

Influence of Twitter on Public Diplomacy between Nigeria and China Relations, 2015-2023

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Certification

This is to certify that **Gbemisola Aminat AKINLOYE** with Matriculation number **LCU/PG/006162** carried out this research work titled ‘Assessment of Social Media on Public Diplomacy: Sino-Nigeria Relations, 2015 – 2023’, in the Department of Politics & International Relations, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, for the award of Masters of Science Degree (MSc) in Politics and International Relation and that this has not been previously submitted.

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Date

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to Almighty Allah, the Most Beneficent and Most Merciful.

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Acknowledgement

My profound gratitude to God Almighty for sparing my life, bestowing upon me wisdom, and granting me strength, peace, and good health during this journey. I am very grateful for the opportunity to study at Lead City University, being a great citadel of learning. I appreciate all the school's management for putting together the necessary educational facilities. I thank Professor Afolakemi Oredein, the Provost of the College of Postgraduate Studies, and other Lead City University Postgraduate College staff for providing a conducive learning environment. I acknowledge the various sources from which materials were gathered for this work. I salute the authors for their contribution to knowledge. A big thanks to all the academic and non-academic staff involved in ensuring this great institution remains a force to be reckoned with in the educational sector.

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Abstract

Diplomatic tools come in response to a rapidly globalising world where communication and influence no longer hinge solely on state-level negotiations. With the rise of digital platforms, social media has emerged as a critical component in the global communication landscape, offering governments, institutions, and individuals a platform to engage in dialogue, promote cultural exchange, and influence global opinions. Drawing on Soft Power theory, Constructivist theory, and Agenda-Setting theory, the research interrogates how digital platforms reshape narratives, identities, and issue salience in bilateral engagement. Employing qualitative content analysis of secondary sources, official communications, news reports, academic literature, and archived social-media content, the study traces patterns of state and non-state digital interaction and their implications for trade, culture, education, and governance. Findings indicate that social media has amplified diplomatic visibility and broadened participatory channels: Nigerian and Chinese actors use platforms to project national images, mobilize support for initiatives, and sustain people-to-people exchanges. Soft power dynamics surface in cultural programming and educational outreach; constructivist processes explain how online discourse produces evolving identities and norms; and agenda-setting mechanisms reveal how actors prioritize issues to shape public attention. However, these opportunities coexist with significant risks, misinformation, platform asymmetries, uneven digital literacy, censorship, and regulatory uncertainty, which erode trust and complicate coordination. The study argues that realizing digital diplomacy's benefits requires policy frameworks that promote media literacy, incentivize cross-platform engagement, institutionalize transparent communication practices, and support collaborative fact-checking. By centring an African perspective on digital diplomacy, the research contributes empirically grounded insights for diplomats, policymakers, and scholars seeking to harness social media for more informed, resilient, and equitable Nigeria–China engagement.

Keywords: Twitter, Public Diplomacy, Social Media, Nigeria–China Relations

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List of Acronyms

Abbreviation	Meaning
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CCECC	China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation
FASMICRO	First Atlantic Semiconductors and Microelectronics
FOCAC	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
GLOBACOM	Global Communication
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
NDMO	Nigeria's Debt Management Office
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
ZTE	Zhong Xing Telecommunication Equipment Company Ltd