China-Nigeria Cooperation In Education And Training: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract: Over the past four decades, with the increase in globalization of higher education there has been an increase in number of student’s mobility to study abroad. Students have not only found interest in developed countries of Europe and America, but also found interest in developing countries like China India and south Africa. Since china renewed interest to cooperate with Africa through the platform of FOCAC the number of African students travelling to china for studies has relatively increased. This paper analyzes China's education aid to Africa through a case study of Nigeria. Nigeria is among the strategic countries in Africa’s cooperation with China through FOCAC. China’s education aid encompasses higher education and vocational training, Chinese language instruction in developing countries, school construction, and collaboration with multilateral organizations. Since the past decades Chinese university scholarships and vocational training programs as well as Chinese-language instruction have grown sharply. this paper also discussed the Four aspects of China’s education aid to Africa ranging from: (i) Confucius Institutes, which are providing language and culture-related training in host countries; (ii) longer term scholarships and short-term training for Nigerians in China; (iii) school construction and stand-alone education projects. In reviewing how these different types of aid are taking place in Nigeria, it will also be important to examine the modalities for their delivery. This paper focuses particularly on the last 2 decades, and especially the period since the start of the formal Sino-African triennial conferences through the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000.

Keywords: Africa, China, Nigeria, Capacity building, Education

I. Introduction

Sub-Saharan African countries, like other countries around the world are striving to build their human capacity so they can leverage on jobs and investments opportunities in an
increasingly globalized world.\(^1\) China’s aid and other engagements in Africa have been relatively on the rise since the turn of the millennium, following the establishment of forum for China – Africa cooperation. China has always emphasized that it has a different ideology than most Western countries regarding its foreign policy through the win- win cooperation with other countries and avoidance of any traits of ‘interference’ towards another nation. In other words, China’s investment in Africa has never had a political condition as this is because China’s preference for dialogue and partnership over confrontation and alliance has created greater resonance, unlike the West’s way of investment, which for decades has deprived Africa of real economic independence (Omoruyi et al, 2017). China has also promoted the idea of a mutually beneficial partnership with Africa, in which both parties gain from the relationship through the resource for infrastructure development agreement. The “win-win” cooperation between China and Africa – has being under criticism by Western media, academia, and governments. However, it does appeal to African leaders and to many Africans. Apart from economic engagements between Africa, education has become a great component of the Sino-African framework. Education Exchanges between Africa and China dated back from the pre-independence era, which are divided into three phases: the initial phase was marked with the establishment of the diplomatic ties between China and some African countries such as Kenya, Egypt, Uganda, and Cameroon, in 1956. This saw 24 exchange students travel to China. The second stage involved the period of reforms from 1970 to 1980. This also recorded an increase in the number of African students travelling to China for studies. The official document of the Chinese government recorded that 4,570 Africans had studied in China by the end of 1996. More so, within this period China has also made impact within the continent through the donations of educational equipment and laboratories (Omoruyi et al, 2017). The finally phase started with the millennium declaration of FORUM FOR CHINA – AFRICA COOPERATION FOCAC(2000). FOCAC is a triennial process at Heads of State level, bolstered by systematic visits to African countries by the top Chinese leadership (Omoruyi et al, 2017). This framework was designed to strengthen China Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development which included human resources development and education. China then set up a list of measures regarding African personnel training, academic cooperation projects (such as joint laboratories and research institutes) and scholarship opportunities\(^2\) (Kaiyu; 2012). “Beyond this, there was the continuation of the scholarship mechanism for longer-term training, mostly at the degree

\(^1\) This chapter draws heavily from (Omoruyi et al, 2017).
level, and there was also the sending of teachers to Africa to facilitate channels of communication between universities of both sides. Also at the time of this first FOCAC meeting in 2000, there was agreement that the two parties should work out ‘country specific training plans’ (King; 2006: 4)\(^3\) The consequence of this long-term partnership is the designing of a landscape of thousands of African students that can access fully-funded higher education degrees, hence, maximize their technical skills and career prospects – potentially beyond the social strata that usually studies abroad. Each year, hundreds of scholarships are given to African students to study in China in a bid to step up youth exchanges and to lay a foundation for future China-Africa ties. In order to ensure sustainable development to Africa, educational issues are to be given more intention under the FOCAC framework. The FOCAC educational agenda has developed from academic exchanges, government scholarships, higher education cooperation and research projects, dispatch of teachers, and human resources development to cover technical and vocational education and training, distance learning (remote learning), school construction, dispatch of volunteers, teaching Chinese as foreign language, and mutual recognition of academic qualification. In its aim to promote access and quality education, China is trying not to leave any African countries behind therefore the dragon economy takes the continent as a whole in terms of bolstering the continent educational system (omoruyi et al., 2017). For example, China intensification of relations with developing country like Nigeria has been attributed to the need to secure raw material (Davies et. al 2008), however, China has also been trying to promote Nigeria’s education development. Nigeria and China have signed several agreements in the domain of economic and technical cooperation. Most of these agreements define the modalities of Chinese concessional lending to Nigeria, while others consist of cultural, technical and diplomatic affairs. Among these accords we have, some of which are listed in Table 1.

Table1: Selected Agreements China, 2001 to 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of agreement</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agreement on Trade, Investment Promotion and Protection</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement on Consular Affairs.</td>
<td>2002</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agreement on Cooperation on Strengthening Management of narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and diversion of Precursor Chemical</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement on Tourist Cooperation</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement for the avoidance of double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Tax and Income</td>
<td>2002</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Strategic Partnership Agreement. 2005
Economic Cooperation Agreement between Nigeria and Xinguang International Group of China. 2006
A memorandum of Understanding on Investment Cooperation between the Federal Ministry of Commerce of Nigeria and Ministry of Commerce of India 2006

Source (OGUNKOLA et al, 2008)

According to Omoruyi et al, (2017) Chinese education aid is precisely focused on primary school construction, language training, teachers and technicians training, and scholarships, which are recognized as a form of capacity building and development. The first chapter of this paper tends to access China-Africa education exchange and cooperation. The second chapter discusses educational cooperation in Sino-Africa relations; the third chapter will be present the impact of China development assistance in improving the education quality and access in Nigeria. The fourth chapter will be discussing policies and perception of China-Nigerian Cooperation and the fifth chapter will conclude the paper.

2. The millennium Education Cooperation

Educational exchanges between China and African countries have been initiated by China shortly after the end of the colonial era in the 1960s. Programs initially focused on student exchanges and teacher visits but the Cultural Revolution which took root in 1965 eventually brought these early attempts to an end (Nordtveit 2009). Ties were again resumed in the 1980s and an increasing number of African students came to China in order to pursue their studies. It is especially during the last decade that educational cooperation has increased more rapidly following China’s increased economic engagement with Africa countries (omoruyi et al, 2017). At the political level, the first Sino-African Education ministerial meetings took place in Beijing in 2005 which resulted in the “Beijing Declaration” signed by 17 African countries (Sino graduate 2012). The declaration contained a common commitment towards educational development and laid a special focus on primary education, vocational and technical education (Nordtveit 2009). Furthermore, the declaration recognized that “the relevance of education to economic development is more significant in the process of pursuing economic development, eliminating poverty and mutual benefit”, and the intention to pursue multilateral consultations around common issues (FOCAC 2005). During the 2006 FOCAC summit on China-Africa Cooperation, four main areas of cooperation have been

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4 Some of the earliest accounts on this matter includes John Hevi’s autobiographical book ‘An African student in China, in which Hevi provides a detailed and unfavorable account of his and some fellow students experiences in China such as the exposure to political control and racial discrimination.
announced by the Chinese government: (i) setting up rural schools in Africa, (ii) increasing the number of Chinese Government Scholarships, (iii) providing professionals and educationalists of various institutions in Africa, and (iv) the establishment of Confucius Institutes (CI) for Chinese language teaching and the encouragement of teaching African languages in Chinese universities (FOCAC, 2006). Along these lines, the Chinese government announced its commitment to increase training for African specialists and heads of leading educational institutions, to assist African countries to build 100 schools and to increase the number of scholarships (Nordtveit 2006:46). More recently, the UNESCO-China-Africa University Leaders meeting was held in Paris in 2011 and brought 44 presidents from Chinese and African universities together to discuss how to advance university cooperation between these two regions. During the FOCAC meeting in 2012, China announced its three years “African Talents Plan” which sets the 30,000 Africans, to award 18,000 government scholarships (Sino graduate 2012) and to build cultural and vocational training facilities by 2015. This is a great increase compared to the 2009 FOCAC meeting which foresaw 5,500 government scholarship and promised to train 20,000 Africans (Hanauer, Morris 2014: 77).

For the sake of providing a better understanding of China’s major education programs in Africa, the remaining part of this section sets to give a greater account of the four main pillars of China’s educational cooperation. This is by no means a comprehensive list but it provides an overview of the main features and modalities of China’s educational cooperation:

**Capacity building and skill transfer**

President Xi Jinping while speaking during the sixth FOCAC forum held this year (2018) in Beijing, pledges to enhance development experiences by offering occupational training courses for African youths and training young talent in agricultural science, increasing the Chinese government scholarships from 30,000 in 2015 to 50,000 in 2018 for Africa and invite 2,000 young people from Africa to visit China. This follows as a result of the impact china has made in the area of infrastructure and human resource trainings since the third and fourth declarations and the unquenchable demand for improved development by the African peoples. This has also placed china as the global actor that understands and is willing to assist the African development projects. Capacity building among local technicians along with supervisory expertise and skills, will be integral for the long-term sustainability of large infrastructure projects and innovative training in area of education in the continent. The third and fourth FOCAC meetings foresaw a massive investment in professional training. The third
FOCAC meeting 2006 promised to train 15,000 African professionals within their respective countries as well as in China (long-term and short-term courses) including teachers of all levels of education and four education research centers were set up in China to providing training to Africa’s formal education system. The 2009 FOCAC meeting again foresaw an increase in human resources development, especially through the support of aiming to reach up to 30,000 African professionals from various sectors in 2015 (FOCAC 2006, 2009, King 2007b). One example is the training sessions of the International Poverty Reduction Center in China (IPRCC –founded by the government in cooperation with UNDP) which focus on China’s poverty reduction experiences for civil servants of developing countries. A report on a 2006 workshop on Poverty, Policy, and Practice for African countries details the following outcomes: “The participants were given detailed information on Chinese economic and social development as well as compulsory education in rural China. Second, the field trip was a chance for the participants to witness and to learn from Chinese experiences and policies. Third, friendship was growing” (cited from Nordtveit 2009:162). Amongst participants, there is a keen interest in China’s development experience as reflected in the following reaction of a Ghanaian participant who was “astonished” by Guangxi’s village-based development model and stated that she would “coordinate the Ghanaian government agencies into the study of the experience and hard work of the Chinese people” (Nordtveit 2009:162). On account of training African diplomats in China, scholarships are offered to Africans to come to China and learn how to build infrastructure themselves or how to work in their various capacity of different disciplines depicting a sympathetic view of China towards Africa on the road for development. Scholarship for African Students in China Representing the earliest form of China-Africa educational cooperation, scholarships are on the FOCAC-Agenda since its initiation in 2000 and over the last decade, there has been a significant increase from 2000 African scholarship recipients in 2003 and 6000 in 2012 (Obamba 2013:7). The fourth FOCAC meeting also foresaw the provision of 200 scholarship for a Master in Public Administration in China for 200 middle to high-level professionals (King 2014:4). The Government Scholarship program is amongst the most straightforward in indicating an overall objective which is “to strengthen mutual understanding and friendship between China and other countries” (Changsha 2014). But Ding and Chapman also spell out that the scholarship program provides mechanisms for training future leaders from other countries who might assume a powerful position in their respective countries. This would have a great influence on the future relationship between China and its beneficiaries (Dong, Chapman
2008:162). What still remains unclear, is how scholarship and training opportunities are distributed across different countries (Obamba 2013:7).

Confucius Institutes and Chinese Language Learning: Following the establishment of the first Confucius Institute in Kenya in 2005, there has been a precipitous spread towards other countries on the continent. Nine years later, 37 Institutes in 27 African countries have been established. Currently there are 54 Confucius institutes in Africa altogether. Although this number only represents a small proportion of the world’s 300 Confucius Institutes, they significantly outweigh institutes of cultural representation of other countries such as Alliance Françoise (which is represented in 16 African countries) and the German Goethe Institute (which is present in 17 countries) Scarlett 2010:3; Confucius Institute 2013). Confucius Institutes are generally demand-driven partnerships between a Chinese and a host country university. Their main function is the promotion of Mandarin and Chinese culture and to work towards a better image of China to the outside world. The Confucius Institutes offer short and long-term programs in Chinese, international Chinese language examinations, and Chinese culture courses and they also offer a lot of extracurricular activities such as film screenings, art exhibitions or sports and they occasionally consult firms and individuals interested in China. In the words of Kragelund(2014), these activities aimed to make Chinese a global language and to encourage trade and investment between the Chinese and the host economy. Finally, there are also many scholarship opportunities for the participant in language training within China (for example, the Confucius Confucius Institute of the University of Nairobi alone issued 40 scholarships in 2009/2010 (King 2010a: 81-82). While the Confucius institute in nnamdi Azikiwe University Nigeria issued 54 scholarships in 2016, 64 in 2017, and 47 in 2018 respectively(http://www.absradiotv.com). The decline in 2018 is said to be in line with the Hanban (Confucius institute board)requirements. The last but not the least is the School Construction, the FOCAC Action Plan 2005 also foresaw that construction of hundred schools in rural areas, while the following 2009 FOCAC meeting provided for the construction of an extra 50 China-Africa friendship schools. While the numbers have increased over the years, however, an academic assessment of this endeavor is entirely absent and little can be said about the effects and perceptions of this program. The reason for this lack of interest might be the fact that this is a rather small number – coming to about 26 schools per year in the time period of 2007-2012. For example, this can hardly be compared with the 2600 primary and secondary schools Japan constructed in 22 countries between 1985 and 2008 (King 2013:30). The different engagement of the two donors might be due to the fact that Japan, as well as other Western donors, are heavily engaged in
supporting basic and secondary education especially under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the ‘Education for All’ Goals while China has largely remained absent from this discourse (King 2014:8).

3. Nigeria’s Educational Cooperation with China

The Millennium Development Goals, a set of development goals for the year 2015, was adopted by the United Nation in 2000. With more attention to education, “to ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.” According to UNESCO (2008), by the year 2000 only 57% of African children were enrolled in primary schools, the lowest enrollment rate of any region surveyed. In Africa, there are seven countries in which 40 percent or more of children do not meet a minimum standard of learning by grades 4 or 5. In countries such as Zambia, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and others, above half of in-school students have not learned basic skills when they complete primary school (Omoruyi et al., 2017). Under the current model, half of sub-Saharan Africa’s total primary school population – 61 million children – will reach adolescence without the necessary skill to perform basic numeracy task, to read or write. (Africa Learning Barometer; 2012). More so, absence of support to students who are poor and less privileged could terminate their educational career or reduce the quality of their learning, especially if they are not able to meet the demands and cost associated with learning (Njeuma D.L., et al (1999), Magdalin, 2015). In Nigeria, there have been significant contributions toward the education sector from the west and several multilateral agencies with focuses on basic education. However, in the last two decades; China has been one of the most important donors since it has increased its foreign development assistance to developing countries including Nigeria. The motive for such aid ranges from different developmental, economic, commercial and political perspectives, which seeks for mutual benefit for both China and Nigeria. The People’s Republic of China and federal republic of Nigeria established formal diplomatic relation on February 10, 1971. The bilateral relation between Nigeria and China has expanded trade and strategic economic cooperation between the two countries. China is considered as one of Nigeria’s closest allies and partners. According to Odinye, (2015) 2014 BBC world service poll, shows that 85% of Nigerians view China’s influence positively, with

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5 Millennium Development Goals Goal 2 Fact Sheet
only 10% expressing a negative view. China - Nigeria relations has been characterized by viable economic and social cooperation, in 2010, Nigeria was among the China’s five top trading partners in Africa with a total investment of U.S.$7.8 billion (China Customs Data Frontier Advisory Analysis, 2011). Over the last decade, China has become a major economic partner of Nigeria. Nigeria is China number one engineering market, number two export market, number three trading partner and major investment destination in Africa. Trade between China and Nigeria has increased from US$2 billion in 2005 to $6.5 billion in the first five months of 2017, an increase of 33 percent, over the same period in 2016. This represented 7.6 percent of the total trade volume between China and Africa and 36.4 percent of total trade volume between China and ECOWAS. China investment in Nigeria grew by 27 percent in 2016. China’s total investment in Nigeria has climbed to $15b. A recent rebased Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ranked the country as the largest economy in Africa (Augie, 2014; Mohammed, 2014; National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2014). The new data estimated the Nigerian economy at N80.3 trillion ($510 billion) for 2013 (NBS, 2014). A NBS report released on April 7, 2014, revealed diverse economic activities ranging from agriculture with about N17.26 trillion, trade N13.35 trillion, crude petroleum and natural gas N11.55 trillion, telecoms N6.97 trillion, real estate N6.43 trillion, manufacturing N5.47 trillion, food, beverages, and tobacco N3.70 trillion, finance and insurance N2.64 trillion, and motion picture, sound recording, and music production N1.13 trillion (Usman, 2015). The nine sectors listed above contribute 85.4% of the total GDP. Apart from being an unprecedented opportunity for both cultural and economic diplomacy in Africa, favorable reports attract China’s interest in the Nigerian economy (Usman, 2015). As stated by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi during his visit to Abuja in January 2017: “Compared with the size, population and market of China and Nigeria, the two countries cooperation still have a large potential to be deepened”. Various technical assistance in the area of infrastructure, military, technology, education and health, have been received by Nigeria. For example an aid of 46 million Yuan to Nigeria for the purpose of purchases of anti-malaria medicines and for training of Nigerian health personnel on malaria control and prevention was granted by China (OGUNKOLA et al, 2008). In area of educational which is our main focus in this paper, some educational institutions in Nigeria have established linkages with China with a view to showcasing the Chinese culture, landscape and innovations. There are four kinds of projects categorizing china - Nigeria educational cooperation: Chinese language training, school constructions, Higher education research cooperation, and human resource and capacity.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201808/01/WS5b614f32a31031a351e9175d.html
building. This section tends to analyze the four categories as well as its impact on Nigeria economic growth and social development.

Chinese Language training

The ramifications of the China and Nigeria economic partnership involves intercultural education, with emphasis on language and culture, and the establishment of Confucius Institutes and Centers across Nigeria (OGUNKOLA et al., 2008). The primary objective of Confucius Institute in Nigeria is to facilitate Chinese language promotion and Chinese cultural transmission in Nigeria and to produce qualified Chinese language teachers and excellent Chinese language students. Within the educational centers, students are taught about modern Chinese society, given detailed lessons on the Chinese language, Chinese expressions, Chinese texts, and conversational and listening skills (Confucius Institute of Kenyatta University, n.d.). The Confucius institute is overseen by the office of Chinese language council international (HANBAN) which was established in 2004, and was introduced in Nigeria 4 years later. In 2008, Under the supervision of hanban, the first Confucius institute was established at nnamdi azikiwe university awka with affiliation to Xiamen university in china. While the second institute was established in 2009 at Lagos state university. Following the demand and the deepen cooperation between Nigeria and china, the Chinese embassy in 2016, opened a Chinese learning center in Abuja as a sister institute of nnamdi azikiwe with affiliation to Xiamen university in china , also there are chinese language centers opened in Kano and calabar respectively. Since its establishment, the Confucius Institutes in nigeria have opened many Chinese language centers including higher institutions, enterprises, organizations, ministries, primary and secondary schools. The agreement between hanban and nnamdi azikiwe university in establishing Confucius institute was signed in march 2008 and inaugurated in February 2009. Its board of directors jointly composed of NAU and Xiamen university. Confucius institute in Nnamdi azikiwe university (UNIZIK) has a total of fourteen (14) staff of which six (6) are local while eight(8)lecturers are assigned by hanban and Xiamen university. About 2500 students at different levels have been trained in the institute since its inception which has in its over 6 years of existence recorded great success. To meet the demand of the institute services from the general public, Nnamdi azikiwe university has created three Chinese language centers: From the first attachment at federal polytechnic oko, to the second at college of education Enugu and now the new center in Ebonyi state college of education. Chinese language learning was also extended to the university primary and secondary school. In 2013, the national university commission approved the establishment of the fulltime bachelor of arts (BA) program with
The vice chancellor prof J.E Ahaneku in an effort to consolidate the increasing relationship between Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka and selected universities in China, received an invitation to visit four Chinese universities namely, Heibei Normal University, Communication University of China, Sichuan Normal University, and Xiamen University for more proactive measures centered on giving more scholarship slots and allowing students studying for bachelor of arts degrees in Chinese language to visit and stay in China for one year as required before returning to complete their degree in Nigeria. UNIZIK Confucius Institute also offers training at three additional levels. Diploma, Executive class and Proficiency writing and oral. With increased Chinese presence in Nigeria, there are a lot of Chinese learners working with Chinese companies in Nigeria as translators, and also students who have developed their own business with Chinese because of the advantage of mastering the Chinese language.

However, in order to equip language learners, promote higher education research cooperation, and human resource and capacity building for Nigerian students, Chinese Government have provided scholarships to Nigerian students. These scholarships are targeted at helping the students with quality training to enable them master necessary skills for the job market.

**Scholarship**

Nigeria and most African countries have long been reliant on overseas assistance, which somehow has often failed to resolve many internal issues. In order to promote Africa’s independent educational development by strengthening its capacity to create its own cultural and human resources, China is offering scholarships to Africa in many areas: sciences, engineering or technology fields, reflecting the demands from the African countries to build up necessary skills (Omoruyi et al, 2017). In addition, other scholarships continue to be in humanities, social studies and Chinese language. Since 2006 FOCAC, the number of scholarships for Africa including Nigeria has grown rapidly. The annual increase in scholarships has averaged 835 and in 2011, a total of 6316 scholarships were given to students from African countries (Sajitha, 2015). China and Nigeria signed an agreement on cultural cooperation and a protocol on cooperation between institutions of higher learning of two countries. China began to provide scholarship for Nigerian students to study in China in 1993. From 2002 to 2003, there were 24 Nigerian students studying in China. The scholarship cooperation with China became prominent since the establishment of Confucius Institute. Since this new decade, and more precisely from the year 2009, the offer increased
considerably, placing China as the first scholarship donor ahead of the traditional donors. The scholarship categories range from Chinese government scholarships and Confucius scholarships. The Chinese government scholarship includes the bilateral scholarship through the management of the Ministry of higher education and the Embassy of China. According to Mr. Yan Xiang Dong, the director, China Cultural Center Abuja, each year, the Chinese government awards 40 scholarships to Nigerian students to study in China. This includes undergraduate studies, as well as in Master and Doctorate. These scholarships cover areas such as Mining, Industrial Fishery, Medicine, Accountancy, Commerce and Distribution, Renewable Energy, Environmental Sciences, Network and Telecommunications, Management of Agricultural Co-operatives, Computer Science, Communication and Information, Electricity, International Relations, International Business Law, and Chinese Language. Currently about 237 Nigerian students are said to be studying in China under government scholarship.

On the other hand, we have the Confucius Institute scholarship, offering especially Chinese language training scholarships. This aims to help learners acquire a deep understanding of China and the Chinese culture. It provides one month, six months and one-year language training for students who are holders of the HSK (Chinese Proficiency Test) level 1, 2 and 3; and scholarship for bachelor’s and Master’s degree in teaching Chinese as a Second language for holders of the HSK level 4 and 5 respectively. Since the approval of bachelor of art in Chinese language by the National University Commission in 2013, The priority of Confucius Institute scholarship mostly goes towards teachers’ training for students majoring in the Chinese language, who after graduation at the Confucius institute Nnamdi Azikiwe University are greatly encouraged by the institute to continue the Master program in China through the scholarship. This has also increased the number of the Confucius Institute scholarship each year. For instance, last year 64 students were awarded scholarship by Nnamdi Azikiwe Confucius Institute.

Sequel to the above scholarships, the Chinese government also provides short-term training for Nigerian students. For instance, Huawei training center in Abuja and Lagos have trained 20,000 telecom engineers thereby contributing to the development of telecom talents in Nigeria. In 2012, Huawei donated ICT scholarship to the University of Lagos, donated 80m naira in 2014, to Africa University of Science and Technology for the construction of an ICT lab and scholarship. Huawei and Nigeria’s Federal Ministry of Communication and Technology organized an ICT based one-year knowledge training program for 1,000 females’ engineers in 2015 and in 2016 ten (10) candidates were selected from various MDA’s for
training in China. Furthermore, China and Nigeria have agreed to strengthen military and civil service exchange as part of a larger capacity building engagement. Owing to this, China offered to raise scholarship awards to Nigerian students from about 100 to 700 annually and as well, give 1,000 other Nigerians vocational and technical training annually.

Primary school constructions

China’s education assistance to Nigeria includes primary school constructions. Under the FOCAC (Forum on China–Africa Cooperation) framework of the year 2006, China promised to build 150 primary rural schools in Africa between 2006 and 2012. China’s 2011 White Paper reported construction of 100 elementary schools between 2007-2009 (Reilly, 2015). Furthermore, Premier Wen Jiabao in 2010, announced that China would build 200 elementary schools in developing countries from 2010-2015 (Reilly, 2015). MOFCOM’s website (2014a) also mentioned 34 schools built from 2009 to 2011 (32 elementary schools). However, Sino-Nigeria cooperation in basic school’s construction usually involves the Chinese embassy and the state commission for education where the schools are provided. Usually these schools are donated to schools who are already learning Chinese language. The federal ministry of education is yet to recognize Chinese language as a second language to be taught in basics school, nevertheless some states like Ogun, Lagos, Calabar, Kano states. In 2012 a primary school built by the Chinese government was donated to FCT administration. Similar schools have been built and donated to Ogun, Kastina, and Kaduna (Daily Trust, 2012). In 2016, Chinese embassy together with Chinese companies in Nigeria donated well equipped 5–classroom block in Ogun state school. Also this similar project had taken place in Lagos state at Isolo SOS international children’s village in 2013, Itedo primary school in Eti Osa in 2014, Satelite junior secondary school in 2015 and Iwora Ajido school Badagry, in 2017. Furthermore, in 2018, two newly constructed classrooms were handed over to the Nigerian government by China in Abuja with the aim of boosting the standard of education in the Nigeria. Contrary to the Japan, the largest bilateral donor in primary school construction in Africa who generally makes use of a local subcontractor doing construction, the Chinese are using technicians from China; materials are brought from China or purchased in Nigeria. However, due to the complexity of the Nigerian education system, these constructions are controlled by Nigeria experts so that the Chinese engineers can follow the norms adapted to the reality of the country. China, through the donation of free school buildings, capacity building through scholarship, teaching and trainings have contributed significantly towards education improvement and economic development in Nigeria. In addition to education, China’s has also realized a lot of projects in
other areas like; health, culture, information and communication technology etc. However, according to omoruyi et al, (2017) some scholars such as Davies et. al (2008), view the above scope and nature of China’s educational aid to Nigeria as attributes by China to cost its African counterparts so as to attain their aggressive economic offensive need for the search of raw materials to feed the demands of the Chinese industries as well as markets for their products. Others like George Ayittey (The Economist debate on Africa, 2010) thinks that, despite the policy based upon equality, reciprocal benefits and win – win cooperation, the relation is still guided by China’s interest rather than the need of the recipient. Highlighted by utilization of Chinese labor and input in every project they carry out in the recipient countries at the time we talk of technology transfer. Therefore a question on whether China’s assistance enhances the self-reliance capability of Nigerian is important to determine whether china is really teaching Nigerians and of African countries in general how to fish or giving them fish.

4. Policies and Perception of Sino-Nigerian Cooperation

The Chinese aid to Nigeria is gradually on increase and the cooperation is still being organized to a large extent by the involvement of the Chinese Embassy, not by professional development and aid workers. The cooperation largely based on FOCAC ideology of win-win mutual benefit strives to provide demand–driven, practical and useful assistance to Nigeria. This section deals with the policies of Chinese involvement in Nigeria – and the perception of their cooperation among Nigerians.

Chinese aid and cooperation policies

China’s aid and cooperation policies are strategies that are largely based on the FOCAC process. FOCAC is a triennial high level meeting between leaders of china and African countries, hence, the Sino-African aid and cooperation strategy is based on 3-year programs. Most of the aid and cooperation projects are decided as an exchange between two countries during FOCAC or during some other high-level meeting. As stated by Chinese embassy in Abuja: We are trying to make a strategic plan, a long-term plan. Every third year, the inter-ministerial forum [FOCAC] evaluates the actions and makes plans for new actions. For example, we decided to construct schools. In the years to come, we will evaluate whether we should continue to give support in the same sector. These decisions are taken during the meetings of the forum. The principles of the cooperation are said to be related to African needs, and secondly, to help in domains that the Chinese are capable of help them in; hence the focus on practical aid projects, rather than the use of conditionality and a meta narrative.
on, for example, structural adjustment or economic policies, human rights, the environment, or other themes that are often being promoted by the Western donors (omoruyi et al, 2017). According to Zheng , (2016), China also justifies its overseas economic activities with development objectives that it helps developing countries to promote sustainable economic development and poverty reduction, but such development objectives have often been subordinated to strategic, diplomatic, or commercial considerations. There are 3 major perspectives of China’s development cooperation strategy. The first perspective is the Beijing’s desire to secure strategic resources—those most fundamental to national security—and secondarily for diplomatic reasons. The second perspective is the Chinese aid policy which has always maintained its distance from the established aid model under the guidance of the OECD Development assistance Committee (DAC) and will not necessarily challenge the existing international aid regime. The third perspective argues that China does not have a coherent aid strategy that is carefully designed and implemented. The Chinese aid policy is often contested by diplomatic and commercial agendas. The diplomatic agenda regards aid as an instrument for Exercising diplomatic influence on the international stage and deepening cooperation with selected countries whereas the commercial agenda views aid as a useful way of assisting domestic businesses to ‘go international’ and expand exports and investments(Lum et al. 2009, Brautigam 2009, Varrall 2015). nevertheless, it’s important to note that China has only recently emerged as a donor, and the Chinese institutions have not yet had time to adjust to the dramatic increase in aid and cooperation that took place after the first (2000) FOCAC. According to omoruyi et al.,(2017) Chinese Embassy Personnel in Yaounde stated ‘Chinese statistic services are not very good, and are yet not established a very good data system. Chinese aid and cooperation with Africa have been hindered by a lack of transparency, and a lot of the documentation on prior projects has been lost. The new strategy of aid to foreign countries is important for us, and we are currently reviewing old projects and practices, to learn for the future. Moreso, The Chinese aid and cooperation administration in policy of non-interference and in its principles of non-conditionality, may have even less control than other donors over the Nigeria ’ use of funding and the selection of personnel to be trained or for scholarship awards. The scholarships and trainings are often in line with the FOCAC agenda and will involve staff in many Chinese and African ministries (Ministries of Commerce, Foreign Affairs, Culture, Education, Science & Technology, 

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8 Although it should be noted that the recent FOCAC (2009b, p. 3) “underline[s] in particular African countries’ urgent need for stronger capacity to adapt to climate change and support their legitimate right in combating climate change.” It also discusses the effect of the worldwide economic slowdown that started in the fall of 2008, and supports African efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals.
Agriculture, and Medicine), host universities in China, as well as both the political and economic & commercial branches of all of China’s African embassies. Then they will follow-up on the selection and process the names and visa applications for the chosen participants. Some of this training, especially short-term training, clearly has a diplomatic goal rather than providing capacity building. These selections of short-term trainees are usually biased: the Ministry sends their family and friends to the training instead of the selecting qualified people for the program. For instance; the Chinese civil engineering construction company in Nigeria offered 48 scholarship slots for training of Nigerian students, but was hijacked by the ministers for their family and friends. And when the minister for works was contacted, he told the press that the scholarship was not for all Nigerians. However, it should be noted that this is not a situation that is specific to the Chinese aid and cooperation. It is a Nigerian problem, linked to the lack of transparency in the administration of scholarships. As noted by an Embassy interviewer, “I have talked to the US Embassy about this problem, and the US Embassy has exactly the same stories and the same problem.” Nevertheless, this situation takes us back to the novelty of the strong Chinese involvement in Africa, and the Sino-African aid and cooperation, which has been characterized with rapid expansion and maybe a more organized and systematic approach.

Nigerians perception of Chinese Assistance

Like most Africans, Nigerians have expressed different opinions and reactions towards sino-nigerian cooperation. A limited number of Nigerians found the aid to be exploitative and aligned to other donors’ excessive approaches. With what they tag unfair negotiating technics and often embassy involvement in institution-to-institution negotiations. They express the view that Some of the Chinese investments and activities in the country are directed at addressing critical gap in the provision of basic infrastructure, but not comparable to the level at which Chinese are seeking Nigeria’s oil and gas and other raw materials. However Nigerian politicians seems to prefer china’s aid as it does not interfere or impose any conditionality like, asking for transparency, human right democracy, and things of such manners, while On the other hand china has been accused by the west for fueling corruption through their no conditional cooperation. Many Nigerians welcome the aid and cooperation from the Chinese because it does not have a colonial tie or hindrance, hence sees china’s development as a model for development. Many Nigerians also expresses concern on Chinese loan which they see as debt trap. After this year’s FOCAC meeting in Beijing, the Chinese government proposed another $60 billion loan for African countries (FOCAC, 2018). Many Africans and Nigerians as well have express fears of Chinese debt trap loan owing to
corruption among the leaders and lack of negotiating capacity against their Chinese counterpart. They also expressed fear that Chinese loans come with ulterior motive which the leaders are blind to see due to their quest for development. For instance, the recent propaganda about Chinese take over of Zambian national broadcasting cooperation for fear that Zambia might not be able to pay over $270 million they loaned to Zambia for the purpose of digital migration. (zambianobserver.com). There are also rumors of China taking over the major Zambian assets like the national power generating company and the Zambian international airport management due to Zambian debts. China’s aid toward provision of infrastructures are said to be tied aid, whereas the money comes from China to Chinese company and Chinese company employs 70% of Chinese workers over 30% of local workers. While the money does not get to the host country, the host pays back with its resource and sometimes the Chinese tends to insist on managing the said infrastructure for a stipulated period of time. According to Brautigam (2008) the tied aid may reduce opportunities for domestic producers. In other words there might be lack of effective skill transfer and utilization of labor. In there area of business most Nigerian traders who import goods from China have expressed satisfaction on the price of commodities from China compare to the traditional donors, conversely the producers in Nigeria has cried out for over competition in market for Chinese product against the domestic products. However the government have been more reluctant in tackling this problem, in other to survive this competition the producers adopted a different strategy by becoming more innovative and creative. According to Nwosu, (2011) a majority of the producers went as far as labeling their products which is produced in Nigeria, ‘Made in China’. The decisions made by the local producers though, did not stop the traders from more importation. Some Nigerians also have expressed satisfaction concerning the Chinese scholarship which has become an avenue for lucky Nigerians to travel abroad for quality education at low cost. This has also encourage the spread of Chinese language in the country. Finally, Nigerians seem to prefer the Chinese over the traditional donors due to development impact that has been witnessed since their bilateral cooperation.

5. Conclusion

The China-Nigeria educational cooperation is one of the various development engagement China has with Africa. Since the inception of FOCAC in 2000, there have been transitions from political engagement to more economic cooperation between China and African countries. The rise of China in world economy and its benefits is not only reckoned by the Nigerian government, but African nations, and the world at large (Alao, 2010; Osakwe, 2012;
Different opinions and sentiments have characterized China-Nigeria cooperation as well as Africa at large raising questions, such as “Is China a friend or a foe to Africa?”, some scholars like (Luo & Zhang, 2014) are in support of the partnership while some others view China-Africa partnership as China the “foe”, and referring the partnership as “Chinese colonization of Africa” (Beuret & Michael, 2008; Odigboh, 2012; Oguntola, 2011). Their reason maybe that they found some political-economic behaviors of the Chinese on Africans and their systems, to be similar to previous colonialist of the continent. Like the case noted above on the use of Chinese expatriates over the local worker. The educational cooperation between China and Nigeria has brought in more technological impact to Nigeria which increased the economic integration and national development. It improved the economic capacity of African countries and effectively helped the local people to get a job. The cooperation with African countries is no longer a simple economic cooperation (Omoruyi et al., 2017). The turn up by many African leaders to this year’s summit in Beijing shows that Africa welcomes Beijing’s engagement as an alternative approach to what they perceive as half-hearted approaches by the United States and Europe. With the initiative of one belt one road, this becomes the great opportunities for the African continent, as there will be more education cooperation between China and Africa with a shared prosperity.

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