

FOREIGN TRADE AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS IN THE TIME OF SOLOMON: LESSONS FOR NIGERIA'S GLOBAL TRADE STRATEGY

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Abstract

This study explores the foreign trade and economic relations during the reign of King Solomon, drawing out practical insights for improving Nigeria's global trade strategy. In the Old Testament, particularly 1 Kings 10 and 2 Chronicles 9, Solomon's administration engaged in extensive international trade with nations such as Tyre, Egypt, and Sheba. These partnerships were characterized by mutual benefit, resource exchange, and infrastructural development. The problem identified in this study is Nigeria's over dependence on crude oil exports, poor trade diversification, and weak bilateral agreements, which have hindered sustainable economic growth. The study adopts a qualitative, historical-comparative method, using scriptural analysis alongside current economic reports and scholarly interpretations. The theoretical framework is grounded in Political Economy Theory, which emphasizes the role of governance and policy in economic outcomes. Findings revealed that Solomon's trade success was rooted in strategic alliances, resource diversification (e.g., gold, spices, horses, timber), and a well-organized port system (e.g., Ezion-Geber). In contrast, Nigeria's trade policy seems to lack long-term vision, infrastructure, and transparency. The study concludes that lessons from Solomon's era can guide Nigeria towards a more diversified, transparent, and strategic global trade system. The study recommends strengthening trade institutions, fostering mutually beneficial regional and international partnerships, and diversifying export commodities.

Keywords: Solomon, Foreign Trade, Nigeria, Global Strategy, Economic Development.

Introduction

Foreign trade has always played a pivotal role in national development, especially in periods of growth, political stability, and economic transformation. The biblical era of King Solomon (10th century BCE) offers one of the earliest recorded examples of strategic international economic relations. Solomon's reign was marked by prosperity and international influence, largely driven by his sophisticated network of trade routes, commercial partnerships, and resource management. Historically, it played a crucial role in shaping the wealth,

influence, and stability of nations. In the biblical era, King Solomon's reign (circa 970–931 BCE) represented a golden age of economic expansion, underpinned by strategic trade relations, resource management, and infrastructural development (Kitchen, 2003; Finkelstein & Silberman, 2006). The account in 1 Kings chapter 10 details how Solomon established foreign partnerships with nations such as Tyre, Egypt, and Sheba to facilitate a robust exchange of commodities including gold, timber, spices, and precious stones. Solomon's visionary leadership, trade diplomacy, and infrastructure investments

such as the development of the Ezion-Geber port transformed Israel into a commercial hub of the ancient Near East (Bright, 2000; Merrill, 1994). In contrast, Nigeria Africa's largest economy by population and GDP has grappled with inconsistent trade policies, over-reliance on oil exports, weak infrastructure, and corruption. (Kitchen, 2003). These problems appear to limit Nigeria's capacity to fully harness the benefits of international trade.

In contrast, Nigeria, a modern nation rich in human and natural resources has faced significant obstacles in harnessing its full trade potential. Despite being Africa's largest oil producer, Nigeria's economy remains overly dependent on crude oil exports, making it vulnerable to global commodity shocks (CBN, 2023; World Bank, 2023). Structural issues such as poor infrastructure, inconsistent trade policies, corruption, and a limited manufacturing base have stunted the country's global trade competitiveness (Igwemeka et al., 2023; Adegboyo et al., 2021). The relevance of ancient trade models (particularly that of Solomon) lies in their strategic alignment between diplomacy, infrastructure, and resource management. By examining Solomon's approach, this paper seeks to offer lessons which Nigeria can integrate into its contemporary trade strategy. Such insights are timely, especially with the advent of regional trade agreements like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which require member states to adopt forward-looking, integrated trade policies (AfDB, 2022; UNCTAD, 2022)

Methodology

This study utilizes a qualitative, comparative-historical research methodology. Primary data were derived from biblical texts (mainly 1 Kings 10 and 2 Chronicles 9) while secondary sources included academic books, journal articles, and economic reports from institutions like

the World Bank, IMF, and Nigerian Bureau of Statistics. Using comparative analysis, Solomon's trade model was evaluated alongside Nigeria's contemporary trade strategy to identify strengths, gaps, and applicable lessons.

Theoretical Framework

This research is grounded in Political Economy Theory by Karl Marx which offers a valuable framework for examining the influence of political decision-making on economic performance. The theory argues that trade outcomes are determined not only by market forces but also by governance arrangements, institutional effectiveness, and political commitment. The Solomon model illustrates a centralized system of governance in which trade policy formed an integral component of a broader national development strategy. By contrast, Nigeria's decentralized governance structure often exposes trade policy to bureaucratic inefficiencies and political interference, potentially undermining its effectiveness.

Conceptual Clarification

This section provides a conceptual foundation for the study by defining and explaining key terms that underpin the analysis of King Solomon's foreign trade and economic relations in relation to Nigeria's contemporary global trade strategy. Conceptual clarification is necessary to ensure analytical precision and to establish a shared understanding of the core ideas guiding the discussion. By outlining the meanings and contexts of foreign trade, economic relations, global trade strategy, the Solomonic economic system, and political economy, this section situates both the historical and modern perspectives within a coherent analytical framework, thereby enhancing the validity and clarity of the comparative assessment.

To effectively analyze the relevance of King Solomon's foreign trade and

economic relations to Nigeria's contemporary global trade strategy, it is essential to clarify key concepts central to this discourse: foreign trade, economic relations, global trade strategy, Solomonic economic system, and political economy.

Foreign trade refers to the cross-border exchange of goods and services between nations. It includes imports and exports, and it is driven by the principle of comparative advantage (Ricardo, 1817). Foreign trade plays a vital role in enhancing a country's access to resources, expanding markets, and stimulating innovation (Todaro & Smith, 2015). In Solomon's time, foreign trade was characterized by the exchange of luxury goods such as gold, spices, cedarwood, horses, and precious stones (1 Kings 10:10–29), facilitated through land and sea-based routes connecting Israel to nations like Egypt, Tyre, and Sheba (Finkelstein & Silberman, 2006).

Economic relations extend beyond trade to encompass investment flows, diplomatic partnerships, and joint ventures. Solomon's economic relations were often sealed with treaties and marriage alliances (e.g., with Pharaoh's daughter), ensuring political stability and sustained trade routes (Bright, 2000). These relationships were not merely transactional but strategically designed to boost economic leverage and security (Merrill, 1994). Global trade strategy refers to a nation's comprehensive approach to engaging in international commerce. It includes trade policy formulation, export promotion, infrastructure development, institutional reforms, and participation in trade agreements (Oduyemi et al., 2023). Nigeria's current trade strategy has faced significant setbacks due to over-reliance on crude oil, inconsistent policies, and infrastructural deficiencies (CBN, 2023; World Bank, 2023). The Solomonic economic system was a centralized, theocratic monarchy where trade and resource allocation were directed from the

royal court. Solomon's administration invested in infrastructure such as ports (e.g., Ezion-Geber) and used his geopolitical influence to secure strategic trade routes (Kitchen, 2003). His model was efficient, coordinated, and aligned with national interests. Political economy, the theoretical lens guiding this study, emphasizes the influence of political structures and governance on economic outcomes. In Solomon's case, strong leadership and a unified political structure enabled coherent economic planning and successful trade relations. In contrast, Nigeria's federal system often leads to policy fragmentation and inconsistent implementation (Igwemeka et al., 2023).

Understanding these concepts allows for a deeper appreciation of how ancient trade models, particularly that of Solomon, can inform modern-day practices in emerging economies like Nigeria. The intersection of history, theology, and economic policy presents a unique framework for rethinking Nigeria's global trade posture.

Literature Review

The literature on foreign trade and international economic relations has evolved significantly, with scholars emphasizing trade as a critical driver of national development. This review evaluates both historical and contemporary perspectives on trade, focusing on King Solomon's ancient model and drawing insights applicable to Nigeria's current trade strategy.

1. Biblical and Historical Foundations of Trade in the Time of Solomon

The Old Testament offers valuable documentation of Solomon's reign as a period of unprecedented wealth, political stability, and international commercial influence. According to 1 Kings 10 and 2 Chronicles 9, Solomon engaged in complex trade relations with regional powers such as Tyre, Egypt, and Sheba. Scholars such as

Bright (2000) and Merrill (1994) note that Solomon's alliances—often sealed with royal marriages—allowed him to access foreign goods like timber, spices, horses, and gold, while ensuring secure trade routes and diplomatic protection. Kitchen (2003) affirms the historical reliability of Solomon's economic undertakings, highlighting his development of Ezion-Geber, a Red Sea port that facilitated maritime trade with Arabia, India, and East Africa. Similarly, Finkelstein and Silberman (2006) argue that Solomon's economic network exemplified an early form of globalization, linking Israel to transcontinental markets. Hitt (2011) supports this view, stating that Solomon's wealth was a result of well-structured trade supported by diplomatic and infrastructural foresight. These biblical accounts underscore the centrality of foreign alliances, infrastructure, and resource diversification in Solomon's economic strategy—principles echoed in modern trade theory.

2. Trade Theories and Their Modern Application

Modern trade theory has consistently emphasized the importance of comparative advantage (Ricardo, 1817), factor endowments (Heckscher & Ohlin, 1933), and institutional efficiency (North, 1990) in driving trade performance. Scholars such as Krugman and Obstfeld (2009) highlight that nations benefit from trade when they focus on producing what they do best, while acquiring other goods through exchange. Solomon's ancient economy can be interpreted through this lens—leveraging Israel's access to valuable local resources (e.g., copper and timber) and exchanging them for goods not readily available domestically. In Nigeria's context, several scholars highlight the misalignment between trade theory and practice. Oduyemi et al. (2023) point to exchange rate volatility as a major constraint to Nigeria's trade performance.

Likewise, Adegboyo et al. (2021) and Igwemeka et al. (2023) stress the need for stable, coherent trade policies that support non-oil sectors. The contrast with Solomon's well-coordinated strategy is evident—his policies were centralized and closely tied to diplomatic goals, ensuring sustained economic prosperity.

3. Nigeria's Contemporary Trade Challenges

Contemporary Nigerian trade strategy has drawn criticism from economists, policymakers, and international observers. According to the World Bank (2023) and IMF (2023), Nigeria remains overly reliant on crude oil, which constitutes over 90% of export earnings, making the economy vulnerable to global shocks. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN, 2023) acknowledges the limited impact of existing diversification efforts. Rodney (1972) and Sachs (2005) emphasize that trade cannot contribute meaningfully to development unless it is integrated with sound governance and institutional frameworks—areas where Nigeria continues to lag. According to UNCTAD (2022), Nigeria's participation in global trade is hampered by high transaction costs, limited transport infrastructure, and underdeveloped value chains. Further, the African Development Bank (AfDB, 2022) reports that Nigeria underutilizes opportunities offered by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), due in part to bureaucratic inefficiencies and inconsistent policy execution. In contrast, Solomon's administration illustrates how strategic leadership and centralized control can turn trade into a robust driver of national prosperity.

4. The Role of Institutions and Political Economy

The political economy approach offers a robust framework for understanding both Solomon's and

Nigeria's trade systems. North (1990) and Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) argue that inclusive institutions and stable governance structures are crucial for sustainable economic development. Solomon's administration displayed these features: centralized governance, efficient coordination of resources, and a long-term strategic vision (Merrill, 1994; Bright, 2000). In contrast, Nigeria's federal structure and high levels of corruption have often led to policy discontinuity and underperformance in the trade sector (Okonjo-Iweala, 2012; Ajakaiye & Fakiyesi, 2009).

5. Theological and Cultural Perspectives

A growing body of literature also explores the theological dimensions of economic behavior in the Bible. Obadiah (2021) and Onwudinjo (2021) argue that biblical economics emphasizes justice, fairness, and ethical resource management—principles embedded in Solomon's dealings. His equitable taxation, fair trade practices, and international diplomacy resonate with current calls for ethical trade governance in Nigeria.

6. Strategic Lessons for Nigeria

Numerous studies have drawn parallels between ancient economic systems and modern policy needs. Aremu (2010) suggests that Nigeria must prioritize economic diplomacy, just as Solomon leveraged political relationships for economic gains. Osagie (2020) and Ndubuisi (2022) stress the need for infrastructure investment, echoing Solomon's development of trade ports and roads. The Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC, 2023) and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2023) have emphasized that without robust policies supporting non-oil exports, Nigeria's trade sector will remain underdeveloped. As Solomon diversified Israel's economy, Nigeria must expand its focus beyond

hydrocarbons to sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and digital services. The literature reveals a broad consensus on the importance of trade in national development, supported by strong institutions, infrastructure, and strategic alliances. The case of Solomon's reign offers valuable historical and theological insights that can inform Nigeria's current trade policy. By adopting a Solomon-like model of diversification, strategic diplomacy, and infrastructure-driven trade, Nigeria can build a more resilient and globally competitive economy.

Empirical Analysis of Foreign Trade during King Solomon

Empirical analysis of foreign trade during King Solomon's reign reveals a highly coordinated and diplomatically savvy economic system. Though ancient, the structures and patterns of Solomon's trade practices align with many modern principles of economic diplomacy, diversification, and infrastructure investment. This section compares historical data from biblical and archaeological sources on Solomon's economy with contemporary Nigerian trade statistics, identifying gaps and lessons for policy reform.

1. Solomon's Trade System:

Solomon's reign (circa 970–931 BCE) is widely regarded as a period of wealth, peace, and international influence in ancient Israel. The biblical record (1 Kings 10:1–29; 2 Chronicles 9:1–28) highlights several economic and trade achievements, including: Strategic trade alliances with nations such as Egypt, Tyre (Phoenicia), Arabia, and Sheba (Yemen or Ethiopia) (Finkelstein & Silberman, 2006). The use of Ezion-Geber as a key Red Sea port for maritime commerce to regions like Ophir (possibly India or East Africa) (Kitchen, 2003). Imports and exports of gold, silver, ivory, apes, spices, horses, and

chariots (Merrill, 1994; Hitt, 2011). A diversified economy, including agriculture, mining (notably copper), forestry (cedar of Lebanon), and textile production (Bright, 2000). Solomon's foreign policy was deeply integrated with economic objectives. For instance, his marriage to Pharaoh's daughter not only solidified a political alliance but opened trade channels with Egypt (1 Kings 3:1). Additionally, his collaboration with Hiram of Tyre granted access to skilled labor and valuable timber, which had both infrastructural and commercial value (Bright, 2000; Kitchen, 2003). Evidence from archaeological studies also supports this narrative. Excavations at Ezion-Geber and Hazor suggest that Solomon invested heavily in logistics and infrastructure to support trade (Dever, 2001). Scholars like Yadin (1963) assert that fortified cities served dual purposes of defense and storage for trade goods.

2. Empirical Assessment of Nigeria's Trade Strategy

In contrast, Nigeria's trade profile presents a more challenging reality. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2023), crude oil accounts for over 90% of the nation's export earnings, indicating a dangerously narrow export base. While Solomon's economy was broadly diversified, Nigeria's economic vulnerability is rooted in this dependence on hydrocarbons.

Weak non-oil export performance: In 2023, non-oil exports accounted for only about 10% of total trade, despite years of export promotion policies (NEPC, 2023). **Trade imbalance:** Nigeria maintains a trade surplus in oil but often records deficits in manufactured goods due to high import dependence (World Bank, 2023). **Underutilized infrastructure:** Ports in Lagos and Port Harcourt operate below global efficiency standards due to congestion, poor logistics, and corruption (UNCTAD, 2022). **Inconsistent trade policies:**

Fluctuations in import bans, forex restrictions, and tariff regimes create uncertainty for investors and exporters (IMF, 2023; Adegboyo et al., 2021). By comparison, Solomon's policy was consistent, centralized, and strategically aligned with long-term national goals.

3. Trade Diplomacy and Strategic Alliances

Solomon understood the role of diplomacy in securing economic interests. His treaties with Tyre and Egypt ensured stability and access to essential goods, as well as labor and technology transfer (Merrill, 1994; Finkelstein, 2006). Nigeria, while a signatory to regional trade agreements such as ECOWAS and the AfCFTA, has not fully exploited the economic opportunities these platforms offer. According to the African Development Bank (2022), non-tariff barriers and infrastructure bottlenecks continue to hinder regional trade integration. Furthermore, Solomon's trade model reflects an early understanding of economic diplomacy an area where Nigeria must improve. Aremu (2010) notes that Nigeria has historically underleveraged its diplomatic missions to promote trade, whereas Solomon's ambassadors doubled as commercial envoys.

4. Infrastructure and Trade Facilitation

Solomon invested heavily in physical infrastructure to facilitate trade. The development of storage cities, ports, and roads (1 Kings 9:15–28) improved trade logistics and national security. In contrast, Nigeria's infrastructure deficit remains one of the key constraints to trade. The World Bank (2023) estimates that Nigeria needs to invest \$100 billion annually over the next decade to close the infrastructure gap. Despite multiple reforms and investments in transport and digital platforms, logistics costs remain high in Nigeria—accounting for 20–30% of

the final price of exports (Osagie, 2020). Solomon's example illustrates the economic returns of strategic infrastructural investment in supporting commerce.

5. Institutional Capacity and Governance

Solomon's centralized rule allowed for unified decision-making and the seamless execution of trade policies. His economic system was supported by appointed officials such as governors, overseers of labor, and port administrators (1 Kings 4:1–19). Nigeria, on the other hand, faces systemic issues in governance, regulatory duplication, and corruption (Okonjo-Iweala, 2012; Igwemeka et al., 2023). Nigeria's trade-related institutions, including customs, port authorities, and export councils, often operate in silos, leading to inefficiencies and delays. Solomon's integrated governance structure enabled a holistic approach to trade and diplomacy, which Nigeria could emulate through institutional reforms.

The empirical contrast between Solomon's era and present-day Nigeria underscores critical gaps in trade policy coherence, infrastructure, diversification, and diplomacy. While Solomon's model operated within a much simpler geopolitical and technological context, the principles of diversification, strategic alliances, infrastructure development, and institutional coordination remain highly applicable. To realign Nigeria's trade strategy with these enduring principles, policymakers must not only invest in the physical and regulatory environment of trade but also cultivate a long-term vision for sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

The reign of King Solomon, as recorded in biblical texts and supported by archaeological findings, represents a historical model of strategic trade diplomacy, economic diversification, and infrastructure-led growth. Solomon's success in transforming Israel into a

prosperous, globally connected state during his era demonstrates how vision-driven leadership, coordinated economic planning, and long-term diplomatic partnerships can drive sustainable development. His reign was marked by an intentional alignment of political alliances and trade networks, infrastructure investments such as the development of ports like Ezion-Geber, and a diversified economic base including timber, gold, spices, copper, and livestock.

In contrast, Nigeria's current foreign trade strategy remains heavily dependent on crude oil exports, which has led to economic vulnerability in the face of fluctuating global prices. This dependence has undermined diversification efforts and exposed structural weaknesses in the trade and industrial sectors. Issues such as weak infrastructure, inconsistent trade policies, poor institutional coordination, and limited trade diplomacy have further hindered Nigeria's ability to compete effectively in the global marketplace. From Solomon's model, Nigeria can draw several key lessons. First, the importance of economic diversification: Solomon did not rely on a single commodity but developed multiple sectors of trade. Second, strategic infrastructure development was critical to supporting trade routes and logistics—something Nigeria must prioritize to lower trade costs. Third, trade diplomacy and political alliances were central to Solomon's success and should be incorporated into Nigeria's foreign policy with a strong focus on regional integration and global partnerships. Finally, institutional efficiency and central coordination, as practiced under Solomon's administration, provide a blueprint for reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies and policy fragmentation in Nigeria.

While the socio-political context of Solomon's time differs significantly from that of modern Nigeria, the underlying principles of sound economic governance, infrastructure investment, diplomatic foresight, and strategic resource

management remain timeless. By learning from these historical insights and adapting them to current realities, Nigeria can reshape its global trade strategy for long-term, inclusive growth.

Achievements of King Solomon in Foreign Trade and Economic Relations

King Solomon's reign (c. 970–931 BCE) represents one of the most remarkable periods of economic expansion and international engagement in ancient Israelite history. His achievements in foreign trade and economic relations were anchored in strategic diplomacy, centralized administration, infrastructural development, and diversified commerce. These accomplishments not only elevated Israel to regional economic prominence but also offer valuable lessons for contemporary economies such as Nigeria as they seek to strengthen their global trade strategies.

One of Solomon's most notable achievements was the establishment of extensive and well-coordinated foreign trade networks. Through diplomatic alliances with powerful neighboring states, particularly Phoenicia under King Hiram of Tyre and Egypt, Solomon secured access to international markets and vital resources. The partnership with Tyre enabled Israel to participate actively in Mediterranean trade, benefiting from Phoenician expertise in maritime commerce, shipbuilding, and navigation. This collaboration facilitated the export of Israeli agricultural products and the import of luxury goods such as gold, silver, timber, and fine crafts, thereby integrating Israel into global trade routes spanning Africa, Asia, and Europe.

Solomon also demonstrated exceptional foresight in infrastructure development as a foundation for trade expansion. He invested heavily in strategic trade infrastructure, including the construction of ports such as Ezion-Geber on the Red Sea, which served as a gateway

for trade with Arabia, East Africa, and Asia. In addition, Solomon fortified key cities and trade corridors to ensure the safe movement of goods and merchants across his kingdom. These investments reduced transaction costs, enhanced trade efficiency, and positioned Israel as a vital transit hub in ancient international commerce an approach that underscores the importance of infrastructure in modern trade strategy, particularly for Nigeria's ports and transport networks.

Another significant achievement of Solomon was the diversification of export commodities. Rather than relying on a single product, Solomon's trade portfolio included gold, spices, horses, chariots, precious stones, timber, and manufactured goods. Israel became a redistribution center, importing horses and chariots from Egypt and exporting them to other Near Eastern states. This diversified trade structure strengthened economic resilience, generated state revenue, and reduced vulnerability to external shocks. Nigeria, by contrast, remains heavily dependent on crude oil exports, highlighting the relevance of Solomon's diversified model for reducing economic risk.

Solomon's economic relations were further reinforced through diplomatic marriages and treaties, which ensured political stability and uninterrupted trade flows. His marriage alliances, particularly with Egypt, were not merely symbolic but strategically designed to secure peace, market access, and economic cooperation. This blend of diplomacy and commerce illustrates how political stability and foreign relations can be leveraged to advance national economic interests an important lesson for Nigeria's engagement in regional and global trade diplomacy.

Centralized governance also played a crucial role in Solomon's economic success. Trade policy, taxation, and resource allocation were coordinated from the royal court, ensuring consistency and strategic alignment with national

objectives. This centralized control minimized bureaucratic inefficiencies and allowed for long-term economic planning. While Nigeria operates under a federal system, Solomon's model highlights the importance of strong institutions, policy coherence, and effective coordination among trade-related agencies.

In sum, King Solomon's achievements in foreign trade and economic relations were the result of deliberate policy choices, strategic alliances, infrastructure investment, export diversification, and strong political leadership. These factors transformed Israel into a prosperous and globally connected economy. For Nigeria, the Solomonic experience offers enduring lessons on the value of diversified exports, robust infrastructure, coherent trade governance, and the strategic use of diplomacy in shaping a competitive and sustainable global trade strategy.

Impacts of King Solomon's Achievements on Southern Israel

The achievements of King Solomon in foreign trade, economic administration, and international diplomacy had profound and lasting impacts on Southern Israel, particularly the regions of Judah, Jerusalem, and the southern trade corridors. Under Solomon's centralized leadership, Southern Israel experienced significant economic growth, political consolidation, and infrastructural transformation, which collectively enhanced its regional influence and internal stability.

One of the most visible impacts of Solomon's achievements was the economic prosperity that emerged in Southern Israel. Jerusalem, as the political and administrative capital, became the focal point of commercial activity and wealth accumulation. Revenues generated from taxation, tribute, and international trade financed large-scale state projects and stimulated local economies. The influx of luxury goods such as gold, silver, spices, and fine craftsmanship elevated living

standards among the elite and encouraged the development of specialized labor and artisanal industries. This economic expansion positioned Southern Israel as a dominant commercial center in the ancient Near East.

Infrastructure development under Solomon also had transformative effects on Southern Israel. The construction and reinforcement of cities, storage facilities, administrative centers, and transport routes improved internal trade efficiency and strengthened external trade connectivity. Southern trade routes linking Jerusalem to Ezion-Geber on the Red Sea enabled access to Arabian, African, and Asian markets. These developments facilitated smoother movement of goods, reduced insecurity along trade corridors, and integrated Southern Israel into long-distance trade networks. The enhanced infrastructure further supported agricultural distribution and resource mobilization within the region.

Politically, Solomon's achievements strengthened state authority and administrative control in Southern Israel. The establishment of a centralized bureaucratic system allowed for effective tax collection, labor mobilization, and policy coordination. Southern Israel benefited from increased security as diplomatic alliances and treaties reduced external threats and ensured peaceful trade relations. This political stability fostered an environment conducive to economic planning and long-term development, reinforcing Jerusalem's role as both a political and economic hub.

Socially, Solomon's economic success contributed to urbanization and demographic growth in Southern Israel. The expansion of trade and state projects attracted labor, merchants, and skilled workers to urban centers, particularly Jerusalem. This urban growth facilitated cultural exchange, technological diffusion, and administrative specialization. However, it also introduced social

stratification, as wealth became concentrated among the ruling class and those directly involved in state-sponsored trade and construction activities.

In summary, the impacts of King Solomon's achievements on Southern Israel were multifaceted, encompassing economic prosperity, infrastructural advancement, political stability, and social transformation. While these developments strengthened Southern Israel's regional prominence and internal cohesion, they also laid the groundwork for future social and political challenges. Nevertheless, Solomon's reign remains a defining period in the historical evolution of Southern Israel, illustrating how strategic leadership and effective economic management can shape the trajectory of a state's development.

Leveraging King Solomon's Economic Strategies for Contemporary Nigerian Economic Policy

The reign of King Solomon provides a historical model of how strategic economic planning, trade diversification, and strong governance can transform a nation's prosperity. For contemporary Nigeria, which faces challenges such as over-reliance on crude oil, weak infrastructure, inconsistent policy implementation, and limited global competitiveness, Solomon's economic strategies offer practical lessons. By adapting these principles, Nigeria can strengthen its trade framework, diversify its economy, and promote sustainable development.

One of the most important lessons for Nigeria is the need for export diversification. Solomon's economy thrived on a broad range of commodities like gold, timber, spices, horses, and luxury goods which minimized dependence on any single source of revenue. Nigeria, by contrast, depends heavily on crude oil exports, which makes it vulnerable to global price fluctuations and economic shocks. Applying the principle of

diversification, Nigeria should invest strategically in agriculture, manufacturing, and services with high export potential. Expanding agro-processing industries, promoting small and medium-sized enterprises, and developing technology-driven service exports can stabilize revenues, generate employment, and reduce the economy's vulnerability.

Infrastructure development is another area where Nigeria can learn from Solomon. The construction of ports, roads, and trade corridors in Solomon's era enabled efficient movement of goods and access to international markets. In Nigeria, inadequate port facilities, congested road networks, and poor logistics remain major barriers to trade competitiveness. Prioritizing investments in trade-enabling infrastructure, including digital platforms for e-commerce and blockchain-based trade solutions, can streamline exports, reduce costs, and encourage industrial growth. Proper infrastructure development will also support regional integration and strengthen Nigeria's role in continental and global trade networks.

Solomon's centralized governance and coordinated economic policies also offer lessons for Nigeria. In his reign, trade decisions, taxation, and resource allocation were harmonized under a strong leadership structure, ensuring policy consistency and alignment with national objectives. Nigeria's federal system, while democratic, often results in fragmented trade policies, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and inconsistent implementation. Strengthening institutions, harmonizing regulations, and improving inter-agency coordination can create a more predictable trade environment, support exporters, and encourage domestic and foreign investment.

Political stability and strategic diplomacy are additional lessons that Nigeria can leverage. Solomon used alliances, treaties, and diplomatic marriages to secure trade routes and foster peaceful

economic relations. For Nigeria, ensuring stable governance and actively participating in regional and global trade agreements such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) can expand market access, improve investor confidence, and enhance long-term economic planning. Political commitment to trade policy continuity will be crucial for translating agreements into real economic gains.

In conclusion, King Solomon's economic strategies provide a historical blueprint that is highly relevant to Nigeria. By focusing on export diversification, infrastructural development, coherent institutional frameworks, and strategic diplomacy, Nigeria can address its current economic challenges, strengthen its trade competitiveness, and achieve sustainable development. Solomon's legacy demonstrates that deliberate planning, strong institutions, and long-term vision are timeless drivers of national prosperity, offering Nigeria valuable insights into building a resilient and globally integrated economy.

Conclusion

The examination of foreign trade and economic relations during the reign of King Solomon provides valuable insights into how strategic leadership, effective governance, and deliberate economic planning can drive national prosperity. Solomon's era demonstrates that successful engagement in international trade is not accidental but the outcome of coordinated policies, strong institutions, and purposeful diplomacy. Through diversified exports, extensive trade networks, infrastructural investment, and stable political alliances, Israel emerged as a significant economic power in the ancient world.

For Nigeria, the lessons from Solomon's trade strategy are both timely and instructive. Nigeria's continued dependence on crude oil, coupled with infrastructural deficiencies and institutional

weaknesses, contrasts sharply with the diversified and well-managed Solomonic economic system. Adapting these historical lessons does not imply replicating ancient models but rather applying their underlying principles to contemporary realities. Emphasizing export diversification, strengthening regional and global trade partnerships, investing in trade-enabling infrastructure, and ensuring institutional coherence are essential steps toward improving Nigeria's global trade performance.

Ultimately, the study underscores that sustainable trade success requires a stable political environment and long-term economic vision. As Solomon's reign illustrates, when trade policy is aligned with national development objectives and supported by effective governance structures, economic growth and global relevance are achievable. By internalizing these lessons, Nigeria can reposition itself more competitively within the global trading system and build a resilient economy capable of withstanding future economic challenges.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance Nigeria's global trade performance by drawing lessons from effective historical and contemporary trade systems.

* **Promote Export Diversification**

Nigeria's heavy reliance on crude oil exports exposes the economy to external shocks such as price volatility and declining global demand for fossil fuels. To address this vulnerability, deliberate investments should be made in agriculture, manufacturing, and the services sector. Strengthening agro-processing industries, supporting small and medium-scale manufacturers, and promoting exportable services such as ICT and creative industries will expand Nigeria's export base, create

employment, and ensure sustainable economic growth. This approach mirrors Solomon's diversified trade portfolio, which reduced overdependence on a single commodity.

* **Strengthen Trade Alliances**

Nigeria should actively pursue and deepen trade alliances at both regional and global levels. Full and effective participation in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) offers opportunities to expand market access, enhance intra-African trade, and stimulate industrial growth. Beyond Africa, Nigeria must negotiate trade agreements that protect domestic industries while promoting competitiveness. Strategic alliances, similar to Solomon's diplomatic trade relationships, can improve market stability and enhance Nigeria's bargaining power in global trade negotiations.

* **Enhance Infrastructure**

Efficient trade requires robust physical and digital infrastructure. Nigeria's ports, road networks, rail systems, and border facilities must be modernized to reduce congestion, lower transaction costs, and improve turnaround times for exports and imports. Additionally, investments in digital infrastructure such as automated customs systems and electronic documentation will enhance trade facilitation. Improved infrastructure will position Nigeria as a regional trade hub and significantly boost export competitiveness.

* **Institutional Reform**

Strong and efficient institutions are central to effective trade governance. Nigeria must reform its trade-related institutions to ensure policy consistency, transparency, and efficiency. Reducing bureaucratic bottlenecks, harmonizing trade policies across agencies, and strengthening export promotion institutions will encourage private sector participation. Institutional coherence, as demonstrated in

the centralized Solomonian system, can significantly enhance trade outcomes when adapted appropriately to Nigeria's federal structure.

* **Leverage Technology**

The adoption of modern technologies is essential for integrating Nigeria into the digital global economy. Digital trade platforms, blockchain technology, and e-commerce systems can improve supply chain transparency, reduce fraud, and enhance access to international markets for exporters. Embracing technology-driven trade solutions will increase efficiency, support small exporters, and align Nigeria's trade framework with global best practices.

* **Foster Political Stability**

Political stability and strong governance are fundamental to sustainable economic development. Nigeria must ensure that governance structures support long-term trade and industrial policies, free from frequent policy reversals and political interference. Stable political environments encourage foreign investment, enable effective implementation of trade reforms, and ensure continuity in economic planning. As evidenced in Solomon's reign, political coherence and strategic leadership are critical drivers of successful trade relations.

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