenophobic attacks. Lack of trust, inadequate communication and domestic politics were viewed by the study as the challenges and limitations of the measures used to strengthen diplomatic relationship between Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobic attacks. Based on the findings, the research recommended that, the Nigeria and South Africa governments should implement citizen diplomacy initiatives, such as cultural exchange programs (adopting a cultural mix policy), educational programs, and business initiatives to encourage people-to-people relations, which will help build understanding, eliminate xenophobic violence and reduce stereotypes between the two countries.

Keywords; Xenophobia, Diplomacy, Relations, Violence, Foreign policy

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Nigeria and South Africa are two of the largest economies in Africa, with significant cultural, economic, and historical ties (Ogunnubi and Aja (2022). Nigeria is considered the world's most populated Black Country. As of March 3, 2025, Nigeria's population is estimated to be 235,900,469, according to Worldometer. This represents 2.89% of the world's population. As of July 2024, the population of South Africa is estimated to be 63 million people. This is a 1.33% increase from July 2023. After enduring both internal political strife and global assistance, South Africa has been widely recognised as the conscience of racial equity on the international scene. Africa's western region is home to Nigeria, while the southern region is home to South Africa.

Nigeria and South Africa, have been involved in each other's different spheres of life-social, political and economic (Adebisi, 2017). However, their relations have been marked by several stages, including rivalry, conflict, cooperation, and competition. Both nations' commercial and trade relations serve as the foundation for

their cooperation, but the legacy of apartheid, xenophobia, and the struggles for leadership on the African continent as well as internationally, are the root reasons of their rivalry and competition

With the dismantling of the apartheid regime and the emergence of constitutional democracy in 1994, immigration inflow into South Africa witnessed sharp increase particularly from neighbouring African countries (Ogunnubi and Amusan, 2019).

Ironically, a high unemployment rate, hardship, and poverty exist in South Africa, and the local indigenous population blames the societal and economic problems on the immigrants, whom they refer to as "Amakwerekwere" (a derogatory South African word for foreign visitors to a township (Wiktionary, 2019). The locals also accuse the immigrants of being responsible for the country's rising crime rate, prostitution rate, high rates of drug addiction and trafficking, and human trafficking rate (South Africa). Therefore, in May 2008, April 2015, March 2019, and to this day, covert xenophobic attacks have been commonplace for foreign nationals, primarily African immigrants in South Africa. The republic of South Africa's diplomatic ties with its neighbours and other African countries, including the Federal Republic of Nigeria, have suffered as a result of these attacks.

Nigeria for some years now, has received some of its nationals in body bags after they encountered their untimely death at the hands of xenophobes in South Africa (Ogunnoiki and Adeyemi, 2019). The most recent instance of xenophobic violence in South Africa, which demonstrated the pervasiveness of prejudice, intolerance, and emotions against foreign migrants, occurred in 2019. According to current data, the South African xenophobic incident in 2008 claimed the most lives, followed by the violence in 2015 and 2019. In South Africa, xenophobic violence and attacks have become widespread, and stricter policies are needed to reduce them.

In South Africa, xenophobia is deeply ingrained in society at all levels, from the individual to the community to the government's institutions and agencies, such as the police and immigration. Due to their open animosity towards migrants, South African immigration and police have killed immigrants extra judicially without regret or concern of legal repercussions. It is of this view that the constant xenophobic attacks and violence in South Africa has a political under tone and has affected the spirit of pan- Africanism (Olotuche and Okolie, 2021), it renders curbing xenophobia extremely challenging.

The relationship turned edgy in 2008 with the xenophobic attack on Africans that raised questions on the historic friendship between the countries, (Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017). . Xenophobic attacks have led to a significant deterioration in diplomatic relations between Nigeria and South Africa affecting the bilateral relationship, with Nigeria recalling its ambassador to South Africa in 2019. The relationship between South Africa and Nigeria deteriorated significantly as a result of South Africa's xenophobic attacks on Nigerians. This also led to strict visa regulations and policies, visa and travel restrictions for tourists, businesspeople, students, and those seeking better opportunities in both countries.

Since the anti-foreigner uprisings in 2008, Nigeria and South Africa have been attempting to mend their diplomatic relationship. In 2013, Nigeria and South Africa signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to reinforce political and diplomatic ties and forestall future xenophobic attacks (Babalola, 2017). Furthermore, Nigeria and South Africa governments have been engaging in dialogue, regular communication, high level diplomatic involvements, citizen diplomacy, and cultural exchange, to manage tensions and to work towards strengthening their diplomatic relationship, in the face of xenophobia.

In spite of this, the attacks against Nigerians have persisted, severely compromising the two countries' diplomatic ties.

The recurrence of xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa has raised concerns about the effectiveness of measures to strengthen diplomatic ties.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the historical and strategic importance of Nigeria-South Africa relations, xenophobic attacks on

Nigerians in South Africa have led to strained diplomatic relations between the two countries, resulting in economic, social, and political consequences. Xenophobic attacks and tensions between the two nations have persisted, threatening to undermine diplomatic ties and regional stability. Despite efforts to strengthen diplomatic ties, xenophobia remains a persistent challenge, necessitating a critical analysis of measures aimed at strengthening Nigeria-South Africa diplomatic relations and mitigating the scourge of xenophobia

Research Questions

The following questions shall guide the study;

What measures have been implemented to strengthen diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobic attacks? ii. How effective have these measures been in addressing the root causes of xenophobic attacks and improving diplomatic relations? iii. What are the challenges and limitations of these measures, and how can they be improved?

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to conduct a critical analysis of the measures implemented to strengthen diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobic attacks.

The specific objectives are under listed beneath;

1. To conduct a critical analysis of the measures implemented to strengthen diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobic attacks.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of these measures in addressing xenophobic attacks and improving diplomatic relations.
3. To identify challenges and limitations of these measures and provide recommendations for improvement.

Research Propositions The following propositions will guide the study;

Dialogue and mutual understanding have been the possible measures implemented to strengthen diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobic attacks. ii. High level diplomatic engagements, citizen diplomacy, cultural exchange, economic cooperation and conflict resolution mechanisms were employed in addressing xenophobic attacks and improving diplomatic relations between Nigeria and South Africa during of xenophobic attacks.
iii. Lack of trust, inadequate communication and domestic politics are the challenges and limitations of the measures used to strengthen diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobic attacks

Significance of the Study

The study will be carrying out with the aim to critically analyze the measures implemented to strengthen diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobic attacks. The following are the significance of the study.

Contribution to the body of knowledge:

The study will be an addition to the body of knowledge already in existence, which provides researchers in the fields of international relations and diplomatic studies as well as students who are interested in conducting research on the sustainability of bilateral relationships between countries with information that serves as a reference document.

Relevance to policy:

The results of the study will inform policy decisions and strategies for effective measures in addressing xenophobic attacks and improving diplomatic relations. Policy makers, governments, ambassadors, and diplomats will find the study's findings useful in formulating national and international policies and in creating a culture that encourages migrants to remain in their country and conduct business.

Practical Applications:

The findings of the study will guide strategy and policy decisions for practical steps to strengthen diplomatic ties. The study's recommendations will offer policymakers, diplomats, and other stakeholders' valuable guidance. The study seeks to propose strategies for enhancing diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa. It will additionally be helpful to heads of state, diplomats, and ambassadors in suggesting strategies for establishing and fostering solid bilateral and diplomatic ties with other countries.

Implications for diplomacy:

This study would be significant because the findings highlights the measures implemented to strengthen diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobic attacks, thereby will serve as a guide to countries to avoid xenophobic attacks on foreigners. Additionally, the study's findings on measures implemented to strengthen diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobic attacks will be useful to conflict sensitive countries globally. The study would aid countries to intensify efforts in ensuring good plans and strategies for establishing and fostering solid bilateral and diplomatic relationship with other countries.

Scope of the Study

Xenophobia and Nigeria-South Africa Diplomatic Relations: A Critical Analysis of Measures to Strengthen Diplomatic Ties, 2008-2024.

The study covers only two variables namely; xenophobia (independent variable), while Nigeria-South Africa diplomatic relations (dependent variable). The study will establish a link between the both variables xenophobia (independent variable) and Nigeria-South Africa diplomatic relations (dependent variable).

The study will focus on the measures implemented to strengthen diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobic attacks and to evaluate the effectiveness of these measures in addressing xenophobic attacks and improving diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Nigeria and South Africa have bilateral relations in different areas, such as economic and trade, defense, sociocultural and political relations which diplomatic relations fall in. Therefore, this study narrows its emphasis on the measures implemented to strengthen diplomatic relations between the both countries.

The focus of this research is limited to Nigeria in the western part of the African continent and South Africa in the southern part of the African continent

The time frame covered by this study is 2008–2024. Although there had been instances of xenophobia in South Africa prior to 2008, May 11, 2008, was the first extensively reported instance. It was initially documented in May 2008 and attracted international interest. There were no attacks on Nigerians in South Africa between May 2008 and April 2015. However, Nigeria's foreign policy goal of making Africa the focal point of her foreign policy started to deteriorate relations with South Africa due to the brutal killings of Africans in South Africa. She further severed her diplomatic ties with South Africa in March 2019 as South Africans launched xenophobic attacks against Nigerians and other African migrants, followed by sporadic and covert attacks in 2020. It is as a result of this, that the research aim to critically analyze the measures implemented to strengthen diplomatic

relationship between Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobic attacks and to evaluate the effectiveness of these measures in addressing xenophobic attacks.

Conceptual Framework

The study will examine three fundamental concepts: the concepts of xenophobia, diplomacy, and relations.

Concept of Xenophobia

The word "xenophobia" is derived from the Greek words "Xenos" and "phobos" which means "strange" or "foreign and "fear" respectively (Crush and Ramachandran, 2009). According to Smelser and Baltes (2001), the term originates from the Greek words "xenos", meaning foreigner, stranger, and "phobos", meaning fear. It is based on existing racist, ethnic, religious, cultural prejudice

Harris (2002) argues that the term, "xenophobia", must be reframed to incorporate acts, manifestation or practices such as violence or physical abuse which normally accompany "dislike" or "fear" of foreigners. Furthermore, Harris, "xenophobia" broadly describes negative social perceptions of immigrants, refugees and immigrants and the resultant violent actions against them. Although xenophobic violence mostly targets foreign to the area or are perceived, albeit in correctly, to be from another country. Xenophobia has over the year gained the status of a global phenomenon. It is not a one-continent affair as it has been practically experienced in one form or the other across different continents of the world. Literature is replete on the concept of xenophobia, Peil, (1974). However, there are no adequate works on its dynamism, nature and divergent manifestations of Africa. Yakushko (2009) defines xenophobia as a form of attitudinal, affective, and behavioral prejudice toward immigrants and those perceived as foreigners. Reynolds and Vine (1987), maintain that xenophobia is a psychological state of hostility or fear towards outsiders. Observably, xenophobia is intricately tied to nations of nationalism and ethno-centrism, both of which are characterized by belief in the superiority of one's nation-state over others, Licata and Klien (2002).

Xenophobia is defined in this study as a negative attitude, hate, fear, and hatred of immigrants that may or may not result in physical attacks against them.

Concept of Diplomacy

Diplomacy originated in the system of conducting relations between the states of classical Greece. It was reviewed in the medieval Europe and grew in importance in the relations between city states of renaissance Italy and the emerging state of post reformation Europe. However, the congress of Vienne, 1815, regularized the system of permanent diplomacy as necessary and important aspects of relations between states. The great powers exchanged embassies and ambassadors, while relations involving smaller powers were conducted through, delegations and ministers. A recognized diplomatic profession developed, characterized by the aristocracy of its members and the secrecy of its method (Adewele, 2010).

After the First World War, more open or democratic diplomacy flourished for a short while. At the end of the Second World War, the distinction between ambassadors proliferated; especially when new states were formed from European colonies (Mclean, 1996). A distinguished American scholar Dr. Melville Herskovits says that Diplomacy is the peaceful resolution of disputes between autonomous groups. Nicolson (1963) is of the view that diplomacy "is an organized pattern of communication and negotiation between states". Watson (1984) says that "Diplomacy is the process and dialogue and negotiation by which states in a system conduct their relations and pursue their purposes by means short of war". Aaron (1962) defines Diplomacy as the "act of conducting relations with other states so as to further the national interest". Brownlie (1979), he defines diplomacy as any means by which states establish and maintain mutual relations, communicate with each other and carry out politics or legal transaction in each case through their authorized agents.

The Encyclopedia Britannica has defined Diplomacy as "the established method of international discourse or the art of managing international relations chiefly by negotiations.

According to Passnownow (2018), diplomacy is the ability of a nation to influence the decision and action of other nations within the comity of nations. Diplomacy according to Satow (1979) is the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between governments of independent states extending to their business with vassal states. Satow (1979) continues to explain that diplomacy can also be seen as the tool with which the foreign policy of a state is traded.

This study will describe diplomacy as the process by which states build and maintain relationships, interact with one another, and conduct political or legal transactions, always through their authorized representatives.

Concept of Relations

The term "relation" originates from a Latin word "relatio" meaning "carrying or bringing back". The first known use of "relation" was in the 14th century. (Merriam-webster.com).

According to Merriam-Webster online dictionary, the term "relation" is define as dealings between countries, persons or groups, the state of sharing an interest (as in social or business matters).

The word relations imply a couple of things. Firstly, it suggests a series of interactions among people, states and other actors. Relations also encompasses a broad variety of forms of interaction ranging from diplomatic, political, military to economic, social, cultural and even humanitarian concerns. (Kariuki, N).

According to dictionary.com, relation is an existing connection; a significant association between or among things. Dictionary.com also defines relations as the various connections between people, countries and the various connections in which persons, people and countries are brought together, for instance foreign relations, business and social relations. Dictionary.com sees relations as the mode or kind of connection between one person and another, between an individual and God and the connection between persons by blood or marriage.

Sam, A. (2013) defines relation as a particular type of connection between two or more entities or phenomena. Sam, A (2013) further stressed that relation is binding, usually continuous association between individuals where in one has some influence on feelings or actions of the other.

Cambridge dictionary sees relation as the way in which two people or groups of people feel and behave towards each other. Furthermore, vocabulary.com sees relation as a word that can describe a connection - between relatives or any two entities.

The study will adopt the combination of the Cambridge dictionary and the vocabulary.com definitions of "relation".

In light of this study, the term "relation" will be define as a word that can describe a connection between two entities (Nigeria and South Africa) in the way in which they feel and behave towards each other.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

There is not a single theory in the basket of theories on international relations that provides a satisfactory explanation on xenophobia and Nigeria-South Africa diplomatic relations: A critical analysis of measures to strengthen diplomatic ties, 2008-2024. Therefore, two (2) theories would be united in this study, these theories are: frustration - aggression theory and constructivism theory in international relations for the proper explanation of the study.

The Frustration – Aggression (F-A) Theory

Frustration – aggression theory is also known as the frustration – aggression hypothesis, ranks among the most seminal and prolific theories in research on aggression. From its beginnings in the late 1930s until today, it has

been applied and studied in a variety of areas, including clinical and social psychology, ethnology, sociology, criminology, political science and medical research.

While frustration – aggression theory has also been used to explain the behavior of animals (Berkoritz, 1983). The section will focus exclusively on the application of frustration – aggression theory on the study of aggressive human behavior.

Central to the frustration – Aggression (F.A) theory is the tenet that there is a causal relationship between frustration which occurs when a person's goal attainment is hampered and aggression. This conviction of the nexus between frustration and aggression was first held by a group of Yale University Psychologists – John Dollard, Leonard W. Dobb, Neal E; Miller, Orval H. Mowrer and Robert R. Sears in their co-authored monograph: Frustration and Aggression (1939) (Ogunnoiki and Adeyemi, 2019) Frustration – Aggression (F.A) theory (1939) stated that "the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression" what is especially noteworthy in this assumption is that, unlike the use of the word in everyday language, frustration here is not understand as an emotional experience but as an interference with the occurrence of an instigated goal – response, (Dollard et al, 1939).

Put differently, frustration is defined as an event instead of an affective state. The arguable benefit of characterizing frustration through observable qualities of events or environmental characteristics is that it allows description and testing of its causal effects, such as those on aggression, objectively instead of relying on subjective self-reported introspection. This basic yet somewhat counterintuitive ascertainment is important as it is also implied in later modifications and reformulations of the frustration – aggression theory. Two year later, the theory was revised by Neal E. Miller (1941) and Leonard Berowitz (1969), (Ogunnoiki and Adeyemi, 2019). The re-formulated theory suggests that while frustration creates a need to respond, some form of aggression is one possible outcome. Therefore, the re-formulated theory stated that while frustration prompts a behaviour that may or may not be aggressive, any aggressive behavior is the result of frustration, making frustration not sufficient, but a necessary condition for aggression (Dolf, 1979).

According to Dollard and colleagues, frustration is the "condition which exists when a goal – response suffers interference", while aggression is defined as 'an act whose goal – response is injury to an organism (or an organism surrogate)'. The theory says that frustration causes aggression, but when the source of the frustration cannot be challenged, the aggression gets displaced onto an innocent target. For example, if a man is disrespected and humiliated at his work, but cannot respond to this for fear of losing his job, he may go home and take his anger and frustration out on his family. This theory is also used to explain xenophobic attacks riots and revolutions, which are believed to be caused by poorer and more deprived sections of society who may express their bottled up frustration and anger through violence (Ogunnoiki and Adeyemi, 2019).

The theory attempts to explain why people scapegoat (Bernard and Kite, 2009); it attempts to give an explanation as to the cause of violence.

Crossman (2019) defines 'scapegoating as a process by which a person or group is unfairly blamed for something that they didn't do and, as a result, the real source of the problem is either never seen or purposefully ignored'.

Weakness of Frustration – Aggression (F.A) Theory

The frustration – aggression theory exerted a very strong influence on decades of research, nevertheless, the hypothesis was severely criticized on the grounds of theoretical rigidity and over generalization, clearly, it was necessary to limit the scope of the theory to establish its validity. For instance, the initial hypothesis failed to distinguish hostile forms of aggression, in which the actor's goal is to inflict harm, and instrumental forms of aggression, in which aggression is simply a means to attain other goals (such a control or domination). This criticism can be dealt with rather easily by confining the frustration – aggression theory of cases of hostile aggression alone.

Critics also challenged the premise that any interference with ongoing goal – directed behaviour would evoke frustration. According to the American psychologist Abraham Maslow (1941) and others, legitimate (or justified) interferences do not necessarily produce frustration, only forms of interference that seem illegitimate (or arbitrary or otherwise unjustified), they argued, should lead to frustration. (Ogunnoiki and Adeyemi, 2019).

Finally, the nature of the connection between perceived frustration and the display of violence also turned out to be more complicated than Dollard and his collaborators realized.

Pastore (1952) was among the first to suggest that only illegitimate frustrations produce aggressive reactions, in his study the subjects were asked how they would respond to various hypothetical situations such as a city bus's failure to pick them up at a regular Research indicated that aggressive behavior is indeed a prevalent response to what are viewed as deliberate and unfair efforts to interfere with an individual's goal – attainment opportunities.

Not surprisingly, the students typically answered that they would not become angry if the thwarting seemed reasonable or proper. And so, in the bus example they said, they would not have been bothered at the bus's passing them by if it had displayed a sign showing it was on the way to the garage. Cohen (1955) conducted a similar investigation in which university women were asked to indicate what would be the ideal reaction to variety of incidents and also what would be the likely actual response. The subjects believed that people were less apt to be aggressive in response to a non-arbitrary frustration in comparison with an arbitrary frustration.

Interestingly, Cohen(1955), also found that although only about 6% of the women said that aggression was an ideal reaction to a non-arbitrary thwarting over half of the participants in the study.

Constructivism theory (in international relations)

Nicholas G. Onuf introduced Constructivism in IR with his book: World of Our Making (1989), (Ogunnoiki, O and Adeyemi, A (2019). However, it was after the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (hereafter USSR) in 1991, which marked the end of the ideological struggle and arms race between the capitalist Western bloc led by the United States (hereafter US) and the communist Eastern bloc under the leadership of the USSR. Alexander Wendt developed the theory in his article: Anarchy is what States make of it: The Social Construction of Power and Politics (1992) and in his book: Social Theory of International Politics (1999), (Ogunnoiki, O and Adeyemi, A (2019). Other notable scholars that contributed to the development of Constructivism are: Emanuel Alder, Friedrich Kratochwil, John G. Ruggie and Peter Katzenstein, (Ogunnoiki, O and Adeyemi, A (2019).

As an IR theory, constructivism, also called social constructivism, adopted the sociological approach in explaining international politics as well as in critiquing traditional IR theories – Realism and Liberalism.

Contrary to Kenneth Waltz and other neo-realists' conviction that the structure of the anarchical international system is determined by the uneven distribution of materialistic capabilities – 'power' (e.g. stockpile of nuclear warheads), (Ogunnoiki, O and Adeyemi, A (2019).

In international relations (IR), constructivism is a social theory that asserts that significant aspects of international relations are shaped by ideational factors. The most important ideational factors are those that are collectively held; these collectively held beliefs construct the interests and identities of actors. (Finnemore, M and Sikkink (2001).

Assumptions of Constructivism Theory in International Relations

The Constructivists strongly believe that the structure of international relations is a 'social construction' via an inter-subjective process between States producing and reproducing structures of shared knowledge over time (MacDonald, 2015 cited in Ogunnoiki, O and Adeyemi, A (2019). In other words, the structure of international relations is a product of States social interaction. It is from the social relationship of States that they derive a shared knowledge of each other, (Ogunnoiki, O and Adeyemi, A (2019).

This shared knowledge however is not permanent but changes over time.

In a nutshell, Constructivism looks at how ideas and norms shape the identities, interests, actions and behaviour of States in the international system.

Constructivism in International Relations introduces a valuable perspective by analyzing how social constructs influence state interactions and global governance. It underscores the significance of normative power in shaping international norms and behaviors, thereby facilitating a deeper understanding of global politics. (Educational wave, n.d).

Relevance of the theory to the study

Since South Africa's transition to post-apartheid in 1994, a number of African countries have established and maintained diplomatic, economic, and sociocultural relationships with South Africa. However, there is a widespread perception of South Africa as a xenophobic country, due to the far too often targeted killings of their citizens there (in South Africa). Nigeria is one of the impacted African countries whose actions in their diplomatic relations with South Africa have been greatly influenced by this shared knowledge.

Nigeria has recently taken diplomatic action to address the frequent xenophobic attacks without cutting off ties with South Africa.

The governments of Nigeria and South Africa have also improved their diplomatic ties and settled the tense dispute through dialogue, high-level diplomatic engagements, citizen diplomacy, economic cooperation, and conflict resolution procedures in response to South Africans' xenophobic attacks on Nigerians.

Because of the aforementioned, the study will critically analyse measures for strengthening diplomatic ties between the two state using constructivism theory in international relations.

Summary of the Gaps in Literature

It is evident from our literature review that the amount of published and unpublished works on xenophobia and the relationship between Nigeria and South Africa is increasing. These works took into account the impact of South African xenophobia on Nigerians. Some concerned with the nature of Nigeria – South Africa relationships. Another addressed the causes of South Africa's xenophobia. Notwithstanding the vast amount of materials on xenophobia in South Africa that has been authored by academics of both national and international renown. However, the aspect of the measures implemented to strengthen diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa in the wake of xenophobic violence had been overlooked. Evidently, this became a thing of concern within the academic genre which necessitated a critical analysis of measures aimed at strengthening Nigeria-South Africa diplomatic relations and mitigating the scourge of xenophobia. In this view, the study seeks to fill that gap in literature.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses the descriptive research design, which is a scientific method that entails observing and describeing a subject's behavior without influencing the outcome. Descriptive research aims to reveal the key componen ts and features of any phenomenon. This study details the measures taken to improve diplomatic relations betw een Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobic violence.

Population, Sample and Sampling Techniques

Population can be defined as including all the people or items with the characteristic that researcher wishes to

understand.

The respondents to the research will be selected from among the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM) staff, the South African High Commission staff, and staff of the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs: African Affairs Department, Division of Southern Africa.

The number of staff interviewed in Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs: African Affairs Department, Division of Southern Africa are eight (8), the number of staff interviewed in Nigerians in Diaspora Commission are eight (8), and the number of staff to be interviewed in South African High Commission are eight (8).

Methods of Data Collection

There is no doubt that the quality of data is tied to the methods and techniques used for gathering the data.

In essence, both primary and secondary data were used in this investigation.

Documentary sources such as political science and international relations textbooks, journals, reviews, newspapers, and online articles were used to gather the secondary data.

To gather primary data for the study, the researcher will employ the interview method under the primary metho

Because of its benefit in obtaining data directly from the sample population, the interview method was used. They are cost effective and have been shown to be helpful in eliciting responders' ideas. Interviews are the tool used to obtain data. The interviews will be conducted through direct face-toface interaction.

Techniques for Data Analysis

In assessing our data and to ensure dependability, the information collected from the interviews will be cross checked against other sources from secondary records or documents.

In addition to providing details and verification to the available data, it significantly improves the consistency with which the instrument tended to measure.

Justification of Methods

Primary data provides firsthand information in the study of Xenophobia and Nigeria-South Africa Diplomatic Relations: A Critical Analysis of Measures to Strengthen Diplomatic Ties, 2008-2024.

Secondary data complements the data from the primary source. Relevant scholarly works shall be employed with aim of making the work appear easy for understanding; therefore, establishes the cause and connections between the dependent and independent variables.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Interviews with respondents who are familiar with the activities of the measures to strengthen diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobic attacks have yielded fascinating and significant revelations after a thorough and rigorous investigation was conducted for this study. All these findings are discussed through the guidance of the research objectives and propositions respectively.

The first objective, to analysis of the measures implemented to strengthen diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobic attacks. The finding discover that, dialogue and mutual understanding were the measures implemented to strengthen diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobic attacks, which validate research proposition one.

The study revealed that, dialogue provided a platform for Nigeria and South Africa to address concerns and grievances related to xenophobic attacks, allowing them to work towards finding solutions. Furthermore, the study also reveal that, regular communication, dialogue and mutual understanding helped to build respect and trust between Nigeria and South Africa, which enabled them to navigate complex issues and to find common ground and creating a foundation for stronger diplomatic relationships and more effective conflict resolution.

The study reports that, dialogue and mutual understanding has facilitated conflict resolution by allowing Nigeria and South Africa to discuss issues, clarify misunderstandings, and work towards mutually beneficial solutions. Dialogue also promoted understanding between Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobic attacks, helping to dispel misconceptions and stereotypes that may contribute to xenophobia. In addition, the finding of the study reveals that, by seeking to understand each other's perspectives and concerns, Nigeria and South Africa have been able to build empathy and develop more effective solutions to address xenophobia.

In line with the above, findings of the research states that, dialogue and mutual understanding has led to cooperation and collaboration in areas such as trade, investment, and security, strengthening diplomatic ties and fostering a sense of mutual benefit between Nigeria and South Africa.

The above findings corroborates with Babalola (2017) which states that, in 2013, Nigeria and South Africa signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to reinforce diplomatic ties and forestall future xenophobic attacks.

The above findings on dialogue between Nigeria and South Africa to strengthen the both countries diplomatic ties in the wake of xenophobic attacks on Nigerians by South Africans corroborates with the state house (2019) reports that states that, the president of the Federal republic of Nigeria, President Mohammed Buhari on 9th September, 2019 after getting a report from the special envoy that was sent to South Africa, instructed the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs to continue to engage with appropriate authorities on the concrete measure with the South African Government.

The second objective to evaluate the effectiveness of these measures in addressing xenophobic attacks and improving diplomatic relations.

The findings discover that, high level diplomatic engagements, citizen diplomacy, cultural exchange, economic cooperation and conflict resolution mechanisms were employed in addressing xenophobic attacks and improving diplomatic relations between Nigeria and South Africa during of xenophobic attacks, which validate research proposition two.

The study findings revealed that, high-level diplomatic engagement was very effective in strengthening Nigeria and South Africa diplomatic ties and addressing xenophobic attacks. Furthermore, the study findings also noted that, high-level diplomatic engagement has made it easier for Nigeria and South Africa governments to communicate honestly and openly, addressing xenophobic concerns and complaints while cementing diplomatic relationships between the two countries. In line with the above, Schneider (2019) argued that, 2nd October, 2019, President Muhammadu Buhari arrived South Africa's Waterloo Air Force Base where South Africa's government officials led by the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Mrs. Naledi Pandor, warmly received him after disembarking from the Nigerian Air Force plane 001. During his three –day state visit, President Buhari and Ramaphosa discussed the recent xenophobic violence against Nigerians and how both countries can work together to prevent a repeat of the ugly incident. In that regard, both leaders agreed to set up "early warning mechanisms". Also discussed was the long-standing trade relation between the two economic heavy weights of Africa which needed to be bolstered. Further, it also resulted in a diplomatic dialogue between the House of Representatives ad hoc Committee led by Majority leader, Femi Gbajabiamila and the then South African President Jacob Zuma on the need to end the spiral of violence against Nigerians residing in South Africa. Promises were made to resolve the issue and compensate Nigerians who lost property. While it is not clear if such compensation has been paid, the point to note is that the Nigerian Government at various levels made concerted efforts to protect its citizens in South Africa. (Ogunnubi and Aja, 2022)

The research findings noted that, in the wake of xenophobic violence in South Africa, citizen diplomacy has been crucial in fostering better diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa. The study findings further argued that, citizen diplomacy facilitated people-to-people interactions, encouraging understanding, empathy, and mutual respect between Nigerian and South African citizens. This has resulted to development of trust between citizens of both countries, reducing tensions and promoting cooperation.

Considering this, the research discovered that, for the protection of Nigerian citizens in South Africa and abroad, the Nigerian government is required to implement a track II diplomacy mix of cultural policy in support of citizen diplomacy. Since the majority of these Nigerian immigrants engage with South Africans on a daily basis, it would seem that it is essential to use informal people-to-people interaction to shape, represent, and promote the image of their states. These interactions have the potential to de-escalate conflict and foster confidence in the host communities. Nigerian citizens living in South Africa must respect and uphold the principles of their culture and constitution when engaging with South Africans. At the informal level of interaction, xenophobic attacks take place, thus Nigerians' orderly behaviour will foster peaceful coexistence more than formal negotiations.

The study further states that, it is concerning, that several Nigerians who should be key in enhancing the country's reputation are charged with a number of wrongdoings and misconduct around South Africa. This damages Nigeria's reputation abroad and makes Nigerians more likely to be stereotyped as criminals in South Africa.

The third objective, to identify challenges and limitations of these measures to strengthen diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobic attacks. The finding discover that, lack of trust, inadequate communication and domestic politics were the challenges and limitations of the measures used to strengthen diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobic attacks, which validate research proposition three.

The research revealed that, it was extremely challenging to establish trust because of the trust deficit triggered by previous instances of xenophobia and violence against Nigerians in South Africa. The efficiency of diplomatic efforts was hampered by the lack of trust, which is necessary for candid and open communication.

According to the study, comprehension and cooperation were hampered during the dialogue procedures by communication barriers brought on by language differences or unclear communication channels. In diplomatic efforts, misunderstandings escalate tensions if they are not swiftly and efficiently resolved. Furthermore, leaders' willingness to undertake diplomatic initiatives was constrained by domestic politics, specifically the negative public perception in both countries. Leaders were hesitant to engage in initiatives which would be considered beneficial to the other country without any reciprocal advantages. Furthermore, the strength and capability of diplomatic institutions in both countries hindered the efficacy of diplomatic initiatives. Lack of resources and inefficient bureaucracy made it difficult to implement diplomatic agreements.

SUMMARY

This study is an examination of measures to strengthen diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa at the face of xenophobic attacks on Nigerian by South Africa.

According to this study, xenophobia is defined as a negative attitude, hate, fear, and hatred of foreigners that may or may not result in an actual physical attack.

Nigeria and South Africa's diplomatic ties have been described as fragile and, at best, tumultuous since the apartheid administration collapsed in 1994.

Xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa have posed significant challenges to diplomatic relations between the two countries. Despite these challenges, both governments have implemented measures to strengthen bilateral ties.

Constructivism theory in international relations (I.R.) serves as the study's foundation. In 1989, Nicholas Onuf introduced "constructivism" to the field of international relations theory. Later, in 1992 and 1999, American political scientist Alexander Wendt popularised and developed the thesis. Constructivism theory in international relations examines how norms and ideas influence states' identities, interests, behaviours, and actions within the international system.

This study used a descriptive research design, which aims to characterise the current state of the subject under investigation. In order to understand the underlying variables that led to the research, the descriptive approach entails the standard collection, analysis, and interpretation of a set of data. First-hand information for the study is provided by primary data, which is subsequently supplemented by secondary data.

The study discovers that, regular communication, dialogue and mutual understanding helped to build respect and trust between Nigeria and South Africa, which enabled them to navigate complex issues and to find common ground and creating a foundation for stronger diplomatic relationships and more effective conflict resolution. The study reports that, dialogue and mutual understanding has facilitated conflict resolution by allowing Nigeria and South Africa to discuss issues, clarify misunderstandings, and work towards mutually beneficial solutions. Dialogue also promoted understanding between Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobic attacks, helping to dispel misconceptions and stereotypes that may contribute to xenophobia.

The findings discover that, high level diplomatic engagements, citizen diplomacy, cultural exchange, economic cooperation and conflict resolution mechanisms were employed in addressing xenophobic attacks and improving diplomatic relations between Nigeria and South Africa during of xenophobic attacks. Furthermore, the study findings also noted that, high-level diplomatic engagement has made it easier for Nigeria and South Africa governments to communicate honestly and openly, addressing xenophobic concerns and complaints while cementing diplomatic relationships between the two countries.

Finally, the research finding discover that, lack of trust, inadequate communication and domestic politics were the challenges and limitations of the measures used to strengthen diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa in the face of xenophobic attacks.

CONCLUSION

South Africa's sporadic xenophobic attacks possess the potential to sabotage the country's diplomatic relationship with other African countries, particularly those like Nigeria whose citizens were impacted by such attacks. Xenophobic attacks have led to a significant deterioration in diplomatic relations between the Nigeria and South Africa affecting the bilateral ties, with Nigeria recalling its ambassador to South Africa in 2019. The relationship between South Africa and Nigeria deteriorated significantly as a result of South Africa's xenophobic attacks on Nigerians. This also led to strict visa regulations and policies, visa and travel restrictions for tourists, businesspeople, students, and those seeking better opportunities in both countries.

In the nutshell, political, economic and socio-cultural diplomacies were negatively affected in the relationship between Nigeria and South Africa due to xenophobic attacks on Nigerian by South Africa.

By engaging in dialogue, regular communication, high level diplomatic engagements, citizen diplomacy, cultural exchange, Nigeria and South Africa have been able to manage tensions and work towards strengthening their diplomatic relationship, in the face of xenophobia.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In an effort to improve the diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa, measures were put in place to strengthen the both countries diplomatic relationship at the face of xenophobia and beyond. The following measures are recommended:

1. In order to foster people-to-people relations, eradicate xenophobic violence, and minimise stereotypes between both countries, the governments of Nigeria and South Africa should undertake citizen diplomacy initiatives, such as cultural exchange programs (adopting a cultural mix policy), educational programs, and business initiatives.

2. To help stop xenophobic tension from rising, the governments of Nigeria and South Africa should set up early warning systems to spot potential threats and share information swiftly.

3. Anti-xenophobia agreements, such as a proposed pact between Nigeria and South Africa, should be used to improve relations between the two countries. These agreements should address xenophobic violence and promote cooperation. One such agreement is the Nigeria-South Africa Bi-National Commission.

4. In an effort to resolve problems and build mutual trust, the governments of Nigeria and South Africa needs to hold frequent high-level diplomatic meetings and dialogues.

5. Finally, the South African government needs to tackle the underlying reasons of xenophobia, which include economic competition, cultural differences, and historical tensions, (such as, apartheid and colonialization).

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