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The aim of the journal is to carve a niche for the communication of research findings, discourses of theoretical and philosophical themes in contemporary Mass Communication and to be one of the leading data base for media and communication studies.

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Jos Journal of Media and Communication Studies is a peer review and refereed journal that is published twice a year (April and September) by the Department of Mass Communication, University of Jos, Nigeria. The aim of the journal is to carve a niche for the communication of research findings, discourses of theoretical and philosophical themes in contemporary Mass Communication.

The journal welcomes theoretical, philosophical and empirical articles in all areas of mass communication, particularly current issues relating to the Mass Media, New Media, Journalism, Advertising, Public Relations and other aspects of communication. Articles discussing broad issues that are anchored on communication or any of its related fields shall also be accepted for publication consideration as well as book reviews.

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Journal of Media & Communication Studies

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Department of Mass Communication, University of Jos.

Continental Presentation and Representation in the ‘Big Brother Africa’ Reality Show

By

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Abstract

Dialectical relationship between media and society has changed dramatically in the last two decades owing to the leaps recorded in technology. This is evidenced by the growth of information technology and the emergence of new media with the Internet as a key medium. Through this, there has been an enormous expansion of television production and transmission across the world strengthening the conditions, formation and content of globalization. These are the existence of a free market in media products, the right to information and speech, and the technologies that can offer fast and low cost channels of transmission across borders and long distances. Reality TV programming is now a staple of the television industry. It has become a phenomenon for our increasingly fragmented societies driven by celebrity culture, titillated by voyeurism, subject to surveillance, and hungry for the communal rituals of authentic human experience. Not surprising, it has become highly profitable franchise, extremely popular and creates instant celebrities, even if it is for a few minutes of fame. Its massive and huge audiences from across Africa and other places, are dynamically offering an unprecedented forum for voyeurism and conversation on morality, cultural decency and pollution, pornography and popular culture, national stereotypes, globalization and African cosmopolitanism or what some have called “Afro-politanism”. These are considered crucial within the context of this research. In this paper, we discuss the impact of BBA in the promotion of capitalism and the commodification of self as some of the identified contents that shape and influence an understanding or perception of the BBA show.

Introduction

Reality TV programming is now a staple of the television industry. It has become a phenomenon for our increasingly fragmented societies driven by celebrity culture, titillated by voyeurism, subject to surveillance, and hungry for the communal rituals of authentic human experience. Not surprising, it has become highly profitable franchise, extremely popular and creates instant celebrities, even if it is for a few minutes of fame. Its massive and huge audiences from across Africa and other places, are dynamically offering an unprecedented forum for voyeurism and conversation on

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morality, cultural decency and pollution, pornography and popular culture, national stereotypes, globalization and African cosmopolitanism or what some have called "Afro-politanism". These are considered crucial within the context of this research.

Media globalization, as this paradigm shift was later called, brought about concerns of cultural identity. Imported media culture was viewed by media scholars and observers as detrimental to local and regional cultures where they are received. The economic, social and political motivations of the programmes are issues that are challenging the belief system of nations and places other than Europe and America.

The relationship between the media and society is multifaceted; political, socio-cultural, economic, and otherwise. Complex issues permeating all these spheres are the focus of this paper. This is because on the surface, Africa's leading Reality Television Show, "Big Brother Africa" (BBA) is just entertainment with a prize of US\$200,000 enticing millions to watch it for its entertainment value. Deep within, analysts like media practitioners, sociologists, social anthropologists, social psychologists, parents, politicians and other concerned stakeholders, take more than a passing glance in the happenings in the "Big Brother" House. According to Murphy (2006) there are intricate interplay of personal, inter and intra group social relationships and interaction that are structural, cultural, economic and gendered which we must examine. Debate over the show has thus far focused on "what is African" with viewers raising questions about how well the housemates represent their respective countries, gender, and the critical concepts of race, class and other aspects of the general society.

Continental Presentation and Representation in "Big Brother Africa"

The BBA Show has opened up a larger market for the producers and contestants to explore. Viewers gather in bars, shopping malls or anywhere else the programme is showing. Thousands of people from different cultures are captivated by "Big Brother". For once, Africans have a representation of their continent through an adapted programme whose focus was not on wars and natural disasters (Bignell 2005). In terms of its reach, Biola Alabi, Director M-Net Africa, notes, "we are reaching more African countries than other Big Brother franchise...the programme has been amazing in its reach, engaging a lot of audience". Attesting to the positive image the programme seems to convey, BBA's cultural advisor, Kole Omotosho in a BBC Radio Africa Service (2003) says:

Big Brother has done more for the political possibility of unity among Africans than politicians can ever do, for the simple reason that they (contestants) [Emphasis mine] have taken themselves as human beings and related across these borders.

This is however contestable from the conspiracy, divisions and criticisms by some of the housemates. Munya (Housemate from Zimbabwe) in BBA All Stars, regularly informed other housemates that he has nothing to do with other Africans and that he came into the house alone and therefore refused to align with any group. The internal dynamics in the 'Big Brother' house tends to promote a concept of unity among housemates, especially as they align to decide who among them to vote for eviction weekly. This is obviously an evidence of what is obtainable in regional

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alliances in Africa such as Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU).

There has been heated debate whether BBA is about the contestants or the countries they represent. In some quarters, it is about both the contestants and the countries they represent, for some, it is about the countries whilst for others, it is about their favorite housemates.

Comments from viewers seem to give credence to the above. For example, Pappyman who posted an SMS to "Big Brother Africa" Show on November 16, 2009 at 11:32 am is of the view that Nkenna, the Nigerian participant has rubbished the country's image on that programme. She once openly discussed her involvement in examination malpractice and said unprintable things about security and safety of lives in Lagos. This is the unfettered freedom of expression afforded by BBA which if not properly watched can bring about legal implications. The worst is that she mentioned the name of one company she applied for a job before she entered the BBA competition and said openly that the owner of the business asked her out and carelessly mentioned the man's name. Pappyman further adds:

She talked without reservation and it is so annoying. When Auntie Dora (Nigeria's Minister of Information then) is working night and day on rebranding Nigeria one useless girl that should be our Ambassador is just messing the country up anyhow. I think she just needs to leave that house before the little respect we have as a country is totally destroyed by that bush girl.

chukz4real (2009) in a SMS text Re: Nkenna (Big Brother Africa), A Model of a Nigerian Woman? November 16, 2009 at 11:55 AM affirmed that "my problem with Nkenna is not about knowing how to cook neither is it knowing how to eat. I sincerely believe her community (village) and state (Imo State) will not dare acknowledge her to be their model either". He further stated:

Nkenna had once told us that her elder sister is still unmarried and giving the family some concern as they pray and fast day and night for suitors to come knocking...told House Mates how she cheated at IMSU (Basic Electricity), mentioned the invigilator' name, names of her course mates that were rusticated due to same offence. And despite the cheating, she failed the course and her family went to the school to find out why their daughter should fail.

If we examine the claims by Nkennis a vis opinions of these people, we may say she succeeded in damaging her country's image considering the fact that no country, not even one viewer from her country, Nigeria, voted for her to stay, probably because of these views.

On the other hand, there are contestants that give the impression that Nigerians are happy, confident, smart and fun to be with. Winners of 'Big Brother' All Stars, UtiNwachukwu and BBA Revolution, Kevin Pam, all returned to the country to a grand reception organized by M-Net Nigeria. They were received at the Presidential Villa, Aso rock, hosted in their states of origin, and signed up for big marketing deals and commercial contracts.

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Examined closely, we may find some of the reasons BBA housemates' receptions are grand back at their countries. The Nigerian Housemate in BBA 5 (Uti), for example, wore a T-Shirt tagged "2011, Nigeria's year of good luck" most times. Wearing the T-Shirt with that inscription was a way of campaigning for the election bid of President GoodluckEbele Jonathan. He also projected and publicized Cross River State tourism potentials during his stay.

BBA created an avenue for housemates to have other opportunities which can be considered as unintended consequence of participating in the programme. Housemates thus became bill-boards for their countries which they advertised passion. In this regard, the form and content of the Reality Show may take a new dimension by attracting powerful individuals, interest groups who would want to take the advertisement opportunities, become a source of diplomatic manoeuvres between countries who could try or even promote their national interests.

State governments also invite BBA winners to their states to promote their pet projects. Liyel-Imoke, Governor of Cross River State, invited Uti to Government House, Calabar for Destiny's Child Centre Charity Fashion Show, Tinapa on 29th December, 2010 and made him Calabar Ambassador (Ita 2010). Ordinarily, Uti who is from Delta State would have been received as an ambassador in Delta and not Cross River. From this point of view, it can be said that the reception in Calabar was an endorsement for those who are seen as role models. The State was cashing on the glory and fame of the BBA winner while he on the other hand would have been remunerated to add to his prize money.

Munya, the housemate from Zimbabwe also met with President Robert Mugabe and several cabinet ministers. Munya said he dreamt of meeting Mugabe while in the 'Big Brother' House and described the 86-year-old leader as "humorous" and a "pleasant man". This was a much needed political endorsement for a President whose popularity and hold on power are on the downward spiral. Munya received US\$300,000 from President Mugabe and businessman, Phillip Chiyangwa, for nicknaming himself "the diamond boy". Chiyangwa went further to accuse M-Net of cheating Munya and believed their countryman deserved to win and not Uti from Nigeria. The embers of patriotism were fired up by mere participation as housemates on BBA. Munya was US\$100,000 richer than Uti the winner courtesy of the generosity of his President and Chiyangwa-an action that could be criticised in view of Zimbabwe's ailing economy. The amount is considered as compensation for what Zimbabwe considered a fraud conducted by producers of the show who were suddenly noticed to have quite a number of Nigerians.

This controversy sets precedence for despot African leaders who want to bargain and perpetuate their position in power by patronising representatives from their countries which may completely differ from the original intent of the programme. On the other hand, the controversy could also prepare intending participants who may go to the house and relate with house mates and Africa based on a desire to profit from and make good reference to potential individuals, companies and organisations. Such rewards and recognition after the programme invariably mean that there is a possibility of greater social conduct or misconduct in the BBA shaped by hidden agenda and such motivations.

Socio-Psychological Behaviour and "Big Brother" Adaptation

There are heated social psychological debates on the idea of BBA bringing African youth to live together and see how they can cope with themselves. They are missing their loved ones, their friends and so many good things outside. However, the essence of the programme is to see how they can endure under a contrived circumstance.

A close examination of this poses a fundamental understanding of the theory and practice of social psychology which helps shape media practice in the sense that, professional media practice can actually locate authentic social behaviour from social psychological diagnosis of society.

It is difficult to accept a social reality as portrayed in BBA where some aspects of social relationships, interactions and interrelationships are not real in the first place. This is because a situation where participants are completely cut off from the outside world, allowed neither access to television, newspapers, computers, telephones or radio, nor contact with relatives or friends, and they do not work or leave the house and its grounds, is considered an artificial environment.

The "group relations" is therefore an induced one. Pure group relations exist within the wider context of the social world and not in a sense of forced dramaturgy. It can thus be said that the programme provides a sociological insight into the interaction of human beings within the process of the particular group and not within the wider society. According to Miller (2010:24), "What we are seeing night after night is a game show, not a serious attempt to explore human nature. According to Bandura (1977:105),

You cannot take the basic external factors of social learning like television, newspapers, computers, telephones or radio, nor contact with relatives or friends away from implicit personality make ups of individuals in social group relations and claim to understand the behaviours of such individuals or groups considering the fact that the basic ingredient of reciprocal determinism is absent.

BBA only gives a picture of Operant Conditioning chamber or Skinner box, a research tool used to examine the orderly relations of the behaviour of human beings within their immediate environment (Skinner 1974) without the broader social forces that combine to shape behaviour in the house. What this means is that whatever behaviour the housemates put up in the house is derived from the conditioning of the house environment. However, their behaviour inside the house, including the learned ones, would also shape the social environment they are returning to as well. This acquired social behaviour now becomes the new cue among top entertainment industries in the country that may not be aware that learned behaviours acquired from what can be called suspended or controlled room social behaviour.

Miller (2010) further posits that Big Brother's producers can only be said to have portrayed a miniature "real world" from the standpoint that it reflects their own social values and prejudices. De Mol (originator of Big Brother) insists that there is no line a person would not cross in order to ensure his/her own personal advancement. According to BBA 2009 winner, Kevin,

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Kevin has always been like this. Looking at the previous Big Brother shows, I have for so long wanted to be a part of the game and so this is something I programmed myself for to try and meet. I desired for a long time to be on BBA. I mean I finished school in 2006 and did not go to tertiary to pursue further studies meaning that I am not meant for white-collar jobs, and shows such as BBA are what I am into, BBA is more me. This is my fifth time to audition for BBA. I even auditioned for Big Brother Nigeria.

Pertinent questions of psychological or behavioural addiction of watching BBA also become central to clinical psychological therapy, considering that thousands of viewers get addicted to watching the BBA, and that there are few clinical psychologists and psychiatrists in Africa. Consider the SMS sent in by Jean Sutherland (2007), quotes one fan "Hola": "Fellow Africans. Does anybody have cure to "BBA2" Withdrawal Symptoms Please? I need urgent attention because my health is deteriorating. I can't sleep, eat or do anything". This is the true psychological state of many other Africans while the BBA takes the waves or whatever expression you choose.

Conclusion

Conceptual issues operationalised within the context of the BBA have raised critical questions of globalization, social context, and many other interrelated concepts that challenged fundamental meanings in the reading of the show.

Key issues in the 'Big Brother' phenomenon revealed more about Africa's collective cultural identity and more about the watchers than the watched. There seems thus, a strong relationship between social behaviour in the house and the audiences back in respective countries the housemates come from as exhibited in the fight between Hannington Kuteesa, male (Uganda) and Lerato Sengadi, female (South Africa).

This paper appreciated the role of the media and its content as a social and stabilizing force in the African context. The BBA programme has fostered greater equality and freedom of speech to all, and provided a platform or forum for collective discussion, in the affairs of the continent. Additionally, it has empowered audiences through involvement in decision making via its selection process.

Recommendation

Television has evolved into a potent force in the transmission of social norms and values in the society. Television programming has changed over the years. For instance, digital television now provides the opportunity for public service broadcasting to redefine itself. New channels are able to connect more effectively to a group of people who differ racially or politically and promote stronger sense of connection to the outside world. The process by which programmes are produced has changed, especially television entertainment. It is no longer the business of a producer to create content, write a script and produce a programme as was applicable in the traditional media. Today, content is provided by the audience and participants of a programme because cable satellite networks have reshaped the face of television.

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An Evaluation of Public Relations Role in the Management of Selected Local Government Councils in Delta State

By

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Abstract

This study evaluates the role of public relations in the management of selected local government councils in Delta State. The study adopted the survey research method. Data were sourced through structured questionnaire from seventy five respondents drawn from three local government councils. The respondents comprised middle level and senior staff, information officers and executive of the staff union (NULGE) in the three local government councils. Opinions expressed by the respondents show that the councils are bedevilled with problems that public relations could be used to manage, but the authorities do not fully appreciate its contributory role. Based on the findings of the study, some useful recommendations that would help to reposition the councils through the proper application of public relations are made.

Key Words: Evaluation, Public Relations, Management, Local Government council.

Introduction

It is true, although arguably so, that the basis for all human interactions is a complex admixture of self interest advancement or self perpetuation. Virtually every person or group of persons has interest to protect, ambitions to achieve and hopes to aspire to. Also since no two individuals are alike, there are counter interests, demands and aspirations, which compel the need to solicit, win and retain attention, support, interest and loyalty.

Every sector of a nation's life is involved in one form of horse-trading or another to advance individual(s), groups or organizations interest(s), be it in commercial business, political campaigns, social welfare programmes or educational activities. Thus, Jubril (1997:23) notes that, deliberate, planned and perhaps sustained efforts are made to establish and maintain mutual understanding with prospective clientele.

Public relations serves all types of organizations. Governmental organizations, (including local governments), nonprofit organizations, and corporations have embraced public relations and set it to work, recognizing it as a means of increasing organizational effectiveness in a complex and changing environment. The effect of public relations could be felt in all spheres of human endeavour, as it involves efforts to convince, win and retain support for ideas,

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products and service. Individuals, family members, commercial and public outfits and non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) apply PR in one way or another to ensure their survival and perpetuity.

The extent to which public relations is beneficial to an individual or organization is relative to a lot of factors: the nature of business undertaken by the organization, its mission and mandate and the level of its application of PR. Public relations provides a veritable opportunity for preplanning ways and means of achieving set goals. It helps the organization, as Madike (2005:5) and Johnston and Zawawi (2004:270) point out, to identify all the various publics that it has to deal with and demands definite plans on how to interact with them.

To operate effectively within these organizations, the public relations practitioners must be thoroughly aware of: the process of communication, the role of public relations in organizational decision making, the four-step public relations process, and the primary publics of public relations. Practitioners must also recognize the problems and publics that are specific to public relations in each organizational type.

Statement of the Problem

Of late, local government councils in the country have come under intense pressure from the people for failure to deliver democracy dividends and to bring development to the people as expected. This seemingly loss of confidence has made many to call for the scrapping of the LGCs, and this has affected the day-to-day administration of the third tier of government. Experts have observed that failure to utilize public relations in the management of the local government councils by their chief executives (chairmen) is responsible for the persistent negative image associated with this tier of government that is suppose to bring development nearer to the grass root.

It is against this backdrop that this study was designed. This study therefore seeks to evaluate public relations role in the management of the selected local government councils in Delta State.

Research Objectives

The study was conducted to:

- i. Find out the problems militating against effective management of the local government councils in Delta State.
- ii. Determine the extent to which these problems have affected the quality of governance in the local government councils in Delta State.
- iii. Ascertain the role of public relations in the day-to-day management of the selected local government councils in Delta State.
- iv. Find out the extent to which public relations is utilize in the management of the selected local government councils in Delta State.

Research Questions

This study sought to find answers to the following questions.

- i. What are the problems militating against effective management of local government councils in Delta State?

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- ii. How have these problems affected the quality of governance in the local government councils in Delta State?
- iii. What role does public relations play in the day-to-day management of the local government councils in Delta State?
- iv. To what extent do the local government authorities utilize public relations in the management of the Local Government Councils in Delta State?

Scope of the Study

The study is concerned with evaluating the role of public relations in the management of local government councils in Delta State. It seeks to specifically determine the problems militating against the management of the local government councils and the extent to which public relations is used in solving the problems.

In doing this, three out of the twenty five local Government Councils in Delta State were selected for the study: Oshimili South, Sapele, and Isoko North.

These LGCs are located each in the three senatorial districts of the state namely: North, Central and South.

Significance of the Study

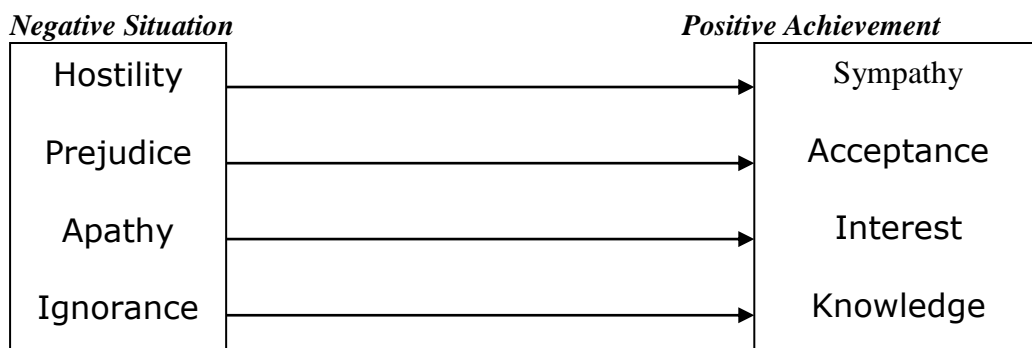
Public Relations is very fundamental to the survival of modern organizations. Its impact could be felt in government establishments, including local government councils in Delta State.

In view of the above, any research conducted in this area will be considered worthwhile. To an extent, local government authorities have come to realize that public relations is a necessary tool for the management of the councils.

Therefore, the findings and recommendations of the study will provide a sustainable frame work for the authorities to manage their councils effectively. It will also add to the existing literature within the public relations sphere.

Theoretical Framework

This study is hinged on the Public Relations transfer process model and the decision-making (or decision theory) approach. The transfer process model is represented below:



Source: Frank Jefkins, *Public Relations Techniques*, Oxford: Heinemann Professional Publishing, Ltd, (1988), p.9.

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According to Jefkins (1988:9), “when the negative situation is converted into positive achievement-through knowledge-the result is the primary objective of public relations, understanding”. Jefkins expects practitioners to use public relations tools to achieve sympathy where there is hostility, acceptance where there is prejudice, develop interest where there is apathy and communicate to achieve knowledge where there is ignorance. Viewing the organization as a system emphasizes the need for good information and channels of communication in order to assist effective decision-making in the organization. Here the focus of attention is on managerial decision-making and how organizations process and use information in making decisions. Successful management lies in responding to internal and external change. This involves the clarification of objectives, the specification of problems, and the search for and implementation of solutions, the organization is seen as an information – processing network with numerous decision points.

Barnard cited by Mullins (1996:58) stressed the need for co-operative action in organizations. He believed that people’s ability to communicate, and their commitment and contribution to the achievement of a common purpose were necessary for the existence of a cooperative system. These ideas were developed further by Simon (2001:159), who sees management as meaning decision-making and his concern is with how decisions are made and decision making can be improved through effective public relations.

The Concept of Local Government

As defined in the official handbook on the reformed system of local government introduced in 1976, local government is governance at the local, grass root level, exercised through representative councils established by law to exercise specific powers within a defined area.

According to the Handbook, powers should give the councils:

Substantial control over local affairs as well as the staff and institutional and functional powers to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine and implement projects so as to complement the activities of the state and federal governments in their areas to ensure-through devolution of functions to these councils and through the active participation of the people and their traditional institutions-that local initiatives and response to local needs and conditions are maximized (Adenuga 1991).

Folarin (1998:7) identified two major existing models of local government. They are:

Local Administration: which derives its existence, powers and sustenance from a strong (national or state) centre where policies are determined. The local units act as agents in the administration and implementation of these policies. As part of the arrangement, the central government makes funds available to the local units to enable them to provide the services for which they have been created. In practice, such units have minimal powers (if any) to generate or collect revenue.

Local Government Proper: which has real political authority delegated to it from the centre in a decentralized system of governance. Such local units usually operate as local councils consisting of persons who may be elected in a democratic process by the local inhabitants, or appointed by government to run the affairs of the

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local government. Local governments proper are given powers to raise a substantial part of their revenue, mainly through the imposition of local taxes. Nonetheless, a substantial part of their operating revenue is provided by the central government through statutory allocation. The local governments are also empowered to enact bye-laws, which must defer to the federal laws and state edicts.

It is clear from the foregoing that our present local government derive from this second model, while most of the local units we had before 1976 (including those that were used to prop up the Indirect Rule System during the colonial period) were various amalgams of the two models. Each of the two models has implications for public relations and decision-making.

Public Relations in Government

Governmental activity at every level has tremendous daily impact-positive and negative-on every kind of organization all over the world. Public affairs units help organizations anticipate or respond to issues affecting their activities or environment, lobby public officials, build grassroots lobbying campaigns, and help shape public policy.

From the other side, government also has a public relations function. Governmental Public Relations plays a crucial role in keeping the public informed about issues, problems, and actions at all levels of government. Governmental public information officers, according to Johnston and Zawawi (2004:205), seek citizens approval of government programmes, help explain what citizens want from the government, strive to make government responsive to citizens' wishes, and attempt to understand and affect public opinion.

Public affairs is related to issues management because through its relationship – building processes, it helps organizations anticipate or respond to issues affecting their activities. Lattimore et al. (2004:302) aver that, public affairs efforts include seeking to shape public opinion and legislation, developing effective responses to matters of public concern, and helping the organization adopt to public expectations. Specifically, public affairs may be involved in monitoring public policy, providing political education for employees or other constituents, maintaining liaisons with various governmental units and encouraging political participation.

To be successful, all organizations – business, nonprofits, and governments – must build governmental relationships and actively collaborate with those government contacts to influence public policies.

Function of Governmental Public Relations

Governmental public information officers, like any other public relations practitioners, seek to achieve mutual understanding between their agencies and publics by following a strategic public relations process. They must gauge public opinion, plan and organize for public relations effectiveness, and construct messages of the entire process.

Like all organizational boundary spanners, Public Information Officers jointly serve two masters- their publics and their employers. On the one hand, they provide the public with complete, candid, continuous reporting of government information and accessible channels for citizens inputs. On the other hand, they strive to gain support for the policies of the government in power and suppresses

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anything that undermine the hegemony of the government. Cutlip (2004:12), late public relations educator maintains that,

The vast government information machine has as its primary purpose advancement of government's policies and personnel... the major objective is to gain support for the incumbent administration's policies and maintain its leaders in power.

However, Public Information Officers serve neither master very well, as evidenced by millions of Americans viewing their "government as distant and unresponsive, if not hostile" (Final Report of the 32nd American Assembly, Columbia University). Both the public and the politicians might be better served if PIOs could provide more active input for government decision makers.

In his seminal reports titled, *Government and Mass Communication*, Zachariah cited in Lattimore et al (2004:303) held that:

Government information can play a vital role in the cause of good administration by exploring the impact of new social forces, discovering strains and tensions before they become acute, and encouraging a positive sense of unity and national direction.

Conclusively, the most basic functions of governmental public relations are to help define and achieve government programme goals, enhance the government's responsiveness and service, and provide the public with sufficient information to permit self-government. The goal of PIOs is to promote cooperation and confidence between citizens and their government. This, in turn, requires governmental accessibility, accountability, consistency, and integrity.

Methodology

The survey method was adopted for this study. Its main instrument for data collection is the questionnaire. Survey method was considered most appropriate approach to gather data for this study because of experts submission that it enhances the study of both small and large number of people that derive from the entire population and share basic characteristics of the elements that make up that population (Black and Champion, 1976; Osuala, 1991:181; Asika, 2004:105 and Nwodu, 2006:67).

The questionnaire elicited demographic variable of respondents and other relevant information about the role of public relations in the management of selected local government councils in Delta State. Seventy five respondents form the sample size for the study, that is, twenty five each from the three local government councils. The subjects are made up of middle level and senior staff, information officers and executive of the staff unions (NULGE). They were purposively selected.

Copies of the questionnaire were administered on those who made themselves available. Responses from the questionnaire were collated, tabulated and analyzed using simple percentages.

Result

The results presented below were based on the analysis of the data generated from the 75 copies of questionnaire distributed and returned. The high rate of return

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(100 percent) was due largely to the face-to-face method of instrument administration on the respondents adopted by the researcher and his research assistants over a period of three weeks.

Table I: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Percentage
Sex	
Male	72
Female	28
Age	
25-40	68
41-60	32
Education	
Secondary	52
Tertiary	48
	N=75

Source: Fieldwork (2014)

Table I shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents as they relate to their sex, age and education. Distribution of sex showed that 72 percent were male while 28 percent were female. The distribution of age groupings showed that 68 percent were between 25 and 40 years, while 32 percent were between 41 and 60 years. Respondents' level of education indicated that 52 percent were secondary school leavers while 48 percent had tertiary education qualifications.

Table 2: Problems Militating Against Effective Management of Local Government Councils

Problems	Percentage
Inability to pay salaries and other allowances due to staff	29.3
Delayed promotion of staff	26.7
Non-implementation/slow pace of development projects	26.7
Politicization of staff recruitment	17.3
	N=75

Source: Field work (2014)

Table 2 shows that inability to pay salaries and other allowances due to staff promptly (29.3%), delayed promotion of staff (26.7%), non-implementation/slow pace of development projects (26.7%) and politicization of staff recruitment (17.3%) are the major problems militating against effective management of the local government councils. This table was used to answer research question one.

Table 3: Extent the Problems have affected the Quality of Governance

Response	Percentage
High level of indiscipline among staff	40
Frequent declaration of industrial disputes	33.3
Loss of confidence on local government council authorities by the people of the LGA	26.7
	N=75

Source: Fieldwork (2014)

Table 3 indicates that high level of indiscipline among staff (40%), frequent declaration of industrial disputes (33.3%) and loss of confidence on local government council authorities by the people of the local government area (26.7%) are the extent to which the problems have affected the quality of governance in the local government councils. This table was used to answer research question two.

Table 4: Public Relations Role in the Management of Local Government Councils

Response	Percentage
Creates understanding between authorities and its publics	32
Makes the realization of management objectives possible	22.7
Creates conducive atmosphere for policy planning and implementation	26.7
Eliminates doubts and strife	18.6
	N=75

Source: Fieldwork (2014)

Table 4 reveals respondents' opinion on the role of public relations in day-to-day management of local government councils: creates understanding between authorities and its publics (32%), makes the realization of management objectives possible (22.7%), creates conducive atmosphere for policy planning and implementation (26.7%), and eliminates doubts and strife (18.6%). This table was used to answer research question three.

Table 5: Extent of utilization of PR in the management of LGCs' Affairs

Extent of PR utilization	Percentage
Very often	16
Often	12
Rarely	20
Not at all	52
	N=75

Source: Field work (2014)

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Table 5 shows the extent to which the authorities utilize public relations in the management of local government council affairs: very often (16%), often (12%), rarely (20%), and not at all (52%). This table was used to answer research question four.

Summary of Findings

The following are the major findings of the study:

- The specific problems that militate against effective management of local government councils include inability to pay salaries and other allowances due to staff, delayed promotion of staff; non-implementation/slow pace of development projects; and politicization of staff recruitment.
- These problems have resulted to high level of indiscipline among staff, frequent declaration of industrial disputes by the workers of the councils; and loss of confidence on the local government council authorities by the people of the local government area.
- Public relations role in the management of local government councils include creating and promoting understanding between local council authorities and its publics, making the realization of management objectives possible; creating conducive atmosphere for policy planning and implementation; and eliminating doubts and strife.
- Local government council authorities do not make use of public relations extensively in the management of the councils' affairs.

Conclusion

The study has shown that public relations has a major role to play in the management of local government councils especially in this era when the third tier of government is faced with myriad of problems that tend to impact negatively on the councils. If properly applied there is every tendency that public relations can play a contributory role in shoring up the image of the local government councils, and bring about good governance at the grassroots level.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusion reached, the following recommendations are pertinent.

- The Chairmen of the local government councils should endeavour to utilize public relations techniques/strategies more effectively to reduce the tensions often generated in the local government councils because of the failure of the authorities to meet with one obligation or the other that has direct bearing on the staff and the larger society.
- The authorities of the councils should strengthen the public relations/information unit to enable it perform optimally. This will benefit the councils and the entire areas the councils are meant to serve.

- The council authorities should strive to fulfill its obligations to the staff and the larger public. If for any reason they find it difficult to meet up, the true position of things should be communicated without delay through the public relations/information office to dispel rumour.
- As the chief public relations officers of the councils, the chairmen should offer selfless service to the electorate and pursue policies that will bring about development for a greater number of the citizenry.

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An Analysis of *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* Newspapers Coverage of the Fulani Herdsmen Attacks in Benue State, 2013/2014

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Abstract

This study analyses the extent of coverage of the Fulani herdsmen attacks on Benue communities between September 2013 and April 2014 by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers from the backdrop of the potential impact of the frames used on public perception and understanding of the crisis. Content analysis was employed as the research design with coding sheets as instrument for data collection. A total of 29 editions of the two papers and 78 news, features and editorials on the attacks were sampled and analysed. The study found that both *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* significantly covered the crisis even though they were divergent in the use of frames. The study found also, that government officials, officials of security agencies, leaders of groups, eyewitnesses and victims of the herdsmen attacks were the dominant sources quoted in the stories on the attacks by the two newspapers, with variation in extent of usage. The human interest, conflict, morality, economic, attribution of responsibility and level of responsibility frames dominantly used in framing of the stories on the attacks. Based on the empirical evidence, the study by way of scholarly exegesis concluded that both papers were influenced by the political, economic and religious interests or ideologies of their ownership in the coverage of the crisis. The study submits that this scenario portends danger to public perception and understanding of the crisis and thus recommends that; the mass media should deal with crisis in such a way as to produce the best possible and least violent outcomes for all the parties concerned through the nature of coverage. Provision of much information as possible about the roots of the problem to encourage a rational public debate concerning the various options for ending the crisis amongst other strategies was also recommended.

Keywords: Mass media; Newspaper Coverage; Framing; Herdsmen Insurgency.

Introduction

Nigeria has over the years been frequently confronted with series of disruptive crisis situations that significantly affects the socioeconomic and political life of the people. Communal and religious crises as well as outbreak of violence from ethnic agitations have claimed the lives of thousands of Nigerians, leaving several others maimed and displaced. The rising wave of Fulani herdsmen insurgency which has launched several attacks across the country, particularly on in Benue, Plateau and Taraba States with scores of people dead, homes, farms/farmlands and other property worth billions of Naira destroyed is one of such disruptive crisis in recent time. While several crises across the country in the past were predicated on aggression arising from contentious issues between warring parties, the Fulani insurgency has a new dimension. It is rather an assault that seems to be predicated on the UsmanDanfodio's old Jihadist doctrine of using violence to intimidate and harass people into conversion or oust and take over the ancestral homes of people whose beliefs and ideologies are divergent or non-confirmative.

Notwithstanding the nature, type or method; a crisis is "an event for which people seek causes and make attributions" (Coombs and Holladay, 2004, p. 97). Consequently, a crisis period is a "time of ambiguity, uncertainty, and struggle to regain control" (Millar and Heath, 2004, p. 247). When hit by a crisis situation such as the Fulani herdsmen attacks on several Benue communities between 2013 and 2012, however, government often makes an effort to minimize the ambiguity by responding to the crisis and the public through appropriate response strategies. At the same time, the public tries to seek information related to the crisis and to evaluate responsibility for the crisis. The more likely people affected or involved in the crisis try to trade blames or attribute responsibility to the other party(s), the stronger the likelihood of them developing a negative image of the other party(s) (Weiner et al., 1987). Thus, as Coombs, (2006a, p.175) notes, "crisis responsibility, the perception that the hard handedness or aggression from the other party is the reason for the crisis or the linchpin" has the capability to escalate or reverberate in other areas. For that reason, understanding how people attribute crisis responsibility is critical for crisis mitigation and management.

This has made the mass media key stakeholders in crisis mitigation and management as what the general public knows about these events and their causes overwhelmingly comes from the mainstream mass media. For this reason, mass media coverage of crisis plays an important role in shaping public opinion about the crisis and indigenous rights. This is because as one of the most trusted vehicles of communication and information dissemination in society, the mass media exercise a significant level of influence on the perception and understanding of crisis situations by members of the public through news frames. The problem however, is that the mass media does not merely cover and mirror events in society as often perceived, but rather filter information through a process called *framing*.

Framing results from a system of reporting wherein reporters use a particular narrative structure, rely on officials as sources, and invoke public opinion in particular ways that, taken together, serve to marginalize collective actors and their issues. This is not to say that reporters and editors are consciously seeking to delegitimize collective actors, but rather that the process of creating the news often leads to this result. Frames are powerful mechanisms that can help define and solve

problems and shape public opinion (Knight, 1999). In crisis communication, framing analysis can provide crisis managers with useful insights into the appropriate crisis response strategies to minimize the damage. While several studies have been carried out in Nigeria on the role of the mass media in crisis situations, most of the studies have failed to consider how the Nigerian mass media (newspapers in particular) framed the crisis at the outset. However, most people seek information about a crisis and evaluate the cause of the crisis and attribute blame or responsibility for the crisis based on mass media coverage of the crisis. Therefore, it is important to look at how the mass media frame a crisis event, the cause of the crisis, and the actor responsible for it because those frames influence the public's perception and impressions of the crisis (Coombs, 2006b). This study therefore, aims to fill that gap by identifying what kinds of news frames have been used in the coverage of the herdsmen attacks on Benue communities between September 2013 and April 2014 by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers.

Statement of the Problem

The framing theory posits that an issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and be construed as having implications for multiple values or considerations by different people. Framing according to the theory refers to the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue (Cho and Gower, 2006, p. 420). Much of the research on framing Nigeria has focused on mass media coverage of crisis in relation to public policy issues, without special focus on framing of the crisis situations (Pate, 2002; Eti, 2009; Akpoghiran and Otite, 2013). Through careful analysis of news media framing of crisis, Iyengar (1991) developed five frames of individual and organizational (societal/governmental) levels of responsibility in crisis. The frames are the human interest frame, conflict frame, morality frame, economic frame and attribution of responsibility frame. The extent to which these frames were employed by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* in coverage of the herdsmen attacks in Benue is not however known. Against this backdrop, the study assesses and analyses how level of responsibility is covered by the two newspapers across crisis types by applying Iyengar's individual and organizational levels of responsibility frames. Consequently, the study was guided by the following research questions:

- RQ1. To what extent were the Fulani herdsmen attacks on Benue communities covered by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers?
- RQ2. What were the dominant sources of information on the coverage of the herdsmen attacks on Benue communities by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers?
- RQ3. What frames were used in reporting the herdsmen attacks on Benue communities in the coverage by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers?

The Fulani Attacks on Benue Communities

History has it that the Fulanis and most tribes of the Benue Valley, particularly the Tiv people, have had long standing cordial relationships (Hon, 2001, p. 11), a relationship built on mutuality predicated on animal rearing interests of both ethnic groups. Although the Tiv people engages in large scale animal farming, unlike pastoralists Fulanis who are predominantly nomads, The Tiv people cherish other

forms of agriculture and are more preoccupied with land cultivation. Consequently, the Tiv people cherish their land and the various conflicts that have ever ensued between them and other tribes in the valley has often been on land issues (Hussein, 1998, p. 24). Although the Fulani people are not part of the Benue valley, they migrate seasonally towards the valley and Southern Nigeria in search of grazing pastures. Like previous skirmishes that has ensued between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in Benue arose from the destruction of farm lands by herds of cattle.

There has been series of clashes between herdsmen and farmers across the Federation due issues relating to destruction of crops and farmlands due to the nomadic activities of Fulani herdsmen. As Gbehe (2007, p. 134) observes, while several lives have been lost and property worth billions of Naira destroyed from the herdsmen phenomenon and several frameworks to address the issue devised; government at various levels (federal, state and local) have not been able to address the issue. Suggestions are usually put on the table when such crisis erupts but easily sidelined or discarded with prevalence of calm (Abbas, 2010, p. 334). As such, the issue of adequate provision of grazing reserves to accommodate the interest of herdsmen who are always on the move to secure food and water for their herds or the introduction of modern pasturing techniques that makes cattle rearing a sedentary occupation rather than nomadic to avoid mass movement of herdsmen and cattle, has not been addressed.

This has made the competition for land, upon which the socio-economic lives of both the farmers and the herdsmen revolve a source of incessant conflicts with violent outcomes that have claimed several lives in Nigeria. The extension of the competition over land has resounded into another critical issue that is related to land - the phenomenon of indigeneship in Nigeria. The factor of indigeneship confers on individual the right to own land (Ker, 2007). Gbehe (2007) has noted that land in most communities in Nigeria such as among the Tiv people in the Benue valley, is freighted with symbolic meaning. It is sacred and considered as an ancestral and historical sphere of influence, and trespass is often perceived as an affront over their right to existence. Based on this, conflicts over land are usually fierce with massive destructions of lives and properties. Ubuwa (2001, p. 43) notes too that conflicts arose in the Benue Valley as a result of loss of land which the people considered as the basis of their social, economic and spiritual existence. Attempt to discount the people from this ancestral heritage usually resulted in large scale conflict.

While this has been a protracted issue with over a century long history, there seems to be little efforts to address the land issue in Nigeria in a manner that will accommodate the interests of farmers and herdsmen. Narrating the dangerous dimension the situation has been allowed to deteriorate to, Okeke (2014, p. 66) likens the situation to a war and says, even though it is an old age problem, it has escalated in the last decade and has assumed a very deadly dimension. The conflicts occur when Fulani herders move into non-Fulani homelands with their cattle. This usually leads to the destruction of farmers' crops. Thus, the herders provoke their victims to acts of resistance (preventing entry into farms, killing or stealing cattle, or poisoning fields). In response, the herders wage deadly attacks on farming communities. It is thus perhaps for these same or similar reasons that the Fulani herdsmen between 2013 and 2014 waged a deadly war against certain Benue communities.

Mass Media Framing of crisis and Public Perception

Throughout the years, the mass media have become trustworthy sources of information for individuals around the world. The public searches for information about events happening around the world and the mass media is the primary source. The need for information during any time of conflict or crisis is crucial not only for those directly affected but also for those involved and engaged from outside the affected area. The need for information on the Fulani herdsmen attacks in Benue State was therefore no exception. However, while information through the mass media is important in managing crisis situations, framing of the crisis by the news media has direct bearing on how the crisis is perceived. Both in terms of how serious are the crisis, the contending issues and the aggressors, public knowledge, understanding and perception of crisis much depends on information from the mass media. The quality of mass media coverage of crisis, is therefore crucial for responsibility as crisis is conditioned not only by factors related to the crisis itself but also to general attitudes and preferences of the mass media through framing.

It is important to understand the different ways the mass media frame prominent news information. The framing theory explains the mass media's influence on society. Tettah and King (2011) described the framing theory "proposes that how an idea, issue or personality is presented (framed) in the media influence how people think about that issue or personality" (p. 505). Individuals usually believe the media and form opinions based on information received from media sources regardless of whether or not the information is factual. According to Chyi and McCombs (2004), "the news media often reframe the event by emphasizing different attributes of the event, consciously or unconsciously, in order to keep the story alive and fresh" (p. 22). It is often the case that various mass media outlets have differing viewpoints on high-profile news stories. According to Heider (1958) in Lowry, Nio and Leitner (2003, p. 64), people's perceptions of and inferences about events are dependent on what information or feature is salient in the environment.

Framing theory suggests that the mass media do even more than create saliency. By selecting what to include and what to exclude from a story, the news media frame a story (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Pan and Kosicki, 1993); that is, the mass media limit or define the story's meaning and thereby shape people's interpretation of that story (Hallahan, 1999). Previous literature has identified a handful of frames that occur commonly in the news, with some studies discussing comprehensively several different types of frames dominantly used in news coverage in different parts of the world. These include conflict, economic consequences, human impact, and morality.

Based on these frames, Iyengar 1991 after analyzing newspapers coverage of crisis in the post-communists states, Europe, America, Asia and Africa identified five news frames in order of predominance: human interest, conflict, morality, economic and attribution of responsibility. Our literature review shall dwell on these frames as the basis for determining the extent to which such frames were present and or how they were employed by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* in their coverage and reportage on the Fulani herdsmen insurgent attacks on Benue Communities with devastating effects. This is to enable us assess the attributions in terms of how each of the papers perceived and constructed issues associated with the crisis.

Human interest frame

This frame “brings a human face or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue, or problem” (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000, p. 95). In crisis situations, the frame stimulates the psychological pulse of people, which ultimately leads them to a more negative attitude toward the crisis. Cho and Gower (2006) showed that the human interest frame influenced participants’ emotional response, and that it was a significant predictor of blame and responsibility in a transgression crisis.

Conflict frame

The conflict frame is used in such away as to reflect conflict and disagreement among individuals, groups, or organizations. Findings of a study conducted by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) reveal that, the conflict frame is the second most common frame that could be found in news reports on crisis events, and the more serious the newspaper, the more the conflict frame is in evident.

Morality frame

According to Iyengar (1991), this frame puts the event, problem, or issue in the context of morals, social prescriptions, and religious tenets. Neuman et al. (1992) found that the morality frame was commonly used by journalists indirectly through quotations or inference, rather than directly because of the journalistic norm of objectivity.

Economic frame

This frame reports an event, problem, or issue in terms of the consequences it will have economically on an individual, groups, organizations, or countries. Neuman et al. (1992) identified it as a common frame in the news. The wide impact of an event is an important news value, and economic consequences are often considerable (Graber, 1993).

Attribution of responsibility frame

Semetko and Valkenburg (2000, p. 96) defines this frame as “a way of attributing responsibility for [a] cause or solution to either the government or to an individual or group” Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) found that the attribution of responsibility frame was most commonly used in serious newspapers.

Level of responsibility frame: individual vs. organizational

Iyengar (1991) identified two distinct news frames dealing with issues: the episodic news frame (focusing on certain individuals or specific events) and the thematic news frame (placing issues and events in general context at the societal or governmental level). At the same time, the mass media can present problems and their solutions as either an individual’s or society’s responsibility. The problem of the Fulani insurgency, for example, may be presented as an individual problem of the affected communities with an individual solution rather than as a societal problem requiring a societal response.

It is evident from these frames that a frame in a communication organizes everyday reality by providing meaning to an unfolding strip of events that may

otherwise not be understood within a given context. Therefore, in as much as the mass media may have its limitations, the power of the mass media to focus public attention on a few key public issues, through framing cannot be underestimated. This is because not only do people acquire factual information about public affairs from the mass media, readers and viewers also learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the emphasis placed on it in the news through the framing process. Through framing, newspapers provide a host of cues about the salience of the topics in the daily news and provide perspectives, from which people should reason, analyze issues and sometimes react.

Method

The study adopted the content analysis method to investigate *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers news coverage of the Fulani herdsmen attacks crisis events in Benue state between September 2013 and April 2014. The study quantified and analyzed news frames of the articles related to the coverage of the Fulani herdsmen attacks crisis events in Benue state between September 2013 and April 2014 by the two newspapers. These two newspapers have been recognized as the most vibrant elite newspapers in Northern Nigeria and are large national circulation newspapers. Also *Daily Trust* owned by a Northern Muslim and *Leadership* is owned by a Northern Christian; implying that the religious backgrounds of their ownership may influence their news frames on the attacks.

This is because the Fulani herdsmen are predominantly Muslims while the Benue communities attacked were predominantly Christian. However, given that both papers have Northern origin, it is expected that both will be objective in their coverage of the attacks. News articles published in these two newspapers on the attacks were collected through an electronic database search in the homepage of the papers. Although the study period is September 2013 and April 2014, only editions that contained stories on the attacks were studied. A total of 29 editions (*Daily Trust* = 11 and *Leadership* = 18) and 78 news articles, feature articles and editorials (*Daily Trust* = 27 and *Leadership* = 51) on the attacks were found and analyzed during the study period, September 2013 and April 2014. The coding category and unit of analysis were three - news articles, feature articles and editorials. The coding instrument consisted of the name of the newspaper, type of article (news or feature) the five news frames, and level of responsibility frame. Two well-trained coders analyzed all articles. Each coder coded the articles independently. For the inter-coder reliability test, two coders coded 30 articles that were randomly selected. Using Holsti's method, the inter-coder reliability was 0.87.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Results were obtained by analyzing the coded data from the sample frames of the two newspapers during the study period. The results presented below addresses the three research questions raised to investigate the extent and nature of coverage given to the Fulani herdsmen attacks on the Benue communities by the two newspapers.

RQ1. To what extent were the Fulani herdsmen attacks on Benue communities covered by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers?

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Data collected from the sample frames in response to research question one which sought ascertain the extent of coverage of the herdsmen attacks by the two newspapers, is presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: Extent of *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* coverage of the attacks

Type of Article	Daily Trust	Leadership	Total
News	18 (66.6%)	32 (62.7%)	50 (64.1%)
Features	8 (29.6%)	17 (33.3%)	25 (32%)
Editorials	1 (3.8%)	2 (3.9%)	3 (3.9%)
Total	27 (34.6%)	51 (65.4%)	78 (100%)

Source: *Daily Trust & Leadership Content, 2013/2014*

Table 1 shows the extent of reportage in terms of types of newspaper articles based on the units of analysis. Data contained in the table shows that for both *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers, news stories have an overwhelming dominance over other reports on the herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State with 18 (66.6%) articles for *Daily Trust* and 32 (62.7%) articles for *Leadership*. This collectively accounts for 50 (64.1%) articles out of the total 78 articles drawn from the sample frames for analysis. The table shows too that *Daily Trust* had 8 (29.6%) feature articles, while *Leadership* had 17 (33.3%) feature articles. This accounts for a total of 25 (32%) feature articles from the sample. Expectedly, editorials are the least articles accounting for 3 (3.9%) of the total articles sampled. The break down shows that *Daily Trust* had 1 (3.8%) editorial and *Leadership* had 2 (3.9%) editorials.

The entire 29 editions of the two newspapers generated a total of 271 articles, implying that the news, features and editorials on the herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State accounted for 28.8% of the stories. Given that the herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State was one among the many crises covered by the two newspapers during the period, it implies that the herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State was significantly covered by the two newspapers. Significance of this data to the study is that despite the overwhelming dominance of the Boko Haram crisis and its adjoining political controversies that seemingly dominates mass media content in Nigeria, the herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State was given significant coverage by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers. This answers research question one to the effect that the extent to which the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State was covered by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers has been evidently established.

RQ2. What were the dominant sources of information on the coverage of the herdsmen attacks on Benue communities by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers?

This research tracked the various individuals or groups who were quoted in the articles analyzed. The table below reflects the percentage of different groups or individuals quoted in the articles.

Table 2: Dominant sources of Information used by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* in coverage of the attacks

Type of Source	Daily Trust	Leadership	Total
Government official	4 (14.8%)	14 (27.4%)	18 (23.2%)
Security official	5 (18.5%)	17 (33.3%)	22 (28.2%)
Group leader	7 (25.9%)	6 (11.7%)	13 (16.6%)
Eyewitness account	3 (5.8%)	6 (11.7%)	9 (11.5%)
Victims	8 (29.6%)	8 (15.9%)	16 (20.5%)
Total	27 (34.6%)	51 (65.4%)	78 (100%)

Source: *Daily Trust & Leadership Content, 2013/2014*

Data contained in table two shows that government officials, officials of security agencies, leaders of groups, eyewitnesses and victims of the herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State were the sources quoted in the news, features and editorials on the attacks in the two newspapers. The table shows that government officials constituted 4 (14.8%) of the sources cited by *Daily Trust* and 14 (27.4%) sources cited by *Leadership* in their reports on the herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State. Also, officials of security agencies were used in 5 (18.5%) reports by *Daily Trust* while *Leadership* used officials of security agencies as sources in 17 (33.3%) reports on the attacks. The data reveals too, that group leaders constituted 7 (25.9%) of the sources for *Daily Trust* and group leaders constituted 6 (11.7%) of the sources for *Leadership*. Eyewitness account were used as sources in 3 (5.8%) reports by *Daily Trust*, and used as sources in 6 (11.7%) reports by *Leadership*. The victims of the attacks were quoted as sources in 8 (29.6%) reports by *Daily Trust* and also as sources in 8 (15.9%) reports by *Leadership*.

The data indicates that government officials, officials of security agencies and leaders of groups were quoted as sources more than eyewitnesses and victims of the attacks by *Leadership* newspaper, while *Daily Trust* quoted victims and group leaders as sources more than government officials, officials of security agencies and eyewitnesses. This shows a divergence in the two newspapers in their sources of information. The data signifies that *Daily Trust* seemed to be on the ground more than *Leadership* newspaper during the crisis, however, the over reliance on group leaders and victims as sources implies that *Daily Trust* may be misled into projecting an agenda they know nothing about or may be lured into projecting the interest of one party in the crisis over the other. Although government officials and security agencies are often accused of downplaying information, particularly casualty figures during a crisis, they and eyewitnesses often seem to have access to more credible information and facts. Notwithstanding, data contained in table 2 answers research question two valuably since the dominant sources of information on the herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State have been ascertained.

RQ3. What frames were used in reporting the herdsmen attacks on Benue communities in the coverage by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers?

The frame clusters used by the two newspapers in their coverage of the Fulani herdsmen attacks on Benue communities was determined using the five key

crisis frames analyzed in the literature review, the data collected through the coding sheets is presented in table 3.

Table 3: The Frames used by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers in coverage of the attacks

Type of Frame Used	Daily Trust	Leadership	Total
Human interest frame	5 (18.5%)	11 (21.5%)	16 (20.5%)
Conflict frame	4 (14.8%)	5 (9.8%)	9 (11.5%)
Morality frame	2 (7.4%)	13 (25.4%)	15 (19.2%)
Economic frame	5 (18.5%)	8 (15.9%)	13 (16.6%)
Attribution of responsibility frame	9 (33.4%)	5 (9.8%)	14 (17.9%)
Level of responsibility frame	2 (7.4%)	9 (17.6%)	11 (14.3%)
Total	27 (34.6%)	51 (65.4%)	78 (100%)

Source: *Daily Trust & Leadership Content, 2013/2014*

The table shows that the attribution of responsibility frame was dominant among the reports on the crisis in *Daily Trust* while the morality frame was the most dominant in the reports *Leadership*. The use of the human interest and economic frames was the next most dominant in *Daily Trust*'s reports on the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State. For *Leadership* newspaper, the morality frame was trailed by the human interest and level of responsibility frames; while the economic and attribution of responsibility frames were less emphasized by *Leadership*. In *Daily Trust*, the morality and level of responsibility frames were the least emphasized.

This table reveals that the two newspapers also differed in their coverage of the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State as shown in their usage of the frames. While most of the articles in *Daily Trust* viewed the crisis as an affront on the rights to nomadic lives of the herdsmen, the articles in *Leadership* viewed the herdsmen as aggressors with external sponsors on a mission to orchestrate an agenda of annihilation against non-Muslims. It is evident from the editorials of both papers on the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State and related issues that *Daily Trust* in spite of its neutral stance in majority of the articles sampled, it is a bit sympathetic to the herdsmen and would want the public to view the consequence from the economic angle and inability of government to guarantee the rights of nomads. *Leadership* on the other hand seems to be sympathetic to the Benue communities attacked by the herdsmen and would want the public to look and the moral and human interest perspective.

The information implies that despite been newspapers from the Northern region of the country, the two newspapers were playing to religious sentiments that shroud their ownership. Thus, it can be argued that none of the two papers were neutral in their coverage and reportage on the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State. Significance of the table and the information contained in it to the study is however, that, it has effectively answered research question three by providing information on the frames that were used in the coverage of the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State.

Discussion of Findings

The mass media inevitably play a key role in conflicts and crisis because of their choice of which "experts" (parties to the crisis, government officials, officials of security agencies, leaders of groups and other stakeholders) to listen to and tell their story. This influences public perception and the definitions of dangers, culpability or responsibility, aggression and hence the political agenda behind the crisis by the general public. The mass media's decision on who is allowed to define a problem, or whether the problem is mentioned at all through the nature of frames used in the coverage and reportage of the crisis, has important consequences, on the management of the crisis. If the selection and use of the frames is done in line with journalistic standards, the mass media become a key ally but if selection and use of the frames is not controlled in a democratic way, the media may be an impediment (El-Nawawy and Shawn, 2010, p. 64).

This position is affirmed by the evidence from the findings of the contents of *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers that the Nigerian mass media can also be an ally or an impediment to crisis management given the nature of the frames the use in coverage of the crisis. The analysis reveals that the two newspapers though gave extensive coverage to the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State, their impact was minimal. The two newspapers did not cover the pre-violence phase of the crisis which would have given them a better understanding of the issues.

While this might seem an indictment, Hanitzsch (2004, p. 486) observes that the mass media often fail to cover the pre-violence stage of a crisis for three reasons. First, the mass media usually fail to take an interest in conflicts before violence breaks and a large number of people are killed. Second, governments tend to ignore calls for preventive action when mass media coverage does occur. Thirdly, the mass media are often accused of pessimism at such stages or castigated of incitements through their reports, and they choose to stay clear.

Consequently, at the violence stage, the news coverage becomes determined by such factors as the journalist's knowledge, predefined news formats, deadlines, the authority of sources, and the possibility of obtaining good pictures. They thus become self-referential to such a degree that the newsworthiness of a story may be a self-fulfilling prophecy through sensationalism. According to Cottle (2008, p. 854), sensationalism is used by the mass media as an instrument to gain attention and prompt emotion from audiences and enables a story to generate a certain level of interest through use of language or graphics that are thrilling and shocking. This is the framing function of the mass media and could perhaps explain the nature of coverage and kind of frames used by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers in their coverage of the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State.

Conclusion

Based on evidence from the content analysis, this study concludes that both *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers gave substantial coverage to the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State while reflecting the religious, political and economic interests of those behind their existence. However, the mass media's presence at the centre of society impacts the way in which the public perceives and interprets events, as such there could result the distortion of truth if the mass media do not live up to their social responsibility.

It is thus the position of this study that crises should rather necessitate journalists, more than ever, to justify their existence rather than showcase their weakness. Therefore, the mass media must harkens to its role has representing shared beliefs, understandings, and emotions, whether in celebration or in crisis situations in order to maintain society through time. Although crisis usually disrupts the mass media's standard schedule by an unplanned events, it the responsibility of journalists while these stories part from normal media routines, they should not be viewed as a transgression of journalistic norms, but rather reinforce the legitimacy of journalists as central actors in the mediation of truth through kinds of frames used.

Recommendations

This study found that the two newspapers displayed a form of coverage that communicated a certain shared perspective on the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State through their frames. Through focusing on the human interest, conflict, morality, economic, attribution of responsibility and level of responsibility frames, their representation of crisis articulated a hegemonic discourse that was prejudicial to the interests of the groups in the crisis. It also denoted the varied points of view held by the newspapers, which were rooted in the different political beliefs, cultural assumptions, and institutional practices - in short, the ideological positions of their origins. It is therefore recommended that:

1. While the existence of conflict has been recognized as an inevitable part of human interaction; the question for the mass media should not be how to prevent it, but rather how to deal with it in such a way as to produce the best possible and least violent outcomes for all the parties concerned through the nature of coverage.
2. Audience members usually try to get more information from the mass media to enhance their understanding, particularly during times of crisis, it is therefore, the responsibility of the mass media to provide as much information as possible about the roots of the problem and to encourage a rational public debate concerning the various options for ending it.
3. Nigerian mass media institutions and journalists must understand that interethnic crisis such as the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State are always intertwined with a range of causal factors - political, economic, and social that could lead to prolongation of the crisis. Journalists should therefore be savvy and not allow themselves to be used by the forces at play in the crisis such as politics and narrow religious or communal interests.
4. Lack of contextual reporting of crisis by newspapers can only exacerbates the misunderstanding among the general public. The mass media should therefore, serve as the bridge by examining and explaining the underlying causes of the crisis in a manner that would help to inform and educate the public.
5. To overly emphasize either of the parties in the crisis as the aggressor without clearly explaining their political, economic, and social motivations in the crisis is to distort the *why*, the *how*, and the *what* that actually took place. The Nigerian mass media must therefore, never fail to reconcile the polarised views held by members of the public about a crisis by providing adequate interpretations to the crisis. The media should also enable actors and mediators recognize opportunities for dialogue, negotiation and consensus through a more informed and subtle

coverage of a crisis and the frames emphasized and selection of sources should reflect the different positions on key issues.

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The Democratic Potential of the Blogosphere

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Abstract

This article discusses the perception of scholars and theorists on the nature of political blogs. It examines discourses on the extent to which blogs constitute digital spheres of democratic, equal encounter thereby providing possibilities for a participatory media audience to enter political online discourses. Ascertaining these ideas however, confronts the observer with highly dynamic and complex concepts, which have to be analysed interdisciplinary against the background of theories on public spheres, political communication, democratic deliberation, media convergences and media audiences. This work establishes that blogs extend access to information on actually every political organisation, whether established or alternative/fractional. Previous research indicates that internet usage can indeed influence people's political attitudes. Many incidents in the USA buttress this point as discussed within this article. Though the majority of blog-content is indeed simply noise, there are examples which reflect the medium's political potential. Researchers are recommended to distinguish between online modes of political communication and to compare quantity as well as quality of deliberation/participation. Nevertheless, critical theories on new media and digital democracy give fruitful insights into the political economy of blog-communication and point to important coherences one has to consider when approaching the issue.

Keywords: Blogosphere, public sphere, media convergence, media audience, digital democracy.

Introduction

The internet has become an increasingly used space for political discourses, at least in developed western societies. Government institutions, political parties, and the mass media, including established organisations, which fulfil crucial functions in the democratic process possess online representations by now. Today, virtually everyone with proper access can put his or her political views and assessments online in various forms where they are theoretically accessible to a vast, continually growing audience. Hence, cyberspace contains countless public forums that allow individuals to enter into dialogue. The ascension of the World Wide Web has thereby led to the

most profound changes in today's media culture and the modes of communication in our society (Bernejo, 2008, p. 7). The constant emergence of innovative communication technologies promotes this development and an end is not foreseeable (Bainbridge, 2008, p. 319). Especially the different applications of the so-called *Web 2.0* which significantly catalysed the transformations of communication patterns as well as forms of content production, distribution and consumption; these changes entail considerable cultural, economic, social, and political consequences. Most notably, social networking media such as *MySpace*, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *blogs* have left a lasting impact in this respect. Blogs, a contraction of the term *weblog*, are often described as a particularly suitable medium for participatory discussions on political issues – though the medium itself can be (and is) used to publish every imaginable form of (hyper-) textual content, ranging from personal diaries, fan fiction, to poetry or recipes.

Being a product of the 1990s, blogs have gained huge popularity worldwide, especially in the last ten years. They are a cheap, easy, and a fast way to produce and share content in form of chronologically ordered articles. Users post comments and have the opportunity to receive instant reaction through the comment section. Most estimations assume that by today over 200 million blogs exist, steadily reaching an even bigger amount of readers (Lovink, 2007, p.5; Helmond, 2008). Apart from mere users, corporations, politicians/political organisations and social groups, professional media increasingly use blogs too. The so-called *blogosphere* – a compound combining the terms *blog* and *sphere* implies that there exists something like an interconnected network (Data Mining, 2006) or even *community*. In fact, it consists of a highly diverse spectrum of information products. The political potential of the *blogosphere* remains one of the most discussed issues in contemporary (new) media and communication studies/sciences, especially as online strategies are progressively implemented into political information and election campaigning (Resnick, 2004). Various articles, books, case studies, and essays have examined this issue.

Recurring topics are for instance the chances and limits of blogs as public spheres (Sunstein, 2007), their actual political relevance (Dean, 2005; Lovink, 2007; Quintellier, 2008), and phenomena like the *citizen journalist* (Rettberg, 2008, p. 84; Papacharissi, 2009). Most researches on blogs focus on the political *blogosphere* in the USA, where individual bloggers have achieved considerable influence on the mainstream media and politics; examples would be media incidents like “Rathergate” (Tremayne, 2007) or democratic candidate Howard Dean's successful online fundraising, using his official blog in 2004 (Meraz, 2007). Today, blogs are an inherent part of political online communication in the UK, too. A number of high-ranked ‘A-list’ bloggers, each of them representing a certain political ideology, discuss the latest developments as well as gossips in British politics on a daily basis. By doing so, they attract a considerable amount of readers and communicate their perspectives to them. Again, almost all parties provide one or more official blogs as part of their online communication campaigns to give themselves both a voice and a forum in the British *blogosphere*. Popular news media producers maintain blogs on several specified topics such as politics too. Blogs are “trendy”, not only among mere users; a certain professionalization is clearly detectable however popular they might be, their potential as a pluralistic democratic forum and the actual impact on offline politics remains to be evaluated. A recent survey, conducted by the National

Endowment for Science, Technology, and Arts (NESTA, 2010), has shown for instance that especially parties seem to fail in using the web for effective online campaigning: They often do not match the demands of the electorate regarding information and dialogue.

Until now, there rarely exists a larger empirical study that has focused on political blogs as a specific subgenre in terms of the actual comment/reply-pattern, i.e. direct dialogues, in Great Britain. In fact, only very few projects have examined political blogs (Stanyer, 2006) or online campaigning (Coleman, 2005; Lusoli&Ward, 2005) in the UK so far. Most research approached aspects like blogs as a new format, motivations for blogging as well as blog-reception; the infrastructure of blog-networks in terms of hyper-linking or the communication *between* blogs. Not much attention has been paid to discourses *on* these issues yet.

It must be noted that political blogs can significantly diverge as regards their discourse potential for various reasons. Several important questions have to be addressed before any conclusions can be drawn; what are political blogs actually? Who are the authors and readers? To what extent do they actually constitute digital spheres of equal democratic encounter? This article analyses these questions and examines how blogs provide possibilities for a participatory media audience to enter political online discourses. Ascertaining this phenomenon confronts the observer with highly dynamic and complex concepts, which have to be analysed interdisciplinary against the background of theories on public spheres, political communication, democratic deliberation, media convergences and media audiences.

In order to understand the contemporary academic discussions on blogs, the public sphere and democracy, it is pivotal to take a look at the state of theoretical arguments and the available empirical findings. The potential of the so-called 'new media' for democratic politicisation, equality, and pluralism has been discussed in academics since the emergence of the Internet 24 years ago; due to the inherent dynamics and unforeseeable consequences, internet/digital media-related issues constantly raise the attention of media theorists and researchers around the globe. Whether economy, education, entertainment, politics, or social interaction, almost every aspect of everyday life in industrialized countries is touched by "virtual revolution" (Lister et al., 2008, p. 237). The enormous interest in the World Wide Web and its relevance for politics is based on the rather simple thought that "greater availability of information is a prerequisite for improved democracy" (Lax 2004, p. 220). Internet communication has repeatedly been characterised as pluralistic, decentralised, making financial limits as well as distances of time and space obsolete (Bernejo, 2008, p. 35; Rettberg, 2008, p. 85). Optimistic assumptions expected that the fast, unlimited exchange of information would have an inevitably liberating impact on the structure of political debates, if not on democracy itself, some predicted for instance an age of transparency, in which the Internet would improve the communication between governments and citizens (Dahlberg, 2007, p. 47; Quintellier, 2008, p. 413). The web therefore offers unprecedented modes of fast, participatory, reciprocal and multilateral communication in total opposition to traditional mass media (Jenkins & Thorburn, 2003, p. 2). Everyone with access to "new technologies" would have the opportunity to enter this realm of 'barrier-free' knowledge production and distribution (Hirschkop, 1998, p. 212).

Before the “rise of the *blogosphere*” (Barlow, 2007), researchers focused on homepages, mailing lists, chat rooms, and web-forums to evaluate the dimensions of digital democracy; especially chances for an extended or new space for the public sphere have been extensively discussed (Lax, 2004, p. 221; Sunstein, 2007, p. 22). However, critical voices soon pointed to the limits of the internet as a levelled, open, and truly democratic environment, as problems like the socio-economic digital divide (Seron, 2002; McGlynn & Sylvester, 2010; Butt, 2006) and the intrinsically capitalistic nature of the World Wide Web contradict many optimistic forecasts (Dean, 2005; Benkler, 2006; Dawson & Foster, 1998; Foster et al., 1998; Menzies, 1998). Genuine “freedom of information” appears to be a mere illusion as control and censorship can be easily implemented by hegemonic institutions like governments (Goldsmith & Wu, 2006, p. 49; Sunstein, 2007, p. 124); it happens in democracies as well, though the modes and techniques of information control are more sophisticated and less obvious than in classic dictatorships (Finkelstein, 2003). Hence, the Internet is anything but borderless (Zuckerman, 2008). However, with the appearance of social network media and blogs in particular, debates on digital media and their role for emancipation and politicisation were further stimulated. Blogs are thereby commonly considered to be “easily created, frequently updated websites that offer the newest information on top of the page” (Eveland et al.; 2007, p. 106). They also provide options to use other media formats and links to create a *hypertextual* multimedia artefact (Scott, 2007, p. 39). Another integral part are the ‘blog rolls’ which link lists to other mostly content-related blogs on the front page. Concerning discourse potential, the comment function is alongside linking the most important aspect of blogs; combined with the dynamics of information, distribution and sharing. These attributes form the distinctive features of the medium. Since “new technologies are often greeted with political optimism” (Bohman, 2004, p. 131), enthusiastic assumptions and expectations emerged quickly again, as well as scientific research to evaluate the actual cultural, economic, and political relevance of blogs (Lovink, 2007, p. IX). Today they are often perceived as the primary online communication channel for participatory, user-created content especially in America. Most writers agree that especially after the terrorist attacks on 9/11 blogs became increasingly important sources of news and information (Tremayne, 2007, p. XIII; Barlow, 2007). Subsequently debates on their impact on established news media developed. The *citizen journalist* remains until now a controversial topic among scientists and professionals (Bruns, 2008, p. 70; Barlow, 2007; Papacharissi, 2009; Huesca & Brenda, 2008). Blogs soon gained considerable attention as regards their political potential as catalysers of open democratic discourses.

Public Spheres and Blogs

Discussing democratic discourse and the internet inevitably leads to the idea of the *public sphere*. It is a very complex, often ambiguously used concept which repeatedly challenges theorists in political, social, and communication sciences. Even though a fixed definition can hardly be given, certain basic assumptions appear to be regarded as characteristic of the phenomenon. The public sphere is therefore a space where ideally spoken open debates between equal individuals take place. It is an important constituent of a working democracy and pivotal for political progress, as it produces democratic debates and contestation. The German philosopher Jürgen

Habermas elaborately theorised the subject for the first time in his basic work *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, published 1962. His analysis of the structure of the public sphere and the modes of political communication in western societies are till today of considerable academic relevance. Many of his forecasting insights are still applicable to characterise and approach the subject in contemporary media societies. For instance, as regards the role of a society's political infrastructure and critical public communication (Habermas, 1996, p. 231-235; Habermas, 1995). Habermas' basic ideas can be summarized as follows: first, communication enables individuals to act politically; the ability to share, understand, scrutinise, and communicate information is pivotal for every kind of discourse, especially democratic ones (Habermas, 1984). Secondly, democratic forms of communication, i.e. political discourses which are non-private and multilateral, need to take place somewhere. Optimally in an open accessible space in which individuals can talk to each other and exchange information publicly. Habermas defines the public sphere as the main site for such modes of debate. According to him, they emerged during the late 18th century in Europe – mainly driven by the rise of the bourgeoisie as a growing and politically emancipated social segment of society. Public spheres therefore provide a space for critical discussion, in which citizens can participate and express as well as compare their political points of view. This process is of substantial relevance for democratic progress, as political decisions on a particular issue should centre on the outcome of deliberative discourses. Thus, debate/conversation can be perceived as “the foundation of effective democracy” (Coleman, 2005, p. 8). The structure and limits of public spaces of debate are determined by several crucial factors like the political system of a society, its socio-economic composition as well as the degree of freedom of speech and press. These norms define the context in which individuals/subjects can act and communicate with each other.

Nowadays, digital media plays an increasingly significant role in western countries. For example, government internet projects like *Data.Gov.UK*, and *Yougov* provide the likelihood to provide more transparency. The UK government made relatively early, in 1999, ambitious plans to embrace web-based media and to implement them in their communication concept (The National Archives, 1999). Some observers assessed that the internet would catalyse the radicalisation of the public sphere by providing the infrastructure for new open forums and so-called *counter publics* as well (Dahlberg, 2005, p. 93). The assumption that blogs/blog-networks would contribute to the construction of such spheres is basically not far-fetched; after all, people can ‘meet’ and discuss any kinds of issues there.

However, Habermas' descriptions and explanations need adjustment and critical revision as society passed through significant changes due to continuing technological progress since the publication of his theoretical groundwork. For instance, his idealised model of face-to-face communication is in its original form hardly applicable to ‘reality’ (Bohman, 2004, p. 134; Bernejo, 2008, p. 30). Furthermore, it is questionable if there has ever existed only one public sphere considering the fact that even before the rise of the internet, independent contextual discourses constituted diverse forums for debate. Traditional media outlets have been used in pre-internet times to create alternative publics too.

Nevertheless, our contemporary digitalised, web-based information society experienced a profound shift from a “hub-and-spoke architecture with unidirectional links to the end points in the mass media, to distributed architecture with multidirectional connections among all nodes in the networked information environment” (Benkler, 2006, p. 212), a development which theoretically has considerable effects on the structure of the contemporary public sphere. While information was increasingly *commodified* (Lyotard, 1984, p. 5), its geographical and social distribution also expanded (Benkler, 2006, p. 29). The internet became the driving force of these structural transformations as even information on ‘niche’ issues can reach far larger populations.

The continuing emergence of new technological devices and easy to handle, participatory communication software have a profound impact on the shape, perception and role of media audiences in these new public forums. “The digital media, which seemingly possesses unlimited ability to generate and store content” (Bernejeo, 2008, p. 35), provides the infrastructure for the ‘informational’ environment. This leads to considerable consequences for societies or economies, respectively: “A particular confluence of technical and economic changes is now altering the way we produce and exchange information, knowledge, and culture in ways that could redefine basic practices, first in the most advanced economies, and eventually around the globe” (Benkler, 2006, p. 31).

Hence, the networked, computerised, environment of today’s society is intrinsically dynamic and provides unprecedented forms of information production and consumption for individuals. The new media is responsible for this development in several respects. 1. Virtually, unlimited sources of content are added to the comparatively limited contingent of the classic mass media (print/TV/radio). 2. Online information products are multimedia-based and often interactive, i.e. they can encompass hyperlinks, comment-functions, and converge forms of conventional content production (textual/visual/auditory) in a single new media artefact (Jenkins, 2006). 3. Through hyperlinking and comments, online artefacts can lead to context-defined discourses and/or hint to further information material from related sources. 4. Due to new technologies like smart phones and/or mobile Internet access as well as fast-speed and easy to handle communication software, information can be published and shared online ‘on the spot’; whether a text, a picture or an audio take. 5. Thus, online media audiences can become actively engaged in the process of content creation and distribution, far easier than in past times. 6. The accessibility to different opinions on a specific issue is drastically broadened too. More information from diverse sources is quickly accessible. Producers and consumers have access to the same technology – at least theoretically, everyone can easily become a content creator him/herself. Bruns (2007) describes this new form of simultaneous production and consumption as “produsage”, the user-led content creation. Bruns further states that for contemporary multimedia culture,

Access to the means of producing and distributing information is widely available, rather than limited to a small number of operators, and does not inherently favour specific participants for commercial, organisational, or political reasons: This means that consumers themselves can now become active producers and distributors of information, which is widely available to all users of the network. (Bruns, 2007, p. 13-14).

Particularly the manifestations of the Web 2.0 are linked to this concept of (postmodern) pluralistic participation, namely blogs, social networking sites, video/photo portals, and free online encyclopaedias. Blogging and social networking actually appear to be the “hegemonic modes” of contemporary internet-usage (Lovink, 2007, p. 13). Regular conferences on new media and blogs, like *Blog World Expo* and *The Net Web* which grow continually, highlight their increasing importance for web communication in general. The medium is a good example of *producersage*. Bloggers mostly refer to different online sources, often inside a framed discourse within the *blogosphere*, and include images, videos or the like. Hence, they use content to produce a new media artefact. Furthermore, blogs often deal with a particular cultural, social or political issue/topic. In most cases they are personalised in content, i.e. local, but basically available to a global audience. As regards democratic discourses, blogs are characterised as an adequate medium for the “informed citizen” (Jenkins, 2003) or ‘net citizen’ (*netizen*) to participate in democratic discourses. For users, commenting is the easiest and fastest way to react to an article and enter, if responses are given, into dialogue. To do this, they do not have to be bloggers themselves – actually everyone can use this device to communicate inside a specific blog-based discourse. The *netizen* is not constraint to the role of a mere perceiver of political online content created and distributed by others. Thus, convergences are not limited to technological devices or media formats; the asymmetry of the conventional sender-receiver relations is significantly affected too. From an optimistic point of view, these developments enhance the opportunity for larger parts of the population to participate in every thinkable kind of online discourses.

As a manifestation of the *Web 2.0*, blogs therefore provide new spaces to exist digitally and communicate with others – a potential extension and pluralisation of the public sphere in the World Wide Web. Dahlberg (2007, p. 47) outlines three basic models which characterise deliberation in such online public spheres. 1. The liberal individual model which states that the internet provides unprecedented abundance of information for individuals and possibilities to share their viewpoints with others, including politicians. This perception dominates online strategies of hegemonic actors like governmental institutions, commercial e-democracy initiatives and much social research. 2. The communitarian model, which actually forms the opposite of the first model as digital collectives and networks catalyse political activities. 3. The “strong democracy” model (Dahlberg, 2007, p. 48), which describes the Internet as an extension of the public sphere, allowing the development of counter-publics; thereby allowing rational public conversation to thrive subsequently. Research has shown, that evidence for all three forms exists (Kaye, 2007; Zhang, 2010), though the last and most radical version occurs only in very specific contexts (e.g. far-leftists or ecological groups; emancipating movements in restrictive political systems, Dahlberg, 2007, p. 57). Nevertheless, there are considerable restrictions and limits to multilateral discourse, active participation, pluralistic *producersage*, and subsequently the emergence of online public forums within the digital environment, caused by multiple complex factors.

Hegemonies 2.0? - Criticism on Digital Democracy and Online Public Spheres

Various observers expressed fundamental criticism on optimistic assessments of the internet's democratic potential on online public spheres. First of all, the allegedly open accessibility of the internet, thus *weblogs*, does not mean that online debates are naturally "healthy and fruitful" (Koop, 2008, p. 155). Though the internet has indeed broadened access to information, this development has not led to an improvement of democracy per se (Ettinghausen, p. 2005). The basic question is how political are the many blogs, tweets, online groups etc.? Enthusiastic utopian positions generally share a certain idealistic perspective on the whole media convergence development. Concerning the *blogosphere*, certain blog types were soon perceived as "watchdogs" (Scott, 2007, p. 40) or a "fifth state" (Cooper, 2006), as an alternative to established news media and PR sources. Some bloggers may become "citizen journalists" or media pundits (Barlow, 2007; Rettberg, 2008), whose writings are consumed by users, politicians, and 'classic' journalists equally. However, this label is not applicable to the majority of content-producing users. Just like in any other social system, hierarchies and power relations determine the actual extent of equality, inclusion, and participation on and between blogs. The accumulation of not only cultural and economic but also political and social capital can be decisive for the scope of a blogger. Producers, who implement successful online strategies, benefit from the "informational chaos" (Jenkins, 2006, p. 180) by exposing themselves above the flood of their less talented competitors, of which many pass by unread. It is difficult for a badly connected/hyperlinked blogger to draw attention to his/her writings. A lot of these blogs end up dead, or in other words, simply become 'information waste'. Applying Aristotle's principle of ethos appears once more appropriate to understand why certain media producers possess more cultural capital, i.e. are more popular than others. Foucault's discourse analysis also provides an appropriate method to analyse the power relations, hierarchies and hegemonies in the *blogosphere*. The allegedly "critical and self-reflective culture" of the web (Blenker, 2006, p. 15) does not include all citizens equally; education and media literacy are only two filters. If a user does not exactly know how to search, evaluate, and use content, the endless oceans of information and possibilities for active involvement become useless. The technological skills influence to what extent he/she understands the infrastructure of the web (Hargittai, 2008, p. 85), i.e. how to navigate cleverly through cyberspace. Subsequently, access to and accumulation of this knowledge determines the degree of possible participation on online politics. Several surveys have thereby indicated that users – for both reading and creating of political blogs are mainly white educated men between the ages of 18 and 34 (Lusoli & Ward, 2005, p. 15). This implies age, gender, race, and social differences. Blog authors and recipients appear not to mirror the diversity of the total population or electorate respectively, though indications towards increasing plurality are recognisable (Royal, 2008). "Universal access" (Hamelink, 2000, p. 85) and digital equality largely remain a utopia. Whole regions only have limited access to the internet, especially in the so-called developing countries. Within the frame of western democratic nation states, lower social segments often cannot afford the required technological equipment too.

In most African countries for instance, blogging is only a recent trend. Most blogs are mainly focused on entertainment news rather than specifically for political reasons. Even though very little literature exists as regard the level to which the

internet fosters democracy in Africa, Hyden et. al (2003) argue similarly that Africans use the internet for more non-political reasons than political. Irrespective of the fact that the birth of the internet can be said to have brought significant change for individuals, previous studies have shown that a huge percentage of the continent's population is still absent from the web. This is not surprising since the continent still battles with a lot of issues such as poor internet facilities, power supply, broadband width, and computer literacy.

Although the percentage of online households as regard computer usage constantly increases worldwide, there are still a large number of people excluded from cyberspace, not because of economic reasons. Only a small (but growing) percentage is capable of effectively using the technological advancements for their benefit. There are an even smaller number of people who can fully understand and manipulate the code behind the user's surface. Castells (2004, p. 47) distinguishes between two types of Internet-users, 1. The producer-user who possesses the knowledge and skills to form the infrastructure, i.e. the web itself, 2. The consumer-user, who is the receiver of manufactured software and computer systems and represents the vast majority.

Summarily, in this article, the first factor of assessment which is the most important is that users must have interest in political issues before they visit and even comment on political blogs. The extent of accessibility, thus participation and consumption, is determined by a wide range of different cultural, sociological, and technological factors which take effect in several dimensions.

Moreover, established media producers, corporations, government institutions and political organisations significantly increase their efforts to make use of the new media (including blogs). This implies the establishment of old hegemonies on the internet, as they can often build on accumulated cultural, economic and political capital. Traditional media producers like newspapers or broadcasters soon provided official homepages and created numerous blogs on various topics, producing 'cross-media' content to meet the challenges of the 21st century information market. Their brand aura therefore gives them advantages in the competition for 'clicks'.

As an unimaginably wide space for 'publicness', digital PR practices become increasingly important too (Bainbridge, 2008, p. Lovink, 2007, p. 9). Just like their counterparts in the free market (e.g. corporate blogs), political PR enters the domains of user-created content with professional information products like party or candidate blogs. The medium offers several potential advantages; it speeds up communication, provides a cheap and easy way to manage online presence, enables the establishment of networks, and allows the publishing of 'house-made' news quickly. Hence, blogs are not reserved for everyday users. In this respect, the emergence of professional blogs, i.e. written by journalists, PR-agents, or the like, once more contradict the predicted "death of the author" (Barthes, 1977). The advancing "colonisation" (Dahlberg, 2007, p. 58), i.e. professionalization of the *blogosphere* entails further potential restrictions to equality on the internet. Again, it was Habermas who anticipated this process, though in a pre-internet context, he identified tendencies towards a "refeudalisation" of the public sphere by hegemonic elements like governments, political organisations or corporations (Habermas, 1996, p. 231). To some, this very development continues today. Dean (2005, p. 3) argues for instance

that neither engaged debates nor counter-hegemonies could ever evolve. Established institutions would rather enhance their usage of the new media. Political elites generally attempt to preserve their power over political information and even its “ideological range” (Woodly, 2008, p. 111).

Jodi Dean (2005) goes even further in her critical evaluation of web communication and states that online activities could never be political, due to their very nature. Her argument resembles certain parallels to the basic cultural criticism Adorno and Horkheimer expressed in their *Dialectics of Enlightenment* 63 years ago. She elaborates her rather pessimistic theory in explaining the mechanisms of “communicative capitalism”, which determines structure, functionality, as well as outcomes of contemporary media culture that prohibits real democracy. “The proliferation, distribution, acceleration, and intensification of communicative access and opportunity, far from enhancing democratic governance or resistance, results in precisely the opposite, the post-political formation of communicative capitalism” (Dean, 2005, p. 3). Basically all principles of democracy like access, inclusion, participation, and discussion are “commodified” (Dean, 2005, p. 5). This would fundamentally contradict democratic principles. The bottom line is, instead of becoming “critical-reflexive citizens” (Dahlberg, 2005, p. 94) individuals remain mere consumers of precast products; ideas like political participation are nothing more than myths or fantasies, guided by a “technological fetish” (Dean, 2005, p.14). Every action online contributes to the illusions of the internet and leaves no impact on the real, offline world. People feel like they would be involved in “politics” but in fact they are not, as they only engage in closed, biased contexts (Dean, 2005, p. 30). Hence, the political efficacy of internet communication is very limited. Loads of information become obsolete as comments, messages, posts etc. get lost in the masses of contributions, which form the so-called ‘information overload’; disorientation, and even anxiety are possible consequences (Bell et al., 2004, p.113). Her sobering assessments are supported by observations of authors like Lovink, who characterises independent political blogs as “the outsourced, privatised test beds, or rather the unit tests of the big media” (2007, p. 8). Blogs would be a “technology of itself”, in the sense of Foucault, and they are more of a manifestation of media culture’s cynical zeitgeist than a democratising force (Lovink, 2007, p.12). The medium emerged without really being needed and it will probably be replaced by the next communicative online invention (Lovink, 2007, p. 11). He also scrutinises the dismantling of the traditional media, as no longer trusting them cannot be positive for a society in the long-run (Lovink, 2007, p. 17). Others tune in when they speak for instance about the “myth of digital democracy” (Hindman, 2009), in reference to myths à la Roland Barthes (1993). These observations are well argued and show the obvious limits to the “techno-determinism” (Lovink, 2007, p. 18), which ontologically drives optimistic assessments of new media/blogs. Furthermore, some positions state that all the modes of exclusion actually undermine the development of truly open public spheres online, as no “indefinite audience” can ever be addressed (Bohman, 2004, p.132). However, this evaluation would imply that public spheres actually never existed since exclusion is a phenomenon which also occurred variedly in pre-internet times. Besides, though within a limited frame, websites and blogs are basically accessible to a broad public.

Altogether, all these sceptical assessments are not unchallenged. Not all forms of online communication can be labelled as foreclosing political progress or prohibiting deliberative discourse (Dahlberg, 2007, p.59). For instance, Zhang et al. state in their examination of the relationship between social network media and political behaviour that “the Internet sometimes serves as a catalyst for building communities and as a networking tool for civic participation” (2009, p. 78). Hence, online activities and blog discourses can have an actual impact on the real, offline world; though it is still not clear which actual relevance such contributions outside the web exactly have (Drezner&Farell, 2008). It is also a fact that blogs extend access to information on actually every political organisation, whether established or alternative/fractional. Research projects indicate that internet usage can indeed influence people’s political attitudes, and that small but detectable differences to non-users exist (Robinson et al., 2004, p. 252). As mentioned before, several incidents in the USA highlight this aspect; individual politicians used blogs for successful campaigning/fundraising (Meraz, 2007, p. 59). Though the majority of blog-content is indeed simply noise, there are examples which illustrate the medium’s political potential. The task is to distinguish between online modes of political communication and to compare quantity as well as quality of deliberation/participation. Nevertheless, critical theories on new media and digital democracy give fruitful insights into the political economy of blog-communication and point to important coherences one has to consider when approaching the issue.

Public Sphere, Shattered Sphere; On Pluralism and Fragmentation

In general, the discussion in this article has shown that plurality principally is an inherent attribute of the internet. Diversity occurs on at least two meta-levels: Firstly, as regards the structure of the media system of a society, and secondly, inside the manifold discourses facilitated by the technological framework. Thus, the internet has contributed significantly to the pluralisation of the public by providing countless sources of content form the “networked information economy” (Benkler, 2006, p. 30-32; Dean, 2005, p. 27). A very important aspect is as regard ‘choice’, users have the opportunity to select from an enormous variety of content. By doing so, they can create a personalised ‘information menu’; this strategy has also been labelled “information diet” (2007, p. 77), opposed to the popular term ‘infobesity’. In this context Bell (2004) states that “narrowcasting” would replace broadcasting; the world we live in would be *glocal*, more pluralistic and multilateral: “Narrowcasting has replaced broadcasting, even though the sources of the narrowcasts are anywhere and everywhere, and the breadth of coverage in terms of content unimaginably wide. So multimedia culture is at once global (in reach) and local (i.e. personalised); it is *glocal*” (Bell, 2007, p. 78). This assessment is largely traceable, for example by observing phenomena like the *blogosphere*, *Youtube*, *Flickr* etc. It also implies a further fragmentation of already diverse public spheres into virtually multitudinous smaller ones, as each blog-post, *Youtube*clips, etc. offer small forums in which individuals can communicate with each other (Hindman, 2009, p. 271). It is assumable that the media consumption of recipients of online content is also influenced by “specific predispositions or motives and social-psychological characteristics” (Papacharissi, 2007, p. 29). The so-called ‘*Uses-and-Gratification-Approach*’ (Katz, 1959) provides an appropriate theoretical framework to examine

'media-usage-patterns' of recipients if it is correctly applied to the contemporary phenomena of the internet. A study conducted by the *Pew Internet Project* in 2004 has shown that through online communication channels, mostly like-minded people enter political discourse (Resnick, 2004). A number of theorists critically observed this development towards dispersed audiences (Benkler, 2006), and pointed to certain problems, limitations and even risks for democracy caused by fragmentation. They point to the dichotomy of contemporary pluralism, precisely because individuals can choose from countless sources. By so doing, they can choose whatever they like and can avoid confrontation with content which might contradict their personal points of view. Cass Sunstein elaborates this aspect in his *Homophily Theory*; he defines 'choice' as a filter and catalyser for polarisation (Sunstein, 2007, p. 49; Sunstein, 2008), which would lead to "balkanisation", the emergence of closed groups consisting of people who share the same ideology. Discourses among them would foreclose the exchange with diverging opinions and reinforce existing viewpoints/attitude. Moreover, if people sharing the same ideology enter debates, they would often depart even more radical than they were at the beginning (Sunstein, 2007, p. 60-64).

The '*spiral-of-silence-theory*' (Noelle-Neuman, 1972) has got to be considered in this context, too. The provider of a blog therefore can fully control who participates in a debate on his/her articles by 'moderating', i.e. to approve or delete a comment. Therefore, the level of pluralism has to be assessed for every blog discourse. Extreme cases of fragmentation, and an obvious downside of free communication in liberal societies, are online discourses among terrorists, racists, and neo-fascists. On the whole, this is a rather pessimistic assessment of the democratic potential online as it defines the internet as a catalyser for insulation. These observations contradict basic principles of deliberative discourse in public spheres like contestation and pluralism (Munger, 2008, p. 134). However, Sunstein simultaneously points out that online fragmentation can have, to a certain extent, positive effects in form of "enclave deliberation" (Meraz, 2007, p. 62), and the connection of alternative grass root networks by making geographical distances obsolete (2007, p. 76). He argues that "in this light that enclave deliberation promotes the development of positions that would be otherwise invisible, silenced, or squelched in general debate" (Sunstein, 2007, p. 77). Hence, ideologically homogenous blogs can stimulate political activity for a particular party or organisation (Zhang et al., 2009, p. 79). Group polarisation can consequently enhance the array of arguments within public discourses. However, one has to keep in mind that in every group or discourse, hierarchies exist and hegemonies evolve. This aspect can limit the democratic pluralism on the micro-level of each blog. Furthermore, *Homophily Theory* does not have to apply on every type of political blog; especially political parties, independent "A-list"-bloggers, and news media blogs which have large interest in attracting a broad readership, for economic and political reasons. Empirical findings imply that the internet can indeed contribute "to a wider awareness of political argument" (Resnick, 2004). Concepts like balkanisation and fragmentation nevertheless provide important indications for the further assessment of deliberative-democratic discourse on blogs.

Finally, the digital, web-based information society potentially inhabits countless online public spheres which tend to be demarcated along contextual (i.e.

content, ideology etc.) and technical (i.e. format) lines. Within the frame of the internet, the *blogosphere* provides a ‘meta-space’ in which different arrays of blog conglomerates exist on a ‘meso-level’, each constituted by a specific ‘topic’ or discourse, respectively. Thus, the *blogosphere* can be ‘mapped’ into contextually closed areas (Reese, 2007). Blog networks can also be separated by factors like gender or race/ethnicity (Harp & Tremayne, 2006, p. 258). Again, within these “blog-clouds” (Lovink, 2007), e.g. political blogs, collectives of weblogs form further subspaces for interaction. However, each particular article/post can be perceived as an even smaller level of public encounter as, 1. The article’s topic frames a possible (sub) discourse, 2. The comment function virtually allows the development of debates. 3. Via linking, all levels can be connected to each other. Certain chances for participation, hence deliberative discourse exist but access seems to be restricted due to various reasons in several dimensions.

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Social Media and Dissemination of False Information in Nigeria: A Threat to National Security

By

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Abstract

This paper sets out to justify social media falsehood as a threat to national security. Caught in the web of globalization and post-modernism, the advent of social media in Nigeria has encouraged the incessant and indiscriminate circulation of falsehood and aided societal crimes such as fraud, and scam. Above all, such falsehood has constituted untold threat to national peace and security. The methodology employed in this paper includes a random survey and analyses of few cases of social media falsehood circulation in Nigeria. The discussions on the implications of falsehood circulation on Nigeria should make Nigerians to understand the need to exercise caution in the process of communication on social media platforms. The paper comes out with recommendations on how to reduce the menace of falsehood circulation to the advantage of Nigeria's peace and national security.

Key terms: Social Media, Falsehood, National Security.

Introduction

The advent of social media use in Nigeria has changed the face of journalism, promoted social interactions and bridged communication gap among users to a reasonable extent. First, the process of gathering and disseminating information to members of the public has been made much easier on face book and twitters, and even faster than publishing news in the print media in contemporary times. For example, the Dana air crash of Sunday, June 3, 2012 in Nigeria was published first on face book and other social media before the news was cast on the international broadcast media. Second, the social media have made it possible for users to find friends whom they may have lost contact with for a long time and to maintain constant interaction among them. However, the social media have abated the evolvment of a new kind of journalism know as "public journalism"- a practice where anyone who has access to the media can report and publish any information to inform, to educate or to entertain other users.

The advent of social media in Nigeria has raised more issues than solutions. The emergence of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Blackberry Messenger and You Tube have changed the face of journalism practice by making

information sharing easier, faster and quicker. But this is not without demerits. Despite the functional attributes of the social media in Nigeria, most Nigerians are no longer at home with the system which they consider as playing more dysfunctional roles. In Nigeria, 4.6 million Nigerians are on facebook while twitter is the 6th most popular website (Attiah 2012:1).

Most Nigerians on facebook reacted angrily to the President of Nigerian Senate, Senator David Mark's suggestion that the social media in the country should be censored. The Senate President's suggestion was instigated by his reasoning that Nigerians use social media to demean their leaders, especially as there is no avenue for retraction of criticism. Perhaps, that was not the first time that the social media were raising dust in the country. Recently, the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria did emphasize the need for social media users to exercise the highest level of caution in sending out and spreading false information that may be generated by users whom the Senate President David Mark described as "faceless characters who are out to falsify and mislead Nigerians without retraction" (Ologbondiyan2012:13).

The issue of circulation of false and misleading information in the social media has never been serious in Nigeria than now. Not too long ago, two hoax text messages attributed to Pastor Adeboye of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Nigeria were circulated round to social media users. The text warned the patrons of social media to desist from wearing any red cloth or red outfits including red shirts, red trousers, red pants, red skirts, red head warmer or anything with a touch of red. The Pastor denied disseminating such information (Adeyemo, 2012). Cynthia Osokogu, an indigene of Delta State in Nigeria, a daughter of a retired army Major, a Business Administration and Masters Degree student at Nassarawa State University before her demise, was gruesomely murdered by a group of young men she met on the social media platform. She was invited over to Lagos for a meeting and was allegedly poisoned to death. The event led to a call by many Nigerians that the unlimited freedom which people have in the social networking media should be regulated (Kumolu 2012).

Most false and misleading information on the social media now constitute threats to national security. For instance, few days after members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in Batch B of the year 2012 resumed at the orientation camp in Bauchi, Nigeria, a section of the social media users posted and circulated information on facebook and twitters that members of Boko Haram (an Islamic Sect against Western Education) had detonated bombs at the Bauchi Orientation camp killing about 50 persons including corps members. It took the visit of the Bauchi State Governor to the camp and a national wide broadcast to discountenance the information which he described as false and totally misleading and mischievous.

Again, between 17th and 19th of August, 2012, text messages made rounds on the social media that some members of Boko Haram have been arrested in Calabar, Cross River State of Nigeria. The State Security services in the state in a release to Cross River Broadcasting Corporation (CRBC) refuted the information and described it as false and misleading. Such false and misleading information, as may be unknown to users of the social media who generate such dubious ideas, constitute gross threat to state security, not only at the state levels, but also at the national level in our society.

Social media have become a threat to ethics of media practice and general security. The abuse of opportunities created by these social media and the subsequent implications of threats to national security are only some of the dysfunctions of the social media. Basic contentions in this paper can be articulated thus: first, the social media are playing positive roles in facilitating information; second, the freedom or license offered by the social media to public journalism may lead to gross abuse of ethics of information circulation as already happening; third, the false and misleading information circulated at will by social media users to others are capable of constituting serious threats to national security; and fourth, if proactive measures are not employed to arrest the trend of social media as communication technology threats in Nigeria, the country will surely head for doom in the nearest future. The thrust of this paper is to demystify and justify social media falsehood as threats to national security in Nigeria and to proffer possible solutions.

The Concept and Dynamism of Social Media

The term 'social' is applied to recreational, pleasure-oriented interactions with others, or any interaction involving two or more people in the society (Calhoun and Acocella 1978:196). The term 'social' has been used in numerous disciplines as an adjective to describe other terms. It is common to hear of social interaction, social club, social democracy, social exclusion, social housing and a lot more. While the term 'social' connotes 'interaction', the sociological perspective holds that 'social' relates to society and leisure activities that involve meeting other people and relating with them based on acceptable norms. 'Social', when considered as descriptive of the media, ordinarily denotes society's members' unhindered interaction with others with the aid of available channels of communication.

The term 'social media' has been used arbitrarily to refer to any medium of communication that facilitates the flow of information among members of a group or society. The meaning and concept of social media assumed a different dimension following the addition of computer and internet capabilities to cell phones in 2003 (Ike 2005:260). Although it is on record that social networking on mobile networks started in 1999 with basic chatting and texting services, the introduction of various technologies on the mobile social networks is more responsible for the geometrical proliferation of the social media use which has reached an advanced level through four generations (Andreas 2012:6). The first generation began between 1999 and early 2000 with pre-installed features such as text only and chat-via-chat rooms on mobile handsets. The second generation began in 2004 through 2006 with the introduction of 3G and camera phones, with added features such as uploading photos, mobile search for persons based on profile, contacting or flirting with persons anonymously, especially for dating purposes.

The third generation of mobile social networks started in 2006 and was adopted widely in 2008/2009. This generation brought tremendous changes and made mobile social networks as a part of daily life. The features include richer user experience, automatic publishing to web profile and status updates, some web 2.0 features, search by group/join by interests, alerts, location based services, content sharing especially music and MMS as well as voice capture. Applications introduced were customized with general interests such as music, and mobile specific content distribution. The fourth generation began in 2008 and reached 2010. It included all

the features of the third generation; ability to hide/mask presence, asynchronous video conversation, multi point audio chat conversation with one button and multiplayer mobile gaming. The 2.0 widgets, Flash lite, open social etc were technologies that made these features possible.

'Social media' are therefore systems based on mobile social networking alone. Whereas the major systems that define social media include applications that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content (Andreas2012:1), these applications can be accessed on the computer systems just as they can be reached on the enhanced mobile phones. In this newer generation, majority of social media applications are accessed on mobile phones which have become much affordable. What make them social media are therefore the sites or applications, not the technological gadgets. 'Social media' refers to the array of internet based tools and platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, My space and Social Book Marking tools and news sites such as Digg, Delicious, Mixx and countless others that increase and enhance the sharing of information (KiserYEAR:page number). These relatively new forms of media make the transfer of text, photos, audio, video and information in general fluid among internet users. Social media are made up of online communities where people can share as much or as little personal information as they desire with other members.

The social media are highly dynamic; they can serve as platforms for dating, marketing, social mobilization, political criticisms and evangelism. Information can be created, searched, promoted, shared or disputed on the social media. They are capable of reaching a mass audience at the same time with the same information. They can, thus, be considered as agents of mass communication and socialization. Friends and relatives could communicate on facebook. This makes the social media agents of social interaction. Other users can learn a lot from the interaction of users. The social media are also platforms for preaching morals in line with religious doctrines as tools of evangelism. They can be considered as platforms for constructive criticism in the political setting. However, the use of social media can be greatly abused.

The social media are facilitators of globalization. Globalization stems from one of Marshall McLuhan's legacies "global village"- the idea that the new communication technologies will permit people to increasingly involve in one another's lives (Baran2002:84). Generally, the social theories guiding the operations of the social media postulate that social media users reflect the neutral stance implied in the concepts of objectivity and impartiality embedded in the dominant professional ideology in the media. The media are thus expected to reflect a multifaceted reality, as truthful and objectively as possible, free from any bias, especially the biases of the professionals engaged in recording and reporting events to the outside world (Curran, Gurevitch and Woollacot2000: 21-22).

Another theory which explained the dynamisms of the social media includes Albert Bandura, Dorothea Ross and Sheila Ross's "Social Learning Theory" which states that individuals' attitudes are influenced by media content through attention, retention and motivation to act (Ike, 210). The Social Responsibility theory on the other hand holds that the journalist (here message sender) must perform a public service to warrant their existence by properly informing the public and responding to society's needs.

National Security in Nigeria

Security is a term that is approached from numerous dimensions. Security has been a subject that has attracted a rapidly growing interest and concern among scholars in social science. Today, scholars in the arts and humanities are also in search of new breakthroughs and findings, believing that possible solutions to security matters from all spheres of human existence would contribute to the development of a nation and actualization of peace and order in all levels of human relations. Ordinarily, security is concerned with the protection and safety of life and property of a person. However, the concept of security has undergone a transition from traditional conceptualization to a non-traditional meaning. Professionally, security has been defined in line with contemporary trends to mean:

...an all-encompassing condition in which the individual citizens live in freedom, peace and safety; participate fully in the process of governance; enjoy the protection of fundamental rights; have access to resources and the basic necessities of life; and inhabit an environment which is not detrimental to their health and social wellbeing... not only in terms of the internal security of the state, but also in terms of secure systems of food, health, money and trade (South African White Paper On Defense 2006:1).

The above definition encapsulates the meaning of national security because of the special attention it pays to citizens' freedom, peace and safety. National security is therefore concerned with the peace, freedom and safety of a people within a country. The attributes of peace, freedom and safety ranges from physiological to psychological security; beginning from physical protection, political protection, social protection and safety and economic protection to health security and general wellbeing. The absence of national security results naturally in security that is capable of derailing the potential development of a nation.

In Nigeria, major national security challenges at the moment include: political violence, extremism, communal violence and the Niger Delta Segs. Individually, these issues are harmful to Nigeria's vital interest in maintaining peace, security and national unity. Combined, these challenges pose a serious threat to Nigeria's viability and security as a nation. Political violence is exemplified in general protests after elections such as the recent events in some parts of northern Nigeria which left a good number of people dead. Extremism is personified in the Boko Haram's claims of fighting against the tenets of Western education and insistence that the Sharia Law be enthroned in all parts of Nigeria, consequent upon which has resulted to senseless killings of innocent Nigerians, especially Christians who are always been attacked in their places of worship.

The recent Jos crises-bombings and communal fighting between the Fulani herdsmen and their co-inhabitants of Jos, Plateau State – are good examples of communal clashes. The persistent fighting and blowing up of petroleum pipelines in the Niger Delta by the militants appears to be endless, even though concerted efforts are made to reduce the phenomenon to the barest minimum. The charades of activities are capable of discouraging investors from investing in the country. The

first version of the national security strategy for the Federal Republic of Nigeria was completed in May 2011, after seven months of research. The research for the paper was undertaken by people within the communities most impacted by insecurity across Nigeria. All their research was collated and assessed thematically but whether the recommendations will be implemented or not leaves more to be imagined.

Other security problems currently confronting the nation include socio-economic agitations, boundary disputes, cultism, criminality and organized crimes such as internet fraud using the social media. These problems also constitute threats to peace, security and development of the country.

Threats to National Security

Communication, as a process of sharing information, ideas and feelings between two or among more persons (Tubes and Moss 1991:15), can therefore be regarded as a threat when the stimulus (the idea) initiated and intended by the sender or the source is injurious to the image or reputation of a person, a group, a community or a nation. This is based on the inference that a threat to a person or a thing is a danger that something unpleasant might happen to them. In a nation, threats occasioned by communication ideas may give rise to general insecurity (Political, social and economic insecurity), including fear of disunity, fear of war, fear of possible eruption of violence, economic regression, social annihilation and religious quarantine.

The social media, situated within the ambience of interpersonal and mass communication, have involved the participation of all those who have access to the technological gadgets that bear the platforms for communication. These interactive communicators are known as users. There are six different types of social media namely collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia), blogs and micro blogs (e.g. Twitter), content communities (e.g. YouTube), social networking sites (e.g. facebook), virtual game worlds (e.g. World of War craft) and virtual social worlds (e.g. Second Life) (Andreas 2012:2). Technologies of social media include blogs, picture-sharing, Vlogs, wall-postings, e-mails, instant messaging, music-sharing, crowd sourcing and voice over IP to name a few. Social media network websites therefore include sites like Facebook, Twitter, Bebo and MySpace.

In Nigeria, social media services have enabled identity building, conversations, information and experience sharing, presence and reputation building, evolving relationships and group building. However, the use of social media by Nigerian users has been both normal and abnormal. The abnormal use of the social media by Nigerians has resulted to the abuse of the channels of social interaction. This is primarily attributed to the fact that Nigerian users have abused the opportunities offered by the platforms for sharing ideas. The uncontrolled participation of most users in the process of gathering, disseminating and sharing information through the social media has culminated to what is known today as 'public journalism'.

Public journalism however warrants participation of unauthorized sources in the sharing of information where participants almost always generate ideas, or information out of sheer imagination or infatuation with the aim of stirring and heating the polity. Others circulate rumour from heresies, and once such information

connects other users, recipients of such ideas make the issue a near-belief. This amounts to gross abuse of the use of social media in Nigeria.

Recently, text messages have adorned the pages of face book users in Nigeria. Most of the contents in summary such as “Boko Haram members have been arrested in Calabar, Cross River State”, “Boko Haram members bomb NYSC camp in Bauchi”, “Boko Haram members plan to bomb more public places of worship”, “Avoid wearing outfits with Red colours”, among others, have been confirmed to be false with little or no iota of truth in most cases. The most recent of such contents read “USA has found a new cancer in human beings caused by silver Nitro Oxide so don’t scratch recharge cards with your nails otherwise you will contract skin cancer, share this with your loved ones”.

Another piece that shook almost the whole nation was the text that warned social media users to desist from answering calls from any strange number, the consequence which was purported death. Recently, too some information on the social media were circulated that “there are deadly sanitary pads that were making ladies bleed to death with the name “DARIES”, it’s a new product in stores and has killed 53 ladies in AkwaIbom State. It makes your vagina to bleed like you are having heavy flow at night and makes you bleed to death without knowing, send this to all your female friends”.

These messages have the tendency to destabilize citizens socially and politically. Most worrisome is the unnecessary name calling, mud-sliding abuses and use of faulty inferences and interpretations towards political office holders and some official culprits who may be standing trial and whom the court may not have adjudged as criminals. The charade of abuses especially within the political sector is capable of bringing the Nigerian political system to ridicule before the international community. Such communications are also capable constituting general threat to national security. Some of such messages are even purported to be the efforts of mischievous persons who intend to run down their competitors in the market.

Conclusion/Discussions

This study views communication, through the social media in Nigeria by users, as constituting a partial threat to national security in Nigeria. From the foregoing, national security has been considered as the experiences of freedom, peace and safety of life and property of the citizens of the country, and the freedom to exercise their franchise as citizens in the process of governance. National security is therefore considered in this paper as a necessary concern and responsibility of all citizens of the nation. This implies that the definition of national security has departed from mere protection of lives and property by the security forces. National security has rather assumed a participatory form where the citizens need to exercise caution in whatever they do or say in public.

Unfortunately, this study reliably reveals that, with the advent of the social media and their sites such as facebook, twitters and 2-go among including other applications that facilitate the circulation of information to other users at the same time, the channels of social interaction have been abused rather than used. Ordinarily, social media are technological systems that emerged with applications and websites for users to interact with their loved ones, date, other useful information, entertain or mobilize other users towards a just cause. However, the channels are used as avenues

for transmitting deceptive messages, fraud and political abuses, thereby publishing falsehood, projecting the nation's image in negative light and heating up the polity against smooth democratic survival in Nigeria.

The fact is that the inventors of the social media have not devised any means for screening users of the channels. Thus, anyone who possesses the wherewithal to purchase a mobile phone or a computer accessory with the applications and website of the social media is qualified as a user. The ultimate result of general participation in a forum for sharing information is the evolution of "public journalism"- a situation where anyone can publish on the website what he evolves, what he thinks or believes, or what he or she feels without weighing the possible national security implications for such information sharing. The security implications of such unprofessional practice in the country include, but not limited to:

- i. Exposure of Nigerians and other residents to unnecessary anxieties through circulation of false information to citizens of Nigeria, which causes fear or unnecessary panic among them, and challenges free movement even in parts of the country the cases of violence and destruction of lives and property are minimal or non existence.
- ii. Generation of anti-economic information that would prevent users of goods and services in Nigeria, including foreigners, from participating freely in the buying of products which may be purported to be harmful to users;
- iii. Representation of Nigeria in negative light and confirmation of Nigerian citizens as a den of fraudsters who survive on scam using the social media to rob unsuspecting members of the country and the international community of their hard-earned income;
- iv. Gross violation of citizen's rights and freedom to expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference, as enshrined in the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Section 39, subsection 1.
- v. Possible destruction of Nigeria's growing democracy through unconstructive dialogue and/or communication about public or political office holders with the intent to destroy their reputation and distract them from performing the duties for which they were elected.

All these constitute a threat to national security and only the entrenchment of appropriate measures can allow for the continuous existence of social media and national security in Nigeria. In this light, this study recommends that:

- i. Mobile communication service providers in Nigeria (MTN, Airtel, Etisalat, Glo and so on) should organize periodic training workshops for users of their products that facilitate access to the use of social media. The training workshops should enlighten the users on the need to employ ethical communication on the social media; communication that would not in any way be adjudged as inimical to national security in Nigeria.
- ii. The call for censorship of social media contents in Nigeria by some highly placed Nigerian politicians is quite improper. Rather, professional journalists should disregard the use of such social media contents as a reference point for gathering and disseminating serious information, nor as information material or basis for probing public official in the quest for transparency and respect for the rule of law.

- iii. The national, regional and state mass media in Nigeria should undertake a stronger Corporate Social Responsibility function of countering information being circulated by some mischief makers, especially upon discovery that the information is false, in order to allay fears that may generate feelings of insecurity among Nigerian citizens and residents of the country.
- iv. The Religious institution should undertake the responsibility of working on their members to view the negative implications of dispersing such falsehood and desist from such acts.
- v. All Nigerians should believe and understand that the task of promoting national security is the responsibility of every citizen, if Nigeria must remain united.

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Theatre for Development Praxis: A Dialogue

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Abstract

Theatre for Development (TfD) as praxis is generally seen as an approach that transcends most barriers which the conventional theatre experiences - barriers of language, participation, functionality and so forth. In Nigeria, the practice of Theatre for Development has always championed the philosophy of empowering the masses and developing rural areas. This paper discusses the pedagogy of TfD highlighting its potential in enhancing development and or social change. Its intention also is to discuss TfD as a process and its role in social education that makes it a tool for social engagement. The paper, therefore, submits that, the process of TfD seeks to open up dialogue with and not just perform for the beneficiaries of change or development.

KEY WORDS: Theatre for Development, Praxis, Dialogue

Introduction

Drama performances possess the potential and ability to enhance social development because plays that are put together attempt to capture the lives of the people and their problems. Again, drama is a participatory art which allows for live or present communication more than any other medium, it allows an immediate dialogue between the participants where the audience themselves become speakers. Steve (2005:xiv-xv) reiterates this when he says that:

TfD has become an instrument for instigating people centered development in the field outside of the academe... An instrument for mobilization and for instigation of participation in the development process.

Iorapuu (2008:4) defines it "as a theatre approach that seeks to make possible development education and action from the perspective of the 'people' through the use of familiar cultural and democratic forms".

This means that, an audience of any development programme that embraces the TfD approach through the post performance discussion is moved to a new resolve that enable the audience to identify with the open reflection on issues presented and encourages a critical thinking through personal involvement in the analysis of the drama episodes. Friere (1970: 9) describing the process of change in behaviour feels that the mind of the individuals that participate in this exercise becomes opened to

new ideas such that people begin to perceive: “ [...] A new awareness of selfhood and begin to look critically at the social institution in which they find themselves”. It is a tool of communication and consciousness raising, that involves identifying problems and seeking solutions to such problems with the full participation of the people for whom change or development is desired.

Perhaps, this informs why Illah (2004:10) describes Theatre for Development as “a mode of popular theatre that seeks to dialogue and participate with and not just for communities...” Illah further argues that, Theatre for Development allows facilitators and amateurs to take theatre to the people. It is indeed, a practice which is anchored on the grassroots approach to education and development. This paper, discusses Tfd as an approach with a focus on its pedagogy and how it enhances development and change. Its intention also, is to discuss Tfd as a process and its role in social education that makes it a tool for social engagement.

Discourse

Theatre for Development (Tfd) as an approach has its roots in the philosophy of empowerment. It uses local materials and enables the audience to make use of the tools it offers to make sense out of an issue so as to change their realities. Theatre is powerful because it creates an aesthetic space in which issues are magnified and dichotomized.

This art can be said to be telescopic because it pulls and brings close things in the distance and enlarges small things. What this means is that, Tfd does not limit itself to exploring the material aspects of people’s lives but provides means of exploring and addressing dynamic issues affecting people. As such, theatre moves beyond its exhilarating qualities and creates an encounter among participants, that interrogates their lives through the episodes that relate real life episodes, which lead to an encounter moves, from the fiction created to an encounter for life, that transforms as a result of the ‘**realizations**’ that emerge through the interaction.

The core issue here is not feeding people with information in a top down model of interventions. The drama approach to education begins with what people know and works with them as subjects, rather than objects to be handed information.

Crispin, and Muriithi (1998:1) reiterating this posit that;

the Tfd approach is an alternative to the paternalistic, elitist, urban based media sources, planned and directed by powerful policy makers and sophisticated media producers who assume they know the right direction for development and changes needed by those whom they see as voiceless, ignorant villagers.

Participatory performance on the one hand, places priority on working with the people and using their own modes of communication to enable small communities look at their own situations, to analyze their own problems with the aim of arousing and stimulating target groups to take desired steps to improve their well being. Baz (1992,5) agrees with this when he says that “this type of performances; ... represent a theatre of social engagement, a theatre primarily committed to bringing about actual change in specific communities”.

This type of theatre is anti Aristotle in the sense that the dramatist engages the audience with a view of turning history from its set course. It is imperative to emphasize here that, while we use theatre to empower, we as practitioners should not

force people to change nor do things they do not want to do. This is because when theater ‘opens the eyes’ of the people or target groups – conscientizes; the next thing is doing what they have learned – the action phase. However, doing or changing as a result of what they (individuals or communities) have discovered through the theatre is a matter of choice. They have to decide when and how they want the change. In other words, they initiate change in their own terms.

Invariably, we can say that Tfd while it makes use of discussions, focus of such discussions is geared towards visualizing why and how changes might be necessary and how they will be achieved and realized. As such, Tfd can be described as an instrument of empowerment for the socially deprived individuals.

Kidd (1984:267) writing on popular culture and formal education submit that:
Popular theatre (Tfd) is used as a means of bringing people together, building confidence and solidarity, stimulating discussion, exploring alternative options for action, and building a collective commitment to change; starting with people’s urgent concerns and issues; it encourages reflections on these issues and possible strategies to change.

To this end, the theatrical medium is harnessed to arouse consciousness among the masses at the grass roots who are struggling to draw their attention to the problems and issues at hand that permeate the society. In other words, Tfd is a dramatic technique employed by drama activists in reaching their audience. It is a means of putting across information and development messages. People through this approach, are made aware of their situation, and are encouraged to critically analyze the situation and take action towards collectively solving such problems. Suffice to say that, Tfd as an approach focuses on generating impact that goes beyond the limit of mere existence but projects into a limit where minds meet and are prodded to react towards a given target to better lives. What can be rightly termed “play for learning”. Okwori, (2005:119) reiterates this when he says; “Theatre can do more than entertainment. It can go beyond fiction to intervene in reality because it is based on it”.

The role of popular performance in social education has been acknowledged worldwide. Theatre activists have not only acknowledged this role but have utilized popular performances for popular action. In the recent past, social education programmes particularly those geared towards development generally, have sprung up in many parts of the third world: Brazil, Mexico, Kenya, Ghana, Zambia, Tanzania, Botswana, Cameroon, Nigeria and so on. Organizers of these programmes attest to the fact that, the common starting point for social education programmes was the validation of the performing culture of the people. It was also observed that popular performing culture should not simply be seen as mere performances of folksongs and dances but events that have far reaching implication in the day to day life of the people.

This implies that, the process of using theatre to mobilize and motivate participation in the development process, as well as educate rural communities is a task that entails using drama to further enhance development. To this end, the art of performance goes beyond the point of exciting and pleasuring the audience to the point where it brings about tangible evidence of change and development in the field. Here, the cognitive value of drama as an art rests in its capacity to stir up a thought

that propels the target audience to develop an approach that conforms to the situation to address issues raised in the skits.

Ode (2008:7) writing on this describes TfD as:

... a method of non-formal education. It is simply a kind of self-development oriented theatre that involves the people fully by enabling them take control of their destinies... Here the people are expected to arise from their state of ignorance and apathy in the quest for social change. This is done through a process of making drama.

In this sense, the theatre activist automatically becomes a popular educator. As a popular educator, the theater activist(s) becomes a strong catalyst in mobilizing the people to discuss their needs in such a way that they will begin to see such needs more specifically as wants. For instance, the need for good health which is the initial stage would be stated as “if only our women would not die during delivery”, might through the able facilitation of the theatre activist specifically be put as, “we want and we intend somehow to have for ourselves safe delivery”. Obviously, such a positive and assertive statement of needs has in itself become a prime motivator and would turn the possibility of a group action into a probability.

It must be noted that the theatre activist/popular educator cannot realize this alone. The first significant step in achieving this, is by identifying key actors among the selected performers from the chosen traditional performing groups.

The theatre activist then takes the group through series of skill acquisition exercises, which put them in a better position to conduct a social education programme with the people.

These skills involve using traditional performances in setting these villagers minds in a thinking process. Once they begin to think about why they must do a specific thing such as making pregnancy safer for themselves, how and what to do to achieve this becomes easy. The performers are trained to involve their audience in after production discussions.

The role of both the performances and the theatre activists here is to use their skills to supply the stimulus for thought and action, and they do this by asking penetrating questions that will put the people in the position to think till they arrive at a plausible solution to the problem. They must also ensure that the conclusions they have reached are not only useful but achievable. There and then a workable action plan is drawn up, setting out what should be done, who will do it, when it will be done and how we get to know the successes and failures of actions further.

On the whole, team work and interactive exercises are central to the work of a popular educator for without these, most participants will become passive recipients of ready-made messages.

As such, TfD aims at social transformation which begins at grass root education aimed at the exclusive good of the people (masses), breeding liberating initiatives that permeate their whole being and communities.

Drama, stories and songs have long been used in development. Most commonly, performances that are used for development purpose by development agencies feature pre-scripted plays and catchy tunes that entertain and engage the audience in discussion as a way of getting messages across and changing attitudes and habits.

Cornwall (1997:23) writing on the role of performance and participatory

development submits that:

Like advertising jingles, such performances seek to sell particular ways of doing things by offering new and different practices which they show to be more desirable. Laughter and action draw the crowd to see characters facing the problems and practicing the solutions that development practitioners regard as the most pressing or appropriate.

TfD as an approach, makes the audience see themselves mirrored on stage and this stimulates them to look at their conditions and thereby taking steps to become involved to effect the desired change. The discourse on TfD as an approach tries to bring out an understanding of what TfD is about or what it stands for.

Among theatre activists who have been involved in this approach it is believed that the premise upon which this approach developed, is the notion of taking theatre to the people. (Alachi 2001:16). Among practitioners there is a continuum from those who believe and focus on the use of community based research to create fairly polished performances to be staged by experienced actors and used as a basis for discussions to those who focus on theatre that emphasizes theatre as a process of enacting everyday problems and proffering solutions to them by those who experience them.

The former, according to Kidd and Colletta (1980:288)

is used as a means to legitimizing and mobilizing participation in government development programmes...a more effective means for socializing them (the people) to accept certain information with critical reflection. This stage in the continuum, does not seek to involve the people rather it seeks to use theatre as a tool for government propaganda. The latter concerns on one hand the use of drama activists as well as development workers for performance after initial research regarding the people's problems.

The second aspect refers to the situation whereby the audience is involved in acting out their problems as well as discussion of such. With this approach, contact is made before hand with the potential audience before and during the performance. The plays that are developed subsequently are centered on the problems identified during the process of research. During performance the plays are deliberately left open ended or unfinished to trigger and motivate the participation of the audience who are invited to complete the play or contributed to them through the discussions of issues raised in the plays with catalysts. In fact, the main focus is the action which the entire process is supposed to start off.

Iorapuu (2003:59) sums it succinctly

The thrust of popular theatre or Theatre for Development is to create a kind of theatre different from the conventional bourgeois theatre, in a language that is most acceptable to the proletariat using those cultural forms that are truly theirs. The theatre reflects their struggles and how they can effect change.

The core issue here is that this approach relies on the people (the masses) or the community and its traditional art forms, in its bid towards breeding change or transformation. As such, the approach makes use of the people's traditional media such as proverbs, folk songs, dances, signs and codes and masquerades that are familiar to the people.

The AhmaduBello University, University of Ibadan, University of Jos and Benue State University popular theatre projects present good examples of this approach. Hagher (1990:10) sums this up better when he quotes Kidd (Year:Pages) thus:

The theatre performance is not the experience; it must be linked with critical analysis, organization and struggle. The performance can provide a dialectical view of the world but this must be consolidated and sharpened through dialogue and action. It must be part of a continuing process in which past action (struggle) provides the dramatic material (historical view of reality) for analysis and strategizing leading to further action.

The above quote is the praxis upon which the pedagogy of Tfd is based. Encouraging people to get a more critical understanding of the particular issue at hand and working out the channels for action. According to Kidd (1980:294) this is made possible “when discussion is woven into the post performance analysis. Acting skills are almost irrelevant here: what matters is the process which moves towards mobilization and enhancing change and development”.

The basic aim of the popular theatre approach (Tfd) is to transform the monologue traditional performance into participatory-based theatre. This is because dialogue as can be observed, is the basic trait that is common among all humans. Also, all humans are capable of dialogue and desire dialogue. It is through the process of dialogue that issues are clarified and new decisions are reached.

Alachi (1996:63) writing on the role of drama and education opines that:

popular theatre is a mass education process because it adopts a form where;... dialogue, reflection and communication that enable the people to discuss their problems with the educator, the ultimate product being action geared towards the solution of the identified problems.

This form of the theatre in essence, brings hitherto hidden issues into limelight and projects the fact that development or change cannot be done in vacuum but must seek to open up dialogue with the beneficiaries of such change. This form of theatre goes beyond mere entertainment and past time activity, but occupies a central position and serves as a platform and medium for raising and analyzing critical issues that cut across social, political and economic spheres of the people's lives.

This entails bringing together the target groups for development as well as stakeholders and development communicators to a round table talk where everybody is allowed to express his or her feelings without fear or favour. This is what marks the hallmark of participation in this approach.

Participatory drama here becomes a tool that enables people in villages and towns to become part of discussions aimed at transforming negative attitudes, habits, values and practices that may be in some cases irrelevant. The core issue here is that theatre allows everyone to participate in their activities be it singing, dancing, acting, problem analysis etc. thereby leading them to talk about their problems and make decisions to bring about development or change in their lives and communities.

CONCLUSION

... the central thrust in Tfd is that the process creates space for

critical education through the various skills explored... the Tfd approach enables people to see problems freshly as possible... and if the outcome of the performance must lead to critical action then people must not only dialogue on the issues, they must also end up with a collective understanding on what to do about the problem.

Iorapuu, 2003:164

Iorapuu's quote above, sets the tone for a conclusion to this paper because 'opening the eyes' of the people through conscientisation is not the issue but beyond conscientisation, the people for whom development is meant identify the problem and move to and or take actual steps to effect change in their lives and their communities.

It is worthy to note that, the relevance of this approach to participatory research is that it enables the participants who are the target group for change to have access to accurate, up-to-date and relevant information on issues that affect their lives through an informal context as the discussion sessions are geared towards encouraging participants to embrace positive attitudes by empowering them to learn to talk about and understand issues better.

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Theatre for Development and the Development of Theatre in Nigeria: A Critique of the New Didactic Heresy

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Abstract

Plays as pieces of dramatic composition or production are often discussed and evaluated purely from the perspective of theatrical performance. Drama can also be analyzed and evaluated on the basis of their literary form, style, or subject matter. The aim of the paper is to apply this latter form of analysis to the new genre of drama generally known as Theatre for Development in Nigeria.

The paper identifies two features which are definite problematics – the main subject matter and intended audience of these plays as well as the almost wholly didactic nature of the scripts in this new genre. The literary landmines in the controversial field of developmental communication, as well as issues of didacticism which are as old as Plato, are discussed. The paper asserts that even though the contention between proponents of didacticism and those of “Art for Art’s sake” may not have yielded any clear victor, falling into the didactic heresy may lead us back to a certain prudery and philistinism which are uncharacteristic of, and wholly unsuitable for literary creations of our time and age.

The author attempts to look in some detail at these two problematics, with the hope of evaluating the contributions, whether positive or negative, of this new genre to the development of theatre in Nigeria.

Introduction

Dramatic works written for performance on the stage, radio, or television are considered as a literary genre. According to classical theorists, lyric poetry, epic poetry and drama constitute the three fundamental genres of literature. As is often the case, plays as pieces of dramatic composition or production can be discussed and evaluated purely from the perspective of theatrical performance. However, as a serious literary genre, drama is one of the categories of artistic works that can also be analyzed and evaluated on the basis of their form, style, or subject matter. The aim of this paper is to begin to apply this latter form of analysis to the new type, kind or indeed genre of drama which falls under the broad context of Theatre for Development in Nigeria.

The New Genre

In modern literary theory, the three ultimate genres correspond to their modern day equivalents and can be divided “into fiction (novel, short story, epic), drama (whether in prose or verse), and poetry (centering on what corresponds to the ancient ‘lyric poetry’)” (Wellek and Warren, 1982:227). While fiction and poetry may have evolved away from their performative epic and lyric poetry antecedents - poems and novels being “eye-read ... for the most part”, drama has remained, “as among the Greeks, a mixed art, centrally literary ... but involving also ‘spectacle’ - making use of the actor’s skill and the play director’s, the crafts of the costumer and electrician.” (Wellek and Warren, 1982:229) These three ultimate genres are now properly thought of as literary modes, each of which can be subdivided into their various forms, species or genres.

The general field of drama “ranges from tragedy to melodrama, (and) from high comedy to farce.” (Nicoll, 1943:172) These species or groupings focus on outer and inner form of the works as the basis of differentiation. Based on the writer’s attitude, purpose, subject matter as well as intended audience, it is possible to conceive of today’s popular ‘Theatre for Development’ plays as belonging to a species or genre that is unique and problematical in some ways.

Firstly, considered at the level of “performance as intervention” (Illah, 2003) the authors, directors and producers of these plays display a degree of altruistic egalitarianism that is uncharacteristic of creative artists. However suspect this may be, it is not necessarily a sticky issue. The second unique feature, and a definite problematic, is the main subject matter and intended audience of these plays. These probably reflect the noble attitudes and purpose behind these ‘Theatre for Development’ productions. However, the entire domain of developmental communication has been so engulfed in raging controversy from such different perspectives that any creative writer venturing into it will be literally walking into a terrain full of theoretical and ideological landmines. The third unique feature, which is also a serious problematic, is the almost wholly didactic nature of the scripts in this new genre. This is another literary minefield which is as old as Plato. Even though the contention between proponents of didacticism and those of “Art for Art’s sake” may not have yielded any clear victor, falling into the didactic heresy may lead us back to a certain prudery and philistinism which is uncharacteristic of, and wholly unsuitable for literary creations of our time and age. The concern of this paper is to look in some detail at these problematics, with the hope of evaluating the contributions, whether positive or negative, of this new genre to the development of theatre in Nigeria.

Didacticism through the Ages

The conviction that the main function of poetry is to teach was already established in ancient Greece before the time of Plato.

Gilbert (1943) points out that:

Poetry occupied a high place in Greek education because it was believed that from it children learned about the gods, poetical characters were worthy of imitation, and that many subjects, such as generalship, were admirably taught by Homer. Plato pointed out that Homer often represented the gods as immoral, that the complaining

and weeping of Achilles is not to be imitated, that no man was ever chosen general because he was educated through poetry (Ibid, p166).

Plato was said to have banished Homer from his republic. In a similar vein, Aristotle in his *Poetics* considered poetry as “an aesthetic phenomenon, without regard to its didactic qualities. He abandons the notion that the characters of tragedy are subjects for imitation” (Ibid, p166).

The Roman emphasis on the edification motive is best exemplified by Lucretius' *De rerum natura* which was an account of Epicurus' atomic theory of matter. Its combination of moral urgency, intellectual force, and precise observation of the physical world makes it one of the summits of classical literature. Lucretius sought to free humanity from the fear of death and of the gods, which he considered the main cause of human unhappiness, and his material was designed to instruct and convince rather than please. Indeed, Lucretius was reputed through this classic to have “written the charter of the didactic theory,” comparing the art of literature to the practice of coating medicine with honey so that children may swallow them for their good in spite of their bitter taste (Gilbert 1943:166). Unlike his near contemporary, Horace's position on the didactic motive was balanced by his assertion that “the poet is to teach, to please, or to do both” (Ibid). This outstanding lyric poet and theorist stated in his *Ars Poetica* that the best poems edify as well as delight; the secret of good writing being wisdom (implying goodness). Horace thus emphasized that a good poet needs both teaching and training to give of his best (Grant, 2004). Many writers through the ages have conformed to these didactic expectations. A prominent example is the Italian poet, prose writer, literary theorist, moral philosopher, and political thinker and one of the great figures of world literature, Dante Alighieri (1265-1321). However, other writers such as Wordsworth (*Lyrical Ballads*) and Shelley (*Prometheus Unbound*) have argued otherwise, vehemently rejecting didacticism in its entirety, with Poe (*The Poetic Principle*) referring to the position of Lucretius and his varied followers as “the heresy of the didactic.”(Gilbert 1943:167)

It is not, however, the intention of this author to dwell on the different conceptions of the nature and function of literature. The following passage is apt in this regard:

If one goes far enough back... one can reach a time when literature, philosophy, and religion exist undifferentiated: among the Greeks, Aeschylus and Hesiod would perhaps be instances. But Plato can already speak of the quarrel between the poets and the philosophers as an ancient quarrel and mean by it something intelligible to us. We must not, on the other hand, exaggerate the difference made by doctrines of ‘art for art's sake’ at the end of the nineteenth century or more recent doctrines of *poésie pure*. The ‘didactic heresy’, as Poe called the belief in poetry as an instrument of edification, is not to be equated with the traditional renaissance doctrine that the poem pleases and teaches through pleasing. (Wellek and Warren, 1982:29)

In the protracted dialectics on the purpose of art, Shepley (1943) points out that the term didactic appears to have several levels of meaning. Didacticism may refer to two related but different questions: (1) should the writer try to teach? (2) Should the work of art be instructive? At another level, the term could be: (1) used

subjectively as a derogatory term; (2) to mark an all embracing category; or (3) to describe a kind or category of work. Wellek and Warren (1982) state that “in their reformatory zeal, certain older advocates of ‘pure literature’ (*poésie pure*) identified the mere presence of ethical or social ideas in a novel or a poem as the ‘didactic heresy’.” They point out that literature is not defiled by the presence of ideas literarily used, but it is the author’s practical intent (whether for propaganda, incitation to direct, immediate action) or scientific intent (such as provision of information, facts, additions to knowledge) which determine whether a piece of work may be classified as pure literature or part of the so-called didactic heresy (Wellek and Warren, 1982:239).

Anatomy of a Didactic Play

Contemporary Nigerian dramas which fall under the broad category of Theatre for Development can be analysed in terms of the two questions posed by Shepley, as well as classified according to the three levels of meanings identified above. Didacticism is a concept that is neither new nor unexamined in Nigerian theatre studies. Nwamuo (2006) probably best encapsulates the current Nigerian academic position on the issue of didacticism when he argues that “the large amount of money spent to get the product (drama presentation) ready, must be recovered as the days of art for arts sake, originated by Edgar Allan Poe, is no more,” (Nwamuo, 2006:8, my parenthesis). He goes on to add that “people go to live theatre performances *to get education while being entertained*, to develop the appetite for art and to appreciate the human artistic experience,” (Ibid, p.9, my emphasis). While Nwamuo’s position may reflect the view of most Nigerian dramatists regarding the issue of didacticism in literature, this author believes that the new genre of Theatre for Development carries didacticism to a whole new level that must arouse our concern for their possible impact on the development of theatre in Nigeria as a whole. Indeed, the unconcealed practical intent of these authors is propaganda, not in terms of misleading publicity or deceptive or distorted information, but in terms of information and publicity aimed at promoting or spreading a policy, idea, doctrine, or cause. Thus, their success is not necessarily a measure of the aesthetic quality of the plays they write and perform, but rather a factor of how successful they are in inducing immediate desired action through incitation and provision of information and facts to their target audiences. When dealing with issues of gender, youth and reproductive health education especially in view of current concerns about the HIV and AIDS pandemic, such plays are, therefore, ethically pedantic, generally lacking in tension or drama, dull and boring, as well as being puritanical and dogmatic.

Ironically, some enthusiasts see these very shortcomings as noteworthy, praising the minimalism in costumes and make-up, the contrived dialogues which focus mainly on the pedagogic points, and plot, character and dramatic action which are suppressed except where they promote the essential teaching aims of the drama. Such artificial actions never appear spontaneous and are very much unlike reality.

The Perils of Patronage or Encouragement

It takes a lot of creative imagination to write and produce a play which will give high aesthetic satisfaction to the viewer or listener. This creativity relies on the adroitness, craft, cunning, dexterity, expertise, know how, and skill of the dramatist.

Proudly, our nation has not failed to produce such great writers in the past. However, as far as creativity and aesthetic quality in drama are concerned, the current impetus given to Theatre for Development productions by the high level of external funding from government and private donors based in the United States and Britain must be seen as the dark cloud that it is, and there are no silver linings. The ingenuity and inventiveness of a creative writer can only barely disguise the crude didacticism required to create the type of message-laden plays that will attract such funds from abroad. Is the creative imagination of a whole generation of our playwrights being unwittingly sacrificed at the altar of Theatre for Development? It is the argument of this author that the ability of our writers to use their imagination to develop new and original ideas especially in the artistic context of drama is being restricted by the lucre of donor dollars. This argument must not, however, be construed as an indictment on the character of writers in the new genre. Literary patronage originated as far back as pre-Homeric times.

Writing on the encouragement of literary production, Harris (1943) showed that patronage from the rich segments of society was critical for the physical well-being and continued productivity of authors. These patrons encompassed both benevolent rulers and malevolent tyrants and dictators. Noblemen and aristocrats provided patronage and encouragement to writers for a variety of reasons including genuine personal love for the literary arts as well as inducement for personal praise-singing:

... Patronage proceeded in a fairly direct line to the Hellenistic period and the interest in learning and literature that was fostered by the Ptolemies at Alexandria. Rome accepted the Greek heritage. Roman aristocrats encouraged literature, for its own sake, or because it gave them an opportunity to have their achievements celebrated in verse. (Harris, 1943:189)

Both the state and religious institutions also provided support for literature “in various degrees; and patronage means, of course, control and supervision”, (Wellek and Warren, 1982:100).

In the large, the later history is the transition from support by noble or ignoble patrons to that afforded by publishers acting as predictive agents of the reading public... In England, the patronage system apparently began to fail early in the eighteenth century. For a time, literature, deprived of its earlier benefactors and not yet fully supported by the reading public, was economically worse off. (Wellek and Warren, 1982:99).

The contemporary Nigerian dramatist is faced with a daunting economic challenge. Nwamuo (2006) paints a gloomy picture of this “petro-dollar republic which wallows in the superlatives” and speaks of the “high level of corruption, the absence of the rule of law, honour, integrity and good planning (constituting) drawbacks in the machinery of governance,” (Nwamuo, 2006:5). This situation has impacted negatively on the growth of theatre audiences:

Owing to certain problems of underdevelopment such as irregular water supply, poor power supply, poor maintenance of theatre buildings and fear of vandalism of public property, most theatre

conveniences or rest-rooms are almost always locked up throughout the performance period. The theatre administrator therefore plans a theatrical event to have a full house, maximize profit but makes no allowance for an intermission. In consequence, some members of the audience abandon the performance, and go home when their bladders begin to ache. Some put up with the inconvenience but swear never to come back. (Nwamuo, 2006:24)

Nwamuo contends that “the result of this obvious neglect of the vital aspect of audience engineering is that theatre audiences are usually thin except on occasions when a big shot, or a government big-whip is coming to the event. They are thin because of insecurity, the threat of the home-video, poor quality productions, indiscipline in the society and low level of awareness.”(Nwamuo, 2006:24) The resultant decline in audience fee income accruing to dramatists has meant that Nigerian writers and producers have had to look elsewhere for funds to enable them continue in the profession.

Conclusion

Dollar funds from foreign donor agencies seem particularly attractive as they enable plays to be written and performed specifically for specialised, captive and usually non-fee paying audiences. However, the dangers of reliance on this form of patronage are two fold.

Firstly, the crude didacticism which many of these ‘Theatre for Development’ productions encourage impacts negatively on the aesthetic quality of our drama productions. A crop of talented Nigerian dramatists at the prime of their creative years find themselves writing mostly unaesthetic pedantic plays instead of exploring new and imaginative topics and treatments that will raise the nation’s theatre profile in the international arena.

Secondly, since these foreign donor funds enable expensive drama productions to be staged free of charge to target audiences, theatre audiences seem to have lost their primacy. Relegated to a second-class status, the role of the audience in determining and rewarding excellence in theatre productions has been severely eroded. This may not be good for the development of theatre in Nigeria.

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An Evaluation of Public Relations' Tools Utilized in the Management of the Jos Crisis

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Abstract

The study set out to evaluate the public relations tools employed in the management of the Jos crisis. Anchored on the intractable conflict and Chaos theories, the survey method was adopted as research design utilizing the descriptive approach. Population of the study comprised of Christians and Moslems in Jos, from which a sample size of 300 respondents was purposively drawn. Findings of the study shows that media relations, publicity, advertising, films, periodicals, oral communication and special events among others were the public relations tools utilized in the management of the crisis. The study found also that the public relations tools utilized were effective in queering down the crisis. Based on the findings, the study concludes that in spite of the effectiveness of the tools and the relative peace being experienced, there seems to be a cold warfare between Christians and Muslims in Jos. As such, adoption of the most effective public relations crisis management tools; adoption of an open and uncompromising neutral attitude towards religious organizations in the country by government; education of religious adherents on issues at stake and on the need to resist being manipulated to resort to violence amongst others were recommended.

Keywords: Public Relations; Crisis Management; peaceful coexistence; Jos Crisis

Introduction

Although public relations is acknowledged as an important crisis management tool in contemporary society, public relations practitioners are not normally responsible for resolving the underlying problem(s) that created a crisis situation. They however, play a crucial role in crises, the same role they have every day: maintaining and improving the relationships that exists within their constituencies by effectively communicating with its target audiences. The recognition of public relations as an effective and important tool in garnering and engineering goodwill, understanding and establishing mutual and sustainable relationship between groups is what has made it critical in both organization and societal crisis management. Given the fact that any society or organization can be hit

with a crisis, regardless of preparation, prevention or care, public relations which is a deliberate and planned programme of action has been recognized as the most effective crisis management tool (Oliver, 2009, p. 84).

Until September 7, 2001, Jos the capital of Plateau State of Nigeria was widely known for its serene and peaceful environment which is uniquely captured by the expression, "Home of Peace and Tourism." Likewise, while Americans were mourning their dead and counting the cost of terrorist attack, the inhabitants of Jos City were still passing through the trauma of the crisis that erupted prior to the attack launched on Americans. "... what has been described as bottled anger, exploded at a small mosque along Congo Russia area of Jos. And for the next several days, it was killing, burning of houses, churches, mosques and vehicles" (*Tell* September 24, 2001, p. 24).

The above statement described how a trivial matter could erupt into an uncontrollable crisis due to the wrong perception followers attach to religion, the base which ought to be built on peace. In line with the above mentioned, Odey (2000, p. 12) noted inter alia:

Whenever, and for whatever reason, love, peace, unity and the spirit of brotherhood are lacking among believers, the aim of religion is defeated. Whenever any group of people who profess any kind of religion refuses to live according to the positive tenets of that religion, but constitute themselves into die-hard fanatics and teams of suicide squads in the hope that by so doing, they bring heaven nearer to themselves, they as such, provide an occasion for giving religion a bad name. The same thing applies when people turn religion into a cloak under which cover they hope to achieve their selfish aims, which they cannot achieve through fair and healthy competition.

Religion no doubt is a highly charged subject matter. Tracing the history of man, it has remained one of the issues that can be counted upon to raise human emotions resulting in chaos. On account of religion, nations have gone to war and have subscribed to diverge forms of violent conflicts either in an attempt to defend their faith or in the process of extending the influence of their religion or to extirpate perceived contrary religious views whose presence could mar the already accepted and established belief.

While it is true that it is not possible to know the exact number of ethno-religious conflicts due to lack of adequate statistical data on this issue, it is interesting to note that about forty percent (40%) of ethno-religion based conflicts are credited to the fourth Republic of Nigeria. The fact that there is a recent increase in the number of ethno-religious conflicts in the country makes the role of public relations a relevant issue of discussion in contemporary Nigeria due to practicable lessons learnt in the use of public relations for conflict management in other nations that are multi-ethnic and multi-religious in their composition.

Statement of the Problem

Man by nature is imperfect and fallible, only God is perfect and infallible, and right from time immemorial, feud, crisis, contention and misunderstanding have

been endemic in human society. This explains why society have entrenched laws that would ensure justice and avert the tendency of conflicts generating into violent crisis. The need for security agencies also arose in society pursuant to law and order that will guarantee peace and stability by helping to curtail excesses and crisis situations. Notwithstanding, conflicts often get out of hand and violent crisis do pervade society as a result. The numerous crises that have rocked Jos, the Plateau State capital in the recent past also resulted from prolonged grievances and inadequately managed conflicts of interests that degenerated into violence.

Since the eruption of violent crisis in 2001 in Jos, both security agencies, government agencies, religious and interfaith organizations as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and traditional institutions have been on the alert with concerted efforts put in place to mitigate the crisis. In spite of the efforts, Plateau State is yet to reclaim its status of 'home of peace and tourism' as there has continued to be series of occasional crisis. Attesting to this fact, Dennis and Zacharys (2004, p. 1) observes that:

... Since the eruption of violent ethno-religious conflict in the city, it has continued to be characterized by severe tension and palpable fear among the inhabitants. There is presently, mutual suspicion between Christians versus Muslims on one hand and "indigenes" versus "settlers" on the other.

With the occasional outbreak of violence and series of bombings in Jos, it implies that the management of the Jos crisis calls for new approaches and strategies such as public relations. Public relations which is described as an integral part of part of society and an essential element of social interaction that is crucial for the effective functioning of society. It has been defined severally and its relevance and origin dates back to ancient times when the primary focus was to produce and generate factual information so as to create better understanding and positive responses.

The Mexican Statement, agreed on by the World Assembly of Public Relations Associations in Mexico City in August 1978 is one of the most widely used and applied definitions of public relations across the globe (Coombs and Timothy, 2007, p. 8). It defines public relations practice as "the art and social science of analysing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organisation leaders, and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve both the organisation's and the public interest." This shows that public relations can be examined from a variety of frameworks, including the focus on how public relations is engaged in the construction of messages and meanings that are intended to influence key publics important in a crisis situation. Public relations encompasses a wide range of approaches, including argumentation, advocacy and persuasion, corporate communication, dialectics and discourse, dramatism and storytelling, information, organizing, public opinion, and reputation management.

This underscores the role and importance of public relations in the management of the Jos crisis. Notwithstanding, the extent to which the stakeholders in the Jos crisis understand and have applied public relations in the management of the crisis and the public relations strategies employed is not certain. Against this background, the study is evaluating the role and strategies of public relations employed by both security agencies, government agencies, religious and interfaith

organizations as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and traditional institutions in the management of the Jos crisis.

Research Questions

The following research questions were drawn in direct response to the study's underlying objectives to guide the study:

Research Question 1: What are the public relations tools utilized in the management of the Jos crisis?

Research Question 2: How effective were tools of public relations utilized based on the order of preference?

Research Question 3: What are the causes of misunderstandings between Christians and Muslims in Jos, Plateau State?

Research Question 4: What are the public relations crisis management skills employed in the management of the Jos crisis?

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on Nothrup's *intractable conflict theory* and Murphy's *Chaos theory* respectively. The intractable conflict theory posits that intractable conflicts ordinarily are those conflicts that seem to elude possible solutions due to prolonged tensions and deep rooted suspicions and differences. The theory according to Smith (2009, p. 21) recognizes the dynamism of identity in personal and societal contract as the responsibility for intractable conflicts. According to Bourgress and Bourgress in Asobie (2005, p. 186), "intractable conflicts are intermittent escalation and de-escalation of conflicts that remain unresolved for a long period of time into violent crisis". Such crisis become stuck at a high level of intensity and destructiveness, typically involving numerous parties who take into cognizance their set of historical, religious, cultural, political and economic compromise to the contending issues.

The chaos theory on the other hand, emphasizes multi-directional causality and lack of predictability in violent crisis arising from long standing conflicts. The theory according to Bernstein and Rakowitz (2012, p. 16) is built on the two ideas that systems, no matter how complex, rely on an underlying order and that within such systems very small changes or events can cause very complex behaviours or outcomes. According to Stanton (2002, p. 20), the chaos theory posits that crisis management should be a long term mechanism that forecasts possible reactions to changes in society's orderings which may result in violent crisis.

Relevance of the theoretical framework lies in the fact that despite the means provided for reconciliation and peace as the lasting solution to the Jos crisis, the misunderstanding is yet to be resolved. As a result, there is still mutual suspicion and fear amongst parties for each other with imminent danger for the eruption of violent crisis. The chaos theory was also propounded as a result of the recognition that both crisis communication researchers and practitioners have focused primarily on the short term goals of resolving a crisis quickly as possible with as little damage to image as possible, as opposed to the longer term time frames and broader scales needed for chaos theory to play out. This calls for a public relations approach.

Public Relations as a Management Tool

Although public relations professionals are stereotypically seen as corporate servants the reality that remains is that, any organization that has at stake how it will be portrayed in the media, employs at least a public relations manager. This accounts for the reason why government agencies, trade associations and nonprofit organizations commonly carry out public relations management roles. In quest to describing the relevance of public relations in management, many authors presented definitions and explanations on why public relations is inevitable if at all the top management functions of an organization or company is to succeed. Akpala (1990, p. 3) viewed public relations being a management tool as:

The process of combining and utilizing or allowing an organization inputs (material and money), by planning, organizing, directing and controlling them, for the purpose of producing outputs desired by customers. So that organizational objectives will be accomplished.

If this notion is to be accepted, as a general view of people's understanding of what management is, then it will be reasonable to state that the management of any crisis situation requires a corporate strategic planning, which public relations is an essential part. In capturing the essence of ensuring that public relations is a management of inside rather than an outside function through the highlights of some salient points, Regester and Larkin (2008, p. 15) sees public relations as "a social philosophy and practices which are communicated to the public to secure its understanding". Public relations can be said to be a planned action which is purposely undertaken to not only gain, but to keep the goodwill of every section of the public with which the organization or institution comes in contact with. In addition to this, Umechukwu (2001, p. 3) emphasized that, "for public relations to succeed, it must become an attitude of mind by which management consciously appreciates that its own interest and those of its publics are in the long run identical and acts accordingly".

Even though we have seen an avalanche of the definitions of public relations, the below definition will need to be considered because of its imperative nature to our discussion and the destination to be arrived at. According to Cultip and Centre (1978, p. 3) public relations is:

A management function of continuous and planned character, through which the public and private organizations and institutions seek to win and retain the understanding, sympathy and support of those with whom they are or may be concerned, by evaluating public opinion about themselves in order to correlates as far as possible their own policies and widespread information.

The recent philosophy of public relations recognizes the validity of the view that an institution does not just function by divine right, but like any other part of the society, there exists, step by step planned programmes. Seymour and Moore (1999, p. 52) highlighted four conceptual foundations and follows; First is that, public relations is seen as social philosophy of management. Among other things, it places interest of the people first in all matters pertaining the conduct of the organization. It assumes that the organization's right to operate is conferred by the people and that privilege can be withdrawn. Secondly, public relations are seen as a social philosophy expressed in policy decisions. Public relations policies are the objectives of an

organization, settled course of action to be followed by management in dealing with problems that arises in the conduct of the enterprises. Third aspect is action resulting from the second policy. Policy decision needs to be expressed in appropriate action which is an offshoot of management. This is necessary because as scholars, noted, institutions are judged by what they do and not what they say in policy statements. Finally, public relations is communication. According to Crisford (1973:21), "the cardinal point to bear in mind is that public relations is fundamentally concerned with people and their relationship with each other." Therefore, in public relations, communication is believed to be the anchor of the profession. Canfield and Franzier (1973, p. 9) regards it as, "the lifeware of public relations management, because the medium reveals, explains, defends and promotes polices in order to secure understanding and acceptance."

Public Relations in Crisis Management and Management of Crisis

The occurrence crisis is a normal phenomenon in society. In fact crisis of recent times has become one of the features of societal dynamics. Therefore, every society should gear its attention towards the expectation of crisis in one form or the other. While ill-prepared societies in Crisis situations irredeemably fall by the way and are engulfed in one form of crisis or the other, the proactive societies and well-preferred ones with "shock absorbers" can withstand the unexpected. Crisis no doubt, is observed by society as unanticipated and unexpected, therefore it needs proper handling. It is pertinent to observe here that people mistake crisis to be in the form of disaster only. This is a misnomer because crisis could also come in form of a bounteous blessing. Therefore, as crisis is experienced in the manner of a drastic change in a society, this kind of change could either be negative or positive. To Daug Newsom, as presented by Salu (1994, p. 383), there are two definition of crisis typology, these include:

- violent crises; these are cataclysmic, immediate, involving loss of life or property e.g. Earthquake, Forest fires, Chemical leaks.
- On violent crises; These may be sudden and involve upheaval, damages tend to be less catastrophic and immediate e.g. Epidemics and Droughts.

In a further emphasis, Nkwocha (1999, p. 187) also outlined two major kinds of crises, thus, "Act-of-God Crisis which occur as a result of the forces of nature and cannot be totally stopped deaths, earthquakes, multiple births, and Man-Made Crisis, which are events caused by human beings or human frailties and can always be prevented e.g. accidents, labour unrest, sex scandals". According to Black as noted by Nkwocha (1999, p. 188), crises could be classified in two ways; Known-unknown and unknown-unknown. Hence:

- **known-Unknown:** These refer to predictable adversities and hazards existing due to the nature of the kind of business an organization is involved in. for instance, plane crashed are associated with airlines, poisonous chemical leakages are common with industrial or chemical plants e.t.c.
- **Unknown-unknown:** These are crisis situations that are totally unknown and never foreseen by anyone. An earthquake in Nigeria constitutes an unknown-unknown crisis.

In further classification of crises, Otuekere-Ubani as quoted by the same Nkwocha (1999, p. 188) posited that crises are based on, "whether they were foreseen

or totally unforeseen, whether the crisis is sudden or a gradual built-up of events and whether the crisis leads to partial paralysis of the company or total extinction.” Although, varied definitions of crisis have been presented with their various classifications too by different scholars, it is necessary to bear in mind that while each crisis may be unique or peculiar, requiring specific or tailor-made communication strategy, four elements exist which are common to all forms of crises.

According to Salu (1994, p. 385), “management, particularly the professional public relations practitioners, must be aware of these four elements of crisis: a trigger, a threat, an uncontrolled situation and an urgent action needed.” “Crisis viewed from the perspective of corporate change dynamics and management is, any event, issues, occurrence, or situation that could be described as a turning point, for better or for worse with both negative and positive valences or scores as a change agent or factor in organizational management” Nwosu as quoted in Nweke (2001, p. 285).

According to Nweke (2001, p. 85) while quoting Walton, “conflict from interpersonal perspective include; personal disagreement over substantive issues, such as differences over organizational structures, policies and practices; interpersonal antagonisms, that is the more interdependent human beings.” Presenting an elaborate explanation of what conflict is all about, Nweke (2001, p. 85 -86) emphasized that:

Conflict has both the aspect of issues and personality dimension. Issues leading to conflict could arise as a result of labour/government disagreement over wage increase. Conflict between the chief executive and his personal assistant where, for instance, the latter sees the first as being too high handed, nose and difficult to work with, is a form of personality conflict. While, cases bordering on a promotion polices, certain issues and personality, especially were the procedure is shrouded in controversy and dissatisfaction, become issue conflict.

Simply put, management of crisis is a situation that arises when an unexpected negative change occurs. Most often, this change is newsworthy and of concern to the public and even though every responsible management might wish to avoid the crisis, the reality is that it is not absolutely avoidable. Thus, it means in essence, acting when the event has already occurred. This explains why public relations practitioners are said to be more involved in proactive crisis management. They are advised to acquire the skills, knowledge and information necessary for effective crisis management for their clients or in their organization. The best method of handling crisis is to plan ahead, anticipating one (crisis) any moment, mapping out preventive measures and control strategies in case of its eventual occurrence.

Therefore, crisis management involves taking appropriate measures by “nipping a problem in the bud,” thereby disallowing it from occurring. According to Nwosu (1996:106), “crisis management in this respect, involves taking appropriate measures to prevent a crisis before it occurs or manage/control it well. The public relations manager plays a central role in crisis management and so most understand the phenomenon of crisis well”. From the foregone, it is evident that crisis management from the public relations perspective is proactive, preventive and pre-planned in nature.

Research Method

The study employs the survey research design utilizing the descriptive approach. Nworgu (1991, p. 55) posits that, "a survey research is one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group". Hence, questionnaire was administered to subjects to collect information on the role and strategies of public relations employed in the efforts of brokering peace between Christians and Moslems in Jos, Plateau state capital. The population of the study consisted of the residents of Jos. A sample size of 300 respondents was purposively drawn for the study. According to Ikeagwu (1998, p. 189), "the basic assumption behind purposive sampling method is that, with good judgment and an appropriate strategy, one can hand- pick the cases to be included in the sample and this develops sample that is satisfactory in relation to one's needs".

Thematic Presentation and Analysis

The questionnaire was structured into a likert scale to weigh responses, as such the data collected is also presented in a likert scale chart. This is followed by the description of answers provided by respondents based on research questions asked. Thus, the description of what public relations tools are, the cause of crisis between the Christians and Moslems in Jos and the most effective tools in crisis management and management of crisis were presented using likert scale frequency distribution tables and percentages.

Research Questions 1: What are the public relations tools utilized in the management of the Jos crisis?

Table 1: Public Relations Tools Utilized in Managing the Jos Crisis

S/N	Items	SA	A	UD	D	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
6	Public relations tools abound, especially in curbing crisis situations	152	75	3	46	24	3.95	Accepted
7	Among the relevant tools of public relations, media relations and publicity, advertising, films, periodicals, oral communication, special events are widely used.	97	102	7	71	23	3.59	Accepted
8	Film with its sound and sight effects is found to be important because it applies to both literates and illiterates as well as the deaf and dumb.	162	81	-	20	37	4.03	Accepted
9	Oral communication as a tool easily transmits messages across to both rural and urban dwellers.	190	62	2	25	21	4.25	Accepted

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10	Periodicals as a tool applied largely to literates.	213	50	-	22	15	4.41	Accepted
11	Special events create opportunity for direct contact, thereby enhancing messages to be passed across.	124	87	13	40	36	3.74	Accepted
12	Advertising provides an attractive appeal to the target public.	156	89	-	31	24	4.07	Accepted
13	Media relations and publicity serve as a formidable tool for government and organizations in maintaining good relations.	112	171	6	7	4	4.26	Accepted

Source: *Field Survey, 2013* (Number of respondents = 300)

Table 1 shows the mean score obtained from information on the basic tools utilized in public relations as a veritable tool in brokering peace between contending parties; the case of Christians and Moslem Crisis in Jos, Plateau State. From the table, it is shown that all the eight items mentioned received positive response from the respondents with mean range of 3.59 – 4.41, revealing that the respondents attest to the fact that media relations and publicity, film, oral communication, periodicals, special events, advertising among others, are basic tools utilized in public relations.

Research Question 2: How effective were tools of public relations utilized based on the order of preference?

Table 2: Effectiveness of the Public Relations Tools Utilized

S/N	Items	SA	A	UD	D	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
14	Public relations are not of the same level of effectiveness.	82	175	11	20	12	3.98	Accepted
15	The effectiveness of a tool of public relations is dependent on how it gets the message across to the target audience.	153	77	3	33	34	3.94	Accepted
16	The wider the coverage of the tool, the more the level of its effectiveness.	206	80	1	10	3	4.58	Accepted
17	Film as a tool of public relations is the most effective since it applied to both ears and eyes, likewise to literates and illiterates.	92	168	-	26	14	3.99	Accepted
18	The least effective tool is periodicals since it is only applicable to the literates.	81	143	4	52	20	3.71	Accepted

Source: *Field Survey, 2013* (Number of respondents = 300)

Table 2 shows the mean score obtained from information on the effectiveness of the tools of public relations based on the order of preference. From the table, five of the items got positive response (accepted) with the mean range of 3.71 to 4.58, thereby revealing that periodicals is the least effective tool because of its applicability to the literates only, while film is the most effective because of its sound and sight effects as well as its applicability to both literates and illiterates.

Research Question 3: What are the causes of misunderstandings between Christians and Muslims in Jos, Plateau State?

Table 3: Causes of Misunderstandings between Christians and Muslims in Jos

S/N	Items	SA	A	UD	D	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
19	Many reasons abound for the misunderstanding between Christians and Muslims in Jos, Plateau State.	113	102	21	31	33	3.77	Accepted
20	The issue of religious intolerance is only a cover up to the crisis.	36	25	15	110	114	2.20	Rejected
21	Power struggle between Christians and Muslims led to the crisis.	97	108	6	50	39	3.58	Accepted
22	The problem of land ownership has been a factor gingering misunderstanding between indigenes who are largely Christians and settlers who are mostly Muslims	89	151	7	22	31	3.81	Accepted
23	Socio-cultural background of Christians and Muslims in Jos enhanced the crisis.	92	98	26	54	30	3.56	Accepted
24	Illiteracy is a factor that can enhance misunderstanding.	143	71	15	45	26	3.86	Accepted
25	The major cause of the crisis is responsible for the massive destruction of lives and properties.	178	54	2	34	32	4.04	Accepted

Source: *Field Survey, 2013* (Number of respondents = 300)

Table 3 shows the mean score on the information obtained on the causes of misunderstanding between Christians and Muslims in Jos, Plateau state capital. From the table, all but one of the items received positive response (accepted), with mean range of 3.56 – 4.04, revealing that power struggle, issue of land ownership, socio-cultural background and illiteracy are among the causes of the misunderstanding between Christians and Muslims in Jos. However, item 20 received a negative response (rejected) with a table mean of 2.20, revealing that the issue of religious

intolerance is not just a cover up to the crisis between Christians and Muslims in Jos, but one of the causes of the crisis.

Research Questions 4: What are the public relations crisis management skills employed in the management of the Jos crisis?

Table 4: Public Relations Crisis Management Skills Utilized in Managing the Jos Crisis

S/N	Items	SA	A	UD	D	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
26	Management of crisis and crisis management utilize public relations tools in peace resolution.	84	97	7	62	50	3.34	Accepted
27	Management skills are important in crisis settlement.	153	71	12	31	33	3.93	Rejected
28	Management of crisis is a reactive measure applied when the crisis has taken place.	185	82	-	19	14	4.35	Accepted
29	Crisis management is proactive, aimed at nipping a problem in the bud.	172	93	-	20	15	4.29	Accepted
30	Management of crisis and crisis management are basically management approaches.	197	84	1	14	4	4.52	Accepted

Source: *Field Survey, 2013* (Number of respondents = 300)

Table 4 above shows the mean score obtained from information on management skills employed by public relations practitioners in crisis control. From the table, all the items hence 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30 had positive response (accepted) with mean range of 3.34 to 4.52, revealing that aside management skills being important in crisis settlement, management of crisis and crisis management are basically, management approaches.

Discussion of Findings

Findings presented in this study call for isolated interpretation in specific areas. In research question one where enquiries were made in relation to what basic tools public relations utilizes especially in relaying its messages, it was gathered based on the analysis and interpretation of data that all the tools mentioned are acceptable. In research question one, item 10 has the highest table mean, hence the highest number of positive response of 4.41. This, in other words, shows that periodicals, as one of the basic tools utilized in public relations are largely applicable only to the literates. Lending credence to the above fact, Frazier and Bertrand (1977,

p. 203) assert that, "as a class, public relations periodicals enjoy high reader interest....., it is edited for specific audience and published at regular intervals". Hence, the high readership above entails that only literates, of course, value periodicals and, as such, the literates in this context form the specific audience so mentioned to be beneficiaries of periodicals which largely include; company magazines, industrial publication and house organ.

The item with the least positive (accepted) mean in research question one is 7, with table mean of 3.59. In this particular item, it was asked whether advertising, media relations and publicity, films, periodicals, oral communication and special events are widely used tools of public relations. This item received a positive remark from the respondents with the above table mean. Frazier and Bertrand (1977, p. 137) supported the above, when they mentioned thus, "communication media used by organizations in public relations include publicity, advertising, periodicals, films, special events and oral communications."

Furthermore, the effectiveness of the basic tools of public relations in research question one was determined through the answers provided by respondents in research question two. Hence, the question is to find out among these veritable tools which are more effective based on the order to preference. Film as a tool of public relations was accepted with mean table of 3.99 as the most effective tool of public relations, since it applies to not just the deaf and dumb, but also to literates and illiterates. In support of the above, Ogunsanya (1991, p. 7) posits that, "human beings relate more to, and remember what they watch on television than what they listen to on radio or from fellow human beings". However, the least effective tool among the ones listed in research question one was found to be periodicals with a positive (accepted) table mean of 3.71. This response emerged to defend the earlier postulation, that periodicals are only applicable to the literates as supported by Frazier and Bertrand.

Research question three addresses the reasons behind the upheavals between Christians and Muslims in Jos, Plateau State capital. Among the factors listed that could be responsible for the crisis, illiteracy topped with a table mean of 3.86 (accepted), showing that illiteracy is largely ticked by respondents as the cause of the misunderstanding between Christians and Muslims in Plateau State. In defense of the above, Iduh (2004, p. 6) earlier mentioned that, "illiterates can easily be manipulated because they are not critical and logical in thinking". In like manner, Dr. Best in (*Inter Gender Peace Bulletin*, February, 2005, p. 8) suggested, "oral history education to sustain indigenous minorities' interests and stake in their societies." Likewise according to Kaigama (2006, p. 70), "peace education for religious harmony should be integral part of education in primary and higher institutions".

Contrary to other items that received positive response (accepted), item 20 had a negative response (rejected). Therefore, the claim that the issue of religious intolerance in only a cover up to the Christian and Muslim crisis in Jos, Plateau State capital has been debunked. This was, however, rejected with table man of 2.20, falling below the decision mean of 3.00. This implies that religious intolerance is one of the causes or could be a cause of religious crisis and not just a cover up. In defense of this objection, Arinze (1999, p. 6-7) noted that, "some of the factors generating religious intolerance generally are political, economic, ethnic or other considerations of personal or group egoism...that stirs parties to conflict".

In research question four, the management skills employed by public relations practitioners in crisis control were determined. In other words, management skills, as crisis management and management of crisis were both determined and confirmed, based on the outcomes of the respondents' responses. Item twenty-eight, which sees management of crisis as a reactive measure applied when crisis has already occurred, received a positive (accepted) response with a table mean of 4.35. This, in other words, posits that management of crisis, as a management approach, is a reactive measure applied when the crisis must have taken place. According to Nweke (2001, p. 88), management of crisis literally means, "managing a crisis that has occurred, which involves sporadic, largely uncoordinated actions to quench crisis".

On the other hand, crisis management in item twenty-nine with a positive response (accepted) of 4.29 from the respondents is largely seen as a proactive management approach aimed at nipping crisis in the bud. In support of the above fact, Nkwocha (1999, p. 192) sees crisis management as involving, "taking appropriate measures to either prevent crisis, before it occurs or control it promptly when it occurs". Hence the two of the above mentioned are utilized in public relations as skills of management approaches in tackling crisis situations.

Research question five asked the question on other measures that public relations practitioners could utilize in crisis control. In other words, this research question explored other means that could be used in checkmating crisis, aside the approaches in public relations. In the table provided for the research results, a run down of the items show that formidable boundary demarcation carries the highest table mean of 4.54, which signifies a positive (accepted) result from the respondents. Therefore, boundary demarcation among the various local government areas in the state could go a mile in stemming misunderstanding or conflict. According to Ngene (2004, p. 53); "being historically nomadic, the Hausa-Fulani were unable to trace their origins... and, therefore, argued that Jos is no man's land." As such, settlement of land dispute and boundary demarcation will bring about relative peace and tranquility. Finally, within the same table, the item that falls under research question five with the lowest table mean is item 33, although it has a positive (accepted) response from the respondents. This item, in other words, stipulates that unbiased and non-sentimental feelings about another person's culture or religion will lead to a harmonious living.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that in spite of the effectiveness of the tools and the relative peace being experienced, there seems to be a cold warfare between Christians and Muslims in Jos as attested to by the 300 respondents sampled for the study. Notwithstanding, the affirmative knowledge of public relations especially the tools in crisis management shows that the cold warfare can be resolved if proactive public relations programmes are put in place by the stakeholders. Through such programmes, the religious intolerance, power struggle, land ownership, socio-cultural differences and illiteracy which seem to be the underlying factors causing crisis in Jos can be effectively managed and contained. This will ensure religious tolerance, equitable sharing of political positions, unbiased and non-sentimental feelings about other people's culture, formidable boundary demarcation,

avoidance of rumour, promotion of education, issue management, economic empowerment, dialogue, peace and reconciliation.

Recommendations

Arising from the findings and conclusion reached in respect to managing the Jos crisis and restoring the city's dignity as the 'home of peace and tourism' the study recommends that:

1. The stakeholders involved in management of the crisis should adopt the most effective public relations crisis management tools, especially publicity, advertising, periodicals, feature articles, photographs, websites, exhibitions, seminars and workshops, award programmes among others.
2. The Nigerian government at the federal, state and local levels, should adopt an open and uncompromising neutral attitude towards religious organizations in the country, by ensuring law and order. In relation to lives and property, the government should ensure equity in the availability of positions and government should not join any religious organization, within or outside its territory.
3. Religious adherents should always be educated on issues at stake and on the need to resist being manipulated to resort to conflict. Peace education for religious tolerance in a mixed community of religious believers and practitioners is also necessary.
4. The promotion of interfaith and interethnic dialogue, especially between Christians and Muslims on peace building should be pursued as a deliberate government policy. Stakeholders in society, whether primary or secondary, individuals or organizations should be engaged, in the course of dialoging
5. The civil society should work with security agencies in exposing the perpetrators or sponsors of conflicts and making sure that justice is adequately served. No sacred cow should be hidden or be allowed to exhibit any clandestine act.
6. Leaders of various religious groups should conscientize their followers on the great value of religious tolerance in a pluralistic religious society. Words should be marched with examples by upholding the positive values and functions of religion.

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Appraisal of Visual Rhetoric as a Persuasive Device in Online Advertising

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Abstract

This paper looks at how visual rhetoric is used in online advertising to attract the attention of the public to an advertisement. The aim of advertising is to persuade toward a desired action, however, an advert has to be noticed first before the desired result is achieved. This is where visual rhetoric plays its magnetic role of captivating the attention of the public through image. This work is premised on the Information Processing Model, propounded by William .J McGuire and covers aspects of advertising such as the aims of advertising, approaches to advertising and how visual appeals are used in online advertising.

Introduction

In recent years, with the increase in internet connectivity in Nigeria and increase in the variety of products and enhanced consumer awareness of e-commerce, online marketing activities have increased dramatically. This has led to a corresponding growth and development of online advertising activities in the country. From using static image banners which had no difference with print advertisements, to flash banners with smooth animation, online advertisements excite effects, engaging graphics and interactivity. The aim of advertising which is used as an influence and persuasion tool in mass communication, to create the desired changes in behaviours of target market and by this way to sell the product, has made visual rhetoric an important component of advertising.

Through visual rhetoric, advertisers try to persuade consumers and influence their choices towards their products and services using the effectiveness of visualization as a rhetorical language. According to Messaris (1997, p. 7), images (visual rhetoric) play and perform three major roles in advertising - they elicit emotions by simulating the appearance of a real person or object; serve as photographic proof that something really did happen; and they establish an implicit link between the thing that is being sold and some other image. The iconicity of visual rhetoric according to Messaris (1997) serves the process of giving rise to some emotional disposition by making it possible for images to draw upon rich variety of visual stimuli and associated emotions. Iconic relationship between the content and

meanings is reflected through several characteristics of images. For instance, an image can display a simulated reality which bears certain associations although visual characteristics might be different from the real world.

Also explaining the importance of visual rhetoric as persuasive devices in advertising, Hall and Hanna (2004, p. 187) note that visuals give persuasive messages more presence, implying that the messages can command more attention from receivers and perhaps cause more change in receivers because of the visual rhetoric presence. Since the world today is saturated with online advertisements and Nigerian firms actively engaged in e-commerce and online advertising activities, people see visual rhetoric as persuasion attempts of advertisers on a daily basis. Consequently, this paper explores the usage of visual rhetoric as persuasive devices in online advertising with the aim of providing insights into visual persuasion. In the critical exploration of persuasive properties of online advertisements and how they engage in forming a response, this paper pays attention not only to the verbal messages but also to the visual rhetoric because usually persuasion is created through visual-verbal continuum.

Theoretical Underpinning

The Information Processing Model propounded by William J. McGuire in 1978 which assumes the consumer as part of a persuasive communication encounter (advertising) is used in anchoring this discourse. McGuire (1978:157) explains that the information-processing approach to social influence posits a series of behavioural steps through which the individual must pass if he/she is effectively to be persuaded. McGuire (1978:157) identifies three basic stages of information processing used by consumers in evaluating advertising messages to include *Input processes*, *Storage processes* and *Output processes*. The stages are explained as follows:

- * **Input** processes are concerned with the analysis of the stimuli.
- * **Storage** processes cover everything that happens to stimuli internally in the brain and can include coding and manipulation of the stimuli.
- * **Output** processes are responsible for preparing an appropriate response to a stimulus.

McGuire (1978:157) furthermore argues that:

This analysis views the recipient of the persuasive communication as an information-processing machine or a problem solver, rather than as a recalcitrant resistor or artful evader in the service of needs that have nothing to do with the topic of the advertising campaign.

Belch and Belch (2001:149) suggest that the stages of this model are similar to the hierarchy of effects sequence; identifying each of the stages of the information processing model as a dependent variable that must be attained and that may serve as an objective of the communication process. Belch and Belch (2001) observe that each phase of the information processing model can be measured in order to evaluate the effectiveness of various strategies designed to move the consumer to purchase.

Contributing to the model, Barone, Miniard and Romeo (2000, p. 387) liken the information processing model to the elaboration likelihood model, and identifies two types of processing that may occur during advertising information processing by consumers - Objective and Biased processing. Objective processing occurs when the individual is motivated through visual rhetoric and able to scrutinize the message for

its “true” or central merits. Biased processing occurs when the individual possesses a strong prior opinion regarding the message topic (*e.g.*, brand loyal or highly dissatisfied consumers) and, hence, responds to message arguments with attitude consistent cognition instead of scrutinizing the message for its quality. That is, if effective visual rhetoric is used and the message is consistent with prior attitudes, the individual will elicit support arguments, while counter arguments will be elicited if effective visual rhetoric is not used, the message is counter attitudinal.

The significance and relevance of the Information Processing Model to the discourse lies in the fact that considerable research has demonstrated that visual rhetoric plays a role in attitudes toward advertising messages and can mediate the process of brand attitude formation (Batra and Ray, 1986; Celuch and Slama, 1995; Meyers-Levy and Peracchio, 1995; Lang, 2000). This explains why the Information Processing Model looks closely at how, independent of the context, stimulation from the visual rhetoric goes through the processes of attention, perception, and storage of advertising messages by consumers throughout a series of distinct memory stores (Miller, 2011, p.98).

The Aims of Advertising

A producer attempts to persuade the public into buying his product by trying to show the qualities of his product through advertising. An advert has to be eye-catching first before it can hold our attention and hopefully lead to the desired action. According to Vesterguard (1986, p.29) The elements responsible for this are the headline along with the illustration and the slogan if possible. The advertiser makes his advert outstanding in order to be noticed by the public and hopefully hold their attention. No matter the channel used to communicate an advertising message be it on TV, the print media, radio or the internet, there are always some goals to achieve. The advertiser tries to see that an advert is noticed. This is by making it eye-catching. The advert must also hold the attention of the audience and convince them that the subject of the advert is of interest to them. The advert also tries to convince the public that the consumption of the product will satisfy a need. Finally advertising points out the qualities of the particular brand being advertised implying that these qualities make it superior to other brands of the same product. What adverts aim to do is to persuade us to consume the advertised product. Advertising uses many devices in persuading. The message is sent across through language and visual image. The image is usually first noticed and together with language helps us understand the message better. According to Jamieson(1985, p.107) the pictorial image possesses the characteristics, it can quicken the reading of the associated text, it can lead the reader into that text, in preference to other text on the same page. And as it is an image, it can readily be retained in the memory then to a corresponding verbal description. Though this paper deals specifically with visual rhetoric in online advertising, it is necessary to glimpse into various views of authors on advertising which can be broadly categorized into positive and negative approaches.

Approaches to Advertising

Positive Approach to Advertising

The main approaches to advertising include the positive and the negative approach. The positive approach to advertising sees advertising as an aid to society

where it is seen to raise the standard of living by informing the public about goods available and encouraging the sale of mass produced goods, which in turn bring about production and creates employment. It is seen as economically beneficial because it brings about stability in the prices of goods and helps in the supply and demand equation. Advertising is said to help in distribution as it paves the way for new goods about to enter the market place. It is seen to strongly influence channels of distribution of manufactured goods McEwan(1956, p.71) According to Leymore in Berman(1981, p.47) advertising supports the social order by reducing anxieties and providing simple solutions for eternal human dilemmas. Advertising under the positive approach is seen as playing an informative role as it presents the good points of a product to people and leaves it to their judgment to take any action.

Negative Approach to Advertising

Just as proponents of advertising under the positive approach view it positively others view it negatively and have accused it of a range of offenses from creating false needs, lacking in social responsibility, providing false emotional satisfaction, justifying consumerism and capitalism, manipulation and deception.

Stanfield in Berman says, the false need for the commodity may pacify for the moment but it cannot satisfy, the need will return again and again(Berman 1981,p.26)Dyer sees advertising as lacking in social responsibility and making us misjudge our priorities(Myers 1986, p.83).

On false emotional satisfaction, Marcuse says, the economic system provides false emotional satisfaction to behave and consume in accordance with the advertisement. According to him it degrades human consciousness(Berman 1981, p.26) thus suggesting that advertising encourages us to lead false lives.

Visual Rhetoric as a Persuasive Device

Rhetoric refers to techniques usually verbal designed and employed to persuade and impress. Since the aim of advertising is to catch attention, hold it and hopefully favourably dispose people to the product and finally persuade them, rhetoric is greatly employed. Rhetoric deals with the manner an idea is expressed and not the meaning of the expression. The form of the expression is what is viewed as rhetoric which Jamieson says increases the persuasiveness of the message (1985, p.59).

Rhetorical devices are found in language which could be verbal or written, this has now been applied to the visual field known as visual rhetoric. An extensive exploration of rhetoric applied to the visual field was carried out by Jacques Durand where he analyzed many adverts and came up with a broad list of figures used in visual rhetoric. He views rhetorical figures as mock violations of norms (Dyer 1982, p.160).

Norms are usually broken in visual rhetoric which helps to make an advert interesting, unique, attention grabbing and hopefully consequently bring about action/consumption. He divided visual rhetoric into four broad categories under which we find different categories which include figures of addition, figures of suppression, figures of substitution and finally figures of exchange. The aim of visual rhetoric ultimately is to gain the attention of the public.

Figures of Addition

This could deal with repetition in visual images to emphasize effectiveness of a product or accumulation to convey the idea of abundance.

Figures of Suppression

This is not very common in advertising since advertising usually exaggerates rather than understates. A play on absence however used in advertising makes the public ponder and fill in the missing object or person.

Figures of Substitution

This could be a situation in which an associated detail is used to invoke an idea or represent an object for example in advert for a refrigerator the product could be replaced by a block of ice.

Figures of Exchange

This could do with the exchange of roles where a child could be dressed as a professional for example a doctor or a judge.

The various techniques under the various categorizations are all in an ultimate attempt to get the public to notice an advertised product and be persuaded to take positive action.

Visual Appeals and Online Advertising

There is an interesting relation between visuals and verbal text in advertisements because when these two elements are put together “verbal texts tend to limit what the visual may mean, and the visual tends to expand what the verbal text means” (Hall and Hanna, 2004, p. 189). This, according to Scott (1994) is because persuasion operates within three levels: invention, arrangement and delivery. The first level deals with the invention of a concept, a promise and organizing argumentation for the concept. Arrangement is related to the way the argument is arranged. In classical rhetoric it deals with the order in which propositions are made. Similarly, in advertising, the choice and placement of visual elements helps to modulate the viewer's experience of the text in time (Scott, 1994:266).

Online advertising is the most obvious place replete with visual rhetorical figures. The use of visual rhetoric in online advertising as Smith (2005, p. 43) observes is predicated on the fact that in the first place, there is no doubt that someone is setting out deliberately to persuade; in the second place, there is little doubt that everything in the advertisement has been most carefully placed for maximum effect. Visual rhetoric, a broad term which has been at times used to describe the location and arrangement of images or typography with the goal to persuade is a common strategy for online advertisements. Hwang, McMillan and Lee (2003) describe a website as a visual interaction that appeals to the audience using visual elements. It uses fonts to clearly deliver text, mindful of location and uses colour and contrast to its advantages. In the world of e-commerce where online advertising is a major force, a website appeals to the audience to take action.

Visual rhetoric elements are taking on a larger role in shaping consumer response to online advertising, though only recently have they received the same

amount of analysis as literary texts (McQuarrie and Mick, 1999, p. 37). According to McQuarrie and Mick (1999, p. 51), visual rhetorical moves deserve a place among devices available to advertisers as moves that have a consistent and reliable impact on consumer response (p. 51). As a result of enhanced internet connectivity and increasing e-commerce activities across the globe, the rhetorical analysis of advertisements is becoming more and more popular. This could be likened to the increasing realization of the effects of the marketing industry by people on their lives in this consumer society.

Much like writing and speaking, visual rhetoric, operates through particular persuasive means called rhetorical strategies - the techniques rhetoricians use to move and convince an audience. In our visually saturated world, advertisements represent one of the most ubiquitous forms of persuasion (Dane and Pratt, 2007, p. 34). In many ways, advertisements are arguments in incredibly compact and complex forms. There is little room to spare in an advertisement; persuasive appeals must be locked into a single frame which works together as a rhetoric function. The common visual appeal rhetoric uses in online advertising as Golan and Zaidner (2008, p. 961) note include:

- **Logos:** This entails rational argument - appeals to reason and an attempt to persuade the audience through clear reasoning and philosophy. Statistics, facts, definitions, and formal proofs, as well as interpretations such as syllogisms or deductively reasoned arguments, are all examples of means of persuasion called “the logical appeal.”
- **Pathos:** Also referred to as “the pathetic appeal” generally refers to an appeal to the emotions - the speaker (advertiser) attempts to put the audience into a particular emotional state so that the audience will be receptive to and ultimately convinced by the speaker’s message. Inflammatory language, sad stories, appeals to nationalist sentiments, and jokes are all examples of pathos.
- **Ethos:** This is an appeal to authority or character; according to Aristotle, *ethos* meant the character or goodwill of the speaker. Today, the speaker’s reliance on authority, credibility, or benevolence when discussing strategies is also considered as ethos. But while this third mode of persuasion the “ethical appeal,” is important, it does not mean strictly the use of ethics or ethical reasoning. Rather, it is the deliberate use of the *speaker’s character* as a mode of persuasion.

Online display advertisements typically refer to banners that include logos, images and text, and are placed on Web pages. Some are interactive and include moving images and sound. Search advertisements, or paid search advertisements, appear next to search engine results for relevant queries that trigger keywords (Mullen and Fisher, 2004, 187). According to Foss and Griffin (1995, p. 7), the major points of visual rhetoric appeal for online advertising in rough economic times are higher accountability and flexibility. Online advertising, which allows advertisers to track how many views or clicks their advertisements attract, enables clients to aim for the best return on investment for their campaigns.

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Sex-Texting and Images of Pornography in Mobile Social Networking among Students in the University of Jos

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Abstract

This paper analyses the evolvement of sex-texting and image of pornography in mobile social networking among youths and the effect that the shared platforms have birthed. The trend in information sharing is culminating into a culture of sex- texting and a huge pursuit on images of pornography. As content producers, young people not only visit porn sites, but watch, capture and circulate pictures that reveal so much 'body parts' of themselves in order to interact. The depth in information revelation by students not only challenges privacy and security concerns, but the free access and exchange in signs and pictures impinge on societal values. This paper adopts the Social Penetration theory as framework. Using Focus Group Discussion, the study examined the opinion of 30 respondents from the Faculty of Arts, University of Jos. Findings show that students reveal so much private information to anonymous friends online. The FGD also revealed that in these engagements, sex- texting and exchange of pornographic images was premium in chatting among students who are active participants in social networking. The paper concludes that despite the intense positive relationships social networking platforms have fostered, the attendant social vices resulting from the underlay in this trend is undesired. The paper recommends among others for students to be sensitized on safe interactions as the engage online.

Keywords: Mobile Social Networking, Sex- texting, Pornography

Introduction

Social Media through mobile phone has been aptly described by Simone (2013) as the third language of the world. The universality of this medium stems from the nuances, which "can cause an individual to forget a verb or a norm regardless of their native tongue". Hence, "140 characters can be more intimidating than a 20 page term paper" (p.7). According to Barnes and Laird (2012a, p.12), Social media is:

quickly evolving in front of our eyes and it is almost impossible to reject and hide from this new form of media. Not only is it an important part of socialization within peer groups, but now it is used

to market and motivate people to become a part of a larger community.

To Barnes and Laird (2012b), the platforms in social networking are undeniably changing the way people communicate, find and share information. Most websites offer these experiences through the use of *Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn* and many various blog formats. With new apps on smart phones, photography and video made digital can be “created, edited and shared quickly and once it is in this new digital cloud it is not yours anymore” (p.23).

Social networking offer users new ways to access information and entertainment. With advances in technology people can share almost everything about themselves to the world view. The advent of mobile phones has also permeated the fabric of the coding and decoding experience. Mobile Social Networking (MSN) therefore is now a universal mode and a premium forum for meeting people, exchange ideas and transact businesses. The teaming targets of these experiences are young adults who engage in this form as daily routine, revealing so much information. While each platform has its unique language, the intensity in these transmissions is changing the way people identify with each other and culminating into a culture of ‘sex-texting’ an exchange which today have become dominant trends in social networking.

Statement of Problem

The axiom *sex sells in the media and the media sells because of sex* are reverberating in social networking among people of all ages particularly young adults who engage in these platforms hours ad infinitum. Aside the daily routine of information sharing, storytelling, and varied transactions, the growing trend in social networking platforms is the exchange of nudity. The presence of pornographic content created by users is worrisome and impinges on societal values. On the one hand, the free access to porn site give users the ability of imaginable possibilities, while on the second hand, the depth in information revelation by most users breathe security concerns and challenges in information sharing. Issues relating to cyber crime, sexual predation, net stalking and on- line romances that result to crimes usually start off as a ‘friendly chat’ with an obvious underlay of sex-texting as a variable in enhancing the shared experience.

Objectives of study

The study had the following objectives:

1. To examine the trends in mobile social networking among young people.
2. To determine the kind of information revelation that takes place on these platforms.
3. To find out if young people are aware of the need and challenges of privacy while using social networks.

Research Questions

The following serve as questions to the study:

1. Do young people reveal huge amount of information as they socialize on-line?
2. How popular is mobile social networking among students of the University of Jos?
3. Is sex-texting and pornography on the increase?
4. How is nudity and images of pornography transmitted among youths?
5. What are the challenges associated with sex –texting and information revelation?

Theoretical Framework

The paper used the social penetration theory as framework for the study. This theory was formulated by Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor in 1973. According to Griffin (2011, p.124) the theory proposes that “as relationships develop, interpersonal communication moves from relatively shallow non-intimate level to more intimate one”. The crux in the theory as seen by the psychologists is on the closeness that exists between two individuals. As expressed by Altman and Taylor (1973 in Howard 2013, par.2), social penetration “occurs primarily through self- disclosure and the closeness develops if the participants proceed in a gradual and orderly fashion from superficial to intimate level of exchange”. To Altima and Taylor (1987), only through the opening of one’s self to the main route to social penetration-self-disclosure that an individual can become vulnerable to others which can result into close relationships. The main assumptions in Social Penetration as outlined by West (2013) include; relationships progress from non intimate to intimate, relational development is general systematic, these relational developments include depenetration and dissolution and fourthly; self – disclosure is at the core of relationships. It is with this core that the study hinges on the theory. With the advent of internet blogs and on-line chatting, texting as communication has sprung up all over the world. The content of these exchanges (sex-texting and images of pornography) with reflections in the interpersonal relationships that are fostered through mobile social networking. While socializing, young people move from being simple friends to intimate ones because of the kinds of activities that take place on the shared platform. One of the main metaphors in social penetration as expressed by Infante, Rancer and Womack (1997) is the ‘Onion analogy”. In this stance, sex-texting is an intimate relationship that is revealed by participants as personality which is personified to the multi-layered nature of the onion uncovers the degree of intimacy.

Scope of the Study

This study examines the perception of youths on mobile social networking with specific interest on the trends in sex-texting and how images of pornography are transmitted. Since not all youths can be studied, the study focuses on students in the Faculty of Arts, University of Jos.

What is Mobile Social Networking?

Social networking is the grouping of individuals into specific groups like small rural communities or a neighbourhood subdivision. While social networking is possible in person, it is most popular online (Social Networking, 2011). At the heart

of networking as put by LASM (2012) is the ability for users to create and share content via a variety of platforms, which constitute an opportunity for understanding social behaviour and interactions. Mobile social networking therefore refers to “social networking where individuals with similar interest converse and connect with one another through their mobile phones” (Mobile Social Networking, 2010a, par. 3). The focal elements that give mobile networking its uniqueness are in the texting services of phones that heighten chatting. On one hand, using phones to interact is “taking the cell phone industry by storm”, while on the other hand “cell phone vendors are looking to catch children and young adults in the networking hype”. (Packer, n.d, p.2).

As mobile web evolved from proprietary mobile technologies and networks, to full mobile access to the Internet, the distinctions have changed. Today, web based social networks are either being extended for mobile access through mobile browsers and Smartphone apps, or native mobile social networks with dedicated focus on mobile use like; mobile communication, location-based services, and augmented reality, requiring mobile devices and technology. The ultimate however is that “mobile and web-based social networking systems often work symbiotically to spread content, increase accessibility and connect users around the world” (Mobile Social Networking, 2010b, par.6).

Pornography and Social media

Pornography is the visual or printed material containing explicit description or display of sexual organs or activity intended to stimulate erotic or emotional feeling (Pornography, n.d). The economic distribution of Images of sex and pornography, as well as its influence in the media is far reaching. To this end, Morris (2014) asserted that commercial pornography accounts for nearly US\$100 billion worldwide. The debate on pornography to social values have made most countries to regulate such content in the media especially Television and film. Although this regulation was successful, the advent of the internet with free access to visual contents has given rise to the proliferation of internet pornography. In the social media, the depiction of sexual matter has been heightened by the circulation of images of sex and nude pictures by users. The unlimited presence of porn sites as they are called have created online visitors and projected the debate intensely.

The Concept of Sex- Texting

The term ‘Sexting’ or ‘Sex-texting’ as used in this study is a combination of two words; sex and texting. It was said to have originated in the 2000’s especially when teenagers and young people relied more on mobile phones for information sharing. The term is a newer version of the connotations with engagements in ‘phone sex’. According to the Internet Slang Dictionary (2005a) Sexting is defined as the act of sending sexually explicit messages or images between cellphones. With sex-texting, users generate their own text/ language/ and even symbols that would be understood in the interaction. Although the Slang dictionary outlined some examples as represented in the table below, every environment has its peculiar signs, and slangs in sex-texting.

8- oral sex, **143-** I love you, **CU 46-** see you for sex, **DUM-** Do you masturbate, **JO-** jerk off, **IIT-** Is it tight, **TDTM-** talk dirty to me, **GNOC-** get naked on camera, **PAW-** Parents are watching

The trends in sex-texting are seen as a natural progression among teenagers and young users who are curious about sex and sexuality (Internet Slang Dictionary 2005b). Various studies have shown that over 39% of teens and over 56% of young adults have engaged in an act of sex texting in the United States (Nigel & Graham, 2011). The aforementioned statistics if not higher is a true reflection in the findings of other countries (Mashable, 2013).

Method

The study employed Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as methodology complementing it with interviews. Focus Group is a form of qualitative research where a group of individuals are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitude towards a product, service, advertisement, concept or even an idea (Michael, 2003). In the social sciences, FGD allows an interviewer to study people in small groups and through a more natural conversational style. According to Marshall and Gretchen (1999), with the combination of participant observation, FGDs can be used for learning about groups and their pattern of interaction. In this stance, participants are recruited on the basis of similar demographics, psychographics and behaviours (Greenbaum, 2000). The study adopted the Mini Focus Group pattern, comprised of 4 to 5 members respectively. This is because the researcher perceived that such group dynamics will produce data and insight to the subject matter.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and the University of Jos

The FGD was conducted with students of the University of Jos, Nigeria. The FGD focused on one faculty, i.e. the Faculty of Arts. As at the 2012/2013 academic session, the Faculty had six departments namely; Mass Communication, Religious Studies, English, Languages and Linguistics, Theatre and Film Arts, and History and International Studies. The buck of the respondents came from the six departments. A total of 30 respondents were selected through purposive sampling techniques. This technique was apt for the study in order to reach the pre-defined group, in this case students who are exposed to different social media platforms. Thus, respondents were picked based on; ownership of a mobile phone, and engagement in social networking.

Defining the Group

Respondents were put into smaller groups; 5 respondents in a group from the six departments. Although each department represented a group, in order to stimulate dynamics and evolve discussions among respondents, the researcher avoided placing respondents with similar demography like age and sex in the same group. A total of 6 FGD's were held lasting 45 minutes to 1 hour for a period of 6 days.

Conducting the Discussions

The FGD was conducted by the researcher (moderator). A tape recorder was used to store all the responses and opinion of the students on the subject matter. The discussions here were evolved through structured questions for all the groups. The questions were short and direct. This ensured a free flow of discussion and a type of engagement (i.e. introducing participants to and make them feel comfortable with the topic) initiated by the moderator.

Data Analysis

The method of data analysis was patterned thus; transcriptions of data, coding the data into pre-determined categories, develop categories based on the data, code the data, and summation of key ideas. Separate spread sheets were used for coding the responses encapsulated in a theme. These themes were formulated alongside the four research questions. The sub-questions under the latter were the same structured questions that formed the buck of engagement between moderator and respondents.

Coding for Respondents

Table 1

DEPTX	Respondents				
MC	MC 1	MC 2	MC 3	MC 4	MC 5
TFA	TFA 1	TFA 2	TFA 3	TFA 4	TFA 5
ENG	ENG 1	ENG 2	ENG3	ENG 4	ENG 5
LIN	LIN 1	LIN 2	LIN 3	LIN 4	LIN 5
HIS	HIS 1	HIS 2	HIS 3	HIS 4	HIS 5
REL	REL 1	REL 2	REL 3	REL 4	REL 5

For easy identification, the study adopted the above to guide the discussions. The first column reveal the DEPTX while the remaining columns had the 5 respondents for each Department. Each department was represented with a code; **MC**-Mass Communication, **TFA**- Theatre and Film Arts, **ENG**- English, **LIN**-Linguistics, **HIS**- History and International Studies, **REL**- Religious Studies respectively.

The following tables reveal the demographic variables of respondents in relation to sex and Age.

Table 2 Respondents' Sex

DEPTX	MALE	FEMALE
MC	2	3
TFA	3	2
ENG	2	3
LIN	2	3

HIS	3	2
REL	2	3
	14 (46.7%)	16(53.3%)
		30 (100%)
Age Bracket of Respondents		
Table 3		
DEPTX	Ages	TOTAL
MC	18 yrs - 28 yrs	5
TFA	17 yrs - 31 yrs	5
ENG	19 yrs - 27 yrs	5
LIN	18 yrs - 30 yrs	5
HIS	18 yrs - 30 yrs	5
REL	19 yrs - 29 yrs	5

Table 2 and 3 reveal the sex and age bracket of the respondents chosen. From the 30 respondent, 14 were males and 16 females. The respondents' ages ranged between 17 yrs to 31 yrs in all. Also, to fully utilize the data obtained, codes for the discussion are categorized by a theme which is used in comparison between respondents and groups perception pattern.

FGD QUESTIONS

Table 4

R1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do young people reveal a lot of information about themselves on-line? 2. Are social media users fond of making anonymous friends? 3. Does the nature of some social platforms embed information sharing unwilling?
R2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why is mobile social networking popular? 2. What are the advantages of mobile social networking?
R3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do youths visit porn sites regularly? 2. Are there unrestricted sites that show pornographic contents? 3. Are youths aware of the concept sex- texting? 4. Does on-line dating encourage sex – texting? 5. Using pictures to communicate on some platforms heightens nudity? 6. Would users be more excited and drawn to nude pictures and stories?

R4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Most discussions online would be incomplete without postings of sex language or nudity to make an effect? 2. Most online users are habitual in forwarding stories with pornographic contents to other user? 3. Is it common for opposite sex(s) to exchange nude pictures with one another while chatting? 4. Do youths innocently reveal ‘body parts’ as fun while chatting? 5. Do you think advertisers employ nudity as sex – appeal to gain popularity?
R5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can Sex – texting result to cyber crime and other vices? 2. What are the negative effects of sex - texting? 3. Do you think sex –texting be regulated? 4. How can young people engage in everyday discussion without sex and nudity? 5. How can youths ensure privacy and protect themselves in social networking?

Theme One: Information Revelation among youths

Table 5

Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Users reveal a lot of information when chatting knowingly and unconsciously give out personal or sensitive details about their life, work, family, dwelling place, environment and many more.</i> ➤ <i>Young people are constantly building anonymous relationships. This is common with social networking. Most people have more friends either on face book or Black berry messenger (BBM) they don't know than familiar ones.</i> ➤ <i>It is interesting to chat with strangers online</i> ➤ <i>Social platforms like Face Book, twitter, Whatsapp, Instagram, and BBM make users reveal information unknowingly. Elements like Postings on wall, Status, D.P's, Timeline, handle, following and the likes associated with the aforementioned platforms can make for good profiling of users. From these elements, users post information, opinion, their feelings, emotions and pictures for the whole world to see.</i> ➤ <i>With the nature of some of the platforms, for instance, Face Book ‘friends of your friends’ can view your wall. Users’ demographic information can be retrieved while their location and time can be accessed. People can have access and even download pictures of others without restriction.</i>

Theme Two: Popularity of MSN among Students of the University of Jos

Table 6

Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>One of the cheapest and affordable means of social networking is through mobile phones.</i> ➤ <i>It is very convenient to use mobile phones to carry out social networking.</i> ➤ <i>Most students can afford mobile phones.</i> ➤ <i>All the platforms in social networking are integrated in the mobile usage.</i> ➤ <i>It is more participatory</i> ➤ <i>The use of mobile phones gives some sort of privacy to the user.</i> ➤ <i>The storing and retrieval of information at will.</i> ➤ <i>Short Message Service (SMS) is an integral part of mobile phones hence chatting is made easier as mobile phones incorporate elements of texting.</i> ➤ <i>Sending and receiving information is faster e.g. Blackberry messenger.</i>

Theme Three: Trends in Sex – texting and Pornographic content

Table 7

Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Students visit porn sites regularly</i> ➤ <i>These sites make for interesting view because of the free access to some of the sites.</i> ➤ <i>Most young people download these pornographic contents and use them in communication.</i> ➤ <i>Young people engage in sex- texting.</i> ➤ <i>Sex- texting is very popular among youths.</i> ➤ <i>Users devise unique language for sex – texting. They also use graphics and pictures when sharing information.</i> ➤ <i>The exchange of nude pictures is very common in social networking.</i>

Theme Four: Transmission of Sex in Social Networking

Table 8

Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Users can capture images with their phones and share them instantly.</i> ➤ <i>It is usual to capture 'body parts' by an individual and send to someone else. This is common in communication between opposite sexes.</i> ➤ <i>Youths are fond of circulating pornographic pictures and stories with such contents.</i> ➤ <i>Most students download pornographic contents and use them in communication.</i>

Theme Five: Challenges in Sex- texting and Information revelation

Table 9

Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>There are problems of security and invasion of privacy in social networking.</i> ➤ <i>It would be difficult to regulate sex-texting because of the personalized nature of the communication and free access in sharing information.</i> ➤ <i>Sex-texting can lead to social vices like rape, cyber crime, 419, dating scam and the likes</i> ➤ <i>There are contemporary issues of youths engaging in friendly chats with anonymous individuals in social networking that result to murder e.g. Cynthia Osokogu case was a classical example.</i> ➤ <i>Through sex-texting, unscrupulous individuals can profile unsuspecting users' behaviour and use same to commit crime.</i> ➤ <i>There are a lot of fake users on social networking sites lurking to play on the emotions of other users who reveal so much information about themselves.</i> ➤ <i>Young people should be economical with words and the manner they reveal information.</i>

Discussion and Findings

The five themes were based on the research questions that guided the study. Table 5 sought to find out information revelation among young people. It revealed that students reveal information while chatting or by the nature of the platform. It also revealed that students like making anonymous friends on the different platforms. All the respondents agreed they have unfamiliar friends on-line and make connections with these invincible people. Furthermore 23 respondents (76.6%) say many users are sometimes not aware of the depth of information they share during such engagements. Users also give out sensitive information during platforms account

creation. Mobile Social Networking (MSN) is popular among youths as revealed in Table 6. 27 respondents representing (90%) attest that cost effectiveness, flexibility in use and affordability heightens MNS' popularity. 67% (20) of the respondents were also of the opinion that MNS allows for privacy. To these respondents, "from the comfort zone or any location, users can engage freely in social networking.

The assertion that "the trend in Mobile social networking is culminating into a culture sex – texting and the dissemination of pornographic content among youths" was strongly agreed by the respondents. 18 of the respondents (60%) reflected that many youths they come in contact with must have one or two pornographic image stored in their mobile phones. As content producers, users of MNS are responsible for the circulation of stories with pornographic underlay whether in pictures or through language. Since SMS is an element in Mobile telephony, texting as asserted by the respondents is a daily engagement. Almost all the social networking platforms involve texting. It is 'fun' to text opine 17 respondents (56.6%). It is also commonplace with social networking to share 'body parts' (i.e. sending or receiving nude pictures) mostly when opposite sexes are engaged in a conversation. It was also attested that on-line dating platforms encourages sex-texting. 12 (40%) respondents also say that some users are just in the fun of circulating and re-circulating images with pornographic contents. If they have ever engaged in sex-texting, 19 (63.3%) respondents say they have actively participated in the sphere of sex-texting.

Table 9 examined the challenges in tandem with sex-texting and information revelation. Majority of the respondents 26 (86.6%) agree that there are challenges of security and privacy concerns in the trends. However, they were of the view that challenges associated with information revelation can be curbed but sex-texting and the circulation of pornographic contents may be difficult to curb since it is at the individual level. The free access in social networking platforms undermines plausible solutions. Respondents strongly agreed that the revelation of information by users as well as sex-texting can lead to social vices such as cyber crime, 419, internet romance scams and even murder as was seen in some cases in Nigeria. The underlay to such interaction as asserted by 25 respondents (83.3%) must have involved some form of sex-texting that fosters closer relationships as seen in the social penetration theory.

Conclusion

The objective of this paper was to examine the trends in social networking with particular interest on the rise in sex-texting and transmission of pornographic content among youths, using students of the faculty of Arts, University of Jos for the study. The above findings have provided a build up on related studies in this area. Social networking has become an integral part of how people especially young adults communicate and connect with the world around them. Just like brands from product advertising, so audiences of social media have evolved. The extent of youth reliance on Mobile Social Networking for the creation and maintenance of relationship is today a premium commodity. MSN has brought with it diverse trends and behaviours.

While the pluses for interaction in a single space are applauded, the dimension of moral values and social vices in our society is quite a challenge. Sex – texting is a growing trend and students (youths) are seemingly unaware of the dangers in privacy and security concerns that come with ‘innocent friendship’. Some of the most common problems associated with MSN are internet romance scam, invasion of privacy, blackmail, kidnapping and even murder as was the classic case of Cynthia Osokogu death as a result of Face book. Many cases abound and will continue if young adults are not sensitized on the need to take precautions while engaging in MSN and sex-texting. This paper concludes by giving the following recommendations;

1. Parents should play a leading role in advising young adults on the consequences of sex-texting.
2. Since the curricular today in most tertiary institutions contain ICT, a part of that curriculum should cover internet privacy and concerns and how students and users can be safe online. In this case deliberate policies can be made by tertiary institutions to incorporate the formal training and guidance on social media and its use.
3. Users of MSN should also be responsible while networking. As users interact online, they can also employ those elements on the different platforms that can aid in security and information revelation.
4. Government can also evolve policies to checkmate pornography and sex-texting to forestall individuals with deviant behaviours. This has been done in countries like the United States.

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Strengthening the Banking Sub-Sector through Financial Public Relations: The Framing Models Option

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Abstract

The Nigerian Banking sub-sector has had a chequered history since independence; and a number of reforms have been carried out to ensure its stability. These include the indigenization policy of the 1970s, the restructuring policies of the 1980s and 1990s and the recapitalization and restructuring of 2005. These measures notwithstanding, the stability of the sub-sector was far from being guaranteed as the issues of excessive internal borrowing, high exposure to the oil and gas, falsification of books and other sharp practices made the system more vulnerable, leading to loss of confidence in the system and tighter control by the Central Bank of Nigeria since 2009. Going by this development, therefore, this work identifies framing models of Public Relations as a complementary means of building a sustainable confidence in the system. Framing is a potentially useful paradigm for examining the strategic creation of Public Relations messages and audience responses. In view of this, seven framing models applicable to financial Public Relations are identified as means of tackling the challenges. These involve the framing of situations, attributes, choices, actions, issues, responsibility, and news. It is stressed here that if the models are appropriately applied, they can be used in creating sustainable understanding within and around the banking environment, presenting the banks unique selling points, broadening stockholder base, increasing prestige of the banks and creating a favourable attitude in the financial community. The work recommends consistent messaging, popularizing unique performance indicators, not burying the bad news, building a large press following, among others, as ingredients of the frames to be employed by the practitioners.

Introduction

Perception is not everything, but it is often the most important thing (Hallahan, 1999). Even the strongest companies benefit from a renewed look at how effectively

they are communicating with employees, investors, customers, the media, and related stakeholders. Therefore, it is important to work with management teams in any organization to ensure that, as markets and business strategies evolve, an organization's vision, values, and attributes are evident to these most important audiences. For banks and other key players in the financial industry, this calls for a well-articulated and vigorously pursued financial Public Relations programme. A successful investor relations or Financial Public Relations programme requires a level of clarity, precision, and regulatory compliance distinct from other forms of corporate communication.

Investor relations and relations with the financial public refer to different forms of communication which a company uses when building relations with those who provide means for its growth and development. This makes existing and potential investors the prime financial public, but one should not overlook the importance of others involved - those that have substantial influence on investors' perspectives and opinions. In relations with the financial public, besides professional, well-informed investors the targeted public are also individuals who, as a rule, are neither professional investors nor are equipped with comprehensive information or broad financial knowledge. Good and active financial Public Relations help a company to provide a fair price for its stocks, provide access to extra capital when needed and ultimately engender public confidence.

The banking sub – sector of the Nigerian economy has over the years experienced boom and burst in its fortunes. While the challenges faced by the industry might have resulted from policy controversy (Brownbridge, 1996), there are issues bothering on lack of effective and honest communication which have eroded investor confidence. A striking observation in this regard is that the option of Financial Public Relations has not been fully exploited as a means of combating the challenge. It is an option discussed in this paper.

Financial Public Relations: A Conceptual Review

As explained earlier, Financial Public Relations is “the creation of an investor – friendly climate; and rapport to engender understanding, appreciation and support by various groups who are responsible for the funding, control or approval of an organisation's financial operations such as shareholders, members of stock exchange banks, insurance houses, investment analysts, or editors of financial journals” (Keghku, 2005). Financial Public Relations ultimately targets investors of all sizes, aiming to convey the strengths of a company's equity story in order to sustain an upwardly moving share price. Investors are reached through press and sell-side analysts, where third party endorsement is powerful and can influence decision making amongst investors. Whilst financial Public Relations uses many of the same techniques as other Public Relations practices, it has different audiences and therefore different channels through which to communicate with them. For instance, Keghku (2005), says that apart from the usual news channels through which financial PR messages are conveyed, there are specialized outlets like *Financial Standard*, *Business Times*, *Business Day* and *Business in Nigeria* which purely and constantly update their audiences on latest development in the financial sector.

Altimore, et al (2012) stresses that the first task of financial public relations is to create and maintain investor confidence, building positive relationships with the

financial community through the dissemination of corporate information. Financial Public Relations is much easier to relate to the proverbial bottom line than other kinds of Public Relations. Relative stock prices, bond ratings and the interest rates charged on loans are direct measures of confidence in a company. When confidence is high, stocks are worth more, and bonds and borrowing cost less. When confidence is low, stock is worth less, and higher interest is demanded by those who loan funds to business. Most companies considers their financial relation programme effective if they have been able to reduce the cost of funds or obtain the best cost of capital. In view of these, Roalman (1974) stresses that an individual is not likely to invest money in a corporation's stocks, bonds, commercial paper, or other financial pledges unless he understands fully what is likely to happen to that corporation in the future. He added that trust in management of a corporation is not built over night, but rather, it is the result of long term actions by the corporation to provide factual financial information in proper perspective. Therefore, the watch words for financial Public Relations managers are consistency, clarity and credibility (Higgins, 2000).

In line with the above, Altimore et al (2012) provide specific objectives for financial PR practitioners. These include:

- a. Building interest in the company,
- b. Creating understanding of the company;
- c. Selling company product;
- d. Broadening stockholder base by attracting new investors;
- e. Stabilizing stock prices;
- f. Winning stockholders approval for management;
- g. Increasing the company's prestige;
- h. Creating favourable attitudes in the financial community;
- i. Developing political sensitivities of stockholders for issues relating to the company;
- j. Improving employees relations; and
- k. Building loyalty of stockholders.

The Realities of the Nigerian Banking Sub-Sector

According to Brownbridge (1996), the banking system in Nigeria has undergone radical changes since independence. Banking developed from an industry which in 1960 was dominated by a small number of foreign owned banks into one in which public sector ownership predominated in the 1970s and 1980s and in which Nigerian private investors have played an increasingly important role since the mid1980s. Government policies had a major influence on developments in the banking industry. Extensive government intervention characterized financial sector policies, beginning in the 1960s and intensifying in the 1970s, the objective of which was to influence resource allocation and promote indigenisation. The three largest banks which operated in Nigeria (sometimes referred to as first generation banks) have their origins in the colonial period. The British Bank for West Africa (now called First Bank) was incorporated in 1894, the Colonial Bank, later acquired by Barclays and now known as Union Bank, began operations in 1917, and the British and French Bank, the precursor of the United Bank for Africa, started in 1949. All three were originally wholly foreign owned but the Federal Government purchased majority shareholdings in the mid1970s, until subsequent liberalization in the 1990s and 2000s transferred

ownership to interested private investors. Since 1987, financial sector reforms have been implemented, encompassing elements of liberalisation and measures to enhance prudential regulation and tackle bank distress (Brownbridge 1996).

Beginning around the time of independence, a second generation of banks were set up in Nigeria. The first group of second generation banks were also mainly foreign owned. They included the Banque Internationale Pour L'Afrique Occidentale (BIAO) later Afribank (and now Mainstreet Bank after being taken over by AMCON). It was the fourth largest bank in Nigeria. This was followed in the 1970s by the establishment of commercial banks by the state governments in Nigeria and by the entry of a number of merchant banks, mostly as joint ventures between foreign investors and the Federal Government and/or private investors. A third generation of banks emerged during the 1980s. Some of these banks were set up by state governments but the majority were started by Nigerian private investors. The growth of the local private banks was very rapid after 1986, particularly in the merchant banking sector.

According to Brownbridge (1996), the growth in the privately owned banks can be attributed to several factors. First, the inefficiencies of the public sector banks provided opportunities for new entrants to target corporate and high income urban customers. The local banks were able to attract these customers by offering higher interest rates on deposits following interest rate deregulation in 1987. A few of the local banks attracted customers by providing more efficient services, such as much faster loan appraisals, and innovative products.

Second, many of the banks were set up primarily so that their owners could obtain foreign exchange which could be resold at a premium. Although the specific mechanism changed several times, the essence of the system involved the CBN auctioning the available foreign exchange to the banks: only the banks were authorised to bid for foreign exchange, which were then expected to supply their customers. (Olişadebe 1991: 178). The restriction of access to the auction to banks, combined with the allocation system which meant that even small banks were able to obtain foreign exchange, provided a powerful incentive for investors to establish banks, even if they had no interest in conducting more conventional banking business.

Third, some of the banks have been set up in order to channel customer deposits into the business ventures of their owners and to conduct other types of fraud. How extensive this has been is impossible to estimate as evidence of frauds of this nature usually only comes to light when banks are liquidated. But the truth is that many of these banks were either liquidated or became distressed due to excessive insider lending by which depositors' funds were converted into the businesses of the bank owners.

Fourth, the criteria for granting banking licenses appear to have been relaxed and politicized in the second half of the 1980s. The Federal Ministry of Finance had the authority to grant licenses with the Presidency and Federal Executive Council also involved in reviewing applications. Political influence was used to obtain licenses for applicants, many of whom had no banking experience, but did have link to the regulatory authority.

In the final analysis, the financial distress of the local banks resulted; and attributable to the combination of bad debts, due in particular to insider lending, and a tightening of liquidity in the banking system. Bad debts arose as a consequence of the

difficult macroeconomic environment – increased interest rates, reduction of protection and subsidies, and economic stagnation undermined the ability of borrowers in the real sector to service their loans - and mismanagement and fraud in the banks. Prudent lending practices were not followed because boards of directors did not provide honest and effective leadership, often being more concerned with securing credit facilities for themselves, managers were inexperienced and often lacked independence from major shareholders, while credit policies and internal controls were poor or non-existent (Mamman and Oluyemi 1994).

The second aspect of the distress among the local private sector banks was their worsening liquidity position. This was caused in part by their own internal problems - the deterioration in loan quality and therefore earnings - and partly by exogenous developments. The efficacy of liberalization has also been undermined by the scale of bank distress, which is partly a legacy of pre-reform policies of public ownership and inadequate prudential supervision but also partly the consequence of inappropriate sequencing of reforms. The inconsistency of deregulation has been a serious drawback in the implementation.

Since the late 1980s, the banking industry has been afflicted by widespread distress or liquidation. Most of the distressed or liquidated banks were owned by state governments or the local private sector. Failed banks tribunal was set up to try offenders and those found guilty were actually sentenced. Even after this development, the confidence in the banking sector was never restored. Therefore, to avoid a reoccurrence of failed bank regime in the country, the Central Bank of Nigeria in 2005, enforced a new capitalization benchmark of 25 billion naira per bank. To remain on the scene, many of the existing banks embarked on Initial Public Offers (IPO), and the investing public did heed their call with optimism. Those banks that felt they couldn't make it alone opted for mergers and acquisitions which left only 24 commercial banks mostly quoted on the Nigeria Stock Exchange operating on the scene. Following that development, banks share prices went astronomically high, creating a false sense of a booming market which attracted more investors into the market through the secondary market offers. However, as it was soon to be discovered, all that glitters wasn't gold after all. The stock exchange market crashed in 2008, and those who invested in the booming banking market had to moan as they lost heavily.

The sliding fortunes of the commercial banks did not stop there. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) after an extensive audit of the existing commercial banks in 2009, declared five of them, Intercontinental Banks PLC, Union Bank of Nigeria PLC, AfriBank PLC, Bank PHB, and Oceanic Bank International PLC as weak and unsafe for business. The entire management of these banks were sacked and many of them were arrested for prosecution. Their offences include falsification of banks statements, excessive internal borrowing, high exposure to oil and gas, high liquidity ratio, lack of transparency, etc. While some of these banks have since been taken over by the Asset Management Company of Nigeria (AMCON) as bridge banks, others have been acquired by stronger competitors within the industry.

Financial Public Relations and the Banking Sub-Sector

The purpose of investor relations is to make a proper connection or link between the company's management and the financial community (Miller, 1991). Basically,

the investor relationship department of corporations deals and communicates with influential financial groups. According to Miller (1991), the financial community consists of the following sixteen influential financial groups: stock exchange member firms, customers' brokers, security analysts and individual analysts, unlisted or over-the-counter dealers, investment bankers, commercial bankers, registered investment advisory services, insurance companies and pension funds, mutual funds and investment trusts, investment counsellors, trustees of estates and institutions, financial statistical organizations, investment magazines and financial publications, large individual shareholders, debt rating agencies, portfolio managers and lender banks. Whatever the principle activities and whoever the audience, communicating and transmitting relevant, concise, trustworthy, real time information are the key activities of investor relations

Besides its basic function of informing and maintaining quality relations with professional and individual investors, investor relations nowadays includes Public Relations and marketing tools. Today in developed capital markets being straight forward and honest with the investing public is standard, so those companies or markets that do not treat investors properly are considered insufficiently transparent and unsafe for investment (Marinkovic, 2007). Investors are not prepared to invest funds in companies if they do not have sufficient data on them, and if they cannot be certain of getting required information at any time from the person in charge of investor relations or top management. Therefore, key players in the banking sub-sector of countries in transition should pay more attention in the future to investor relations and adequate tools.

Fundamentally, the remit of investor relations is not only to create an awareness and understanding of a company amongst the investment community, but also to help quoted companies gain access to capital and achieve liquidity in and fair valuation for their shares. However, Financial Public Relations is not without its challenges. The first basically deals with the regulatory framework within which listed companies operate. Although the Public Relations companies themselves (if used purely on consultancy basis) are not regulated by the Financial Services Authority ("FSA"), listed companies do have to abide by regulations dished out by the regulatory authority especially, the Securities and Exchange Commission. Along this line, certain information such as management's financial forecasts, cannot be disclosed. The regulation also affects the timing for the release of information, as in order to maintain a fair and orderly market, it is essential that all investors are given access to new information about the company at the same time – that is giving a select few access to information which could affect the share price would be against the rules for either market.

Secondly, working with other advisers can be challenging, and often it is the role of the Public Relations to coordinate communication between advisers and the clients. This involves arranging all parties' strategy meetings, to agree on messaging and tone of announcements and presentations to investors.

Consequent upon these challenges, the strategic communication message of a bank have to be hinged on:

- i. **Present Business Status:** Explaining information about the business and environment as well as recent developments and decisions on the basis of company's long term planning and strategy.

- ii. **Forecasting Future Status:** Highlighting future prospects of the business rather than historical performance, focusing on long term strategy and on long term opportunities for the business.
- iii. **Transparency:** Avoiding over-expectations from the target audiences and facing adverse news openly and honestly.
- iv. **Managing Relations:** Providing analysts with access to the top management; being proactive rather than re-active; employing an investor relations staff or a department that is able to explain details and is responsive to analysts' inquires and requests. (Dodevic, et al 2012)

It is therefore the job of the Financial Public Relations manager(s) to work ahead of time and ensure that relevant information are dished out fairly and timely in a way that it would engender competitive advantage. In view of this task the financial Public Relations manager must abide by certain **dos** and **don'ts** as advocated by the CIPR Skills Guide (2013). These include:

- a. Being consistent with messaging, particularly in terms of how much detail you give.
- b. Looking at other companies in your clients' sectors to see what sort of key performance indicators they are using – adopting similar ones will enable analysts and press to quickly benchmark you.
- c. Building a following of press and analysts and continue to communicate with them, even in the case of bad news;
- d. Analysing shareholder registers regularly to understand what type of investor to communicate with (i.e. if there is a large retail investor holding, ensure that they are communicated with through the available investor press such Financial Standard, Business Day, etc in Nigeria);
- e. Working closely with other advisors, so that you all have the same strategic objectives and are communicating the same messages;
- f. A consistent drip-feeding of news flow to the market will help to sustain an upwardly moving share price. No news is considered bad news, so keeping investors regularly informed is essential to support the share price;
- g. Not burying bad news; being upfront with shareholders; and
- h. Engaging with the press at all times of the year, so that they understand the company's story and will be more likely to write when there is news.

The Framing Models Option for the Banking Sub-sector

As explained earlier, framing is a way of giving some overall interpretations to isolated items of facts (McQuail, 2009). Framing in the words of Entman (2003) essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment for the item described. Framing is a potentially useful paradigm for examining the strategic creation of public relations messages and audience responses. Public relations workers have been referred to pejoratively as “image-makers” and “spin doctors”—labels that only partially portray their important role in constructing social reality. Indeed, public relations counseling involves *defining reality* for organizations by shaping organizational perspectives about the outsideworld—a process also termed *enactment* (Weick, 1969). Similarly, outbound

public relations communications involve attempts to define reality, at least as it relates to client organizations, for the many publics on whom the organization depends. This construction process might be dismissed as manipulation. However, because defining reality is the very essence of communication, constructionists would argue that the process is neither inherently good nor bad, but the bottom line is that it has to be built on good faith, transparency and honesty. This therefore gives credence to framing as an integral aspect of Public Relations.

After an extensive literature review across disciplines, (Hallhan, 1999) identifies seven distinct types of framing applicable to public relations. These involve the framing of situations, attributes, choices, actions, issues, responsibility, and news. They are explained thus:

i. Framing of Attributes: Public relations practitioners routinely engage in framing of attributes by accentuating particular aspects of the causes, products, or services they represent. The principle can be seen today at work as corporations strive to promote their various good qualities—such as community involvement, support of the arts and education, and philanthropy—which only indirectly relate to their principal business activity (Hollahan, 1999). In many cases, attribute framing involves creating *positively valenced* associations with beliefs and values, traditions and rituals, or with other cultural artifacts that people cherish. In respect of the banking sub-sector in Nigeria, it can be argued that many of them might have attempted to promote their positive attributes through social responsibility services, but the extent at which they identify with the host communities core values remain questionable. On the other hand, the creation of *negatively valenced* associations is sometimes useful when messages focus on competitors. For example, there was an issue of de-marketing which tended to portray the defunct Intercontinental Bank as unsafe for business. The bank did not recover from the storm it generated before it finally lost its corporate identity. So instead of framing their own attributes, they allow others do it for them, albeit in a negative way.

ii. Framing of Situation: The situations in which the parties find themselves must be consistent with their expectations. For example, consider the extensive use of special events as group gatherings to mark organizational achievements—grand openings, award banquets, anniversary celebrations, and so on. Each of these communication opportunities must be staged or framed in a way that meets expectations of participants. Unmet expectations related to ritualistic staging or celebratory atmospherics might redefine the event and lead to inferences by participants that are just the opposite of the intent of event sponsors (Hallahan, 1999). The task of the financial Public Relations managers here therefore entails proper handling of all ceremonies in a way that customers, shareholders, (existing and potential), host communities and concerned regulatory agencies would be fulfilled.

iii. Framing of Choices: For practitioners whose work involves asking people to take risks, the framing of risks provides useful insights into processes of decision making. With a preponderance of evidence suggesting that people are risk-averse and more concerned with preventing losses than achieving gains, framing provides a valuable theoretical model in which arguments related to risk-taking might be posed (Heath,

Seshadri, and Lee, 1998). In various contexts—such as which bank share to buy and in what proportion or which bank to deposit a life time saving—financial public relations professionals deal with individuals confronted with serious decision making that only requires the best of persuasion to get them to act in a way desired. It must be noted that most of the distressed or liquidated banks in the country had their problems deeply rooted either in dwindling capital base or high liquidity ratio because issue related to making of choices were not properly handled.

iv.Framing of Actions: Similarly, when individuals are reasonably motivated to act, or when question of foregoing losses or sustaining gains comes into view, public relations routinely faces concerns about how to maximize behavioral intentions and actions by posing desired actions in the most advantageous way. As an example, there are many potential customers or investors who are hanging on the fence. It takes one last piece of persuasion perfectly crafted but anchored on truth to get them across the fence. Such act of persuasion must be built on what previous investors or depositors have gained and on a line-up of attractive and achievable benefits accruable to such decision.

v.Framing of Issues: Framing is clearly a valuable concept for issue managers. Issue management essentially involves efforts to control or contain the development, growth, and maturation of issues over the life cycle of a controversy (Meng, 1992). The ultimate objective of most issues management initiatives is to seek resolution of disputes in an expedient manner that benefits all parties and avoids unnecessary conflict. However, if that is not possible, effective issues management involves controlling the prominence the issue attains in the media or the public policy agenda. Defining issues through the process of framing thus becomes a pivotal concern. Issues can be framed as significant or insignificant to the public interest but more important can be defined in terms of how people should think about an issue. But the overall objective should not be tailored towards deception because of the backlash that might result. Take, for example, if a bank is presenting itself as facilitator of investment opportunity for its customers, it must be seen to have clearly outlined the credit options available and in a way not driven by purely selfish agenda. This is because customers are aware that banks only think of its interest before anything else, but making them to be reasonably optimistic of their own chances can go a long way in encouraging them not minding what the bank stands to gain.

vi.Framing of Responsibility: Responsibility framing—acceptance or denial of being responsible for events—has particular implications for public relations. The adroit handling of negative information has been the focus of recent research, particularly in the context of crisis management (Lyon and Cameron, 1998). For organizations engaged in good works, the goal of many public relations efforts is to enhance the reputation of the organization by calling attention to the organization's role in activities such as funding a new local symphony or helping improve local schools. In such circumstances, organizations actively seek out credit for their actions. However, their efforts to gain recognition can be discounted by cynics who see such efforts as self-serving efforts to ingratiate the organization with the community. When involved in controversy, however, an organization might want to pursue a strategy of

responsibility avoidance. Although many public relations advisers contend that organizations should openly accept responsibility for mistakes, many organizations find this difficult for a variety of legitimate reasons—the potential of lost business, the blemishing of their corporate reputation, investor uneasiness, and legal liability, to name just a few. But come to think of it, if a bank is consistently known for accepting responsibility for both positive and negative actions or inactions, the customers or investing public are most certain to go with them in times of crisis, as their transparency might become a trademark that might not be possibly rivalled. But the number of Nigerian banks that have significantly explored this option remains to be determined.

vii. Framing of news: Finally, as suppliers of nearly half of the content found in the news media (Cutlip, 1989), public relations practitioners are extricably involved in the framing of the news. The role of sources as shapers of news content is well documented (Itule and Anderson, 2009). In proposing a particular story to a reporter or editor, public relations professionals engage in two separate but related processes. The first is to solicit interest in the story topic in itself. The second is to assure that the story is slanted or framed in a way that is consistent with the source's *preferred framing* (i.e., how a client would like to have its story told). Exchanges between sources and journalists are essentially *frame negotiations* in which adroit sources play on journalists' schematically organized knowledge about news to propose stories that follow conventions of storytelling, fit certain formulaic categories of content, and resonate with a journalist's notions of news reporting. For the practitioners in banks therefore, this aspect of framing has to be adhered to. After all, you are the only one that blow your own trumpet. But some words of caution: truth should be the determining principle in framing such news.

Theoretical Framework

This work is anchored on framing theory (advocated by Entman, 2003) and the Public Relations Transfer Process model advanced by Frank Jefkins (1981).

a. Framing Theory

According to Entman (2003), messages and information sent to audiences carry with them a pre-existing set of meanings or frames. He calls it an active process of drawing out dominant themes. These meanings come from the cultural and social groupings in which we live and work. A pre-existing interpretation or frame that audience instantly know and accept is very useful to communicators (Altmore, et al (2012). Common devices used in media and public relations stories are catchphrases, depictions, metaphors, exemplars and visual images. In fact framing theorists suggest that if we want to communicate successfully with one another, we are bound to use common frames as a necessary condition to being understood.

The theory is relevant to this work because the seven framing models which form the core of the approach adopted are the offshoot of the theory. In fact, there is no possibility of framing models without the framing theory itself.

b. Frank Jefkins Transfer Process (Model)

Jefkins (1988) advocated a process of converting negativism into positivism. In his view, when the atmosphere a particular socio-economic circumstance is dominated by negative feeling, it is the job of Public Relations to ensure mutual feelings of understanding through a consistent series of appeal process. It is this process that is termed PR Transfer Model or Process. The model advocates converting hostility to sympathy, prejudice to acceptance, apathy to interest and ignorance to knowledge. In terms of relevance to this work, therefore, practitioners of financial Public Relations can use the framing models to ensure an investor friendly environment for the banking sub-sector by invoking sympathy in times of crisis, acceptance of innovation when there is prejudice, generating interest in period of apathy and educating them on issues they lack required knowledge.

Conclusion

The foregoing indicates that framing models are essential tools in Public Relations practices. A careful look at each of the framing models and its application to the banking sub-sector shows that there is no aspect of Public Relations that can find it more relevant than the Financial Public Relations. The Nigerian banking system have been over the years characterised by chequered history mostly attributable to the undoing of the internal control mechanism bothering on openness and accountability. In organizing communications between a bank and key publics therefore, a major concern in public relations should be to structure encounters in ways that will be favorably received and reinforce the interest of all parties. For example, if an exchange is truly meant to be a two-way symmetric exchange (which normative or system theorists suggest is the ideal way to conduct public relations; Grunig, 2000), practitioners must take care to assure that the structure of the encounters themselves are framed properly to facilitate dialogue and open discussion.

In conclusion, reporting every important event, openness towards investors, Internet pages and printed information intended entirely for the investing public, as well as constant direct conversations with shareholders and potential investors and customers, all anchored on appropriate framing choice(s), must become a daily routine for the banks that want to compete equally in the world money market.

Recommendations

In view of the peculiarities of the Nigerian banking sub – sector and the framing options for financial public relations so far analyzed, the following recommendations are hereby forwarded to ensure safe practices that will strengthen this aspect of the Nigerian financial sector. Each of them needs to be adopted using appropriate framing option(s).

- a. Managers of financial public relations in banks must be consistent with messaging, particularly in terms of how much details they give;
- b. They have to look at other banks in the sub - sectors to see what sort of key performance indicators they are using so as to think of adopting better option(s) – adopting similar ones will enable analysts and press to quickly benchmark you;
- c. They have to build a following of press and analysts and continue to communicate with them, even in the case of bad news;

- d. They have the responsibility of analyzing shareholder registers regularly to understand what type of investor to communicate with (i.e. if there is a large retail investor holding, ensure that they are communicated with through the available investor press; for instance, Financial Standard, Business Day, Annual Report etc in Nigeria);
- e. Work closely with other advisors, so that you all have the same strategic objectives and are communicating the same messages;
- f. A consistent drip-feeding of news flow to the market will help to sustain an upwardly moving share price. No news is considered bad news, so keeping investors regularly informed is essential to supporting the share price;
- g. They should ensure that bad news are not buried; report them with justifiable reasons so as to remain upfront with stakeholders; and
- h. Engage the press at all times of the year, so that they understand the company's story and will be more likely to write when there is news.

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Influence of the Internet on Sexual Behaviour of University Undergraduates: A Comparative Study of University of Jos and Benue State University, Makurdi

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Abstract

The study assessed the influence of Internet on the sexual behaviour of undergraduates in University of Jos and Benue State University. Survey was employed as research method using questionnaire and interview to gather data. Findings revealed that the sexual contents on the Internet have influence on university undergraduates. Further findings show that university undergraduates pay much attention to the sexual contents on the Internet which include pornography, dating, romance and oral sex. The study found too that the perception of undergraduates regarding sexual beliefs and behaviours is influenced by sexual content on the net. The study concludes that the Internet provides sexual behavior orientation to university undergraduates but this orientation is often dysfunctional and therefore poses a threat to the Nigerian youths. A multilevel approach that is school-based, family-based and community programmes aimed at helping youths out of false sexual behaviour orientation offered by the Internet among others is recommended by the study.

Introduction:

In recent times, Internet has become a large influence on people's attitudes and behaviours. Internet has been found to reflect and possibly shape the attitudes, values, and behaviours of young people (Greeson, 200:199). Mbofong (2003:3) agrees with the above when he wrote:

Internet, as most of us know is a large network, which communicates with each other by means of data packets. Internet is regarded as the largest information base. Today, Internet has become an integral part of our daily lives. We depend on the Internet to update ourselves about current news and rely on the communication platform it offers

to get in touch with our loved ones. Information from all around the world is just a click away, thanks to the Internet.

According to Borzekowski, Fobil, and Asante (2006:19) “the Internet has areas that appeal to all the most important sides of our lives, including relationship and sex”. According to them, there are a few different sides to relationships and sex on the internet- some can be helpful some not.

Speaking in the same vein, Igun (2006:21) said, “The Internet today is in many ways seen as an essential to life. It is used in the workplace, school and home. With the invention of the Internet the world has forever changed in both good and bad ways”. Speaking about the positive influence of the Internet, Oketunji (2001:8) wrote:

Many positive results have come from the invention of the Internet. One positive that has resulted from the Internet is the fact that you are always able to access research information anytime of the day or night. The Internet has every kind of information that you could possibly want, there is everything for everyone on the Internet. Besides research information, there also is daily local and world news information, and also weather. Young people also benefit from the Internet because there are so many websites geared to learning for them.

Having said that, Igun was quick to add that not everything from the Internet is positive when he wrote:

Not everything that has resulted from the Internet has been positive; some negative things have also come along with it. One of the worst results from the Internet is, inappropriate content such as pornography is available to anyone, including young children. Another negative effect of the Internet is that false information can also be found, which can lead to confusion.

As computers and mobile phones become relatively inexpensive, widespread use of Internet technologies by undergraduates for different purposes has considerably affected their every day lives. More and more undergraduates from both developed and developing countries are becoming identified by online usernames, passwords, and code names serving both leisure and educational pursuits (Chen, Wigand and Nilan 2000:590). The Internet offers information about many topics including sexual and reproductive health rights. According to Huberman (2008:203), studies have shown that many university undergraduates have used the Internet to look for information on health and sexuality, including topics they may not feel comfortable talking about with parents, teachers or healthcare providers- from depression to sexual behaviours. Sexual behaviour, means being attracted to a male or a female and acting in a manner leading to the satisfaction of the sex instinct.

Environmental influence is said to be one of the factors that contribute to the sexual behaviour of youths. The mass media especially the Internet is known to have contributed a lot to the sexual behaviour of undergraduates. According to Cyber Atlas (2001:506), the word sex is the most popular search term used on the Internet today. The Internet has increased dramatically the availability of sexually explicit content.

Computer and Internet use is diffusing more rapidly than any previous technology (Taylor, 2000:23).

The Internet may have both positive and negative effects on sexual health. According to Finkelhor, Mitchell, and Wolak, 2000:520), one national survey of young people (10-17 years old) who regularly use the Internet, one out of four said he or she had encountered unwanted pornography in the past year, and one out of five had been exposed to unwanted sexual solicitations or approaches. At the same time, a number of sites, such as the American Social Health Association *iwannaknow.org*, promote healthy sexual behaviour and provide young people with advice on communication in relationships as well as methods for protecting against sexually transmitted diseases.

Now, considering that the Internet offers both positive and negative sexual content to university undergraduates, one stands to reason that its influence on undergraduates could be positive or negative.

Statement of the Problem

The Internet offers a variety of activities that are appealing to young people especially university undergraduates. The Internet was initially developed and its use restricted to scientific research by the US Department of Defence (Cheung and Huang 2005:245). Since its widespread adoption, the Internet has impacted the lives of people from all walks of life, including impacts on business, shopping, education and social activities (Cheung and Huang 2005:245). Internet social activities have presented university undergraduates with opportunities as well as challenges. The increasing usage of social networking sites such as Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, Blogs, Instant Message, Message Board, and YouTube offer sexual orientation to university undergraduates which can be positive or negative (Cheung and Huang 2005:75). These social networking sites often give help, advice or information on sexual health. This type of information seems to be very important to undergraduates as an American survey found that 75% of young people use the Internet for health information (Borzekowski, Fobil and Asante 2006:246). These sites also create loads of new ways to make friends and talk to them.

On the other side, these sites are used to lure young people, especially university undergraduates into cybersex. Cybersex has been likened to a kind of “sexual revolution” with more than 100,000 web sites featuring all kinds of sexual content, such as erotic photos, videos, live sex acts, and web-cam strips sessions (Carnes 2001, Cooper, Boies, Maheu, and Greenfield, 2001:523). Visits to pornographic sites have increased with some sites reporting as many as 50 million hits (Worden, 2001:95). Although many of the undergraduate students who use the Internet tend to be recreational or utilitarian oriented, some end up becoming addicted to cybersex. Consequently, considering the opportunities and challenges offered by the Internet to university undergraduate students, what this study investigates is influence of the Internet on the sexual behavior of undergraduates in University of Jos and Benue State University.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to ascertain the sexual orientation the Internet provides to undergraduate students. Specifically, the study seeks:

1. To find out the sexual content undergraduates pay attention to on the Internet.
2. To examine the influence of sexual contents on the Internet on university undergraduates' sexual perceptions.
3. To ascertain the influence of sexual content on the Internet on university undergraduates' attitudes towards sex and sexual behaviours.

Research Questions

The following research questions which are in line with the above stated objectives were raised to further guide and give focus to this study.

1. What sexual content do undergraduates pay attention to on the Internet?
2. How is the sexual content on the Internet influencing university undergraduates' sexual perceptions?
3. What is the influence of sexual content on the Internet on university undergraduates' attitudes towards sex and sexual behaviours?

Significance of the Study

The study is significant in a number of ways. It contributes to knowledge about the Internet and sexual orientation of university undergraduates. It also contributes to how best the Internet can be used for the sexual orientation of university undergraduates. It is also hoped that the findings of the study will serve as a resource material for researchers as it will provide a guide for further studies in university undergraduates' social relationships.

Scope of the Study

The study is concerned with the influence of the Internet on sexual orientation of university undergraduates. Accordingly, it is delimited to the Internet contents that have to do with sexuality and its influence on university undergraduates. In the same vein, this study is delimited to the two being studied.

Review of Literature

Sexual activity among university undergraduates in contemporary Nigeria is gradually, yet firmly, assuring a revolutionary dimension. Evidence of this is to be seen in the increasing sexual promiscuity among undergraduates, high infection rates of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, rising figures of pregnancies, abortions and deaths (Iwokwagh, 2008:3).

Statistics indicate that in Nigeria, 26% and 66% of girls between 15 and 20 and 24 years respectively had pre-marital sexual experience in 1990 (MC Cauley, 1990) in Iwokwagh (2008:3). Makinwa (2002:18) reported in a recent survey of sexual behaviour of over 5,500 urban youths aged 12-24, that (44% of females and 37% of males) have had sexual intercourse. Of these figures, 82% of females and 72% of males were reported to have had sexual intercourse at 19. Findings from the National HIV/AIDS and Reproductive Health Survey, 2003, further strengthen the results of Makinwa's study, with regards to early sexual experiences of adolescents. It was found in the survey that the median age at first sexual intercourse was 18 years.

Several studies had revealed the sexual behaviour of adolescents and youths. A study of sexual activities of adolescents conducted by Owuamanam (1995:58) revealed that various activities are widely practiced among Nigerian adolescents, such

activities are kissing breast/genital fondling, embracing, hand holding and sexual intercourse. According to Odewole (2000:87) and Omoteso (2006:130), several attitude surveys had also revealed that the sexual attitude of adolescents is more liberal than that of adults. WHO (1993) in Omoteso (2006:130) reported that 53% of girls and 67% boys aged between 14 and 19 years were sexually active. In studies of Ravi (1991), Capenter (2000), Horan, Philips and Hagan (2000), Koenig (2000), Remez (2000), Sanders and Reinisch (2001) in Omoteso (2006:131), it was reported that young men surveyed were more likely than women to report sexual experience.

Arising from undergraduates' risky sexual behaviour is a deluge of unpleasant consequences (Iwokwagh 2008:4). For instance, it has been noted that the increasing number of unwanted pregnancies among university undergraduates in Nigeria is fast becoming an international health problem (Iwokwagh 2008). Statistics show that more than 70 percent of girls have become pregnant at least once by the time they are 18years old (Arkutu 1995 in Iwokwagh 2008:4).

Although many factors contribute to the high sexual activities by university undergraduates, Adebayo, Udegbe and Sunmola (2006:743) identified gender and Internet as the factors that shape sexual behaviour of university undergraduates. According to them, "Gender and Internet use are factors that appear germane to the understanding of youth's sexual attitude and behaviour in Nigeria. Longe et al (2007:198) corroborates this view when they said that, "the Internet more than any other agent of social change has contributed in no small measure to the removal of guilt, fear and shame associated with unconventional sexual activities".

Adebayo, Udegbe and Sunmola (2006:776) had established an interaction effect between the use of the Internet by males and risky sexual behaviour. Emeozor (2005) in Adebayo et al (2006) equally had raised an alarm on the possible relationship between access to pornographic content on the Internet and risky sexual tendencies that can lead to the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Braun-Harvey (2008:1) said that Internet shared most of the blame. According to him, "the Internet is sex, since the advents of the Internet, sexual interests and behaviour have become a common purpose for surfing the net". He queried:

Each new application and technology on the Internet has resulted in a vast array of sexual applications, from the dissemination of sexual information to the selling of sexual health and erotic toys as well as an infinite number of sexual images, activities and turn on. The companies that are making the most consistent profits online are companies that provide sexual related products. The unspoken yet generally understood assumption is that people go online to pursue curiosity about sex. The prevailing viewpoint about this phenomenon is, largely one of the risks and negative consequences.

According to Taylor (1999:21), the Internet has increased dramatically the availability of sexually explicit content. Kunkel, Cope, Farinola, Biely, Rollin, Donnerstein (2000:101) warned that despite increasing public concern about the potential health risks of early, unprotected sexual activity most mass media (including the Internet) rarely depict three Cs of responsible sexual behaviour: Commitment,

Contraceptives, and consideration of Consequences. Although more than half of couples who have engage in sexual intercourse on the Internet are in an established relationship, 1 in 10 are couples who have met only recently, one quarter do not maintain a relationship after having sex. Only about 1 in 10 of the programmes on television or the Internet that include sexual content mentions the possible consequences or the need to use contraceptives or protection against STDs. Unintended pregnancies rarely are shown as the outcome of unprotected sex and STDs other than HIV/AIDS are almost never discussed (Kunkel et al 2001:36).

Longe, Chiemeké, Onifade, Balogun, Otti and Longe (2007:195) said that, apart from the issues of piracy and fraudulent scam mails, one major emerging worrisome dimension in Nigerian cyberspace is pornography in its various guises. According to these researchers, the Internet aided by technology induced anonymity has popularized the sex business more than any other means of advertisement. With unlimited access to a variety of websites and the impediment of needing to enter a brothel physically removed, immoral gratification is just the click of a mouse away from any intending customer (Sackson, 1999 in Longe et al 2007). Longe et al (2007:195) opined:

In her paper, *Internet Infidelity: A critical Review of the Literature*, Katherine (2006) in Longe et al (2007:196) is of the opinion that people are using the Internet more frequently to form friendships and romances and to initiate inordinate affairs. Ayodele (2007:215) is of the opinion that x-rated films and “cyber-sex” are lascivious films specially designed to arouse sexual feelings. In times past, it was not easy to come by such because it was difficult to produce and it was primarily made available for the rich and the ruling class (Vanwesenbeek, 2001; Awake, 2003). Technology advancement has made it so popular, affordable and readily available to the less affluent. In the last two decades, the proliferation of cable systems and Internet has made sexually, explicit media so enormously prevalent and are saturating society at an accelerating rate which made it more accessible to both the rich and poor, young and old, educating and less educated alike (Ayodele, 2007).

Vanwesenbeek (2001) reported that what the proliferation of cable systems and Internet offered to the viewers varies from often soft, but sometimes hardcore, porn movies to very explicit documentaries about ordinary and less ordinary people’s sexual lives. Ayodele (2007:215) said that, this might be the reason why Awake (2003) affirmed that, the consumer who is afraid that his neighbour will see him in the adult section of a video store can now stay at home and order by pushing a button on his cable system or direct TV or Internet service. Easy access to this kind of programming has contributed a lot of acceptability (Ayodele, 2007).

People are selective in their sexual media viewing habits and that they are likely to choose the materials that are congruent with their sexual scripts fantasies and disposition (Mosher, 1998). Bagaert (2001:40), elaborating on this idea, found that individual differences (e.g. intelligence and antisocial tendencies) were indeed predictive of undergraduate men’s choices of and preference for various forms of sexual media. Statistics have also shown that the primary consumption of pornography is their source of sex education (Awake 2003). Studies by Brown (2000:35) and Steele (1999:154) showed that teenagers identify (their sense of themselves and other) affects and is affected by the way they use, understand, appropriate or resist mass media images and message about love, sex, and

relationship thereby putting an emphasis on media practice rather than media content to which people were personally involved with TV comedies and dramas (i.e. the level of identification or connection with the content) was a better predictor of sexual outcomes (attitude expectations and behaviour) among undergraduates than was the sheer viewing amount.

Aremu (2002) in Ayodele ((2007:216), while considering the systematic viewing of television from the age of 2 to the teens' years, argued that children considered to be emotionally disturbed might not be able to distinguish between fantasy and reality when watching television shows (this applies these watched on the Internet). It could then be said that the predictive features of watching x-rated films is all embracing that is, it involves them personally (leisure seeking, self esteem, sexual preoccupation and so on).

Ayodele (2007:216) quotes some sources reporting that 15% of all Internet users accessed one of the top five "Adult" web sites in a recent month (Copper, Schever, Boise and Gorden, 2000), that sex is the most frequently searched topic on Internet (Freeman-Longo and Blanchard 2000) and that, all of the top eight word searchers on the Internet involve pornography (Sparrow and Griffiths, 2000). Similarly, Cheney (2000:91) reported that 3.8 million Canadians accessed Internet sex in October of 2000 adding that all average user visits Internet sex sites on an average of 4 days per month. Fisher (2001:21) corroborates the statistical ratings of Cheney (2000) that approximately 25% of all Canadian males visited an Internet sexuality site monthly and did so at an average of 4 different days.

Empirical studies reported by Ayodele (2007:216), indicate that personal factors influence the effect of exposure through related variations in cognitive and emotional processing of the sexual stimuli (Newhavlen, 2000:61). Other support evidences say that the effects of exposure to sexually explicit materials are mediated by the ways the stimuli are given meaning in connection with personality aspects such as inhibition or excitation proneness among men (Jeanssen and Bancroft, 2000, Janssen, Everaerd, Spieving and Jassen, 2000). Further more, Pearson and Pollack (1997:80) found a comparative evidence for women while Malamuth (1996:28) reported a consistent evidence of difference between male and female in affective reactions and self-ratings of arousal after exposure to sexually explicit materials.

Sexually explicit materials shapes attitudes and influences behaviours and its messages are so enticing primarily, because they are fantasy and are presented as more exciting than the real heterosexual act (Ayodele 2007:216). There is a mixed findings on the effects of exposure to pornography in individual especially men (Banserman, 1996:409) and this can be explained in part by the notion that exposure to pornography may have adversarial attitudinal and behaviour effects in some men but not in others (Vanwesenbeek, 2001).

According to sexual behaviour sequence, individuals who come into contact with erotic stimuli and who are sufficiently sexually aroused for a sufficient period of time are motivated to engage in preparatory sexual behaviour. Preparatory behaviour which increase the likelihood of overt sexual behaviour can involve actions such as hocking one's bedroom door and plugging in a vibrator, making sexual overtures to an to an opposite sex or same sex partner or seeing sexual relationship in an Internet chat room (Fisher, 1986; Gallup, 1986, Fisher, 2001). If preparatory sexual behaviours are successful, sexual behaviour that may be subjectively negative could

result and thus increase the risk of developing sexually deviant tendencies such as raping, masturbation, women offenders (Ayodele 2007:217).

Longe et al (2007:197) opined that:

The disorganization of primary societies, and resort to urban life, with its attendant loss of rich cultural values has encroached on the adolescents (undergraduates) ability to handle their newly awakened sexual impulses. Today, we notice gross sexual misconducts among different age groups in our nation fuelled by the claim of urbanization, modernization, spurious sexual expressions in junk magazines and of course pornography and Internet dating. The consequences are not farfetched. They include child-pregnancy, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases and of course possible increase in the incidence of HIV/AIDS due to in unguided sexual escapades.

In Benue state, the story is not different. Iwokwagh, (2008:4) said that, with rapid urbanization and breakdown of moral values, sexual permissiveness have become a characteristic of the social life of university undergraduates in Benue state. There have been growing incidents of pregnancy and contracting of sexual transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS among university undergraduates (Longe et al 2007:197). More than one-third of these pregnancies are aborted, with almost half of the pregnant ones being admitted in hospitals for bleeding, anemia and fatigue (Nwanko, 1983:19). Some have been confirmed HIV positive while others are already dead or are at the point of death because of AIDS (Longe et al 2007:197). This has social and economic implications for the growth and development of the state (Iwokwagh 2008:4). For example, the high and rapid rising figures of undergraduates pregnancies and unsafe abortion as well as deaths from sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS have profound negative implications for the state's economy. This is because it leads to diversion of public funds and resources in capital projects, investments and saving into care of this category of people. According to Iwokwagh (2008:4), the state faces a bleak future in the wake of the teeming deaths that characterize the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This is because HIV/AIDS illness and deaths mostly affect the productive sector (youths) of the state's economy.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the social learning theory propounded in 1977 by Albert Bandura. According him, "learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them on what to do. Fortunately, most human behaviour is learned observationally through modeling; from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action".

According to Cherry (2007:19), the social learning theory proposed by Albert Bandura has become perhaps the influential theory of learning and development. While rooted in many of the basic concepts of traditional learning theory, Bandura believed that direct reinforcement could not account for all types of learning.

His theory added a social element, arguing that people can learn new information and behaviours by watching other people. Known as observational learning for modeling, this type of learning can be used to explain a wide variety of behaviours. For instance, Adebayo et al (2006:744) rightly observed in accordance with the social learning theory that some risky or antisocial behaviours are acquired and reinforced through social learning that occur by observing and copying the actions of others. Symbolic modeling occurs mostly through the media. Sexuality can, therefore, be learned vicariously through the Internet. It is well known that sexuality is a dominant theme on the Internet and that youths (aged 12-24) are the largest population using the Internet for communication purposes (New Internet project) in (Adebayo et al 2006:744). Nevertheless, media reports and research evidence suggest that young people are at risk as a result of being online, and the greatest risk is exposure to unsolicited sexually explicit materials.

This theory is therefore relevant to this study because according to the prediction of social learning theory, a child exposed to certain unconventional behaviours can adopt and internalize such behaviours as conventional ones (Adebayo et al 2006:744).

Research Method

The survey design was adopted with questionnaire and interview as instruments for data collection. The population of the study comprise of the entire undergraduate students in University of Jos and Benue State University. Statistics from the institutions in the 2012/2013 session shows that the two universities have an undergraduate population of 22, 723 students (University of Jos, 10, 206; and Benue State University, Makurdi, 22, 517 respectively). A sample size of 360 respondents was drawn from the two institutions using the online sample size calculator developed by creative research systems (<http://www.surveysystem.com/sample-size-formula.htm>). Multistage sampling procedure, involving a combination of cluster, purposive and simple random sampling techniques was used to provide a relatively equal opportunity for all undergraduate students in the two institutions to be selected as respondents. Using the cluster sampling technique, the population was divided into nineteen (19) units of clusters based on the colleges/faculties in the two universities.

The cluster sampling technique was again applied in the second stage to select three (3) Colleges/Faculties from the 19 cluster units of the two universities – making up six Colleges/Faculties. The simple random sampling technique was applied in the third stage to select three departments from each of the three colleges/faculties. A sample size of 20 respondents per department was also selected using the simple random sampling technique. On the whole, 18 departments were studied and 360 respondents were sampled. Interview was also conducted with 15 students randomly selected from the two universities, culminating into 30 interview sessions for the study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Research Question 1: What sexual content do undergraduates pay attention to on the Internet? Data presented in table 1 answers this research question.

Table 1: Sexual Content Mostly Paid Attention to by Respondents

Responses	UniJos	BSU	Total	Percentage
Dating	58	67	125	34.7
Pornography	83	76	159	44.2
Romance	24	23	47	13.1
Oral sex	7	5	12	3.3
Nothing at all	8	9	17	4.7
Total	180	180	360	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Data in Table 1 shows that undergraduates of the two universities pay particular attention to sexual contents on the internet as indicated by all respondents that they mostly pay attention to certain sexual content, ranging from dating, through pornography, romance, to oral sex amongst other content. The views of the interviewees also supports this data as all interviews admitted exposing themselves to some level of pornographic content on the internet. The interviewees note however, that such exposure is sometimes not deliberate but as a result of intrusive sharing by friends on social media. However, given the overwhelming responses in the questionnaire regarding particular attention to sexual content on the internet, it can be implied that sexual contents on the internet are becoming trendy and attractive to internet users.

Research Question 2: How is the sexual content on the Internet influencing university undergraduates' sexual perceptions? This research question is answered by data contained in table 2.

Table 2: Influence of Internet Sexual Content on Sexual Perceptions

Responses	UniJos	BSU	Total	Percentage
Internet sex is a normal activity	28	24	52	14.4
Internet sex is a hilarious activity	11	7	18	5
Internet sex is fun	63	58	121	33.6
Internet sex is educative	71	83	154	42.7
Internet sex is casual	7	8	15	4.2
Total	180	180	360	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Information regarding how sexual content on the Internet is influencing university undergraduates' sexual perceptions is presented in table 2. The data show that the sexual contents on the internet is influencing university undergraduates' sexual perceptions; making them to view sex as a normal activity; as a hilarious (entertaining) activity and as fun. The data shows too that the sexual content on the Internet is influencing university undergraduates to perceive sex as a casual and educative activity that is necessary for everyone to engage in, without minding the attendant implications and consequences. The interviewees also share this perception, though a significant percentage of the interviews contend that the sexual content on the Internet is influencing university undergraduates to perceive sex as a serious

matter that must be taken seriously and cautiously. Notwithstanding, the data implies that the sexual perceptions of university undergraduates is being influenced by sexual content on the Internet.

Research Question 3: What is the influence of sexual content on the Internet on university undergraduates' attitudes towards sex and sexual behaviours? Data presented in table answers research question three.

Table 3: Influence on Attitudes and Sexual Behaviours

Responses	UniJos	BSU	Total	Percentage
Casual attitudes and behaviours	45	41	86	23.8
Liberal and open minded	32	33	65	18.1
Conscious and careful	40	37	77	21.4
Explorative and inquisitive	38	29	67	18.6
Concerned about exploitation	16	22	38	10.6
All of the above	9	18	27	7.5
Total	180	180	360	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Data in the table 3 shows that the attitudes and behaviours of undergraduate students in Nigerian universities towards sex as typified by the findings are significantly being influenced by sexual contents on the Internet. The interviewees also agree with this notion even though, most of them imply that the influence is positive, offering sexual education issues that would otherwise not be discussed with the young adults by parents, teachers or social institutions. Notwithstanding, the data collected through the questionnaire tend to portray more negative influences than the positive influences provided by the interviewees. From whatever, angle however; it is sufficiently evident that the attitudes and behaviours of Nigerian undergraduate students in towards sex and sexuality related issues has been influenced significantly by the sexual content offerings of the internet.

Overall, the data collected from both instruments show that undergraduates of the two universities studied have good knowledge of the Internet and its contents. Summarily, all the respondents agreed that the sexual contents on the Internet had influence on them. Respondents also agreed to personally seeking out sexual contents on the Internet for entertainment, fun, sexual fantasy as well as to learn more about romance and or sex. In addition, respondents agreed that through their interaction with the Internet, they have become more liberal about sexual issues.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study show that undergraduates pay attention to the sexual contents on the Internet which includes pornography, dating, romance and oral sex that are implicitly or explicitly displayed on the Internet. These findings are in conformity with those of Longe, Chiemeké, Onifade, Balogun, Otti and Longe's 2007 study which noted the high level of explicit sexual content such as pornography on the Internet and its high consumption by Nigerian youths. Similarly, the findings also affirm the studies of Katherine (2006), Ayodele (2007) and Vanwesenbeck (2001)

which found that people are using the Internet more frequently to form sexual relationships and romances and to initiate inordinate affairs. These studies also concord that the presentation of these sexual materials on the Internet is so attractive for any youth to ignore.

It is evident from the findings of this study that the level of influence exercised by sexual contents on the internet on university undergraduates in Nigeria is high (68%). The findings concur with the findings of Ayodele (2009) that sexual explicit materials shape attitudes and influence behaviour of youths in several ways. The findings are also consistent with those of Igoche's 2005 study which showed the extent of influence of the media on the moral development of youths in Benue State.

Further findings of the study reveal that the sexual contents on the Internet have changed the sexual beliefs and behaviours of university undergraduates towards sex to a very high extent (68%). These findings lay credence to those of Adebayo, Udegbe and Summole (2006) and Owuamanam (1995) which established an interaction effect between the use of the Internet and undergraduates' risky sexual behaviour in Nigeria. This also corroborates the study of Longe, Onifade, Balogun, Otti and Longe (2007) which established that the Internet more than any other agent of social change has contributed in no small measure to the removal of guilt, fear and shame associated with unconventional sexual activities. These findings equally give credence to theoretical postulations of the social learning theory which argues that people can learn new information and behaviours by watching other people. This type of learning, the theory argues, can be used to explain a wide variety of behaviours. What this means is that most undergraduates' sexual beliefs and behaviours are induced by the sexual contents they view on the Internet.

Conclusion

As the findings of this study suggest, sexual activity awareness is very high among Nigerian university undergraduates as a result of access and exposure to sexual content on the internet. This poses dangerous consequences to the youths and may perhaps amplify or justify the alarm raised in some quarters concerning the possible relationship between access to the Internet and sexual behaviour orientation, with concomitant attendant sexually related problems amongst teenagers and youths. Consequently, as the mass media affects our ideas of who we are and what we could be, it is possible that access and exposure to sexual content on the internet will no doubt influence our perception, attitude and behaviour towards sex. We create our identity in relation to the images we see around us from a young age. It is therefore the conclusion of this study that the current widespread access and exposure to sexual content on the internet by undergraduate students of Nigerian universities can have undesirable effects, if the current trend of influence is unabated.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study and findings of other empirical studies reviewed in this study, the research makes the following recommendations:

- i. **The Role of Guardians/ Parents:** Guardians/ Parents should advise, caution and warn their children as they are growing up about the potential dangers of the Internet. Guardians/ Parents should not shy away from educating children on

sexual issues. A situation where sex is seen as a subject that must not be discussed should be stopped because as Ayodele (2009:225) noted “sex has become a thorn in the flesh in the lives of our youngsters, tearing them apart morally, educationally, socially, physically and psychologically”. This calls for parents to reappraise their roles in enlightening their youngsters on issues related to sex rather than leaving it in the hands of schools, peers or the media. Sex should not be seen in the family as so sacred that it must not be discussed with young ones lest “sexual revolution” will completely evolve.

- ii. **The Role of Educators:** Sex education should be introduced in schools from primary to tertiary level. Sex education in schools should be made part and parcel of the University Curriculum. Sex education will reduce the risks of potentially negative outcomes from sexual behaviour like unwanted pregnancy and infection with sexual transmitted diseases and HIV. More psychologists and guardians and counsellors should be made available in the universities so that they can guide the students on the way to control and modify their sexual behaviours.
- iii. **The Role of Network Providers and Cyber cafe Owners:** Cyber cafes should be encouraged to partition their services to adult, youth and children/ teen sections in order to take advantage of technologies for content channelling/ selection. While some computer terminals can be dedicated to access all forms of contents, others for youth/ children/ teenagers usage can be enabled to access contents that are purely healthy for youths’ age group consumption. Content channelling/ service technologies and filters can be used as an aid to moderating contents viewed by youths/ teenagers at all Internet access points. Network providers can actually help in this regard by channelling contents meant for adult different from the one meant for the youngsters.
- iv. **The Role of Government and NGOs:** Government and NGOs should organize public enlightenment to properly create awareness and to expose the affective and psychological effect of viewing sexual contents such as pornography on the Internet. Government legislations aimed at the censorship of such contents for youngsters will be a right step in the right direction. In the word of Dick and Herbert (2003), effective and vigorous law enforcement can help deter Internet pornography and diminish the supply of inappropriate sexual materials available to youngsters.
- v. **A Multi-level Approach:** A multi-level approach with school-based, family-based and community- based programmes aimed at helping youths out of false sexual orientation should be embarked upon. This could be achieved in the social contexts within which the youths live. Responsible mentorship on all fronts demands that adult members in the society be interested in the web contents being consumed by the youths, children and teenagers. Adults must learn to teach youngsters how to make good choices on the Internet. They must be willing to engage in sometimes difficult conversations. They must face the tradeoffs that are inevitable with demanding work and family schedules. But in addition to teaching responsible behaviour and coping skills for encounters with inappropriate material and experiences on the Internet, this instruction in the words of Longe et al (2007:208) will help youngsters think critically about all kinds of media messages, including those associated with hate, racism and violence. It will also help them conduct effective Internet searches for

information and make ethical and responsible choices about Internet behaviour and non-Internet behaviour as well.

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Traditional Communication systems among the Tiv People of Benue State of Nigeria: Successes, Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

The paper gives an overview of the traditional systems of communication and different modes of information dissemination among the Tiv people of Benue State of Nigeria. Anchored on the Source-Message-Channel- Receiver (S-M-C-R) model, the paper underscores the usefulness of the systems as means of communication. This is predicated on the fact that the Tiv traditional society can better be informed if its traditions and customs are exploited properly and scientifically. The paper asserts that Tiv traditional systems of communication and mechanisms of information dissemination is still relevant and often play a vital role in mobilizing the people especially at the grass root level for social, economic and political empowerment. Contending that the traditional communicators, institutions and symbols are the only source of information in rural areas the paper also tries to impress that these can be revitalized and upgraded for enhanced information flow.

Key words: traditional communication, social system, source, channel, message

Introduction

In reference to Harold Lasswell, Akinfeleye (1988, p.48) posits that:

Man has always needed something to watch over his environment and report to him on dangers, discoveries, opportunities, opinion, facts, decisions, changes and current trends – something to entertain people on broad scale, something to broaden trade and commerce.

Not being an island in the use of some forms of communication for obvious reasons, the Tiv people have over the years been identified with different means they interact. Through the traditional systems of communication, the indigenous people carry out

all the existing functions of information, education, entertainment, enlightenment, surveillance etc which the advent of the mass media has reinforced.

The Tiv people of Benue State which, constitute the fourth largest ethnic group in Nigeria are located in the middle belt region of the country. The Tiv shares borders with the Chamba and Jukun of Taraba State in the northeast. They also share border with the Igede of Benue State; Iyala, Gakem and Obudu of Cross River State in the southeast; and the Idoma of Benue State to the south. There is also an international boundary between the Tiv and the Republic of Cameroon at a southeastern angle of the ethnic group's location. The population of the people is matched by the landmass it occupies. Alluding to this, Makar (1975, p.26) posits that Tivland which "lies between 6° 30' and 8° 10' north latitude and 8° and 10° east longitude has a landmass area of 30, 000 sq. km²".

The Tiv population is, however, still a contentious issue as to the exact figure. By 1991, the Tiv population of Benue was placed at 2.1 million (National Population Commission, 1991), but was very much contested as not being comprehensive. Wegh (1998, p.23) places the current Tiv population at 4 million.

Though predominantly found in 14 out of the 21 local government areas of Benue State, the Tiv are found in several other local government areas and states of the federation. According to Kpoughul (2000, p.29):

The Tiv occupy vast lands in about six local government areas in the present day Taraba State, four local governments in Nasarawa State and two local governments in Cross River State and Akwaya sub-division in the Republic of Cameroon respectively.

With the penetration of Western influence, Christianity has become the primary religion of the people. Nevertheless, some Tiv folk still practice traditional religion.

It is instructive to note that traditional communication systems play integral role in exchange of messages among the Tiv people. They serve the purpose of making known needs and requirements, exchanging information, engendering understanding as well as establishing and maintaining relations. Consequently, despite the import of mass media, traditional communication systems are still operational among the Tiv people. This is premised on the near total disconnect of the rural people in particular from the mass media. Also, the ruralites in particular still cherish their traditional values and norms among which is the mode and channels through which they interact.

Essentially, the traditional communication channels at the disposal of Tiv people are markets, gunshots, canons, animal horns, flutes, drum beats, oramedia and music among others (shall be discussed). Like other ethnic groups in Nigeria and by extension, Africa, most of these channels have a long history, and their application depends on a given occasion or situation (Sanda, 2010, p.40). It is against this background that the article seeks to relive the traditional communication systems as are being used by the Tiv people with a view to repositioning them for greater impact.

Theoretical Framework

The article is built on David Berlo's Communication Model popularly known as the S-M-C-R model which he developed in 1960 (Narula, 2006, p.31). The thrust of Berlo's approach which is an improvement on Shannon Weaver's model is the

emphasis it places on dyadic (having two elements) communication, therefore stressing the role of the relationship between the source and the receiver as an important variable in the communication process. Writing on the model, Goss (1983, p.10) cited in Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso (2008, p.28) avers that the source (the originator of the message) and the receiver (the target of communication) are people in the communication process. According to the theory, consequently, these people have certain characteristics that affect fidelity of message. These are skills (their abilities to speak and listen), attitudes (their feelings about the speaker and topic), knowledge (the amount of information relevant to the communication interaction), social system (roles in life, social standing, group belonging, and upbringing) and culture (the person's origin, ethnic background and home country) (Goss, 1983, p.10).

Table 1: The SMCR Model of Communication

S SOURCE	M MESSAGE	C CHANNEL	R RECEIVER
Communication Skill Attitude Knowledge Social System Culture	Content Elements Treatment Structure Code	Seeing Hearing Touching Smelling Tasting	Communication Skill Attitude Knowledge Social System Culture

Source: Goss (1983). *Communication in everyday life*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company

As shown above, the model has the various components in the communication process. The basic four components are source, message, channel and receiver.

Source is where the message originates. The initiator or sender of message decides on what to send based on stimulus. In communicating, the source has to choose a channel to carry his/her message. He or she decides on the best channel or combination of channels for maximum impact. For example, would a verbal message be better than non-verbal message?

The essential elements which the SMCR model identifies under the heading of message are content, elements, treatment structure and code. Content is the material in the message selected by the source to express his/her purpose. The treatment of the message is the decisions which the source makes in selecting and arranging both code and content. The ways you choose to arrange assertions in part determine the structure of the content. The code of the message means how it is sent e.g. language, body language, gestures, music and even culture is a code. Who receives the message and decodes it is referred to as receiver or decoder.

Embedded under channel are seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting. What is seen, heard, felt, smell or tasted depends on the traditional medium in use and interpreted meaningfully.

The suitability of this model to the study is located on its communication elements which singles out sender and receiver that share messages and experience through some given channels based on shared frame of reference. Thus, despite the fact that the model elaborates several elements in the communication process

generally, the use of Tiv traditional systems of communications is better appreciated by the people in context, even though it may have some African affinity.

Conceptual Clarifications

Since the academic culture demands the definition of terms as a means of enhancing full understanding the paper, it is imperative to define key terms in this work.

Communication: Is the process of sharing ideas, feelings and experiences through some means or channels. Blake and Haroldsen (1995) cited in Popoola (2004, p.106) opined that it is “The transmission of information, ideas, emotions, skills etc by use of symbols – words, pictures, figures, graphs, etc. It is the act or process of transmission that is usually called communication.” Thus, communication could be seen as sharing meanings between human beings either through verbal and non verbal cues. This implies the involvement of two parties – the sender and receiver of message. As a process, the encoder or sender of some form of message initiates and passes the message to another or group who responds or reacts and so the interaction continues. Doob (1966) cited in Ogwezzy (2008, p.42) elucidates that:

...people are exposed to a communication whose (i) communicator (ii) seeks to achieve a goal or a set of goals (iii) through a medium or media (iv, v) at a particular site (vii) in spite of certain restrictions (vii) by means of a message (viii) that reaches them in a specified mood (ix) subsequently what follows are perception (x) reactions (xi) changes, and feedback.

Communication may, therefore, involve a village messenger delivering messages, use of canons/gun shots to announce an important event or a person simply telling a folktale in the presence of a participating group.

Traditional communication Systems: This refers to the process of passing information from one person to another or groups using channels or modes rooted in a society’s culture. In other words, traditional communication systems are:

products of the interplay between a traditional community’s customs and conflicts, harmony and strife, cultural convergences and divergences, culture specific tangibles, interpersonal relations, symbols and codes and moral traditions which include mythology, oral literature ... which encompass a people’s factual, symbolic and cosmological existence (Ugboaja, 1985 in Ebeze, 2002, p.28).

Traditional communication systems make use of such media like oramedia, village messenger, and market among others. These modes of communication as used today is an admixture of social conventions and practices that have become sharpened and blended into veritable communication modes and systems which have almost become standard practices for society (Olulade, 1998 cited in Ogwezzy, 2008, p.20). Functionally, Kombol (2005, p.65) note that the use of traditional modes of communication is to allow for greater participation. They serve as platforms where people freely use without anybody claiming ownership of the modes or channels.

Modes and Channels of Traditional Communication Systems used by Tiv People

The Tiv traditional media are diverse in nature. They however, fall under the two broad ways namely; verbal and non-verbal. Verbal traditional media involve all those that make use of word of mouth. Typical examples are village messenger, folktale, parables, proverbs and extramundane media among others. Non-verbal media, on the other hand are those that do not require word of mouth or speech organs to pass messages. They include varying forms of membraneophones (drums), gong, aerophones (flute, whistle, and pipe), dance etc. for clarity we shall treat some of these media in details.

i. Drums: This could simply be wooden drums or skin drums referred to as membraneophones. Describing the wooden drum Akpabio (2003, p.14) states that:

...the wooden drum is made from tree-trunk. To enable it produce mellifluous sounds, the bark is removed and an opening is made at the top. This way when struck with a stick it produces sounds. The drums come in various sizes and shapes and it has various designations.

Wooden drums common among the Tiv people are *ilu*, *gede* and *indyer*. Among the aforementioned, *idyer* is the largest single drum carved entirely out of wood (Nwuneli, 1983). Added to this class of drum is *gbangew* which are slides of wood of about two feet long, normally twelve or twenty-four in number. Closely related to wooden drum are various skin drums whose uses depend on needs and purposes. These media produce sound through the vibration of membranes (Wilson, 1987 and Ibagere, 1994, p.91), by beating with bare hands or striking with well carved sticks. Skin drums used by Tiv people go by different names. Examples are *gbande*, *genga*, *ajo* and *kunkun*. Each of the skin drums are derived from round tree-trunk (Akpabio, 2003, p.14), hollowed through the middle. All the drums are tightly wrapped at both ends with animal skin and network of strings, except the *gbandew* which is wrapped only at one end. Of all these, *gengais* the biggest followed by *ajo* and its *kunkun* equivalent. *Gbande* takes different shapes and so are variations in sizes, too. Skin drums are used particularly on social occasions like festivals, marriages, investiture as well as at religious gatherings, burial and political activities.

ii. Gong/bell: Gong is a metal instrument with an opening at one end, which produces sound when beaten normally by a stick coated or wrapped with a piece of cloth or rubber. While some gongs have dual opening, others have one. The Tiv people call the gong with one opening which is the giant size *chembekwen* and the dual opening *kwen*. The latter is the type Wilson (1998, p.33) likens to *ahangkang*, *akpongkpong* and *ogene* used by Efik, Ibibio and Igbo respectively. Gongs are used by village criers to attract attention for announcements. In Tiv society, rather than being used by village criers to attract attention, the *gong* essentially complements other musical instruments to motivate and entertain people during ceremonies.

Bell (*imemeghso* called in Tiv) on the other hand is a cone-shaped instrument with a wooden handle and ball shaped metal suspended on the inside. According to Akpabio (2003, p.16), it produces sound when the ball-shaped metal suspended on the inside of the cone-shaped structure hits the side of the structure in the process of

jiggling. The communication function of bells among the Tiv can be seen as they are used in schools and churches. In schools, bells announce when to arrive school, herald dismissal from school, regulation of lessons and of course, can signal an emergency assembly. In the case of churches, bells remind adherents to prepare for some religious activities. Bells also announce death of prominent members of the church.

iii. Aerophones: These are instruments like animal horn (*koroughkunyam*), elephant tusk (*soho nor*) and Indian bamboo (*akendemsongo*) etc, which produce sound due to vibrations coming from a column of air. The carved animal horn referred to *askoroughor akya/miaghin* Tiv language is derived from such animals like elephant, cow or deer and antelope. There are other aerophones or trumpets viz; *igidaand kaakaki*. *Igidais* essentially used for praise singing while *kaakaki*, though serve similar purpose, is often used nowadays during church service by Christians. In all cases “it is the mouth that is usually used to force air through the instrument” (Ibagere, 1994, p.91).

iv. Gunshots and canons: These are used in traditional Tiv communication to convey different types of information. The number of times and duration they are shot relay specific messages intended. Gunshots are used during festive periods. This was typical when festivals like *amagh wan* warranted the shooting of guns and blasting of canons (*tiam*). Apart from use of these during festive periods, the Tiv people used and are still using gunshots (during hunting expeditions). Sometimes gunshots and canons are used during burials particularly when an aged person or important personality dies. According to Mede (1998) cited in Ogwezzy (2008, p.161), the sound of canons which are buried about two inches beneath the earth can travel a distance of up to four kilometres.

v. Village messenger/crier: This is an important person who, through the word of mouth, goes round the village to deliver messages from the leaders. In Tiv language he is called *ortyomor ortindin*. Usually he is chosen by the elders of the community to do errands for the elders and the leader of the community. He is sent out to the heads of the neighbouring families for a crucial meeting at the place/residence of the overall head of the community. Some of these meetings revolve around community works, political issues, and obituaries. In disseminating the message, the village crier goes from house to house or at social gatherings to deliver messages. This contrasts the practice of traditional messengers from other climes who customarily use instruments in form of *gong* to pique attention of community members at strategic places and make their announcements as directed. According to Ebeze (2002, p.29) one of the good aspects of the village crier is that people can stop and ask questions on his message

vi. Venue oriented channels: Among these channels is market which is a designated place where people meet for the purpose of buying and selling. Village dwellers in Tiv settings have special days weekly or bi-weekly to meet for the purpose of exchange. Examples of few existing markets in Tivland are Adikpo, Ikyogen, Jato-Aka, Agbo, Ihugh, Anyiin, Gbor, Tor Donga, Buruku, Gbajumba, Zaki-Biam,

Ushongo, Naka, Ikpayongo and Aliade. During such meetings information about socio-economic and political life as they affect the villagers are shared. Apart from markets are the various rivers and streams where people meet at different locations to fetch water, bath or wash their clothes and other domestic items. Few rivers and streams worthy of mention are Rivers KatsinaAla, Benue, Moor, Amile, Dura and Awajir. Roads also constitute venue as channel of traditional communication. Tiv people travel along roads on foot or bicycles. During such travels they interact among themselves. Some even arrange a predetermined place where they meet to share messages.

vii. Oramedia: These are means of communication through festivals, plays, puppets, dance, songs, parables, riddles folktales, and proverbs. The popularity of puppetry among the Tiv people can be seen its *Kwagh-hirability* to entertain, inform and educate through face-to-face communication. Affirming its significance, Kombol (2002, p.24) notes that “the *Kwagh-hir* has gained national and even international recognition and illustrates how African systems foster unity. As other people from other communities watch it, it exposes them to the Tiv culture. They might laugh, and even start learning the songs that accompany the movement of puppets.” Side by side with the Tiv *Kwagh-hir* puppetry are certain dances like *Ange*, *Ingyor*, *Anza alor*, *Ibumeghand* the erotic *Swange/kpingidance* pioneered and popularized by OrshioAdaagu *etc.* They are known for their dance craft, poetic creativity and general aesthetic profundity. To provide just one example relating to their dance repertoire, in “1973 the ethnic group alone accounted for fifty-four of the one hundred and eighty-eight dances performed at the ‘Festival of 200 Dances of the Benue-Plateau State’ held in Jos, Nigeria. The then Benue-Plateau State comprised more than thirty ethnic nationalities” (Tsenongo, 2011, p.134). This is statistical testimony to the dancing skills among Tiv people that sometimes goes with the stories.

Similarly, songs perform unifying role, and are harnessed for social, economic and political empowerment. In looking at how songs are used, Wilson (1998, p.41) states that itinerant music entertainment groups use satire, criticism, moralization, praise, symbolism, didacticism, suggestion and labeling to communicate with individuals, groups and society at large. Key and legendary singers in Tiv enclave are Number 1 Golozo, TondoKumbul, Obadiah, just to mention a few. Essentially Tiv songs disseminate traditional wisdom, instill pride and solidarity, criticize certain actions and personages and provoke thoughtfulness. These songs come in different fashion. Praise songs, for example, are used to praise God during worship or people ranging from military prowess, coronations to inspiration to carry out a task. Others serve as lullabies (soft songs by mothers or nannies to soothe babies), dirge (sung at funerals to encourage family and friends of the deceased to invoke God for the fortitude to bear the irreparable loss). In the political realm, singers through their songs function as political communicators that either seeks to create understanding about the political process and culture, advance a political party or candidate or both.

Motivational songs are generally meant to raise people’s emotions and give them confidence to confront a task or enemy with utmost vigour and determination. The following example is appropriate.

Mnyamchiemoer se hembra

I dreamt of our victory

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O-o-o sehemba	Yes, we shall be victorious
Mnyamchiemoer se hembra	I dreamt of our victory
O-o-o se hembra	Yes, we shall be victorious
Shima yam ngiawambeawambe	My heart bleeds
Hoonngiawambwawambe	Truly, it bleeds

The following example which features a charismatic personality is also meant to raise morale, muster courage to be confrontational and at the same time undermines the competence of the rival group.

Nyianyoo (name of the person) Nyianyoo	Today (name of the person)
Today	
Or a zamapega	No one will escape
Nyianyoo (name of the person) Nyianyoo	Today (name of the person) Today
Or a zamapega	No one will escape
Response is recap of same words.	

OR

Iorbakeeraga o-o-o ayio-o-o	People are not there to reckon with
Iorbakeeraga o-o-o	People are not there
Mo yo m gemaijime o-o-o	For me I have turned my back to them

Tiv people are known of several stories or folktales, too. Mede (1998, p.2) cited in Owezzy (2008, p.63) is categorical that “folk tales are actually part of Tiv [Benue State in Nigeria] mythology and explain certain supernatural events and facts of life.” Giving perspective on the significance of folktale, Popoola (2004, p.108) avers:

Folktale is used to communicate old stories to both old and young children. This is usually done in the evening after the day’s work. We would gather ourselves family by family and thrill ourselves with folktale. It is a tradition, which has passed through several generations. It is still very relevant in our community today because we use it to teach morals and check some abuses and other things.

As an integral aspect of Tiv culture, Leo Frobenius, the German traveller, for example, declared the Tiv people as the “best storytellers in Africa” (Keil, 1979, p.20) cited in Tsenongo (2011, p.134). Also Laura Bohannan has, under the pseudonym of Elenore Smith Bowen, often been referred deservedly to for her admiring description of a Tiv tale-telling session in her autobiographical novel, *Return to Laughter*. Commenting on Bohannan’s book, Harding (1992, p.156) has said that, “So important does Bohannan consider storytelling in Tiv life that not only is its performance the occasion of the laughter which gives the novel its title, but it is recognized as a healing, binding force in the community.” In acknowledgement of Keil (1979, p.57), Tsenongo (2011, p.134) was right in his submission that “qualitatively, all visitors to Tivland agree that storytelling can be a very dramatic event.”

Apart from folktales, proverb is another significant medium of indigenous communication in Tiv society. It occurs informally in day-to-day verbal communication. As an integral aspect of people’s culture:

Proverbs spring spontaneously from the people. They are *voxpopuli...* in profound sense and consequently, should be accepted as a true index of what a people regard as true and are interpretative of the principles of life and conduct. Proverbs are therefore, trustworthy witness of the social, political, ethical and religious ideals of the people among whom they originate (Ikenga-Metuh, 1992, p.20).

Proverbs are highly rated among the Tiv people for they are considered to be the wisdom lore of the race. They communicate ethical values of society enjoining people to apply them to daily social relations. In reference to Olatunji (1985, p.170), Ayantayo (2010, p.10), maintains that proverbs serve as social characters to praise what the society considers to be virtues such as tolerance, responsibility, dedication, love, discipline, justice etc. On the other hand, proverbs condemn unacceptable conduct like injustice, intolerance, destruction, jealousy, envy, hatred, sexual immorality. Adeyongo (2001) advance several examples of Tiv proverbs to substantiate the point we are making. The following few examples will suffice.

The fact that there is no vicarious liability in crime has clearly been reflected in some Tiv proverbs as the one below.

Orgentōōikyav, or gen karvaigyunduga (Someone cannot carry heavy load and another develops a hunchback under the weight of the load).

Departing from the above proverb is the one below used to call for resolution in a situation in which there is a discord which occurs between two people. The proverb can be used to draw the attention of closely related people engaged in a dispute to try and bring it to an end.

Angbiankaveanongokpaveōōichengeimom

(Even when brothers fight, they still wash their wounds in one potsherd) or (Even when two brothers fight, they still return to the same house to nurse their wounds).

The subjoined proverb below expresses the fact that a conflict between two close partners cannot be avoided.

Anyiveanombor je kpambazehe (Even the teeth and the tongue do quarrel with each other).

The following proverb is often employed by peacemakers to settle long-standing disputes when the two adversaries seem to be unmanageable.

Ma iyongotserga (No conflict lasts forever).

The proverb tells two people engaged in a dispute that they should bring the matter to an end.

Humour and obscenity can also be employed to bring to an end a serious dispute as could be seen in the following proverb.

Ijuakaianōrkpa I hide I yavshaake (No matter how stiff is the erection of a penis, it still goes back and sleeps on the testicles).

In the case of the following proverb, it is used when someone notices that a simple argument will degenerate to a serious conflict.

Kavulvul a hingirura ye (it is drizzles that develop into a downpour).

Another proverb is as one given below which is used when every possible suspicion of other people has been eliminated, leaving only the culprit.

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Mngeremuma due shakove(The water has dried up and exposed the wolf fish).

That truth cannot be concealed indefinitely is the message conveyed by the following proverb.

Mimi kaigyachor I shin mnger(Truth is raffia palm branch dropped in the water).

The point being made is that no matter how long it takes to investigate a matter or, how long people try to cover up a fact, there is no way the truth about it will not come out one day.

There are other modes of Tiv traditional communication systems that deserve at least some passing commentary in spite of the fact that some are fast going extinct. These include but not limited to riddles, knots (which signifies one's interest in a farmland), use of palm frond to indicate death, incantation and divination/oath-taking (Ishorkpehen/swembumun). Besides is the use of names some of which are often used as creative or nicknames like:

Organdegambe	Describes how tall one is
Mdoom	Describes one's beauty
Ordedoo	Describes one's good virtues
Avirighzende	Describes ones admirable movement
Hembafan	Describes one who claims to know more than others
Genyi	Describes one that is too critical
Mboom ta ichur	Describes one that is considered to be the ugliest
Hiembanwan u ...	Describes the most disrespectful person
Akaaakimbir	Describes one that does not act on first order/directive
Or gandeigyoor	Describes the untouchable
Or kpeikyandega	One does not die of lanky stature

Besides are some other Tiv modes of communication like age grade (kwar), use of colours, tying of beads or snail shell round the neck or waist of a girl (signifying virginity), sending of a new wrapper with a hole in the middle sent to the parents of a newly married woman by her groom meaning that the bride came defiled. The use of clothes typified by the *anger* with popular black and white stripes is also worthy of note.

Successes of Tiv Traditional Communication Systems

We have established that the Tive traditional systems inform, educate, mobilize, and entertain people. How successful they are in discharging the mandate is a product of the following reasons.

The greater proportion of the population is rural dwellers that are illiterate and relatively poor. For them to have a sense of belonging they are reached through the traditional modes of communication that they are familiar with. This provides justification why instead of using mass media to reach the rural dwellers that might be cut off either due to lose of signals from the electronic media or no penetration of the print media, the use of existing modes they easily access and understand better become appropriate.

Tiv traditional communication systems do not depend on electricity or other similar forms of power in order to reach its audience. Consequently, the dissemination of information is guaranteed 24 hours. This is coupled with the fact that there is no delayed feed back; a common feature with the mass media.

The communication systems are economical in operation. They do not require huge capital investment before use. The technological sophistication required in mass media has no place in the traditional communication systems. This means therefore, that the media are almost always practically available for use. For example, it does not take the village messenger much to deliver messages at the appropriate place and time.

Challenges/Shortcomings of Tiv Communication Systems

The Tiv communication system is faced with some challenges or shortcomings in the contemporary world. These include:

Extinction of Tiv Language: The Tiv language is going into extinction because of the adoption of the language of colonial masters as official language. Nigeria adopts English as the official language as part of the colonial heritage. This threatens not only the Tiv language but the over 250 languages being spoken in the approximately 160 million population in the country. Once the language of a people is taken, the whole of its culture is eroded.

Limited reach: Their lack of capacity to transcend space and other barriers in the same manner as communication satellite creates the apparent differences in time value of information between western and traditional communication systems.

Dominance of the mass media: The manifestation of the 'Global Village' theory of Marshall McLuhan is a challenge to oramedia. We now have the new communication culture of electronic age that perhaps enslaves Tiv people particularly the youths on the websites and internet. This is more evident when we look at the content of the news media which is largely western culture.

The reliance of oramedia through the opinion leaders is a challenge as the new sets of opinion leaders in Tiv land and Africa in general are selfish, self-centred, and protégés of the West that continues to undermine African culture. The new opinion leaders are now partisan and distort information to the people through the folk media.

Western cultural imperialism: The social system in the Tiv family and by extension African family set up, community and institutions are greatly affected by the dominant Western culture which threatens oramedia. The African children now lack the home training, and the understanding of the African languages to the understanding of the oramedia messages.

The problem of urbanization and noise pollution: Some of the facilities of modern living restrict access to Tiv traditional media messages. Wilson (1994) cited in Ebeze (2008, p.37) points out that "the endless hum of the air conditioners, the deafening peal of high fidelity music equipment or the sometimes-cacophonous blare of vehicular traffic may make the penetration of messages transmitted through traditional media in urban or semi-urban areas impossible."

Conclusion

The paper explores the continued use of traditional communication systems among the Tiv people. It debunks the notion that the African traditional communication is

outmoded, as Wilson (1988) pointed out, quoting Ronald Escarpit (1968) and Colin Cherry (1975), “no newly introduced mode of communication or combination of new modes wholly replace or supplant the traditional ones. The fact is that they supplemented the old ones or replace some of their functions but never all their functions”. The paper, therefore, proves the relevance of traditional media of communication in the daily interaction of the people, especially at the grass roots. One of the secrets behind the survival of Tiv traditional communication is the preponderance of people living in the rural areas where there is a near disconnect from the modern media. By implication, the Tiv traditional communication refuses to bow to modern mass communication and western influence due to its culture of socializing the young ones into on-going culture and tradition in the various communities as a result of the conscious efforts of socializing agents, especially that of parents and some opinion leaders. The paper concludes with practical recommendations to contend apparent challenges and limitations of the Tiv traditional communication systems.

Recommendations

There should be a Tiv cultural re-engineering whereby parents create platforms to discuss with family members as was tenable in the past. This will avail youths who are more vulnerable to western influence the opportunity to better appreciate their cultural values with a view to imbibing and preserving these values. On their part, the youths should demonstrate some measure of pride and commitment in appreciating their communication systems.

There should be recognition of traditional modes as effective means of communication. The various modes like Tiv songs, dance, folktales and puppetry should be prioritized by communication policy at least at state level than ever before.

Efforts should be made to preserve the originality of Tiv traditional communication systems. The state government and well-to-do persons in particular can intervene by sponsoring production of printed and electronic materials as well as broad spectrum of competitions like the *Kagh-hirpuppet* with a view of Tiv cultural revival.

The modern mass media which the people are becoming fast familiar with should ceaselessly package programmes with seemingly local content. Through mediamorphosis (integration of traditional communication in modern media) the mass media would be projecting cultural values.

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The Mass Media and Conflict Management

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Abstract

Our society today has played host to a lot of violent and terrorist attacks ranging from; the destruction of lives and properties, to bomb blasts. In some cases, these probably started just as a minor conflict or disagreement between two or more parties and gradually escalated into a full blown crises or war, as the case may be. The paper “the mass media and conflict management” could not have come at a better time, owing to the fact that, the media has become part and parcel of the human life. Thus, the kind of media contents audience members are exposed to, affects their lives and ways of thinking, directly or indirectly. This paper examines the media as a mediator and a yardstick for resolving conflict within the society.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is an essential aspect of life and a pre-requisite for human interaction. It enables man to relate with his environment, thereby achieving the essence of life. The environment consists of different people with different socio-cultural backgrounds. Therefore, effective communication depends on different values, cultural norms, environmental peculiarities and the degree of exposure to other cultures and their characteristics.

“Conflicts occur when people with different orientation have to interact and co-exist in an organization or community”. (Saidu and Best, *ed*) 2007:26). Communication is therefore a “double-edged sword” in the sense that it serves as an essential tool for peaceful co-existence and interaction, while on the other hand, it is a source of conflict among people of diverse orientation. According to, Abdulrahman cited in Saidu and Best (*ed*) (2007:26), “there is need to know that in every conflict situation, communication plays a vital and fundamental role in it’s escalation to a violent or armed conflict, as well as being a necessary pre-requisite for its prevention, management and resolution.

Communication or symbolic power is generally different from other kinds of power since it depends on non-material factor (trust, rationality, respect affection etc.) (McQuail, 2005:464). The power of the mass media as an influential tool cannot be over emphasized. Mcquails (2005:79) sheds more light on the power of the mass media thus:

... the mass media are assumed to have a potential for significant ideas and values conveyed by the media (in their content) which are seen as the primary causes of social change, irrespective of who owns and controls it. The influence is thought to work through individual motivations and actions. This view leads to a strong belief in various potential media effects for good or ill. Examples include the promotion by the media of peace and international understanding (or having opposite effects)...

Conflict and communication are inextricably tied. Thus, there is need for the media to use its communicative power as a tool or instrument for conflict management in our society today.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The emergence of the global village and its influence on all facets of human endeavour is made possible by communication and its important medium of ICT (Information Communication Technology). This then implies that people involved in conflict management and peace building must be versatile in cross cultural communication, as the world reaches a multicultural unit of a global village in handling conflict issues and conflicting parties, as well as the peace building process.

Saidu and Best (*ed*), (2007:30) asserts that “Despite the increasing role of the media in conflict management and post violence peace building; such as the use of dialogue and drama to promote tolerance and the placement of Jingles on peaceful co-existence, it is still neck-need in generating or escalating a number of conflict in some societies. Some of the products of the media that cause or escalates conflict include attempts to catch the public with emotional or sensational reporting, and such captions that will sell their papers or viewpoints resulting from their sympathy for a particular side of the conflict”

This then poses as a problem for the society because the media invades our lives, yet little or nothing can be done about the nature of media contents that people are exposed to which influences their actions and reactions in the cause of their daily living. Thus, it is expected that the mass media puts into consideration its role of agenda settings by laying more emphasis on relevant and positive content, rather than negative or biased contents that might further incite negative actions and reactions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research study identifies the relationship between communication and conflict. Thus, the objectives of this study are:

- i. To emphasize the need for the media to uphold their social responsibility to the society, thereby justifying the status conferred on them by the masses as the fourth estate of the realm.
- ii. To promote and encourage peace and co-existence in our society through positive media contents.
- iii. To stress the need for the mass media, as the conscience of the society to act as agents for social change and development in Nigeria.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Before conflicts break out into violence and bloodshed, the mass media can either raise an alarm to pre-empt or diffuse it, or instigate its occurrence. And after it has broken out, the mass media can escalate crises or arbitrate its resolution (Saidu and Best (*ed*) 2007:35). In this regard, the significance of this research work is to most importantly disabuse the minds of all those who hold the notion that the mass media has no relevance or significance to the societal development of Nigeria as a country.

This research work would also serve as a contribution by the researcher to the discourse on the roles of the mass media in conflict management and peace development in our society today.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In a bid to critically examine the topic in question, this study shall be hinged on two theories:

- Social responsibility theory
- The agenda setting theory

Social Responsibility Theory

The social responsibility theory historically emerged in the 20th century and deeply has its roots in the libertarian theory of the press. According to Yaroson and Asemah (2008:65):

In a sense, the social responsibility theory's major premise is that freedom, including the freedom of the press cannot be defined apart from a responsibility it exercises. The media which enjoy a protected and privileged position in a democratic government, have an obligation to society to carry out certain essential functions in a complex, modern society. If the media assume their responsibilities and make them the basis of operational policy, remedies may be unnecessary to ensure fulfillment of contemporary society needs...

The social responsibility theory calls for responsibilities, more than the actual freedom of the press. The media is expected to be up and doing in the surveillance, value reinforcement, culture transmission, agenda setting and clarification of rules and values of the society.

The two basic assumptions about social responsibility theory are:

- That the media do serve essential functions to the society by accepting an obligation to fulfill such functions.
- That media ownership and control should be viewed as a kind of public stewardship, not as a private franchise.

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This theory postulated six specific functions of the media in attainment of social responsibility. The functions include:

- a. To serve the political system by making information, discussion and consideration of public affairs generally accessible.
- b. To inform the public to enable it take self determined action.
- c. To protect the relicts of the individuals by acting as a watchdog over the government.
- d. To serve the economic system; for instance by bringing together buyers and sellers through the medium of advertising.
- e. To provide “good” entertainment, whatever “good” may consider the culture at any given point in time.
- f. To preserve financial autonomy in order not to become dependent on special interest and influences.

This theory is relevant to this study as it forms the basis for the analysis of the role of the media as a socially responsible institution which needs to contribute to the development of the country by acting as agents for social change. Also, this theory supports some of the research questions, thus, its examination shall be of utmost importance to this research study.

Agenda Setting Theory

This theory argues that the media may not tell us what to think, but it may tell us what to think about. That is to say that the mass media pre-determines what issues are regarded as important at any given time, in a given society.

Yarosan and Asemah (2008:93) asserts that “the theory puts forth the ability of the media to influence the significance of events in the publics minds. The media set the agenda for the audience discussion and mental order and organize their world....”

The element inverted in agenda includes:

- a. The quantity or frequency of reporting
- b. The prominence given to the reports through headlines display, pictures and layout in newspapers, magazines films graphics or timing on radio and television.
- c. The degree of conflicts generated in the reports.
- d. Cumulative media-specific effects over time.

This theory is useful to this study as it brings to fore the importance of the agenda setting theory of the media in managing conflict in the society through presenting and promoting positive media contents, which will in a longrun influence the people to think positively rather than negatively.

THE MASS MEDIA IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

The mass media consists of those channels of communication, that are able to reach a significant large number of people who are widely dispersed by time and space. This includes the traditional media of radio, television, newspapers, and currently the internet, among many others. Therefore, the media can be a contributory factor towards peace building or managing a conflict situation, right before it manifests into a crises, which could also advance into war.

Akin (2005:4) argues that without the media, people might not be properly informed about happenings beyond their immediate neighborhood. For this reason, the more sources one compares, the more accurate the picture that can be put together. This is to say, Balancing the news by obtaining the opinions of all parties involved would at least provide a comprehensive view of what is going on, which will assist in understanding key issues.

Also, Howard (2003:24) opines that “when the media responds well to its own professional structures such as accuracy, impartiality and independence, the media can then have an influence in managing the conflict. When the entire professional requirements are put into check, the media can dutifully inform and educate its audience in a socially responsible way.

Howard (2003:24) also contends that “though sensationalism and partisanship can deliver profit, but at the expense of peace building and conflict management”. This means that a media that has the zeal to perform its social responsibility to the society should not be too commercially driven. The media should prioritize its social responsibility to the society before thinking of its commercial gains and profits.

The Nigerian media seems to be lost in the thick woods of ethnic cultural diversity and socio-political differences that characterize the nation. It is divided into two axes: the south-western or Lagos-Ibadan axis and the northern axis. The bipolarism has great impact on the coverage of certain national issues. Their reports of events have always been in the interest of their geographical zone. This has been the case in recent times. Perhaps, this might be the reason why Kawu (2002: 128) argued that “the northern point of view has always been presented in an adversarial, always negative manner by so-called Nigerian press that is controlled by the political elite of the south-west or it is at best influenced by the currents of thoughts of the south-west (Afenifere) elite”. Thus, it is expected that the mass media should at all times maintain a neutral position when they are to report events in the society. They are supposed to present balanced and objective stories from the most credible sources possible.

According to Nwosu (2004:5); “The mass media are considered to be very important in conflict management because they are information merchants, conduits or carriers of various shades and colours of information. And in times of conflict or even wars, adequate or inadequate management of information is considered to be a critical factor in the emergence, escalation or reduction of tension at various levels. Tensions, depending on how they are managed can determine the end or continuation of the conflict”.

In respect to the above, media practitioners therefore have a significant impact on preventing and resolving conflict effectively by assuming conflict preventing functions. A responsive journalist should be able to provide a forum in

which the society can reflect itself. Most of the time, the mass media succumbs to sensationalism in conflict management, which is wrong.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE MEDIA IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

How well the media performs its roles is dependent on a number of factors. Saidu and Best (*ed*) (2007:23) enumerates a number of factors affecting the media in conflict management, which includes:

1. **Ownership:** Ownership is probably the most important factor that can influence the media or the practitioner's management of a conflict situation. As a matter of fact, it is during conflicts that we see how powerful the media is, especially as a tool for propaganda. A perfect example is the American-Iraqi wars where the views of the American media were quite different from that of Iraq and other Arab countries. For the Arab media, it was America fighting the entire Arab world, for America, it was the world fighting terrorism.

This goes a long way in justifying the adage which says "those who pay the piper, dictate the tune". Thus, Saidu and Best (2007) agrees to the fact that an instrument of propaganda cannot be objective and, therefore unable to efficiently mediate in a conflict situation to bring about peace. In other words, once the media perceives itself as a propaganda outfit, it is ready to sacrifice truth and objectivity for propaganda.

2. **Economic Factors:** This factor also greatly influences the media negatively, affecting their sense of judgment, both on the sides of the owners and practitioners. Issues such as the 'Brown-Envelope' syndrome and direct or indirect favours from government and other individuals fall under this factor.

3. **Religious Factors:** Religious differences have been the major cause of conflict, especially, in Nigeria today. The different religious beliefs of media personnels play a major role in the way and manner media personnel perceive issues.

4. **Cultural Factors:** The diverse cultural beliefs, languages and norms of media practitioners also tend to influence their perception of issues and the way and manner they carry out their responsibilities.

5. **Professionalism:** Today, most people who work in media houses are not trained journalists and media personnel. Thus, they fail to understand the importance of media ethics and professionalism while carrying out their duties.

COMMUNICATION AS A TOOL FOR THIRD PARTY IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT (MEDIATION)

As media practitioners, it is important to know the different communication techniques that are employed in the process of conflict management. This is because, communication is an essential ingredient for conflict management.

According to Saidu and Best (*ed*) (2007:33):

As a third party, you hardly can resolve a conflict you do not understand, and you hardly can understand a conflict, unless you have adequate and accurate information at your disposal. Also, as a mediator, you must talk about concerns and feelings, to guide the disputants to speak about what they will like to change and what they need, to resolve the problem. You must read between the lines to

determine the 'common ground' while trying to find out exactly what each of the disputants requires to resolve the problem. These are done via communication.

Some important features in assertive clear speaking in conflict management includes being focused on the issues as against addressing the personality of the perceived opponents in the conflict, expressing their feeling through the use of 'I' in contrast to the use of judgmental words that could block the transformation techniques.

The use of listening techniques in facilitating the process of mediation has a psychological effect on the conflicting parties and does not help in finding common grounds to resolve problems. Other active listening technique includes: encouraging the speaker, paraphrasing, summarizing and validating from the speaker. Never the less, one problem encountered with the practice of active listening is that most people enjoy being listened to, but find it difficult to listen to others.

WAYS IN WHICH THE MEDIA CAN SERVE AS INSTRUMENTS FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Listed below are things the mass media needs to put in place in order to effectively serve as an instrument for conflict management as stipulated by Saidu& Best (2007):

1. Media practitioners need to be trained in conflict resolution and management.
2. The media needs a reorientation of personal values and the values in the ethics of the profession.
3. The media practitioner should be highly knowledgeable and versatile in his or her profession.
4. The media needs freedom from government or proprietor's interference to be very objective.
5. Media practitioners should be exposed to constant training and re-training in various areas, especially the fast growing studies in conflict management. This will enable them to keep abreast with the challenges of the moment and those ahead.
6. Adequate funding is also required by owners to maintain and keep media practitioner in business and out of 'trouble.'

SUMMARY

In the context of this study, the media is only an instrument. It is like the pistol or pen. It does nothing other than the use to which it is put to. Thus, when we talk about the media, we are talking about those who use it. These fall into two groups. Those who own it (and therefore, who do the manipulation/ remote controlling), and those who run it and get the product sent out to the public (the direct manipulators). The first group makes the policies and set the objectives. They engage

those in the second group, to actualize their objectives and on their own, they work out strategies to achieve the goals.

“Like communication, conflict is natural and can be mild and localized as blinking or as widespread and violent as war (Saidu and Best (ed), 2007:35). The mass media plays an important role in influencing the society. They can either raise an alarm to pre-empt or diffuse conflict, or instigate its occurrence. This study serves as a call for the mass media, and Journalists in particular, as gatekeepers, watchdogs and apostle of conscience and truth, to stand in the chambers of justice, knowing fully well that they hold a double edged sword that must be used with extreme discretion and wisdom. The journalist is first a member of the society, before he/she is a journalist. If the pen (mass media) is used to hurt or injure the society to which he belongs, it is obvious that the perpetrator of such act is indirectly doing injustice to himself.

In a nutshell, this study critically highlights the roles of the media in conflict management, communication as a tool for third party (mediation) in conflict management.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that there is much to be done as regards the media and its contents. It is clear that the media needs to be more effective in its coverage and reportage of conflict and crisis situations. They must also uphold their social responsibility to the society by disseminating positive contents that would go a long way in enlightening and educating the masses on the need to have a peaceful society.

However, achieving a peaceful and violent free environment is a collective concern. Thus, the media cannot undertake this task alone. The masses must also try to support the effort of the media for the betterment of the society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the media to effectively act as an instrument for conflict management, the researcher deemed it fit to pose the following recommendations:

1. To be an effective mediator, according to conflict researchers, the mass media must provide timely, accurate information that can forewarn people of any conflict, give useful and full information that would educate the public and point towards conflict resolution.
2. The mass media should give a fair and balanced hearing to all sides of any argument.
3. The media should respect all the codes of ethics in Journalism, including fairness, accuracy, and truthfulness as well as respecting the confidentiality of sources.
4. As practitioners, Journalist, and indeed media personnel, should imbibe the culture of development Journalism, which encourages investigative Journalism. In other words, development should put more emphasis on human resources, rather than on the infrastructure alone.

5. Journalists must be adequately remunerated, trained and equipped. Many journalist have been subjected to poverty and undue hard ship and these have made some prone and susceptible to unethical conducts.
6. The media needs a reorientation of personal values and the values of the ethics of the profession.
7. Media practitioners need to be trained in conflict resolution and management. Acquiring skills in this area will improve the quality and manner in which reports of conflict are handled.
8. The media practitioner is supposed to be highly knowledgeable and versatile in his profession.

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Harnessing Internet Offerings for the Maximization of Integrated Marketing Communications in Nigeria

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Abstract

Over the years, product exchange powered business in the old school of transactional marketing, advertising and allied promotions remained veritable ways of attracting customers and doing business. However, as the both the consumer and the society become increasingly influenced by emerging trends, marketing communication campaigns are now under unprecedented pressure to deliver on corporate objectives. Against the backdrop of the advent of the Internet and evolving market dynamics, organizations are compelled to build and sustain patronage beyond a single business consummation. This work explores how organizations can cultivate and sustain profitable and enduring consumer engagements through Integrated Marketing Communications anchored on the crest of Internet revolution.

Introduction

The Internet has unquestionably become the dominant technology that is today powering many other innovations in the emerging global communications landscape. When about 40 years ago, Marshall McLuhan predicted that mass communications would transform the world into a “global village”, it was considered preposterous. Today, to the consternation of even the most vocal critics, the doubts are dissolving radically. The present Internet revolution has come closest to fulfilling that global village concept; as we are now all neighbours in the global village, wired digitally, thanks to internet.

As an interactive super-highway, the Internet is changing not only the way people communicate, but also the way business is done globally. Rodman, (2006:298) conceives of the medium as “a vast interconnected hardware system, made up of different types of computers” that purvey information worldwide in a huge online traffic. Commencing initially as a defense project in the 1960s in the United States, the Internet by 1995 had so many people online that it had to be relinquished, for security reasons by the military to the public and commercial sectors. With an amazing connectivity to the worldwide web (www) which is a diversified

communications gateway, the Internet provides information at mind-boggling speed to the audience on almost anything, anywhere, all the time. According to Rodman, while the World Wide Web collected some 10 million electronic documents at a quarter million web sites in its first three years, by 2004, there were 2.5 billion documents. (2006:300).

Over the years, the Internet has become a convergence of the media that preceded it, and is now hailed as the media of the future – from which new media innovations are evolving. This socio-economic significance of the Internet is made further pervasive by the digital convergence that has transformed the medium into a conduit of all other media: radio, television, movies, recordings, books, magazine and newspaper. As the fastest growing medium in history, the Internet offers incredible amount of information and opportunities to a wide range of people across all works of life.

With phenomenal speed, the Internet has affected not only how it is used but also launched the world into a new media revolution that is redefining communication, business and life. As the Internet continues to unfold, with its vast potentials, consumers are no longer mere onlookers but active partakers in a new digital interactive era

For business and marketing generally, the internet has opened windows of opportunity with a whole new world of potential customers waiting to be engaged. Marketing has not remained the same since what was initially concerned as a defense project rolled out from production line to the public as the Internet. This meta-discuss of how the Internet is impacting on the business of integrated marketing communications (IMC) in Nigeria is yet an attempt at understanding how the new medium that has networked the world into a wireless convergence. For business and integrated marketing communications generally, Nigeria can ill afford to be immune to this exponential deployment of the Internet.

What is Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)?

Integrated marketing communication (IMC) is the management concept which strategically co-ordinates all the communication channels available to an organization to deliver clear, consistent and persuasive messages about the organization and its products. IMC seeks to combine or amalgamate all the elements of marketing communication so that a single, coherent and consistent message is conveyed in a campaign. Hitherto, different and often disparate messages are conveyed in various programmes; these confuse the consumers and have been known to damage brands. Although it emerged in the mid 1990s as a public relations proposition, IMC has over the years gained acceptability as a concept used for engaging target audiences across all spheres of interaction - corporate, governmental and individual. According to Arens (2002:240), IMC is

the process of building and reinforcing mutually profitable relationships with employees, customers, other stake holders and the general publics by developing and coordinating a strategic communications programme that enables them to have a constructive encounter with the company and its brand through a variety of media or other contacts.

The concept works through the unification of available marketing communication tools to present compelling messages that promote company goals and build strong brand identity in the marketplace. For instance, if a TV commercial conveys a particular message via a particular logo and image, then all consumer engagements and promotions, including newspaper adverts, billboards, public relations or point of sale materials should not carry contradictory messages, but rather the same messages in complementation. Using a combination of vehicles such as advertising, publicity, direct marketing, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and special and experiential offerings like websites, trade fairs and exhibitions, etc, IMC merges all messages by positioning identity and images to reinforce organizational goals. In the words of Lindell, (1997), engaging IMC as a tool of promotion "...means that your PR materials say the same thing as your direct mail campaign and your advertising has the same look and feel as your Web sites".

While adding to the profit bottom line in business, the goal of IMC ultimately, is to position the organization and its brand firmly in a value chain to be able to deliver to all stake holders in a wholistic engagement. Proponents of IMC argue that because public and social issues also affect marketing in addition to product and price, an organization needs to respond to all matters arising with a unified voice, Dominick (2002:359).

Rationale for Increasing use of IMC

The erstwhile understanding of the society as a mass market initially gave rise to the concept of mass communication as theorized variously by many early scholars. However, this primordial understanding of the society as one mass, anonymous and omnibus market soon appeared too simplistic and dysfunctional in delivering business results as society changed dramatically. This dynamism in the society necessitated the tailoring of certain communications strategically to meet the marketing objectives of businesses and organizations. According to Dominick, (2002: 359), by the mid-1990s integrated marketing communications (IMC) emerged as a mantra amongst marketers who began to espouse the harnessing of all corporate and product messages into a more functional marketing synergy.

Generally, the following factors have combined to promote the dynamic use of IMC as viable platform for engaging the market:

- 1 Fragmentation of the mass market.
Over the years the fragmentation of the mass market has given rise to the need to target customers according to their needs with specific customized products. This has made product differentiation and proliferation compelling.
- 2 Consumer sophistication
This rise of more sophisticated, more critical and more demanding customers has occurred over the years, with many of them desiring a more active role in product formulation and information dissemination. Call it primacy of the consumer; the consumer has changed; stamping authority as the coveted 'king' and wanting more involvement in the business relationship. Almost everywhere, the customer is increasingly more educated, more sophisticated and more insatiable.
- 3 Decreasing trust

Despite the increase in consumer demand, proliferation of products failed to ensure brand loyalty as many products were unable to deliver on claims and promises. There were wide schisms between company communications and product deliverables.

- 4 The rise of relationship marketing
In repudiation of the transactional marketing of the old school, marketers have discovered that the key to building value, brand equity and customer loyalty is not in the products, but in the cultivation of a mutually beneficial relationship with customers as the lifeblood of the business. (Arens, 2002:235-237).
- 5 Failure of the traditional media of marketing communications
With too much advertising cluttering the old media - radio, television, billboard, newspaper, magazine - marketers are compelled to find new and more effective ways to communicate with their large audience, potential and real. The rapid changes in customer and market dynamism needed to be addressed pronto through more functional communication methods.
- 6 Advent of Global System of Mobile communication (GSM)
The explosion in the GSM market led to the unprecedented increase in social networking and the introduction of user's generated contents (UGC) by people through electronic devices available to many in homes, schools and offices.
- 7 The Internet and new media interactivity
Perhaps most instrumental to the birth of IMC is the Internet technology. The new digital media and their amazing interactivity birthed by the Internet have transformed business and life generally. These revolutions have compelled the attention of marketers seeking to reach the consumers at their time and convenience. Since its advent, the Internet has wooed away media audience - from all previous media - to itself. This has compelled marketers to crave and break the attention of audience members who have been wooed away from all known media before it. Marketers must thus get the invaluable attention of audience members in their Googling, blogging or Facebook engagement

Dynamics of Integrated Marketing Communication - How IMC works

1. Communication is driving force.

Since IMC is message anchored, communication is the driving force for both the organization and its brands. It drives relations and powers integration. The integrating force that powers IMC is communication. All elements of the marketing mix are held together by co-ordinated communication; with each element reinforcing the other. For example, advertising supports and gives credence to whatever campaigns public relations is prosecuting.

2. Management of Interdependence of the Market.

Integrated marketing communications involve the management of the interdependence of all stakeholders in the market place. Once the various publics that impact on an organization have been identified, they must be engaged continuously for mutual value addition. For example the corporate affairs people must manage the media relations of an organization pro-actively by cultivating a rapport with editors and reporters; and carrying them along on the affairs of the organization. It is widely

said that IMC is all about the management of interdependence of people, things and issues that affect an organization. [RMG find ref]

3. IMC is Relationship-driven.

Whereas business and marketing are transactional under the traditional media - driven by mere exchange considerations - what powers business and prospers organizations driven by IMC is relationship. Organizations have discovered that it is more cost effective to retain customers than to acquire new ones. This paradigm shift is anchored on the understanding that establishing viable relationships adds more value to a company than striking one-off business deals with customers.

4. IMC is Customer-centric.

Rather than being product-driven, business driven by IMC is “customer-centric”. This involves working on the customer; exciting the customer and ultimately leading the customer to the brand, instead of foisting the product on the customer through traditional advertising or sales promotion.[RMG find ref]

5. Fusion of Marketing and Communication Planning.

Rather than have marketing planning work disparately, and often in competition with communication strategy, IMC permits a fusion of both into a management function. This fusion is claimed to be more result oriented as has been shown in the successful launch of Windows 95 by Microsoft.

6. Integration is the key.

Whether using the inside-out or the more sophisticated outside-in perspective to IMC, integration is the master key. There must be wholesome integration of all the communication mix and channels so as to present the organization positively, with one face, one voice and strong brand. To achieve this desired integration, all communications activity of IMC must pass the criteria of coherence, consistency, continuity and complementation – 4 Cs of IMC. Tom Duncan identifies “four levels of integration that companies use: unified image, consistent voice, good listener, and at the most integrated, world-class citizen”, Arens (2002:240).

7. IMC is Research and Data-driven.

Continuous, multifaceted media, marketing and customer research is needed to feed the management decision making. In order to create value; engage the customer, media and various publics; confront the marketing dynamics and respond to challenges, IMC relies on several forms of research for information.

8. Integration creates Synergy.

The strategic integration of all the media and marketing vehicles creates the synergy that powers IMC. This synergy derives from the mutual interdependence of all the stakeholders in a business, but also of the various communication and marketing mix. All too often, in times past companies come out with conflicting messages to the public offering little or no synergy: a television ad says one thing, whereas a sales promotion activity sends a different signal. However with IMC, product advertisements and company brochure or literature will reinforce each other and also be in sync with the company’s positioning and web site communications. Long term business relationship is sustainable only when IMC is reinforcing the positive images and minimizing the negative messages that come out from the organization. Through effective synergy, the brand is strengthened; and the stronger the brand, the more value it has to impact on the balance sheet realities.

Potentials of the Internet for Integrated Marketing Communications

As the online audience continues to grow worldwide due to integration with and migration from other traditional media, marketers are increasingly rethinking their strategies in tandem with the attractive demographics of the Internet audience. Marketing research on the use of the Internet in Africa may be scanty, but world statistics indicate that generally (Explain what you mean by **online audience**) is better educated and more urbane than the remaining population, Arens (2002:550-551). Global figures may yet appear nebulous to justify any simplistic generalization, but the following online highlights culled from separate 2000 studies by Jupiter Research and Media Metrix Inc. are instructive for the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) industry in Africa:

- There is a bountiful traffic of people who used to spend time in front of the TV moving to the computer
- Majority of people who surf the Net are well educated and urbane
- Many PC users are giving up TV and radio engagements to spend more time on the Net
- Almost 50 percent of people surveyed said they were watching less TV; with 22 percent reading magazines less frequently and 21 percent reading newspapers less frequently
- 46 percent of online population are women
- More than half of new online users are women
- The Web is used largely by users with relatively high annual household incomes.
- Those in the low income brackets using the internet are about one-third, but are the fastest growing group.

For many institutions in Africa, governmental and business, the increasing quest for information by this growing internet population is an opportunity for several multi-media online engagements. Whereas the global Internet population was nearly half a billion people in 2000, (Arens, 2002:550), new online data estimate that audience to be 40% of the world's population, (2013, ICT Facts & Figures), presently estimated at 7.2 billion, (digitaltrends.com). Between the break of the century and now, Internet users globally have grown exponentially, with African online community presently put at 900 million, (msn.com). This growing online population in Africa, no doubt, offers huge potentials that would excite information purveyors in both the government and private sector.

Driven by a synergy of the internet, digital turnover and satellite revolution the new media now make text, audio, video and graphics and assorted data accessible to all via an expanding array of electronic appliances. For purveyors and users of IMC in Africa, the digital implications are far-reaching especially for information packaging, electronic commerce (e-commerce), target marketing and several other online and offline engagements with the public. The convergence of content, systems and network in the production, storage, processing and transmission of information is now better enhanced than before. Mojayeet. al (Year), explaining further, maintain that with convergence,

Everything comes on at once on the computer or television or any other complementing new media form; technological equipment such as digital camera-recording of events must carry with it mixture of

audio, video and graphics or other visible objects as well as global system of mobile communication (GSM), where the interlink of sound, video, text are now possible (2008:356).

By this convergence, new media integrate both the forms and formats of the old media to deliver richer news, information and entertainment services to the public.

The Imperatives of Convergence for IMC

For the maximization of IMC in Africa, the following imperatives, drawn largely from the convergence offered by the internet, satellite and new media cannot be ignored:

- Man's natural desire for information is now met to near satiation in the bottomless reservoir of data available online. Presently, there is almost nothing that one cannot find or buy on the Web (Belch and Belch, 2013; Dominic 2012).
- High-speed, digital connectivity on the net is compelling more users to spend more time online at incredible ease and convenience. As more people air their views online about social issues and on products and brands at great convenience power now resides with the consumer rather than brand owners. Consequently, brand managers must find better ways to engage consumers through the use of IMC.
- Power of content and user-control is matched only by the possibility of audience involvement offered by the new media at the thresholds of user-to-user, user-to-document, and user-to-system interactivity, McMillan (2006). [RMG see Mojaye 360]
- New ways to buy and sell have emerged through e-commerce.
- Target-driven marketing frontiers for IMC are enhanced through online research and continuous customer tracking. These provide more direct feedback on the value of marketing communication expenditures, customer satisfaction and the competition generally.
- The limited control of the internet presents less worry to marketers about media and other regulatory watchdogs who police online business and communications. Consequently marketers and information managers virtually have a blank cheque to do business, as networks are largely unable to censor what is said or shown online.
- In terms of effectiveness of IMC, measurement appears more effective with online campaign. Data-based marketing and several other metrics enhance the better evaluation of consumer response to campaigns as well as return on investment from promotional budgets.

Pitfalls of the Internet as an IMC Tool

As promising as the internet is to both marketers and consumers, the medium is not without its perils and drawbacks. Unlike the traditional media, the freedom of the internet, up scaled by its digital interactivity constitutes its attractiveness. However, in spite of its huge potentials there is a rising constituency who think it is time to cross-examine the internet. Some of the areas that have drawn damning criticisms since the explosion of the internet include the following:

1. Lack of effective gate keepers.

Lack of statutory control presents an intriguing paradox in Internet usage. There are many users of the Internet who are also content producers and may be referred to as gatekeepers. While it is the most democratic of media in terms of freedom, the Internet is often derided as the “wild, wild west” for its lack of regulation. Anybody can get on it and do or post anything - and this is precarious - without any one entity to hold accountable.

2. Lack of institutional security.

Many people still consider the Internet highly unsafe to do business. Especially for financial transaction, many are yet to accept it as a viable medium to do business. Few, for example, would dare to purchase credit card over the net, for fear of scam and cyber fraud.

3. Slow downloads

Due largely to bandwidth limitations, response time for users of the Internet is often slow and this hampers people from full online maximization. This is a disincentive for any robust online marketing.

4. Deception.

While a vast majority of blogs and Internet prepositions are legitimate, they also offer the potential for deception. For instance, no one can ascertain the objectivity of a blogger who comments on a product or brand, either positively or negatively. While unfair trade opportunities exist online for companies to anonymously promote their brands, on the other hand, competitive brand bashing which is unethical in marketing can be done anonymously. As explained further by Rodman (2006:322), the Internet ...allows an undifferentiated mass of information to appear online. Authoritative information provided by authors sits side-by-side, in the same format with nonsense and fraud.

5. Privacy violation.

While customer profiling is a legitimate marketing practice, devices such as “cookies”, “spyware”, “request” and a plethora of tracking softwares have raised concerns about privacy invasion of users of the Net. Privacy advocates are thus naturally worried about the safety and usage of the huge reservoir of personal information available online. According to Arens

Although software developers claim that the users are tracked anonymously with encrypted identification numbers, privacy advocates believe the marketing method is too invasive into consumers, lives. (2002:562).

6. The great “Digital Divide”.

While the internet may have indeed networked the world into a “global village” as envisioned of the new media by Marshall McLuhan, a wide “digital divide” by way of technological gap exists between those who are computer and internet literate and those who are not especially in Africa and many parts of Asia. The full deployment of the internet for fruitful integrated marketing communications is limited by this divide.

7. Fear of Westernization.

The awesome power of the Internet with its pervasive influence over socialization compels many critics to question the intention of its use wholistically. Increasingly, there is widespread perception especially in the developing nations of the systematic

use of the Internet as a global instrument of cultural imperialism and westernization of the world.

8. Commercialization of the Internet

The increasing use of the Internet for integrated marketing communications and other profit driven endeavours is considered in some quarters as another extension of the much deprecated commercialization of the media.

Conclusion

For many in business, media, sports and entertainment, everything has changed since the advent of the Internet. Since this pervasive medium rolled out with unparalleled reverberations into diverse, new, digital and interactive offerings, notwithstanding the plethora of risks inbuilt, those in the business of integrated marketing communications (IMC) have never had it so good. This new media reality of the Internet has jotted many ailing business and lives into a new digital, online consciousness.

For the marketer desirous of a new market place and daring to innovate, the deliverables online are enormous, despite the many unknown bumps of the Internet. The medium may still be unfolding; yet, the potential for attraction of open gateway to people and information offerable through the internet revolution is too irresistible to permit any serious consideration of the flaws of the new medium.

As the medium transforms both itself and the society generally, more than ever, the imperative is for the marketer craving for customer retention and new niche frontier to follow the consumers into their Smartphones, iPads, facebook, e-mails, music players and interactive televisions. Even amidst the increasing calls for more control of the Internet, the new refrain that is resonating amongst marketers both local and international and many in the business of IMC is: innovate or die.

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Assessment of Sources of Information on Fertilizer among Farmers in Benue and Plateau States

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Abstract

The sources of information on fertilizer among farmers in Benue and Plateau States were assessed by the study through a survey using questionnaire as instrument for data collection. Findings show that radio is the leading source of information among farmers in Benue and Plateau States, with 24.5% rating by the farmers sampled. Nevertheless, 71.2% of the farmers in Benue and Plateau states basically rely on informal sources of information on fertilizer. Further findings reveal that agricultural extension workers are the most reliable sources of information on fertilizer among farmers in the two states studied. Also, that information on fertilizer from informal sources is the most suitable to the information needs of farmers in Benue and Plateau states regarding fertilizer. Overall, it is evident from the findings that fertilizer is an essential commodity and helpful in increasing crops yield in the two states. Against this backdrop, the study concludes that there is heavy reliance of farmers in Benue and Plateau states on informal information sources such extension workers, traditional rulers, announcements in churches and mosques, friends, and neighbours/relatives. Consequently, application of more channels in delivering information to farmers; information dissemination to farmers on fertilizers availability, cost, procurement and methods of application among other things are recommended.

Introduction

Communication is the catalyst for the effective functioning of all human society. Its imperativeness lies in the old adage that 'man cannot but communicate'; implying that it is communication that makes life meaningful for all humans in every society. According to Folorunso (1987) in Umeh (2008:8) a well informed society is a mobilized society because it is information literate, more responsive to government policies and eager to participate in the nation's development programmes. In

agriculture, the role of information in enhancing agricultural development cannot be over emphasized. Information is vital for increasing production and improving marketing and distribution strategies (Oladele, 2006:16).

Information is the bedrock of communication and the opens windows of sharing experiences, best practices, sources of financial aids and new markets. According to Opera (2008:289) knowledge and information are basic ingredients for increased agricultural production and productivity. The availability of information on accessibility of fertilizer, cost, distribution channels, and types to be used on each crop, application techniques, and other support services will be critical resource in the operation and management of the agricultural enterprise. Both mechanized large scale farmers and peasant small scale farmers rely heavily on fertilizer for enhanced farm yields. Therefore, effective agricultural information delivery as Opera (2008:290) notes, at the right time in the right format and from the right source may shift the balance between success and failure of the farmer.

Recognition of the information needs of the farmers and the determination of how best to provide them with the information they need, particularly on fertilizer and other farming techniques is thus, an imperative. It is against this backdrop that Hossain (2000:41) has noted that communication of agricultural information is a vital factor in the change process of the farming community. Because of this, he said “agricultural research results constitute an important knowledge base that should be made available to farmers through sources whose attributes are acceptable to them”. It therefore, becomes imperative that identification of the different sources of information to farmers be made to bring out the relevance of these sources as well as bring out the preference/ priority farmers attach to such information sources.

Statement of the Problem

Several agricultural programmes and schemes have been devised in Nigeria over the years, to help equip farmers with information and resources that will help reduce the burden of farming and increase farm yields. Such programmes and schemes have lead to institutions and agencies saddled with the responsibilities of setting policies and implementation strategies. As part of the concerted efforts to equip farmers with information and resources that will improve agricultural yields, the farm Settlement Schemes was introduced in 1956 by the Colonial Government of Sir James Robertson. The Yakubu Gowon regime also introduced the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP), in 1972.

Pursuant to the same goals, successive regimes to date have devised one programme or the other to help sensitize, create awareness and equip farmers with necessary information and resources to boost agriculture in the country (Umeh, 2008:10). The aim of most of such programmes and schemes besides enhancing farmers’ agricultural production, is to improve rural life and check rural-urban drift in population. In spite of all these efforts, Adeola, Adewale, and Adebayo (2008: 79) observe that attainment of self-sufficiency in food production has remained a mirage in Nigeria. They predicate the problem on the fact that majority of farmers who are peasants are either inadequately or poorly informed about innovations and techniques to apply or programmes and schemes that they can tap into to enhance their farming. This corroborates an earlier submission by Arokoyo (2003:47) that there is an insufficient effort to provide information to Nigerian farmers, particularly fertilizer

which is most crucial to achieve improved productivity and enhance their standard of living of rural dwellers. Anyanwu, Agwu and Umeweni (2002:40) note too that information on innovations on fertilizer application and even the availability of the product is shrouded in mystery in Nigeria. The mass media that are the major purveyors of information have not been adequately and properly utilized to complement other sources of information to farmers. It against this background, the study is assessing the sources of information on fertilizer to farmers in Benue and Plateau States.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to ascertain the sources of information on fertilizer to farmers in Benue and Plateau States. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Ascertain the sources from which farmers in Benue and Plateau States access information on fertilizer.
2. Determine the most reliable information sources on fertilizer among farmers in Benue and Plateau States.
3. Find out the information sources on fertilizer that best suit the needs of farmers in Benue and Plateau States.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the sources from which farmers in Benue and Plateau States access information on fertilizer?
2. What are the most reliable information sources on fertilizer among farmers in Benue and Plateau States?
3. What are the information sources on fertilizer that best suit the needs of farmers in Benue and Plateau States?

Scope and Significance of the Study

The study is concerned with sources of information on fertilizer among farmers. Accordingly, it is delimited in scope to information contents that have to do with fertilizer availability, procurement and application. Geographically, the study is delimited in scope to farmers in Benue and Plateau States.

Significance of the study can be viewed from a number of ways - first, it is hoped that it will better educate agricultural information providers in this areas and other development information providers. Second, it will educate agricultural programmes and schemes implementation agencies on the easily accessible sources of information to farmers in Benue and Plateau States. It will also enable such agencies and bodies to know the sources best suits the information needs of farmers in Benue and Plateau States. The findings of the study will serve as a resource material for researchers as it will provide a guide for further studies.

Review of Related Literature

The sources from which farmers obtain information regarding their farming activities have attracted interest and attention from scholars around the world in recent time. Such interest and attention are not unconnected with global development agendas and incessant food shortages around the world, mostly blamed on poor agricultural yield. The concern is more on rural dwellers due to their low level of

education and awareness of most agricultural innovations. Studies conducted tend to highlight how farmers access information, with special focus on fertilizer availability and applications.

The study by Ayoade (2010:39) found that interpersonal source of information was available to farmers. This interpersonal source was friends who are non-professionals in information dissemination. In a related study by Okwu and Daudu (2011:88), interpersonal communication channels were generally found to be more available, accessible and used by the farmers than the mass media to obtain information on improved farm technologies. Relatives/friends/neighbours constituted the most regularly available, accessible and used interpersonal channels, although extension agents and television were mentioned by the farmers as the most preferred interpersonal channel and mass medium, respectively.

According to Frederico Mayor, the then Director General of UNESCO, as cited by Alan and Associates (1997:21), indigenous people are people living in and from the richness and variety of complex ecosystems, and they have understanding of the properties of plants and animals, the function of the ecosystems and the techniques for using and managing them that are particular and often detailed. This understanding (or knowledge) is transmitted orally from generation to generation (Opera, 2008:290). Thus, it is important that any method of disseminating development information must recognize existing traditional or indigenous channels of information dissemination. It is in view of this that Mundy and Compton (2000:19) have noted that every society has evolved ways for transmitting information from person to person.

It is in recognition of this fact that Monu (2000:51) has agreed that for communication to become truly an instrument of society change, it must be based on the existing value and belief system of the community as well as upon built in respected and trusted communication channels, like the folk media. In such a people-centered participation approach of communication, the identification of networks of information flow provides deeper insight into the pattern of exchange of information in the farming community (Hossain, 2000:89). Most indigenous people have traditional songs, legend, dreams, methods and practices as means of transmitting specific elements of indigenous knowledge (Alan and Associates, 1997:145). These media are amendable to the transmission of exogenous knowledge (Opera, 2008:290).

Studies such as those of Chatman (2000:17) and Aboyale (2000:79) have shown that a wide range of sources of fertilizer news and other agricultural information is available to farmers. Because of this, choice of appropriate medium is crucial in agricultural information delivery (Opera, 2008:290). This is because the desire to use or not to use a particular information channels is affected by the channel's disposition and information demand characteristics (Richardson, 2003:98). Information channels disposition and information demand characteristics according to Lee, refers to the users preferred means and styles of obtaining the needed information whereas information demand characteristics refers to the quality pattern that users expect in the needed information. A source of news or information must be credible, reliable and above all familiar to the user before he would use it. This is particularly so where there are alternative sources (Opera, 2008:290)

Djojomartono and Pertini (2000:291) have argued that no one medium is best. The selected medium, they argued must be adapted to the message, target

audience and social economic environment. Nevertheless, it is always best to use a combination of channels (Opera, 2008:290). Munyua (2008) in Opera (2008:290) notes that traditional media of agricultural information delivery to farmers have been used very successfully in developing countries and rural radio in particular has played a major role in delivering agricultural messages. She further noted that print, video, television, film slides, pictures, drama, dance, folklore, group discussion, meetings, exhibitions and demonstrations have also been used to speed up the flow of information.

However, Djojmartono and Pertini (2000:291) note that radio and television are more appropriate for one way communication, reaching a lot of people quickly with fairly simple ideas. It is in this vein that Munyua in Opara states that the two media have been monologic and have not allowed much interaction with the users. It is in view of this that Djojmartono and Pertini state that interpersonal communication including extension agent, group meetings, community organization, and demonstrations are the ways to teach and develop credibility, but sometimes their effectiveness is hindered by some limiting factors such as time, space, human resources and budget. However, Tadesse (2008:54) notes that mass media are particularly effective in making farmers aware of new technologies and there after they can always approach the extension agent, whose job it is to deliver repackaged agricultural information from subject matter specialists to farmers for application in their farming operations.

Ozowa (2003:40) identified poor reception quality and inadequate area coverage and inappropriate broadcast time as some of the draw backs of radio and television. He argues that even though Nigerian farmers rank the extension agent highest as a source of providing credible, agricultural information and advice, the extension personnel are ill-equipped for extension and extension communication job. To strengthen the effectiveness of the mass media in agricultural information delivery, Ozowa reported that the media Forum for Agriculture was formed by media practitioners from all over Nigeria in 1989 with the aim of providing better coverage of agriculture in the media.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the tenets of the diffusion of innovations theory and the uses and gratifications theory. The diffusion of innovations theory propounded by Everett M. Rogers in 1962 seeks to explain how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread through cultures (McQuail, 2005). The theory acknowledges diffusion of innovations as a specific kind of communication that includes an innovation, individuals or other units of adoption, and a communication channel.

The uses and gratifications theory, formulated by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch in 1974, on the other hand, attempts to explain the uses and functions of media for individuals, groups and society in general. A key tenet of the theory is the shift media production and transmission functions to the media consumption functioning, which perceives messages recipients as selectively choosing, attending to, perceiving and retaining the messages on the basis of their needs (Severin and Tankard, 1991). The uses and gratifications theory acknowledges

that users of information are goal driven decision-makers who select information and communication channels that meet their needs.

Relevance of these theories to the study lies in their recognition of the individual user of information in the communication process. Both theories emphasizes the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system and the use to which individual make of the information based on their needs gratifications as crucial elements in information seeking behaviours and innovations adaptation.

Research Method

The survey research design has been adopted as the method of data collection for this study, with the use of questionnaire as instrument for data collection. Commenting on this design, Ada, Abul, Ker, and Okwu (1997:37) state that it is “a strategy used to find meaning and obtain an understanding of the present condition, attitudes, opinions, beliefs...” The population of the study comprise of all farmers in Benue and Plateau States from which a sample size of 400 respondents was drawn using the Taro Yamane statistical formula for calculating sample size. The data collected for the study was collated and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as simple percentages and tables of summary in order to ease comprehension and to appreciate observed variables of the research outcome.

Data Presentation and Analysis

A total of 398 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved from a sample size of 400 administered the instrument. This shows a high response rate of 99.5% for the study which is used in answering the research questions. Consequently, the data presented and analyzed is based on the 398 copies of the questionnaire returned.

Research Questions 1: What are the sources from which farmers in Benue and Plateau States access information on fertilizer? Answer to this research question is contained in the data presented in table 1 which shows the various sources of information on fertilizer among farmers in Benue and Plateau States.

Table 1: Sources of Information on Fertilizer among the Farmers

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	98	24.6
Television	11	2.8
Newspaper	6	1.5
Friends	76	19.1
Neighbours/Relatives	47	11.8
Traditional Ruler	37	9.3
Announcement in Church/Mosque	52	13.1
Extension workers	71	17.8
Total	398	100%

Source: *Field Survey, 2014.*

Table 1 show that radio is the leading source of information among farmers in Benue State, with 24.5% rating by the farmers sampled. Nevertheless, farmers in Benue and Plateau states also access information on fertilizer from agricultural

extension worker, announcements in churches and mosques, from traditional rulers, relatives, neighbours and friends, as well as from television and newspapers. On the whole, the data implies that majority of the farmers in Benue and Plateau States (71.2%) basically rely on informal sources of information on fertilizer.

This signifies that despite being the major purveyors of information in society, and in spite of radio's role in the dissemination of information on fertilizer, the mass media in comparison to the informal sources of information, are yet to take the leading role in the dissemination of agricultural information to the farmers in Benue and Plateau states, particularly on fertilizer availability and application.

Research Questions 2: What are the most reliable information sources on fertilizer among farmers in Benue and Plateau States? Table 2 presents data in response to this research question.

Table 2: The most Reliable Information Sources on Fertilizer among the Farmers

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	43	10.8
Television	12	3
Newspaper	4	1
Friends	45	11.3
Neighbours/Relatives	57	14.3
Traditional Ruler	80	20.1
Announcement in Church/Mosque	76	19.1
Extension workers	81	20.4
Total	398	100%

Source: *Field Survey, 2014.*

Data contained in table 2 shows the most reliable sources of information on fertilizer among farmers in Benue and Plateau states. It is implied from the data that agricultural extension workers are the most reliable sources of information on fertilizer among farmers in the two states studied. This is followed by information obtained from traditional rulers and announcements in churches and mosques.

This implies that the interpersonal and group communication channels are more influential among the farmers in Benue and Plateau states, and could be inferred that the knowledge they have about fertilizer especially its availability and applications is from extension worker. Similarly, the data shows the influence of traditional and religious institutions in the lives of farmers in Benue and Plateau states, hence information from extension worker, traditional rulers and announcements in churches and mosques are deemed the most reliable sources on fertilizer among the farmers.

Research Questions 3: What are the information sources on fertilizer that best suit the needs of farmers in Benue and Plateau States? Data contained in table 3 provides information on the suitability of the information sources to the information needs of farmers in Benue and Plateau states.

Table 1: Suitability of Sources of Information on Fertilizer for needs of the Farmers

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	70	17.6
Television	13	3.3
Newspaper	6	1.5
Friends	34	8.5
Neighbours/Relatives	47	11.8
Traditional Ruler	62	15.6
Announcement in Church/Mosque	79	19.8
Extension workers	87	21.9
Total	398	100%

Source: *Field Survey, 2014.*

Information contained in the table shows respondents' rating of the sources based on their information needs. The respondents extols information from extension workers, announcements in churches and mosques, radio, traditional rulers and information from neighbours and relatives as most suitable to their information needs regarding fertilizer.

This implies that extension workers and local institutions as well as individuals with knowledge of fertilizer are very essential to agricultural productivity in Benue and Plateau states. To this end, farmers in Benue and Plateau states will be better equipped and assisted to enhance agricultural productivity through such channels. Overall, it is evident from the data that fertilizer is an essential commodity and helpful in increasing crops yield.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study as contained in the data presented reveals that over 70% of farmers in Benue and Plateau states rely heavily on informal sources of information on fertilizer. The findings indicate that informal sources such as extension workers, traditional rulers, announcements in churches and mosques, friends, and neighbours/relatives are the most vital for the farmers in Benue and Plateau states. These findings are consistent with those of Daudu, Chado, and Igbashal's 2009 study which found that 73.5% of farmers in Benue State source information on agricultural issues from friends and relatives. The findings also agree with those of Opera's 2008 study which found that farmers in Nigeria heavily rely on informal sources for agricultural information.

Similarly, the study found that farmers in Benue and Plateau states prefer a combination of the various information sources such as from extension workers, announcements in churches and mosques, radio, traditional rulers and information from neighbours and relatives as well as television and newspapers in fulfilling their information needs. This is also consistent with the observation of Inagaki, (2007) that, the Millennium Development Goals call for not only greater financial commitment in international assistance programme but also innovative strategies to tackle the serious education and other basic human problems in the developing world such as agriculture.

The findings of this study therefore, call for a renewed interest and commitment to agricultural practices that would advance the development of rural communities whom according to White (2008), constitutes majority of the population in developing countries such as Nigeria. The millennium development goals offers opportunity for scholars and agencies of government and non-governmental organisations to provoke a renewed debate on the global development issues that will provide an opportunity for development practitioners to integrate established methods and novel communication approaches into larger development initiatives in a greater scale.

Against this backdrop, the findings of the study support previous studies that the systematic use of communication for development historically has been flawed. It is therefore important that the agricultural sector be developed, in order to develop rural areas. This is because agriculture is the pivotal source around which livelihoods in the rural areas are sustained, and historically, the farming tradition has always been a part of the culture of Nigerians, particularly the people of Benue and Plateau, and indeed the entire middle belt region of Nigeria.

Conclusion

Following the findings available to the study through the analysis and interpretation of the research data, the study concludes that there is heavy reliance of farmers in benue and Plateau states on informal information sources such extension workers, traditional rulers, announcements in churches and mosques, friends, and neighbours/relatives. However, a good combination of the informal sources with the formal mass media would better help in equipping the farmers with authentic information. As such, there is need to integrate the mass media into key agricultural policies and programmes as well as increase awareness of the farmers on fertilizer availability and application to improve farm yields and agricultural produce in Benue and Plateau states that are the hub of Nigeria's food chain.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings and the conclusion reached, the following recommendations are made by the study:

1. Development information providers should always apply more than one channel in delivering information to the target farmers. This information should be provided in the right format and the right language especially where the mass media are used.
2. More efforts should be geared towards information dissemination to farmers especially on fertilizers availability, cost, procurement and methods of application as it will be of immense benefits to the farmers and as such should be taken serious by all stakeholders in the agricultural business.
3. Interpersonal sources which seem to be most suitable for the farmers should be integrated into agricultural policies, programmes and schemes because they have been found to be more effective and influential among farmers.
4. Efforts should be made to ensure that broadcast times on radio and televisions are appropriate and the area of coverage should be as wide as possible. Similarly, the time of broadcast, format and the language used should be conversant with the people.

5. Education and training of extension worker and other agricultural agents on interpersonal communication should be considered vital in the provision of extension services to the farmers.

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The Nigerian Leadership Experience: Lessons in Ahmed Yerima's Little Drops

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Abstract

Nigeria is one of the developing countries of the world endowed with diverse human and material resources. Unfortunately, social ills such as bad leadership, insurgency and corruption which appear to be on the increase, have negatively affected the nation politically, socially and economically. Certainly, these social maladies have been the bane of development for many years. Since independence, the country has been governed under military and civilian regimes at various times. The country's leadership, past and present came up with policies and programmes that articulate the vision of an ideal state. Despite the good intentions and efforts, not much has been achieved in Nigerian's nation building project. The sordid state of socio-economic experiences was further compounded by the civil war which halted meaningful development, tore the country apart and widened the gap between the "Haves and Have Nots". Thus a class structure society was created with a gloomy future. Perhaps, the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta in the late fifties, added another strands to the nation's woes. The region has become a crises-ridden society. Indeed, the Niger Delta issues have become topical, with serious national implications and have received global attention. This foreseen mirage could be as a result of bad leadership that has taken over the region by some selfish and insatiable Nigerians. Theatre practitioners, particularly dramatists seized the opportunity, captured and reflected in their works the crises in the region. In this paper, the researcher examines the recurrent leadership questions in Nigeria's quest for national development using Ahmed Yerima's Little Drops as paradigm. The paper concludes that, good Leadership in all ramifications and all over the world remains the pivot upon which any meaningful socio-economic and political development is achieved. If Nigerians begin to demonstrate good leadership qualities, then the dream of becoming one of the developed countries of the world in 20, 20, 20 will not be a mirage.

Keywords: Nigerian Leadership, Socioeconomic Experience, Lessons, Theatre, Drama

Introduction

A number of development discourses attribute Nigeria's lack of meaningful development to the multi-faceted problems of bad leadership. The post-colonial elites have consistently failed to provide the needed leadership to improve the lot of the teeming masses of this country. From the North to South, East to West, crises of leadership have engrossed Nigeria. Almost fifty four years now, Nigeria got her independence and the country still suffers from political instability, lack of legitimacy of political leaders, religious and ethnic intolerance, socio-economic disorder and corruption. Most countries in Africa are yet to improve the quality of life of the majority of their citizens. This is evident in the many crises that have bedeviled the continent of Africa in general and Nigeria in particular over the years. Doki decries the country's backwardness and asserts that:

Upon the attainment of independence, Nigeria has been plagued with one crisis to the other: civil war in 1967, sharia crisis in 1977, maitatsine crisis in 1980, the oil crisis in 1986, the declaration of jihad in Kaduna state in 1996, the Kaduna and Abia religious riot in 2000, Tiv/Awe communal clashes in 2001, Tiv/Udam crisis in 2002, and a host of other sporadic attacks at different times and places (2004:142)

Regrettably, most of these crises and clashes confronting Nigeria are linked with leadership challenges. In fact, the change of political leadership from the colonial masters to Nigerians marked the beginning of the search for true and selfless leaders in the country.

Today, the visible signs of Nigeria's bad leadership and underdevelopment are poverty, hunger, disease, ignorance, injustice and corruption which have ravaged the lives of many citizens. The failed state phenomenon, corruption and bad governance among other interrelated variables that had impeded the growth of this country tilt towards bad leadership. For instance, most Niger Delta states have had their revenue base improved than their Northern and Western counterparts through the 13% derivation accrued to the region since the beginning of democratic regime. However, how these monies are spent remains an issue of serious concern to many. The failure in the system and lack of critical infrastructure (be it governmental or private) is another issue blamed on the particular style of leadership at that region. Fortunately, the region has produced the incumbent president of this country. Yet, it still remains a habitation of the good, the bad and the ugly. This is evident in many political wranglings in the region especially the one recently witnessed in Rivers state which has snowballed into a national brouhaha and has become an indictment of the Jonathan's administration.

The United Nations Millennium Declaration was adopted in September, 2000. It enjoined both rich and poor countries to ensure significant eradication of poverty, promote human dignity, equality, peace, democracy and environmental sustainability. Based on these, Nigeria projected that in 2015, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) will be actualized. However, one year to the 2015 deadline, Nigeria alongside other African countries is no where close to achieving the MDGs. The constant clamour for control of either power or resources breed terror in the minds of the weak or perceived disenfranchised group who formed militia groups to protect themselves

and to fight the state. This has to do with accusations, allegations of neglect, oppression, domination, exploitation, victimization, discrimination, marginalization, nepotism and bigotry from our past and present leaders. From the Odua Peoples Congress, the Bakassi Boys, Egbesu Boys, Ijaw Youth Congress, MASSOB, MEND, Boko Haram, and recently the Ombatse Militia just to mention a few, have terrorized the country.

Again, socio-political and economic developments after Nigeria's civil war have further widened the monumental gap between the rich and the poor, thus creating a gloomy picture of the future and a class-based society. This statement agrees with Onah and Doki's argument that:

Certain leaders in socio-economic and political spheres precipitate dire consequences by creating avenues for the emergence of a new group of comfortable upper class, a situation capable of promoting mass discontent, reinforced distortion and disarticulation of the existing social and economic structures (2005:14)

No wonder! A Nigerian foremost writer, Chinua Achebe (1988:2) observes and strongly believes that, "the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely the failure of leadership". The Nigerian leadership problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to their responsibility which is the hallmark of true leadership.

From the seventies till today, theatrical plays in Nigeria were written to express certain ideological positions or to condemn decadent socio-political practices and to also entertain. The works of Wole Soyinka, Ola Rotimi, Zulu Sofola, Bode Sowande, Femi Osofisan, Kole Omotosho, Iyorwuese Hagher, Ahmed Yerima, Ojo Bakare Rasaki, Tor Iorapuu among others are good examples. Theatre today has entered another phase in history as a mediator between man and the happenings within his social milieu. The question is: does *Little Drops* as a play that connects ideologically with its setting-Nigeria have anything to teach us as lessons in leadership? This and many other questions will be examined as we progress in the course of the discourse.

The Concept of Leadership

The concept of leadership characterized all spheres of human endeavour. It is associated with social institutions such as the family, religion, traditional, politics, economy, education among others. Leadership of any kind brings with it the burden of responsibility and accountability. Leadership is an automatic response to a situation where a nation has leaders that are truly concerned about the welfare and wellbeing of its people. Danladi James, (2009:4) posits that:

Leadership is the ability of an individual to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute towards the effectiveness and success of an organization, society, community and country of which they are members. It involves taking oneself out of the picture and considering the needs of others.

Leadership is a bond between the leaders and the followership. It has to do with both parties playing their part in pursuance and achievement of their desired goals of society's growth and development. Hodget and Steven (1971:182) define leadership "as the process of influencing people to direct their effort towards the achievement of

some particular goals". Leadership is about people and the ability of the people to direct their energy and action towards the betterment of their lives and the society at large. The issue is not whether you influence people, but rather what kind of influence you will have on them. This implies that, the concept of leadership actually begins with a choice. Bass Martins, sees leadership as all encompassing:

Leadership is conceived as a focus of group processes, as a matter of personality, as a matter of inducing compliance, as the exercise of influence, as a particular behavior, as a form of persuasion, as a power relation, as an instrument to achieve goal, as an effect of interaction, as a differentiated role and above all as initiation of structure (1990:11).

This presupposes that, leadership is a process, a process that takes place at the level of individuals, groups and society. It encompasses everything man does to make himself and his society a better place to live. It is the preeminence of one or a few individuals or a group in the process of control or power relation.

However, one great mistake that is often made in the analysis of the word leadership is the mix up with the word divine. An average Nigerian believes that power is divine and has to be used supremely by the ordained. Most African rulers especially those who acquired power through elections tend to forget the norms of democratic rule. They want to stay in power forever. The case of Ghaddafi of Libya, Ben Ali of Tunisia, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal are good examples.

John Whitney and Tina Packer have made it simple in their masterpiece: "Power Plays". The book is about the themes of leadership in William Shakespeare's 39 plays. The thrust of their argument was that, Shakespeare has survived all the generations to remain the world's greatest writer because he:

Wrote twenty seven of his plays in one ten- year period; he finished the masterpieces King Lear, Macbeth and Anthony and Cleopatra in fourteen months. There is hardly a topic under the sun that he did not explore brilliantly. Good and evil, love and hatred, justice and mercy, pride and humility, guilt and innocence, war and peace. But the one subject he returns to again and again is leadership. (Whitney and Packer 2000:11)

Again, John Whitney and Tina Packer have explained who a leader is when they say:

A leader must understand the capabilities of his followers, not as they exist today, but as they would exist if they were stretched. The leaders' job is not to seek what is comfortable but what is possible and what will ultimately serve the purpose. Yes, the leader must also understand the mood of those he is leading, but not in order to pander; rather, to know where to place the ladder, so that he and his followers can climb together. And ultimately a leader must convince her (his) followers through action, example and argument, that this is the way to go and together they can do it (Whitney and Packer 2000:35).

This position vividly captures the true meaning of being a leader. However, the paradox of Nigeria's situation is that, leaders are more concerned about their personal aggrandizements while the teeming populace wallows in abject poverty in the midst of plenty.

The Nigerian Leadership Style

The problem of corruption is leadership related. Since independence, from the military regime to civilian the problem of Nigeria has remained that of true leadership style. The state of our country today is characterized by injustice, corruption, kleptomania, greed and inequality. "Nigeria is a nation with abundant material and human resources. Yet, considered an executive member of the club of the most corrupt nations as well as the club of the poorest nations on earth" (Hagher 2003:177).

Corruption among politicians has eaten deep into the fabric of our nation such that it has been legalized through unwritten laws among government officials and the citizenry and the worst of all our leaders. Leadership becomes a trade rather than a call to serve. Nigeria is where she is today because of the caliber of people Nigerians elect as leaders. Most of them get to leadership positions through foul means and with a misconception of what true leadership entails. To them leadership is not an opportunity to serve honestly but an opportunity to amass wealth, misuse power and undo all who stand in their way. It is these corrupt practices by our past and present leaders that are today responsible for the nation's backwardness and act of terrorism. The situation is pathetic as it is appalling. Agreeing with this, Tse Andera (2010: 23) says:

Those who are bereft of vision and leadership qualities are often the ones with the means to rig election and wangle their ways into seats of power and authority to enrich themselves to the detriment of the masses using political programme outlined in party manifestoes.

The issue of corruption cannot be divorced from politics; rather they are intertwined because one gives birth to the other. Umar Yusuf (2007:15) for instance, posits that:

Mallam Nuhu Ribadu the then former EFCC Boss has over time alluded that, 220 Billion Pounds were squandered between independence in 1960 and the return to democracy in 1999. If this figure is correct, it then means that, the nation since 1960 has lost what the entire African continent got in foreign aids to looters. Notable among them are some retired Army Generals and political elites. These people siphoned the wealth of Nigeria and circulated some to their allies and cronies.

These unpatriotic qualities are recurrent decimals in the Nigerian socio-political setting today. This is because, the dominant culture of the West characterized by capitalism continuously seeps down as it were, to corrupt the polity and give an impression that the failure of contemporary society seems to have no solution to our leadership problem. From the Abacha loot, Sani Na'aba saga, Tafa Balogun's scandals, the Alameseya scam, Eteh's crisis, Ibori's waterloo, and recently the crisis

that rocked the Rivers State House of Assembly just to mention a few, are practical examples of Nigerian leadership style.

Ahmed Yerima's Artistic Profile/Synopsis of Little Drops

Ahmed Yerima is a director, playwright, actor, scholar, and cultural administrator par excellence. He has held many public offices in Nigeria and has been an artistic consultant to many cultural events over the years. Yerima was the Artistic Director of the National Troupe of Nigeria. He is the most prolific of the third generation's dramatists in Nigeria whose works touched the nooks and crannies of this country. Yerima's drama is clearly in support of the struggle of the masses for a just and humane society. Drama and theatre to him, is a means of advancing society's need for change and consequent liberation from corruption, ignorance, poverty and injustice. Yerima's ideology is succinctly captured by Bakare Ojo Rasaki when he writes that:

Yerima does not send out to subvert. Rather than a theatrical discourse challenging the establishment with a view to rocking the boat, he would place his mirror beside reality, reflect it as it is, or simply celebrate what he finds worthy in the reality. He is after the mirror-image instead of counter-image. He does not sufficiently distance himself from the reality of his artistic creation so that he can offer it his critically dispassionate umpiring (2010:336).

Through his works that impacted greatly, he has provided some kind of leadership in the literary and theatrical circles, which manifested in the LNG award he received. Yerima is sure worried and concerned about the Nigerian state which greed, corruption and self centeredness tend to undermine national interest. He uses his artistic talent to hold the mirror up for the society to see itself vividly. He spares no segment of the society in his writing, but always ends up with hope for the betterment of the society. "No playwright in Nigeria is more direct in dramaturgical approach than Yerima. He refrains from couching the situations in phantasmagorias but present them as they are with visible references" (Adeoye 2010:192).

For some years, Yerima's themes seem to have dwelled more on the pains of the female folk and succeeded in wielding the image and messages that produce a powerful thesis for a feminist ideology. He has been able to use Little Drops as a socio-aesthetic mediation through which a modest attempt is made to reflect the contemporary national issues.

Little Drops, a play set in the swamp of the Niger Delta is composed of six characters, all women except Ovievie, a ghost and Kuru, a militant leader who is seeking an escape route out of the swamp. The others include: Memekezie, the old woman by the swamp, Mukume, a woman raped by three militants during her honeymoon, Azue, the queen who was present during the beheading of her husband (the king), by his militants subjects. Bonuwo, a teacher whose forty one students were killed by the JTF explosives. The play is a socio-political drama that depicts the transient nature of power-play that has bedeviled Nigeria. Yerima showcases both the Nigerian civil war and the militancy in the Niger Delta. He has made the lines between illusion and reality very thin through the use of language, images and characters that are very vivid in the representation of contemporary situations in the Niger Delta.

It is a reaffirmation of the absurdity and senselessness of war and any act of terrorism in whatever guise. The play also exposes the fact that at the base, the root causes of the crises in the region include corruption, greed, excessive accumulation and insatiable desire for power. The ideas which the play revolves around are drawn from the perspectives of women- the neglected innocent victims of the war of contradictions who became midday widows, orphans and victims of rape. In this play, the women bear the burden and pains which the collateral damages of the Niger Delta crises caused and fought by men. Yerima highlights the pains, shame and ridicules the people of the region have experienced over the years. However, in *Little Drops*, one subject that remains constant and which the playwright tries to bring to the fore is the question of effective leadership which the entire play revolves around and also remains the superlative theme in the play.

The Niger Delta Experience in *Little Drops*

Literatures about the Niger Delta region show gross devastations and negligence despite effort by individuals, companies, governmental and non-governmental organizations to key into finding lasting solutions to the problems of poverty, unemployment, disease, environmental degradation, inequality, marginalization and injustice which have necessitated the crises. The federal, state, local governments and multinational oil companies in collaboration with some unpatriotic leaders of the Niger Delta conspired to plunder the wealth of the region. The Region has been turned into a battle field as the militants engage in act of guerrilla warfare, cultism, terrorism, kidnapping, hostage taking, robbery and oil theft. These have become parts of the struggle. Anyone who is unsympathetic to the cause for justice and right of the people of the region is either maimed or killed by the militants as the enemy of the people. Mukume's words raise the question of who the militants are fighting for? While the militants themselves are quick to respond that they are fighting for the people, especially the women, children and youth: *"No. There was no way one could seat on the fence. No. you could not watch the world exploit your people. With so much neglect, you could not turn your face away. We all felt a sense of duty. We had to fight"* (P.48).

This situation is again portrayed in the dialogue between Bonuwo and Kuru. Kuru says: *"anyone ungrateful to the cause is deserved to die"* (P.52). This reflects the sordid situation perpetrated by different factions of the militant groups believed to be fighting for justice and freedom in the region. Unfortunately today, the crisis is on going even with the amnesty initiative, there are still horrendous and bloody killings in the region:

AZUE: First, the boys came and drank and ate. They danced and chanted his praise. They left driving like wild animals. Then came, the government boys. Again, they drank and ate with him, leaving bags of money in the palace. Unknown to the king he was being watched by his driver who was the informant of the boys. They came back, and there was confusion. They cut off the head of the king right in front of his family

MEME: Heeoo! The government men... what did they do?

AZUE: They came too late. By the time they arrived, the king was dead and half the palace was already burning... He was warned. Some of the chiefs warned him, but he would not listen. He spoke from both sides of his mouth. The boys called him vulture before they beheaded him (PP.22-23)

Here, the king is part and parcel of the crises in the community. He is romancing with the government and oil companies for personal aggrandizement and primitive accumulation at the detriment of the people and the community. This suggests how the present crop of leaders struggle for power to amass public wealth at the expense of the teeming populace and the country at large.

Negative leadership style has been one of the banes of the region's development, peace and stability. The Chiefs and some big lords cheat the people. They siphon what is meant for the people to even marry many women and please them with the ill-gotten wealth. For instance, Meme responding to Azue says: *"You speak as if you know her. If he did not have to please her, he would not have been a vulture to his people. We heard the chiefs and even big lords did it in the city, cheat the people. But, I never expected our king would be one of them"* (P.25). The people always respect their leaders. They are so powerful that principal government officials and owners of multinational oil companies come to pay them homage. Unfortunately, most of the leaders sell their consciences to corruption and greed thereby meting unnecessary pains on their people.

Over the years, the federal government of Nigeria has attempted to resolve the lingering crises that have bedeviled the region by granting an amnesty to militants in the region. The amnesty was meant for the militants to denounce their involvement in militancy and drop their weapons. Yet, instead of giving up the arms, they acquired more. The dialogues among Bonuwu, Kuru and Azue capture this situation:

BONUWO: Oh! he hurts me with his plea. Forty one children that is all I lost to the stupid war, forty one. And you were promised amnesty. But instead of giving up arms, you acquired more as we can see.

KURU: The Amnesty could not sell. There was no consultation with us who were to be granted the amnesty. Just a few men sat in the capital and worked out a one-sided agreement. Some of our leaders rejected it.

AZUE: Your leaders? Those who decreed the death of my husband? He was a kind and just man. He did not hurt anybody.

KURU: I am sorry, he hurt the people. He exploited us. He sold his conscience and sense of duty to his people for money. (P.60)

This experience has been evident in the region. What the people desire in the region today is peace, meaningful development and sustainable growth. The conversations between Kuru and Meme vividly express this:

KURU: All we are asking for is the development of the Niger Delta region which has a population of twenty eight million. Yes, and we are the owners of the raw materials but we don't have a say in the sharing. As a result, there is poverty and mass unemployment

MUKUME: The youths. How about the youths?

KURU: There is frustration among the youths; this is what draws them to violence. They need a sense of belongings, and then they will be less attracted to violence.

MEME: And the people?

KURU: People must be part of the division of wealth. The oil companies are playing a game of divide and rule with us. They think they are smart. There are some people in government and in high place who believe that the Niger Delta people must be taught a lesson... Even our big men are covered with too much tea drinking that they forget the true cause of their people. But we will see, we shall destroy everything, everything, and everything. Total break up!

MEME: That is not the answer... It will never stop. Innocent people will always lose their lives. Faith and commitment that is what we need. You must also have trust among yourselves. Then decide what you want for our future. Have faith in your decision and when you are committed to it, it will be easy to achieve peace. (PP 62-63)

The words of Meme have done justice to what the people of the Niger Delta region and Nigerians at large desperately need now to curb incessant crises that militate against the growth and development of the region and the country. Women rather chose peace instead of war, live instead of death, because they are aware that in the event of war, the female gender is more hit. Memekezie recounts her ordeal with a gory description of how she lost all her family in one day during the Nigerian Civil War even as a poor fisherwoman in the swamp of the Niger Delta: "*All my blood. My husband and two sons. They all perished the same day. During the Biafra war... Unknown to us there was a war. How are we to know in this swampy bush?*" (P.34). Memekezie's reference to the Civil War is to tell us that the country is not new to carnage and senseless killings of innocent Nigerians as is it evident today. However, she advocates for peace instead of war: "*We have not sent anyone to kill and die for us. We want peace. We are tired of burying our beloved ones...*" (P.52). Nigeria needs people like Meme who are proactive and good in decision making to transform the system.

Despite the shortcomings in Nigerian system of leadership, it is obvious that a few good leaders still exist. Some of them have shown Nigerians that true leadership exists with the people as demonstrated by their sacrifices, leadership skills and qualities. Governor Babatunde Fashola of Lagos state and the former NAFDAC

Director General- Dora Akunyili have been praised for their leadership style by many nationally and internationally. For Akunyili, these qualities were demonstrated when she was in NAFDAC. She has distinguished herself in her chosen career. She was ebullient, dogged, courageous and honest in her undertakings. Upon her assumption of office as NAFDAC Director General some years ago, the agency has since become a household name in the country and beyond. Fake drugs counterfeiters did not find it funny. She ordered the closure of different fake drugs companies. Her courage, honesty and doggedness earned her numerous awards of excellence within and without. For Fashola, it is evident in his development hallmarks and purposeful leadership skills and qualities being exhibited in Lagos state today. They could be likened to the character of Meme in the play whose earnest desire is purposeful and committed leadership.

Conclusion

Leadership in all ramifications and all over the world remains the pivot upon which any meaningful socio-economic and political development is achieved. It begins with a choice. The issue is not whether you will influence people; but rather, what kind of influence you will have on the people. When there is no true leadership, society stagnates. Progress is achieved when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better. The revolution in some parts of North Africa and the Middle East is a good example. The coup D'état in Mali, Guinea Bissau and the turmoil in Egypt, Libya among others speak volume of the problem of leadership in Africa. In reality, true leadership is, and has always been a selfless action. It involves taking oneself out of the picture and considering the needs of others.

The development of our country requires selfless, committed and transparent leaders who will deliver the benefits of democracy to the teeming masses and not take advantage of the masses to enrich themselves. When Nigerians put their personal interest above the national interest, the result is that, neither the nation nor the citizens would experience sustainable peace, growth and developments. The Niger Delta crises have succeeded in drawing the world to the region's plight. The Nigerian government recognized its own failures in the region. In order to redress the wrongs, it granted amnesty to the militants, set up Niger Delta Development Corporation (NDDC) and established the ministry of Niger Delta to accelerate development of the region. It means that, for a committed leadership style, Nigerians have to have a change of attitude and value-reorientation about what true leadership entails.

Osofisan as (cited by Gbileeka), has provided a way forward:

The way out of this is clear enough if we are to have development in the country, if the organization of our economic and political life is to become positive and fruitful then, this dominant and corrupting culture must be wiped out so that our political and economic life will yield positive and fruitful results (1997:361)

Therefore, whatever the artist writes about, he or she is writing about the social realities of life. The relevance of an artiste is subsumed in his/her ability to project without ambiguity the events, problems and issues of the moment. Through creative

writing, the artist finds some means of documenting issues that permit discourse and gives them a social meaning through dramatization. Emman Dandaura, (2002:2) maintains that “a playwright is a member of the society; so naturally, his artistic sensibilities are shaped and sharpened by the socio-economic conditions and political happenings of his time”. Ngugi Wa Thiong’o (1981:2) contends that:

A writer has no choice. Whether or not he is aware of it, his works reflect one or more aspects of the intense economic, political cultural and ideological struggles. What he can choose is one or the other side in the battle field: the side of the people or the side of those social forces and classes that try to keep the people down... Every writer is a writer in politics.

A practical schema for theatre intervention must be based on the analysis of what went wrong, why it went wrong and deal with the perceptions associated with the feeling of those who feel wronged. This is why most socio-political playwrighters write, not to please anyone, but to expose social miasma inherent in the society. If Nigerians begin to demonstrate good leadership qualities highlighted by Ahmed Yerima and others in most of their plays, then the dream of becoming one of the developed countries of the world in 20, 20, 20 will be a reality.

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Dynamics of Database Marketing, Direct Marketing and Telemarketing

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Abstract

Marketing has over the years been synonymous with advertising, hence the advertising been referred to as part of the marketing mix. The evolutionary trends in marketing have necessitated the use of certain strategies and tactics such as direct marketing, telemarketing and database marketing. In the 21st century, the use of databases of consumers (IMC) to improve on sales and costumer-relationships is on the increase and has erupted several gains and pains. Companies gain large profit margin, sometimes, as against the privacy of their consumers; such consumers, at other times, are bombarded with ‘unsolicited mails and messages’ via emails and phones. Using the social presence and social marketing theories, this discourse explores the benefits of database while relating it to the dynamism of direct and telemarketing. Scenarios and recommendations for the Nigerian marketer are also suggested for consideration.

Keywords: *Marketing, Direct marketing, Telemarketing, Database marketing, Advertising, Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC).*

Introduction

The concept of marketing is based on the promotion, distribution and selling of products or services. Arens (2006) defines marketing “as the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, distribution, and promotion of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfies the perceived needs, wants and objectives of individuals and organizations”. This definition can be summed up to mean that marketing is a process aimed at satisfying costumers’ needs at a given time.

The American Marketing Association (AMA), defines the concept as “the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives” (Belch & Belch, 2009:8). There is a similarity between the two definitions given above. The definitions focus on exchange as a central concept in marketing and the use of some processes to achieve a good relationship with the

customers. But, there are some non-profit organizations that embark on marketing without the exchange of money for goods and services provided for.

Thus, AMA (American Marketing Association) adopted a revised definition of marketing in 2007, as “the activity, set of institutions and processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients and society at large” (Belch & Belch, 2009:8). This revised definition has incorporated the role of communication in marketing.

Concepts such as direct marketing, telemarketing and database marketing are techniques which over the years have helped explain the need to understand consumers and strive to satisfy their needs while making them friends of the company or organization (Arens, 2006).

These three concepts are constantly intertwined and offer themselves a symbiotic relationship by complimenting each other every bit of the way. Belch and Belch (2009) argue that Direct Marketing, telemarketing and database marketing are integral elements in the integrated marketing communication (IMC) programme. The trio combines to proffer solutions to several marketing and sales challenges (Weymeyer, 2005).

Direct marketing had been used as far back as the 15th Century with the invention of the printing press. Its evolution however, has been peculiar mainly due to technological advances (Fletcher, Wheeler and Wright, 1992). The role of technology can never be underestimated in the development of database marketing and by implication direct marketing and telemarketing.

Database marketing as an arm of direct marketing is understood in some perspectives as a strategy while some other scholars see it as a tactic (Database marketing: Along term strategy for practice success, 2012; Cooke, 1994).

This discourse explores the various dynamics of using these unique marketing strategies and tactics to improve on consumer satisfaction, profit maximization and its revolutionary role in advertising and public relations.

Direct Marketing

Belch and Belch (2009) define direct marketing as a system of marketing by which organizations communicate directly with target customers to generate a response or transaction. This response may take the form of an inquiry, a purchase or even a vote. Belch and Belch also cited Peter Bennett’s definitions as;

The total of activities by which the seller, in effecting the exchange of goods and services with the buyer, directs efforts to a target audience using one or more media (direct selling, direct mail, telemarketing, direct-action advertising, catalogue selling cable TV selling, etc) for the purpose of soliciting a response by phone, mail or personal visit from a prospect or customer. (Belch and Belch, 2009:458).

Furthermore, Arens (2006) cites direct marketing magazines as a measurable system of marketing that uses one or more advertising media to affect a measurable response and transaction at any location, with this activity stored in a database. This definition has created an important aspect of direct marketing, which is the emergence of database.

It can be deduced from the definitions above that direct marketing is interactive in nature and is a system of marketing that enables the marketer have full details of the buyers. Asemah (2011) lists the elements of direct marketing as follows:

- It is a personal communication tool.
- It involves a two-way communication channel.
- It seeks direct response from consumers.
- It eliminates middlemen.
- It operates with a database of customers.
- It is direct communication with consumers.
- It is often targeted at a narrowly specified audience and ,
- It builds lasting relationship with customers.

Direct marketing is the oldest method of marketing but it is now growing fast and improving due to the introduction of the integrated marketing communication (IMC) programme to promote the products of an organization. Today, marketers prefer to use direct-response or action advertising to create a viable market for their products, this is because direct marketing efforts are always aimed at stimulating some action or response from the customer or a prospect.

Direct marketing offers customers private sceneries with their products. Hence, it (credit marketing) can be used or supported with other promotional mix like advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotion and other support media. For this reason many companies now consider direct marketing as an important component in the integrated marketing programmes. This involves employing a number of media to perform the function of reaching the customer or prospective buyer. According to Asemah (2011), each medium can be said to perform a certain or specific function, but they generally follow a one-step approach. The medium is used to directly obtain an order in the one step approach, while the two step approach involves the use of more than one medium.

- a. **Direct Mail:** Direct mail is the most effective method for closing a sale or generating to inquire (Arens, 2006:315). It entails sending information about marketing offers to customers through mails. It involves information about products; brands, prices, quality, sales outlets and phone number of the organization are mailed to target customers. It's straight forward advertising to a desired customer.

With the advent of internet, the use of e-mails has been popularized in direct mail marketing. Marketers flood e-mails of specific audience expecting to get a response. This kind of mail is called "Junk mails" and what Asemah (2011) calls "unsolicited mails".

- b. **Telemarketing:** From the name, it can also mean telephone marketing. It includes selling and prospecting by telephone, answering phone inquiries and providing sales related services to callers. This type of marketing is becoming popular in Nigeria. Telecommunication networks like MTN Nigeria, Etisalat and Globacom call their customers to inform them about some services or new products, even for survey about the quality of their services and products. Telemarketers develop a strong and lasting relationship with their customers whom they speak with often but have never met face- to-face.

- c. **Catalogues:** Catalogues are reference books that list, describe and usually picture the products sold by a manufacturer or retailer. It contains information about marketing offer and producers for ordering or buying the offer. In Nigeria, flyers handbills are usually used in place of catalogues for small and medium scale organizations to target customers.
- d. **Kiosk marketing:** This is the most common type of direct marketing in Nigeria. It involves the use of make-shift structures, small buildings, sales outlets or pre-fabricated buildings to sell products or provide information on how products could be purchased. Mobile shops or motorized kiosks are also common tools of kiosk marketing. For instance, fast food, provisions sellers/dealers, newspaper vendors, motor-parts dealers, G.S.M accessory dealers are example of businesses that use kiosk marketing strategy.
- e. **Direct Response Radio and Television Marketing:** This is interactive radio and television programmes that basically market goods and inform customers/audiences about a product or service. This programmes runs for 1 hour or 30 minutes explaining how a marketing offer could be used to solve a problem that bothers consumers. Audience can call in and ask questions about products, how to use them and where to buy them. Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd., a subsidiary of UAC Nigeria adopted this format using the popular *Home Front* of Peace FM 90.5, PRTVC Jos.
- f. **Ambush Marketing:** The marketer moves from one place to the other especially where he/she expects to see their target consumers and approach the consumers with the marketing offers as the consumer appears. This is an aggressive marketing technique to increase sales through setting techniques. Asemah (2011) gave an example of the 2003 National identity card registration exercise in Nigeria. One of the registration requirements was blood group of individuals. Most people did not know their group, so lab technologists used the ambush marketing techniques and went to the registration venues ready to immediately determine blood groups for any customer.
- g. **Direct Response Advertising:** It is an advert that asks the reader, viewer or listener to provide feedback straight to the sender. Any medium can be used for direct response, but the most common are direct mails, catalogues, radio, magazines and television.

Advantages of Direct Marketing

- (1) Marketers and companies have realized that, they can't do the job of sales and promotion with just one medium. That is the reason why customer database became key to retaining and growing customers. It enables the company build a relationship with the consumer and therefore, learns what they customers like, dislike, what and where they buy and their needs. As Arens (2006:311) puts it, "with a database, companies can choose the prospects they can serve most effectively and profitably- the purpose of all marketing".
- (2) Through direct marketing, companies can send discrete messages to individual customers. People like to see themselves as unique and not a part

of a crowd of mass market. Companies can use direct marketing to initiate, build, cultivate and measure the effectiveness of its loyalty to each customer.

- (3) By providing a tangible response, direct marketing offers accountability marketers can count the responses and determine the cost per response. They can also judge the effectiveness of the medium they are using and test different creative executions (Asemah, 2011). Direct marketing offers convenience to time-sensitive consumers and it offers precision and flexibility for cost-effective marketers. Most people are not home today, if they are, they are watching 150 different cable channels, which rather prime-time network T.V advert meaningless.

Disadvantages of Direct Marketing

- (1) Clutter: People are deluged with mails from commercial sponsors and marketers that appear in an irritating clutter. Most at times, they do not read the mails from advertising companies because they (consumer) tag them as junks. While many people believe unsolicited mail promotes junk products, others dislike being solicited and often throw out most of the junk mail they receive. Also, telemarketing is found irritating to many consumers. This creates image problem for the direct marketing industry. For instance when MTN Nigeria calls customers to tell them about their services, most people end the call immediately they realized that it's the service provider calling.
- (2) Accuracy: While direct marketing may have the advantage of targeting potential customers, the effectiveness of reaching the target customers depends however, on the accuracy of the list used. For instance, people move, change names, change occupation and even addresses, if the lists are not kept current, selectivity will decrease.
- (3) Many consumers are concerned with privacy. They do not like having their names sold by list renders.

Advent of Database Marketing

The beginning of database marketing can be traced to catalogue retailers based in the USA selling directly to customers. The principal channel used was direct mail and mailing of new catalogue usually took place to the whole database of customer (De Tienne and Thompson, 1996). The analysis of the results of the mailings led to the adoption of technique to improve targeting, such as Chi-squared Automated Interaction Detection (CHAID) and logistic regression (De-Tienne and Thompson, 1996; Magidson, 1988, Schoenbachler, 1999).

The addition of centralized call centres and the internet to the database marketing mix introduced the element of interactivity and personalization (Kelly, 2000). According to Castells (2005), there has been, in the last two decades, a process of structural transformation which is associated with the advent of a new technological paradigm which has resulted to several changes and the adaptation of numerous systems and concepts that liberate man from certain strenuous functions. Wehmeyer (2005) indicates that database marketing has existed since the 1960s with an upswing in the 1980s when computer technology was adopted. He further explains thus:

With the help of database technology, database marketing broadens and support the entire marketing mix. Its main applications are

segmentation, value analysis, controlling and reporting. After a thorough analysis of marketing practices, Coviella et al, come to the conclusion that database marketing is a more intense or closer form of transaction marketing, although they concede it to have a certain relational perspective (ibid 2005:244)

The emergence of database in marketing arose due to the need for companies to acquire more information about their customers and the need to do one-to-one marketing (direct marketing). It is an integral part of the overall IMC programme and has grown over the years to be a major contributor to profit in many organizations including domestic ones. Database, according to Arens (2006:311) “is the key to direct marketing success.” He sees database marketing as an improvement of the direct marketing concept, hence the two works hand in hand. Arens further indicates that database is a form of modern computer technology that enables manufacturers to have access to consumer information thereby compiling and analyzing them in unprecedented ways.

Since technology is dynamic and a product of societal needs (Castells, 2005), scholars have argued that a new and better form of database marketing is emerging known as Consumer Relationship Management (CRM) (Weymeyer, 2005; Blattberg and Deighton, 1991; Fletcher, Wheeler and Wright, 1992). They argue that the CRM has a stronger impact on the marketing universe and is the remedy, in many cases, for a company’s problems in sales and marketing.

Theoretical Framework

Two theories come handy in this discuss. They are; social marketing theory and social presence theory.

The social marketing theory is premised on the fact that information providers always seek to bring about useful, beneficial social change. The argument for this theory indicates that the quest to provide useful information provides a framework for designing, carrying out, and evaluating information campaigns. The social marketing theory pays attention to audience activity and the need to reach active audience with information needs (Baran and Davis, 2010).

The theory postulates that mass media-based information campaigns can be more effective through greater understanding and manipulation of aspects of societal and psychological factors. The theory does this by anticipating flow of information barriers and providing strategies for overcoming them, either deliberately or otherwise, through “the brute force of saturation advertising” (Goldberg, Fishbein and Middlestadt, 1997; Rice and Atkin, 1989; Grier and Bryant, 2004).

Linking the theory to this discourse, it is obvious as indicated above, that database marketing is a deliberate strategy for information dissemination to information seekers. Social marketing explains the basic principle of intimacy between source and receiver.

According to Baran and Davis there are seven features of social marketing theory which directly apply to database marketing, direct marketing and telemarketing:

- Methods for inducing audience awareness of campaign topics or candidates. A key first step in promoting ideas or candidates is to make people aware of their existence.
- Methods for targeting messages at specific audience segments most receptive or susceptible to those messages. Targeting is one of several concepts borrowed from product marketing research and converted to the marketing of ideas.
- Methods for reinforcing messages within targeted segments and for encouraging these people to influence others through face-to-face communication. Strategies to achieve this include visits by change agents, group discussion, messages placed simultaneously in several media, and door-to-door canvassing.
- Methods for cultivating images and impressions of people, products or services.
- Methods for stimulating interest and inducing information seeking by audience members.
- Methods for inducing desired decision making or positioning.
- Methods for activating audience segments, especially those who have been targeted by the campaign. Many campaigns fail because the lack a mechanism for stimulating action. Some techniques used to activate people include change agents, free merchandise, free and convenient transportation, moderate appeals and broadcast or telephone appeals from high-status sources.

On the other hand the theory of social presence was a product of three sociology scholars namely; John Short, Ederyn Williams and Bruce Chrisitie in 1976. The theory's basis assumption is that a medium's social effects are principally caused by the degree of social presence which it affords to its users. The awareness of a communicator of the presence of an interaction partner is the essence of this theory (Hurley, 2006). Promoters of the database concept of marketing intend that through direct, telephone and telecommunications marketing, strong presence of companies and organizations would be established in the minds of consumers and audience. They believe in developing a relationship beyond just buying the product to understanding the product (Belch and Belch, 2009).

Belch and Belch's (2009) idea of how the database the process works is a model that comes highly functional. They outline seven cardinal items in the process explaining that the process involves direct marketing and the overall IMC programme. In their analysis, the product is first (the consumer buys the product) and information are filed on coupon, warranty cards etc which are sent back to companies to form the database. The company digests the data by using sophisticated techniques and database softwares and separate consumers. After this, an ideal consumer emerges based on specific characteristics; hence the company is able to target those market segments. This knowledge can be put to use to produce new products, improve on existing ones and ensure that the right consumers know which products to choose through adverts. Companies could go ahead to share data with retailers, where they in turn acquire new information about buyers which, ultimately, refines the database and increases customer satisfaction.

Role of Database Marketing, Telemarketing and Direct Marketing in Relationship Marketing

Relationship marketing is a concept aimed at the construction of a durable relationship between the enterprise and the final client who are identified at individual levels. (Dumitresau, 2010). The idea behind marketing is to increase sales of goods through careful planning. These goods and services are only patronized by an entity called consumers. The need to lure them, woo them and persuade them to develop interest in a company's merchandise is the bane of relationship marketing. Virgil (2004) posits that the emergence of relationship marketing has forced the service providing enterprises to develop an efficient management for their relations with the clients, which is based on relevant and permanent up to date database marketing.

Virgil's argument is valid since database, telemarketing and direct marketing are the basic channels through which organisations connect with consumers on a more intimate platform. The strategy of database management emphasizes that clients' information are carefully used to transform them into loyal one as well as attract new ones. (Cespedes, 1995)

The Contexts in Nigeria

Nwokah and Nwokah (2012) while providing an argument for the future of database marketing painted a typical Nigerian case study in the utilization of database by Coca Cola "... products/prices to geo- demographics with less income will defer from that of geo- demographics with high income. In 1995, Coca Cola Nigeria for instance, briefly used these prices of Coca Cola products in the Nigerian universities campuses". This was only made possible because Coca Cola Nigeria used the available information gotten from a data base that predicted a higher return on save as against the low sales reported by retailers. The experiences of developing nations are nothing compared to advanced nations who have gone far in the utilization of direct marketing through database. (Tapp, 2008;Nwoka and Ondukwu, 2010). However, globalization and technology have provided a bridge across the digital divide and facilities such as telecommunications, advanced courier services, social networking sites and consumer credit cards have found common use in countries such as Nigeria (Belch and Belch, 2009).

Worthy of note amongst the aforementioned is the telecommunications sector which provides a pool of data for prospective companies and the network providers themselves. Several times people receive text messages imploring them to patronize such goods or services at discounted prices. In some other instances, the networks require the users to provide certain information about themselves which becomes useful both to themselves, companies and establishments in need of such, although this raises an ethical dimension to the issue. Other relevant application of database in Nigeria is in politics. President Goodluck Jonathan's "Neighbour 2 Neighbour campaign" of 2011 sought to intimate voters of the president's campaign promises through direct marketing. The use of coupon, warranty forms questionnaires and raffle draws by manufacturing companies is a viable strategy to gather adequate information about clients (Nwokah and Nwokah, 2012).

Strengths of Database in Direct Marketing

According to Belch and Belch (2009), the use of database in direct and telemarketing strategies forms the bases for any marketing success they identified the following as the strengths of the system:

- Improving the selection of market segments: Through the characteristics of consumers in the databases, markets are able to concentrate on the population that possesses the greater potentials of purchasing a product.
- Databases stimulate purchases: when a person makes a purchase where he gives certain information about himself, companies take it upon themselves to compliment him through e-mails or text messages. Naturally, it provides a stimulant for more purchase.
- Cross selling: a good consumer for one product is often considered as a potential good one for another product. Kamakura, Wedel, De-Rosa and Mazzon (2003) indicated that databases are strong sources for cross selling a product which helps to win in competition and introduction of new products and services.
- Databases help in customer relationship management: CRM demands that a company develops and maintain a significant amount of information about its client. Databases provide healthy information to manage such relationships.

Weaknesses of Database Marketing

Despite the benefits of database marketing, it suffers some impediments.

- It requires strategic and organizational changes beyond technological superiority to gain many of the benefits of its capabilities, cost of development, poor data and system quality, a lack of a database marketing strategy and a lack of a company-wide marketing orientation (Desai et al., 1998).
- Even, Shankaranarayanan and Berger(2010) identify a basic flaw with the use of database which has to do with the inequality in the utility of customer data. According to them, there is a rapid increase in the acquisition of data from consumers which has led to the mismanagement and underutilization of the data
- Furthermore, the management of data is costly and only large businesses can afford to manage such.
- As a technology based initiative, system failure could occur which will result to a total loss of consumer data as it is alleged to have happened to MTN.

ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES

A marketing company is faced with a plethora of moral challenges. Considering that it is the responsibility of a marketing company to provide services on behalf of other companies, it stands to reason that any unethical decision or approach reflects on the company being represented by the marketing firm. Moreover, antitrust concerns are always prevalent due to the fact that the marketing company has access to internal knowledge of many companies—some of which are competitors in the same market (Dean, 2010).

This perspective presents a platform for a better comprehension of the ethical issues associated with database marketing, in Nigeria and by extension, anywhere in the world. Marketers control a large volume of information about their costumers and they need to protect their integrity by safeguarding such information so that it would not end up in the wrong hands.

An infringement on this consumer right amounts to invasion of privacy, according to Milne (2000). He further indicated that the emergence of online marketing brings new privacy concerns that have resulted in scrutiny and review by regulatory bodies. Belch and Belch (2009) particularly pointed out that most ethical issues in database marketing bother on privacy – from unwarranted calls to unexpected text messages, from disclosure to misrepresentation of costumer information. Regulation of the excesses of marketers in the US is usually done by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). In Nigeria, two professional bodies that regulate the practice of marketing are the Nigeria Marketing Association (NIMARK) and the Chartered Institute of Marketers in Nigeria (CIMN).

Privacy has become public issue (Spiller and Hamilton, 1998). This has prompted researches in this field by marketing scholars. In a research conducted by Spiller and Hamilton (as cited above), an overwhelming majority of consumers from the United State are willing to pay a price just to have their names removed from all lists and databases in order to eliminate unsolicited marketing communication forever. Murphy (2002) identifies four fronts which he believes will help improve the status of ethics in marketing and resolve such challenges. They include; Regulation, organizational Leadership, Social Responsibility and Candid Communication. Murphy's point of view stands as a recommendation for new and existing marketers who are genuinely interested in creating a Customer Relationship Management programme.

The Future of Database Marketing

As indicated earlier, the stream of information acquisition and flow from customer to organization is on the increase and organisations are developing newer strategies to help them accommodate such needs. Stone (2010) observes that there is a changing phase currently underway between suppliers and consumers. He believes that smart utilities in energy and water usage will drive marketers into a new relationship with users. His argument is that consumers will behave differently and unsatisfactorily, hence the need to prepare better ways of managing them.

His argument necessitated the introduction of the Customer Relationship Management philosophy which according to Weymeyer, (2005); Blattberg and Dieghton (1991); Fletcher, Wheeler and Wright (1992) as an improved option to database marketing. Nwokah and Nwokah (2012) posit that it is hardly deniable that the future of database marketing in contemporary business environment is bright. They believe that database will help in accurate decision making processes. It will be used to track creative campaigns that deliver and will help marketers to customize their merchandise and receive prompt online feedback about their products.

Conclusion

Clayeyssen (2009:111) considers that a marketing database is a "box with a living memory". A very important decision with regard to the usage of an effecting

marketing database is, according to Kotler (2008:251), the way the service providing company resolves the following four problems:

- i. The investment for creating and maintaining a marketing database can be very high;
- ii. The considerable difficulty in "forcing" the employees to focus on the clients;
- iii. The possibility that the hypotheses of the marketing database will sometimes not be verified.
- iv. The possibility that some clients do not agree with the collecting of personal information about them.

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Government Propaganda versus Terrorism in the Information Age

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Abstract

This article explores the reasons why governments have failed to maintain absolute control over information or media content in the recent age of terrorism. It uses Framing theory and Noam Chomsky's 'propaganda model' to explain theories and conceptualisations of global communications politics. Propaganda has become even more complex and dynamic concept as media systems have moved from a one-source-multiple-channels model, to a fragmented-sources-and channels model. The concept is no longer confined to government usage but terrorist groups and individuals, in a bid to influence information globally. These individuals use the internet which affords them cheap publicity and anonymity, to execute propaganda. It is argued in this article, that terrorists use violence to provoke governments into harsh and indiscriminate counterterrorism responses in order to radicalise and mobilise a population whose interests the terrorists claim to represent. (Mesquita and Dickson, 2007). This article discusses these factors, not only in relation to media and cultural institutions but the process of communication between countries, societies and cultures. It discusses the effect of propaganda on identity, in the area of gender, race and sexuality. It also explores the role of global communication in issues relating to conflict, and finally, it analyses some regulation policies of multi-national organisations like, the EU, UN, etc, in the area of terrorism while suggesting ways in which the media can combat terrorism.

Key Words: Information age, Internet, Cyber-terrorism, Terrorism, Propaganda, Identity.

Introduction

Today more than ever before, the concept of the 'information age' as a catalyst to global terrorism is becoming more evident as events keep unfolding to buttress the idea. A variety of technologies contribute to the information age; the development of print, telegraph, telephones, fax, radio, television and mobile phones which have become significant in recent years. These forms of communication combined with

computer technology have given birth to the internet which is the cornerstone of the information age. This essay focuses mainly on the characteristics of the information age that begins with the 20th century, which involves the emergence of the invention of computers, which has led to the rapid increase and flow of information and heavy dependence on information technology.

The information age is an era, where information, rather than labour, has become the capital of the post-modern society. In Toffler's (1980) stratification of economic evolution, the information age is classified as belonging to the 'third wave', a period, powered by information and technological machinery. For Hope and Hope (1997, p.3), 'the third wave economy' is the era of the replacement of the manufacturing sector of the economy with the service sector. On the cultural scale, Irvine (2009) defines the information age as the era that re-defines national identities, breaks down linguistic, cultural and ethnic identities and leads to the mixing of global cultures like never before. Politically, Dutton and Wan (2001) see the Web as a new tool that encourages rapid information exchange enough to coordinate political activity. The web provides the avenue for the masses to air discontentment about political process and even challenge the government. This challenge posed on the government has taken many forms. Since after the declaration of the 'the war on terrorism' after the 9/11 crisis, there has been an increasing struggle over the manipulation of information by governments who have been disadvantaged by the diversification of media outlets and free access to the internet. The terrorist attack on the United States of America showed how the world was nothing but a weak, interdependent and a 'global village' (Tehrani, 2002, p.58).

Propaganda and Framing Theory

Most discourses on terrorism significantly employ theories of framing (Papacharissi and Oliveira, 2008). The process of news reporting is often complicated, as events are not simply reported but are influenced and adjusted to reflect a certain reality. Frames socially construct reality by imposing meaning on actions, events and issues and organise them within familiar categories and narratives (Odhiambo et. al. 2013). Following familiar patterns, media select and emphasize certain facts and downplay others; their presentation of issues therefore shapes public perceptions and views of appropriate responses. Norris et. al (2003) find it a puzzle why certain frames are used instead of others, but the puzzle is solved by the propaganda model which identifies filters that exclude or marginalize certain information and sources (Herman, 2003). Patrick and Thrall (2008) identify propaganda model as part of a hegemonic approach that 'has dominated political communication literature on war and the media for over a generation'.

Key Perceptions on Propaganda

Propaganda has been defined as an attempt to manipulate and dominate discourses, some of whose manifestations are text (Barbe, 2008, p.115). It is also defined by the North Atlantic Alliance as any information, ideas, doctrines or special appeals disseminated to influence the opinion, emotions, attitudes or behaviour of any specified group in order to benefit the sponsor either directly or indirectly (NATO Glossary of Military Terms, pp.2-205). Snow and Taylor (2006, p.390) also state that

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the 20th century democratic governments in times of war deployed the 'Strategy of Truth' which was a propaganda tool used in the Second World War. This strategy involved the suppression of certain information that was said to hamper national or operational security. By virtue of this selection, propaganda was achieved. The meaning of propaganda has always been associated with government system of control and manipulation of information, especially in totalitarian regimes. Propaganda according to Taylor was always associated with 'disinformation' or 'misinformation' during political unrest. The negative meaning attached to propaganda according to Edward Bernays (1928, p.38) was as result of its usage by the Germans during the Nazi rule, propaganda as at that time, involved total domination, 'having the desire to control everything that can serve it' (Ellul,1973, p.14).

Bernays came up with one of the greatest propaganda in the 1920s that would be remembered in the U.S. He came up with an alternative idea, that if propaganda can be used during war, it can be used during times of peace; he came up with a term to replace propaganda which was public relations. According to Bernays, the idea of the 'consuming-self' during the industrial revolution, particularly in the United States, was an era of propaganda. Using Freud's idea of psychoanalysis, Edward set up a public relations firm in New York whose sole aim was the manipulation of human beings to buy what they did not necessarily need by 'connecting mass produced goods to their conscious desire'. At the time of Bernays' experiment, it was a taboo for American women to smoke. One of his major projects was to influence the American women to start smoking. He went into a deal with George Hill, the president of America's tobacco corporation who also wanted Bernays to break the chain in order to increase market for his product. Abraham Arden Brill, one of the first psychoanalysts from America came up with the idea that tobacco represented the 'phallus' and the superiority of man over woman. He suggested that in order to break the existing trend, it would be appropriate to come up with a technique that women's smoking of tobacco would be pictured as 'challenging' male superiority. During the annual East Day parade in New York, Bernays hired a group of rich 'American debutante women', asked them to hide cigarettes in their dresses, and at his signal, start smoking on the parade ground. Barneys then informed the press that he heard that a group of women were planning to carry out a protest by 'lighting up what he called tortures of freedom'. 'The next day, this story was not just in the New York times but in papers all over the world. The sale of cigarettes to women rose from that day; He had made cigarettes 'socially acceptable by a singular symbolic act' (pp.131-132)

By the 1980s, Noam Chomsky, in his book 'The Manufacturing Consent', came with a definition of propaganda, which was not limited to times of war, peace or authoritarian regimes. His argument being that just as there can be no authoritarian regime without coercion, threat or intimidation, there can be no democracy without propaganda. According to him, the world's fear as at the 1990's was to keep the statuesque, which was democracy in capitalism and in trying to achieve this, a lot of propaganda was being used (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). Chomsky's 'propaganda model' argues that the media is always subordinated to external powers. Most of his

study on propaganda was being applied to the United States democratic system of governance, portraying how the media was being used by the government to influence public opinion. The lies behind the weapons of mass destruction, called the 'Weapons of Mass Deception' by Tarcher (2003) would be regarded as one of the greatest propaganda in recent times to be used by the U.S government. More than half of the world was fooled into believing the story. The concept of the 'propaganda model' as a tool used to manipulate public opinion, or incite mass reaction, is being applied to address other forms of control, such as those carried out by individuals and less developed countries in this essay.

Terrorism, Propaganda and the Media

The recent growing influence of terrorism on the globe is characterised by the massive deployment of propaganda. 'Propaganda and terrorism are identical insofar as they both seek to influence a mass audience in a way intended to benefit the sponsor. Terror may be seen as a subspecies of propaganda' (Thackrah, 2004, p.206). Terrorism is a significant overturn in the history of government controlled propaganda. The declaration of 'the war on terror' since after 9/11 has been seen as one of the significant events that fostered not only the visibility of Islamic media, but the opposition it poses to western ideas and systems of control. According to Whittaker, (2003, p.5) terrorism implies the 'pursuit of power, the acquisition of power, and the use of power to achieve political change'. Terrorism is thus violence - or, equally important, a threat of violence. The major objective of terrorism is to produce public reaction and mould public opinion or change of opinion on a certain action or an issue. Hence, propaganda is a vital tool used by terrorists to achieve control and influence public opinion.

In the last 30 years or more, we have experienced increasing 'terrorist attacks from state and non-state actors' Thackrah (2004, p.44). Most of the terrorist attacks in recent years have been associated with America's activities of propaganda in the 1970s and 80s. One of such is the 'sponsoring of drug-trafficking Muslim warriors including those now in Al -Qaeda, this dates back to 1979-1989, sponsored in part by the CIA'S links to the drug laundering Bank of Credit and Commerce International' (BCCI) (Griffin and Scott, 2007, p.73). Again in the past years, the Western world has proved that it can use its sophisticated technological weapons to destroy its foes without incurring much damage upon itself. However, with the birth of terrorism, weaker states have been able to fight back oppression. This resentment is not limited to a specific territory according to Tehranian; it is a global resistance from the weaker states. We have now arrived into the era of prolonged politics and warfare between the 'haves and the have-nots' (Tehranian, 2002, p.59). Benjamin Barber cleverly called it 'Jihad vs. McWorld' (Barber, 1992).

Terrorist groups just like any other institution engaged in propaganda need the media in order to disseminate their information. According to Paletz and Schmid (1992, p.2), the main objective of terrorists is to 'seek publicity' to execute their 'psychological goals' and the utilisation of violence to bring about those 'psychological effects'. By so doing, they intend to dispirit their foes, displaying their movement's capability, winning 'sympathy', and generating 'fear and disorder'. According to Schmid and Paletz, in order for terrorists to achieve these goals, a

system of publicity is required, and this system works in two ways. First, they can increase their 'news value' by carrying out the event in a manner that will attract international news agencies and secondly, by using their media, to create content that would incite public action (p.31). In a general sense, the success of a terrorist operation depends almost entirely on the amount of publicity it receives" (Paletz and Schmid, 1992, p.7).

Radio, television, newspapers, and the internet are popular platforms through which major propagandas have been carried out. For example, the desire to establish a new media that will practice freedom of speech and expression by the U.S. government was turned against them. Radio Alhurra was the idea of the U.S. government to provide a media system in Afghanistan that would exercise 'freedom of speech and expression'. However, it was later used by the masses to criticise American judgement of other radio stations in the Arab world (Conway 2007, p.28) The 'Aljazeera effect' is a term coined by Philip Seib from the CNN effect which was a popular notion in the last 10 years. According to him, Aljazeera is a typical effect of new media influence, haven affected global politics and culture. Aljazeera was termed 'propaganda mechanism' because it was suspected to circulate coded messages to terrorists. This accusation was made by the U.S. In October 2001, after the videotapes of an interview with Osama Bin Laden were broadcasted by Aljazeera in Qatar (2008, p.6).

'Today, both sub-state and non-state actors are said to be harnessing or preparing to harness the power of the internet to harass and attack their foes' (Conway, 2007, p.25). 'Cyber terrorism', a term coined by Barry Collin represents the concurrence of 'cyberspace and terrorism' (Colarik, 2006, p.24). Conway cites an example with the late Al Qaeda leader Abu Musab Al Zarqawi, who used the internet as a platform to propagate ideas about his terrorist activities in Iraq. In an article published in Forbes by Lenzner and Vardi in 2004, it was stated that Al Qaeda formerly utilised the web to disseminate propaganda and make contacts with operatives, but a terror alert was being received in August, stating Al-Qaeda's strategies to destroy financial institutions in New York and New Jersey, this happened after the arrest of a Pakistan computer engineer, Muhammad Naeem Noor Khan. (Colarik,2009, p.9) This information leak destabilised Al-Qaeda's internet activity significantly.

According to Peter Burke, Al -Qaeda has been given the status of a 'multinational terrorist group of the 21st Century. Previous terrorist groups carried out their activities within local boundaries; however, Al-Qaeda is an organisation that incorporates staging 'wars against the west and even Muslim countries friendly to the west'. Al-Qaeda has over 3,000 supporters that are found in diverse Islamic nations. Practising the principles of global Jihad, 'Al-Qaeda has been able to 'politicise, radicalise and mobilise Muslims both in the territorial communities of the Middle East and Asia as well as the migrant communities of Europe, North America, and Australasia'. With such global spread, Al-Qaeda produces an added type of threat, previously unanticipated by 'counter-terrorism forces and security and intelligence professionals as well'. It was the strength of Al-Qaeda's sophisticated terrorist network of moving funds, goods, and personnel to attack its targets that enabled it to mount the 9/11 attack (Burke, 2007, pp.1-4).

Another significant example is the rise of cyber terrorism in third world countries. Rising terrorists groups such as Al Shabaab and Boko Haram are actively engaged in internet publicity and have been linked with Al-Qaeda (Uzodike and Maiangwa, 2012). These groups receive massive reactions from the general public in the form of either support or condemnation. The latest kidnapping of over 200 teenage girls from their school in Chibok, Borno State, Nigeria, received an outpouring of interests globally. This massive reaction seems to have elevated the group to a more equal status with other Al-Qaeda affiliates – at least on the vital modern battlefield of the Internet (Wassef and Reals, 2014). The internet is also used as Al-Shabaab's major medium besides radio because it is cost effective and reaches a wide range of audience. They use online forums and chat rooms in order to recruit young followers to their cause. Al-Shabaab's website which was long shut down, featured posts, videos and official statements in English, Arabic and Somali, as well as online classroom to educate followers (Ploch, 2011). Hence, terrorists according to Conway have understood the significance of the internet in information circulation. In Africa especially, it can be said that terrorists have succeeded in using the internet more than the government to perpetuate propaganda. The government in Nigeria has been accused of reacting to the Boko Haram crisis with more of a soft than heavy hand. While the government tries to initiate physical dialogue and negotiations with the terrorist group, their effort seems futile as the terrorist group keeps launching more violent attacks and using the internet and media to publicise their actions.

Terrorism and Counterterrorism

It has been argued by scholars that terrorism is a tool used to foster extremist causes (Pape 2003). Terrorist activities are perceived to be a calculated attempt that lures governments into rash responses that usually distorts their image, thereby winning more individuals in favour of the terrorists. Mesquita and Dickson cite an example with the Early Basque separatist members of ETA who adopted similar tactics in the 1960s, attacking Spanish targets with the goal of provoking government repression.

“The militants reasoned the selective attacks against government bullies would provoke the government into excessive and non-discriminately retaliation against all Basque residents.....the escalating spiral of government repression and civilian resistance would culminate with a Spanish government no longer able to afford an extensive, expensive and permanent occupation of the Basque country” (Zirakzadech, 2002, p.23 cited in Mesquita and Dickson 2007)

In recent times events in the Middle East have also reflected a similar situation, There has been a struggle of power between the Hamas and other Islamic groups for control of the Palestinians (Bloom, 2004). In most cases, the driving force of terrorism is to incite repressive Israeli reaction, radicalising the masses and improving support for extremists (Mishal and Sela, 2000). It is not surprising however that this tactic has yielded results. During the 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council election, Hamas won most of the seats and hence leadership of the Palestinian Authority.

This same situation was witnessed by the US in Iraq. US forces feared that actions of military counterterrorism against terrorism might lead to mass mobilization instead of eradicating violence. 'This Trade-off between security and mobilization was maybe most evident in the debate over strategies leading to the assault on Falluja in November 2004.

These cases reflect a dilemma for governments since terrorism is an act of propaganda intended to provoke governments in reacting harshly, thereby providing an avenue for terrorist mobilization.

Furthermore, aside from terrorism, there are significant activities of propaganda that serve as a threat to government controlled activities being utilised around the globe that are worthy of mention in this essay. With the growing use of new media platforms like 'Twitter', 'Facebook', 'YouTube' and 'MySpace', people practice 'entrepreneurial journalism' which according to Jeff Jarvis will be the future of journalistic practice. Media systems have moved from 'a one-source-multiple-channels model, to a fragmented-sources-and channels model'. The 'propaganda model' of news discourse is gaining credibility as a result of the strategies deployed by media institutions and individuals to control public opinion through information. The internet is becoming a tool used by not only terrorists but the general public to check government control. Seib (2008, p.120) before the death of Osama Bin Laden in 2011 stated, that Osama Bin Laden's next attack might not come from the caves where he is believed to be hiding but from 'cells around the world connected by the internet'. Government gradual loss of propaganda in China can be likened to what Lynch (1999, p.2) calls 'public sphere praetorianism', a situation where the state or any other political force fails to achieve control over the circulation of messages'. Cases of individual propaganda have been carried out in China. Citizens have continued to upload information that has been declared secret by the government. This has continued despite persecution. An example is an individual that uploaded the laws and ethics of the events at Tiananmen Square despite strict warning by the government.

Blogs have become an important source of information to the general public in America. News about politics, entertainment and information are readily available on blogs. Tremayne (2007, p.3) coins the term 'blogosphere' from the Herbasian 'public sphere'. 'Blogosphere' relates to the sharing of information via the connection of blogs and links. In relation to the Herbasian Public sphere, blogs serve as a public forum for the discussion of information, freedom of expression and the sharing of ideas. The effects of blogs are not restricted to mainstream media alone, blogs have been used to carry out propaganda and incite public reaction. Tremayne cites an example with 2004 U.S elections. The U.S. representative Ed Schrock gave up his attempt at re-election after a headline on Blogative.com read, 'The Republican from Virginia was Gay'. A write-up on the blog implied the statement was an attempt to frustrate public officials from office because of their hypocrisy. In October 2005, the website Hoopshype.com carried a number of stories under the caption 'Rumours'. The idea was to get away with any information contained even if it was not credible. The internet provides an effective platform for the personal opinions of the public to be heard even if the information contained is questionable. Unlike mainstream media,

where the credibility of certain media outlets are presupposed based on existing performance, blog content, in most cases is not rated based on authorship.

Policy, Content and Regulation

Most of government control over the internet is approached from the area of content. 'Content policy is usually approached from three standpoints: (human rights, (freedom of expression and right to communicate), government (legislated content control) and technology (tools for content control)' (Conway, 2007, p.25).

According to Conway, in as much as the United Nations endorses the freedom of speech and expression as a fundamental human right, it also fortifies the state to regulate this freedom based on 'morality, public order and general welfare'. According to her, the major problem the U.S. government is facing in terms of internet regulation can be likened to the concept of 'savage deregulation' which is a result of the weakening of state control as a result of extensive policy formation. The freedom of expression granted by the first amendment of the 'internet-based regulation, in the U.S., grants even the right to publish hate speech and similar material'. The greatest challenge of the government is how to control content in the light of this law, many court hearings have been held in an attempt to strike a balance between content and policy. The signing up for cybercrime convention by the U.S has led to its inability to sign for the additional protocol to the cybercrime convention. The protocol 'deals with the criminalization of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems' (Conway, 2007, p.26). The first agreement reached to stand against terrorism was signed by the European community in the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism in 1978 (Thackrah, 2004, p.91). EU countries that have the additional protocol can prosecute terrorists and their accomplices for the publication of terrorist or hate material. The U.S. on the other hand cannot, this is why so many terrorist web sites are based in the U.S. These internet laws have changed the role of the government from provider, to promoter and now regulator (Cairncross, 1997, p.15).

One of the important roles played by the UN in the war against terrorism is to follow up terrorist activities world-wide and try to cripple their activities. For example In September 2002, a United Nations report confirmed that it was becoming difficult to stop Al-Qaeda's movement of funds and that the group was still gaining substantial funds sufficient to carry out more attacks. (Rogers, 2004, p.179). Al-Qaeda's strength has become a major source of insecurity to the western world. In order to combat terrorist activities, Thackrah (2004, p.46), argues that the laws governing terrorism in some countries need to be changed in order to implement fully international agreements such as the Montréal agreement convention an aircraft sabotage, and the United Nations convention against taking hostages.

The Effect of Propaganda and Terrorism on Identity in the Information Age

Identity has been re-defined by the information age. The location of identity is being questioned as globalisation intensifies. One of the major ways through which identity has changed, is with the rise in terrorism and propaganda. Daniels (2009, pp. 661-662) uses Soley and Nichols' types of propaganda to unravel the instability of identity on the web. He addresses the use of 'black propaganda' on the internet to

carry out political agendas, he calls the websites used for such propaganda activities, 'cloaked websites'. He cites an example with a cloaked website created shortly after the election of bush as president, www.gwbush.com. This group according to him propagated views that were considered to be on the far left of America's political website. They were able to fool web users by using a 'domain name that was similar to the official campaign's Universal resource locator' (URL). There are many cloaked websites on the internet today that are aimed at 'cyber-terrorism' as well. Most of such websites hide their identities and pass information concerning terrorist activities to members globally.

Since after the 9/11 attack, the identity of the terrorist has changed dramatically. The idea of the 'other' as equally powerful and able to destroy the west is the greatest fear of the 21st Century. Prior to the attack, Aljazeera's identity was not popular and even if it was, it would have probably been regarded as 'one of those local Middle Eastern television networks'. However, when it became popular after the attack, it was perceived with a negative connotation, as a tool for propaganda. The United States has also lost its reputation in the Middle-East and most part of the world, with the unravelling of propaganda carried out by the government to influence mass reaction. Activities of propaganda, such as The weapons of mass destruction, the war on Iraq, the attempt to manipulate American public opinion by the bribing of Hill and Knowlton to create false stories in Kuwait, among many others.

In addition, there has been an existing gendered notion attached to terrorist propagandas. Terrorist activities are preconceived to be carried out by the male gender, even though there have been a number of female suicide bombers and children trained to become terrorists. There is a fundamental belief that women and children are driven into terrorist propaganda by men. A research about soviet health propaganda, portrayed women as victims used to propagate propaganda. The woman as 'mother', 'vulnerable' and 'innocent' is a constant image of the female which is used to carry out propaganda and win the sympathy of the general public. For example, during the war between Israel and the Palestine, the idea that children and women were being killed in Gaza was the constant picture portrayed by global media, and the residents of Gaza to depict the severity of the war. Similarly, the kidnapping of over 200 girls by Boko Haram in Nigeria received worldwide attention mainly because the girls were seen as vulnerable and unable to defend themselves. Hence, whether women and children carry out major propaganda activities or not, there is this preconceived notion that women and children are always the victims of 'male' or terrorist propaganda (Starks, 2003, p.411).

Over time the fear of terrorism has led to racial profiling where individuals of Middle-eastern descent are being attacked or discriminated against especially in the US. In recent times, however, terrorists have been seen to come from diverse races around the globe. The basic ideology of what a terrorist looks like is what is obtained from the media. The media has projected the idea that terrorists are Arabs, Afghans, and Muslims, etc.

In conclusion, the 'propaganda model' initiated by Noam Choamsky, not only reflects the propaganda of media institutions but of individuals themselves. Propaganda has gone beyond the state. According to Colarik, the depicting of 'young Arabs, Asians, blowing up themselves at checkpoints', with the intention of receiving

a reward in heaven, is old news. David Witzhum, the Chief Editor of Israel Television, stated that the media is used as an instrument to perpetuate conflict by governments, rebels and terrorists alike in order to achieve their aim- 'which is to show the effects of terror and violence. Their conviction is that the actual effect of terror is its representation in the media, without which its value and effect as weapon, is meaningless and limited'. (Witzum cited in Colarik, 2006, p.24). Hence, even the media's coverage of terrorism can also be linked to propaganda. The importance of the media as an outlet for terrorism has become increasingly central. Media outlets need to carry out their responsibility of being the fifth estate of the society by propagating anti-terrorism messages while reporting incidences of terrorism, similar to the case of the Cold war with the anti-Soviet Western radio listened to on the opposite side of the Berlin Wall. The reputation that terrorist seeks to protect should be destroyed by the media. Actions such as advertising the feats achieved by the government and individuals in combating terrorism such as the detention of a terrorist, the publication of their confessions, and of any act that shows their lack of loyalty to their organisation, and any measures that limits their heroic image should be publicised by the media. Also governments in creating policies that fight terrorism, need to be aware that they face a profound dilemma, as actions such as crackdowns are counterproductive, in the sense of increasing mobilization, but may have no other reasonable option for increasing security (Mequita and Dickson, 2007, p.30).

Finally, as highlighted previously, the use of propaganda is being intensified by the information age in which everyone is a propagandist. The desire inherent in every human to control opinion is the very nature of propaganda. Among these groups as discussed, are terrorists who have realised the growing importance of the internet to disseminate propaganda messages. Hackers are also giving governments a hard time to maintain secrecy; America is limited by her internet policies to punish terrorists, hackers or any other violators on the internet. These factors among many others have crippled government control over 'thought work' and given individuals and terrorist groups the mandate to carry out propaganda Lynch (1999, p.16).

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Continental Presentation and Representation in the ‘Big Brother Africa’ Reality Show

By

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Abstract

Dialectical relationship between media and society has changed dramatically in the last two decades owing to the leaps recorded in technology. This is evidenced by the growth of information technology and the emergence of new media with the Internet as a key medium. Through this, there has been an enormous expansion of television production and transmission across the world strengthening the conditions, formation and content of globalization. These are the existence of a free market in media products, the right to information and speech, and the technologies that can offer fast and low cost channels of transmission across borders and long distances. Reality TV programming is now a staple of the television industry. It has become a phenomenon for our increasingly fragmented societies driven by celebrity culture, titillated by voyeurism, subject to surveillance, and hungry for the communal rituals of authentic human experience. Not surprising, it has become highly profitable franchise, extremely popular and creates instant celebrities, even if it is for a few minutes of fame. Its massive and huge audiences from across Africa and other places, are dynamically offering an unprecedented forum for voyeurism and conversation on morality, cultural decency and pollution, pornography and popular culture, national stereotypes, globalization and African cosmopolitanism or what some have called “Afro-politanism”. These are considered crucial within the context of this research. In this paper, we discuss the impact of BBA in the promotion of capitalism and the commodification of self as some of the identified contents that shape and influence an understanding or perception of the BBA show.

Introduction

Reality TV programming is now a staple of the television industry. It has become a phenomenon for our increasingly fragmented societies driven by celebrity culture, titillated by voyeurism, subject to surveillance, and hungry for the communal rituals of authentic human experience. Not surprising, it has become highly profitable franchise, extremely popular and creates instant celebrities, even if it is for a few minutes of fame. Its massive and huge audiences from across Africa and other places, are dynamically offering an unprecedented forum for voyeurism and conversation on

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morality, cultural decency and pollution, pornography and popular culture, national stereotypes, globalization and African cosmopolitanism or what some have called "Afro-politanism". These are considered crucial within the context of this research.

Media globalization, as this paradigm shift was later called, brought about concerns of cultural identity. Imported media culture was viewed by media scholars and observers as detrimental to local and regional cultures where they are received. The economic, social and political motivations of the programmes are issues that are challenging the belief system of nations and places other than Europe and America.

The relationship between the media and society is multifaceted; political, socio-cultural, economic, and otherwise. Complex issues permeating all these spheres are the focus of this paper. This is because on the surface, Africa's leading Reality Television Show, "Big Brother Africa" (BBA) is just entertainment with a prize of US\$200,000 enticing millions to watch it for its entertainment value. Deep within, analysts like media practitioners, sociologists, social anthropologists, social psychologists, parents, politicians and other concerned stakeholders, take more than a passing glance in the happenings in the "Big Brother" House. According to Murphy (2006) there are intricate interplay of personal, inter and intra group social relationships and interaction that are structural, cultural, economic and gendered which we must examine. Debate over the show has thus far focused on "what is African" with viewers raising questions about how well the housemates represent their respective countries, gender, and the critical concepts of race, class and other aspects of the general society.

Continental Presentation and Representation in "Big Brother Africa"

The BBA Show has opened up a larger market for the producers and contestants to explore. Viewers gather in bars, shopping malls or anywhere else the programme is showing. Thousands of people from different cultures are captivated by "Big Brother". For once, Africans have a representation of their continent through an adapted programme whose focus was not on wars and natural disasters (Bignell 2005). In terms of its reach, Biola Alabi, Director M-Net Africa, notes, "we are reaching more African countries than other Big Brother franchise...the programme has been amazing in its reach, engaging a lot of audience". Attesting to the positive image the programme seems to convey, BBA's cultural advisor, Kole Omotosho in a BBC Radio Africa Service (2003) says:

Big Brother has done more for the political possibility of unity among Africans than politicians can ever do, for the simple reason that they (contestants) [Emphasis mine] have taken themselves as human beings and related across these borders.

This is however contestable from the conspiracy, divisions and criticisms by some of the housemates. Munya (Housemate from Zimbabwe) in BBA All Stars, regularly informed other housemates that he has nothing to do with other Africans and that he came into the house alone and therefore refused to align with any group. The internal dynamics in the 'Big Brother' house tends to promote a concept of unity among housemates, especially as they align to decide who among them to vote for eviction weekly. This is obviously an evidence of what is obtainable in regional

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alliances in Africa such as Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU).

There has been heated debate whether BBA is about the contestants or the countries they represent. In some quarters, it is about both the contestants and the countries they represent, for some, it is about the countries whilst for others, it is about their favorite housemates.

Comments from viewers seem to give credence to the above. For example, Pappyman who posted an SMS to "Big Brother Africa" Show on November 16, 2009 at 11:32 am is of the view that Nkenna, the Nigerian participant has rubbished the country's image on that programme. She once openly discussed her involvement in examination malpractice and said unprintable things about security and safety of lives in Lagos. This is the unfettered freedom of expression afforded by BBA which if not properly watched can bring about legal implications. The worst is that she mentioned the name of one company she applied for a job before she entered the BBA competition and said openly that the owner of the business asked her out and carelessly mentioned the man's name. Pappyman further adds:

She talked without reservation and it is so annoying. When Auntie Dora (Nigeria's Minister of Information then) is working night and day on rebranding Nigeria one useless girl that should be our Ambassador is just messing the country up anyhow. I think she just needs to leave that house before the little respect we have as a country is totally destroyed by that bush girl.

chukz4real (2009) in a SMS text Re: Nkenna (Big Brother Africa), A Model of a Nigerian Woman? November 16, 2009 at 11:55 AM affirmed that "my problem with Nkenna is not about knowing how to cook neither is it knowing how to eat. I sincerely believe her community (village) and state (Imo State) will not dare acknowledge her to be their model either". He further stated:

Nkenna had once told us that her elder sister is still unmarried and giving the family some concern as they pray and fast day and night for suitors to come knocking...told House Mates how she cheated at IMSU (Basic Electricity), mentioned the invigilator' name, names of her course mates that were rusticated due to same offence. And despite the cheating, she failed the course and her family went to the school to find out why their daughter should fail.

If we examine the claims by Nkennis vis opinions of these people, we may say she succeeded in damaging her country's image considering the fact that no country, not even one viewer from her country, Nigeria, voted for her to stay, probably because of these views.

On the other hand, there are contestants that give the impression that Nigerians are happy, confident, smart and fun to be with. Winners of 'Big Brother' All Stars, UtiNwachukwu and BBA Revolution, Kevin Pam, all returned to the country to a grand reception organized by M-Net Nigeria. They were received at the Presidential Villa, Aso rock, hosted in their states of origin, and signed up for big marketing deals and commercial contracts.

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Examined closely, we may find some of the reasons BBA housemates' receptions are grand back at their countries. The Nigerian Housemate in BBA 5 (Uti), for example, wore a T-Shirt tagged "2011, Nigeria's year of good luck" most times. Wearing the T-Shirt with that inscription was a way of campaigning for the election bid of President GoodluckEbele Jonathan. He also projected and publicized Cross River State tourism potentials during his stay.

BBA created an avenue for housemates to have other opportunities which can be considered as unintended consequence of participating in the programme. Housemates thus became bill-boards for their countries which they advertised passion. In this regard, the form and content of the Reality Show may take a new dimension by attracting powerful individuals, interest groups who would want to take the advertisement opportunities, become a source of diplomatic manoeuvres between countries who could try or even promote their national interests.

State governments also invite BBA winners to their states to promote their pet projects. Liyel-Imoke, Governor of Cross River State, invited Uti to Government House, Calabar for Destiny's Child Centre Charity Fashion Show, Tinapa on 29th December, 2010 and made him Calabar Ambassador (Ita 2010). Ordinarily, Uti who is from Delta State would have been received as an ambassador in Delta and not Cross River. From this point of view, it can be said that the reception in Calabar was an endorsement for those who are seen as role models. The State was cashing on the glory and fame of the BBA winner while he on the other hand would have been remunerated to add to his prize money.

Munya, the housemate from Zimbabwe also met with President Robert Mugabe and several cabinet ministers. Munya said he dreamt of meeting Mugabe while in the 'Big Brother' House and described the 86-year-old leader as "humorous" and a "pleasant man". This was a much needed political endorsement for a President whose popularity and hold on power are on the downward spiral. Munya received US\$300,000 from President Mugabe and businessman, Phillip Chiyangwa, for nicknaming himself "the diamond boy". Chiyangwa went further to accuse M-Net of cheating Munya and believed their countryman deserved to win and not Uti from Nigeria. The embers of patriotism were fired up by mere participation as housemates on BBA. Munya was US\$100,000 richer than Uti the winner courtesy of the generosity of his President and Chiyangwa-an action that could be criticised in view of Zimbabwe's ailing economy. The amount is considered as compensation for what Zimbabwe considered a fraud conducted by producers of the show who were suddenly noticed to have quite a number of Nigerians.

This controversy sets precedence for despot African leaders who want to bargain and perpetuate their position in power by patronising representatives from their countries which may completely differ from the original intent of the programme. On the other hand, the controversy could also prepare intending participants who may go to the house and relate with house mates and Africa based on a desire to profit from and make good reference to potential individuals, companies and organisations. Such rewards and recognition after the programme invariably mean that there is a possibility of greater social conduct or misconduct in the BBA shaped by hidden agenda and such motivations.

Socio-Psychological Behaviour and “Big Brother” Adaptation

There are heated social psychological debates on the idea of BBA bringing African youth to live together and see how they can cope with themselves. They are missing their loved ones, their friends and so many good things outside. However, the essence of the programme is to see how they can endure under a contrived circumstance.

A close examination of this poses a fundamental understanding of the theory and practice of social psychology which helps shape media practice in the sense that, professional media practice can actually locate authentic social behaviour from social psychological diagnosis of society.

It is difficult to accept a social reality as portrayed in BBA where some aspects of social relationships, interactions and interrelationships are not real in the first place. This is because a situation where participants are completely cut off from the outside world, allowed neither access to television, newspapers, computers, telephones or radio, nor contact with relatives or friends, and they do not work or leave the house and its grounds, is considered an artificial environment.

The “group relations” is therefore an induced one. Pure group relations exist within the wider context of the social world and not in a sense of forced dramaturgy. It can thus be said that the programme provides a sociological insight into the interaction of human beings within the process of the particular group and not within the wider society. According to Miller (2010:24), “What we are seeing night after night is a game show, not a serious attempt to explore human nature. According to Bandura (1977:105),

You cannot take the basic external factors of social learning like television, newspapers, computers, telephones or radio, nor contact with relatives or friends away from implicit personality make ups of individuals in social group relations and claim to understand the behaviours of such individuals or groups considering the fact that the basic ingredient of reciprocal determinism is absent.

BBA only gives a picture of Operant Conditioning chamber or Skinner box, a research tool used to examine the orderly relations of the behaviour of human beings within their immediate environment (Skinner 1974) without the broader social forces that combine to shape behaviour in the house. What this means is that whatever behaviour the housemates put up in the house is derived from the conditioning of the house environment. However, their behaviour inside the house, including the learned ones, would also shape the social environment they are returning to as well. This acquired social behaviour now becomes the new cue among top entertainment industries in the country that may not be aware that learned behaviours acquired from what can be called suspended or controlled room social behaviour.

Miller (2010) further posits that Big Brother's producers can only be said to have portrayed a miniature “real world” from the standpoint that it reflects their own social values and prejudices. De Mol (originator of Big Brother) insists that there is no line a person would not cross in order to ensure his/her own personal advancement. According to BBA 2009 winner, Kevin,

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Kevin has always been like this. Looking at the previous Big Brother shows, I have for so long wanted to be a part of the game and so this is something I programmed myself for to try and meet. I desired for a long time to be on BBA. I mean I finished school in 2006 and did not go to tertiary to pursue further studies meaning that I am not meant for white-collar jobs, and shows such as BBA are what I am into, BBA is more me. This is my fifth time to audition for BBA. I even auditioned for Big Brother Nigeria.

Pertinent questions of psychological or behavioural addiction of watching BBA also become central to clinical psychological therapy, considering that thousands of viewers get addicted to watching the BBA, and that there are few clinical psychologists and psychiatrists in Africa. Consider the SMS sent in by Jean Sutherland (2007), quotes one fan "Hola": "Fellow Africans. Does anybody have cure to "BBA2" Withdrawal Symptoms Please? I need urgent attention because my health is deteriorating. I can't sleep, eat or do anything". This is the true psychological state of many other Africans while the BBA takes the waves or whatever expression you choose.

Conclusion

Conceptual issues operationalised within the context of the BBA have raised critical questions of globalization, social context, and many other interrelated concepts that challenged fundamental meanings in the reading of the show.

Key issues in the 'Big Brother' phenomenon revealed more about Africa's collective cultural identity and more about the watchers than the watched. There seems thus, a strong relationship between social behaviour in the house and the audiences back in respective countries the housemates come from as exhibited in the fight between Hannington Kuteesa, male (Uganda) and Lerato Sengadi, female (South Africa).

This paper appreciated the role of the media and its content as a social and stabilizing force in the African context. The BBA programme has fostered greater equality and freedom of speech to all, and provided a platform or forum for collective discussion, in the affairs of the continent. Additionally, it has empowered audiences through involvement in decision making via its selection process.

Recommendation

Television has evolved into a potent force in the transmission of social norms and values in the society. Television programming has changed over the years. For instance, digital television now provides the opportunity for public service broadcasting to redefine itself. New channels are able to connect more effectively to a group of people who differ racially or politically and promote stronger sense of connection to the outside world. The process by which programmes are produced has changed, especially television entertainment. It is no longer the business of a producer to create content, write a script and produce a programme as was applicable in the traditional media. Today, content is provided by the audience and participants of a programme because cable satellite networks have reshaped the face of television.

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An Evaluation of Public Relations Role in the Management of Selected Local Government Councils in Delta State

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Abstract

This study evaluates the role of public relations in the management of selected local government councils in Delta State. The study adopted the survey research method. Data were sourced through structured questionnaire from seventy five respondents drawn from three local government councils. The respondents comprised middle level and senior staff, information officers and executive of the staff union (NULGE) in the three local government councils. Opinions expressed by the respondents show that the councils are bedevilled with problems that public relations could be used to manage, but the authorities do not fully appreciate its contributory role. Based on the findings of the study, some useful recommendations that would help to reposition the councils through the proper application of public relations are made.

Key Words: Evaluation, Public Relations, Management, Local Government council.

Introduction

It is true, although arguably so, that the basis for all human interactions is a complex admixture of self interest advancement or self perpetuation. Virtually every person or group of persons has interest to protect, ambitions to achieve and hopes to aspire to. Also since no two individuals are alike, there are counter interests, demands and aspirations, which compel the need to solicit, win and retain attention, support, interest and loyalty.

Every sector of a nation's life is involved in one form of horse-trading or another to advance individual(s), groups or organizations interest(s), be it in commercial business, political campaigns, social welfare programmes or educational activities. Thus, Jubril (1997:23) notes that, deliberate, planned and perhaps sustained efforts are made to establish and maintain mutual understanding with prospective clientele.

Public relations serves all types of organizations. Governmental organizations, (including local governments), nonprofit organizations, and corporations have embraced public relations and set it to work, recognizing it as a means of increasing organizational effectiveness in a complex and changing environment. The effect of public relations could be felt in all spheres of human endeavour, as it involves efforts to convince, win and retain support for ideas,

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products and service. Individuals, family members, commercial and public outfits and non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) apply PR in one way or another to ensure their survival and perpetuity.

The extent to which public relations is beneficial to an individual or organization is relative to a lot of factors: the nature of business undertaken by the organization, its mission and mandate and the level of its application of PR. Public relations provides a veritable opportunity for preplanning ways and means of achieving set goals. It helps the organization, as Madike (2005:5) and Johnston and Zawawi (2004:270) point out, to identify all the various publics that it has to deal with and demands definite plans on how to interact with them.

To operate effectively within these organizations, the public relations practitioners must be thoroughly aware of: the process of communication, the role of public relations in organizational decision making, the four-step public relations process, and the primary publics of public relations. Practitioners must also recognize the problems and publics that are specific to public relations in each organizational type.

Statement of the Problem

Of late, local government councils in the country have come under intense pressure from the people for failure to deliver democracy dividends and to bring development to the people as expected. This seemingly loss of confidence has made many to call for the scrapping of the LGCs, and this has affected the day-to-day administration of the third tier of government. Experts have observed that failure to utilize public relations in the management of the local government councils by their chief executives (chairmen) is responsible for the persistent negative image associated with this tier of government that is suppose to bring development nearer to the grass root.

It is against this backdrop that this study was designed. This study therefore seeks to evaluate public relations role in the management of the selected local government councils in Delta State.

Research Objectives

The study was conducted to:

- i. Find out the problems militating against effective management of the local government councils in Delta State.
- ii. Determine the extent to which these problems have affected the quality of governance in the local government councils in Delta State.
- iii. Ascertain the role of public relations in the day-to-day management of the selected local government councils in Delta State.
- iv. Find out the extent to which public relations is utilize in the management of the selected local government councils in Delta State.

Research Questions

This study sought to find answers to the following questions.

- i. What are the problems militating against effective management of local government councils in Delta State?

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- ii. How have these problems affected the quality of governance in the local government councils in Delta State?
- iii. What role does public relations play in the day-to-day management of the local government councils in Delta State?
- iv. To what extent do the local government authorities utilize public relations in the management of the Local Government Councils in Delta State?

Scope of the Study

The study is concerned with evaluating the role of public relations in the management of local government councils in Delta State. It seeks to specifically determine the problems militating against the management of the local government councils and the extent to which public relations is used in solving the problems.

In doing this, three out of the twenty five local Government Councils in Delta State were selected for the study: Oshimili South, Sapele, and Isoko North.

These LGCs are located each in the three senatorial districts of the state namely: North, Central and South.

Significance of the Study

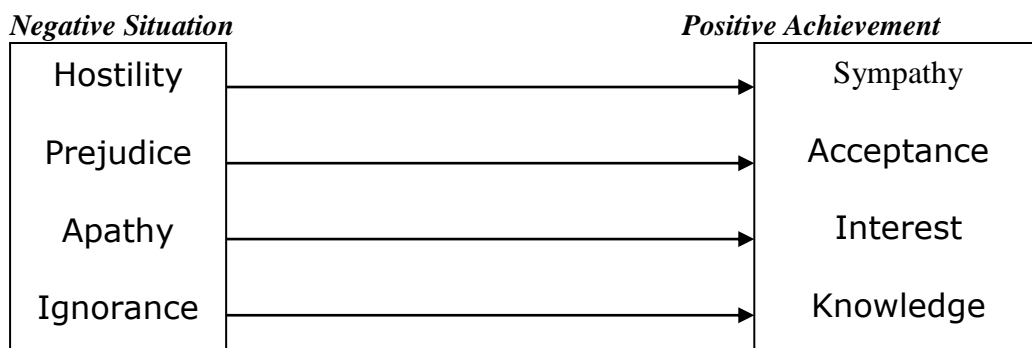
Public Relations is very fundamental to the survival of modern organizations. Its impact could be felt in government establishments, including local government councils in Delta State.

In view of the above, any research conducted in this area will be considered worthwhile. To an extent, local government authorities have come to realize that public relations is a necessary tool for the management of the councils.

Therefore, the findings and recommendations of the study will provide a sustainable frame work for the authorities to manage their councils effectively. It will also add to the existing literature within the public relations sphere.

Theoretical Framework

This study is hinged on the Public Relations transfer process model and the decision-making (or decision theory) approach. The transfer process model is represented below:



Source: Frank Jefkins, *Public Relations Techniques*, Oxford: Heinemann Professional Publishing, Ltd, (1988), p.9.

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According to Jefkins (1988:9), “when the negative situation is converted into positive achievement-through knowledge-the result is the primary objective of public relations, understanding”. Jefkins expects practitioners to use public relations tools to achieve sympathy where there is hostility, acceptance where there is prejudice, develop interest where there is apathy and communicate to achieve knowledge where there is ignorance. Viewing the organization as a system emphasizes the need for good information and channels of communication in order to assist effective decision-making in the organization. Here the focus of attention is on managerial decision-making and how organizations process and use information in making decisions. Successful management lies in responding to internal and external change. This involves the clarification of objectives, the specification of problems, and the search for and implementation of solutions, the organization is seen as an information – processing network with numerous decision points.

Barnard cited by Mullins (1996:58) stressed the need for co-operative action in organizations. He believed that people’s ability to communicate, and their commitment and contribution to the achievement of a common purpose were necessary for the existence of a cooperative system. These ideas were developed further by Simon (2001:159), who sees management as meaning decision-making and his concern is with how decisions are made and decision making can be improved through effective public relations.

The Concept of Local Government

As defined in the official handbook on the reformed system of local government introduced in 1976, local government is governance at the local, grass root level, exercised through representative councils established by law to exercise specific powers within a defined area.

According to the Handbook, powers should give the councils:

Substantial control over local affairs as well as the staff and institutional and functional powers to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine and implement projects so as to complement the activities of the state and federal governments in their areas to ensure-through devolution of functions to these councils and through the active participation of the people and their traditional institutions-that local initiatives and response to local needs and conditions are maximized (Adenuga 1991).

Folarin (1998:7) identified two major existing models of local government. They are:

Local Administration: which derives its existence, powers and sustenance from a strong (national or state) centre where policies are determined. The local units act as agents in the administration and implementation of these policies. As part of the arrangement, the central government makes funds available to the local units to enable them to provide the services for which they have been created. In practice, such units have minimal powers (if any) to generate or collect revenue.

Local Government Proper: which has real political authority delegated to it from the centre in a decentralized system of governance. Such local units usually operate as local councils consisting of persons who may be elected in a democratic process by the local inhabitants, or appointed by government to run the affairs of the

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local government. Local governments proper are given powers to raise a substantial part of their revenue, mainly through the imposition of local taxes. Nonetheless, a substantial part of their operating revenue is provided by the central government through statutory allocation. The local governments are also empowered to enact bye-laws, which must defer to the federal laws and state edicts.

It is clear from the foregoing that our present local government derive from this second model, while most of the local units we had before 1976 (including those that were used to prop up the Indirect Rule System during the colonial period) were various amalgams of the two models. Each of the two models has implications for public relations and decision-making.

Public Relations in Government

Governmental activity at every level has tremendous daily impact-positive and negative-on every kind of organization all over the world. Public affairs units help organizations anticipate or respond to issues affecting their activities or environment, lobby public officials, build grassroots lobbying campaigns, and help shape public policy.

From the other side, government also has a public relations function. Governmental Public Relations plays a crucial role in keeping the public informed about issues, problems, and actions at all levels of government. Governmental public information officers, according to Johnston and Zawawi (2004:205), seek citizens approval of government programmes, help explain what citizens want from the government, strive to make government responsive to citizens' wishes, and attempt to understand and affect public opinion.

Public affairs is related to issues management because through its relationship – building processes, it helps organizations anticipate or respond to issues affecting their activities. Lattimore et al. (2004:302) aver that, public affairs efforts include seeking to shape public opinion and legislation, developing effective responses to matters of public concern, and helping the organization adopt to public expectations. Specifically, public affairs may be involved in monitoring public policy, providing political education for employees or other constituents, maintaining liaisons with various governmental units and encouraging political participation.

To be successful, all organizations – business, nonprofits, and governments – must build governmental relationships and actively collaborate with those government contacts to influence public policies.

Function of Governmental Public Relations

Governmental public information officers, like any other public relations practitioners, seek to achieve mutual understanding between their agencies and publics by following a strategic public relations process. They must gauge public opinion, plan and organize for public relations effectiveness, and construct messages of the entire process.

Like all organizational boundary spanners, Public Information Officers jointly serve two masters- their publics and their employers. On the one hand, they provide the public with complete, candid, continuous reporting of government information and accessible channels for citizens inputs. On the other hand, they strive to gain support for the policies of the government in power and suppresses

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anything that undermine the hegemony of the government. Cutlip (2004:12), late public relations educator maintains that,

The vast government information machine has as its primary purpose advancement of government's policies and personnel... the major objective is to gain support for the incumbent administration's policies and maintain its leaders in power.

However, Public Information Officers serve neither master very well, as evidenced by millions of Americans viewing their "government as distant and unresponsive, if not hostile" (Final Report of the 32nd American Assembly, Columbia University). Both the public and the politicians might be better served if PIOs could provide more active input for government decision makers.

In his seminal reports titled, *Government and Mass Communication*, Zachariah cited in Lattimore et al (2004:303) held that:

Government information can play a vital role in the cause of good administration by exploring the impact of new social forces, discovering strains and tensions before they become acute, and encouraging a positive sense of unity and national direction.

Conclusively, the most basic functions of governmental public relations are to help define and achieve government programme goals, enhance the government's responsiveness and service, and provide the public with sufficient information to permit self-government. The goal of PIOs is to promote cooperation and confidence between citizens and their government. This, in turn, requires governmental accessibility, accountability, consistency, and integrity.

Methodology

The survey method was adopted for this study. Its main instrument for data collection is the questionnaire. Survey method was considered most appropriate approach to gather data for this study because of experts submission that it enhances the study of both small and large number of people that derive from the entire population and share basic characteristics of the elements that make up that population (Black and Champion, 1976; Osuala, 1991:181; Asika, 2004:105 and Nwodu, 2006:67).

The questionnaire elicited demographic variable of respondents and other relevant information about the role of public relations in the management of selected local government councils in Delta State. Seventy five respondents form the sample size for the study, that is, twenty five each from the three local government councils. The subjects are made up of middle level and senior staff, information officers and executive of the staff unions (NULGE). They were purposively selected.

Copies of the questionnaire were administered on those who made themselves available. Responses from the questionnaire were collated, tabulated and analyzed using simple percentages.

Result

The results presented below were based on the analysis of the data generated from the 75 copies of questionnaire distributed and returned. The high rate of return

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(100 percent) was due largely to the face-to-face method of instrument administration on the respondents adopted by the researcher and his research assistants over a period of three weeks.

Table I: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Percentage
Sex	
Male	72
Female	28
Age	
25-40	68
41-60	32
Education	
Secondary	52
Tertiary	48
	N=75

Source: Fieldwork (2014)

Table I shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents as they relate to their sex, age and education. Distribution of sex showed that 72 percent were male while 28 percent were female. The distribution of age groupings showed that 68 percent were between 25 and 40 years, while 32 percent were between 41 and 60 years. Respondents' level of education indicated that 52 percent were secondary school leavers while 48 percent had tertiary education qualifications.

Table 2: Problems Militating Against Effective Management of Local Government Councils

Problems	Percentage
Inability to pay salaries and other allowances due to staff	29.3
Delayed promotion of staff	26.7
Non-implementation/slow pace of development projects	26.7
Politicization of staff recruitment	17.3
	N=75

Source: Field work (2014)

Table 2 shows that inability to pay salaries and other allowances due to staff promptly (29.3%), delayed promotion of staff (26.7%), non-implementation/slow pace of development projects (26.7%) and politicization of staff recruitment (17.3%) are the major problems militating against effective management of the local government councils. This table was used to answer research question one.

Table 3: Extent the Problems have affected the Quality of Governance

Response	Percentage
High level of indiscipline among staff	40
Frequent declaration of industrial disputes	33.3
Loss of confidence on local government council authorities by the people of the LGA	26.7
	N=75

Source: Fieldwork (2014)

Table 3 indicates that high level of indiscipline among staff (40%), frequent declaration of industrial disputes (33.3%) and loss of confidence on local government council authorities by the people of the local government area (26.7%) are the extent to which the problems have affected the quality of governance in the local government councils. This table was used to answer research question two.

Table 4: Public Relations Role in the Management of Local Government Councils

Response	Percentage
Creates understanding between authorities and its publics	32
Makes the realization of management objectives possible	22.7
Creates conducive atmosphere for policy planning and implementation	26.7
Eliminates doubts and strife	18.6
	N=75

Source: Fieldwork (2014)

Table 4 reveals respondents' opinion on the role of public relations in day-to-day management of local government councils: creates understanding between authorities and its publics (32%), makes the realization of management objectives possible (22.7%), creates conducive atmosphere for policy planning and implementation (26.7%), and eliminates doubts and strife (18.6%). This table was used to answer research question three.

Table 5: Extent of utilization of PR in the management of LGCs' Affairs

Extent of PR utilization	Percentage
Very often	16
Often	12
Rarely	20
Not at all	52
	N=75

Source: Field work (2014)

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Table 5 shows the extent to which the authorities utilize public relations in the management of local government council affairs: very often (16%), often (12%), rarely (20%), and not at all (52%). This table was used to answer research question four.

Summary of Findings

The following are the major findings of the study:

- The specific problems that militate against effective management of local government councils include inability to pay salaries and other allowances due to staff, delayed promotion of staff; non-implementation/slow pace of development projects; and politicization of staff recruitment.
- These problems have resulted to high level of indiscipline among staff, frequent declaration of industrial disputes by the workers of the councils; and loss of confidence on the local government council authorities by the people of the local government area.
- Public relations role in the management of local government councils include creating and promoting understanding between local council authorities and its publics, making the realization of management objectives possible; creating conducive atmosphere for policy planning and implementation; and eliminating doubts and strife.
- Local government council authorities do not make use of public relations extensively in the management of the councils' affairs.

Conclusion

The study has shown that public relations has a major role to play in the management of local government councils especially in this era when the third tier of government is faced with myriad of problems that tend to impact negatively on the councils. If properly applied there is every tendency that public relations can play a contributory role in shoring up the image of the local government councils, and bring about good governance at the grassroots level.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusion reached, the following recommendations are pertinent.

- The Chairmen of the local government councils should endeavour to utilize public relations techniques/strategies more effectively to reduce the tensions often generated in the local government councils because of the failure of the authorities to meet with one obligation or the other that has direct bearing on the staff and the larger society.
- The authorities of the councils should strengthen the public relations/information unit to enable it perform optimally. This will benefit the councils and the entire areas the councils are meant to serve.

- The council authorities should strive to fulfill its obligations to the staff and the larger public. If for any reason they find it difficult to meet up, the true position of things should be communicated without delay through the public relations/information office to dispel rumour.
- As the chief public relations officers of the councils, the chairmen should offer selfless service to the electorate and pursue policies that will bring about development for a greater number of the citizenry.

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An Analysis of *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* Newspapers Coverage of the Fulani Herdsmen Attacks in Benue State, 2013/2014

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Abstract

This study analyses the extent of coverage of the Fulani herdsmen attacks on Benue communities between September 2013 and April 2014 by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers from the backdrop of the potential impact of the frames used on public perception and understanding of the crisis. Content analysis was employed as the research design with coding sheets as instrument for data collection. A total of 29 editions of the two papers and 78 news, features and editorials on the attacks were sampled and analysed. The study found that both *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* significantly covered the crisis even though they were divergent in the use of frames. The study found also, that government officials, officials of security agencies, leaders of groups, eyewitnesses and victims of the herdsmen attacks were the dominant sources quoted in the stories on the attacks by the two newspapers, with variation in extent of usage. The human interest, conflict, morality, economic, attribution of responsibility and level of responsibility frames dominantly used in framing of the stories on the attacks. Based on the empirical evidence, the study by way of scholarly exegesis concluded that both papers were influenced by the political, economic and religious interests or ideologies of their ownership in the coverage of the crisis. The study submits that this scenario portends danger to public perception and understanding of the crisis and thus recommends that; the mass media should deal with crisis in such a way as to produce the best possible and least violent outcomes for all the parties concerned through the nature of coverage. Provision of much information as possible about the roots of the problem to encourage a rational public debate concerning the various options for ending the crisis amongst other strategies was also recommended.

Keywords: Mass media; Newspaper Coverage; Framing; Herdsmen Insurgency.

Introduction

Nigeria has over the years been frequently confronted with series of disruptive crisis situations that significantly affects the socioeconomic and political life of the people. Communal and religious crises as well as outbreak of violence from ethnic agitations have claimed the lives of thousands of Nigerians, leaving several others maimed and displaced. The rising wave of Fulani herdsmen insurgency which has launched several attacks across the country, particularly on in Benue, Plateau and Taraba States with scores of people dead, homes, farms/farmlands and other property worth billions of Naira destroyed is one of such disruptive crisis in recent time. While several crises across the country in the past were predicated on aggression arising from contentious issues between warring parties, the Fulani insurgency has a new dimension. It is rather an assault that seems to be predicated on the UsmanDanfodio's old Jihadist doctrine of using violence to intimidate and harass people into conversion or oust and take over the ancestral homes of people whose beliefs and ideologies are divergent or non-confirmative.

Notwithstanding the nature, type or method; a crisis is "an event for which people seek causes and make attributions" (Coombs and Holladay, 2004, p. 97). Consequently, a crisis period is a "time of ambiguity, uncertainty, and struggle to regain control" (Millar and Heath, 2004, p. 247). When hit by a crisis situation such as the Fulani herdsmen attacks on several Benue communities between 2013 and 2012, however, government often makes an effort to minimize the ambiguity by responding to the crisis and the public through appropriate response strategies. At the same time, the public tries to seek information related to the crisis and to evaluate responsibility for the crisis. The more likely people affected or involved in the crisis try to trade blames or attribute responsibility to the other party(s), the stronger the likelihood of them developing a negative image of the other party(s) (Weiner et al., 1987). Thus, as Coombs, (2006a, p.175) notes, "crisis responsibility, the perception that the hard handedness or aggression from the other party is the reason for the crisis or the linchpin" has the capability to escalate or reverberate in other areas. For that reason, understanding how people attribute crisis responsibility is critical for crisis mitigation and management.

This has made the mass media key stakeholders in crisis mitigation and management as what the general public knows about these events and their causes overwhelmingly comes from the mainstream mass media. For this reason, mass media coverage of crisis plays an important role in shaping public opinion about the crisis and indigenous rights. This is because as one of the most trusted vehicles of communication and information dissemination in society, the mass media exercise a significant level of influence on the perception and understanding of crisis situations by members of the public through news frames. The problem however, is that the mass media does not merely cover and mirror events in society as often perceived, but rather filter information through a process called *framing*.

Framing results from a system of reporting wherein reporters use a particular narrative structure, rely on officials as sources, and invoke public opinion in particular ways that, taken together, serve to marginalize collective actors and their issues. This is not to say that reporters and editors are consciously seeking to delegitimize collective actors, but rather that the process of creating the news often leads to this result. Frames are powerful mechanisms that can help define and solve

problems and shape public opinion (Knight, 1999). In crisis communication, framing analysis can provide crisis managers with useful insights into the appropriate crisis response strategies to minimize the damage. While several studies have been carried out in Nigeria on the role of the mass media in crisis situations, most of the studies have failed to consider how the Nigerian mass media (newspapers in particular) framed the crisis at the outset. However, most people seek information about a crisis and evaluate the cause of the crisis and attribute blame or responsibility for the crisis based on mass media coverage of the crisis. Therefore, it is important to look at how the mass media frame a crisis event, the cause of the crisis, and the actor responsible for it because those frames influence the public's perception and impressions of the crisis (Coombs, 2006b). This study therefore, aims to fill that gap by identifying what kinds of news frames have been used in the coverage of the herdsmen attacks on Benue communities between September 2013 and April 2014 by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers.

Statement of the Problem

The framing theory posits that an issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and be construed as having implications for multiple values or considerations by different people. Framing according to the theory refers to the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue (Cho and Gower, 2006, p. 420). Much of the research on framing Nigeria has focused on mass media coverage of crisis in relation to public policy issues, without special focus on framing of the crisis situations (Pate, 2002; Eti, 2009; Akpoghiran and Otite, 2013). Through careful analysis of news media framing of crisis, Iyengar (1991) developed five frames of individual and organizational (societal/governmental) levels of responsibility in crisis. The frames are the human interest frame, conflict frame, morality frame, economic frame and attribution of responsibility frame. The extent to which these frames were employed by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* in coverage of the herdsmen attacks in Benue is not however known. Against this backdrop, the study assesses and analyses how level of responsibility is covered by the two newspapers across crisis types by applying Iyengar's individual and organizational levels of responsibility frames. Consequently, the study was guided by the following research questions:

- RQ1. To what extent were the Fulani herdsmen attacks on Benue communities covered by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers?
- RQ2. What were the dominant sources of information on the coverage of the herdsmen attacks on Benue communities by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers?
- RQ3. What frames were used in reporting the herdsmen attacks on Benue communities in the coverage by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers?

The Fulani Attacks on Benue Communities

History has it that the Fulanis and most tribes of the Benue Valley, particularly the Tiv people, have had long standing cordial relationships (Hon, 2001, p. 11), a relationship built on mutuality predicated on animal rearing interests of both ethnic groups. Although the Tiv people engages in large scale animal farming, unlike pastoralists Fulanis who are predominantly nomads, The Tiv people cherish other

forms of agriculture and are more preoccupied with land cultivation. Consequently, the Tiv people cherish their land and the various conflicts that have ever ensued between them and other tribes in the valley has often been on land issues (Hussein, 1998, p. 24). Although the Fulani people are not part of the Benue valley, they migrate seasonally towards the valley and Southern Nigeria in search of grazing pastures. Like previous skirmishes that has ensued between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in Benue arose from the destruction of farm lands by herds of cattle.

There has been series of clashes between herdsmen and farmers across the Federation due issues relating to destruction of crops and farmlands due to the nomadic activities of Fulani herdsmen. As Gbehe (2007, p. 134) observes, while several lives have been lost and property worth billions of Naira destroyed from the herdsmen phenomenon and several frameworks to address the issue devised; government at various levels (federal, state and local) have not been able to address the issue. Suggestions are usually put on the table when such crisis erupts but easily sidelined or discarded with prevalence of calm (Abbas, 2010, p. 334). As such, the issue of adequate provision of grazing reserves to accommodate the interest of herdsmen who are always on the move to secure food and water for their herds or the introduction of modern pasturing techniques that makes cattle rearing a sedentary occupation rather than nomadic to avoid mass movement of herdsmen and cattle, has not been addressed.

This has made the competition for land, upon which the socio-economic lives of both the farmers and the herdsmen revolve a source of incessant conflicts with violent outcomes that have claimed several lives in Nigeria. The extension of the competition over land has resounded into another critical issue that is related to land - the phenomenon of indigeneship in Nigeria. The factor of indigeneship confers on individual the right to own land (Ker, 2007). Gbehe (2007) has noted that land in most communities in Nigeria such as among the Tiv people in the Benue valley, is freighted with symbolic meaning. It is sacred and considered as an ancestral and historical sphere of influence, and trespass is often perceived as an affront over their right to existence. Based on this, conflicts over land are usually fierce with massive destructions of lives and properties. Ubuwa (2001, p. 43) notes too that conflicts arose in the Benue Valley as a result of loss of land which the people considered as the basis of their social, economic and spiritual existence. Attempt to discount the people from this ancestral heritage usually resulted in large scale conflict.

While this has been a protracted issue with over a century long history, there seems to be little efforts to address the land issue in Nigeria in a manner that will accommodate the interests of farmers and herdsmen. Narrating the dangerous dimension the situation has been allowed to deteriorate to, Okeke (2014, p. 66) likens the situation to a war and says, even though it is an old age problem, it has escalated in the last decade and has assumed a very deadly dimension. The conflicts occur when Fulani herders move into non-Fulani homelands with their cattle. This usually leads to the destruction of farmers' crops. Thus, the herders provoke their victims to acts of resistance (preventing entry into farms, killing or stealing cattle, or poisoning fields). In response, the herders wage deadly attacks on farming communities. It is thus perhaps for these same or similar reasons that the Fulani herdsmen between 2013 and 2014 waged a deadly war against certain Benue communities.

Mass Media Framing of crisis and Public Perception

Throughout the years, the mass media have become trustworthy sources of information for individuals around the world. The public searches for information about events happening around the world and the mass media is the primary source. The need for information during any time of conflict or crisis is crucial not only for those directly affected but also for those involved and engaged from outside the affected area. The need for information on the Fulani herdsmen attacks in Benue State was therefore no exception. However, while information through the mass media is important in managing crisis situations, framing of the crisis by the news media has direct bearing on how the crisis is perceived. Both in terms of how serious are the crisis, the contending issues and the aggressors, public knowledge, understanding and perception of crisis much depends on information from the mass media. The quality of mass media coverage of crisis, is therefore crucial for responsibility as crisis is conditioned not only by factors related to the crisis itself but also to general attitudes and preferences of the mass media through framing.

It is important to understand the different ways the mass media frame prominent news information. The framing theory explains the mass media's influence on society. Tettah and King (2011) described the framing theory "proposes that how an idea, issue or personality is presented (framed) in the media influence how people think about that issue or personality" (p. 505). Individuals usually believe the media and form opinions based on information received from media sources regardless of whether or not the information is factual. According to Chyi and McCombs (2004), "the news media often reframe the event by emphasizing different attributes of the event, consciously or unconsciously, in order to keep the story alive and fresh" (p. 22). It is often the case that various mass media outlets have differing viewpoints on high-profile news stories. According to Heider (1958) in Lowry, Nio and Leitner (2003, p. 64), people's perceptions of and inferences about events are dependent on what information or feature is salient in the environment.

Framing theory suggests that the mass media do even more than create saliency. By selecting what to include and what to exclude from a story, the news media frame a story (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Pan and Kosicki, 1993); that is, the mass media limit or define the story's meaning and thereby shape people's interpretation of that story (Hallahan, 1999). Previous literature has identified a handful of frames that occur commonly in the news, with some studies discussing comprehensively several different types of frames dominantly used in news coverage in different parts of the world. These include conflict, economic consequences, human impact, and morality.

Based on these frames, Iyengar 1991 after analyzing newspapers coverage of crisis in the post-communists states, Europe, America, Asia and Africa identified five news frames in order of predominance: human interest, conflict, morality, economic and attribution of responsibility. Our literature review shall dwell on these frames as the basis for determining the extent to which such frames were present and or how they were employed by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* in their coverage and reportage on the Fulani herdsmen insurgent attacks on Benue Communities with devastating effects. This is to enable us assess the attributions in terms of how each of the papers perceived and constructed issues associated with the crisis.

Human interest frame

This frame “brings a human face or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue, or problem” (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000, p. 95). In crisis situations, the frame stimulates the psychological pulse of people, which ultimately leads them to a more negative attitude toward the crisis. Cho and Gower (2006) showed that the human interest frame influenced participants’ emotional response, and that it was a significant predictor of blame and responsibility in a transgression crisis.

Conflict frame

The conflict frame is used in such away as to reflect conflict and disagreement among individuals, groups, or organizations. Findings of a study conducted by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) reveal that, the conflict frame is the second most common frame that could be found in news reports on crisis events, and the more serious the newspaper, the more the conflict frame is in evident.

Morality frame

According to Iyengar (1991), this frame puts the event, problem, or issue in the context of morals, social prescriptions, and religious tenets. Neuman et al. (1992) found that the morality frame was commonly used by journalists indirectly through quotations or inference, rather than directly because of the journalistic norm of objectivity.

Economic frame

This frame reports an event, problem, or issue in terms of the consequences it will have economically on an individual, groups, organizations, or countries. Neuman et al. (1992) identified it as a common frame in the news. The wide impact of an event is an important news value, and economic consequences are often considerable (Graber, 1993).

Attribution of responsibility frame

Semetko and Valkenburg (2000, p. 96) defines this frame as “a way of attributing responsibility for [a] cause or solution to either the government or to an individual or group” Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) found that the attribution of responsibility frame was most commonly used in serious newspapers.

Level of responsibility frame: individual vs. organizational

Iyengar (1991) identified two distinct news frames dealing with issues: the episodic news frame (focusing on certain individuals or specific events) and the thematic news frame (placing issues and events in general context at the societal or governmental level). At the same time, the mass media can present problems and their solutions as either an individual’s or society’s responsibility. The problem of the Fulani insurgency, for example, may be presented as an individual problem of the affected communities with an individual solution rather than as a societal problem requiring a societal response.

It is evident from these frames that a frame in a communication organizes everyday reality by providing meaning to an unfolding strip of events that may

otherwise not be understood within a given context. Therefore, in as much as the mass media may have its limitations, the power of the mass media to focus public attention on a few key public issues, through framing cannot be underestimated. This is because not only do people acquire factual information about public affairs from the mass media, readers and viewers also learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the emphasis placed on it in the news through the framing process. Through framing, newspapers provide a host of cues about the salience of the topics in the daily news and provide perspectives, from which people should reason, analyze issues and sometimes react.

Method

The study adopted the content analysis method to investigate *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers news coverage of the Fulani herdsmen attacks crisis events in Benue state between September 2013 and April 2014. The study quantified and analyzed news frames of the articles related to the coverage of the Fulani herdsmen attacks crisis events in Benue state between September 2013 and April 2014 by the two newspapers. These two newspapers have been recognized as the most vibrant elite newspapers in Northern Nigeria and are large national circulation newspapers. Also *Daily Trust* owned by a Northern Muslim and *Leadership* is owned by a Northern Christian; implying that the religious backgrounds of their ownership may influence their news frames on the attacks.

This is because the Fulani herdsmen are predominantly Muslims while the Benue communities attacked were predominantly Christian. However, given that both papers have Northern origin, it is expected that both will be objective in their coverage of the attacks. News articles published in these two newspapers on the attacks were collected through an electronic database search in the homepage of the papers. Although the study period is September 2013 and April 2014, only editions that contained stories on the attacks were studied. A total of 29 editions (*Daily Trust* = 11 and *Leadership* = 18) and 78 news articles, feature articles and editorials (*Daily Trust* = 27 and *Leadership* = 51) on the attacks were found and analyzed during the study period, September 2013 and April 2014. The coding category and unit of analysis were three - news articles, feature articles and editorials. The coding instrument consisted of the name of the newspaper, type of article (news or feature) the five news frames, and level of responsibility frame. Two well-trained coders analyzed all articles. Each coder coded the articles independently. For the inter-coder reliability test, two coders coded 30 articles that were randomly selected. Using Holsti's method, the inter-coder reliability was 0.87.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Results were obtained by analyzing the coded data from the sample frames of the two newspapers during the study period. The results presented below addresses the three research questions raised to investigate the extent and nature of coverage given to the Fulani herdsmen attacks on the Benue communities by the two newspapers.

RQ1. To what extent were the Fulani herdsmen attacks on Benue communities covered by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers?

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Data collected from the sample frames in response to research question one which sought ascertain the extent of coverage of the herdsmen attacks by the two newspapers, is presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: Extent of *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* coverage of the attacks

Type of Article	Daily Trust	Leadership	Total
News	18 (66.6%)	32 (62.7%)	50 (64.1%)
Features	8 (29.6%)	17 (33.3%)	25 (32%)
Editorials	1 (3.8%)	2 (3.9%)	3 (3.9%)
Total	27 (34.6%)	51 (65.4%)	78 (100%)

Source: *Daily Trust & Leadership Content, 2013/2014*

Table 1 shows the extent of reportage in terms of types of newspaper articles based on the units of analysis. Data contained in the table shows that for both *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers, news stories have an overwhelming dominance over other reports on the herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State with 18 (66.6%) articles for *Daily Trust* and 32 (62.7%) articles for *Leadership*. This collectively accounts for 50 (64.1%) articles out of the total 78 articles drawn from the sample frames for analysis. The table shows too that *Daily Trust* had 8 (29.6%) feature articles, while *Leadership* had 17 (33.3%) feature articles. This accounts for a total of 25 (32%) feature articles from the sample. Expectedly, editorials are the least articles accounting for 3 (3.9%) of the total articles sampled. The break down shows that *Daily Trust* had 1 (3.8%) editorial and *Leadership* had 2 (3.9%) editorials.

The entire 29 editions of the two newspapers generated a total of 271 articles, implying that the news, features and editorials on the herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State accounted for 28.8% of the stories. Given that the herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State was one among the many crises covered by the two newspapers during the period, it implies that the herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State was significantly covered by the two newspapers. Significance of this data to the study is that despite the overwhelming dominance of the Boko Haram crisis and its adjoining political controversies that seemingly dominates mass media content in Nigeria, the herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State was given significant coverage by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers. This answers research question one to the effect that the extent to which the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State was covered by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers has been evidently established.

RQ2. What were the dominant sources of information on the coverage of the herdsmen attacks on Benue communities by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers?

This research tracked the various individuals or groups who were quoted in the articles analyzed. The table below reflects the percentage of different groups or individuals quoted in the articles.

Table 2: Dominant sources of Information used by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* in coverage of the attacks

Type of Source	Daily Trust	Leadership	Total
Government official	4 (14.8%)	14 (27.4%)	18 (23.2%)
Security official	5 (18.5%)	17 (33.3%)	22 (28.2%)
Group leader	7 (25.9%)	6 (11.7%)	13 (16.6%)
Eyewitness account	3 (5.8%)	6 (11.7%)	9 (11.5%)
Victims	8 (29.6%)	8 (15.9%)	16 (20.5%)
Total	27 (34.6%)	51 (65.4%)	78 (100%)

Source: *Daily Trust & Leadership Content, 2013/2014*

Data contained in table two shows that government officials, officials of security agencies, leaders of groups, eyewitnesses and victims of the herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State were the sources quoted in the news, features and editorials on the attacks in the two newspapers. The table shows that government officials constituted 4 (14.8%) of the sources cited by *Daily Trust* and 14 (27.4%) sources cited by *Leadership* in their reports on the herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State. Also, officials of security agencies were used in 5 (18.5%) reports by *Daily Trust* while *Leadership* used officials of security agencies as sources in 17 (33.3%) reports on the attacks. The data reveals too, that group leaders constituted 7 (25.9%) of the sources for *Daily Trust* and group leaders constituted 6 (11.7%) of the sources for *Leadership*. Eyewitness account were used as sources in 3 (5.8%) reports by *Daily Trust*, and used as sources in 6 (11.7%) reports by *Leadership*. The victims of the attacks were quoted as sources in 8 (29.6%) reports by *Daily Trust* and also as sources in 8 (15.9%) reports by *Leadership*.

The data indicates that government officials, officials of security agencies and leaders of groups were quoted as sources more than eyewitnesses and victims of the attacks by *Leadership* newspaper, while *Daily Trust* quoted victims and group leaders as sources more than government officials, officials of security agencies and eyewitnesses. This shows a divergence in the two newspapers in their sources of information. The data signifies that *Daily Trust* seemed to be on the ground more than *Leadership* newspaper during the crisis, however, the over reliance on group leaders and victims as sources implies that *Daily Trust* may be misled into projecting an agenda they know nothing about or may be lured into projecting the interest of one party in the crisis over the other. Although government officials and security agencies are often accused of downplaying information, particularly casualty figures during a crisis, they and eyewitnesses often seem to have access to more credible information and facts. Notwithstanding, data contained in table 2 answers research question two valuably since the dominant sources of information on the herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State have been ascertained.

RQ3. What frames were used in reporting the herdsmen attacks on Benue communities in the coverage by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers?

The frame clusters used by the two newspapers in their coverage of the Fulani herdsmen attacks on Benue communities was determined using the five key

crisis frames analyzed in the literature review, the data collected through the coding sheets is presented in table 3.

Table 3: The Frames used by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers in coverage of the attacks

Type of Frame Used	Daily Trust	Leadership	Total
Human interest frame	5 (18.5%)	11 (21.5%)	16 (20.5%)
Conflict frame	4 (14.8%)	5 (9.8%)	9 (11.5%)
Morality frame	2 (7.4%)	13 (25.4%)	15 (19.2%)
Economic frame	5 (18.5%)	8 (15.9%)	13 (16.6%)
Attribution of responsibility frame	9 (33.4%)	5 (9.8%)	14 (17.9%)
Level of responsibility frame	2 (7.4%)	9 (17.6%)	11 (14.3%)
Total	27 (34.6%)	51 (65.4%)	78 (100%)

Source: *Daily Trust & Leadership Content, 2013/2014*

The table shows that the attribution of responsibility frame was dominant among the reports on the crisis in *Daily Trust* while the morality frame was the most dominant in the reports *Leadership*. The use of the human interest and economic frames was the next most dominant in *Daily Trust*'s reports on the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State. For *Leadership* newspaper, the morality frame was trailed by the human interest and level of responsibility frames; while the economic and attribution of responsibility frames were less emphasized by *Leadership*. In *Daily Trust*, the morality and level of responsibility frames were the least emphasized.

This table reveals that the two newspapers also differed in their coverage of the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State as shown in their usage of the frames. While most of the articles in *Daily Trust* viewed the crisis as an affront on the rights to nomadic lives of the herdsmen, the articles in *Leadership* viewed the herdsmen as aggressors with external sponsors on a mission to orchestrate an agenda of annihilation against non-Muslims. It is evident from the editorials of both papers on the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State and related issues that *Daily Trust* in spite of its neutral stance in majority of the articles sampled, it is a bit sympathetic to the herdsmen and would want the public to view the consequence from the economic angle and inability of government to guarantee the rights of nomads. *Leadership* on the other hand seems to be sympathetic to the Benue communities attacked by the herdsmen and would want the public to look and the moral and human interest perspective.

The information implies that despite been newspapers from the Northern region of the country, the two newspapers were playing to religious sentiments that shroud their ownership. Thus, it can be argued that none of the two papers were neutral in their coverage and reportage on the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State. Significance of the table and the information contained in it to the study is however, that, it has effectively answered research question three by providing information on the frames that were used in the coverage of the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State.

Discussion of Findings

The mass media inevitably play a key role in conflicts and crisis because of their choice of which "experts" (parties to the crisis, government officials, officials of security agencies, leaders of groups and other stakeholders) to listen to and tell their story. This influences public perception and the definitions of dangers, culpability or responsibility, aggression and hence the political agenda behind the crisis by the general public. The mass media's decision on who is allowed to define a problem, or whether the problem is mentioned at all through the nature of frames used in the coverage and reportage of the crisis, has important consequences, on the management of the crisis. If the selection and use of the frames is done in line with journalistic standards, the mass media become a key ally but if selection and use of the frames is not controlled in a democratic way, the media may be an impediment (El-Nawawy and Shawn, 2010, p. 64).

This position is affirmed by the evidence from the findings of the contents of *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers that the Nigerian mass media can also be an ally or an impediment to crisis management given the nature of the frames the use in coverage of the crisis. The analysis reveals that the two newspapers though gave extensive coverage to the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State, their impact was minimal. The two newspapers did not cover the pre-violence phase of the crisis which would have given them a better understanding of the issues.

While this might seem an indictment, Hanitzsch (2004, p. 486) observes that the mass media often fail to cover the pre-violence stage of a crisis for three reasons. First, the mass media usually fail to take an interest in conflicts before violence breaks and a large number of people are killed. Second, governments tend to ignore calls for preventive action when mass media coverage does occur. Thirdly, the mass media are often accused of pessimism at such stages or castigated of incitements through their reports, and they choose to stay clear.

Consequently, at the violence stage, the news coverage becomes determined by such factors as the journalist's knowledge, predefined news formats, deadlines, the authority of sources, and the possibility of obtaining good pictures. They thus become self-referential to such a degree that the newsworthiness of a story may be a self-fulfilling prophecy through sensationalism. According to Cottle (2008, p. 854), sensationalism is used by the mass media as an instrument to gain attention and prompt emotion from audiences and enables a story to generate a certain level of interest through use of language or graphics that are thrilling and shocking. This is the framing function of the mass media and could perhaps explain the nature of coverage and kind of frames used by *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers in their coverage of the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State.

Conclusion

Based on evidence from the content analysis, this study concludes that both *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers gave substantial coverage to the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State while reflecting the religious, political and economic interests of those behind their existence. However, the mass media's presence at the centre of society impacts the way in which the public perceives and interprets events, as such there could result the distortion of truth if the mass media do not live up to their social responsibility.

It is thus the position of this study that crises should rather necessitate journalists, more than ever, to justify their existence rather than showcase their weakness. Therefore, the mass media must harkens to its role has representing shared beliefs, understandings, and emotions, whether in celebration or in crisis situations in order to maintain society through time. Although crisis usually disrupts the mass media's standard schedule by an unplanned events, it the responsibility of journalists while these stories part from normal media routines, they should not be viewed as a transgression of journalistic norms, but rather reinforce the legitimacy of journalists as central actors in the mediation of truth through kinds of frames used.

Recommendations

This study found that the two newspapers displayed a form of coverage that communicated a certain shared perspective on the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State through their frames. Through focusing on the human interest, conflict, morality, economic, attribution of responsibility and level of responsibility frames, their representation of crisis articulated a hegemonic discourse that was prejudicial to the interests of the groups in the crisis. It also denoted the varied points of view held by the newspapers, which were rooted in the different political beliefs, cultural assumptions, and institutional practices - in short, the ideological positions of their origins. It is therefore recommended that:

1. While the existence of conflict has been recognized as an inevitable part of human interaction; the question for the mass media should not be how to prevent it, but rather how to deal with it in such a way as to produce the best possible and least violent outcomes for all the parties concerned through the nature of coverage.
2. Audience members usually try to get more information from the mass media to enhance their understanding, particularly during times of crisis, it is therefore, the responsibility of the mass media to provide as much information as possible about the roots of the problem and to encourage a rational public debate concerning the various options for ending it.
3. Nigerian mass media institutions and journalists must understand that interethnic crisis such as the Fulani herdsmen attacks on communities in Benue State are always intertwined with a range of causal factors - political, economic, and social that could lead to prolongation of the crisis. Journalists should therefore be savvy and not allow themselves to be used by the forces at play in the crisis such as politics and narrow religious or communal interests.
4. Lack of contextual reporting of crisis by newspapers can only exacerbates the misunderstanding among the general public. The mass media should therefore, serve as the bridge by examining and explaining the underlying causes of the crisis in a manner that would help to inform and educate the public.
5. To overly emphasize either of the parties in the crisis as the aggressor without clearly explaining their political, economic, and social motivations in the crisis is to distort the *why*, the *how*, and the *what* that actually took place. The Nigerian mass media must therefore, never fail to reconcile the polarised views held by members of the public about a crisis by providing adequate interpretations to the crisis. The media should also enable actors and mediators recognize opportunities for dialogue, negotiation and consensus through a more informed and subtle

coverage of a crisis and the frames emphasized and selection of sources should reflect the different positions on key issues.

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The Democratic Potential of the Blogosphere

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Abstract

This article discusses the perception of scholars and theorists on the nature of political blogs. It examines discourses on the extent to which blogs constitute digital spheres of democratic, equal encounter thereby providing possibilities for a participatory media audience to enter political online discourses. Ascertaining these ideas however, confronts the observer with highly dynamic and complex concepts, which have to be analysed interdisciplinary against the background of theories on public spheres, political communication, democratic deliberation, media convergences and media audiences. This work establishes that blogs extend access to information on actually every political organisation, whether established or alternative/fractional. Previous research indicates that internet usage can indeed influence people's political attitudes. Many incidents in the USA buttress this point as discussed within this article. Though the majority of blog-content is indeed simply noise, there are examples which reflect the medium's political potential. Researchers are recommended to distinguish between online modes of political communication and to compare quantity as well as quality of deliberation/participation. Nevertheless, critical theories on new media and digital democracy give fruitful insights into the political economy of blog-communication and point to important coherences one has to consider when approaching the issue.

Keywords: Blogosphere, public sphere, media convergence, media audience, digital democracy.

Introduction

The internet has become an increasingly used space for political discourses, at least in developed western societies. Government institutions, political parties, and the mass media, including established organisations, which fulfil crucial functions in the democratic process possess online representations by now. Today, virtually everyone with proper access can put his or her political views and assessments online in various forms where they are theoretically accessible to a vast, continually growing audience. Hence, cyberspace contains countless public forums that allow individuals to enter into dialogue. The ascension of the World Wide Web has thereby led to the

most profound changes in today's media culture and the modes of communication in our society (Bernejo, 2008, p. 7). The constant emergence of innovative communication technologies promotes this development and an end is not foreseeable (Bainbridge, 2008, p. 319). Especially the different applications of the so-called *Web 2.0* which significantly catalysed the transformations of communication patterns as well as forms of content production, distribution and consumption; these changes entail considerable cultural, economic, social, and political consequences. Most notably, social networking media such as *MySpace*, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *blogs* have left a lasting impact in this respect. Blogs, a contraction of the term *weblog*, are often described as a particularly suitable medium for participatory discussions on political issues – though the medium itself can be (and is) used to publish every imaginable form of (hyper-) textual content, ranging from personal diaries, fan fiction, to poetry or recipes.

Being a product of the 1990s, blogs have gained huge popularity worldwide, especially in the last ten years. They are a cheap, easy, and a fast way to produce and share content in form of chronologically ordered articles. Users post comments and have the opportunity to receive instant reaction through the comment section. Most estimations assume that by today over 200 million blogs exist, steadily reaching an even bigger amount of readers (Lovink, 2007, p.5; Helmond, 2008). Apart from mere users, corporations, politicians/political organisations and social groups, professional media increasingly use blogs too. The so-called *blogosphere* – a compound combining the terms *blog* and *sphere* implies that there exists something like an interconnected network (Data Mining, 2006) or even *community*. In fact, it consists of a highly diverse spectrum of information products. The political potential of the *blogosphere* remains one of the most discussed issues in contemporary (new) media and communication studies/sciences, especially as online strategies are progressively implemented into political information and election campaigning (Resnick, 2004). Various articles, books, case studies, and essays have examined this issue.

Recurring topics are for instance the chances and limits of blogs as public spheres (Sunstein, 2007), their actual political relevance (Dean, 2005; Lovink, 2007; Quintellier, 2008), and phenomena like the *citizen journalist* (Rettberg, 2008, p. 84; Papacharissi, 2009). Most researches on blogs focus on the political *blogosphere* in the USA, where individual bloggers have achieved considerable influence on the mainstream media and politics; examples would be media incidents like “Rathergate” (Tremayne, 2007) or democratic candidate Howard Dean's successful online fundraising, using his official blog in 2004 (Meraz, 2007). Today, blogs are an inherent part of political online communication in the UK, too. A number of high-ranked ‘A-list’ bloggers, each of them representing a certain political ideology, discuss the latest developments as well as gossips in British politics on a daily basis. By doing so, they attract a considerable amount of readers and communicate their perspectives to them. Again, almost all parties provide one or more official blogs as part of their online communication campaigns to give themselves both a voice and a forum in the British *blogosphere*. Popular news media producers maintain blogs on several specified topics such as politics too. Blogs are “trendy”, not only among mere users; a certain professionalization is clearly detectable however popular they might be, their potential as a pluralistic democratic forum and the actual impact on offline politics remains to be evaluated. A recent survey, conducted by the National

Endowment for Science, Technology, and Arts (NESTA, 2010), has shown for instance that especially parties seem to fail in using the web for effective online campaigning: They often do not match the demands of the electorate regarding information and dialogue.

Until now, there rarely exists a larger empirical study that has focused on political blogs as a specific subgenre in terms of the actual comment/reply-pattern, i.e. direct dialogues, in Great Britain. In fact, only very few projects have examined political blogs (Stanyer, 2006) or online campaigning (Coleman, 2005; Lusoli&Ward, 2005) in the UK so far. Most research approached aspects like blogs as a new format, motivations for blogging as well as blog-reception; the infrastructure of blog-networks in terms of hyper-linking or the communication *between* blogs. Not much attention has been paid to discourses *on* these issues yet.

It must be noted that political blogs can significantly diverge as regards their discourse potential for various reasons. Several important questions have to be addressed before any conclusions can be drawn; what are political blogs actually? Who are the authors and readers? To what extent do they actually constitute digital spheres of equal democratic encounter? This article analyses these questions and examines how blogs provide possibilities for a participatory media audience to enter political online discourses. Ascertaining this phenomenon confronts the observer with highly dynamic and complex concepts, which have to be analysed interdisciplinary against the background of theories on public spheres, political communication, democratic deliberation, media convergences and media audiences.

In order to understand the contemporary academic discussions on blogs, the public sphere and democracy, it is pivotal to take a look at the state of theoretical arguments and the available empirical findings. The potential of the so-called 'new media' for democratic politicisation, equality, and pluralism has been discussed in academics since the emergence of the Internet 24 years ago; due to the inherent dynamics and unforeseeable consequences, internet/digital media-related issues constantly raise the attention of media theorists and researchers around the globe. Whether economy, education, entertainment, politics, or social interaction, almost every aspect of everyday life in industrialized countries is touched by "virtual revolution" (Lister et al., 2008, p. 237). The enormous interest in the World Wide Web and its relevance for politics is based on the rather simple thought that "greater availability of information is a prerequisite for improved democracy" (Lax 2004, p. 220). Internet communication has repeatedly been characterised as pluralistic, decentralised, making financial limits as well as distances of time and space obsolete (Bernejo, 2008, p. 35; Rettberg, 2008, p. 85). Optimistic assumptions expected that the fast, unlimited exchange of information would have an inevitably liberating impact on the structure of political debates, if not on democracy itself, some predicted for instance an age of transparency, in which the Internet would improve the communication between governments and citizens (Dahlberg, 2007, p. 47; Quintellier, 2008, p. 413). The web therefore offers unprecedented modes of fast, participatory, reciprocal and multilateral communication in total opposition to traditional mass media (Jenkins & Thorburn, 2003, p. 2). Everyone with access to "new technologies" would have the opportunity to enter this realm of 'barrier-free' knowledge production and distribution (Hirschkop, 1998, p. 212).

Before the “rise of the *blogosphere*” (Barlow, 2007), researchers focused on homepages, mailing lists, chat rooms, and web-forums to evaluate the dimensions of digital democracy; especially chances for an extended or new space for the public sphere have been extensively discussed (Lax, 2004, p. 221; Sunstein, 2007, p. 22). However, critical voices soon pointed to the limits of the internet as a levelled, open, and truly democratic environment, as problems like the socio-economic digital divide (Seron, 2002; McGlynn & Sylvester, 2010; Butt, 2006) and the intrinsically capitalistic nature of the World Wide Web contradict many optimistic forecasts (Dean, 2005; Benkler, 2006; Dawson & Foster, 1998; Foster et al., 1998; Menzies, 1998). Genuine “freedom of information” appears to be a mere illusion as control and censorship can be easily implemented by hegemonic institutions like governments (Goldsmith & Wu, 2006, p. 49; Sunstein, 2007, p. 124); it happens in democracies as well, though the modes and techniques of information control are more sophisticated and less obvious than in classic dictatorships (Finkelstein, 2003). Hence, the Internet is anything but borderless (Zuckerman, 2008). However, with the appearance of social network media and blogs in particular, debates on digital media and their role for emancipation and politicisation were further stimulated. Blogs are thereby commonly considered to be “easily created, frequently updated websites that offer the newest information on top of the page” (Eveland et al.; 2007, p. 106). They also provide options to use other media formats and links to create a *hypertextual* multimedia artefact (Scott, 2007, p. 39). Another integral part are the ‘blog rolls’ which link lists to other mostly content-related blogs on the front page. Concerning discourse potential, the comment function is alongside linking the most important aspect of blogs; combined with the dynamics of information, distribution and sharing. These attributes form the distinctive features of the medium. Since “new technologies are often greeted with political optimism” (Bohman, 2004, p. 131), enthusiastic assumptions and expectations emerged quickly again, as well as scientific research to evaluate the actual cultural, economic, and political relevance of blogs (Lovink, 2007, p. IX). Today they are often perceived as the primary online communication channel for participatory, user-created content especially in America. Most writers agree that especially after the terrorist attacks on 9/11 blogs became increasingly important sources of news and information (Tremayne, 2007, p. XIII; Barlow, 2007). Subsequently debates on their impact on established news media developed. The *citizen journalist* remains until now a controversial topic among scientists and professionals (Bruns, 2008, p. 70; Barlow, 2007; Papacharissi, 2009; Huesca & Brenda, 2008). Blogs soon gained considerable attention as regards their political potential as catalysers of open democratic discourses.

Public Spheres and Blogs

Discussing democratic discourse and the internet inevitably leads to the idea of the *public sphere*. It is a very complex, often ambiguously used concept which repeatedly challenges theorists in political, social, and communication sciences. Even though a fixed definition can hardly be given, certain basic assumptions appear to be regarded as characteristic of the phenomenon. The public sphere is therefore a space where ideally spoken open debates between equal individuals take place. It is an important constituent of a working democracy and pivotal for political progress, as it produces democratic debates and contestation. The German philosopher Jürgen

Habermas elaborately theorised the subject for the first time in his basic work *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, published 1962. His analysis of the structure of the public sphere and the modes of political communication in western societies are till today of considerable academic relevance. Many of his forecasting insights are still applicable to characterise and approach the subject in contemporary media societies. For instance, as regards the role of a society's political infrastructure and critical public communication (Habermas, 1996, p. 231-235; Habermas, 1995). Habermas' basic ideas can be summarized as follows: first, communication enables individuals to act politically; the ability to share, understand, scrutinise, and communicate information is pivotal for every kind of discourse, especially democratic ones (Habermas, 1984). Secondly, democratic forms of communication, i.e. political discourses which are non-private and multilateral, need to take place somewhere. Optimally in an open accessible space in which individuals can talk to each other and exchange information publicly. Habermas defines the public sphere as the main site for such modes of debate. According to him, they emerged during the late 18th century in Europe – mainly driven by the rise of the bourgeoisie as a growing and politically emancipated social segment of society. Public spheres therefore provide a space for critical discussion, in which citizens can participate and express as well as compare their political points of view. This process is of substantial relevance for democratic progress, as political decisions on a particular issue should centre on the outcome of deliberative discourses. Thus, debate/conversation can be perceived as “the foundation of effective democracy” (Coleman, 2005, p. 8). The structure and limits of public spaces of debate are determined by several crucial factors like the political system of a society, its socio-economic composition as well as the degree of freedom of speech and press. These norms define the context in which individuals/subjects can act and communicate with each other.

Nowadays, digital media plays an increasingly significant role in western countries. For example, government internet projects like *Data.Gov.UK*, and *Yougov* provide the likelihood to provide more transparency. The UK government made relatively early, in 1999, ambitious plans to embrace web-based media and to implement them in their communication concept (The National Archives, 1999). Some observers assessed that the internet would catalyse the radicalisation of the public sphere by providing the infrastructure for new open forums and so-called *counter publics* as well (Dahlberg, 2005, p. 93). The assumption that blogs/blog-networks would contribute to the construction of such spheres is basically not far-fetched; after all, people can ‘meet’ and discuss any kinds of issues there.

However, Habermas' descriptions and explanations need adjustment and critical revision as society passed through significant changes due to continuing technological progress since the publication of his theoretical groundwork. For instance, his idealised model of face-to-face communication is in its original form hardly applicable to ‘reality’ (Bohman, 2004, p. 134; Bernejo, 2008, p. 30). Furthermore, it is questionable if there has ever existed only one public sphere considering the fact that even before the rise of the internet, independent contextual discourses constituted diverse forums for debate. Traditional media outlets have been used in pre-internet times to create alternative publics too.

Nevertheless, our contemporary digitalised, web-based information society experienced a profound shift from a “hub-and-spoke architecture with unidirectional links to the end points in the mass media, to distributed architecture with multidirectional connections among all nodes in the networked information environment” (Benkler, 2006, p. 212), a development which theoretically has considerable effects on the structure of the contemporary public sphere. While information was increasingly *commodified* (Lyotard, 1984, p. 5), its geographical and social distribution also expanded (Benkler, 2006, p. 29). The internet became the driving force of these structural transformations as even information on ‘niche’ issues can reach far larger populations.

The continuing emergence of new technological devices and easy to handle, participatory communication software have a profound impact on the shape, perception and role of media audiences in these new public forums. “The digital media, which seemingly possesses unlimited ability to generate and store content” (Bernejeo, 2008, p. 35), provides the infrastructure for the ‘informational’ environment. This leads to considerable consequences for societies or economies, respectively: “A particular confluence of technical and economic changes is now altering the way we produce and exchange information, knowledge, and culture in ways that could redefine basic practices, first in the most advanced economies, and eventually around the globe” (Benkler, 2006, p. 31).

Hence, the networked, computerised, environment of today’s society is intrinsically dynamic and provides unprecedented forms of information production and consumption for individuals. The new media is responsible for this development in several respects. 1. Virtually, unlimited sources of content are added to the comparatively limited contingent of the classic mass media (print/TV/radio). 2. Online information products are multimedia-based and often interactive, i.e. they can encompass hyperlinks, comment-functions, and converge forms of conventional content production (textual/visual/auditory) in a single new media artefact (Jenkins, 2006). 3. Through hyperlinking and comments, online artefacts can lead to context-defined discourses and/or hint to further information material from related sources. 4. Due to new technologies like smart phones and/or mobile Internet access as well as fast-speed and easy to handle communication software, information can be published and shared online ‘on the spot’; whether a text, a picture or an audio take. 5. Thus, online media audiences can become actively engaged in the process of content creation and distribution, far easier than in past times. 6. The accessibility to different opinions on a specific issue is drastically broadened too. More information from diverse sources is quickly accessible. Producers and consumers have access to the same technology – at least theoretically, everyone can easily become a content creator him/herself. Bruns (2007) describes this new form of simultaneous production and consumption as “produsage”, the user-led content creation. Bruns further states that for contemporary multimedia culture,

Access to the means of producing and distributing information is widely available, rather than limited to a small number of operators, and does not inherently favour specific participants for commercial, organisational, or political reasons: This means that consumers themselves can now become active producers and distributors of information, which is widely available to all users of the network. (Bruns, 2007, p. 13-14).

Particularly the manifestations of the Web 2.0 are linked to this concept of (postmodern) pluralistic participation, namely blogs, social networking sites, video/photo portals, and free online encyclopaedias. Blogging and social networking actually appear to be the “hegemonic modes” of contemporary internet-usage (Lovink, 2007, p. 13). Regular conferences on new media and blogs, like *Blog World Expo* and *The Net Web* which grow continually, highlight their increasing importance for web communication in general. The medium is a good example of *producersage*. Bloggers mostly refer to different online sources, often inside a framed discourse within the *blogosphere*, and include images, videos or the like. Hence, they use content to produce a new media artefact. Furthermore, blogs often deal with a particular cultural, social or political issue/topic. In most cases they are personalised in content, i.e. local, but basically available to a global audience. As regards democratic discourses, blogs are characterised as an adequate medium for the “informed citizen” (Jenkins, 2003) or ‘net citizen’ (*netizen*) to participate in democratic discourses. For users, commenting is the easiest and fastest way to react to an article and enter, if responses are given, into dialogue. To do this, they do not have to be bloggers themselves – actually everyone can use this device to communicate inside a specific blog-based discourse. The *netizen* is not constraint to the role of a mere perceiver of political online content created and distributed by others. Thus, convergences are not limited to technological devices or media formats; the asymmetry of the conventional sender-receiver relations is significantly affected too. From an optimistic point of view, these developments enhance the opportunity for larger parts of the population to participate in every thinkable kind of online discourses.

As a manifestation of the *Web 2.0*, blogs therefore provide new spaces to exist digitally and communicate with others – a potential extension and pluralisation of the public sphere in the World Wide Web. Dahlberg (2007, p. 47) outlines three basic models which characterise deliberation in such online public spheres. 1. The liberal individual model which states that the internet provides unprecedented abundance of information for individuals and possibilities to share their viewpoints with others, including politicians. This perception dominates online strategies of hegemonic actors like governmental institutions, commercial e-democracy initiatives and much social research. 2. The communitarian model, which actually forms the opposite of the first model as digital collectives and networks catalyse political activities. 3. The “strong democracy” model (Dahlberg, 2007, p. 48), which describes the Internet as an extension of the public sphere, allowing the development of counter-publics; thereby allowing rational public conversation to thrive subsequently. Research has shown, that evidence for all three forms exists (Kaye, 2007; Zhang, 2010), though the last and most radical version occurs only in very specific contexts (e.g. far-leftists or ecological groups; emancipating movements in restrictive political systems, Dahlberg, 2007, p. 57). Nevertheless, there are considerable restrictions and limits to multilateral discourse, active participation, pluralistic *producersage*, and subsequently the emergence of online public forums within the digital environment, caused by multiple complex factors.

Hegemonies 2.0? - Criticism on Digital Democracy and Online Public Spheres

Various observers expressed fundamental criticism on optimistic assessments of the internet's democratic potential on online public spheres. First of all, the allegedly open accessibility of the internet, thus *weblogs*, does not mean that online debates are naturally "healthy and fruitful" (Koop, 2008, p. 155). Though the internet has indeed broadened access to information, this development has not led to an improvement of democracy per se (Ettinghausen, p. 2005). The basic question is how political are the many blogs, tweets, online groups etc.? Enthusiastic utopian positions generally share a certain idealistic perspective on the whole media convergence development. Concerning the *blogosphere*, certain blog types were soon perceived as "watchdogs" (Scott, 2007, p. 40) or a "fifth state" (Cooper, 2006), as an alternative to established news media and PR sources. Some bloggers may become "citizen journalists" or media pundits (Barlow, 2007; Rettberg, 2008), whose writings are consumed by users, politicians, and 'classic' journalists equally. However, this label is not applicable to the majority of content-producing users. Just like in any other social system, hierarchies and power relations determine the actual extent of equality, inclusion, and participation on and between blogs. The accumulation of not only cultural and economic but also political and social capital can be decisive for the scope of a blogger. Producers, who implement successful online strategies, benefit from the "informational chaos" (Jenkins, 2006, p. 180) by exposing themselves above the flood of their less talented competitors, of which many pass by unread. It is difficult for a badly connected/hyperlinked blogger to draw attention to his/her writings. A lot of these blogs end up dead, or in other words, simply become 'information waste'. Applying Aristotle's principle of ethos appears once more appropriate to understand why certain media producers possess more cultural capital, i.e. are more popular than others. Foucault's discourse analysis also provides an appropriate method to analyse the power relations, hierarchies and hegemonies in the *blogosphere*. The allegedly "critical and self-reflective culture" of the web (Blenker, 2006, p. 15) does not include all citizens equally; education and media literacy are only two filters. If a user does not exactly know how to search, evaluate, and use content, the endless oceans of information and possibilities for active involvement become useless. The technological skills influence to what extent he/she understands the infrastructure of the web (Hargittai, 2008, p. 85), i.e. how to navigate cleverly through cyberspace. Subsequently, access to and accumulation of this knowledge determines the degree of possible participation on online politics. Several surveys have thereby indicated that users – for both reading and creating of political blogs are mainly white educated men between the ages of 18 and 34 (Lusoli & Ward, 2005, p. 15). This implies age, gender, race, and social differences. Blog authors and recipients appear not to mirror the diversity of the total population or electorate respectively, though indications towards increasing plurality are recognisable (Royal, 2008). "Universal access" (Hamelink, 2000, p. 85) and digital equality largely remain a utopia. Whole regions only have limited access to the internet, especially in the so-called developing countries. Within the frame of western democratic nation states, lower social segments often cannot afford the required technological equipment too.

In most African countries for instance, blogging is only a recent trend. Most blogs are mainly focused on entertainment news rather than specifically for political reasons. Even though very little literature exists as regard the level to which the

internet fosters democracy in Africa, Hyden et. al (2003) argue similarly that Africans use the internet for more non-political reasons than political. Irrespective of the fact that the birth of the internet can be said to have brought significant change for individuals, previous studies have shown that a huge percentage of the continent's population is still absent from the web. This is not surprising since the continent still battles with a lot of issues such as poor internet facilities, power supply, broadband width, and computer literacy.

Although the percentage of online households as regard computer usage constantly increases worldwide, there are still a large number of people excluded from cyberspace, not because of economic reasons. Only a small (but growing) percentage is capable of effectively using the technological advancements for their benefit. There are an even smaller number of people who can fully understand and manipulate the code behind the user's surface. Castells (2004, p. 47) distinguishes between two types of Internet-users, 1. The producer-user who possesses the knowledge and skills to form the infrastructure, i.e. the web itself, 2. The consumer-user, who is the receiver of manufactured software and computer systems and represents the vast majority.

Summarily, in this article, the first factor of assessment which is the most important is that users must have interest in political issues before they visit and even comment on political blogs. The extent of accessibility, thus participation and consumption, is determined by a wide range of different cultural, sociological, and technological factors which take effect in several dimensions.

Moreover, established media producers, corporations, government institutions and political organisations significantly increase their efforts to make use of the new media (including blogs). This implies the establishment of old hegemonies on the internet, as they can often build on accumulated cultural, economic and political capital. Traditional media producers like newspapers or broadcasters soon provided official homepages and created numerous blogs on various topics, producing 'cross-media' content to meet the challenges of the 21st century information market. Their brand aura therefore gives them advantages in the competition for 'clicks'.

As an unimaginably wide space for 'publicness', digital PR practices become increasingly important too (Bainbridge, 2008, p. Lovink, 2007, p. 9). Just like their counterparts in the free market (e.g. corporate blogs), political PR enters the domains of user-created content with professional information products like party or candidate blogs. The medium offers several potential advantages; it speeds up communication, provides a cheap and easy way to manage online presence, enables the establishment of networks, and allows the publishing of 'house-made' news quickly. Hence, blogs are not reserved for everyday users. In this respect, the emergence of professional blogs, i.e. written by journalists, PR-agents, or the like, once more contradict the predicted "death of the author" (Barthes, 1977). The advancing "colonisation" (Dahlberg, 2007, p. 58), i.e. professionalization of the *blogosphere* entails further potential restrictions to equality on the internet. Again, it was Habermas who anticipated this process, though in a pre-internet context, he identified tendencies towards a "refeudalisation" of the public sphere by hegemonic elements like governments, political organisations or corporations (Habermas, 1996, p. 231). To some, this very development continues today. Dean (2005, p. 3) argues for instance

that neither engaged debates nor counter-hegemonies could ever evolve. Established institutions would rather enhance their usage of the new media. Political elites generally attempt to preserve their power over political information and even its “ideological range” (Woodly, 2008, p. 111).

Jodi Dean (2005) goes even further in her critical evaluation of web communication and states that online activities could never be political, due to their very nature. Her argument resembles certain parallels to the basic cultural criticism Adorno and Horkheimer expressed in their *Dialectics of Enlightenment* 63 years ago. She elaborates her rather pessimistic theory in explaining the mechanisms of “communicative capitalism”, which determines structure, functionality, as well as outcomes of contemporary media culture that prohibits real democracy. “The proliferation, distribution, acceleration, and intensification of communicative access and opportunity, far from enhancing democratic governance or resistance, results in precisely the opposite, the post-political formation of communicative capitalism” (Dean, 2005, p. 3). Basically all principles of democracy like access, inclusion, participation, and discussion are “commodified” (Dean, 2005, p. 5). This would fundamentally contradict democratic principles. The bottom line is, instead of becoming “critical-reflexive citizens” (Dahlberg, 2005, p. 94) individuals remain mere consumers of precast products; ideas like political participation are nothing more than myths or fantasies, guided by a “technological fetish” (Dean, 2005, p.14). Every action online contributes to the illusions of the internet and leaves no impact on the real, offline world. People feel like they would be involved in “politics” but in fact they are not, as they only engage in closed, biased contexts (Dean, 2005, p. 30). Hence, the political efficacy of internet communication is very limited. Loads of information become obsolete as comments, messages, posts etc. get lost in the masses of contributions, which form the so-called ‘information overload’; disorientation, and even anxiety are possible consequences (Bell et al., 2004, p.113). Her sobering assessments are supported by observations of authors like Lovink, who characterises independent political blogs as “the outsourced, privatised test beds, or rather the unit tests of the big media” (2007, p. 8). Blogs would be a “technology of itself”, in the sense of Foucault, and they are more of a manifestation of media culture’s cynical zeitgeist than a democratising force (Lovink, 2007, p.12). The medium emerged without really being needed and it will probably be replaced by the next communicative online invention (Lovink, 2007, p. 11). He also scrutinises the dismantling of the traditional media, as no longer trusting them cannot be positive for a society in the long-run (Lovink, 2007, p. 17). Others tune in when they speak for instance about the “myth of digital democracy” (Hindman, 2009), in reference to myths à la Roland Barthes (1993). These observations are well argued and show the obvious limits to the “techno-determinism” (Lovink, 2007, p. 18), which ontologically drives optimistic assessments of new media/blogs. Furthermore, some positions state that all the modes of exclusion actually undermine the development of truly open public spheres online, as no “indefinite audience” can ever be addressed (Bohman, 2004, p.132). However, this evaluation would imply that public spheres actually never existed since exclusion is a phenomenon which also occurred variedly in pre-internet times. Besides, though within a limited frame, websites and blogs are basically accessible to a broad public.

Altogether, all these sceptical assessments are not unchallenged. Not all forms of online communication can be labelled as foreclosing political progress or prohibiting deliberative discourse (Dahlberg, 2007, p.59). For instance, Zhang et al. state in their examination of the relationship between social network media and political behaviour that “the Internet sometimes serves as a catalyst for building communities and as a networking tool for civic participation” (2009, p. 78). Hence, online activities and blog discourses can have an actual impact on the real, offline world; though it is still not clear which actual relevance such contributions outside the web exactly have (Drezner&Farell, 2008). It is also a fact that blogs extend access to information on actually every political organisation, whether established or alternative/fractional. Research projects indicate that internet usage can indeed influence people’s political attitudes, and that small but detectable differences to non-users exist (Robinson et al., 2004, p. 252). As mentioned before, several incidents in the USA highlight this aspect; individual politicians used blogs for successful campaigning/fundraising (Meraz, 2007, p. 59). Though the majority of blog-content is indeed simply noise, there are examples which illustrate the medium’s political potential. The task is to distinguish between online modes of political communication and to compare quantity as well as quality of deliberation/participation. Nevertheless, critical theories on new media and digital democracy give fruitful insights into the political economy of blog-communication and point to important coherences one has to consider when approaching the issue.

Public Sphere, Shattered Sphere; On Pluralism and Fragmentation

In general, the discussion in this article has shown that plurality principally is an inherent attribute of the internet. Diversity occurs on at least two meta-levels: Firstly, as regards the structure of the media system of a society, and secondly, inside the manifold discourses facilitated by the technological framework. Thus, the internet has contributed significantly to the pluralisation of the public by providing countless sources of content form the “networked information economy” (Benkler, 2006, p. 30-32; Dean, 2005, p. 27). A very important aspect is as regard ‘choice’, users have the opportunity to select from an enormous variety of content. By doing so, they can create a personalised ‘information menu’; this strategy has also been labelled “information diet” (2007, p. 77), opposed to the popular term ‘infobesity’. In this context Bell (2004) states that “narrowcasting” would replace broadcasting; the world we live in would be *glocal*, more pluralistic and multilateral: “Narrowcasting has replaced broadcasting, even though the sources of the narrowcasts are anywhere and everywhere, and the breadth of coverage in terms of content unimaginably wide. So multimedia culture is at once global (in reach) and local (i.e. personalised); it is *glocal*” (Bell, 2007, p. 78). This assessment is largely traceable, for example by observing phenomena like the *blogosphere*, *Youtube*, *Flickr* etc. It also implies a further fragmentation of already diverse public spheres into virtually multitudinous smaller ones, as each blog-post, *Youtube*clips, etc. offer small forums in which individuals can communicate with each other (Hindman, 2009, p. 271). It is assumable that the media consumption of recipients of online content is also influenced by “specific predispositions or motives and social-psychological characteristics” (Papacharissi, 2007, p. 29). The so-called ‘*Uses-and-Gratification-Approach*’ (Katz, 1959) provides an appropriate theoretical framework to examine

'media-usage-patterns' of recipients if it is correctly applied to the contemporary phenomena of the internet. A study conducted by the *Pew Internet Project* in 2004 has shown that through online communication channels, mostly like-minded people enter political discourse (Resnick, 2004). A number of theorists critically observed this development towards dispersed audiences (Benkler, 2006), and pointed to certain problems, limitations and even risks for democracy caused by fragmentation. They point to the dichotomy of contemporary pluralism, precisely because individuals can choose from countless sources. By so doing, they can choose whatever they like and can avoid confrontation with content which might contradict their personal points of view. Cass Sunstein elaborates this aspect in his *Homophily Theory*; he defines 'choice' as a filter and catalyser for polarisation (Sunstein, 2007, p. 49; Sunstein, 2008), which would lead to "balkanisation", the emergence of closed groups consisting of people who share the same ideology. Discourses among them would foreclose the exchange with diverging opinions and reinforce existing viewpoints/attitude. Moreover, if people sharing the same ideology enter debates, they would often depart even more radical than they were at the beginning (Sunstein, 2007, p. 60-64).

The '*spiral-of-silence-theory*' (Noelle-Neuman, 1972) has got to be considered in this context, too. The provider of a blog therefore can fully control who participates in a debate on his/her articles by 'moderating', i.e. to approve or delete a comment. Therefore, the level of pluralism has to be assessed for every blog discourse. Extreme cases of fragmentation, and an obvious downside of free communication in liberal societies, are online discourses among terrorists, racists, and neo-fascists. On the whole, this is a rather pessimistic assessment of the democratic potential online as it defines the internet as a catalyser for insulation. These observations contradict basic principles of deliberative discourse in public spheres like contestation and pluralism (Munger, 2008, p. 134). However, Sunstein simultaneously points out that online fragmentation can have, to a certain extent, positive effects in form of "enclave deliberation" (Meraz, 2007, p. 62), and the connection of alternative grass root networks by making geographical distances obsolete (2007, p. 76). He argues that "in this light that enclave deliberation promotes the development of positions that would be otherwise invisible, silenced, or squelched in general debate" (Sunstein, 2007, p. 77). Hence, ideologically homogenous blogs can stimulate political activity for a particular party or organisation (Zhang et al., 2009, p. 79). Group polarisation can consequently enhance the array of arguments within public discourses. However, one has to keep in mind that in every group or discourse, hierarchies exist and hegemonies evolve. This aspect can limit the democratic pluralism on the micro-level of each blog. Furthermore, *Homophily Theory* does not have to apply on every type of political blog; especially political parties, independent "A-list"-bloggers, and news media blogs which have large interest in attracting a broad readership, for economic and political reasons. Empirical findings imply that the internet can indeed contribute "to a wider awareness of political argument" (Resnick, 2004). Concepts like balkanisation and fragmentation nevertheless provide important indications for the further assessment of deliberative-democratic discourse on blogs.

Finally, the digital, web-based information society potentially inhabits countless online public spheres which tend to be demarcated along contextual (i.e.

content, ideology etc.) and technical (i.e. format) lines. Within the frame of the internet, the *blogosphere* provides a ‘meta-space’ in which different arrays of blog conglomerates exist on a ‘meso-level’, each constituted by a specific ‘topic’ or discourse, respectively. Thus, the *blogosphere* can be ‘mapped’ into contextually closed areas (Reese, 2007). Blog networks can also be separated by factors like gender or race/ethnicity (Harp & Tremayne, 2006, p. 258). Again, within these “blog-clouds” (Lovink, 2007), e.g. political blogs, collectives of weblogs form further subspaces for interaction. However, each particular article/post can be perceived as an even smaller level of public encounter as, 1. The article’s topic frames a possible (sub) discourse, 2. The comment function virtually allows the development of debates. 3. Via linking, all levels can be connected to each other. Certain chances for participation, hence deliberative discourse exist but access seems to be restricted due to various reasons in several dimensions.

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Social Media and Dissemination of False Information in Nigeria: A Threat to National Security

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Abstract

This paper sets out to justify social media falsehood as a threat to national security. Caught in the web of globalization and post-modernism, the advent of social media in Nigeria has encouraged the incessant and indiscriminate circulation of falsehood and aided societal crimes such as fraud, and scam. Above all, such falsehood has constituted untold threat to national peace and security. The methodology employed in this paper includes a random survey and analyses of few cases of social media falsehood circulation in Nigeria. The discussions on the implications of falsehood circulation on Nigeria should make Nigerians to understand the need to exercise caution in the process of communication on social media platforms. The paper comes out with recommendations on how to reduce the menace of falsehood circulation to the advantage of Nigeria's peace and national security.

Key terms: Social Media, Falsehood, National Security.

Introduction

The advent of social media use in Nigeria has changed the face of journalism, promoted social interactions and bridged communication gap among users to a reasonable extent. First, the process of gathering and disseminating information to members of the public has been made much easier on face book and twitters, and even faster than publishing news in the print media in contemporary times. For example, the Dana air crash of Sunday, June 3, 2012 in Nigeria was published first on face book and other social media before the news was cast on the international broadcast media. Second, the social media have made it possible for users to find friends whom they may have lost contact with for a long time and to maintain constant interaction among them. However, the social media have abated the evolvment of a new kind of journalism know as "public journalism"- a practice where anyone who has access to the media can report and publish any information to inform, to educate or to entertain other users.

The advent of social media in Nigeria has raised more issues than solutions. The emergence of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Blackberry Messenger and You Tube have changed the face of journalism practice by making

information sharing easier, faster and quicker. But this is not without demerits. Despite the functional attributes of the social media in Nigeria, most Nigerians are no longer at home with the system which they consider as playing more dysfunctional roles. In Nigeria, 4.6 million Nigerians are on facebook while twitter is the 6th most popular website (Attiah 2012:1).

Most Nigerians on facebook reacted angrily to the President of Nigerian Senate, Senator David Mark's suggestion that the social media in the country should be censored. The Senate President's suggestion was instigated by his reasoning that Nigerians use social media to demean their leaders, especially as there is no avenue for retraction of criticism. Perhaps, that was not the first time that the social media were raising dust in the country. Recently, the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria did emphasize the need for social media users to exercise the highest level of caution in sending out and spreading false information that may be generated by users whom the Senate President David Mark described as "faceless characters who are out to falsify and mislead Nigerians without retraction" (Ologbondiyan2012:13).

The issue of circulation of false and misleading information in the social media has never been serious in Nigeria than now. Not too long ago, two hoax text messages attributed to Pastor Adeboye of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Nigeria were circulated round to social media users. The text warned the patrons of social media to desist from wearing any red cloth or red outfits including red shirts, red trousers, red pants, red skirts, red head warmer or anything with a touch of red. The Pastor denied disseminating such information (Adeyemo, 2012). Cynthia Osokogu, an indigene of Delta State in Nigeria, a daughter of a retired army Major, a Business Administration and Masters Degree student at Nassarawa State University before her demise, was gruesomely murdered by a group of young men she met on the social media platform. She was invited over to Lagos for a meeting and was allegedly poisoned to death. The event led to a call by many Nigerians that the unlimited freedom which people have in the social networking media should be regulated (Kumolu 2012).

Most false and misleading information on the social media now constitute threats to national security. For instance, few days after members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in Batch B of the year 2012 resumed at the orientation camp in Bauchi, Nigeria, a section of the social media users posted and circulated information on facebook and twitters that members of Boko Haram (an Islamic Sect against Western Education) had detonated bombs at the Bauchi Orientation camp killing about 50 persons including corps members. It took the visit of the Bauchi State Governor to the camp and a national wide broadcast to discountenance the information which he described as false and totally misleading and mischievous.

Again, between 17th and 19th of August, 2012, text messages made rounds on the social media that some members of Boko Haram have been arrested in Calabar, Cross River State of Nigeria. The State Security services in the state in a release to Cross River Broadcasting Corporation (CRBC) refuted the information and described it as false and misleading. Such false and misleading information, as may be unknown to users of the social media who generate such dubious ideas, constitute gross threat to state security, not only at the state levels, but also at the national level in our society.

Social media have become a threat to ethics of media practice and general security. The abuse of opportunities created by these social media and the subsequent implications of threats to national security are only some of the dysfunctions of the social media. Basic contentions in this paper can be articulated thus: first, the social media are playing positive roles in facilitating information; second, the freedom or license offered by the social media to public journalism may lead to gross abuse of ethics of information circulation as already happening; third, the false and misleading information circulated at will by social media users to others are capable of constituting serious threats to national security; and fourth, if proactive measures are not employed to arrest the trend of social media as communication technology threats in Nigeria, the country will surely head for doom in the nearest future. The thrust of this paper is to demystify and justify social media falsehood as threats to national security in Nigeria and to proffer possible solutions.

The Concept and Dynamism of Social Media

The term 'social' is applied to recreational, pleasure-oriented interactions with others, or any interaction involving two or more people in the society (Calhoun and Acocella 1978:196). The term 'social' has been used in numerous disciplines as an adjective to describe other terms. It is common to hear of social interaction, social club, social democracy, social exclusion, social housing and a lot more. While the term 'social' connotes 'interaction', the sociological perspective holds that 'social' relates to society and leisure activities that involve meeting other people and relating with them based on acceptable norms. 'Social', when considered as descriptive of the media, ordinarily denotes society's members' unhindered interaction with others with the aid of available channels of communication.

The term 'social media' has been used arbitrarily to refer to any medium of communication that facilitates the flow of information among members of a group or society. The meaning and concept of social media assumed a different dimension following the addition of computer and internet capabilities to cell phones in 2003 (Ike 2005:260). Although it is on record that social networking on mobile networks started in 1999 with basic chatting and texting services, the introduction of various technologies on the mobile social networks is more responsible for the geometrical proliferation of the social media use which has reached an advanced level through four generations (Andreas 2012:6). The first generation began between 1999 and early 2000 with pre-installed features such as text only and chat-via-chat rooms on mobile handsets. The second generation began in 2004 through 2006 with the introduction of 3G and camera phones, with added features such as uploading photos, mobile search for persons based on profile, contacting or flirting with persons anonymously, especially for dating purposes.

The third generation of mobile social networks started in 2006 and was adopted widely in 2008/2009. This generation brought tremendous changes and made mobile social networks as a part of daily life. The features include richer user experience, automatic publishing to web profile and status updates, some web 2.0 features, search by group/join by interests, alerts, location based services, content sharing especially music and MMS as well as voice capture. Applications introduced were customized with general interests such as music, and mobile specific content distribution. The fourth generation began in 2008 and reached 2010. It included all

the features of the third generation; ability to hide/mask presence, asynchronous video conversation, multi point audio chat conversation with one button and multiplayer mobile gaming. The 2.0 widgets, Flash lite, open social etc were technologies that made these features possible.

'Social media' are therefore systems based on mobile social networking alone. Whereas the major systems that define social media include applications that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content (Andreas2012:1), these applications can be accessed on the computer systems just as they can be reached on the enhanced mobile phones. In this newer generation, majority of social media applications are accessed on mobile phones which have become much affordable. What make them social media are therefore the sites or applications, not the technological gadgets. 'Social media' refers to the array of internet based tools and platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, My space and Social Book Marking tools and news sites such as Digg, Delicious, Mixx and countless others that increase and enhance the sharing of information (KiserYEAR:page number). These relatively new forms of media make the transfer of text, photos, audio, video and information in general fluid among internet users. Social media are made up of online communities where people can share as much or as little personal information as they desire with other members.

The social media are highly dynamic; they can serve as platforms for dating, marketing, social mobilization, political criticisms and evangelism. Information can be created, searched, promoted, shared or disputed on the social media. They are capable of reaching a mass audience at the same time with the same information. They can, thus, be considered as agents of mass communication and socialization. Friends and relatives could communicate on facebook. This makes the social media agents of social interaction. Other users can learn a lot from the interaction of users. The social media are also platforms for preaching morals in line with religious doctrines as tools of evangelism. They can be considered as platforms for constructive criticism in the political setting. However, the use of social media can be greatly abused.

The social media are facilitators of globalization. Globalization stems from one of Marshall McLuhan's legacies "global village"- the idea that the new communication technologies will permit people to increasingly involve in one another's lives (Baran2002:84). Generally, the social theories guiding the operations of the social media postulate that social media users reflect the neutral stance implied in the concepts of objectivity and impartiality embedded in the dominant professional ideology in the media. The media are thus expected to reflect a multifaceted reality, as truthful and objectively as possible, free from any bias, especially the biases of the professionals engaged in recording and reporting events to the outside world (Curran, Gurevitch and Woollacot2000: 21-22).

Another theory which explained the dynamisms of the social media includes Albert Bandura, Dorothea Ross and Sheila Ross's "Social Learning Theory" which states that individuals' attitudes are influenced by media content through attention, retention and motivation to act (Ike, 210). The Social Responsibility theory on the other hand holds that the journalist (here message sender) must perform a public service to warrant their existence by properly informing the public and responding to society's needs.

National Security in Nigeria

Security is a term that is approached from numerous dimensions. Security has been a subject that has attracted a rapidly growing interest and concern among scholars in social science. Today, scholars in the arts and humanities are also in search of new breakthroughs and findings, believing that possible solutions to security matters from all spheres of human existence would contribute to the development of a nation and actualization of peace and order in all levels of human relations. Ordinarily, security is concerned with the protection and safety of life and property of a person. However, the concept of security has undergone a transition from traditional conceptualization to a non-traditional meaning. Professionally, security has been defined in line with contemporary trends to mean:

...an all-encompassing condition in which the individual citizens live in freedom, peace and safety; participate fully in the process of governance; enjoy the protection of fundamental rights; have access to resources and the basic necessities of life; and inhabit an environment which is not detrimental to their health and social wellbeing... not only in terms of the internal security of the state, but also in terms of secure systems of food, health, money and trade (South African White Paper On Defense 2006:1).

The above definition encapsulates the meaning of national security because of the special attention it pays to citizens' freedom, peace and safety. National security is therefore concerned with the peace, freedom and safety of a people within a country. The attributes of peace, freedom and safety ranges from physiological to psychological security; beginning from physical protection, political protection, social protection and safety and economic protection to health security and general wellbeing. The absence of national security results naturally in security that is capable of derailing the potential development of a nation.

In Nigeria, major national security challenges at the moment include: political violence, extremism, communal violence and the Niger Delta Segra. Individually, these issues are harmful to Nigeria's vital interest in maintaining peace, security and national unity. Combined, these challenges pose a serious threat to Nigeria's viability and security as a nation. Political violence is exemplified in general protests after elections such as the recent events in some parts of northern Nigeria which left a good number of people dead. Extremism is personified in the Boko Haram's claims of fighting against the tenets of Western education and insistence that the Sharia Law be enthroned in all parts of Nigeria, consequent upon which has resulted to senseless killings of innocent Nigerians, especially Christians who are always been attacked in their places of worship.

The recent Jos crises-bombings and communal fighting between the Fulani herdsmen and their co-inhabitants of Jos, Plateau State – are good examples of communal clashes. The persistent fighting and blowing up of petroleum pipelines in the Niger Delta by the militants appears to be endless, even though concerted efforts are made to reduce the phenomenon to the barest minimum. The charades of activities are capable of discouraging investors from investing in the country. The

first version of the national security strategy for the Federal Republic of Nigeria was completed in May 2011, after seven months of research. The research for the paper was undertaken by people within the communities most impacted by insecurity across Nigeria. All their research was collated and assessed thematically but whether the recommendations will be implemented or not leaves more to be imagined.

Other security problems currently confronting the nation include socio-economic agitations, boundary disputes, cultism, criminality and organized crimes such as internet fraud using the social media. These problems also constitute threats to peace, security and development of the country.

Threats to National Security

Communication, as a process of sharing information, ideas and feelings between two or among more persons (Tubes and Moss 1991:15), can therefore be regarded as a threat when the stimulus (the idea) initiated and intended by the sender or the source is injurious to the image or reputation of a person, a group, a community or a nation. This is based on the inference that a threat to a person or a thing is a danger that something unpleasant might happen to them. In a nation, threats occasioned by communication ideas may give rise to general insecurity (Political, social and economic insecurity), including fear of disunity, fear of war, fear of possible eruption of violence, economic regression, social annihilation and religious quarantine.

The social media, situated within the ambience of interpersonal and mass communication, have involved the participation of all those who have access to the technological gadgets that bear the platforms for communication. These interactive communicators are known as users. There are six different types of social media namely collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia), blogs and micro blogs (e.g. Twitter), content communities (e.g. YouTube), social networking sites (e.g. Facebook), virtual game worlds (e.g. World of Warcraft) and virtual social worlds (e.g. Second Life) (Andreas 2012:2). Technologies of social media include blogs, picture-sharing, Vlogs, wall-postings, e-mails, instant messaging, music-sharing, crowd sourcing and voice over IP to name a few. Social media network websites therefore include sites like Facebook, Twitter, Bebo and MySpace.

In Nigeria, social media services have enabled identity building, conversations, information and experience sharing, presence and reputation building, evolving relationships and group building. However, the use of social media by Nigerian users has been both normal and abnormal. The abnormal use of the social media by Nigerians has resulted to the abuse of the channels of social interaction. This is primarily attributed to the fact that Nigerian users have abused the opportunities offered by the platforms for sharing ideas. The uncontrolled participation of most users in the process of gathering, disseminating and sharing information through the social media has culminated to what is known today as 'public journalism'.

Public journalism however warrants participation of unauthorized sources in the sharing of information where participants almost always generate ideas, or information out of sheer imagination or infatuation with the aim of stirring and heating the polity. Others circulate rumour from heresies, and once such information

connects other users, recipients of such ideas make the issue a near-belief. This amounts to gross abuse of the use of social media in Nigeria.

Recently, text messages have adorned the pages of face book users in Nigeria. Most of the contents in summary such as “Boko Haram members have been arrested in Calabar, Cross River State”, “Boko Haram members bomb NYSC camp in Bauchi”, “Boko Haram members plan to bomb more public places of worship”, “Avoid wearing outfits with Red colours”, among others, have been confirmed to be false with little or no iota of truth in most cases. The most recent of such contents read “USA has found a new cancer in human beings caused by silver Nitro Oxide so don’t scratch recharge cards with your nails otherwise you will contract skin cancer, share this with your loved ones”.

Another piece that shook almost the whole nation was the text that warned social media users to desist from answering calls from any strange number, the consequence which was purported death. Recently, too some information on the social media were circulated that “there are deadly sanitary pads that were making ladies bleed to death with the name “DARIES”, it’s a new product in stores and has killed 53 ladies in AkwaIbom State. It makes your vagina to bleed like you are having heavy flow at night and makes you bleed to death without knowing, send this to all your female friends”.

These messages have the tendency to destabilize citizens socially and politically. Most worrisome is the unnecessary name calling, mud-sliding abuses and use of faulty inferences and interpretations towards political office holders and some official culprits who may be standing trial and whom the court may not have adjudged as criminals. The charade of abuses especially within the political sector is capable of bringing the Nigerian political system to ridicule before the international community. Such communications are also capable constituting general threat to national security. Some of such messages are even purported to be the efforts of mischievous persons who intend to run down their competitors in the market.

Conclusion/Discussions

This study views communication, through the social media in Nigeria by users, as constituting a partial threat to national security in Nigeria. From the foregoing, national security has been considered as the experiences of freedom, peace and safety of life and property of the citizens of the country, and the freedom to exercise their franchise as citizens in the process of governance. National security is therefore considered in this paper as a necessary concern and responsibility of all citizens of the nation. This implies that the definition of national security has departed from mere protection of lives and property by the security forces. National security has rather assumed a participatory form where the citizens need to exercise caution in whatever they do or say in public.

Unfortunately, this study reliably reveals that, with the advent of the social media and their sites such as facebook, twitters and 2-go among including other applications that facilitate the circulation of information to other users at the same time, the channels of social interaction have been abused rather than used. Ordinarily, social media are technological systems that emerged with applications and websites for users to interact with their loved ones, date, other useful information, entertain or mobilize other users towards a just cause. However, the channels are used as avenues

for transmitting deceptive messages, fraud and political abuses, thereby publishing falsehood, projecting the nation's image in negative light and heating up the polity against smooth democratic survival in Nigeria.

The fact is that the inventors of the social media have not devised any means for screening users of the channels. Thus, anyone who possesses the wherewithal to purchase a mobile phone or a computer accessory with the applications and website of the social media is qualified as a user. The ultimate result of general participation in a forum for sharing information is the evolution of "public journalism"- a situation where anyone can publish on the website what he evolves, what he thinks or believes, or what he or she feels without weighing the possible national security implications for such information sharing. The security implications of such unprofessional practice in the country include, but not limited to:

- i. Exposure of Nigerians and other residents to unnecessary anxieties through circulation of false information to citizens of Nigeria, which causes fear or unnecessary panic among them, and challenges free movement even in parts of the country the cases of violence and destruction of lives and property are minimal or non existence.
- ii. Generation of anti-economic information that would prevent users of goods and services in Nigeria, including foreigners, from participating freely in the buying of products which may be purported to be harmful to users;
- iii. Representation of Nigeria in negative light and confirmation of Nigerian citizens as a den of fraudsters who survive on scam using the social media to rob unsuspecting members of the country and the international community of their hard-earned income;
- iv. Gross violation of citizen's rights and freedom to expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference, as enshrined in the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Section 39, subsection 1.
- v. Possible destruction of Nigeria's growing democracy through unconstructive dialogue and/or communication about public or political office holders with the intent to destroy their reputation and distract them from performing the duties for which they were elected.

All these constitute a threat to national security and only the entrenchment of appropriate measures can allow for the continuous existence of social media and national security in Nigeria. In this light, this study recommends that:

- i. Mobile communication service providers in Nigeria (MTN, Airtel, Etisalat, Glo and so on) should organize periodic training workshops for users of their products that facilitate access to the use of social media. The training workshops should enlighten the users on the need to employ ethical communication on the social media; communication that would not in any way be adjudged as inimical to national security in Nigeria.
- ii. The call for censorship of social media contents in Nigeria by some highly placed Nigerian politicians is quite improper. Rather, professional journalists should disregard the use of such social media contents as a reference point for gathering and disseminating serious information, nor as information material or basis for probing public official in the quest for transparency and respect for the rule of law.

- iii. The national, regional and state mass media in Nigeria should undertake a stronger Corporate Social Responsibility function of countering information being circulated by some mischief makers, especially upon discovery that the information is false, in order to allay fears that may generate feelings of insecurity among Nigerian citizens and residents of the country.
- iv. The Religious institution should undertake the responsibility of working on their members to view the negative implications of dispersing such falsehood and desist from such acts.
- v. All Nigerians should believe and understand that the task of promoting national security is the responsibility of every citizen, if Nigeria must remain united.

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Theatre for Development Praxis: A Dialogue

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Abstract

Theatre for Development (TfD) as praxis is generally seen as an approach that transcends most barriers which the conventional theatre experiences - barriers of language, participation, functionality and so forth. In Nigeria, the practice of Theatre for Development has always championed the philosophy of empowering the masses and developing rural areas. This paper discusses the pedagogy of TfD highlighting its potential in enhancing development and or social change. Its intention also is to discuss TfD as a process and its role in social education that makes it a tool for social engagement. The paper, therefore, submits that, the process of TfD seeks to open up dialogue with and not just perform for the beneficiaries of change or development.

KEY WORDS: Theatre for Development, Praxis, Dialogue

Introduction

Drama performances possess the potential and ability to enhance social development because plays that are put together attempt to capture the lives of the people and their problems. Again, drama is a participatory art which allows for live or present communication more than any other medium, it allows an immediate dialogue between the participants where the audience themselves become speakers. Steve (2005:xiv-xv) reiterates this when he says that:

TfD has become an instrument for instigating people centered development in the field outside of the academe... An instrument for mobilization and for instigation of participation in the development process.

Iorapuu (2008:4) defines it "as a theatre approach that seeks to make possible development education and action from the perspective of the 'people' through the use of familiar cultural and democratic forms".

This means that, an audience of any development programme that embraces the TfD approach through the post performance discussion is moved to a new resolve that enable the audience to identify with the open reflection on issues presented and encourages a critical thinking through personal involvement in the analysis of the drama episodes. Friere (1970: 9) describing the process of change in behaviour feels that the mind of the individuals that participate in this exercise becomes opened to

new ideas such that people begin to perceive: “ [...] A new awareness of selfhood and begin to look critically at the social institution in which they find themselves”. It is a tool of communication and consciousness raising, that involves identifying problems and seeking solutions to such problems with the full participation of the people for whom change or development is desired.

Perhaps, this informs why Illah (2004:10) describes Theatre for Development as “a mode of popular theatre that seeks to dialogue and participate with and not just for communities...” Illah further argues that, Theatre for Development allows facilitators and amateurs to take theatre to the people. It is indeed, a practice which is anchored on the grassroots approach to education and development. This paper, discusses Tfd as an approach with a focus on its pedagogy and how it enhances development and change. Its intention also, is to discuss Tfd as a process and its role in social education that makes it a tool for social engagement.

Discourse

Theatre for Development (Tfd) as an approach has its roots in the philosophy of empowerment. It uses local materials and enables the audience to make use of the tools it offers to make sense out of an issue so as to change their realities. Theatre is powerful because it creates an aesthetic space in which issues are magnified and dichotomized.

This art can be said to be telescopic because it pulls and brings close things in the distance and enlarges small things. What this means is that, Tfd does not limit itself to exploring the material aspects of people’s lives but provides means of exploring and addressing dynamic issues affecting people. As such, theatre moves beyond its exhilarating qualities and creates an encounter among participants, that interrogates their lives through the episodes that relate real life episodes, which lead to an encounter moves, from the fiction created to an encounter for life, that transforms as a result of the ‘**realizations**’ that emerge through the interaction.

The core issue here is not feeding people with information in a top down model of interventions. The drama approach to education begins with what people know and works with them as subjects, rather than objects to be handed information.

Crispin, and Muriithi (1998:1) reiterating this posit that;

the Tfd approach is an alternative to the paternalistic, elitist, urban based media sources, planned and directed by powerful policy makers and sophisticated media producers who assume they know the right direction for development and changes needed by those whom they see as voiceless, ignorant villagers.

Participatory performance on the one hand, places priority on working with the people and using their own modes of communication to enable small communities look at their own situations, to analyze their own problems with the aim of arousing and stimulating target groups to take desired steps to improve their well being. Baz (1992,5) agrees with this when he says that “this type of performances; ... represent a theatre of social engagement, a theatre primarily committed to bringing about actual change in specific communities”.

This type of theatre is anti Aristotle in the sense that the dramatist engages the audience with a view of turning history from its set course. It is imperative to emphasize here that, while we use theatre to empower, we as practitioners should not

force people to change nor do things they do not want to do. This is because when theater ‘opens the eyes’ of the people or target groups – conscientizes; the next thing is doing what they have learned – the action phase. However, doing or changing as a result of what they (individuals or communities) have discovered through the theatre is a matter of choice. They have to decide when and how they want the change. In other words, they initiate change in their own terms.

Invariably, we can say that Tfd while it makes use of discussions, focus of such discussions is geared towards visualizing why and how changes might be necessary and how they will be achieved and realized. As such, Tfd can be described as an instrument of empowerment for the socially deprived individuals.

Kidd (1984:267) writing on popular culture and formal education submit that:
Popular theatre (Tfd) is used as a means of bringing people together, building confidence and solidarity, stimulating discussion, exploring alternative options for action, and building a collective commitment to change; starting with people’s urgent concerns and issues; it encourages reflections on these issues and possible strategies to change.

To this end, the theatrical medium is harnessed to arouse consciousness among the masses at the grass roots who are struggling to draw their attention to the problems and issues at hand that permeate the society. In other words, Tfd is a dramatic technique employed by drama activists in reaching their audience. It is a means of putting across information and development messages. People through this approach, are made aware of their situation, and are encouraged to critically analyze the situation and take action towards collectively solving such problems. Suffice to say that, Tfd as an approach focuses on generating impact that goes beyond the limit of mere existence but projects into a limit where minds meet and are prodded to react towards a given target to better lives. What can be rightly termed “play for learning”. Okwori, (2005:119) reiterates this when he says; “Theatre can do more than entertainment. It can go beyond fiction to intervene in reality because it is based on it”.

The role of popular performance in social education has been acknowledged worldwide. Theatre activists have not only acknowledged this role but have utilized popular performances for popular action. In the recent past, social education programmes particularly those geared towards development generally, have sprung up in many parts of the third world: Brazil, Mexico, Kenya, Ghana, Zambia, Tanzania, Botswana, Cameroon, Nigeria and so on. Organizers of these programmes attest to the fact that, the common starting point for social education programmes was the validation of the performing culture of the people. It was also observed that popular performing culture should not simply be seen as mere performances of folksongs and dances but events that have far reaching implication in the day to day life of the people.

This implies that, the process of using theatre to mobilize and motivate participation in the development process, as well as educate rural communities is a task that entails using drama to further enhance development. To this end, the art of performance goes beyond the point of exciting and pleasuring the audience to the point where it brings about tangible evidence of change and development in the field. Here, the cognitive value of drama as an art rests in its capacity to stir up a thought

that propels the target audience to develop an approach that conforms to the situation to address issues raised in the skits.

Ode (2008:7) writing on this describes TfD as:

... a method of non-formal education. It is simply a kind of self-development oriented theatre that involves the people fully by enabling them take control of their destinies... Here the people are expected to arise from their state of ignorance and apathy in the quest for social change. This is done through a process of making drama.

In this sense, the theatre activist automatically becomes a popular educator. As a popular educator, the theater activist(s) becomes a strong catalyst in mobilizing the people to discuss their needs in such a way that they will begin to see such needs more specifically as wants. For instance, the need for good health which is the initial stage would be stated as “if only our women would not die during delivery”, might through the able facilitation of the theatre activist specifically be put as, “we want and we intend somehow to have for ourselves safe delivery”. Obviously, such a positive and assertive statement of needs has in itself become a prime motivator and would turn the possibility of a group action into a probability.

It must be noted that the theatre activist/popular educator cannot realize this alone. The first significant step in achieving this, is by identifying key actors among the selected performers from the chosen traditional performing groups.

The theatre activist then takes the group through series of skill acquisition exercises, which put them in a better position to conduct a social education programme with the people.

These skills involve using traditional performances in setting these villagers minds in a thinking process. Once they begin to think about why they must do a specific thing such as making pregnancy safer for themselves, how and what to do to achieve this becomes easy. The performers are trained to involve their audience in after production discussions.

The role of both the performances and the theatre activists here is to use their skills to supply the stimulus for thought and action, and they do this by asking penetrating questions that will put the people in the position to think till they arrive at a plausible solution to the problem. They must also ensure that the conclusions they have reached are not only useful but achievable. There and then a workable action plan is drawn up, setting out what should be done, who will do it, when it will be done and how we get to know the successes and failures of actions further.

On the whole, team work and interactive exercises are central to the work of a popular educator for without these, most participants will become passive recipients of ready-made messages.

As such, TfD aims at social transformation which begins at grass root education aimed at the exclusive good of the people (masses), breeding liberating initiatives that permeate their whole being and communities.

Drama, stories and songs have long been used in development. Most commonly, performances that are used for development purpose by development agencies feature pre-scripted plays and catchy tunes that entertain and engage the audience in discussion as a way of getting messages across and changing attitudes and habits.

Cornwall (1997:23) writing on the role of performance and participatory

development submits that:

Like advertising jingles, such performances seek to sell particular ways of doing things by offering new and different practices which they show to be more desirable. Laughter and action draw the crowd to see characters facing the problems and practicing the solutions that development practitioners regard as the most pressing or appropriate.

TfD as an approach, makes the audience see themselves mirrored on stage and this stimulates them to look at their conditions and thereby taking steps to become involved to effect the desired change. The discourse on TfD as an approach tries to bring out an understanding of what TfD is about or what it stands for.

Among theatre activists who have been involved in this approach it is believed that the premise upon which this approach developed, is the notion of taking theatre to the people. (Alachi 2001:16). Among practitioners there is a continuum from those who believe and focus on the use of community based research to create fairly polished performances to be staged by experienced actors and used as a basis for discussions to those who focus on theatre that emphasizes theatre as a process of enacting everyday problems and proffering solutions to them by those who experience them.

The former, according to Kidd and Colletta (1980:288)

is used as a means to legitimizing and mobilizing participation in government development programmes...a more effective means for socializing them (the people) to accept certain information with critical reflection. This stage in the continuum, does not seek to involve the people rather it seeks to use theatre as a tool for government propaganda. The latter concerns on one hand the use of drama activists as well as development workers for performance after initial research regarding the people's problems.

The second aspect refers to the situation whereby the audience is involved in acting out their problems as well as discussion of such. With this approach, contact is made before hand with the potential audience before and during the performance. The plays that are developed subsequently are centered on the problems identified during the process of research. During performance the plays are deliberately left open ended or unfinished to trigger and motivate the participation of the audience who are invited to complete the play or contributed to them through the discussions of issues raised in the plays with catalysts. In fact, the main focus is the action which the entire process is supposed to start off.

Iorapuu (2003:59) sums it succinctly

The thrust of popular theatre or Theatre for Development is to create a kind of theatre different from the conventional bourgeois theatre, in a language that is most acceptable to the proletariat using those cultural forms that are truly theirs. The theatre reflects their struggles and how they can effect change.

The core issue here is that this approach relies on the people (the masses) or the community and its traditional art forms, in its bid towards breeding change or transformation. As such, the approach makes use of the people's traditional media such as proverbs, folk songs, dances, signs and codes and masquerades that are familiar to the people.

The AhmaduBello University, University of Ibadan, University of Jos and Benue State University popular theatre projects present good examples of this approach. Hagher (1990:10) sums this up better when he quotes Kidd (Year:Pages) thus:

The theatre performance is not the experience; it must be linked with critical analysis, organization and struggle. The performance can provide a dialectical view of the world but this must be consolidated and sharpened through dialogue and action. It must be part of a continuing process in which past action (struggle) provides the dramatic material (historical view of reality) for analysis and strategizing leading to further action.

The above quote is the praxis upon which the pedagogy of Tfd is based. Encouraging people to get a more critical understanding of the particular issue at hand and working out the channels for action. According to Kidd (1980:294) this is made possible “when discussion is woven into the post performance analysis. Acting skills are almost irrelevant here: what matters is the process which moves towards mobilization and enhancing change and development”.

The basic aim of the popular theatre approach (Tfd) is to transform the monologue traditional performance into participatory-based theatre. This is because dialogue as can be observed, is the basic trait that is common among all humans. Also, all humans are capable of dialogue and desire dialogue. It is through the process of dialogue that issues are clarified and new decisions are reached.

Alachi (1996:63) writing on the role of drama and education opines that:

popular theatre is a mass education process because it adopts a form where;... dialogue, reflection and communication that enable the people to discuss their problems with the educator, the ultimate product being action geared towards the solution of the identified problems.

This form of the theatre in essence, brings hitherto hidden issues into limelight and projects the fact that development or change cannot be done in vacuum but must seek to open up dialogue with the beneficiaries of such change. This form of theatre goes beyond mere entertainment and past time activity, but occupies a central position and serves as a platform and medium for raising and analyzing critical issues that cut across social, political and economic spheres of the people's lives.

This entails bringing together the target groups for development as well as stakeholders and development communicators to a round table talk where everybody is allowed to express his or her feelings without fear or favour. This is what marks the hallmark of participation in this approach.

Participatory drama here becomes a tool that enables people in villages and towns to become part of discussions aimed at transforming negative attitudes, habits, values and practices that may be in some cases irrelevant. The core issue here is that theatre allows everyone to participate in their activities be it singing, dancing, acting, problem analysis etc. thereby leading them to talk about their problems and make decisions to bring about development or change in their lives and communities.

CONCLUSION

... the central thrust in Tfd is that the process creates space for

critical education through the various skills explored... the Tfd approach enables people to see problems freshly as possible... and if the outcome of the performance must lead to critical action then people must not only dialogue on the issues, they must also end up with a collective understanding on what to do about the problem.

Iorapuu, 2003:164

Iorapuu's quote above, sets the tone for a conclusion to this paper because 'opening the eyes' of the people through conscientisation is not the issue but beyond conscientisation, the people for whom development is meant identify the problem and move to and or take actual steps to effect change in their lives and their communities.

It is worthy to note that, the relevance of this approach to participatory research is that it enables the participants who are the target group for change to have access to accurate, up-to-date and relevant information on issues that affect their lives through an informal context as the discussion sessions are geared towards encouraging participants to embrace positive attitudes by empowering them to learn to talk about and understand issues better.

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Theatre for Development and the Development of Theatre in Nigeria: A Critique of the New Didactic Heresy

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Abstract

Plays as pieces of dramatic composition or production are often discussed and evaluated purely from the perspective of theatrical performance. Drama can also be analyzed and evaluated on the basis of their literary form, style, or subject matter. The aim of the paper is to apply this latter form of analysis to the new genre of drama generally known as Theatre for Development in Nigeria.

The paper identifies two features which are definite problematics the main subject matter and intended audience of these plays as well as the almost wholly didactic nature of the scripts in this new genre. The literary landmines in the controversial field of developmental communication, as well as issues of didacticism which are as old as Plato, are discussed. The paper asserts that even though the contention between proponents of didacticism and those of “Art for Art’s sake” may not have yielded any clear victor, falling into the didactic heresy may lead us back to a certain prudery and philistinism which are uncharacteristic of, and wholly unsuitable for literary creations of our time and age.

The author attempts to look in some detail at these two problematics, with the hope of evaluating the contributions, whether positive or negative, of this new genre to the development of theatre in Nigeria.

Introduction

Dramatic works written for performance on the stage, radio, or television are considered as a literary genre. According to classical theorists, lyric poetry, epic poetry and drama constitute the three fundamental genres of literature. As is often the case, plays as pieces of dramatic composition or production can be discussed and evaluated purely from the perspective of theatrical performance. However, as a serious literary genre, drama is one of the categories of artistic works that can also be analyzed and evaluated on the basis of their form, style, or subject matter. The aim of this paper is to begin to apply this latter form of analysis to the new type, kind or indeed genre of drama which falls under the broad context of Theatre for Development in Nigeria.

The New Genre

In modern literary theory, the three ultimate genres correspond to their modern day equivalents and can be divided “into fiction (novel, short story, epic), drama (whether in prose or verse), and poetry (centering on what corresponds to the ancient ‘lyric poetry’)” (Wellek and Warren, 1982:227). While fiction and poetry may have evolved away from their performative epic and lyric poetry antecedents - poems and novels being “eye-read ... for the most part”, drama has remained, “as among the Greeks, a mixed art, centrally literary ... but involving also ‘spectacle’ - making use of the actor’s skill and the play director’s, the crafts of the costumer and electrician.” (Wellek and Warren, 1982:229) These three ultimate genres are now properly thought of as literary modes, each of which can be subdivided into their various forms, species or genres.

The general field of drama “ranges from tragedy to melodrama, (and) from high comedy to farce.” (Nicoll, 1943:172) These species or groupings focus on outer and inner form of the works as the basis of differentiation. Based on the writer’s attitude, purpose, subject matter as well as intended audience, it is possible to conceive of today’s popular ‘Theatre for Development’ plays as belonging to a species or genre that is unique and problematical in some ways.

Firstly, considered at the level of “performance as intervention” (Illah, 2003) the authors, directors and producers of these plays display a degree of altruistic egalitarianism that is uncharacteristic of creative artists. However suspect this may be, it is not necessarily a sticky issue. The second unique feature, and a definite problematic, is the main subject matter and intended audience of these plays. These probably reflect the noble attitudes and purpose behind these ‘Theatre for Development’ productions. However, the entire domain of developmental communication has been so engulfed in raging controversy from such different perspectives that any creative writer venturing into it will be literally walking into a terrain full of theoretical and ideological landmines. The third unique feature, which is also a serious problematic, is the almost wholly didactic nature of the scripts in this new genre. This is another literary minefield which is as old as Plato. Even though the contention between proponents of didacticism and those of “Art for Art’s sake” may not have yielded any clear victor, falling into the didactic heresy may lead us back to a certain prudery and philistinism which is uncharacteristic of, and wholly unsuitable for literary creations of our time and age. The concern of this paper is to look in some detail at these problematics, with the hope of evaluating the contributions, whether positive or negative, of this new genre to the development of theatre in Nigeria.

Didacticism through the Ages

The conviction that the main function of poetry is to teach was already established in ancient Greece before the time of Plato.

Gilbert (1943) points out that:

Poetry occupied a high place in Greek education because it was believed that from it children learned about the gods, poetical characters were worthy of imitation, and that many subjects, such as generalship, were admirably taught by Homer. Plato pointed out that Homer often represented the gods as immoral, that the complaining

and weeping of Achilles is not to be imitated, that no man was ever chosen general because he was educated through poetry (Ibid, p166).

Plato was said to have banished Homer from his republic. In a similar vein, Aristotle in his *Poetics* considered poetry as “an aesthetic phenomenon, without regard to its didactic qualities. He abandons the notion that the characters of tragedy are subjects for imitation” (Ibid, p166).

The Roman emphasis on the edification motive is best exemplified by Lucretius' *De rerum natura* which was an account of Epicurus' atomic theory of matter. Its combination of moral urgency, intellectual force, and precise observation of the physical world makes it one of the summits of classical literature. Lucretius sought to free humanity from the fear of death and of the gods, which he considered the main cause of human unhappiness, and his material was designed to instruct and convince rather than please. Indeed, Lucretius was reputed through this classic to have “written the charter of the didactic theory,” comparing the art of literature to the practice of coating medicine with honey so that children may swallow them for their good in spite of their bitter taste (Gilbert 1943:166). Unlike his near contemporary, Horace's position on the didactic motive was balanced by his assertion that “the poet is to teach, to please, or to do both” (Ibid). This outstanding lyric poet and theorist stated in his *Ars Poetica* that the best poems edify as well as delight; the secret of good writing being wisdom (implying goodness). Horace thus emphasized that a good poet needs both teaching and training to give of his best (Grant, 2004). Many writers through the ages have conformed to these didactic expectations. A prominent example is the Italian poet, prose writer, literary theorist, moral philosopher, and political thinker and one of the great figures of world literature, Dante Alighieri (1265-1321). However, other writers such as Wordsworth (*Lyrical Ballads*) and Shelley (*Prometheus Unbound*) have argued otherwise, vehemently rejecting didacticism in its entirety, with Poe (*The Poetic Principle*) referring to the position of Lucretius and his varied followers as “the heresy of the didactic.”(Gilbert 1943:167)

It is not, however, the intention of this author to dwell on the different conceptions of the nature and function of literature. The following passage is apt in this regard:

If one goes far enough back... one can reach a time when literature, philosophy, and religion exist undifferentiated: among the Greeks, Aeschylus and Hesiod would perhaps be instances. But Plato can already speak of the quarrel between the poets and the philosophers as an ancient quarrel and mean by it something intelligible to us. We must not, on the other hand, exaggerate the difference made by doctrines of ‘art for art's sake’ at the end of the nineteenth century or more recent doctrines of *poésie pure*. The ‘didactic heresy’, as Poe called the belief in poetry as an instrument of edification, is not to be equated with the traditional renaissance doctrine that the poem pleases and teaches through pleasing. (Wellek and Warren, 1982:29)

In the protracted dialectics on the purpose of art, Shepley (1943) points out that the term didactic appears to have several levels of meaning. Didacticism may refer to two related but different questions: (1) should the writer try to teach? (2) Should the work of art be instructive? At another level, the term could be: (1) used

subjectively as a derogatory term; (2) to mark an all embracing category; or (3) to describe a kind or category of work. Wellek and Warren (1982) state that “in their reformatory zeal, certain older advocates of ‘pure literature’ (*poésie pure*) identified the mere presence of ethical or social ideas in a novel or a poem as the ‘didactic heresy’.” They point out that literature is not defiled by the presence of ideas literarily used, but it is the author’s practical intent (whether for propaganda, incitation to direct, immediate action) or scientific intent (such as provision of information, facts, additions to knowledge) which determine whether a piece of work may be classified as pure literature or part of the so-called didactic heresy (Wellek and Warren, 1982:239).

Anatomy of a Didactic Play

Contemporary Nigerian dramas which fall under the broad category of Theatre for Development can be analysed in terms of the two questions posed by Shepley, as well as classified according to the three levels of meanings identified above. Didacticism is a concept that is neither new nor unexamined in Nigerian theatre studies. Nwamuo (2006) probably best encapsulates the current Nigerian academic position on the issue of didacticism when he argues that “the large amount of money spent to get the product (drama presentation) ready, must be recovered as the days of art for arts sake, originated by Edgar Allan Poe, is no more,” (Nwamuo, 2006:8, my parenthesis). He goes on to add that “people go to live theatre performances *to get education while being entertained*, to develop the appetite for art and to appreciate the human artistic experience,” (Ibid, p.9, my emphasis). While Nwamuo’s position may reflect the view of most Nigerian dramatists regarding the issue of didacticism in literature, this author believes that the new genre of Theatre for Development carries didacticism to a whole new level that must arouse our concern for their possible impact on the development of theatre in Nigeria as a whole. Indeed, the unconcealed practical intent of these authors is propaganda, not in terms of misleading publicity or deceptive or distorted information, but in terms of information and publicity aimed at promoting or spreading a policy, idea, doctrine, or cause. Thus, their success is not necessarily a measure of the aesthetic quality of the plays they write and perform, but rather a factor of how successful they are in inducing immediate desired action through incitation and provision of information and facts to their target audiences. When dealing with issues of gender, youth and reproductive health education especially in view of current concerns about the HIV and AIDS pandemic, such plays are, therefore, ethically pedantic, generally lacking in tension or drama, dull and boring, as well as being puritanical and dogmatic.

Ironically, some enthusiasts see these very shortcomings as noteworthy, praising the minimalism in costumes and make-up, the contrived dialogues which focus mainly on the pedagogic points, and plot, character and dramatic action which are suppressed except where they promote the essential teaching aims of the drama. Such artificial actions never appear spontaneous and are very much unlike reality.

The Perils of Patronage or Encouragement

It takes a lot of creative imagination to write and produce a play which will give high aesthetic satisfaction to the viewer or listener. This creativity relies on the adroitness, craft, cunning, dexterity, expertise, know how, and skill of the dramatist.

Proudly, our nation has not failed to produce such great writers in the past. However, as far as creativity and aesthetic quality in drama are concerned, the current impetus given to Theatre for Development productions by the high level of external funding from government and private donors based in the United States and Britain must be seen as the dark cloud that it is, and there are no silver linings. The ingenuity and inventiveness of a creative writer can only barely disguise the crude didacticism required to create the type of message-laden plays that will attract such funds from abroad. Is the creative imagination of a whole generation of our playwrights being unwittingly sacrificed at the altar of Theatre for Development? It is the argument of this author that the ability of our writers to use their imagination to develop new and original ideas especially in the artistic context of drama is being restricted by the lucre of donor dollars. This argument must not, however, be construed as an indictment on the character of writers in the new genre. Literary patronage originated as far back as pre-Homeric times.

Writing on the encouragement of literary production, Harris (1943) showed that patronage from the rich segments of society was critical for the physical well-being and continued productivity of authors. These patrons encompassed both benevolent rulers and malevolent tyrants and dictators. Noblemen and aristocrats provided patronage and encouragement to writers for a variety of reasons including genuine personal love for the literary arts as well as inducement for personal praise-singing:

... Patronage proceeded in a fairly direct line to the Hellenistic period and the interest in learning and literature that was fostered by the Ptolemies at Alexandria. Rome accepted the Greek heritage. Roman aristocrats encouraged literature, for its own sake, or because it gave them an opportunity to have their achievements celebrated in verse. (Harris, 1943:189)

Both the state and religious institutions also provided support for literature “in various degrees; and patronage means, of course, control and supervision”, (Wellek and Warren, 1982:100).

In the large, the later history is the transition from support by noble or ignoble patrons to that afforded by publishers acting as predictive agents of the reading public... In England, the patronage system apparently began to fail early in the eighteenth century. For a time, literature, deprived of its earlier benefactors and not yet fully supported by the reading public, was economically worse off. (Wellek and Warren, 1982:99).

The contemporary Nigerian dramatist is faced with a daunting economic challenge. Nwamuo (2006) paints a gloomy picture of this “petro-dollar republic which wallows in the superlatives” and speaks of the “high level of corruption, the absence of the rule of law, honour, integrity and good planning (constituting) drawbacks in the machinery of governance,” (Nwamuo, 2006:5). This situation has impacted negatively on the growth of theatre audiences:

Owing to certain problems of underdevelopment such as irregular water supply, poor power supply, poor maintenance of theatre buildings and fear of vandalism of public property, most theatre

conveniences or rest-rooms are almost always locked up throughout the performance period. The theatre administrator therefore plans a theatrical event to have a full house, maximize profit but makes no allowance for an intermission. In consequence, some members of the audience abandon the performance, and go home when their bladders begin to ache. Some put up with the inconvenience but swear never to come back. (Nwamuo, 2006:24)

Nwamuo contends that “the result of this obvious neglect of the vital aspect of audience engineering is that theatre audiences are usually thin except on occasions when a big shot, or a government big-whip is coming to the event. They are thin because of insecurity, the threat of the home-video, poor quality productions, indiscipline in the society and low level of awareness.”(Nwamuo, 2006:24) The resultant decline in audience fee income accruing to dramatists has meant that Nigerian writers and producers have had to look elsewhere for funds to enable them continue in the profession.

Conclusion

Dollar funds from foreign donor agencies seem particularly attractive as they enable plays to be written and performed specifically for specialised, captive and usually non-fee paying audiences. However, the dangers of reliance on this form of patronage are two fold.

Firstly, the crude didacticism which many of these ‘Theatre for Development’ productions encourage impacts negatively on the aesthetic quality of our drama productions. A crop of talented Nigerian dramatists at the prime of their creative years find themselves writing mostly unaesthetic pedantic plays instead of exploring new and imaginative topics and treatments that will raise the nation’s theatre profile in the international arena.

Secondly, since these foreign donor funds enable expensive drama productions to be staged free of charge to target audiences, theatre audiences seem to have lost their primacy. Relegated to a second-class status, the role of the audience in determining and rewarding excellence in theatre productions has been severely eroded. This may not be good for the development of theatre in Nigeria.

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An Evaluation of Public Relations' Tools Utilized in the Management of the Jos Crisis

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Abstract

The study set out to evaluate the public relations tools employed in the management of the Jos crisis. Anchored on the intractable conflict and Chaos theories, the survey method was adopted as research design utilizing the descriptive approach. Population of the study comprised of Christians and Moslems in Jos, from which a sample size of 300 respondents was purposively drawn. Findings of the study shows that media relations, publicity, advertising, films, periodicals, oral communication and special events among others were the public relations tools utilized in the management of the crisis. The study found also that the public relations tools utilized were effective in queering down the crisis. Based on the findings, the study concludes that in spite of the effectiveness of the tools and the relative peace being experienced, there seems to be a cold warfare between Christians and Muslims in Jos. As such, adoption of the most effective public relations crisis management tools; adoption of an open and uncompromising neutral attitude towards religious organizations in the country by government; education of religious adherents on issues at stake and on the need to resist being manipulated to resort to violence amongst others were recommended.

Keywords: Public Relations; Crisis Management; peaceful coexistence; Jos Crisis

Introduction

Although public relations is acknowledged as an important crisis management tool in contemporary society, public relations practitioners are not normally responsible for resolving the underlying problem(s) that created a crisis situation. They however, play a crucial role in crises, the same role they have every day: maintaining and improving the relationships that exists within their constituencies by effectively communicating with its target audiences. The recognition of public relations as an effective and important tool in garnering and engineering goodwill, understanding and establishing mutual and sustainable relationship between groups is what has made it critical in both organization and societal crisis management. Given the fact that any society or organization can be hit

with a crisis, regardless of preparation, prevention or care, public relations which is a deliberate and planned programme of action has been recognized as the most effective crisis management tool (Oliver, 2009, p. 84).

Until September 7, 2001, Jos the capital of Plateau State of Nigeria was widely known for its serene and peaceful environment which is uniquely captured by the expression, "Home of Peace and Tourism." Likewise, while Americans were mourning their dead and counting the cost of terrorist attack, the inhabitants of Jos City were still passing through the trauma of the crisis that erupted prior to the attack launched on Americans. "... what has been described as bottled anger, exploded at a small mosque along Congo Russia area of Jos. And for the next several days, it was killing, burning of houses, churches, mosques and vehicles" (*Tell* September 24, 2001, p. 24).

The above statement described how a trivial matter could erupt into an uncontrollable crisis due to the wrong perception followers attach to religion, the base which ought to be built on peace. In line with the above mentioned, Odey (2000, p. 12) noted inter alia:

Whenever, and for whatever reason, love, peace, unity and the spirit of brotherhood are lacking among believers, the aim of religion is defeated. Whenever any group of people who profess any kind of religion refuses to live according to the positive tenets of that religion, but constitute themselves into die-hard fanatics and teams of suicide squads in the hope that by so doing, they bring heaven nearer to themselves, they as such, provide an occasion for giving religion a bad name. The same thing applies when people turn religion into a cloak under which cover they hope to achieve their selfish aims, which they cannot achieve through fair and healthy competition.

Religion no doubt is a highly charged subject matter. Tracing the history of man, it has remained one of the issues that can be counted upon to raise human emotions resulting in chaos. On account of religion, nations have gone to war and have subscribed to diverge forms of violent conflicts either in an attempt to defend their faith or in the process of extending the influence of their religion or to extirpate perceived contrary religious views whose presence could mar the already accepted and established belief.

While it is true that it is not possible to know the exact number of ethno-religious conflicts due to lack of adequate statistical data on this issue, it is interesting to note that about forty percent (40%) of ethno-religion based conflicts are credited to the fourth Republic of Nigeria. The fact that there is a recent increase in the number of ethno-religious conflicts in the country makes the role of public relations a relevant issue of discussion in contemporary Nigeria due to practicable lessons learnt in the use of public relations for conflict management in other nations that are multi-ethnic and multi-religious in their composition.

Statement of the Problem

Man by nature is imperfect and fallible, only God is perfect and infallible, and right from time immemorial, feud, crisis, contention and misunderstanding have

been endemic in human society. This explains why society have entrenched laws that would ensure justice and avert the tendency of conflicts generating into violent crisis. The need for security agencies also arose in society pursuant to law and order that will guarantee peace and stability by helping to curtail excesses and crisis situations. Notwithstanding, conflicts often get out of hand and violent crisis do pervade society as a result. The numerous crises that have rocked Jos, the Plateau State capital in the recent past also resulted from prolonged grievances and inadequately managed conflicts of interests that degenerated into violence.

Since the eruption of violent crisis in 2001 in Jos, both security agencies, government agencies, religious and interfaith organizations as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and traditional institutions have been on the alert with concerted efforts put in place to mitigate the crisis. In spite of the efforts, Plateau State is yet to reclaim its status of 'home of peace and tourism' as there has continued to be series of occasional crisis. Attesting to this fact, Dennis and Zacharys (2004, p. 1) observes that:

... Since the eruption of violent ethno-religious conflict in the city, it has continued to be characterized by severe tension and palpable fear among the inhabitants. There is presently, mutual suspicion between Christians versus Muslims on one hand and "indigenes" versus "settlers" on the other.

With the occasional outbreak of violence and series of bombings in Jos, it implies that the management of the Jos crisis calls for new approaches and strategies such as public relations. Public relations which is described as an integral part of part of society and an essential element of social interaction that is crucial for the effective functioning of society. It has been defined severally and its relevance and origin dates back to ancient times when the primary focus was to produce and generate factual information so as to create better understanding and positive responses.

The Mexican Statement, agreed on by the World Assembly of Public Relations Associations in Mexico City in August 1978 is one of the most widely used and applied definitions of public relations across the globe (Coombs and Timothy, 2007, p. 8). It defines public relations practice as "the art and social science of analysing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organisation leaders, and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve both the organisation's and the public interest." This shows that public relations can be examined from a variety of frameworks, including the focus on how public relations is engaged in the construction of messages and meanings that are intended to influence key publics important in a crisis situation. Public relations encompasses a wide range of approaches, including argumentation, advocacy and persuasion, corporate communication, dialectics and discourse, dramatism and storytelling, information, organizing, public opinion, and reputation management.

This underscores the role and importance of public relations in the management of the Jos crisis. Notwithstanding, the extent to which the stakeholders in the Jos crisis understand and have applied public relations in the management of the crisis and the public relations strategies employed is not certain. Against this background, the study is evaluating the role and strategies of public relations employed by both security agencies, government agencies, religious and interfaith

organizations as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and traditional institutions in the management of the Jos crisis.

Research Questions

The following research questions were drawn in direct response to the study's underlying objectives to guide the study:

Research Question 1: What are the public relations tools utilized in the management of the Jos crisis?

Research Question 2: How effective were tools of public relations utilized based on the order of preference?

Research Question 3: What are the causes of misunderstandings between Christians and Muslims in Jos, Plateau State?

Research Question 4: What are the public relations crisis management skills employed in the management of the Jos crisis?

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on Nothrup's *intractable conflict theory* and Murphy's *Chaos theory* respectively. The intractable conflict theory posits that intractable conflicts ordinarily are those conflicts that seem to elude possible solutions due to prolonged tensions and deep rooted suspicions and differences. The theory according to Smith (2009, p. 21) recognizes the dynamism of identity in personal and societal contract as the responsibility for intractable conflicts. According to Bourgress and Bourgress in Asobie (2005, p. 186), "intractable conflicts are intermittent escalation and de-escalation of conflicts that remain unresolved for a long period of time into violent crisis". Such crisis become stuck at a high level of intensity and destructiveness, typically involving numerous parties who take into cognizance their set of historical, religious, cultural, political and economic compromise to the contending issues.

The chaos theory on the other hand, emphasizes multi-directional causality and lack of predictability in violent crisis arising from long standing conflicts. The theory according to Bernstein and Rakowitz (2012, p. 16) is built on the two ideas that systems, no matter how complex, rely on an underlying order and that within such systems very small changes or events can cause very complex behaviours or outcomes. According to Stanton (2002, p. 20), the chaos theory posits that crisis management should be a long term mechanism that forecasts possible reactions to changes in society's orderings which may result in violent crisis.

Relevance of the theoretical framework lies in the fact that despite the means provided for reconciliation and peace as the lasting solution to the Jos crisis, the misunderstanding is yet to be resolved. As a result, there is still mutual suspicion and fear amongst parties for each other with imminent danger for the eruption of violent crisis. The chaos theory was also propounded as a result of the recognition that both crisis communication researchers and practitioners have focused primarily on the short term goals of resolving a crisis quickly as possible with as little damage to image as possible, as opposed to the longer term time frames and broader scales needed for chaos theory to play out. This calls for a public relations approach.

Public Relations as a Management Tool

Although public relations professionals are stereotypically seen as corporate servants the reality that remains is that, any organization that has at stake how it will be portrayed in the media, employs at least a public relations manager. This accounts for the reason why government agencies, trade associations and nonprofit organizations commonly carry out public relations management roles. In quest to describing the relevance of public relations in management, many authors presented definitions and explanations on why public relations is inevitable if at all the top management functions of an organization or company is to succeed. Akpala (1990, p. 3) viewed public relations being a management tool as:

The process of combining and utilizing or allowing an organization inputs (material and money), by planning, organizing, directing and controlling them, for the purpose of producing outputs desired by customers. So that organizational objectives will be accomplished.

If this notion is to be accepted, as a general view of people's understanding of what management is, then it will be reasonable to state that the management of any crisis situation requires a corporate strategic planning, which public relations is an essential part. In capturing the essence of ensuring that public relations is a management of inside rather than an outside function through the highlights of some salient points, Regester and Larkin (2008, p. 15) sees public relations as "a social philosophy and practices which are communicated to the public to secure its understanding". Public relations can be said to be a planned action which is purposely undertaken to not only gain, but to keep the goodwill of every section of the public with which the organization or institution comes in contact with. In addition to this, Umechukwu (2001, p. 3) emphasized that, "for public relations to succeed, it must become an attitude of mind by which management consciously appreciates that its own interest and those of its publics are in the long run identical and acts accordingly".

Even though we have seen an avalanche of the definitions of public relations, the below definition will need to be considered because of its imperative nature to our discussion and the destination to be arrived at. According to Cultip and Centre (1978, p. 3) public relations is:

A management function of continuous and planned character, through which the public and private organizations and institutions seek to win and retain the understanding, sympathy and support of those with whom they are or may be concerned, by evaluating public opinion about themselves in order to correlates as far as possible their own polices and widespread information.

The recent philosophy of public relations recognizes the validity of the view that an institution does not just function by divine right, but like any other part of the society, there exists, step by step planned programmes. Seymour and Moore (1999, p. 52) highlighted four conceptual foundations and follows; First is that, public relations is seen as social philosophy of management. Among other things, it places interest of the people first in all matters pertaining the conduct of the organization. It assumes that the organization's right to operate is conferred by the people and that privilege can be withdrawn. Secondly, public relations are seen as a social philosophy expressed in policy decisions. Public relations policies are the objectives of an

organization, settled course of action to be followed by management in dealing with problems that arises in the conduct of the enterprises. Third aspect is action resulting from the second policy. Policy decision needs to be expressed in appropriate action which is an offshoot of management. This is necessary because as scholars, noted, institutions are judged by what they do and not what they say in policy statements. Finally, public relations is communication. According to Crisford (1973:21), "the cardinal point to bear in mind is that public relations is fundamentally concerned with people and their relationship with each other." Therefore, in public relations, communication is believed to be the anchor of the profession. Canfield and Franzier (1973, p. 9) regards it as, "the lifeware of public relations management, because the medium reveals, explains, defends and promotes polices in order to secure understanding and acceptance."

Public Relations in Crisis Management and Management of Crisis

The occurrence crisis is a normal phenomenon in society. In fact crisis of recent times has become one of the features of societal dynamics. Therefore, every society should gear its attention towards the expectation of crisis in one form or the other. While ill-prepared societies in Crisis situations irredeemably fall by the way and are engulfed in one form of crisis or the other, the proactive societies and well-preferred ones with "shock absorbers" can withstand the unexpected. Crisis no doubt, is observed by society as unanticipated and unexpected, therefore it needs proper handling. It is pertinent to observe here that people mistake crisis to be in the form of disaster only. This is a misnomer because crisis could also come in form of a bounteous blessing. Therefore, as crisis is experienced in the manner of a drastic change in a society, this kind of change could either be negative or positive. To Daug Newsom, as presented by Salu (1994, p. 383), there are two definition of crisis typology, these include:

- violent crises; these are cataclysmic, immediate, involving loss of life or property e.g. Earthquake, Forest fires, Chemical leaks.
- On violent crises; These may be sudden and involve upheaval, damages tend to be less catastrophic and immediate e.g. Epidemics and Droughts.

In a further emphasis, Nkwocha (1999, p. 187) also outlined two major kinds of crises, thus, "Act-of-God Crisis which occur as a result of the forces of nature and cannot be totally stopped deaths, earthquakes, multiple births, and Man-Made Crisis, which are events caused by human beings or human frailties and can always be prevented e.g. accidents, labour unrest, sex scandals". According to Black as noted by Nkwocha (1999, p. 188), crises could be classified in two ways; Known-unknown and unknown-unknown. Hence:

- **known-Unknown:** These refer to predictable adversities and hazards existing due to the nature of the kind of business an organization is involved in. for instance, plane crashed are associated with airlines, poisonous chemical leakages are common with industrial or chemical plants e.t.c.
- **Unknown-unknown:** These are crisis situations that are totally unknown and never foreseen by anyone. An earthquake in Nigeria constitutes an unknown-unknown crisis.

In further classification of crises, Otuekere-Ubani as quoted by the same Nkwocha (1999, p. 188) posited that crises are based on, "whether they were foreseen

or totally unforeseen, whether the crisis is sudden or a gradual built-up of events and whether the crisis leads to partial paralysis of the company or total extinction.” Although, varied definitions of crisis have been presented with their various classifications too by different scholars, it is necessary to bear in mind that while each crisis may be unique or peculiar, requiring specific or tailor-made communication strategy, four elements exist which are common to all forms of crises.

According to Salu (1994, p. 385), “management, particularly the professional public relations practitioners, must be aware of these four elements of crisis: a trigger, a threat, an uncontrolled situation and an urgent action needed.” “Crisis viewed from the perspective of corporate change dynamics and management is, any event, issues, occurrence, or situation that could be described as a turning point, for better or for worse with both negative and positive valences or scores as a change agent or factor in organizational management” Nwosu as quoted in Nweke (2001, p. 285).

According to Nweke (2001, p. 85) while quoting Walton, “conflict from interpersonal perspective include; personal disagreement over substantive issues, such as differences over organizational structures, policies and practices; interpersonal antagonisms, that is the more interdependent human beings.” Presenting an elaborate explanation of what conflict is all about, Nweke (2001, p. 85 -86) emphasized that:

Conflict has both the aspect of issues and personality dimension. Issues leading to conflict could arise as a result of labour/government disagreement over wage increase. Conflict between the chief executive and his personal assistant where, for instance, the latter sees the first as being too high handed, nose and difficult to work with, is a form of personality conflict. While, cases bordering on a promotion polices, certain issues and personality, especially were the procedure is shrouded in controversy and dissatisfaction, become issue conflict.

Simply put, management of crisis is a situation that arises when an unexpected negative change occurs. Most often, this change is newsworthy and of concern to the public and even though every responsible management might wish to avoid the crisis, the reality is that it is not absolutely avoidable. Thus, it means in essence, acting when the event has already occurred. This explains why public relations practitioners are said to be more involved in proactive crisis management. They are advised to acquire the skills, knowledge and information necessary for effective crisis management for their clients or in their organization. The best method of handling crisis is to plan ahead, anticipating one (crisis) any moment, mapping out preventive measures and control strategies in case of its eventual occurrence.

Therefore, crisis management involves taking appropriate measures by “nipping a problem in the bud,” thereby disallowing it from occurring. According to Nwosu (1996:106), “crisis management in this respect, involves taking appropriate measures to prevent a crisis before it occurs or manage/control it well. The public relations manager plays a central role in crisis management and so most understand the phenomenon of crisis well”. From the foregone, it is evident that crisis management from the public relations perspective is proactive, preventive and pre-planned in nature.

Research Method

The study employs the survey research design utilizing the descriptive approach. Nworgu (1991, p. 55) posits that, "a survey research is one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group". Hence, questionnaire was administered to subjects to collect information on the role and strategies of public relations employed in the efforts of brokering peace between Christians and Moslems in Jos, Plateau state capital. The population of the study consisted of the residents of Jos. A sample size of 300 respondents was purposively drawn for the study. According to Ikeagwu (1998, p. 189), "the basic assumption behind purposive sampling method is that, with good judgment and an appropriate strategy, one can hand- pick the cases to be included in the sample and this develops sample that is satisfactory in relation to one's needs".

Thematic Presentation and Analysis

The questionnaire was structured into a likert scale to weigh responses, as such the data collected is also presented in a likert scale chart. This is followed by the description of answers provided by respondents based on research questions asked. Thus, the description of what public relations tools are, the cause of crisis between the Christians and Moslems in Jos and the most effective tools in crisis management and management of crisis were presented using likert scale frequency distribution tables and percentages.

Research Questions 1: What are the public relations tools utilized in the management of the Jos crisis?

Table 1: Public Relations Tools Utilized in Managing the Jos Crisis

S/N	Items	SA	A	UD	D	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
6	Public relations tools abound, especially in curbing crisis situations	152	75	3	46	24	3.95	Accepted
7	Among the relevant tools of public relations, media relations and publicity, advertising, films, periodicals, oral communication, special events are widely used.	97	102	7	71	23	3.59	Accepted
8	Film with its sound and sight effects is found to be important because it applies to both literates and illiterates as well as the deaf and dumb.	162	81	-	20	37	4.03	Accepted
9	Oral communication as a tool easily transmits messages across to both rural and urban dwellers.	190	62	2	25	21	4.25	Accepted

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10	Periodicals as a tool applied largely to literates.	213	50	-	22	15	4.41	Accepted
11	Special events create opportunity for direct contact, thereby enhancing messages to be passed across.	124	87	13	40	36	3.74	Accepted
12	Advertising provides an attractive appeal to the target public.	156	89	-	31	24	4.07	Accepted
13	Media relations and publicity serve as a formidable tool for government and organizations in maintaining good relations.	112	171	6	7	4	4.26	Accepted

Source: *Field Survey, 2013* (Number of respondents = 300)

Table 1 shows the mean score obtained from information on the basic tools utilized in public relations as a veritable tool in brokering peace between contending parties; the case of Christians and Moslem Crisis in Jos, Plateau State. From the table, it is shown that all the eight items mentioned received positive response from the respondents with mean range of 3.59 – 4.41, revealing that the respondents attest to the fact that media relations and publicity, film, oral communication, periodicals, special events, advertising among others, are basic tools utilized in public relations.

Research Question 2: How effective were tools of public relations utilized based on the order of preference?

Table 2: Effectiveness of the Public Relations Tools Utilized

S/N	Items	SA	A	UD	D	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
14	Public relations are not of the same level of effectiveness.	82	175	11	20	12	3.98	Accepted
15	The effectiveness of a tool of public relations is dependent on how it gets the message across to the target audience.	153	77	3	33	34	3.94	Accepted
16	The wider the coverage of the tool, the more the level of its effectiveness.	206	80	1	10	3	4.58	Accepted
17	Film as a tool of public relations is the most effective since it applied to both ears and eyes, likewise to literates and illiterates.	92	168	-	26	14	3.99	Accepted
18	The least effective tool is periodicals since it is only applicable to the literates.	81	143	4	52	20	3.71	Accepted

Source: *Field Survey, 2013* (Number of respondents = 300)

Table 2 shows the mean score obtained from information on the effectiveness of the tools of public relations based on the order of preference. From the table, five of the items got positive response (accepted) with the mean range of 3.71 to 4.58, thereby revealing that periodicals is the least effective tool because of its applicability to the literates only, while film is the most effective because of its sound and sight effects as well as its applicability to both literates and illiterates.

Research Question 3: What are the causes of misunderstandings between Christians and Muslims in Jos, Plateau State?

Table 3: Causes of Misunderstandings between Christians and Muslims in Jos

S/N	Items	SA	A	UD	D	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
19	Many reasons abound for the misunderstanding between Christians and Muslims in Jos, Plateau State.	113	102	21	31	33	3.77	Accepted
20	The issue of religious intolerance is only a cover up to the crisis.	36	25	15	110	114	2.20	Rejected
21	Power struggle between Christians and Muslims led to the crisis.	97	108	6	50	39	3.58	Accepted
22	The problem of land ownership has been a factor gingering misunderstanding between indigenes who are largely Christians and settlers who are mostly Muslims	89	151	7	22	31	3.81	Accepted
23	Socio-cultural background of Christians and Muslims in Jos enhanced the crisis.	92	98	26	54	30	3.56	Accepted
24	Illiteracy is a factor that can enhance misunderstanding.	143	71	15	45	26	3.86	Accepted
25	The major cause of the crisis is responsible for the massive destruction of lives and properties.	178	54	2	34	32	4.04	Accepted

Source: *Field Survey, 2013* (Number of respondents = 300)

Table 3 shows the mean score on the information obtained on the causes of misunderstanding between Christians and Muslims in Jos, Plateau state capital. From the table, all but one of the items received positive response (accepted), with mean range of 3.56 – 4.04, revealing that power struggle, issue of land ownership, socio-cultural background and illiteracy are among the causes of the misunderstanding between Christians and Muslims in Jos. However, item 20 received a negative response (rejected) with a table mean of 2.20, revealing that the issue of religious

intolerance is not just a cover up to the crisis between Christians and Muslims in Jos, but one of the causes of the crisis.

Research Questions 4: What are the public relations crisis management skills employed in the management of the Jos crisis?

Table 4: Public Relations Crisis Management Skills Utilized in Managing the Jos Crisis

S/N	Items	SA	A	UD	D	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
26	Management of crisis and crisis management utilize public relations tools in peace resolution.	84	97	7	62	50	3.34	Accepted
27	Management skills are important in crisis settlement.	153	71	12	31	33	3.93	Rejected
28	Management of crisis is a reactive measure applied when the crisis has taken place.	185	82	-	19	14	4.35	Accepted
29	Crisis management is proactive, aimed at nipping a problem in the bud.	172	93	-	20	15	4.29	Accepted
30	Management of crisis and crisis management are basically management approaches.	197	84	1	14	4	4.52	Accepted

Source: *Field Survey, 2013* (Number of respondents = 300)

Table 4 above shows the mean score obtained from information on management skills employed by public relations practitioners in crisis control. From the table, all the items hence 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30 had positive response (accepted) with mean range of 3.34 to 4.52, revealing that aside management skills being important in crisis settlement, management of crisis and crisis management are basically, management approaches.

Discussion of Findings

Findings presented in this study call for isolated interpretation in specific areas. In research question one where enquiries were made in relation to what basic tools public relations utilizes especially in relaying its messages, it was gathered based on the analysis and interpretation of data that all the tools mentioned are acceptable. In research question one, item 10 has the highest table mean, hence the highest number of positive response of 4.41. This, in other words, shows that periodicals, as one of the basic tools utilized in public relations are largely applicable only to the literates. Lending credence to the above fact, Frazier and Bertrand (1977,

p. 203) assert that, "as a class, public relations periodicals enjoy high reader interest....., it is edited for specific audience and published at regular intervals". Hence, the high readership above entails that only literates, of course, value periodicals and, as such, the literates in this context form the specific audience so mentioned to be beneficiaries of periodicals which largely include; company magazines, industrial publication and house organ.

The item with the least positive (accepted) mean in research question one is 7, with table mean of 3.59. In this particular item, it was asked whether advertising, media relations and publicity, films, periodicals, oral communication and special events are widely used tools of public relations. This item received a positive remark from the respondents with the above table mean. Frazier and Bertrand (1977, p. 137) supported the above, when they mentioned thus, "communication media used by organizations in public relations include publicity, advertising, periodicals, films, special events and oral communications."

Furthermore, the effectiveness of the basic tools of public relations in research question one was determined through the answers provided by respondents in research question two. Hence, the question is to find out among these veritable tools which are more effective based on the order to preference. Film as a tool of public relations was accepted with mean table of 3.99 as the most effective tool of public relations, since it applies to not just the deaf and dumb, but also to literates and illiterates. In support of the above, Ogunsanya (1991, p. 7) posits that, "human beings relate more to, and remember what they watch on television than what they listen to on radio or from fellow human beings". However, the least effective tool among the ones listed in research question one was found to be periodicals with a positive (accepted) table mean of 3.71. This response emerged to defend the earlier postulation, that periodicals are only applicable to the literates as supported by Frazier and Bertrand.

Research question three addresses the reasons behind the upheavals between Christians and Muslims in Jos, Plateau State capital. Among the factors listed that could be responsible for the crisis, illiteracy topped with a table mean of 3.86 (accepted), showing that illiteracy is largely ticked by respondents as the cause of the misunderstanding between Christians and Muslims in Plateau State. In defense of the above, Iduh (2004, p. 6) earlier mentioned that, "illiterates can easily be manipulated because they are not critical and logical in thinking". In like manner, Dr. Best in (*Inter Gender Peace Bulletin*, February, 2005, p. 8) suggested, "oral history education to sustain indigenous minorities' interests and stake in their societies." Likewise according to Kaigama (2006, p. 70), "peace education for religious harmony should be integral part of education in primary and higher institutions".

Contrary to other items that received positive response (accepted), item 20 had a negative response (rejected). Therefore, the claim that the issue of religious intolerance in only a cover up to the Christian and Muslim crisis in Jos, Plateau State capital has been debunked. This was, however, rejected with table man of 2.20, falling below the decision mean of 3.00. This implies that religious intolerance is one of the causes or could be a cause of religious crisis and not just a cover up. In defense of this objection, Arinze (1999, p. 6-7) noted that, "some of the factors generating religious intolerance generally are political, economic, ethnic or other considerations of personal or group egoism...that stirs parties to conflict".

In research question four, the management skills employed by public relations practitioners in crisis control were determined. In other words, management skills, as crisis management and management of crisis were both determined and confirmed, based on the outcomes of the respondents' responses. Item twenty-eight, which sees management of crisis as a reactive measure applied when crisis has already occurred, received a positive (accepted) response with a table mean of 4.35. This, in other words, posits that management of crisis, as a management approach, is a reactive measure applied when the crisis must have taken place. According to Nweke (2001, p. 88), management of crisis literally means, "managing a crisis that has occurred, which involves sporadic, largely uncoordinated actions to quench crisis".

On the other hand, crisis management in item twenty-nine with a positive response (accepted) of 4.29 from the respondents is largely seen as a proactive management approach aimed at nipping crisis in the bud. In support of the above fact, Nkwocha (1999, p. 192) sees crisis management as involving, "taking appropriate measures to either prevent crisis, before it occurs or control it promptly when it occurs". Hence the two of the above mentioned are utilized in public relations as skills of management approaches in tackling crisis situations.

Research question five asked the question on other measures that public relations practitioners could utilize in crisis control. In other words, this research question explored other means that could be used in checkmating crisis, aside the approaches in public relations. In the table provided for the research results, a run down of the items show that formidable boundary demarcation carries the highest table mean of 4.54, which signifies a positive (accepted) result from the respondents. Therefore, boundary demarcation among the various local government areas in the state could go a mile in stemming misunderstanding or conflict. According to Ngene (2004, p. 53); "being historically nomadic, the Hausa-Fulani were unable to trace their origins... and, therefore, argued that Jos is no man's land." As such, settlement of land dispute and boundary demarcation will bring about relative peace and tranquility. Finally, within the same table, the item that falls under research question five with the lowest table mean is item 33, although it has a positive (accepted) response from the respondents. This item, in other words, stipulates that unbiased and non-sentimental feelings about another person's culture or religion will lead to a harmonious living.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that in spite of the effectiveness of the tools and the relative peace being experienced, there seems to be a cold warfare between Christians and Muslims in Jos as attested to by the 300 respondents sampled for the study. Notwithstanding, the affirmative knowledge of public relations especially the tools in crisis management shows that the cold warfare can be resolved if proactive public relations programmes are put in place by the stakeholders. Through such programmes, the religious intolerance, power struggle, land ownership, socio-cultural differences and illiteracy which seem to be the underlying factors causing crisis in Jos can be effectively managed and contained. This will ensure religious tolerance, equitable sharing of political positions, unbiased and non-sentimental feelings about other people's culture, formidable boundary demarcation,

avoidance of rumour, promotion of education, issue management, economic empowerment, dialogue, peace and reconciliation.

Recommendations

Arising from the findings and conclusion reached in respect to managing the Jos crisis and restoring the city's dignity as the 'home of peace and tourism' the study recommends that:

1. The stakeholders involved in management of the crisis should adopt the most effective public relations crisis management tools, especially publicity, advertising, periodicals, feature articles, photographs, websites, exhibitions, seminars and workshops, award programmes among others.
2. The Nigerian government at the federal, state and local levels, should adopt an open and uncompromising neutral attitude towards religious organizations in the country, by ensuring law and order. In relation to lives and property, the government should ensure equity in the availability of positions and government should not join any religious organization, within or outside its territory.
3. Religious adherents should always be educated on issues at stake and on the need to resist being manipulated to resort to conflict. Peace education for religious tolerance in a mixed community of religious believers and practitioners is also necessary.
4. The promotion of interfaith and interethnic dialogue, especially between Christians and Muslims on peace building should be pursued as a deliberate government policy. Stakeholders in society, whether primary or secondary, individuals or organizations should be engaged, in the course of dialoging
5. The civil society should work with security agencies in exposing the perpetrators or sponsors of conflicts and making sure that justice is adequately served. No sacred cow should be hidden or be allowed to exhibit any clandestine act.
6. Leaders of various religious groups should conscientize their followers on the great value of religious tolerance in a pluralistic religious society. Words should be marched with examples by upholding the positive values and functions of religion.

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Appraisal of Visual Rhetoric as a Persuasive Device in Online Advertising

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Abstract

This paper looks at how visual rhetoric is used in online advertising to attract the attention of the public to an advertisement. The aim of advertising is to persuade toward a desired action, however, an advert has to be noticed first before the desired result is achieved. This is where visual rhetoric plays its magnetic role of captivating the attention of the public through image. This work is premised on the Information Processing Model, propounded by William .J McGuire and covers aspects of advertising such as the aims of advertising, approaches to advertising and how visual appeals are used in online advertising.

Introduction

In recent years, with the increase in internet connectivity in Nigeria and increase in the variety of products and enhanced consumer awareness of e-commerce, online marketing activities have increased dramatically. This has led to a corresponding growth and development of online advertising activities in the country. From using static image banners which had no difference with print advertisements, to flash banners with smooth animation, online advertisements excite effects, engaging graphics and interactivity. The aim of advertising which is used as an influence and persuasion tool in mass communication, to create the desired changes in behaviours of target market and by this way to sell the product, has made visual rhetoric an important component of advertising.

Through visual rhetoric, advertisers try to persuade consumers and influence their choices towards their products and services using the effectiveness of visualization as a rhetorical language. According to Messaris (1997, p. 7), images (visual rhetoric) play and perform three major roles in advertising - they elicit emotions by simulating the appearance of a real person or object; serve as photographic proof that something really did happen; and they establish an implicit link between the thing that is being sold and some other image. The iconicity of visual rhetoric according to Messaris (1997) serves the process of giving rise to some emotional disposition by making it possible for images to draw upon rich variety of visual stimuli and associated emotions. Iconic relationship between the content and

meanings is reflected through several characteristics of images. For instance, an image can display a simulated reality which bears certain associations although visual characteristics might be different from the real world.

Also explaining the importance of visual rhetoric as persuasive devices in advertising, Hall and Hanna (2004, p. 187) note that visuals give persuasive messages more presence, implying that the messages can command more attention from receivers and perhaps cause more change in receivers because of the visual rhetoric presence. Since the world today is saturated with online advertisements and Nigerian firms actively engaged in e-commerce and online advertising activities, people see visual rhetoric as persuasion attempts of advertisers on a daily basis. Consequently, this paper explores the usage of visual rhetoric as persuasive devices in online advertising with the aim of providing insights into visual persuasion. In the critical exploration of persuasive properties of online advertisements and how they engage in forming a response, this paper pays attention not only to the verbal messages but also to the visual rhetoric because usually persuasion is created through visual-verbal continuum.

Theoretical Underpinning

The Information Processing Model propounded by William J. McGuire in 1978 which assumes the consumer as part of a persuasive communication encounter (advertising) is used in anchoring this discourse. McGuire (1978:157) explains that the information-processing approach to social influence posits a series of behavioural steps through which the individual must pass if he/she is effectively to be persuaded. McGuire (1978:157) identifies three basic stages of information processing used by consumers in evaluating advertising messages to include *Input processes*, *Storage processes* and *Output processes*. The stages are explained as follows:

- * **Input** processes are concerned with the analysis of the stimuli.
- * **Storage** processes cover everything that happens to stimuli internally in the brain and can include coding and manipulation of the stimuli.
- * **Output** processes are responsible for preparing an appropriate response to a stimulus.

McGuire (1978:157) furthermore argues that:

This analysis views the recipient of the persuasive communication as an information-processing machine or a problem solver, rather than as a recalcitrant resistor or artful evader in the service of needs that have nothing to do with the topic of the advertising campaign.

Belch and Belch (2001:149) suggest that the stages of this model are similar to the hierarchy of effects sequence; identifying each of the stages of the information processing model as a dependent variable that must be attained and that may serve as an objective of the communication process. Belch and Belch (2001) observe that each phase of the information processing model can be measured in order to evaluate the effectiveness of various strategies designed to move the consumer to purchase.

Contributing to the model, Barone, Miniard and Romeo (2000, p. 387) liken the information processing model to the elaboration likelihood model, and identifies two types of processing that may occur during advertising information processing by consumers - Objective and Biased processing. Objective processing occurs when the individual is motivated through visual rhetoric and able to scrutinize the message for

its “true” or central merits. Biased processing occurs when the individual possesses a strong prior opinion regarding the message topic (*e.g.*, brand loyal or highly dissatisfied consumers) and, hence, responds to message arguments with attitude consistent cognition instead of scrutinizing the message for its quality. That is, if effective visual rhetoric is used and the message is consistent with prior attitudes, the individual will elicit support arguments, while counter arguments will be elicited if effective visual rhetoric is not used, the message is counter attitudinal.

The significance and relevance of the Information Processing Model to the discourse lies in the fact that considerable research has demonstrated that visual rhetoric plays a role in attitudes toward advertising messages and can mediate the process of brand attitude formation (Batra and Ray, 1986; Celuch and Slama, 1995; Meyers-Levy and Peracchio, 1995; Lang, 2000). This explains why the Information Processing Model looks closely at how, independent of the context, stimulation from the visual rhetoric goes through the processes of attention, perception, and storage of advertising messages by consumers throughout a series of distinct memory stores (Miller, 2011, p.98).

The Aims of Advertising

A producer attempts to persuade the public into buying his product by trying to show the qualities of his product through advertising. An advert has to be eye-catching first before it can hold our attention and hopefully lead to the desired action. According to Vesterguard (1986, p.29) The elements responsible for this are the headline along with the illustration and the slogan if possible. The advertiser makes his advert outstanding in order to be noticed by the public and hopefully hold their attention. No matter the channel used to communicate an advertising message be it on TV, the print media, radio or the internet, there are always some goals to achieve. The advertiser tries to see that an advert is noticed. This is by making it eye-catching. The advert must also hold the attention of the audience and convince them that the subject of the advert is of interest to them. The advert also tries to convince the public that the consumption of the product will satisfy a need. Finally advertising points out the qualities of the particular brand being advertised implying that these qualities make it superior to other brands of the same product. What adverts aim to do is to persuade us to consume the advertised product. Advertising uses many devices in persuading. The message is sent across through language and visual image. The image is usually first noticed and together with language helps us understand the message better. According to Jamieson(1985, p.107) the pictorial image possesses the characteristics, it can quicken the reading of the associated text, it can lead the reader into that text, in preference to other text on the same page. And as it is an image, it can readily be retained in the memory then to a corresponding verbal description. Though this paper deals specifically with visual rhetoric in online advertising, it is necessary to glimpse into various views of authors on advertising which can be broadly categorized into positive and negative approaches.

Approaches to Advertising

Positive Approach to Advertising

The main approaches to advertising include the positive and the negative approach. The positive approach to advertising sees advertising as an aid to society

where it is seen to raise the standard of living by informing the public about goods available and encouraging the sale of mass produced goods, which in turn bring about production and creates employment. It is seen as economically beneficial because it brings about stability in the prices of goods and helps in the supply and demand equation. Advertising is said to help in distribution as it paves the way for new goods about to enter the market place. It is seen to strongly influence channels of distribution of manufactured goods McEwan(1956, p.71) According to Leymore in Berman(1981, p.47) advertising supports the social order by reducing anxieties and providing simple solutions for eternal human dilemmas. Advertising under the positive approach is seen as playing an informative role as it presents the good points of a product to people and leaves it to their judgment to take any action.

Negative Approach to Advertising

Just as proponents of advertising under the positive approach view it positively others view it negatively and have accused it of a range of offenses from creating false needs, lacking in social responsibility, providing false emotional satisfaction, justifying consumerism and capitalism, manipulation and deception.

Stanfield in Berman says, the false need for the commodity may pacify for the moment but it cannot satisfy, the need will return again and again(Berman 1981,p.26)Dyer sees advertising as lacking in social responsibility and making us misjudge our priorities(Myers 1986, p.83).

On false emotional satisfaction, Marcuse says, the economic system provides false emotional satisfaction to behave and consume in accordance with the advertisement. According to him it degrades human consciousness(Berman 1981, p.26) thus suggesting that advertising encourages us to lead false lives.

Visual Rhetoric as a Persuasive Device

Rhetoric refers to techniques usually verbal designed and employed to persuade and impress. Since the aim of advertising is to catch attention, hold it and hopefully favourably dispose people to the product and finally persuade them, rhetoric is greatly employed. Rhetoric deals with the manner an idea is expressed and not the meaning of the expression. The form of the expression is what is viewed as rhetoric which Jamieson says increases the persuasiveness of the message (1985, p.59).

Rhetorical devices are found in language which could be verbal or written, this has now been applied to the visual field known as visual rhetoric. An extensive exploration of rhetoric applied to the visual field was carried out by Jacques Durand where he analyzed many adverts and came up with a broad list of figures used in visual rhetoric. He views rhetorical figures as mock violations of norms (Dyer 1982, p.160).

Norms are usually broken in visual rhetoric which helps to make an advert interesting, unique, attention grabbing and hopefully consequently bring about action/consumption. He divided visual rhetoric into four broad categories under which we find different categories which include figures of addition, figures of suppression, figures of substitution and finally figures of exchange. The aim of visual rhetoric ultimately is to gain the attention of the public.

Figures of Addition

This could deal with repetition in visual images to emphasize effectiveness of a product or accumulation to convey the idea of abundance.

Figures of Suppression

This is not very common in advertising since advertising usually exaggerates rather than understates. A play on absence however used in advertising makes the public ponder and fill in the missing object or person.

Figures of Substitution

This could be a situation in which an associated detail is used to invoke an idea or represent an object for example in advert for a refrigerator the product could be replaced by a block of ice.

Figures of Exchange

This could do with the exchange of roles where a child could be dressed as a professional for example a doctor or a judge.

The various techniques under the various categorizations are all in an ultimate attempt to get the public to notice an advertised product and be persuaded to take positive action.

Visual Appeals and Online Advertising

There is an interesting relation between visuals and verbal text in advertisements because when these two elements are put together “verbal texts tend to limit what the visual may mean, and the visual tends to expand what the verbal text means” (Hall and Hanna, 2004, p. 189). This, according to Scott (1994) is because persuasion operates within three levels: invention, arrangement and delivery. The first level deals with the invention of a concept, a promise and organizing argumentation for the concept. Arrangement is related to the way the argument is arranged. In classical rhetoric it deals with the order in which propositions are made. Similarly, in advertising, the choice and placement of visual elements helps to modulate the viewer's experience of the text in time (Scott, 1994:266).

Online advertising is the most obvious place replete with visual rhetorical figures. The use of visual rhetoric in online advertising as Smith (2005, p. 43) observes is predicated on the fact that in the first place, there is no doubt that someone is setting out deliberately to persuade; in the second place, there is little doubt that everything in the advertisement has been most carefully placed for maximum effect. Visual rhetoric, a broad term which has been at times used to describe the location and arrangement of images or typography with the goal to persuade is a common strategy for online advertisements. Hwang, McMillan and Lee (2003) describe a website as a visual interaction that appeals to the audience using visual elements. It uses fonts to clearly deliver text, mindful of location and uses colour and contrast to its advantages. In the world of e-commerce where online advertising is a major force, a website appeals to the audience to take action.

Visual rhetoric elements are taking on a larger role in shaping consumer response to online advertising, though only recently have they received the same

amount of analysis as literary texts (McQuarrie and Mick, 1999, p. 37). According to McQuarrie and Mick (1999, p. 51), visual rhetorical moves deserve a place among devices available to advertisers as moves that have a consistent and reliable impact on consumer response (p. 51). As a result of enhanced internet connectivity and increasing e-commerce activities across the globe, the rhetorical analysis of advertisements is becoming more and more popular. This could be likened to the increasing realization of the effects of the marketing industry by people on their lives in this consumer society.

Much like writing and speaking, visual rhetoric, operates through particular persuasive means called rhetorical strategies - the techniques rhetoricians use to move and convince an audience. In our visually saturated world, advertisements represent one of the most ubiquitous forms of persuasion (Dane and Pratt, 2007, p. 34). In many ways, advertisements are arguments in incredibly compact and complex forms. There is little room to spare in an advertisement; persuasive appeals must be locked into a single frame which works together as a rhetoric function. The common visual appeal rhetoric uses in online advertising as Golan and Zaidner (2008, p. 961) note include:

- **Logos:** This entails rational argument - appeals to reason and an attempt to persuade the audience through clear reasoning and philosophy. Statistics, facts, definitions, and formal proofs, as well as interpretations such as syllogisms or deductively reasoned arguments, are all examples of means of persuasion called “the logical appeal.”
- **Pathos:** Also referred to as “the pathetic appeal” generally refers to an appeal to the emotions - the speaker (advertiser) attempts to put the audience into a particular emotional state so that the audience will be receptive to and ultimately convinced by the speaker’s message. Inflammatory language, sad stories, appeals to nationalist sentiments, and jokes are all examples of pathos.
- **Ethos:** This is an appeal to authority or character; according to Aristotle, *ethos* meant the character or goodwill of the speaker. Today, the speaker’s reliance on authority, credibility, or benevolence when discussing strategies is also considered as ethos. But while this third mode of persuasion the “ethical appeal,” is important, it does not mean strictly the use of ethics or ethical reasoning. Rather, it is the deliberate use of the *speaker’s character* as a mode of persuasion.

Online display advertisements typically refer to banners that include logos, images and text, and are placed on Web pages. Some are interactive and include moving images and sound. Search advertisements, or paid search advertisements, appear next to search engine results for relevant queries that trigger keywords (Mullen and Fisher, 2004, 187). According to Foss and Griffin (1995, p. 7), the major points of visual rhetoric appeal for online advertising in rough economic times are higher accountability and flexibility. Online advertising, which allows advertisers to track how many views or clicks their advertisements attract, enables clients to aim for the best return on investment for their campaigns.

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Sex-Texting and Images of Pornography in Mobile Social Networking among Students in the University of Jos

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Abstract

This paper analyses the evolvement of sex-texting and image of pornography in mobile social networking among youths and the effect that the shared platforms have birthed. The trend in information sharing is culminating into a culture of sex- texting and a huge pursuit on images of pornography. As content producers, young people not only visit porn sites, but watch, capture and circulate pictures that reveal so much 'body parts' of themselves in order to interact. The depth in information revelation by students not only challenges privacy and security concerns, but the free access and exchange in signs and pictures impinge on societal values. This paper adopts the Social Penetration theory as framework. Using Focus Group Discussion, the study examined the opinion of 30 respondents from the Faculty of Arts, University of Jos. Findings show that students reveal so much private information to anonymous friends online. The FGD also revealed that in these engagements, sex- texting and exchange of pornographic images was premium in chatting among students who are active participants in social networking. The paper concludes that despite the intense positive relationships social networking platforms have fostered, the attendant social vices resulting from the underlay in this trend is undesired. The paper recommends among others for students to be sensitized on safe interactions as the engage online.

Keywords: Mobile Social Networking, Sex- texting, Pornography

Introduction

Social Media through mobile phone has been aptly described by Simone (2013) as the third language of the world. The universality of this medium stems from the nuances, which "can cause an individual to forget a verb or a norm regardless of their native tongue". Hence, "140 characters can be more intimidating than a 20 page term paper" (p.7). According to Barnes and Laird (2012a, p.12), Social media is:

quickly evolving in front of our eyes and it is almost impossible to reject and hide from this new form of media. Not only is it an important part of socialization within peer groups, but now it is used

to market and motivate people to become a part of a larger community.

To Barnes and Laird (2012b), the platforms in social networking are undeniably changing the way people communicate, find and share information. Most websites offer these experiences through the use of *Facebook*, *MySpace*, *Twitter*, *YouTube*, *LinkedIn* and many various blog formats. With new apps on smart phones, photography and video made digital can be “created, edited and shared quickly and once it is in this new digital cloud it is not yours anymore” (p.23).

Social networking offer users new ways to access information and entertainment. With advances in technology people can share almost everything about themselves to the world view. The advent of mobile phones has also permeated the fabric of the coding and decoding experience. Mobile Social Networking (MSN) therefore is now a universal mode and a premium forum for meeting people, exchange ideas and transact businesses. The teaming targets of these experiences are young adults who engage in this form as daily routine, revealing so much information. While each platform has its unique language, the intensity in these transmissions is changing the way people identify with each other and culminating into a culture of ‘sex-texting’ an exchange which today have become dominant trends in social networking.

Statement of Problem

The axiom *sex sells in the media* and *the media sells because of sex* are reverberating in social networking among people of all ages particularly young adults who engage in these platforms hours ad infinitum. Aside the daily routine of information sharing, storytelling, and varied transactions, the growing trend in social networking platforms is the exchange of nudity. The presence of pornographic content created by users is worrisome and impinges on societal values. On the one hand, the free access to porn site give users the ability of imaginable possibilities, while on the second hand, the depth in information revelation by most users breathe security concerns and challenges in information sharing. Issues relating to cyber crime, sexual predation, net stalking and on- line romances that result to crimes usually start off as a ‘friendly chat’ with an obvious underlay of sex-texting as a variable in enhancing the shared experience.

Objectives of study

The study had the following objectives:

1. To examine the trends in mobile social networking among young people.
2. To determine the kind of information revelation that takes place on these platforms.
3. To find out if young people are aware of the need and challenges of privacy while using social networks.

Research Questions

The following serve as questions to the study:

1. Do young people reveal huge amount of information as they socialize on-line?
2. How popular is mobile social networking among students of the University of Jos?
3. Is sex-texting and pornography on the increase?
4. How is nudity and images of pornography transmitted among youths?
5. What are the challenges associated with sex –texting and information revelation?

Theoretical Framework

The paper used the social penetration theory as framework for the study. This theory was formulated by Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor in 1973. According to Griffin (2011, p.124) the theory proposes that “as relationships develop, interpersonal communication moves from relatively shallow non-intimate level to more intimate one”. The crux in the theory as seen by the psychologists is on the closeness that exists between two individuals. As expressed by Altman and Taylor (1973 in Howard 2013, par.2), social penetration “occurs primarily through self- disclosure and the closeness develops if the participants proceed in a gradual and orderly fashion from superficial to intimate level of exchange”. To Altima and Taylor (1987), only through the opening of one’s self to the main route to social penetration-self-disclosure that an individual can become vulnerable to others which can result into close relationships. The main assumptions in Social Penetration as outlined by West (2013) include; relationships progress from non intimate to intimate, relational development is general systematic, these relational developments include depenetration and dissolution and fourthly; self – disclosure is at the core of relationships. It is with this core that the study hinges on the theory. With the advent of internet blogs and on-line chatting, texting as communication has sprung up all over the world. The content of these exchanges (sex-texting and images of pornography) with reflections in the interpersonal relationships that are fostered through mobile social networking. While socializing, young people move from being simple friends to intimate ones because of the kinds of activities that take place on the shared platform. One of the main metaphors in social penetration as expressed by Infante, Rancer and Womack (1997) is the ‘Onion analogy”. In this stance, sex-texting is an intimate relationship that is revealed by participants as personality which is personified to the multi-layered nature of the onion uncovers the degree of intimacy.

Scope of the Study

This study examines the perception of youths on mobile social networking with specific interest on the trends in sex-texting and how images of pornography are transmitted. Since not all youths can be studied, the study focuses on students in the Faculty of Arts, University of Jos.

What is Mobile Social Networking?

Social networking is the grouping of individuals into specific groups like small rural communities or a neighbourhood subdivision. While social networking is possible in person, it is most popular online (Social Networking, 2011). At the heart

of networking as put by LASM (2012) is the ability for users to create and share content via a variety of platforms, which constitute an opportunity for understanding social behaviour and interactions. Mobile social networking therefore refers to “social networking where individuals with similar interest converse and connect with one another through their mobile phones” (Mobile Social Networking, 2010a, par. 3). The focal elements that give mobile networking its uniqueness are in the texting services of phones that heighten chatting. On one hand, using phones to interact is “taking the cell phone industry by storm”, while on the other hand “cell phone vendors are looking to catch children and young adults in the networking hype”. (Packer, n.d, p.2).

As mobile web evolved from proprietary mobile technologies and networks, to full mobile access to the Internet, the distinctions have changed. Today, web based social networks are either being extended for mobile access through mobile browsers and Smartphone apps, or native mobile social networks with dedicated focus on mobile use like; mobile communication, location-based services, and augmented reality, requiring mobile devices and technology. The ultimate however is that “mobile and web-based social networking systems often work symbiotically to spread content, increase accessibility and connect users around the world” (Mobile Social Networking, 2010b, par.6).

Pornography and Social media

Pornography is the visual or printed material containing explicit description or display of sexual organs or activity intended to stimulate erotic or emotional feeling (Pornography, n.d). The economic distribution of Images of sex and pornography, as well as its influence in the media is far reaching. To this end, Morris (2014) asserted that commercial pornography accounts for nearly US\$100 billion worldwide. The debate on pornography to social values have made most countries to regulate such content in the media especially Television and film. Although this regulation was successful, the advent of the internet with free access to visual contents has given rise to the proliferation of internet pornography. In the social media, the depiction of sexual matter has been heightened by the circulation of images of sex and nude pictures by users. The unlimited presence of porn sites as they are called have created online visitors and projected the debate intensely.

The Concept of Sex- Texting

The term ‘Sexting’ or ‘Sex-texting’ as used in this study is a combination of two words; sex and texting. It was said to have originated in the 2000’s especially when teenagers and young people relied more on mobile phones for information sharing. The term is a newer version of the connotations with engagements in ‘phone sex’. According to the Internet Slang Dictionary (2005a) Sexting is defined as the act of sending sexually explicit messages or images between cellphones. With sex-texting, users generate their own text/ language/ and even symbols that would be understood in the interaction. Although the Slang dictionary outlined some examples as represented in the table below, every environment has its peculiar signs, and slangs in sex-texting.

8- oral sex, **143-** I love you, **CU 46-** see you for sex, **DUM-** Do you masturbate, **JO-** jerk off, **IIT-** Is it tight, **TDTM-** talk dirty to me, **GNOC-** get naked on camera, **PAW-** Parents are watching

The trends in sex-texting are seen as a natural progression among teenagers and young users who are curious about sex and sexuality (Internet Slang Dictionary 2005b). Various studies have shown that over 39% of teens and over 56% of young adults have engaged in an act of sex texting in the United States (Nigel & Graham, 2011). The aforementioned statistics if not higher is a true reflection in the findings of other countries (Mashable, 2013).

Method

The study employed Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as methodology complementing it with interviews. Focus Group is a form of qualitative research where a group of individuals are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitude towards a product, service, advertisement, concept or even an idea (Michael, 2003). In the social sciences, FGD allows an interviewer to study people in small groups and through a more natural conversational style. According to Marshall and Gretchen (1999), with the combination of participant observation, FGDs can be used for learning about groups and their pattern of interaction. In this stance, participants are recruited on the basis of similar demographics, psychographics and behaviours (Greenbaum, 2000). The study adopted the Mini Focus Group pattern, comprised of 4 to 5 members respectively. This is because the researcher perceived that such group dynamics will produce data and insight to the subject matter.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and the University of Jos

The FGD was conducted with students of the University of Jos, Nigeria. The FGD focused on one faculty, i.e. the Faculty of Arts. As at the 2012/2013 academic session, the Faculty had six departments namely; Mass Communication, Religious Studies, English, Languages and Linguistics, Theatre and Film Arts, and History and International Studies. The buck of the respondents came from the six departments. A total of 30 respondents were selected through purposive sampling techniques. This technique was apt for the study in order to reach the pre-defined group, in this case students who are exposed to different social media platforms. Thus, respondents were picked based on; ownership of a mobile phone, and engagement in social networking.

Defining the Group

Respondents were put into smaller groups; 5 respondents in a group from the six departments. Although each department represented a group, in order to stimulate dynamics and evolve discussions among respondents, the researcher avoided placing respondents with similar demography like age and sex in the same group. A total of 6 FGD's were held lasting 45 minutes to 1 hour for a period of 6 days.

Conducting the Discussions

The FGD was conducted by the researcher (moderator). A tape recorder was used to store all the responses and opinion of the students on the subject matter. The discussions here were evolved through structured questions for all the groups. The questions were short and direct. This ensured a free flow of discussion and a type of engagement (i.e. introducing participants to and make them feel comfortable with the topic) initiated by the moderator.

Data Analysis

The method of data analysis was patterned thus; transcriptions of data, coding the data into pre-determined categories, develop categories based on the data, code the data, and summation of key ideas. Separate spread sheets were used for coding the responses encapsulated in a theme. These themes were formulated alongside the four research questions. The sub-questions under the latter were the same structured questions that formed the buck of engagement between moderator and respondents.

Coding for Respondents

Table 1

DEPTX	Respondents				
MC	MC 1	MC 2	MC 3	MC 4	MC 5
TFA	TFA 1	TFA 2	TFA 3	TFA 4	TFA 5
ENG	ENG 1	ENG 2	ENG3	ENG 4	ENG 5
LIN	LIN 1	LIN 2	LIN 3	LIN 4	LIN 5
HIS	HIS 1	HIS 2	HIS 3	HIS 4	HIS 5
REL	REL 1	REL 2	REL 3	REL 4	REL 5

For easy identification, the study adopted the above to guide the discussions. The first column reveal the DEPTX while the remaining columns had the 5 respondents for each Department. Each department was represented with a code; **MC**-Mass Communication, **TFA**- Theatre and Film Arts, **ENG**- English, **LIN**-Linguistics, **HIS**- History and International Studies, **REL**- Religious Studies respectively.

The following tables reveal the demographic variables of respondents in relation to sex and Age.

Table 2 Respondents' Sex

DEPTX	MALE	FEMALE
MC	2	3
TFA	3	2
ENG	2	3
LIN	2	3

HIS	3	2
REL	2	3
	14 (46.7%)	16(53.3%)
		30 (100%)
Age Bracket of Respondents		
Table 3		
DEPTX	Ages	TOTAL
MC	18 yrs - 28 yrs	5
TFA	17 yrs - 31 yrs	5
ENG	19 yrs - 27 yrs	5
LIN	18 yrs - 30 yrs	5
HIS	18 yrs - 30 yrs	5
REL	19 yrs - 29 yrs	5

Table 2 and 3 reveal the sex and age bracket of the respondents chosen. From the 30 respondent, 14 were males and 16 females. The respondents' ages ranged between 17 yrs to 31 yrs in all. Also, to fully utilize the data obtained, codes for the discussion are categorized by a theme which is used in comparison between respondents and groups perception pattern.

FGD QUESTIONS

Table 4

R1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do young people reveal a lot of information about themselves on-line? 2. Are social media users fond of making anonymous friends? 3. Does the nature of some social platforms embed information sharing unwilling?
R2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why is mobile social networking popular? 2. What are the advantages of mobile social networking?
R3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do youths visit porn sites regularly? 2. Are there unrestricted sites that show pornographic contents? 3. Are youths aware of the concept sex- texting? 4. Does on-line dating encourage sex – texting? 5. Using pictures to communicate on some platforms heightens nudity? 6. Would users be more excited and drawn to nude pictures and stories?

R4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Most discussions online would be incomplete without postings of sex language or nudity to make an effect? 2. Most online users are habitual in forwarding stories with pornographic contents to other user? 3. Is it common for opposite sex(s) to exchange nude pictures with one another while chatting? 4. Do youths innocently reveal ‘body parts’ as fun while chatting? 5. Do you think advertisers employ nudity as sex – appeal to gain popularity?
R5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can Sex – texting result to cyber crime and other vices? 2. What are the negative effects of sex - texting? 3. Do you think sex –texting be regulated? 4. How can young people engage in everyday discussion without sex and nudity? 5. How can youths ensure privacy and protect themselves in social networking?

Theme One: Information Revelation among youths

Table 5

Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Users reveal a lot of information when chatting knowingly and unconsciously give out personal or sensitive details about their life, work, family, dwelling place, environment and many more.</i> ➤ <i>Young people are constantly building anonymous relationships. This is common with social networking. Most people have more friends either on face book or Black berry messenger (BBM) they don't know than familiar ones.</i> ➤ <i>It is interesting to chat with strangers online</i> ➤ <i>Social platforms like Face Book, twitter, Whatsapp, Instagram, and BBM make users reveal information unknowingly. Elements like Postings on wall, Status, D.P's, Timeline, handle, following and the likes associated with the aforementioned platforms can make for good profiling of users. From these elements, users post information, opinion, their feelings, emotions and pictures for the whole world to see.</i> ➤ <i>With the nature of some of the platforms, for instance, Face Book ‘friends of your friends’ can view your wall. Users’ demographic information can be retrieved while their location and time can be accessed. People can have access and even download pictures of others without restriction.</i>

Theme Two: Popularity of MSN among Students of the University of Jos

Table 6

Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ <i>One of the cheapest and affordable means of social networking is through mobile phones.</i>➤ <i>It is very convenient to use mobile phones to carry out social networking.</i>➤ <i>Most students can afford mobile phones.</i>➤ <i>All the platforms in social networking are integrated in the mobile usage.</i>➤ <i>It is more participatory</i>➤ <i>The use of mobile phones gives some sort of privacy to the user.</i>➤ <i>The storing and retrieval of information at will.</i>➤ <i>Short Message Service (SMS) is an integral part of mobile phones hence chatting is made easier as mobile phones incorporate elements of texting.</i>➤ <i>Sending and receiving information is faster e.g. Blackberry messenger.</i>

Theme Three: Trends in Sex – texting and Pornographic content

Table 7

Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ <i>Students visit porn sites regularly</i>➤ <i>These sites make for interesting view because of the free access to some of the sites.</i>➤ <i>Most young people download these pornographic contents and use them in communication.</i>➤ <i>Young people engage in sex- texting.</i>➤ <i>Sex- texting is very popular among youths.</i>➤ <i>Users devise unique language for sex – texting. They also use graphics and pictures when sharing information.</i>➤ <i>The exchange of nude pictures is very common in social networking.</i>

Theme Four: Transmission of Sex in Social Networking

Table 8

Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Users can capture images with their phones and share them instantly.</i> ➤ <i>It is usual to capture 'body parts' by an individual and send to someone else. This is common in communication between opposite sexes.</i> ➤ <i>Youths are fond of circulating pornographic pictures and stories with such contents.</i> ➤ <i>Most students download pornographic contents and use them in communication.</i>

Theme Five: Challenges in Sex- texting and Information revelation

Table 9

Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>There are problems of security and invasion of privacy in social networking.</i> ➤ <i>It would be difficult to regulate sex-texting because of the personalized nature of the communication and free access in sharing information.</i> ➤ <i>Sex-texting can lead to social vices like rape, cyber crime, 419, dating scam and the likes</i> ➤ <i>There are contemporary issues of youths engaging in friendly chats with anonymous individuals in social networking that result to murder e.g. Cynthia Osokogu case was a classical example.</i> ➤ <i>Through sex-texting, unscrupulous individuals can profile unsuspecting users' behaviour and use same to commit crime.</i> ➤ <i>There are a lot of fake users on social networking sites lurking to play on the emotions of other users who reveal so much information about themselves.</i> ➤ <i>Young people should be economical with words and the manner they reveal information.</i>

Discussion and Findings

The five themes were based on the research questions that guided the study. Table 5 sought to find out information revelation among young people. It revealed that students reveal information while chatting or by the nature of the platform. It also revealed that students like making anonymous friends on the different platforms. All the respondents agreed they have unfamiliar friends on-line and make connections with these invincible people. Furthermore 23 respondents (76.6%) say many users are sometimes not aware of the depth of information they share during such engagements. Users also give out sensitive information during platforms account

creation. Mobile Social Networking (MSN) is popular among youths as revealed in Table 6. 27 respondents representing (90%) attest that cost effectiveness, flexibility in use and affordability heightens MNS' popularity. 67% (20) of the respondents were also of the opinion that MNS allows for privacy. To these respondents, "from the comfort zone or any location, users can engage freely in social networking.

The assertion that "the trend in Mobile social networking is culminating into a culture sex – texting and the dissemination of pornographic content among youths" was strongly agreed by the respondents. 18 of the respondents (60%) reflected that many youths they come in contact with must have one or two pornographic image stored in their mobile phones. As content producers, users of MNS are responsible for the circulation of stories with pornographic underlay whether in pictures or through language. Since SMS is an element in Mobile telephony, texting as asserted by the respondents is a daily engagement. Almost all the social networking platforms involve texting. It is 'fun' to text opine 17 respondents (56.6%). It is also commonplace with social networking to share 'body parts' (i.e. sending or receiving nude pictures) mostly when opposite sexes are engaged in a conversation. It was also attested that on-line dating platforms encourages sex-texting. 12 (40%) respondents also say that some users are just in the fun of circulating and re-circulating images with pornographic contents. If they have ever engaged in sex-texting, 19 (63.3%) respondents say they have actively participated in the sphere of sex-texting.

Table 9 examined the challenges in tandem with sex-texting and information revelation. Majority of the respondents 26 (86.6%) agree that there are challenges of security and privacy concerns in the trends. However, they were of the view that challenges associated with information revelation can be curbed but sex-texting and the circulation of pornographic contents may be difficult to curb since it is at the individual level. The free access in social networking platforms undermines plausible solutions. Respondents strongly agreed that the revelation of information by users as well as sex-texting can lead to social vices such as cyber crime, 419, internet romance scams and even murder as was seen in some cases in Nigeria. The underlay to such interaction as asserted by 25 respondents (83.3%) must have involved some form of sex-texting that fosters closer relationships as seen in the social penetration theory.

Conclusion

The objective of this paper was to examine the trends in social networking with particular interest on the rise in sex-texting and transmission of pornographic content among youths, using students of the faculty of Arts, University of Jos for the study. The above findings have provided a build up on related studies in this area. Social networking has become an integral part of how people especially young adults communicate and connect with the world around them. Just like brands from product advertising, so audiences of social media have evolved. The extent of youth reliance on Mobile Social Networking for the creation and maintenance of relationship is today a premium commodity. MSN has brought with it diverse trends and behaviours.

While the pluses for interaction in a single space are applauded, the dimension of moral values and social vices in our society is quite a challenge. Sex – texting is a growing trend and students (youths) are seemingly unaware of the dangers in privacy and security concerns that come with ‘innocent friendship’. Some of the most common problems associated with MSN are internet romance scam, invasion of privacy, blackmail, kidnapping and even murder as was the classic case of Cynthia Osokogu death as a result of Face book. Many cases abound and will continue if young adults are not sensitized on the need to take precautions while engaging in MSN and sex-texting. This paper concludes by giving the following recommendations;

1. Parents should play a leading role in advising young adults on the consequences of sex-texting.
2. Since the curricular today in most tertiary institutions contain ICT, a part of that curriculum should cover internet privacy and concerns and how students and users can be safe online. In this case deliberate policies can be made by tertiary institutions to incorporate the formal training and guidance on social media and its use.
3. Users of MSN should also be responsible while networking. As users interact online, they can also employ those elements on the different platforms that can aid in security and information revelation.
4. Government can also evolve policies to checkmate pornography and sex-texting to forestall individuals with deviant behaviours. This has been done in countries like the United States.

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Strengthening the Banking Sub-Sector through Financial Public Relations: The Framing Models Option

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Abstract

The Nigerian Banking sub-sector has had a chequered history since independence; and a number of reforms have been carried out to ensure its stability. These include the indigenization policy of the 1970s, the restructuring policies of the 1980s and 1990s and the recapitalization and restructuring of 2005. These measures notwithstanding, the stability of the sub-sector was far from being guaranteed as the issues of excessive internal borrowing, high exposure to the oil and gas, falsification of books and other sharp practices made the system more vulnerable, leading to loss of confidence in the system and tighter control by the Central Bank of Nigeria since 2009. Going by this development, therefore, this work identifies framing models of Public Relations as a complementary means of building a sustainable confidence in the system. Framing is a potentially useful paradigm for examining the strategic creation of Public Relations messages and audience responses. In view of this, seven framing models applicable to financial Public Relations are identified as means of tackling the challenges. These involve the framing of situations, attributes, choices, actions, issues, responsibility, and news. It is stressed here that if the models are appropriately applied, they can be used in creating sustainable understanding within and around the banking environment, presenting the banks unique selling points, broadening stockholder base, increasing prestige of the banks and creating a favourable attitude in the financial community. The work recommends consistent messaging, popularizing unique performance indicators, not burying the bad news, building a large press following, among others, as ingredients of the frames to be employed by the practitioners.

Introduction

Perception is not everything, but it is often the most important thing (Hallahan, 1999). Even the strongest companies benefit from a renewed look at how effectively

they are communicating with employees, investors, customers, the media, and related stakeholders. Therefore, it is important to work with management teams in any organization to ensure that, as markets and business strategies evolve, an organization's vision, values, and attributes are evident to these most important audiences. For banks and other key players in the financial industry, this calls for a well-articulated and vigorously pursued financial Public Relations programme. A successful investor relations or Financial Public Relations programme requires a level of clarity, precision, and regulatory compliance distinct from other forms of corporate communication.

Investor relations and relations with the financial public refer to different forms of communication which a company uses when building relations with those who provide means for its growth and development. This makes existing and potential investors the prime financial public, but one should not overlook the importance of others involved - those that have substantial influence on investors' perspectives and opinions. In relations with the financial public, besides professional, well-informed investors the targeted public are also individuals who, as a rule, are neither professional investors nor are equipped with comprehensive information or broad financial knowledge. Good and active financial Public Relations help a company to provide a fair price for its stocks, provide access to extra capital when needed and ultimately engender public confidence.

The banking sub – sector of the Nigerian economy has over the years experienced boom and burst in its fortunes. While the challenges faced by the industry might have resulted from policy controversy (Brownbridge, 1996), there are issues bothering on lack of effective and honest communication which have eroded investor confidence. A striking observation in this regard is that the option of Financial Public Relations has not been fully exploited as a means of combating the challenge. It is an option discussed in this paper.

Financial Public Relations: A Conceptual Review

As explained earlier, Financial Public Relations is “the creation of an investor – friendly climate; and rapport to engender understanding, appreciation and support by various groups who are responsible for the funding, control or approval of an organisation's financial operations such as shareholders, members of stock exchange banks, insurance houses, investment analysts, or editors of financial journals” (Keghku, 2005). Financial Public Relations ultimately targets investors of all sizes, aiming to convey the strengths of a company's equity story in order to sustain an upwardly moving share price. Investors are reached through press and sell-side analysts, where third party endorsement is powerful and can influence decision making amongst investors. Whilst financial Public Relations uses many of the same techniques as other Public Relations practices, it has different audiences and therefore different channels through which to communicate with them. For instance, Keghku (2005), says that apart from the usual news channels through which financial PR messages are conveyed, there are specialized outlets like *Financial Standard*, *Business Times*, *Business Day* and *Business in Nigeria* which purely and constantly update their audiences on latest development in the financial sector.

Altimore, et al (2012) stresses that the first task of financial public relations is to create and maintain investor confidence, building positive relationships with the

financial community through the dissemination of corporate information. Financial Public Relations is much easier to relate to the proverbial bottom line than other kinds of Public Relations. Relative stock prices, bond ratings and the interest rates charged on loans are direct measures of confidence in a company. When confidence is high, stocks are worth more, and bonds and borrowing cost less. When confidence is low, stock is worth less, and higher interest is demanded by those who loan funds to business. Most companies considers their financial relation programme effective if they have been able to reduce the cost of funds or obtain the best cost of capital. In view of these, Roalman (1974) stresses that an individual is not likely to invest money in a corporation's stocks, bonds, commercial paper, or other financial pledges unless he understands fully what is likely to happen to that corporation in the future. He added that trust in management of a corporation is not built over night, but rather, it is the result of long term actions by the corporation to provide factual financial information in proper perspective. Therefore, the watch words for financial Public Relations managers are consistency, clarity and credibility (Higgins, 2000).

In line with the above, Altimore et al (2012) provide specific objectives for financial PR practitioners. These include:

- a. Building interest in the company,
- b. Creating understanding of the company;
- c. Selling company product;
- d. Broadening stockholder base by attracting new investors;
- e. Stabilizing stock prices;
- f. Winning stockholders approval for management;
- g. Increasing the company's prestige;
- h. Creating favourable attitudes in the financial community;
- i. Developing political sensitivities of stockholders for issues relating to the company;
- j. Improving employees relations; and
- k. Building loyalty of stockholders.

The Realities of the Nigerian Banking Sub-Sector

According to Brownbridge (1996), the banking system in Nigeria has undergone radical changes since independence. Banking developed from an industry which in 1960 was dominated by a small number of foreign owned banks into one in which public sector ownership predominated in the 1970s and 1980s and in which Nigerian private investors have played an increasingly important role since the mid1980s. Government policies had a major influence on developments in the banking industry. Extensive government intervention characterized financial sector policies, beginning in the 1960s and intensifying in the 1970s, the objective of which was to influence resource allocation and promote indigenisation. The three largest banks which operated in Nigeria (sometimes referred to as first generation banks) have their origins in the colonial period. The British Bank for West Africa (now called First Bank) was incorporated in 1894, the Colonial Bank, later acquired by Barclays and now known as Union Bank, began operations in 1917, and the British and French Bank, the precursor of the United Bank for Africa, started in 1949. All three were originally wholly foreign owned but the Federal Government purchased majority shareholdings in the mid1970s, until subsequent liberalization in the 1990s and 2000s transferred

ownership to interested private investors. Since 1987, financial sector reforms have been implemented, encompassing elements of liberalisation and measures to enhance prudential regulation and tackle bank distress (Brownbridge 1996).

Beginning around the time of independence, a second generation of banks were set up in Nigeria. The first group of second generation banks were also mainly foreign owned. They included the Banque Internationale Pour L'Afrique Occidentale (BIAO) later Afriland (and now Mainstreet Bank after being taken over by AMCON). It was the fourth largest bank in Nigeria. This was followed in the 1970s by the establishment of commercial banks by the state governments in Nigeria and by the entry of a number of merchant banks, mostly as joint ventures between foreign investors and the Federal Government and/or private investors. A third generation of banks emerged during the 1980s. Some of these banks were set up by state governments but the majority were started by Nigerian private investors. The growth of the local private banks was very rapid after 1986, particularly in the merchant banking sector.

According to Brownbridge (1996), the growth in the privately owned banks can be attributed to several factors. First, the inefficiencies of the public sector banks provided opportunities for new entrants to target corporate and high income urban customers. The local banks were able to attract these customers by offering higher interest rates on deposits following interest rate deregulation in 1987. A few of the local banks attracted customers by providing more efficient services, such as much faster loan appraisals, and innovative products.

Second, many of the banks were set up primarily so that their owners could obtain foreign exchange which could be resold at a premium. Although the specific mechanism changed several times, the essence of the system involved the CBN auctioning the available foreign exchange to the banks: only the banks were authorised to bid for foreign exchange, which were then expected to supply their customers. (Oliadebe 1991: 178). The restriction of access to the auction to banks, combined with the allocation system which meant that even small banks were able to obtain foreign exchange, provided a powerful incentive for investors to establish banks, even if they had no interest in conducting more conventional banking business.

Third, some of the banks have been set up in order to channel customer deposits into the business ventures of their owners and to conduct other types of fraud. How extensive this has been is impossible to estimate as evidence of frauds of this nature usually only comes to light when banks are liquidated. But the truth is that many of these banks were either liquidated or became distressed due to excessive insider lending by which depositors' funds were converted into the businesses of the bank owners.

Fourth, the criteria for granting banking licenses appear to have been relaxed and politicized in the second half of the 1980s. The Federal Ministry of Finance had the authority to grant licenses with the Presidency and Federal Executive Council also involved in reviewing applications. Political influence was used to obtain licenses for applicants, many of whom had no banking experience, but did have link to the regulatory authority.

In the final analysis, the financial distress of the local banks resulted; and attributable to the combination of bad debts, due in particular to insider lending, and a tightening of liquidity in the banking system. Bad debts arose as a consequence of the

difficult macroeconomic environment – increased interest rates, reduction of protection and subsidies, and economic stagnation undermined the ability of borrowers in the real sector to service their loans - and mismanagement and fraud in the banks. Prudent lending practices were not followed because boards of directors did not provide honest and effective leadership, often being more concerned with securing credit facilities for themselves, managers were inexperienced and often lacked independence from major shareholders, while credit policies and internal controls were poor or non-existent (Mamman and Oluyemi 1994).

The second aspect of the distress among the local private sector banks was their worsening liquidity position. This was caused in part by their own internal problems - the deterioration in loan quality and therefore earnings - and partly by exogenous developments. The efficacy of liberalization has also been undermined by the scale of bank distress, which is partly a legacy of pre-reform policies of public ownership and inadequate prudential supervision but also partly the consequence of inappropriate sequencing of reforms. The inconsistency of deregulation has been a serious drawback in the implementation.

Since the late 1980s, the banking industry has been afflicted by widespread distress or liquidation. Most of the distressed or liquidated banks were owned by state governments or the local private sector. Failed banks tribunal was set up to try offenders and those found guilty were actually sentenced. Even after this development, the confidence in the banking sector was never restored. Therefore, to avoid a reoccurrence of failed bank regime in the country, the Central Bank of Nigeria in 2005, enforced a new capitalization benchmark of 25 billion naira per bank. To remain on the scene, many of the existing banks embarked on Initial Public Offers (IPO), and the investing public did heed their call with optimism. Those banks that felt they couldn't make it alone opted for mergers and acquisitions which left only 24 commercial banks mostly quoted on the Nigeria Stock Exchange operating on the scene. Following that development, banks share prices went astronomically high, creating a false sense of a booming market which attracted more investors into the market through the secondary market offers. However, as it was soon to be discovered, all that glitters wasn't gold after all. The stock exchange market crashed in 2008, and those who invested in the booming banking market had to moan as they lost heavily.

The sliding fortunes of the commercial banks did not stop there. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) after an extensive audit of the existing commercial banks in 2009, declared five of them, Intercontinental Banks PLC, Union Bank of Nigeria PLC, AfriBank PLC, Bank PHB, and Oceanic Bank International PLC as weak and unsafe for business. The entire management of these banks were sacked and many of them were arrested for prosecution. Their offences include falsification of banks statements, excessive internal borrowing, high exposure to oil and gas, high liquidity ratio, lack of transparency, etc. While some of these banks have since been taken over by the Asset Management Company of Nigeria (AMCON) as bridge banks, others have been acquired by stronger competitors within the industry.

Financial Public Relations and the Banking Sub-Sector

The purpose of investor relations is to make a proper connection or link between the company's management and the financial community (Miller, 1991). Basically,

the investor relationship department of corporations deals and communicates with influential financial groups. According to Miller (1991), the financial community consists of the following sixteen influential financial groups: stock exchange member firms, customers' brokers, security analysts and individual analysts, unlisted or over-the-counter dealers, investment bankers, commercial bankers, registered investment advisory services, insurance companies and pension funds, mutual funds and investment trusts, investment counsellors, trustees of estates and institutions, financial statistical organizations, investment magazines and financial publications, large individual shareholders, debt rating agencies, portfolio managers and lender banks. Whatever the principle activities and whoever the audience, communicating and transmitting relevant, concise, trustworthy, real time information are the key activities of investor relations

Besides its basic function of informing and maintaining quality relations with professional and individual investors, investor relations nowadays includes Public Relations and marketing tools. Today in developed capital markets being straight forward and honest with the investing public is standard, so those companies or markets that do not treat investors properly are considered insufficiently transparent and unsafe for investment (Marinkovic, 2007). Investors are not prepared to invest funds in companies if they do not have sufficient data on them, and if they cannot be certain of getting required information at any time from the person in charge of investor relations or top management. Therefore, key players in the banking sub-sector of countries in transition should pay more attention in the future to investor relations and adequate tools.

Fundamentally, the remit of investor relations is not only to create an awareness and understanding of a company amongst the investment community, but also to help quoted companies gain access to capital and achieve liquidity in and fair valuation for their shares. However, Financial Public Relations is not without its challenges. The first basically deals with the regulatory framework within which listed companies operate. Although the Public Relations companies themselves (if used purely on consultancy basis) are not regulated by the Financial Services Authority ("FSA"), listed companies do have to abide by regulations dished out by the regulatory authority especially, the Securities and Exchange Commission. Along this line, certain information such as management's financial forecasts, cannot be disclosed. The regulation also affects the timing for the release of information, as in order to maintain a fair and orderly market, it is essential that all investors are given access to new information about the company at the same time – that is giving a select few access to information which could affect the share price would be against the rules for either market.

Secondly, working with other advisers can be challenging, and often it is the role of the Public Relations to coordinate communication between advisers and the clients. This involves arranging all parties' strategy meetings, to agree on messaging and tone of announcements and presentations to investors.

Consequent upon these challenges, the strategic communication message of a bank have to be hinged on:

- i. **Present Business Status:** Explaining information about the business and environment as well as recent developments and decisions on the basis of company's long term planning and strategy.

- ii. **Forecasting Future Status:** Highlighting future prospects of the business rather than historical performance, focusing on long term strategy and on long term opportunities for the business.
- iii. **Transparency:** Avoiding over-expectations from the target audiences and facing adverse news openly and honestly.
- iv. **Managing Relations:** Providing analysts with access to the top management; being proactive rather than re-active; employing an investor relations staff or a department that is able to explain details and is responsive to analysts' inquires and requests. (Dodevic, et al 2012)

It is therefore the job of the Financial Public Relations manager(s) to work ahead of time and ensure that relevant information are dished out fairly and timely in a way that it would engender competitive advantage. In view of this task the financial Public Relations manager must abide by certain **dos** and **don'ts** as advocated by the CIPR Skills Guide (2013). These include:

- a. Being consistent with messaging, particularly in terms of how much detail you give.
- b. Looking at other companies in your clients' sectors to see what sort of key performance indicators they are using – adopting similar ones will enable analysts and press to quickly benchmark you.
- c. Building a following of press and analysts and continue to communicate with them, even in the case of bad news;
- d. Analysing shareholder registers regularly to understand what type of investor to communicate with (i.e. if there is a large retail investor holding, ensure that they are communicated with through the available investor press such Financial Standard, Business Day, etc in Nigeria);
- e. Working closely with other advisors, so that you all have the same strategic objectives and are communicating the same messages;
- f. A consistent drip-feeding of news flow to the market will help to sustain an upwardly moving share price. No news is considered bad news, so keeping investors regularly informed is essential to support the share price;
- g. Not burying bad news; being upfront with shareholders; and
- h. Engaging with the press at all times of the year, so that they understand the company's story and will be more likely to write when there is news.

The Framing Models Option for the Banking Sub-sector

As explained earlier, framing is a way of giving some overall interpretations to isolated items of facts (McQuail, 2009). Framing in the words of Entman (2003) essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment for the item described. Framing is a potentially useful paradigm for examining the strategic creation of public relations messages and audience responses. Public relations workers have been referred to pejoratively as “image-makers” and “spin doctors”—labels that only partially portray their important role in constructing social reality. Indeed, public relations counseling involves *defining reality* for organizations by shaping organizational perspectives about the outsideworld—a process also termed *enactment* (Weick, 1969). Similarly, outbound

public relations communications involve attempts to define reality, at least as it relates to client organizations, for the many publics on whom the organization depends. This construction process might be dismissed as manipulation. However, because defining reality is the very essence of communication, constructionists would argue that the process is neither inherently good nor bad, but the bottom line is that it has to be built on good faith, transparency and honesty. This therefore gives credence to framing as an integral aspect of Public Relations.

After an extensive literature review across disciplines, (Hallhan, 1999) identifies seven distinct types of framing applicable to public relations. These involve the framing of situations, attributes, choices, actions, issues, responsibility, and news. They are explained thus:

i. Framing of Attributes: Public relations practitioners routinely engage in framing of attributes by accentuating particular aspects of the causes, products, or services they represent. The principle can be seen today at work as corporations strive to promote their various good qualities—such as community involvement, support of the arts and education, and philanthropy—which only indirectly relate to their principal business activity (Hollahan, 1999). In many cases, attribute framing involves creating *positively valenced* associations with beliefs and values, traditions and rituals, or with other cultural artifacts that people cherish. In respect of the banking sub-sector in Nigeria, it can be argued that many of them might have attempted to promote their positive attributes through social responsibility services, but the extent at which they identify with the host communities core values remain questionable. On the other hand, the creation of *negatively valenced* associations is sometimes useful when messages focus on competitors. For example, there was an issue of de-marketing which tended to portray the defunct Intercontinental Bank as unsafe for business. The bank did not recover from the storm it generated before it finally lost its corporate identity. So instead of framing their own attributes, they allow others do it for them, albeit in a negative way.

ii. Framing of Situation: The situations in which the parties find themselves must be consistent with their expectations. For example, consider the extensive use of special events as group gatherings to mark organizational achievements—grand openings, award banquets, anniversary celebrations, and so on. Each of these communication opportunities must be staged or framed in a way that meets expectations of participants. Unmet expectations related to ritualistic staging or celebratory atmospherics might redefine the event and lead to inferences by participants that are just the opposite of the intent of event sponsors (Hallahan, 1999). The task of the financial Public Relations managers here therefore entails proper handling of all ceremonies in a way that customers, shareholders, (existing and potential), host communities and concerned regulatory agencies would be fulfilled.

iii. Framing of Choices: For practitioners whose work involves asking people to take risks, the framing of risks provides useful insights into processes of decision making. With a preponderance of evidence suggesting that people are risk-averse and more concerned with preventing losses than achieving gains, framing provides a valuable theoretical model in which arguments related to risk-taking might be posed (Heath,

Seshadri, and Lee, 1998). In various contexts—such as which bank share to buy and in what proportion or which bank to deposit a life time saving—financial public relations professionals deal with individuals confronted with serious decision making that only requires the best of persuasion to get them to act in a way desired. It must be noted that most of the distressed or liquidated banks in the country had their problems deeply rooted either in dwindling capital base or high liquidity ratio because issue related to making of choices were not properly handled.

iv.Framing of Actions: Similarly, when individuals are reasonably motivated to act, or when question of foregoing losses or sustaining gains comes into view, public relations routinely faces concerns about how to maximize behavioral intentions and actions by posing desired actions in the most advantageous way. As an example, there are many potential customers or investors who are hanging on the fence. It takes one last piece of persuasion perfectly crafted but anchored on truth to get them across the fence. Such act of persuasion must be built on what previous investors or depositors have gained and on a line-up of attractive and achievable benefits accruable to such decision.

v.Framing of Issues: Framing is clearly a valuable concept for issue managers. Issue management essentially involves efforts to control or contain the development, growth, and maturation of issues over the life cycle of a controversy (Meng, 1992). The ultimate objective of most issues management initiatives is to seek resolution of disputes in an expedient manner that benefits all parties and avoids unnecessary conflict. However, if that is not possible, effective issues management involves controlling the prominence the issue attains in the media or the public policy agenda. Defining issues through the process of framing thus becomes a pivotal concern. Issues can be framed as significant or insignificant to the public interest but more important can be defined in terms of how people should think about an issue. But the overall objective should not be tailored towards deception because of the backlash that might result. Take, for example, if a bank is presenting itself as facilitator of investment opportunity for its customers, it must be seen to have clearly outlined the credit options available and in a way not driven by purely selfish agenda. This is because customers are aware that banks only think of its interest before anything else, but making them to be reasonably optimistic of their own chances can go a long way in encouraging them not minding what the bank stands to gain.

vi.Framing of Responsibility: Responsibility framing—acceptance or denial of being responsible for events—has particular implications for public relations. The adroit handling of negative information has been the focus of recent research, particularly in the context of crisis management (Lyon and Cameron, 1998). For organizations engaged in good works, the goal of many public relations efforts is to enhance the reputation of the organization by calling attention to the organization's role in activities such as funding a new local symphony or helping improve local schools. In such circumstances, organizations actively seek out credit for their actions. However, their efforts to gain recognition can be discounted by cynics who see such efforts as self-serving efforts to ingratiate the organization with the community. When involved in controversy, however, an organization might want to pursue a strategy of

responsibility avoidance. Although many public relations advisers contend that organizations should openly accept responsibility for mistakes, many organizations find this difficult for a variety of legitimate reasons—the potential of lost business, the blemishing of their corporate reputation, investor uneasiness, and legal liability, to name just a few. But come to think of it, if a bank is consistently known for accepting responsibility for both positive and negative actions or inactions, the customers or investing public are most certain to go with them in times of crisis, as their transparency might become a trademark that might not be possibly rivalled. But the number of Nigerian banks that have significantly explored this option remains to be determined.

vii. Framing of news: Finally, as suppliers of nearly half of the content found in the news media (Cutlip, 1989), public relations practitioners are extricably involved in the framing of the news. The role of sources as shapers of news content is well documented (Itule and Anderson, 2009). In proposing a particular story to a reporter or editor, public relations professionals engage in two separate but related processes. The first is to solicit interest in the story topic in itself. The second is to assure that the story is slanted or framed in a way that is consistent with the source's *preferred framing* (i.e., how a client would like to have its story told). Exchanges between sources and journalists are essentially *frame negotiations* in which adroit sources play on journalists' schematically organized knowledge about news to propose stories that follow conventions of storytelling, fit certain formulaic categories of content, and resonate with a journalist's notions of news reporting. For the practitioners in banks therefore, this aspect of framing has to be adhered to. After all, you are the only one that blow your own trumpet. But some words of caution: truth should be the determining principle in framing such news.

Theoretical Framework

This work is anchored on framing theory (advocated by Entman, 2003) and the Public Relations Transfer Process model advanced by Frank Jefkins (1981).

a. Framing Theory

According to Entman (2003), messages and information sent to audiences carry with them a pre-existing set of meanings or frames. He calls it an active process of drawing out dominant themes. These meanings come from the cultural and social groupings in which we live and work. A pre-existing interpretation or frame that audience instantly know and accept is very useful to communicators (Altimore, et al (2012). Common devices used in media and public relations stories are catchphrases, depictions, metaphors, exemplars and visual images. In fact framing theorists suggest that if we want to communicate successfully with one another, we are bound to use common frames as a necessary condition to being understood.

The theory is relevant to this work because the seven framing models which form the core of the approach adopted are the offshoot of the theory. In fact, there is no possibility of framing models without the framing theory itself.

b. Frank Jefkins Transfer Process (Model)

Jefkins (1988) advocated a process of converting negativism into positivism. In his view, when the atmosphere a particular socio-economic circumstance is dominated by negative feeling, it is the job of Public Relations to ensure mutual feelings of understanding through a consistent series of appeal process. It is this process that is termed PR Transfer Model or Process. The model advocates converting hostility to sympathy, prejudice to acceptance, apathy to interest and ignorance to knowledge. In terms of relevance to this work, therefore, practitioners of financial Public Relations can use the framing models to ensure an investor friendly environment for the banking sub-sector by invoking sympathy in times of crisis, acceptance of innovation when there is prejudice, generating interest in period of apathy and educating them on issues they lack required knowledge.

Conclusion

The foregoing indicates that framing models are essential tools in Public Relations practices. A careful look at each of the framing models and its application to the banking sub-sector shows that there is no aspect of Public Relations that can find it more relevant than the Financial Public Relations. The Nigerian banking system have been over the years characterised by chequered history mostly attributable to the undoing of the internal control mechanism bothering on openness and accountability. In organizing communications between a bank and key publics therefore, a major concern in public relations should be to structure encounters in ways that will be favorably received and reinforce the interest of all parties. For example, if an exchange is truly meant to be a two-way symmetric exchange (which normative or system theorists suggest is the ideal way to conduct public relations; Grunig, 2000), practitioners must take care to assure that the structure of the encounters themselves are framed properly to facilitate dialogue and open discussion.

In conclusion, reporting every important event, openness towards investors, Internet pages and printed information intended entirely for the investing public, as well as constant direct conversations with shareholders and potential investors and customers, all anchored on appropriate framing choice(s), must become a daily routine for the banks that want to compete equally in the world money market.

Recommendations

In view of the peculiarities of the Nigerian banking sub – sector and the framing options for financial public relations so far analyzed, the following recommendations are hereby forwarded to ensure safe practices that will strengthen this aspect of the Nigerian financial sector. Each of them needs to be adopted using appropriate framing option(s).

- a. Managers of financial public relations in banks must be consistent with messaging, particularly in terms of how much details they give;
- b. They have to look at other banks in the sub - sectors to see what sort of key performance indicators they are using so as to think of adopting better option(s) – adopting similar ones will enable analysts and press to quickly benchmark you;
- c. They have to build a following of press and analysts and continue to communicate with them, even in the case of bad news;

- d. They have the responsibility of analyzing shareholder registers regularly to understand what type of investor to communicate with (i.e. if there is a large retail investor holding, ensure that they are communicated with through the available investor press; for instance, Financial Standard, Business Day, Annual Report etc in Nigeria);
- e. Work closely with other advisors, so that you all have the same strategic objectives and are communicating the same messages;
- f. A consistent drip-feeding of news flow to the market will help to sustain an upwardly moving share price. No news is considered bad news, so keeping investors regularly informed is essential to supporting the share price;
- g. They should ensure that bad news are not buried; report them with justifiable reasons so as to remain upfront with stakeholders; and
- h. Engage the press at all times of the year, so that they understand the company's story and will be more likely to write when there is news.

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Influence of the Internet on Sexual Behaviour of University Undergraduates: A Comparative Study of University of Jos and Benue State University, Makurdi

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Abstract

The study assessed the influence of Internet on the sexual behaviour of undergraduates in University of Jos and Benue State University. Survey was employed as research method using questionnaire and interview to gather data. Findings revealed that the sexual contents on the Internet have influence on university undergraduates. Further findings show that university undergraduates pay much attention to the sexual contents on the Internet which include pornography, dating, romance and oral sex. The study found too that the perception of undergraduates regarding sexual beliefs and behaviours is influenced by sexual content on the net. The study concludes that the Internet provides sexual behavior orientation to university undergraduates but this orientation is often dysfunctional and therefore poses a threat to the Nigerian youths. A multilevel approach that is school-based, family-based and community programmes aimed at helping youths out of false sexual behaviour orientation offered by the Internet among others is recommended by the study.

Introduction:

In recent times, Internet has become a large influence on people's attitudes and behaviours. Internet has been found to reflect and possibly shape the attitudes, values, and behaviours of young people (Greeson, 200:199). Mbofong (2003:3) agrees with the above when he wrote:

Internet, as most of us know is a large network, which communicates with each other by means of data packets. Internet is regarded as the largest information base. Today, Internet has become an integral part of our daily lives. We depend on the Internet to update ourselves about current news and rely on the communication platform it offers

to get in touch with our loved ones. Information from all around the world is just a click away, thanks to the Internet.

According to Borzekowski, Fobil, and Asante (2006:19) “the Internet has areas that appeal to all the most important sides of our lives, including relationship and sex”. According to them, there are a few different sides to relationships and sex on the internet- some can be helpful some not.

Speaking in the same vein, Igun (2006:21) said, “The Internet today is in many ways seen as an essential to life. It is used in the workplace, school and home. With the invention of the Internet the world has forever changed in both good and bad ways”. Speaking about the positive influence of the Internet, Oketunji (2001:8) wrote:

Many positive results have come from the invention of the Internet. One positive that has resulted from the Internet is the fact that you are always able to access research information anytime of the day or night. The Internet has every kind of information that you could possibly want, there is everything for everyone on the Internet. Besides research information, there also is daily local and world news information, and also weather. Young people also benefit from the Internet because there are so many websites geared to learning for them.

Having said that, Igun was quick to add that not everything from the Internet is positive when he wrote:

Not everything that has resulted from the Internet has been positive; some negative things have also come along with it. One of the worst results from the Internet is, inappropriate content such as pornography is available to anyone, including young children. Another negative effect of the Internet is that false information can also be found, which can lead to confusion.

As computers and mobile phones become relatively inexpensive, widespread use of Internet technologies by undergraduates for different purposes has considerably affected their every day lives. More and more undergraduates from both developed and developing countries are becoming identified by online usernames, passwords, and code names serving both leisure and educational pursuits (Chen, Wigand and Nilan 2000:590). The Internet offers information about many topics including sexual and reproductive health rights. According to Huberman (2008:203), studies have shown that many university undergraduates have used the Internet to look for information on health and sexuality, including topics they may not feel comfortable talking about with parents, teachers or healthcare providers- from depression to sexual behaviours. Sexual behaviour, means being attracted to a male or a female and acting in a manner leading to the satisfaction of the sex instinct.

Environmental influence is said to be one of the factors that contribute to the sexual behaviour of youths. The mass media especially the Internet is known to have contributed a lot to the sexual behaviour of undergraduates. According to Cyber Atlas (2001:506), the word sex is the most popular search term used on the Internet today. The Internet has increased dramatically the availability of sexually explicit content.

Computer and Internet use is diffusing more rapidly than any previous technology (Taylor, 2000:23).

The Internet may have both positive and negative effects on sexual health. According to Finkelhor, Mitchell, and Wolak, 2000:520), one national survey of young people (10-17 years old) who regularly use the Internet, one out of four said he or she had encountered unwanted pornography in the past year, and one out of five had been exposed to unwanted sexual solicitations or approaches. At the same time, a number of sites, such as the American Social Health Association *iwannaknow.org*, promote healthy sexual behaviour and provide young people with advice on communication in relationships as well as methods for protecting against sexually transmitted diseases.

Now, considering that the Internet offers both positive and negative sexual content to university undergraduates, one stands to reason that its influence on undergraduates could be positive or negative.

Statement of the Problem

The Internet offers a variety of activities that are appealing to young people especially university undergraduates. The Internet was initially developed and its use restricted to scientific research by the US Department of Defence (Cheung and Huang 2005:245). Since its widespread adoption, the Internet has impacted the lives of people from all walks of life, including impacts on business, shopping, education and social activities (Cheung and Huang 2005:245). Internet social activities have presented university undergraduates with opportunities as well as challenges. The increasing usage of social networking sites such as Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, Blogs, Instant Message, Message Board, and YouTube offer sexual orientation to university undergraduates which can be positive or negative (Cheung and Huang 2005:75). These social networking sites often give help, advice or information on sexual health. This type of information seems to be very important to undergraduates as an American survey found that 75% of young people use the Internet for health information (Borzekowski, Fobil and Asante 2006:246). These sites also create loads of new ways to make friends and talk to them.

On the other side, these sites are used to lure young people, especially university undergraduates into cybersex. Cybersex has been likened to a kind of “sexual revolution” with more than 100,000 web sites featuring all kinds of sexual content, such as erotic photos, videos, live sex acts, and web-cam strips sessions (Carnes 2001, Cooper, Boies, Maheu, and Greenfield, 2001:523). Visits to pornographic sites have increased with some sites reporting as many as 50 million hits (Worden, 2001:95). Although many of the undergraduate students who use the Internet tend to be recreational or utilitarian oriented, some end up becoming addicted to cybersex. Consequently, considering the opportunities and challenges offered by the Internet to university undergraduate students, what this study investigates is influence of the Internet on the sexual behavior of undergraduates in University of Jos and Benue State University.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to ascertain the sexual orientation the Internet provides to undergraduate students. Specifically, the study seeks:

1. To find out the sexual content undergraduates pay attention to on the Internet.
2. To examine the influence of sexual contents on the Internet on university undergraduates' sexual perceptions.
3. To ascertain the influence of sexual content on the Internet on university undergraduates' attitudes towards sex and sexual behaviours.

Research Questions

The following research questions which are in line with the above stated objectives were raised to further guide and give focus to this study.

1. What sexual content do undergraduates pay attention to on the Internet?
2. How is the sexual content on the Internet influencing university undergraduates' sexual perceptions?
3. What is the influence of sexual content on the Internet on university undergraduates' attitudes towards sex and sexual behaviours?

Significance of the Study

The study is significant in a number of ways. It contributes to knowledge about the Internet and sexual orientation of university undergraduates. It also contributes to how best the Internet can be used for the sexual orientation of university undergraduates. It is also hoped that the findings of the study will serve as a resource material for researchers as it will provide a guide for further studies in university undergraduates' social relationships.

Scope of the Study

The study is concerned with the influence of the Internet on sexual orientation of university undergraduates. Accordingly, it is delimited to the Internet contents that have to do with sexuality and its influence on university undergraduates. In the same vein, this study is delimited to the two being studied.

Review of Literature

Sexual activity among university undergraduates in contemporary Nigeria is gradually, yet firmly, assuring a revolutionary dimension. Evidence of this is to be seen in the increasing sexual promiscuity among undergraduates, high infection rates of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, rising figures of pregnancies, abortions and deaths (Iwokwagh, 2008:3).

Statistics indicate that in Nigeria, 26% and 66% of girls between 15 and 20 and 24 years respectively had pre-marital sexual experience in 1990 (MC Cauley, 1990) in Iwokwagh (2008:3). Makinwa (2002:18) reported in a recent survey of sexual behaviour of over 5,500 urban youths aged 12-24, that (44% of females and 37% of males) have had sexual intercourse. Of these figures, 82% of females and 72% of males were reported to have had sexual intercourse at 19. Findings from the National HIV/AIDS and Reproductive Health Survey, 2003, further strengthen the results of Makinwa's study, with regards to early sexual experiences of adolescents. It was found in the survey that the median age at first sexual intercourse was 18 years.

Several studies had revealed the sexual behaviour of adolescents and youths. A study of sexual activities of adolescents conducted by Owuamanam (1995:58) revealed that various activities are widely practiced among Nigerian adolescents, such

activities are kissing breast/genital fondling, embracing, hand holding and sexual intercourse. According to Odewole (2000:87) and Omoteso (2006:130), several attitude surveys had also revealed that the sexual attitude of adolescents is more liberal than that of adults. WHO (1993) in Omoteso (2006:130) reported that 53% of girls and 67% boys aged between 14 and 19 years were sexually active. In studies of Ravi (1991), Capenter (2000), Horan, Philips and Hagan (2000), Koenig (2000), Remez (2000), Sanders and Reinisch (2001) in Omoteso (2006:131), it was reported that young men surveyed were more likely than women to report sexual experience.

Arising from undergraduates' risky sexual behaviour is a deluge of unpleasant consequences (Iwokwagh 2008:4). For instance, it has been noted that the increasing number of unwanted pregnancies among university undergraduates in Nigeria is fast becoming an international health problem (Iwokwagh 2008). Statistics show that more than 70 percent of girls have become pregnant at least once by the time they are 18years old (Arkutu 1995 in Iwokwagh 2008:4).

Although many factors contribute to the high sexual activities by university undergraduates, Adebayo, Udegbe and Sunmola (2006:743) identified gender and Internet as the factors that shape sexual behaviour of university undergraduates. According to them, "Gender and Internet use are factors that appear germane to the understanding of youth's sexual attitude and behaviour in Nigeria. Longe et al (2007:198) corroborates this view when they said that, "the Internet more than any other agent of social change has contributed in no small measure to the removal of guilt, fear and shame associated with unconventional sexual activities".

Adebayo, Udegbe and Sunmola (2006:776) had established an interaction effect between the use of the Internet by males and risky sexual behaviour. Emeozor (2005) in Adebayo et al (2006) equally had raised an alarm on the possible relationship between access to pornographic content on the Internet and risky sexual tendencies that can lead to the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Braun-Harvey (2008:1) said that Internet shared most of the blame. According to him, "the Internet is sex, since the advents of the Internet, sexual interests and behaviour have become a common purpose for surfing the net". He queried:

Each new application and technology on the Internet has resulted in a vast array of sexual applications, from the dissemination of sexual information to the selling of sexual health and erotic toys as well as an infinite number of sexual images, activities and turn on. The companies that are making the most consistent profits online are companies that provide sexual related products. The unspoken yet generally understood assumption is that people go online to pursue curiosity about sex. The prevailing viewpoint about this phenomenon is, largely one of the risks and negative consequences.

According to Taylor (1999:21), the Internet has increased dramatically the availability of sexually explicit content. Kunkel, Cope, Farinola, Biely, Rollin, Donnerstein (2000:101) warned that despite increasing public concern about the potential health risks of early, unprotected sexual activity most mass media (including the Internet) rarely depict three Cs of responsible sexual behaviour: Commitment,

Contraceptives, and consideration of Consequences. Although more than half of couples who have engage in sexual intercourse on the Internet are in an established relationship, 1 in 10 are couples who have met only recently, one quarter do not maintain a relationship after having sex. Only about 1 in 10 of the programmes on television or the Internet that include sexual content mentions the possible consequences or the need to use contraceptives or protection against STDs. Unintended pregnancies rarely are shown as the outcome of unprotected sex and STDs other than HIV/AIDS are almost never discussed (Kunkel et al 2001:36).

Longe, Chiemeké, Onifade, Balogun, Otti and Longe (2007:195) said that, apart from the issues of piracy and fraudulent scam mails, one major emerging worrisome dimension in Nigerian cyberspace is pornography in its various guises. According to these researchers, the Internet aided by technology induced anonymity has popularized the sex business more than any other means of advertisement. With unlimited access to a variety of websites and the impediment of needing to enter a brothel physically removed, immoral gratification is just the click of a mouse away from any intending customer (Sackson, 1999 in Longe et al 2007). Longe et al (2007:195) opined:

In her paper, *Internet Infidelity: A critical Review of the Literature*, Katherine (2006) in Longe et al (2007:196) is of the opinion that people are using the Internet more frequently to form friendships and romances and to initiate inordinate affairs. Ayodele (2007:215) is of the opinion that x-rated films and “cyber-sex” are lascivious films specially designed to arouse sexual feelings. In times past, it was not easy to come by such because it was difficult to produce and it was primarily made available for the rich and the ruling class (Vanwesenbeek, 2001; Awake, 2003). Technology advancement has made it so popular, affordable and readily available to the less affluent. In the last two decades, the proliferation of cable systems and Internet has made sexually, explicit media so enormously prevalent and are saturating society at an accelerating rate which made it more accessible to both the rich and poor, young and old, educating and less educated alike (Ayodele, 2007).

Vanwesenbeek (2001) reported that what the proliferation of cable systems and Internet offered to the viewers varies from often soft, but sometimes hardcore, porn movies to very explicit documentaries about ordinary and less ordinary people’s sexual lives. Ayodele (2007:215) said that, this might be the reason why Awake (2003) affirmed that, the consumer who is afraid that his neighbour will see him in the adult section of a video store can now stay at home and order by pushing a button on his cable system or direct TV or Internet service. Easy access to this kind of programming has contributed a lot of acceptability (Ayodele, 2007).

People are selective in their sexual media viewing habits and that they are likely to choose the materials that are congruent with their sexual scripts fantasies and disposition (Mosher, 1998). Bagaert (2001:40), elaborating on this idea, found that individual differences (e.g. intelligence and antisocial tendencies) were indeed predictive of undergraduate men’s choices of and preference for various forms of sexual media. Statistics have also shown that the primary consumption of pornography is their source of sex education (Awake 2003). Studies by Brown (2000:35) and Steele (1999:154) showed that teenagers identify (their sense of themselves and other) affects and is affected by the way they use, understand, appropriate or resist mass media images and message about love, sex, and

relationship thereby putting an emphasis on media practice rather than media content to which people were personally involved with TV comedies and dramas (i.e. the level of identification or connection with the content) was a better predictor of sexual outcomes (attitude expectations and behaviour) among undergraduates than was the sheer viewing amount.

Aremu (2002) in Ayodele ((2007:216), while considering the systematic viewing of television from the age of 2 to the teens' years, argued that children considered to be emotionally disturbed might not be able to distinguish between fantasy and reality when watching television shows (this applies these watched on the Internet). It could then be said that the predictive features of watching x-rated films is all embracing that is, it involves them personally (leisure seeking, self esteem, sexual preoccupation and so on).

Ayodele (2007:216) quotes some sources reporting that 15% of all Internet users accessed one of the top five "Adult" web sites in a recent month (Copper, Schever, Boise and Gorden, 2000), that sex is the most frequently searched topic on Internet (Freeman-Longo and Blanchard 2000) and that, all of the top eight word searchers on the Internet involve pornography (Sparrow and Griffiths, 2000). Similarly, Cheney (2000:91) reported that 3.8 million Canadians accessed Internet sex in October of 2000 adding that all average user visits Internet sex sites on an average of 4 days per month. Fisher (2001:21) corroborates the statistical ratings of Cheney (2000) that approximately 25% of all Canadian males visited an Internet sexuality site monthly and did so at an average of 4 different days.

Empirical studies reported by Ayodele (2007:216), indicate that personal factors influence the effect of exposure through related variations in cognitive and emotional processing of the sexual stimuli (Newhavlen, 2000:61). Other support evidences say that the effects of exposure to sexually explicit materials are mediated by the ways the stimuli are given meaning in connection with personality aspects such as inhibition or excitation proneness among men (Jeanssen and Bancroft, 2000, Janssen, Everaerd, Spieving and Jassen, 2000). Further more, Pearson and Pollack (1997:80) found a comparative evidence for women while Malamuth (1996:28) reported a consistent evidence of difference between male and female in affective reactions and self-ratings of arousal after exposure to sexually explicit materials.

Sexually explicit materials shapes attitudes and influences behaviours and its messages are so enticing primarily, because they are fantasy and are presented as more exciting than the real heterosexual act (Ayodele 2007:216). There is a mixed findings on the effects of exposure to pornography in individual especially men (Banserman, 1996:409) and this can be explained in part by the notion that exposure to pornography may have adversarial attitudinal and behaviour effects in some men but not in others (Vanwesenbeek, 2001).

According to sexual behaviour sequence, individuals who come into contact with erotic stimuli and who are sufficiently sexually aroused for a sufficient period of time are motivated to engage in preparatory sexual behaviour. Preparatory behaviour which increase the likelihood of overt sexual behaviour can involve actions such as hocking one's bedroom door and plugging in a vibrator, making sexual overtures to an to an opposite sex or same sex partner or seeing sexual relationship in an Internet chat room (Fisher, 1986; Gallup, 1986, Fisher, 2001). If preparatory sexual behaviours are successful, sexual behaviour that may be subjectively negative could

result and thus increase the risk of developing sexually deviant tendencies such as raping, masturbation, women offenders (Ayodele 2007:217).

Longe et al (2007:197) opined that:

The disorganization of primary societies, and resort to urban life, with its attendant loss of rich cultural values has encroached on the adolescents (undergraduates) ability to handle their newly awakened sexual impulses. Today, we notice gross sexual misconducts among different age groups in our nation fuelled by the claim of urbanization, modernization, spurious sexual expressions in junk magazines and of course pornography and Internet dating. The consequences are not farfetched. They include child-pregnancy, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases and of course possible increase in the incidence of HIV/AIDS due to in unguided sexual escapades.

In Benue state, the story is not different. Iwokwagh, (2008:4) said that, with rapid urbanization and breakdown of moral values, sexual permissiveness have become a characteristic of the social life of university undergraduates in Benue state. There have been growing incidents of pregnancy and contracting of sexual transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS among university undergraduates (Longe et al 2007:197). More than one-third of these pregnancies are aborted, with almost half of the pregnant ones being admitted in hospitals for bleeding, anemia and fatigue (Nwanko, 1983:19). Some have been confirmed HIV positive while others are already dead or are at the point of death because of AIDS (Longe et al 2007:197). This has social and economic implications for the growth and development of the state (Iwokwagh 2008:4). For example, the high and rapid rising figures of undergraduates pregnancies and unsafe abortion as well as deaths from sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS have profound negative implications for the state's economy. This is because it leads to diversion of public funds and resources in capital projects, investments and saving into care of this category of people. According to Iwokwagh (2008:4), the state faces a bleak future in the wake of the teeming deaths that characterize the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This is because HIV/AIDS illness and deaths mostly affect the productive sector (youths) of the state's economy.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the social learning theory propounded in 1977 by Albert Bandura. According him, "learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them on what to do. Fortunately, most human behaviour is learned observationally through modeling; from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action".

According to Cherry (2007:19), the social learning theory proposed by Albert Bandura has become perhaps the influential theory of learning and development. While rooted in many of the basic concepts of traditional learning theory, Bandura believed that direct reinforcement could not account for all types of learning.

His theory added a social element, arguing that people can learn new information and behaviours by watching other people. Known as observational learning for modeling, this type of learning can be used to explain a wide variety of behaviours. For instance, Adebayo et al (2006:744) rightly observed in accordance with the social learning theory that some risky or antisocial behaviours are acquired and reinforced through social learning that occur by observing and copying the actions of others. Symbolic modeling occurs mostly through the media. Sexuality can, therefore, be learned vicariously through the Internet. It is well known that sexuality is a dominant theme on the Internet and that youths (aged 12-24) are the largest population using the Internet for communication purposes (New Internet project) in (Adebayo et al 2006:744). Nevertheless, media reports and research evidence suggest that young people are at risk as a result of being online, and the greatest risk is exposure to unsolicited sexually explicit materials.

This theory is therefore relevant to this study because according to the prediction of social learning theory, a child exposed to certain unconventional behaviours can adopt and internalize such behaviours as conventional ones (Adebayo et al 2006:744).

Research Method

The survey design was adopted with questionnaire and interview as instruments for data collection. The population of the study comprise of the entire undergraduate students in University of Jos and Benue State University. Statistics from the institutions in the 2012/2013 session shows that the two universities have an undergraduate population of 22, 723 students (University of Jos, 10, 206; and Benue State University, Makurdi, 22, 517 respectively). A sample size of 360 respondents was drawn from the two institutions using the online sample size calculator developed by creative research systems (<http://www.surveysystem.com/sample-size-formula.htm>). Multistage sampling procedure, involving a combination of cluster, purposive and simple random sampling techniques was used to provide a relatively equal opportunity for all undergraduate students in the two institutions to be selected as respondents. Using the cluster sampling technique, the population was divided into nineteen (19) units of clusters based on the colleges/faculties in the two universities.

The cluster sampling technique was again applied in the second stage to select three (3) Colleges/Faculties from the 19 cluster units of the two universities – making up six Colleges/Faculties. The simple random sampling technique was applied in the third stage to select three departments from each of the three colleges/faculties. A sample size of 20 respondents per department was also selected using the simple random sampling technique. On the whole, 18 departments were studied and 360 respondents were sampled. Interview was also conducted with 15 students randomly selected from the two universities, culminating into 30 interview sessions for the study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Research Question 1: What sexual content do undergraduates pay attention to on the Internet? Data presented in table 1 answers this research question.

Table 1: Sexual Content Mostly Paid Attention to by Respondents

Responses	UniJos	BSU	Total	Percentage
Dating	58	67	125	34.7
Pornography	83	76	159	44.2
Romance	24	23	47	13.1
Oral sex	7	5	12	3.3
Nothing at all	8	9	17	4.7
Total	180	180	360	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Data in Table 1 shows that undergraduates of the two universities pay particular attention to sexual contents on the internet as indicated by all respondents that they mostly pay attention to certain sexual content, ranging from dating, through pornography, romance, to oral sex amongst other content. The views of the interviewees also supports this data as all interviews admitted exposing themselves to some level of pornographic content on the internet. The interviewees note however, that such exposure is sometimes not deliberate but as a result of intrusive sharing by friends on social media. However, given the overwhelming responses in the questionnaire regarding particular attention to sexual content on the internet, it can be implied that sexual contents on the internet are becoming trendy and attractive to internet users.

Research Question 2: How is the sexual content on the Internet influencing university undergraduates' sexual perceptions? This research question is answered by data contained in table 2.

Table 2: Influence of Internet Sexual Content on Sexual Perceptions

Responses	UniJos	BSU	Total	Percentage
Internet sex is a normal activity	28	24	52	14.4
Internet sex is a hilarious activity	11	7	18	5
Internet sex is fun	63	58	121	33.6
Internet sex is educative	71	83	154	42.7
Internet sex is casual	7	8	15	4.2
Total	180	180	360	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Information regarding how sexual content on the Internet is influencing university undergraduates' sexual perceptions is presented in table 2. The data show that the sexual contents on the internet is influencing university undergraduates' sexual perceptions; making them to view sex as a normal activity; as a hilarious (entertaining) activity and as fun. The data shows too that the sexual content on the Internet is influencing university undergraduates to perceive sex as a casual and educative activity that is necessary for everyone to engage in, without minding the attendant implications and consequences. The interviewees also share this perception, though a significant percentage of the interviews contend that the sexual content on the Internet is influencing university undergraduates to perceive sex as a serious

matter that must be taken seriously and cautiously. Notwithstanding, the data implies that the sexual perceptions of university undergraduates is being influenced by sexual content on the Internet.

Research Question 3: What is the influence of sexual content on the Internet on university undergraduates' attitudes towards sex and sexual behaviours? Data presented in table answers research question three.

Table 3: Influence on Attitudes and Sexual Behaviours

Responses	UniJos	BSU	Total	Percentage
Casual attitudes and behaviours	45	41	86	23.8
Liberal and open minded	32	33	65	18.1
Conscious and careful	40	37	77	21.4
Explorative and inquisitive	38	29	67	18.6
Concerned about exploitation	16	22	38	10.6
All of the above	9	18	27	7.5
Total	180	180	360	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Data in the table 3 shows that the attitudes and behaviours of undergraduate students in Nigerian universities towards sex as typified by the findings are significantly being influenced by sexual contents on the Internet. The interviewees also agree with this notion even though, most of them imply that the influence is positive, offering sexual education issues that would otherwise not be discussed with the young adults by parents, teachers or social institutions. Notwithstanding, the data collected through the questionnaire tend to portray more negative influences than the positive influences provided by the interviewees. From whatever, angle however; it is sufficiently evident that the attitudes and behaviours of Nigerian undergraduate students in towards sex and sexuality related issues has been influenced significantly by the sexual content offerings of the internet.

Overall, the data collected from both instruments show that undergraduates of the two universities studied have good knowledge of the Internet and its contents. Summarily, all the respondents agreed that the sexual contents on the Internet had influence on them. Respondents also agreed to personally seeking out sexual contents on the Internet for entertainment, fun, sexual fantasy as well as to learn more about romance and or sex. In addition, respondents agreed that through their interaction with the Internet, they have become more liberal about sexual issues.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study show that undergraduates pay attention to the sexual contents on the Internet which includes pornography, dating, romance and oral sex that are implicitly or explicitly displayed on the Internet. These findings are in conformity with those of Longe, Chiemekwe, Onifade, Balogun, Otti and Longe's 2007 study which noted the high level of explicit sexual content such as pornography on the Internet and its high consumption by Nigerian youths. Similarly, the findings also affirm the studies of Katherine (2006), Ayodele (2007) and Vanwesenbeck (2001)

which found that people are using the Internet more frequently to form sexual relationships and romances and to initiate inordinate affairs. These studies also concord that the presentation of these sexual materials on the Internet is so attractive for any youth to ignore.

It is evident from the findings of this study that the level of influence exercised by sexual contents on the internet on university undergraduates in Nigeria is high (68%). The findings concur with the findings of Ayodele (2009) that sexual explicit materials shape attitudes and influence behaviour of youths in several ways. The findings are also consistent with those of Igoche's 2005 study which showed the extent of influence of the media on the moral development of youths in Benue State.

Further findings of the study reveal that the sexual contents on the Internet have changed the sexual beliefs and behaviours of university undergraduates towards sex to a very high extent (68%). These findings lay credence to those of Adebayo, Udegbe and Summole (2006) and Owuamanam (1995) which established an interaction effect between the use of the Internet and undergraduates' risky sexual behaviour in Nigeria. This also corroborates the study of Longe, Onifade, Balogun, Otti and Longe (2007) which established that the Internet more than any other agent of social change has contributed in no small measure to the removal of guilt, fear and shame associated with unconventional sexual activities. These findings equally give credence to theoretical postulations of the social learning theory which argues that people can learn new information and behaviours by watching other people. This type of learning, the theory argues, can be used to explain a wide variety of behaviours. What this means is that most undergraduates' sexual beliefs and behaviours are induced by the sexual contents they view on the Internet.

Conclusion

As the findings of this study suggest, sexual activity awareness is very high among Nigerian university undergraduates as a result of access and exposure to sexual content on the internet. This poses dangerous consequences to the youths and may perhaps amplify or justify the alarm raised in some quarters concerning the possible relationship between access to the Internet and sexual behaviour orientation, with concomitant attendant sexually related problems amongst teenagers and youths. Consequently, as the mass media affects our ideas of who we are and what we could be, it is possible that access and exposure to sexual content on the internet will no doubt influence our perception, attitude and behaviour towards sex. We create our identity in relation to the images we see around us from a young age. It is therefore the conclusion of this study that the current widespread access and exposure to sexual content on the internet by undergraduate students of Nigerian universities can have undesirable effects, if the current trend of influence is unabated.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study and findings of other empirical studies reviewed in this study, the research makes the following recommendations:

- i. **The Role of Guardians/ Parents:** Guardians/ Parents should advise, caution and warn their children as they are growing up about the potential dangers of the Internet. Guardians/ Parents should not shy away from educating children on

sexual issues. A situation where sex is seen as a subject that must not be discussed should be stopped because as Ayodele (2009:225) noted “sex has become a thorn in the flesh in the lives of our youngsters, tearing them apart morally, educationally, socially, physically and psychologically”. This calls for parents to reappraise their roles in enlightening their youngsters on issues related to sex rather than leaving it in the hands of schools, peers or the media. Sex should not be seen in the family as so sacred that it must not be discussed with young ones lest “sexual revolution” will completely evolve.

- ii. **The Role of Educators:** Sex education should be introduced in schools from primary to tertiary level. Sex education in schools should be made part and parcel of the University Curriculum. Sex education will reduce the risks of potentially negative outcomes from sexual behaviour like unwanted pregnancy and infection with sexual transmitted diseases and HIV. More psychologists and guardians and counsellors should be made available in the universities so that they can guide the students on the way to control and modify their sexual behaviours.
- iii. **The Role of Network Providers and Cyber cafe Owners:** Cyber cafes should be encouraged to partition their services to adult, youth and children/ teen sections in order to take advantage of technologies for content channelling/ selection. While some computer terminals can be dedicated to access all forms of contents, others for youth/ children/ teenagers usage can be enabled to access contents that are purely healthy for youths’ age group consumption. Content channelling/ service technologies and filters can be used as an aid to moderating contents viewed by youths/ teenagers at all Internet access points. Network providers can actually help in this regard by channelling contents meant for adult different from the one meant for the youngsters.
- iv. **The Role of Government and NGOs:** Government and NGOs should organize public enlightenment to properly create awareness and to expose the affective and psychological effect of viewing sexual contents such as pornography on the Internet. Government legislations aimed at the censorship of such contents for youngsters will be a right step in the right direction. In the word of Dick and Herbert (2003), effective and vigorous law enforcement can help deter Internet pornography and diminish the supply of inappropriate sexual materials available to youngsters.
- v. **A Multi-level Approach:** A multi-level approach with school-based, family-based and community- based programmes aimed at helping youths out of false sexual orientation should be embarked upon. This could be achieved in the social contexts within which the youths live. Responsible mentorship on all fronts demands that adult members in the society be interested in the web contents being consumed by the youths, children and teenagers. Adults must learn to teach youngsters how to make good choices on the Internet. They must be willing to engage in sometimes difficult conversations. They must face the tradeoffs that are inevitable with demanding work and family schedules. But in addition to teaching responsible behaviour and coping skills for encounters with inappropriate material and experiences on the Internet, this instruction in the words of Longe et al (2007:208) will help youngsters think critically about all kinds of media messages, including those associated with hate, racism and violence. It will also help them conduct effective Internet searches for

information and make ethical and responsible choices about Internet behaviour and non-Internet behaviour as well.

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Traditional Communication systems among the Tiv People of Benue State of Nigeria: Successes, Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

The paper gives an overview of the traditional systems of communication and different modes of information dissemination among the Tiv people of Benue State of Nigeria. Anchored on the Source-Message-Channel- Receiver (S-M-C-R) model, the paper underscores the usefulness of the systems as means of communication. This is predicated on the fact that the Tiv traditional society can better be informed if its traditions and customs are exploited properly and scientifically. The paper asserts that Tiv traditional systems of communication and mechanisms of information dissemination is still relevant and often play a vital role in mobilizing the people especially at the grass root level for social, economic and political empowerment. Contending that the traditional communicators, institutions and symbols are the only source of information in rural areas the paper also tries to impress that these can be revitalized and upgraded for enhanced information flow.

Key words: traditional communication, social system, source, channel, message

Introduction

In reference to Harold Lasswell, Akinfeleye (1988, p.48) posits that:

Man has always needed something to watch over his environment and report to him on dangers, discoveries, opportunities, opinion, facts, decisions, changes and current trends – something to entertain people on broad scale, something to broaden trade and commerce.

Not being an island in the use of some forms of communication for obvious reasons, the Tiv people have over the years been identified with different means they interact. Through the traditional systems of communication, the indigenous people carry out

all the existing functions of information, education, entertainment, enlightenment, surveillance etc which the advent of the mass media has reinforced.

The Tiv people of Benue State which, constitute the fourth largest ethnic group in Nigeria are located in the middle belt region of the country. The Tiv shares borders with the Chamba and Jukun of Taraba State in the northeast. They also share border with the Igede of Benue State; Iyala, Gakem and Obudu of Cross River State in the southeast; and the Idoma of Benue State to the south. There is also an international boundary between the Tiv and the Republic of Cameroon at a southeastern angle of the ethnic group's location. The population of the people is matched by the landmass it occupies. Alluding to this, Makar (1975, p.26) posits that Tivland which "lies between 6° 30' and 8° 10' north latitude and 8° and 10° east longitude has a landmass area of 30, 000 sq. km²".

The Tiv population is, however, still a contentious issue as to the exact figure. By 1991, the Tiv population of Benue was placed at 2.1 million (National Population Commission, 1991), but was very much contested as not being comprehensive. Wegh (1998, p.23) places the current Tiv population at 4 million.

Though predominantly found in 14 out of the 21 local government areas of Benue State, the Tiv are found in several other local government areas and states of the federation. According to Kpoughul (2000, p.29):

The Tiv occupy vast lands in about six local government areas in the present day Taraba State, four local governments in Nasarawa State and two local governments in Cross River State and Akwaya sub-division in the Republic of Cameroon respectively.

With the penetration of Western influence, Christianity has become the primary religion of the people. Nevertheless, some Tiv folk still practice traditional religion.

It is instructive to note that traditional communication systems play integral role in exchange of messages among the Tiv people. They serve the purpose of making known needs and requirements, exchanging information, engendering understanding as well as establishing and maintaining relations. Consequently, despite the import of mass media, traditional communication systems are still operational among the Tiv people. This is premised on the near total disconnect of the rural people in particular from the mass media. Also, the ruralites in particular still cherish their traditional values and norms among which is the mode and channels through which they interact.

Essentially, the traditional communication channels at the disposal of Tiv people are markets, gunshots, canons, animal horns, flutes, drum beats, oramedia and music among others (shall be discussed). Like other ethnic groups in Nigeria and by extension, Africa, most of these channels have a long history, and their application depends on a given occasion or situation (Sanda, 2010, p.40). It is against this background that the article seeks to relive the traditional communication systems as are being used by the Tiv people with a view to repositioning them for greater impact.

Theoretical Framework

The article is built on David Berlo's Communication Model popularly known as the S-M-C-R model which he developed in 1960 (Narula, 2006, p.31). The thrust of Berlo's approach which is an improvement on Shannon Weaver's model is the

emphasis it places on dyadic (having two elements) communication, therefore stressing the role of the relationship between the source and the receiver as an important variable in the communication process. Writing on the model, Goss (1983, p.10) cited in Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso (2008, p.28) avers that the source (the originator of the message) and the receiver (the target of communication) are people in the communication process. According to the theory, consequently, these people have certain characteristics that affect fidelity of message. These are skills (their abilities to speak and listen), attitudes (their feelings about the speaker and topic), knowledge (the amount of information relevant to the communication interaction), social system (roles in life, social standing, group belonging, and upbringing) and culture (the person's origin, ethnic background and home country) (Goss, 1983, p.10).

Table 1: The SMCR Model of Communication

S SOURCE	M MESSAGE	C CHANNEL	R RECEIVER
Communication Skill Attitude Knowledge Social System Culture	Content Elements Treatment Structure Code	Seeing Hearing Touching Smelling Tasting	Communication Skill Attitude Knowledge Social System Culture

Source: Goss (1983). *Communication in everyday life*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company

As shown above, the model has the various components in the communication process. The basic four components are source, message, channel and receiver.

Source is where the message originates. The initiator or sender of message decides on what to send based on stimulus. In communicating, the source has to choose a channel to carry his/her message. He or she decides on the best channel or combination of channels for maximum impact. For example, would a verbal message be better than non-verbal message?

The essential elements which the SMCR model identifies under the heading of message are content, elements, treatment structure and code. Content is the material in the message selected by the source to express his/her purpose. The treatment of the message is the decisions which the source makes in selecting and arranging both code and content. The ways you choose to arrange assertions in part determine the structure of the content. The code of the message means how it is sent e.g. language, body language, gestures, music and even culture is a code. Who receives the message and decodes it is referred to as receiver or decoder.

Embedded under channel are seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting. What is seen, heard, felt, smell or tasted depends on the traditional medium in use and interpreted meaningfully.

The suitability of this model to the study is located on its communication elements which singles out sender and receiver that share messages and experience through some given channels based on shared frame of reference. Thus, despite the fact that the model elaborates several elements in the communication process

generally, the use of Tiv traditional systems of communications is better appreciated by the people in context, even though it may have some African affinity.

Conceptual Clarifications

Since the academic culture demands the definition of terms as a means of enhancing full understanding the paper, it is imperative to define key terms in this work.

Communication: Is the process of sharing ideas, feelings and experiences through some means or channels. Blake and Haroldsen (1995) cited in Popoola (2004, p.106) opined that it is “The transmission of information, ideas, emotions, skills etc by use of symbols – words, pictures, figures, graphs, etc. It is the act or process of transmission that is usually called communication.” Thus, communication could be seen as sharing meanings between human beings either through verbal and non verbal cues. This implies the involvement of two parties – the sender and receiver of message. As a process, the encoder or sender of some form of message initiates and passes the message to another or group who responds or reacts and so the interaction continues. Doob (1966) cited in Ogwezzy (2008, p.42) elucidates that:

...people are exposed to a communication whose (i) communicator (ii) seeks to achieve a goal or a set of goals (iii) through a medium or media (iv, v) at a particular site (vii) in spite of certain restrictions (vii) by means of a message (viii) that reaches them in a specified mood (ix) subsequently what follows are perception (x) reactions (xi) changes, and feedback.

Communication may, therefore, involve a village messenger delivering messages, use of canons/gun shots to announce an important event or a person simply telling a folktale in the presence of a participating group.

Traditional communication Systems: This refers to the process of passing information from one person to another or groups using channels or modes rooted in a society’s culture. In other words, traditional communication systems are:

products of the interplay between a traditional community’s customs and conflicts, harmony and strife, cultural convergences and divergences, culture specific tangibles, interpersonal relations, symbols and codes and moral traditions which include mythology, oral literature ... which encompass a people’s factual, symbolic and cosmological existence (Ugboaja, 1985 in Ebeze, 2002, p.28).

Traditional communication systems make use of such media like oramedia, village messenger, and market among others. These modes of communication as used today is an admixture of social conventions and practices that have become sharpened and blended into veritable communication modes and systems which have almost become standard practices for society (Olulade, 1998 cited in Ogwezzy, 2008, p.20). Functionally, Kombol (2005, p.65) note that the use of traditional modes of communication is to allow for greater participation. They serve as platforms where people freely use without anybody claiming ownership of the modes or channels.

Modes and Channels of Traditional Communication Systems used by Tiv People

The Tiv traditional media are diverse in nature. They however, fall under the two broad ways namely; verbal and non-verbal. Verbal traditional media involve all those that make use of word of mouth. Typical examples are village messenger, folktale, parables, proverbs and extramundane media among others. Non-verbal media, on the other hand are those that do not require word of mouth or speech organs to pass messages. They include varying forms of membraneophones (drums), gong, aerophones (flute, whistle, and pipe), dance etc. for clarity we shall treat some of these media in details.

i. Drums: This could simply be wooden drums or skin drums referred to as membraneophones. Describing the wooden drum Akpabio (2003, p.14) states that:

...the wooden drum is made from tree-trunk. To enable it produce mellifluous sounds, the bark is removed and an opening is made at the top. This way when struck with a stick it produces sounds. The drums come in various sizes and shapes and it has various designations.

Wooden drums common among the Tiv people are *ilu*, *gede* and *indyer*. Among the aforementioned, *idyer* is the largest single drum carved entirely out of wood (Nwuneli, 1983). Added to this class of drum is *gbangew* which are slides of wood of about two feet long, normally twelve or twenty-four in number. Closely related to wooden drum are various skin drums whose uses depend on needs and purposes. These media produce sound through the vibration of membranes (Wilson, 1987 and Ibagere, 1994, p.91), by beating with bare hands or striking with well carved sticks. Skin drums used by Tiv people go by different names. Examples are *gbande*, *genga*, *ajo* and *kunkun*. Each of the skin drums are derived from round tree-trunk (Akpabio, 2003, p.14), hollowed through the middle. All the drums are tightly wrapped at both ends with animal skin and network of strings, except the *gbandew* which is wrapped only at one end. Of all these, *gengais* the biggest followed by *ajo* and its *kunkun* equivalent. *Gbande* takes different shapes and so are variations in sizes, too. Skin drums are used particularly on social occasions like festivals, marriages, investiture as well as at religious gatherings, burial and political activities.

ii. Gong/bell: Gong is a metal instrument with an opening at one end, which produces sound when beaten normally by a stick coated or wrapped with a piece of cloth or rubber. While some gongs have dual opening, others have one. The Tiv people call the gong with one opening which is the giant size *chembekwen* and the dual opening *kwen*. The latter is the type Wilson (1998, p.33) likens to *ahangkang*, *akpongkpong* and *ogene* used by Efik, Ibibio and Igbo respectively. Gongs are used by village criers to attract attention for announcements. In Tiv society, rather than being used by village criers to attract attention, the *gong* essentially complements other musical instruments to motivate and entertain people during ceremonies.

Bell (*imemeghso* called in Tiv) on the other hand is a cone-shaped instrument with a wooden handle and ball shaped metal suspended on the inside. According to Akpabio (2003, p.16), it produces sound when the ball-shaped metal suspended on the inside of the cone-shaped structure hits the side of the structure in the process of

jiggling. The communication function of bells among the Tiv can be seen as they are used in schools and churches. In schools, bells announce when to arrive school, herald dismissal from school, regulation of lessons and of course, can signal an emergency assembly. In the case of churches, bells remind adherents to prepare for some religious activities. Bells also announce death of prominent members of the church.

iii. Aerophones: These are instruments like animal horn (*koroughkunyam*), elephant tusk (*soho nor*) and Indian bamboo (*akendemsongo*) etc, which produce sound due to vibrations coming from a column of air. The carved animal horn referred to *askoroughor akya/miaghin* Tiv language is derived from such animals like elephant, cow or deer and antelope. There are other aerophones or trumpets viz; *igidaand kaakaki*. *Igidais* essentially used for praise singing while *kaakaki*, though serve similar purpose, is often used nowadays during church service by Christians. In all cases “it is the mouth that is usually used to force air through the instrument” (Ibagere, 1994, p.91).

iv. Gunshots and canons: These are used in traditional Tiv communication to convey different types of information. The number of times and duration they are shot relay specific messages intended. Gunshots are used during festive periods. This was typical when festivals like *amagh wan* warranted the shooting of guns and blasting of canons (*tiam*). Apart from use of these during festive periods, the Tiv people used and are still using gunshots (during hunting expeditions). Sometimes gunshots and canons are used during burials particularly when an aged person or important personality dies. According to Mede (1998) cited in Ogwezzy (2008, p.161), the sound of canons which are buried about two inches beneath the earth can travel a distance of up to four kilometres.

v. Village messenger/crier: This is an important person who, through the word of mouth, goes round the village to deliver messages from the leaders. In Tiv language he is called *ortyomor ortindin*. Usually he is chosen by the elders of the community to do errands for the elders and the leader of the community. He is sent out to the heads of the neighbouring families for a crucial meeting at the place/residence of the overall head of the community. Some of these meetings revolve around community works, political issues, and obituaries. In disseminating the message, the village crier goes from house to house or at social gatherings to deliver messages. This contrasts the practice of traditional messengers from other climes who customarily use instruments in form of *gong* to pique attention of community members at strategic places and make their announcements as directed. According to Ebeze (2002, p.29) one of the good aspects of the village crier is that people can stop and ask questions on his message

vi. Venue oriented channels: Among these channels is market which is a designated place where people meet for the purpose of buying and selling. Village dwellers in Tiv settings have special days weekly or bi-weekly to meet for the purpose of exchange. Examples of few existing markets in Tivland are Adikpo, Ikyogen, Jato-Aka, Agbo, Ihugh, Anyiin, Gbor, Tor Donga, Buruku, Gbajumba, Zaki-Biam,

Ushongo, Naka, Ikpayongo and Aliade. During such meetings information about socio-economic and political life as they affect the villagers are shared. Apart from markets are the various rivers and streams where people meet at different locations to fetch water, bath or wash their clothes and other domestic items. Few rivers and streams worthy of mention are Rivers KatsinaAla, Benue, Moor, Amile, Dura and Awajir. Roads also constitute venue as channel of traditional communication. Tiv people travel along roads on foot or bicycles. During such travels they interact among themselves. Some even arrange a predetermined place where they meet to share messages.

vii. Oramedia: These are means of communication through festivals, plays, puppets, dance, songs, parables, riddles folktales, and proverbs. The popularity of puppetry among the Tiv people can be seen its *Kwagh-hirability* to entertain, inform and educate through face-to-face communication. Affirming its significance, Kombol (2002, p.24) notes that “the *Kwagh-hir* has gained national and even international recognition and illustrates how African systems foster unity. As other people from other communities watch it, it exposes them to the Tiv culture. They might laugh, and even start learning the songs that accompany the movement of puppets.” Side by side with the Tiv *Kwagh-hir* puppetry are certain dances like *Ange*, *Ingyor*, *Anza alor*, *Ibumeghand* the erotic *Swange/kpingidance* pioneered and popularized by OrshioAdaagu *etc.* They are known for their dance craft, poetic creativity and general aesthetic profundity. To provide just one example relating to their dance repertoire, in “1973 the ethnic group alone accounted for fifty-four of the one hundred and eighty-eight dances performed at the ‘Festival of 200 Dances of the Benue-Plateau State’ held in Jos, Nigeria. The then Benue-Plateau State comprised more than thirty ethnic nationalities” (Tsenongo, 2011, p.134). This is statistical testimony to the dancing skills among Tiv people that sometimes goes with the stories.

Similarly, songs perform unifying role, and are harnessed for social, economic and political empowerment. In looking at how songs are used, Wilson (1998, p.41) states that itinerant music entertainment groups use satire, criticism, moralization, praise, symbolism, didacticism, suggestion and labeling to communicate with individuals, groups and society at large. Key and legendary singers in Tiv enclave are Number 1 Golozo, TondoKumbul, Obadiah, just to mention a few. Essentially Tiv songs disseminate traditional wisdom, instill pride and solidarity, criticize certain actions and personages and provoke thoughtfulness. These songs come in different fashion. Praise songs, for example, are used to praise God during worship or people ranging from military prowess, coronations to inspiration to carry out a task. Others serve as lullabies (soft songs by mothers or nannies to soothe babies), dirge (sung at funerals to encourage family and friends of the deceased to invoke God for the fortitude to bear the irreparable loss). In the political realm, singers through their songs function as political communicators that either seeks to create understanding about the political process and culture, advance a political party or candidate or both.

Motivational songs are generally meant to raise people’s emotions and give them confidence to confront a task or enemy with utmost vigour and determination. The following example is appropriate.

Mnyamchiemoer se hembra

I dreamt of our victory

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O-o-o sehemba	Yes, we shall be victorious
Mnyamchiemoer se hembra	I dreamt of our victory
O-o-o se hembra	Yes, we shall be victorious
Shima yam ngiawambeawambe	My heart bleeds
Hoonngiawambwawambe	Truly, it bleeds

The following example which features a charismatic personality is also meant to raise morale, muster courage to be confrontational and at the same time undermines the competence of the rival group.

Nyianyoo (name of the person) Nyianyoo Today (name of the person)
Today

Or a zamapega	No one will escape
Nyianyoo (name of the person) Nyianyoo	Today (name of the person) Today
Or a zamapega	No one will escape

Response is recap of same words.

OR

Iorbakeeraga o-o-o ayio-o-o	People are not there to reckon with
Iorbakeeraga o-o-o	People are not there
Mo yo m gemaijime o-o-o	For me I have turned my back to them

Tiv people are known of several stories or folktales, too. Mede (1998, p.2) cited in Owezzy (2008, p.63) is categorical that “folk tales are actually part of Tiv [Benue State in Nigeria] mythology and explain certain supernatural events and facts of life.” Giving perspective on the significance of folktale, Popoola (2004, p.108) avers:

Folktale is used to communicate old stories to both old and young children. This is usually done in the evening after the day’s work. We would gather ourselves family by family and thrill ourselves with folktale. It is a tradition, which has passed through several generations. It is still very relevant in our community today because we use it to teach morals and check some abuses and other things.

As an integral aspect of Tiv culture, Leo Frobenius, the German traveller, for example, declared the Tiv people as the “best storytellers in Africa” (Keil, 1979, p.20) cited in Tsenongo (2011, p.134). Also Laura Bohannan has, under the pseudonym of Elenore Smith Bowen, often been referred deservedly to for her admiring description of a Tiv tale-telling session in her autobiographical novel, *Return to Laughter*. Commenting on Bohannan’s book, Harding (1992, p.156) has said that, “So important does Bohannan consider storytelling in Tiv life that not only is its performance the occasion of the laughter which gives the novel its title, but it is recognized as a healing, binding force in the community.” In acknowledgement of Keil (1979, p.57), Tsenongo (2011, p.134) was right in his submission that “qualitatively, all visitors to Tivland agree that storytelling can be a very dramatic event.”

Apart from folktales, proverb is another significant medium of indigenous communication in Tiv society. It occurs informally in day-to-day verbal communication. As an integral aspect of people’s culture:

Proverbs spring spontaneously from the people. They are *voxpopuli...* in profound sense and consequently, should be accepted as a true index of what a people regard as true and are interpretative of the principles of life and conduct. Proverbs are therefore, trustworthy witness of the social, political, ethical and religious ideals of the people among whom they originate (Ikenga-Metuh, 1992, p.20).

Proverbs are highly rated among the Tiv people for they are considered to be the wisdom lore of the race. They communicate ethical values of society enjoining people to apply them to daily social relations. In reference to Olatunji (1985, p.170), Ayantayo (2010, p.10), maintains that proverbs serve as social characters to praise what the society considers to be virtues such as tolerance, responsibility, dedication, love, discipline, justice etc. On the other hand, proverbs condemn unacceptable conduct like injustice, intolerance, destruction, jealousy, envy, hatred, sexual immorality. Adeyongo (2001) advance several examples of Tiv proverbs to substantiate the point we are making. The following few examples will suffice.

The fact that there is no vicarious liability in crime has clearly been reflected in some Tiv proverbs as the one below.

Orgentōōikyav, or gen karvaigyunduga(Someone cannot carry heavy load and another develops a hunchback under the weight of the load).

Departing from the above proverb is the one below used to call for resolution in a situation in which there is a discord which occurs between two people. The proverb can be used to draw the attention of closely related people engaged in a dispute to try and bring it to an end.

Angbiankaveanongokpaveōōichengeimom

(Even when brothers fight, they still wash their wounds in one potsherd) or (Even when two brothers fight, they still return to the same house to nurse their wounds).

The subjoined proverb below expresses the fact that a conflict between two close partners cannot be avoided.

Anyiveanombor je kpambazehe(Even the teeth and the tongue do quarrel with each other).

The following proverb is often employed by peacemakers to settle long-standing disputes when the two adversaries seem to be unmanageable.

Ma iyongotserga(No conflict lasts forever).

The proverb tells two people engaged in a dispute that they should bring the matter to an end.

Humour and obscenity can also be employed to bring to an end a serious dispute as could be seen in the following proverb.

Ijuakaianōrkpa I hide I yavshaake(No matter how stiff is the erection of a penis, it still goes back and sleeps on the testicles).

In the case of the following proverb, it is used when someone notices that a simple argument will degenerate to a serious conflict.

Kavulvul a hingirura ye (it is drizzles that develop into a downpour).

Another proverb is as one given below which is used when every possible suspicion of other people has been eliminated, leaving only the culprit.

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Mngeremuma due shakove(The water has dried up and exposed the wolf fish).

That truth cannot be concealed indefinitely is the message conveyed by the following proverb.

Mimi kaigyachor I shin mnger(Truth is raffia palm branch dropped in the water).

The point being made is that no matter how long it takes to investigate a matter or, how long people try to cover up a fact, there is no way the truth about it will not come out one day.

There are other modes of Tiv traditional communication systems that deserve at least some passing commentary in spite of the fact that some are fast going extinct. These include but not limited to riddles, knots (which signifies one's interest in a farmland), use of palm frond to indicate death, incantation and divination/oath-taking (Ishorkpehen/swembumun). Besides is the use of names some of which are often used as creative or nicknames like:

Organdegambe	Describes how tall one is
Mdoom	Describes one's beauty
Ordedoo	Describes one's good virtues
Avirighzende	Describes ones admirable movement
Hembafan	Describes one who claims to know more than others
Genyi	Describes one that is too critical
Mboom ta ichur	Describes one that is considered to be the ugliest
Hiembanwan u ...	Describes the most disrespectful person
Akaaakimbir	Describes one that does not act on first order/directive
Or gandeigyoor	Describes the untouchable
Or kpeikyandega	One does not die of lanky stature

Besides are some other Tiv modes of communication like age grade (kwar), use of colours, tying of beads or snail shell round the neck or waist of a girl (signifying virginity), sending of a new wrapper with a hole in the middle sent to the parents of a newly married woman by her groom meaning that the bride came defiled. The use of clothes typified by the *anger* with popular black and white stripes is also worthy of note.

Successes of Tiv Traditional Communication Systems

We have established that the Tive traditional systems inform, educate, mobilize, and entertain people. How successful they are in discharging the mandate is a product of the following reasons.

The greater proportion of the population is rural dwellers that are illiterate and relatively poor. For them to have a sense of belonging they are reached through the traditional modes of communication that they are familiar with. This provides justification why instead of using mass media to reach the rural dwellers that might be cut off either due to lose of signals from the electronic media or no penetration of the print media, the use of existing modes they easily access and understand better become appropriate.

Tiv traditional communication systems do not depend on electricity or other similar forms of power in order to reach its audience. Consequently, the dissemination of information is guaranteed 24 hours. This is coupled with the fact that there is no delayed feed back; a common feature with the mass media.

The communication systems are economical in operation. They do not require huge capital investment before use. The technological sophistication required in mass media has no place in the traditional communication systems. This means therefore, that the media are almost always practically available for use. For example, it does not take the village messenger much to deliver messages at the appropriate place and time.

Challenges/Shortcomings of Tiv Communication Systems

The Tiv communication system is faced with some challenges or shortcomings in the contemporary world. These include:

Extinction of Tiv Language: The Tiv language is going into extinction because of the adoption of the language of colonial masters as official language. Nigeria adopts English as the official language as part of the colonial heritage. This threatens not only the Tiv language but the over 250 languages being spoken in the approximately 160 million population in the country. Once the language of a people is taken, the whole of its culture is eroded.

Limited reach: Their lack of capacity to transcend space and other barriers in the same manner as communication satellite creates the apparent differences in time value of information between western and traditional communication systems.

Dominance of the mass media: The manifestation of the 'Global Village' theory of Marshall McLuhan is a challenge to oramedia. We now have the new communication culture of electronic age that perhaps enslaves Tiv people particularly the youths on the websites and internet. This is more evident when we look at the content of the news media which is largely western culture.

The reliance of oramedia through the opinion leaders is a challenge as the new sets of opinion leaders in Tiv land and Africa in general are selfish, self-centred, and protégés of the West that continues to undermine African culture. The new opinion leaders are now partisan and distort information to the people through the folk media.

Western cultural imperialism: The social system in the Tiv family and by extension African family set up, community and institutions are greatly affected by the dominant Western culture which threatens oramedia. The African children now lack the home training, and the understanding of the African languages to the understanding of the oramedia messages.

The problem of urbanization and noise pollution: Some of the facilities of modern living restrict access to Tiv traditional media messages. Wilson (1994) cited in Ebeze (2008, p.37) points out that "the endless hum of the air conditioners, the deafening peal of high fidelity music equipment or the sometimes-cacophonous blare of vehicular traffic may make the penetration of messages transmitted through traditional media in urban or semi-urban areas impossible."

Conclusion

The paper explores the continued use of traditional communication systems among the Tiv people. It debunks the notion that the African traditional communication is

outmoded, as Wilson (1988) pointed out, quoting Ronald Escarpit (1968) and Colin Cherry (1975), “no newly introduced mode of communication or combination of new modes wholly replace or supplant the traditional ones. The fact is that they supplemented the old ones or replace some of their functions but never all their functions”. The paper, therefore, proves the relevance of traditional media of communication in the daily interaction of the people, especially at the grass roots. One of the secrets behind the survival of Tiv traditional communication is the preponderance of people living in the rural areas where there is a near disconnect from the modern media. By implication, the Tiv traditional communication refuses to bow to modern mass communication and western influence due to its culture of socializing the young ones into on-going culture and tradition in the various communities as a result of the conscious efforts of socializing agents, especially that of parents and some opinion leaders. The paper concludes with practical recommendations to contend apparent challenges and limitations of the Tiv traditional communication systems.

Recommendations

There should be a Tiv cultural re-engineering whereby parents create platforms to discuss with family members as was tenable in the past. This will avail youths who are more vulnerable to western influence the opportunity to better appreciate their cultural values with a view to imbibing and preserving these values. On their part, the youths should demonstrate some measure of pride and commitment in appreciating their communication systems.

There should be recognition of traditional modes as effective means of communication. The various modes like Tiv songs, dance, folktales and puppetry should be prioritized by communication policy at least at state level than ever before.

Efforts should be made to preserve the originality of Tiv traditional communication systems. The state government and well-to-do persons in particular can intervene by sponsoring production of printed and electronic materials as well as broad spectrum of competitions like the *Kagh-hir* puppet with a view of Tiv cultural revival.

The modern mass media which the people are becoming fast familiar with should ceaselessly package programmes with seemingly local content. Through mediamorphosis (integration of traditional communication in modern media) the mass media would be projecting cultural values.

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The Mass Media and Conflict Management

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Abstract

Our society today has played host to a lot of violent and terrorist attacks ranging from; the destruction of lives and properties, to bomb blasts. In some cases, these probably started just as a minor conflict or disagreement between two or more parties and gradually escalated into a full blown crises or war, as the case may be. The paper “the mass media and conflict management” could not have come at a better time, owing to the fact that, the media has become part and parcel of the human life. Thus, the kind of media contents audience members are exposed to, affects their lives and ways of thinking, directly or indirectly. This paper examines the media as a mediator and a yardstick for resolving conflict within the society.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is an essential aspect of life and a pre-requisite for human interaction. It enables man to relate with his environment, thereby achieving the essence of life. The environment consists of different people with different socio-cultural backgrounds. Therefore, effective communication depends on different values, cultural norms, environmental peculiarities and the degree of exposure to other cultures and their characteristics.

“Conflicts occur when people with different orientation have to interact and co-exist in an organization or community”. (Saidu and Best, *ed*) 2007:26). Communication is therefore a “double-edged sword” in the sense that it serves as an essential tool for peaceful co-existence and interaction, while on the other hand, it is a source of conflict among people of diverse orientation. According to, Abdulrahman cited in Saidu and Best (*ed*) (2007:26), “there is need to know that in every conflict situation, communication plays a vital and fundamental role in it’s escalation to a violent or armed conflict, as well as being a necessary pre-requisite for its prevention, management and resolution.

Communication or symbolic power is generally different from other kinds of power since it depends on non-material factor (trust, rationality, respect affection etc.) (McQuail, 2005:464). The power of the mass media as an influential tool cannot be over emphasized. Mcquails (2005:79) sheds more light on the power of the mass media thus:

... the mass media are assumed to have a potential for significant ideas and values conveyed by the media (in their content) which are seen as the primary causes of social change, irrespective of who owns and controls it. The influence is thought to work through individual motivations and actions. This view leads to a strong belief in various potential media effects for good or ill. Examples include the promotion by the media of peace and international understanding (or having opposite effects)...

Conflict and communication are inextricably tied. Thus, there is need for the media to use its communicative power as a tool or instrument for conflict management in our society today.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The emergence of the global village and its influence on all facets of human endeavour is made possible by communication and its important medium of ICT (Information Communication Technology). This then implies that people involved in conflict management and peace building must be versatile in cross cultural communication, as the world reaches a multicultural unit of a global village in handling conflict issues and conflicting parties, as well as the peace building process.

Saidu and Best (*ed*), (2007:30) asserts that “Despite the increasing role of the media in conflict management and post violence peace building; such as the use of dialogue and drama to promote tolerance and the placement of Jingles on peaceful co-existence, it is still neck-need in generating or escalating a number of conflict in some societies. Some of the products of the media that cause or escalates conflict include attempts to catch the public with emotional or sensational reporting, and such captions that will sell their papers or viewpoints resulting from their sympathy for a particular side of the conflict”

This then poses as a problem for the society because the media invades our lives, yet little or nothing can be done about the nature of media contents that people are exposed to which influences their actions and reactions in the cause of their daily living. Thus, it is expected that the mass media puts into consideration its role of agenda settings by laying more emphasis on relevant and positive content, rather than negative or biased contents that might further incite negative actions and reactions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research study identifies the relationship between communication and conflict. Thus, the objectives of this study are:

- i. To emphasize the need for the media to uphold their social responsibility to the society, thereby justifying the status conferred on them by the masses as the fourth estate of the realm.
- ii. To promote and encourage peace and co-existence in our society through positive media contents.
- iii. To stress the need for the mass media, as the conscience of the society to act as agents for social change and development in Nigeria.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Before conflicts break out into violence and bloodshed, the mass media can either raise an alarm to pre-empt or diffuse it, or instigate its occurrence. And after it has broken out, the mass media can escalate crises or arbitrate its resolution (Saidu and Best (*ed*) 2007:35). In this regard, the significance of this research work is to most importantly disabuse the minds of all those who hold the notion that the mass media has no relevance or significance to the societal development of Nigeria as a country.

This research work would also serve as a contribution by the researcher to the discourse on the roles of the mass media in conflict management and peace development in our society today.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In a bid to critically examine the topic in question, this study shall be hinged on two theories:

- Social responsibility theory
- The agenda setting theory

Social Responsibility Theory

The social responsibility theory historically emerged in the 20th century and deeply has its roots in the libertarian theory of the press. According to Yaroson and Asemah (2008:65):

In a sense, the social responsibility theory's major premise is that freedom, including the freedom of the press cannot be defined apart from a responsibility it exercises. The media which enjoy a protected and privileged position in a democratic government, have an obligation to society to carry out certain essential functions in a complex, modern society. If the media assume their responsibilities and make them the basis of operational policy, remedies may be unnecessary to ensure fulfillment of contemporary society needs...

The social responsibility theory calls for responsibilities, more than the actual freedom of the press. The media is expected to be up and doing in the surveillance, value reinforcement, culture transmission, agenda setting and clarification of rules and values of the society.

The two basic assumptions about social responsibility theory are:

- That the media do serve essential functions to the society by accepting an obligation to fulfill such functions.
- That media ownership and control should be viewed as a kind of public stewardship, not as a private franchise.

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This theory postulated six specific functions of the media in attainment of social responsibility. The functions include:

- a. To serve the political system by making information, discussion and consideration of public affairs generally accessible.
- b. To inform the public to enable it take self determined action.
- c. To protect the relicts of the individuals by acting as a watchdog over the government.
- d. To serve the economic system; for instance by bringing together buyers and sellers through the medium of advertising.
- e. To provide “good” entertainment, whatever “good” may consider the culture at any given point in time.
- f. To preserve financial autonomy in order not to become dependent on special interest and influences.

This theory is relevant to this study as it forms the basis for the analysis of the role of the media as a socially responsible institution which needs to contribute to the development of the country by acting as agents for social change. Also, this theory supports some of the research questions, thus, its examination shall be of utmost importance to this research study.

Agenda Setting Theory

This theory argues that the media may not tell us what to think, but it may tell us what to think about. That is to say that the mass media pre-determines what issues are regarded as important at any given time, in a given society.

Yarosan and Asemah (2008:93) asserts that “the theory puts forth the ability of the media to influence the significance of events in the publics minds. The media set the agenda for the audience discussion and mental order and organize their world....”

The element inverted in agenda includes:

- a. The quantity or frequency of reporting
- b. The prominence given to the reports through headlines display, pictures and layout in newspapers, magazines films graphics or timing on radio and television.
- c. The degree of conflicts generated in the reports.
- d. Cumulative media-specific effects over time.

This theory is useful to this study as it brings to fore the importance of the agenda setting theory of the media in managing conflict in the society through presenting and promoting positive media contents, which will in a longrun influence the people to think positively rather than negatively.

THE MASS MEDIA IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

The mass media consists of those channels of communication, that are able to reach a significant large number of people who are widely dispersed by time and space. This includes the traditional media of radio, television, newspapers, and currently the internet, among many others. Therefore, the media can be a contributory factor towards peace building or managing a conflict situation, right before it manifests into a crises, which could also advance into war.

Akin (2005:4) argues that without the media, people might not be properly informed about happenings beyond their immediate neighborhood. For this reason, the more sources one compares, the more accurate the picture that can be put together. This is to say, Balancing the news by obtaining the opinions of all parties involved would at least provide a comprehensive view of what is going on, which will assist in understanding key issues.

Also, Howard (2003:24) opines that “when the media responds well to its own professional structures such as accuracy, impartiality and independence, the media can then have an influence in managing the conflict. When the entire professional requirements are put into check, the media can dutifully inform and educate its audience in a socially responsible way.

Howard (2003:24) also contends that “though sensationalism and partisanship can deliver profit, but at the expense of peace building and conflict management”. This means that a media that has the zeal to perform its social responsibility to the society should not be too commercially driven. The media should prioritize its social responsibility to the society before thinking of its commercial gains and profits.

The Nigerian media seems to be lost in the thick woods of ethnic cultural diversity and socio-political differences that characterize the nation. It is divided into two axes: the south-western or Lagos-Ibadan axis and the northern axis. The bipolarism has great impact on the coverage of certain national issues. Their reports of events have always been in the interest of their geographical zone. This has been the case in recent times. Perhaps, this might be the reason why Kawu (2002: 128) argued that “the northern point of view has always been presented in an adversarial, always negative manner by so-called Nigerian press that is controlled by the political elite of the south-west or it is at best influenced by the currents of thoughts of the south-west (Afenifere) elite”. Thus, it is expected that the mass media should at all times maintain a neutral position when they are to report events in the society. They are supposed to present balanced and objective stories from the most credible sources possible.

According to Nwosu (2004:5); “The mass media are considered to be very important in conflict management because they are information merchants, conduits or carriers of various shades and colours of information. And in times of conflict or even wars, adequate or inadequate management of information is considered to be a critical factor in the emergence, escalation or reduction of tension at various levels. Tensions, depending on how they are managed can determine the end or continuation of the conflict”.

In respect to the above, media practitioners therefore have a significant impact on preventing and resolving conflict effectively by assuming conflict preventing functions. A responsive journalist should be able to provide a forum in

which the society can reflect itself. Most of the time, the mass media succumbs to sensationalism in conflict management, which is wrong.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE MEDIA IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

How well the media performs its roles is dependent on a number of factors. Saidu and Best (*ed*) (2007:23) enumerates a number of factors affecting the media in conflict management, which includes:

1. **Ownership:** Ownership is probably the most important factor that can influence the media or the practitioner's management of a conflict situation. As a matter of fact, it is during conflicts that we see how powerful the media is, especially as a tool for propaganda. A perfect example is the American-Iraqi wars where the views of the American media were quite different from that of Iraq and other Arab countries. For the Arab media, it was America fighting the entire Arab world, for America, it was the world fighting terrorism.

This goes a long way in justifying the adage which says "those who pay the piper, dictate the tune". Thus, Saidu and Best (2007) agrees to the fact that an instrument of propaganda cannot be objective and, therefore unable to efficiently mediate in a conflict situation to bring about peace. In other words, once the media perceives itself as a propaganda outfit, it is ready to sacrifice truth and objectivity for propaganda.

2. **Economic Factors:** This factor also greatly influences the media negatively, affecting their sense of judgment, both on the sides of the owners and practitioners. Issues such as the 'Brown-Envelope' syndrome and direct or indirect favours from government and other individuals fall under this factor.

3. **Religious Factors:** Religious differences have been the major cause of conflict, especially, in Nigeria today. The different religious beliefs of media personnels play a major role in the way and manner media personnel perceive issues.

4. **Cultural Factors:** The diverse cultural beliefs, languages and norms of media practitioners also tend to influence their perception of issues and the way and manner they carry out their responsibilities.

5. **Professionalism:** Today, most people who work in media houses are not trained journalists and media personnel. Thus, they fail to understand the importance of media ethics and professionalism while carrying out their duties.

COMMUNICATION AS A TOOL FOR THIRD PARTY IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT (MEDIATION)

As media practitioners, it is important to know the different communication techniques that are employed in the process of conflict management. This is because, communication is an essential ingredient for conflict management.

According to Saidu and Best (*ed*) (2007:33):

As a third party, you hardly can resolve a conflict you do not understand, and you hardly can understand a conflict, unless you have adequate and accurate information at your disposal. Also, as a mediator, you must talk about concerns and feelings, to guide the disputants to speak about what they will like to change and what they need, to resolve the problem. You must read between the lines to

determine the 'common ground' while trying to find out exactly what each of the disputants requires to resolve the problem. These are done via communication.

Some important features in assertive clear speaking in conflict management includes being focused on the issues as against addressing the personality of the perceived opponents in the conflict, expressing their feeling through the use of 'I' in contrast to the use of judgmental words that could block the transformation techniques.

The use of listening techniques in facilitating the process of mediation has a psychological effect on the conflicting parties and does not help in finding common grounds to resolve problems. Other active listening technique includes: encouraging the speaker, paraphrasing, summarizing and validating from the speaker. Never the less, one problem encountered with the practice of active listening is that most people enjoy being listened to, but find it difficult to listen to others.

WAYS IN WHICH THE MEDIA CAN SERVE AS INSTRUMENTS FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Listed below are things the mass media needs to put in place in order to effectively serve as an instrument for conflict management as stipulated by Saidu& Best (2007):

1. Media practitioners need to be trained in conflict resolution and management.
2. The media needs a reorientation of personal values and the values in the ethics of the profession.
3. The media practitioner should be highly knowledgeable and versatile in his or her profession.
4. The media needs freedom from government or proprietor's interference to be very objective.
5. Media practitioners should be exposed to constant training and re-training in various areas, especially the fast growing studies in conflict management. This will enable them to keep abreast with the challenges of the moment and those ahead.
6. Adequate funding is also required by owners to maintain and keep media practitioner in business and out of 'trouble.'

SUMMARY

In the context of this study, the media is only an instrument. It is like the pistol or pen. It does nothing other than the use to which it is put to. Thus, when we talk about the media, we are talking about those who use it. These fall into two groups. Those who own it (and therefore, who do the manipulation/ remote controlling), and those who run it and get the product sent out to the public (the direct manipulators). The first group makes the policies and set the objectives. They engage

those in the second group, to actualize their objectives and on their own, they work out strategies to achieve the goals.

“Like communication, conflict is natural and can be mild and localized as blinking or as widespread and violent as war (Saidu and Best (ed), 2007:35). The mass media plays an important role in influencing the society. They can either raise an alarm to pre-empt or diffuse conflict, or instigate its occurrence. This study serves as a call for the mass media, and Journalists in particular, as gatekeepers, watchdogs and apostle of conscience and truth, to stand in the chambers of justice, knowing fully well that they hold a double edged sword that must be used with extreme discretion and wisdom. The journalist is first a member of the society, before he/she is a journalist. If the pen (mass media) is used to hurt or injure the society to which he belongs, it is obvious that the perpetrator of such act is indirectly doing injustice to himself.

In a nutshell, this study critically highlights the roles of the media in conflict management, communication as a tool for third party (mediation) in conflict management.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that there is much to be done as regards the media and its contents. It is clear that the media needs to be more effective in its coverage and reportage of conflict and crisis situations. They must also uphold their social responsibility to the society by disseminating positive contents that would go a long way in enlightening and educating the masses on the need to have a peaceful society.

However, achieving a peaceful and violent free environment is a collective concern. Thus, the media cannot undertake this task alone. The masses must also try to support the effort of the media for the betterment of the society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the media to effectively act as an instrument for conflict management, the researcher deemed it fit to pose the following recommendations:

1. To be an effective mediator, according to conflict researchers, the mass media must provide timely, accurate information that can forewarn people of any conflict, give useful and full information that would educate the public and point towards conflict resolution.
2. The mass media should give a fair and balanced hearing to all sides of any argument.
3. The media should respect all the codes of ethics in Journalism, including fairness, accuracy, and truthfulness as well as respecting the confidentiality of sources.
4. As practitioners, Journalist, and indeed media personnel, should imbibe the culture of development Journalism, which encourages investigative Journalism. In other words, development should put more emphasis on human resources, rather than on the infrastructure alone.

5. Journalists must be adequately remunerated, trained and equipped. Many journalist have been subjected to poverty and undue hard ship and these have made some prone and susceptible to unethical conducts.
6. The media needs a reorientation of personal values and the values of the ethics of the profession.
7. Media practitioners need to be trained in conflict resolution and management. Acquiring skills in this area will improve the quality and manner in which reports of conflict are handled.
8. The media practitioner is supposed to be highly knowledgeable and versatile in his profession.

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Harnessing Internet Offerings for the Maximization of Integrated Marketing Communications in Nigeria

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Abstract

Over the years, product exchange powered business in the old school of transactional marketing, advertising and allied promotions remained veritable ways of attracting customers and doing business. However, as the both the consumer and the society become increasingly influenced by emerging trends, marketing communication campaigns are now under unprecedented pressure to deliver on corporate objectives. Against the backdrop of the advent of the Internet and evolving market dynamics, organizations are compelled to build and sustain patronage beyond a single business consummation. This work explores how organizations can cultivate and sustain profitable and enduring consumer engagements through Integrated Marketing Communications anchored on the crest of Internet revolution.

Introduction

The Internet has unquestionably become the dominant technology that is today powering many other innovations in the emerging global communications landscape. When about 40 years ago, Marshall McLuhan predicted that mass communications would transform the world into a “global village”, it was considered preposterous. Today, to the consternation of even the most vocal critics, the doubts are dissolving radically. The present Internet revolution has come closest to fulfilling that global village concept; as we are now all neighbours in the global village, wired digitally, thanks to internet.

As an interactive super-highway, the Internet is changing not only the way people communicate, but also the way business is done globally. Rodman, (2006:298) conceives of the medium as “a vast interconnected hardware system, made up of different types of computers” that purvey information worldwide in a huge online traffic. Commencing initially as a defense project in the 1960s in the United States, the Internet by 1995 had so many people online that it had to be relinquished, for security reasons by the military to the public and commercial sectors. With an amazing connectivity to the worldwide web (www) which is a diversified

communications gateway, the Internet provides information at mind-boggling speed to the audience on almost anything, anywhere, all the time. According to Rodman, while the World Wide Web collected some 10 million electronic documents at a quarter million web sites in its first three years, by 2004, there were 2.5 billion documents. (2006:300).

Over the years, the Internet has become a convergence of the media that preceded it, and is now hailed as the media of the future – from which new media innovations are evolving. This socio-economic significance of the Internet is made further pervasive by the digital convergence that has transformed the medium into a conduit of all other media: radio, television, movies, recordings, books, magazine and newspaper. As the fastest growing medium in history, the Internet offers incredible amount of information and opportunities to a wide range of people across all works of life.

With phenomenal speed, the Internet has affected not only how it is used but also launched the world into a new media revolution that is redefining communication, business and life. As the Internet continues to unfold, with its vast potentials, consumers are no longer mere onlookers but active partakers in a new digital interactive era

For business and marketing generally, the internet has opened windows of opportunity with a whole new world of potential customers waiting to be engaged. Marketing has not remained the same since what was initially concerned as a defense project rolled out from production line to the public as the Internet. This meta-discuss of how the Internet is impacting on the business of integrated marketing communications (IMC) in Nigeria is yet an attempt at understanding how the new medium that has networked the world into a wireless convergence. For business and integrated marketing communications generally, Nigeria can ill afford to be immune to this exponential deployment of the Internet.

What is Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)?

Integrated marketing communication (IMC) is the management concept which strategically co-ordinates all the communication channels available to an organization to deliver clear, consistent and persuasive messages about the organization and its products. IMC seeks to combine or amalgamate all the elements of marketing communication so that a single, coherent and consistent message is conveyed in a campaign. Hitherto, different and often disparate messages are conveyed in various programmes; these confuse the consumers and have been known to damage brands. Although it emerged in the mid 1990s as a public relations proposition, IMC has over the years gained acceptability as a concept used for engaging target audiences across all spheres of interaction - corporate, governmental and individual. According to Arens (2002:240), IMC is

the process of building and reinforcing mutually profitable relationships with employees, customers, other stake holders and the general publics by developing and coordinating a strategic communications programme that enables them to have a constructive encounter with the company and its brand through a variety of media or other contacts.

The concept works through the unification of available marketing communication tools to present compelling messages that promote company goals and build strong brand identity in the marketplace. For instance, if a TV commercial conveys a particular message via a particular logo and image, then all consumer engagements and promotions, including newspaper adverts, billboards, public relations or point of sale materials should not carry contradictory messages, but rather the same messages in complementation. Using a combination of vehicles such as advertising, publicity, direct marketing, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and special and experiential offerings like websites, trade fairs and exhibitions, etc, IMC merges all messages by positioning identity and images to reinforce organizational goals. In the words of Lindell, (1997), engaging IMC as a tool of promotion "...means that your PR materials say the same thing as your direct mail campaign and your advertising has the same look and feel as your Web sites".

While adding to the profit bottom line in business, the goal of IMC ultimately, is to position the organization and its brand firmly in a value chain to be able to deliver to all stake holders in a wholistic engagement. Proponents of IMC argue that because public and social issues also affect marketing in addition to product and price, an organization needs to respond to all matters arising with a unified voice, Dominick (2002:359).

Rationale for Increasing use of IMC

The erstwhile understanding of the society as a mass market initially gave rise to the concept of mass communication as theorized variously by many early scholars. However, this primordial understanding of the society as one mass, anonymous and omnibus market soon appeared too simplistic and dysfunctional in delivering business results as society changed dramatically. This dynamism in the society necessitated the tailoring of certain communications strategically to meet the marketing objectives of businesses and organizations. According to Dominick, (2002: 359), by the mid-1990s integrated marketing communications (IMC) emerged as a mantra amongst marketers who began to espouse the harnessing of all corporate and product messages into a more functional marketing synergy.

Generally, the following factors have combined to promote the dynamic use of IMC as viable platform for engaging the market:

- 1 Fragmentation of the mass market.
Over the years the fragmentation of the mass market has given rise to the need to target customers according to their needs with specific customized products. This has made product differentiation and proliferation compelling.
- 2 Consumer sophistication
This rise of more sophisticated, more critical and more demanding customers has occurred over the years, with many of them desiring a more active role in product formulation and information dissemination. Call it primacy of the consumer; the consumer has changed; stamping authority as the coveted 'king' and wanting more involvement in the business relationship. Almost everywhere, the customer is increasingly more educated, more sophisticated and more insatiable.
- 3 Decreasing trust

Despite the increase in consumer demand, proliferation of products failed to ensure brand loyalty as many products were unable to deliver on claims and promises. There were wide schisms between company communications and product deliverables.

- 4 The rise of relationship marketing
In repudiation of the transactional marketing of the old school, marketers have discovered that the key to building value, brand equity and customer loyalty is not in the products, but in the cultivation of a mutually beneficial relationship with customers as the lifeblood of the business. (Arens, 2002:235-237).
- 5 Failure of the traditional media of marketing communications
With too much advertising cluttering the old media - radio, television, billboard, newspaper, magazine - marketers are compelled to find new and more effective ways to communicate with their large audience, potential and real. The rapid changes in customer and market dynamism needed to be addressed pronto through more functional communication methods.
- 6 Advent of Global System of Mobile communication (GSM)
The explosion in the GSM market led to the unprecedented increase in social networking and the introduction of user's generated contents (UGC) by people through electronic devices available to many in homes, schools and offices.
- 7 The Internet and new media interactivity
Perhaps most instrumental to the birth of IMC is the Internet technology. The new digital media and their amazing interactivity birthed by the Internet have transformed business and life generally. These revolutions have compelled the attention of marketers seeking to reach the consumers at their time and convenience. Since its advent, the Internet has wooed away media audience - from all previous media - to itself. This has compelled marketers to crave and break the attention of audience members who have been wooed away from all known media before it. Marketers must thus get the invaluable attention of audience members in their Googling, blogging or Facebook engagement

Dynamics of Integrated Marketing Communication - How IMC works

1. Communication is driving force.

Since IMC is message anchored, communication is the driving force for both the organization and its brands. It drives relations and powers integration. The integrating force that powers IMC is communication. All elements of the marketing mix are held together by co-ordinated communication; with each element reinforcing the other. For example, advertising supports and gives credence to whatever campaigns public relations is prosecuting.

2. Management of Interdependence of the Market.

Integrated marketing communications involve the management of the interdependence of all stakeholders in the market place. Once the various publics that impact on an organization have been identified, they must be engaged continuously for mutual value addition. For example the corporate affairs people must manage the media relations of an organization pro-actively by cultivating a rapport with editors and reporters; and carrying them along on the affairs of the organization. It is widely

said that IMC is all about the management of interdependence of people, things and issues that affect an organization. [RMG find ref]

3. IMC is Relationship-driven.

Whereas business and marketing are transactional under the traditional media - driven by mere exchange considerations - what powers business and prospers organizations driven by IMC is relationship. Organizations have discovered that it is more cost effective to retain customers than to acquire new ones. This paradigm shift is anchored on the understanding that establishing viable relationships adds more value to a company than striking one-off business deals with customers.

4. IMC is Customer-centric.

Rather than being product-driven, business driven by IMC is “customer-centric”. This involves working on the customer; exciting the customer and ultimately leading the customer to the brand, instead of foisting the product on the customer through traditional advertising or sales promotion.[RMG find ref]

5. Fusion of Marketing and Communication Planning.

Rather than have marketing planning work disparately, and often in competition with communication strategy, IMC permits a fusion of both into a management function. This fusion is claimed to be more result oriented as has been shown in the successful launch of Windows 95 by Microsoft.

6. Integration is the key.

Whether using the inside-out or the more sophisticated outside-in perspective to IMC, integration is the master key. There must be wholesome integration of all the communication mix and channels so as to present the organization positively, with one face, one voice and strong brand. To achieve this desired integration, all communications activity of IMC must pass the criteria of coherence, consistency, continuity and complementation – 4 Cs of IMC. Tom Duncan identifies “four levels of integration that companies use: unified image, consistent voice, good listener, and at the most integrated, world-class citizen”, Arens (2002:240).

7. IMC is Research and Data-driven.

Continuous, multifaceted media, marketing and customer research is needed to feed the management decision making. In order to create value; engage the customer, media and various publics; confront the marketing dynamics and respond to challenges, IMC relies on several forms of research for information.

8. Integration creates Synergy.

The strategic integration of all the media and marketing vehicles creates the synergy that powers IMC. This synergy derives from the mutual interdependence of all the stakeholders in a business, but also of the various communication and marketing mix. All too often, in times past companies come out with conflicting messages to the public offering little or no synergy: a television ad says one thing, whereas a sales promotion activity sends a different signal. However with IMC, product advertisements and company brochure or literature will reinforce each other and also be in sync with the company’s positioning and web site communications. Long term business relationship is sustainable only when IMC is reinforcing the positive images and minimizing the negative messages that come out from the organization. Through effective synergy, the brand is strengthened; and the stronger the brand, the more value it has to impact on the balance sheet realities.

Potentials of the Internet for Integrated Marketing Communications

As the online audience continues to grow worldwide due to integration with and migration from other traditional media, marketers are increasingly rethinking their strategies in tandem with the attractive demographics of the Internet audience. Marketing research on the use of the Internet in Africa may be scanty, but world statistics indicate that generally (Explain what you mean by **online audience**) is better educated and more urbane than the remaining population, Arens (2002:550-551). Global figures may yet appear nebulous to justify any simplistic generalization, but the following online highlights culled from separate 2000 studies by Jupiter Research and Media Metrix Inc. are instructive for the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) industry in Africa:

- There is a bountiful traffic of people who used to spend time in front of the TV moving to the computer
- Majority of people who surf the Net are well educated and urbane
- Many PC users are giving up TV and radio engagements to spend more time on the Net
- Almost 50 percent of people surveyed said they were watching less TV; with 22 percent reading magazines less frequently and 21 percent reading newspapers less frequently
- 46 percent of online population are women
- More than half of new online users are women
- The Web is used largely by users with relatively high annual household incomes.
- Those in the low income brackets using the internet are about one-third, but are the fastest growing group.

For many institutions in Africa, governmental and business, the increasing quest for information by this growing internet population is an opportunity for several multi-media online engagements. Whereas the global Internet population was nearly half a billion people in 2000, (Arens, 2002:550), new online data estimate that audience to be 40% of the world's population, (2013, ICT Facts & Figures), presently estimated at 7.2 billion, (digitaltrends.com). Between the break of the century and now, Internet users globally have grown exponentially, with African online community presently put at 900 million, (msn.com). This growing online population in Africa, no doubt, offers huge potentials that would excite information purveyors in both the government and private sector.

Driven by a synergy of the internet, digital turnover and satellite revolution the new media now make text, audio, video and graphics and assorted data accessible to all via an expanding array of electronic appliances. For purveyors and users of IMC in Africa, the digital implications are far-reaching especially for information packaging, electronic commerce (e-commerce), target marketing and several other online and offline engagements with the public. The convergence of content, systems and network in the production, storage, processing and transmission of information is now better enhanced than before. Mojayeet. al (Year), explaining further, maintain that with convergence,

Everything comes on at once on the computer or television or any other complementing new media form; technological equipment such as digital camera-recording of events must carry with it mixture of

audio, video and graphics or other visible objects as well as global system of mobile communication (GSM), where the interlink of sound, video, text are now possible (2008:356).

By this convergence, new media integrate both the forms and formats of the old media to deliver richer news, information and entertainment services to the public.

The Imperatives of Convergence for IMC

For the maximization of IMC in Africa, the following imperatives, drawn largely from the convergence offered by the internet, satellite and new media cannot be ignored:

- Man's natural desire for information is now met to near satiation in the bottomless reservoir of data available online. Presently, there is almost nothing that one cannot find or buy on the Web (Belch and Belch, 2013; Dominic 2012).
- High-speed, digital connectivity on the net is compelling more users to spend more time online at incredible ease and convenience. As more people air their views online about social issues and on products and brands at great convenience power now resides with the consumer rather than brand owners. Consequently, brand managers must find better ways to engage consumers through the use of IMC.
- Power of content and user-control is matched only by the possibility of audience involvement offered by the new media at the thresholds of user-to-user, user-to-document, and user-to-system interactivity, McMillan (2006). [RMG see Mojaye 360]
- New ways to buy and sell have emerged through e-commerce.
- Target-driven marketing frontiers for IMC are enhanced through online research and continuous customer tracking. These provide more direct feedback on the value of marketing communication expenditures, customer satisfaction and the competition generally.
- The limited control of the internet presents less worry to marketers about media and other regulatory watchdogs who police online business and communications. Consequently marketers and information managers virtually have a blank cheque to do business, as networks are largely unable to censor what is said or shown online.
- In terms of effectiveness of IMC, measurement appears more effective with online campaign. Data-based marketing and several other metrics enhance the better evaluation of consumer response to campaigns as well as return on investment from promotional budgets.

Pitfalls of the Internet as an IMC Tool

As promising as the internet is to both marketers and consumers, the medium is not without its perils and drawbacks. Unlike the traditional media, the freedom of the internet, up scaled by its digital interactivity constitutes its attractiveness. However, in spite of its huge potentials there is a rising constituency who think it is time to cross-examine the internet. Some of the areas that have drawn damning criticisms since the explosion of the internet include the following:

1. Lack of effective gate keepers.

Lack of statutory control presents an intriguing paradox in Internet usage. There are many users of the Internet who are also content producers and may be referred to as gatekeepers. While it is the most democratic of media in terms of freedom, the Internet is often derided as the “wild, wild west” for its lack of regulation. Anybody can get on it and do or post anything - and this is precarious - without any one entity to hold accountable.

2. Lack of institutional security.

Many people still consider the Internet highly unsafe to do business. Especially for financial transaction, many are yet to accept it as a viable medium to do business. Few, for example, would dare to purchase credit card over the net, for fear of scam and cyber fraud.

3. Slow downloads

Due largely to bandwidth limitations, response time for users of the Internet is often slow and this hampers people from full online maximization. This is a disincentive for any robust online marketing.

4. Deception.

While a vast majority of blogs and Internet prepositions are legitimate, they also offer the potential for deception. For instance, no one can ascertain the objectivity of a blogger who comments on a product or brand, either positively or negatively. While unfair trade opportunities exist online for companies to anonymously promote their brands, on the other hand, competitive brand bashing which is unethical in marketing can be done anonymously. As explained further by Rodman (2006:322), the Internet ...allows an undifferentiated mass of information to appear online. Authoritative information provided by authors sits side-by-side, in the same format with nonsense and fraud.

5. Privacy violation.

While customer profiling is a legitimate marketing practice, devices such as “cookies”, “spyware”, “request” and a plethora of tracking softwares have raised concerns about privacy invasion of users of the Net. Privacy advocates are thus naturally worried about the safety and usage of the huge reservoir of personal information available online. According to Arens

Although software developers claim that the users are tracked anonymously with encrypted identification numbers, privacy advocates believe the marketing method is too invasive into consumers, lives. (2002:562).

6. The great “Digital Divide”.

While the internet may have indeed networked the world into a “global village” as envisioned of the new media by Marshall McLuhan, a wide “digital divide” by way of technological gap exists between those who are computer and internet literate and those who are not especially in Africa and many parts of Asia. The full deployment of the internet for fruitful integrated marketing communications is limited by this divide.

7. Fear of Westernization.

The awesome power of the Internet with its pervasive influence over socialization compels many critics to question the intention of its use wholistically. Increasingly, there is widespread perception especially in the developing nations of the systematic

use of the Internet as a global instrument of cultural imperialism and westernization of the world.

8. Commercialization of the Internet

The increasing use of the Internet for integrated marketing communications and other profit driven endeavours is considered in some quarters as another extension of the much deprecated commercialization of the media.

Conclusion

For many in business, media, sports and entertainment, everything has changed since the advent of the Internet. Since this pervasive medium rolled out with unparalleled reverberations into diverse, new, digital and interactive offerings, notwithstanding the plethora of risks inbuilt, those in the business of integrated marketing communications (IMC) have never had it so good. This new media reality of the Internet has jotted many ailing business and lives into a new digital, online consciousness.

For the marketer desirous of a new market place and daring to innovate, the deliverables online are enormous, despite the many unknown bumps of the Internet. The medium may still be unfolding; yet, the potential for attraction of open gateway to people and information offerable through the internet revolution is too irresistible to permit any serious consideration of the flaws of the new medium.

As the medium transforms both itself and the society generally, more than ever, the imperative is for the marketer craving for customer retention and new niche frontier to follow the consumers into their Smartphones, iPads, facebook, e-mails, music players and interactive televisions. Even amidst the increasing calls for more control of the Internet, the new refrain that is resonating amongst marketers both local and international and many in the business of IMC is: innovate or die.

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Assessment of Sources of Information on Fertilizer among Farmers in Benue and Plateau States

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Abstract

The sources of information on fertilizer among farmers in Benue and Plateau States were assessed by the study through a survey using questionnaire as instrument for data collection. Findings show that radio is the leading source of information among farmers in Benue and Plateau States, with 24.5% rating by the farmers sampled. Nevertheless, 71.2% of the farmers in Benue and Plateau states basically rely on informal sources of information on fertilizer. Further findings reveal that agricultural extension workers are the most reliable sources of information on fertilizer among farmers in the two states studied. Also, that information on fertilizer from informal sources is the most suitable to the information needs of farmers in Benue and Plateau states regarding fertilizer. Overall, it is evident from the findings that fertilizer is an essential commodity and helpful in increasing crops yield in the two states. Against this backdrop, the study concludes that there is heavy reliance of farmers in Benue and Plateau states on informal information sources such extension workers, traditional rulers, announcements in churches and mosques, friends, and neighbours/relatives. Consequently, application of more channels in delivering information to farmers; information dissemination to farmers on fertilizers availability, cost, procurement and methods of application among other things are recommended.

Introduction

Communication is the catalyst for the effective functioning of all human society. Its imperativeness lies in the old adage that 'man cannot but communicate'; implying that it is communication that makes life meaningful for all humans in every society. According to Folorunso (1987) in Umeh (2008:8) a well informed society is a mobilized society because it is information literate, more responsive to government policies and eager to participate in the nation's development programmes. In

agriculture, the role of information in enhancing agricultural development cannot be over emphasized. Information is vital for increasing production and improving marketing and distribution strategies (Oladele, 2006:16).

Information is the bedrock of communication and the opens windows of sharing experiences, best practices, sources of financial aids and new markets. According to Opera (2008:289) knowledge and information are basic ingredients for increased agricultural production and productivity. The availability of information on accessibility of fertilizer, cost, distribution channels, and types to be used on each crop, application techniques, and other support services will be critical resource in the operation and management of the agricultural enterprise. Both mechanized large scale farmers and peasant small scale farmers rely heavily on fertilizer for enhanced farm yields. Therefore, effective agricultural information delivery as Opera (2008:290) notes, at the right time in the right format and from the right source may shift the balance between success and failure of the farmer.

Recognition of the information needs of the farmers and the determination of how best to provide them with the information they need, particularly on fertilizer and other farming techniques is thus, an imperative. It is against this backdrop that Hossain (2000:41) has noted that communication of agricultural information is a vital factor in the change process of the farming community. Because of this, he said “agricultural research results constitute an important knowledge base that should be made available to farmers through sources whose attributes are acceptable to them”. It therefore, becomes imperative that identification of the different sources of information to farmers be made to bring out the relevance of these sources as well as bring out the preference/ priority farmers attach to such information sources.

Statement of the Problem

Several agricultural programmes and schemes have been devised in Nigeria over the years, to help equip farmers with information and resources that will help reduce the burden of farming and increase farm yields. Such programmes and schemes have lead to institutions and agencies saddled with the responsibilities of setting policies and implementation strategies. As part of the concerted efforts to equip farmers with information and resources that will improve agricultural yields, the farm Settlement Schemes was introduced in 1956 by the Colonial Government of Sir James Robertson. The Yakubu Gowon regime also introduced the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP), in 1972.

Pursuant to the same goals, successive regimes to date have devised one programme or the other to help sensitize, create awareness and equip farmers with necessary information and resources to boost agriculture in the country (Umeh, 2008:10). The aim of most of such programmes and schemes besides enhancing farmers’ agricultural production, is to improve rural life and check rural-urban drift in population. In spite of all these efforts, Adeola, Adewale, and Adebayo (2008: 79) observe that attainment of self-sufficiency in food production has remained a mirage in Nigeria. They predicate the problem on the fact that majority of farmers who are peasants are either inadequately or poorly informed about innovations and techniques to apply or programmes and schemes that they can tap into to enhance their farming. This corroborates an earlier submission by Arokoyo (2003:47) that there is an insufficient effort to provide information to Nigerian farmers, particularly fertilizer

which is most crucial to achieve improved productivity and enhance their standard of living of rural dwellers. Anyanwu, Agwu and Umeweni (2002:40) note too that information on innovations on fertilizer application and even the availability of the product is shrouded in mystery in Nigeria. The mass media that are the major purveyors of information have not been adequately and properly utilized to complement other sources of information to farmers. It against this background, the study is assessing the sources of information on fertilizer to farmers in Benue and Plateau States.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to ascertain the sources of information on fertilizer to farmers in Benue and Plateau States. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Ascertain the sources from which farmers in Benue and Plateau States access information on fertilizer.
2. Determine the most reliable information sources on fertilizer among farmers in Benue and Plateau States.
3. Find out the information sources on fertilizer that best suit the needs of farmers in Benue and Plateau States.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the sources from which farmers in Benue and Plateau States access information on fertilizer?
2. What are the most reliable information sources on fertilizer among farmers in Benue and Plateau States?
3. What are the information sources on fertilizer that best suit the needs of farmers in Benue and Plateau States?

Scope and Significance of the Study

The study is concerned with sources of information on fertilizer among farmers. Accordingly, it is delimited in scope to information contents that have to do with fertilizer availability, procurement and application. Geographically, the study is delimited in scope to farmers in Benue and Plateau States.

Significance of the study can be viewed from a number of ways - first, it is hoped that it will better educate agricultural information providers in this areas and other development information providers. Second, it will educate agricultural programmes and schemes implementation agencies on the easily accessible sources of information to farmers in Benue and Plateau States. It will also enable such agencies and bodies to know the sources best suits the information needs of farmers in Benue and Plateau States. The findings of the study will serve as a resource material for researchers as it will provide a guide for further studies.

Review of Related Literature

The sources from which farmers obtain information regarding their farming activities have attracted interest and attention from scholars around the world in recent time. Such interest and attention are not unconnected with global development agendas and incessant food shortages around the world, mostly blamed on poor agricultural yield. The concern is more on rural dwellers due to their low level of

education and awareness of most agricultural innovations. Studies conducted tend to highlight how farmers access information, with special focus on fertilizer availability and applications.

The study by Ayoade (2010:39) found that interpersonal source of information was available to farmers. This interpersonal source was friends who are non-professionals in information dissemination. In a related study by Okwu and Daudu (2011:88), interpersonal communication channels were generally found to be more available, accessible and used by the farmers than the mass media to obtain information on improved farm technologies. Relatives/friends/neighbours constituted the most regularly available, accessible and used interpersonal channels, although extension agents and television were mentioned by the farmers as the most preferred interpersonal channel and mass medium, respectively.

According to Frederico Mayor, the then Director General of UNESCO, as cited by Alan and Associates (1997:21), indigenous people are people living in and from the richness and variety of complex ecosystems, and they have understanding of the properties of plants and animals, the function of the ecosystems and the techniques for using and managing them that are particular and often detailed. This understanding (or knowledge) is transmitted orally from generation to generation (Opera, 2008:290). Thus, it is important that any method of disseminating development information must recognize existing traditional or indigenous channels of information dissemination. It is in view of this that Mundy and Compton (2000:19) have noted that every society has evolved ways for transmitting information from person to person.

It is in recognition of this fact that Monu (2000:51) has agreed that for communication to become truly an instrument of society change, it must be based on the existing value and belief system of the community as well as upon built in respected and trusted communication channels, like the folk media. In such a people-centered participation approach of communication, the identification of networks of information flow provides deeper insight into the pattern of exchange of information in the farming community (Hossain, 2000:89). Most indigenous people have traditional songs, legend, dreams, methods and practices as means of transmitting specific elements of indigenous knowledge (Alan and Associates, 1997:145). These media are amendable to the transmission of exogenous knowledge (Opera, 2008:290).

Studies such as those of Chatman (2000:17) and Aboyale (2000:79) have shown that a wide range of sources of fertilizer news and other agricultural information is available to farmers. Because of this, choice of appropriate medium is crucial in agricultural information delivery (Opera, 2008:290). This is because the desire to use or not to use a particular information channels is affected by the channel's disposition and information demand characteristics (Richardson, 2003:98). Information channels disposition and information demand characteristics according to Lee, refers to the users preferred means and styles of obtaining the needed information whereas information demand characteristics refers to the quality pattern that users expect in the needed information. A source of news or information must be credible, reliable and above all familiar to the user before he would use it. This is particularly so where there are alternative sources (Opera, 2008:290)

Djojomartono and Pertini (2000:291) have argued that no one medium is best. The selected medium, they argued must be adapted to the message, target

audience and social economic environment. Nevertheless, it is always best to use a combination of channels (Opera, 2008:290). Munyua (2008) in Opera (2008:290) notes that traditional media of agricultural information delivery to farmers have been used very successfully in developing countries and rural radio in particular has played a major role in delivering agricultural messages. She further noted that print, video, television, film slides, pictures, drama, dance, folklore, group discussion, meetings, exhibitions and demonstrations have also been used to speed up the flow of information.

However, Djojmartono and Pertini (2000:291) note that radio and television are more appropriate for one way communication, reaching a lot of people quickly with fairly simple ideas. It is in this vein that Munyua in Opara states that the two media have been monologic and have not allowed much interaction with the users. It is in view of this that Djojmartono and Pertini state that interpersonal communication including extension agent, group meetings, community organization, and demonstrations are the ways to teach and develop credibility, but sometimes their effectiveness is hindered by some limiting factors such as time, space, human resources and budget. However, Tadesse (2008:54) notes that mass media are particularly effective in making farmers aware of new technologies and there after they can always approach the extension agent, whose job it is to deliver repackaged agricultural information from subject matter specialists to farmers for application in their farming operations.

Ozowa (2003:40) identified poor reception quality and inadequate area coverage and inappropriate broadcast time as some of the draw backs of radio and television. He argues that even though Nigerian farmers rank the extension agent highest as a source of providing credible, agricultural information and advice, the extension personnel are ill-equipped for extension and extension communication job. To strengthen the effectiveness of the mass media in agricultural information delivery, Ozowa reported that the media Forum for Agriculture was formed by media practitioners from all over Nigeria in 1989 with the aim of providing better coverage of agriculture in the media.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the tenets of the diffusion of innovations theory and the uses and gratifications theory. The diffusion of innovations theory propounded by Everett M. Rogers in 1962 seeks to explain how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread through cultures (McQuail, 2005). The theory acknowledges diffusion of innovations as a specific kind of communication that includes an innovation, individuals or other units of adoption, and a communication channel.

The uses and gratifications theory, formulated by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch in 1974, on the other hand, attempts to explain the uses and functions of media for individuals, groups and society in general. A key tenet of the theory is the shift media production and transmission functions to the media consumption functioning, which perceives messages recipients as selectively choosing, attending to, perceiving and retaining the messages on the basis of their needs (Severin and Tankard, 1991). The uses and gratifications theory acknowledges

that users of information are goal driven decision-makers who select information and communication channels that meet their needs.

Relevance of these theories to the study lies in their recognition of the individual user of information in the communication process. Both theories emphasizes the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system and the use to which individual make of the information based on their needs gratifications as crucial elements in information seeking behaviours and innovations adaptation.

Research Method

The survey research design has been adopted as the method of data collection for this study, with the use of questionnaire as instrument for data collection. Commenting on this design, Ada, Abul, Ker, and Okwu (1997:37) state that it is “a strategy used to find meaning and obtain an understanding of the present condition, attitudes, opinions, beliefs...” The population of the study comprise of all farmers in Benue and Plateau States from which a sample size of 400 respondents was drawn using the Taro Yamane statistical formula for calculating sample size. The data collected for the study was collated and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as simple percentages and tables of summary in order to ease comprehension and to appreciate observed variables of the research outcome.

Data Presentation and Analysis

A total of 398 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved from a sample size of 400 administered the instrument. This shows a high response rate of 99.5% for the study which is used in answering the research questions. Consequently, the data presented and analyzed is based on the 398 copies of the questionnaire returned.

Research Questions 1: What are the sources from which farmers in Benue and Plateau States access information on fertilizer? Answer to this research question is contained in the data presented in table 1 which shows the various sources of information on fertilizer among farmers in Benue and Plateau States.

Table 1: Sources of Information on Fertilizer among the Farmers

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	98	24.6
Television	11	2.8
Newspaper	6	1.5
Friends	76	19.1
Neighbours/Relatives	47	11.8
Traditional Ruler	37	9.3
Announcement in Church/Mosque	52	13.1
Extension workers	71	17.8
Total	398	100%

Source: *Field Survey, 2014.*

Table 1 show that radio is the leading source of information among farmers in Benue State, with 24.5% rating by the farmers sampled. Nevertheless, farmers in Benue and Plateau states also access information on fertilizer from agricultural

extension worker, announcements in churches and mosques, from traditional rulers, relatives, neighbours and friends, as well as from television and newspapers. On the whole, the data implies that majority of the farmers in Benue and Plateau States (71.2%) basically rely on informal sources of information on fertilizer.

This signifies that despite being the major purveyors of information in society, and in spite of radio's role in the dissemination of information on fertilizer, the mass media in comparison to the informal sources of information, are yet to take the leading role in the dissemination of agricultural information to the farmers in Benue and Plateau states, particularly on fertilizer availability and application.

Research Questions 2: What are the most reliable information sources on fertilizer among farmers in Benue and Plateau States? Table 2 presents data in response to this research question.

Table 2: The most Reliable Information Sources on Fertilizer among the Farmers

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	43	10.8
Television	12	3
Newspaper	4	1
Friends	45	11.3
Neighbours/Relatives	57	14.3
Traditional Ruler	80	20.1
Announcement in Church/Mosque	76	19.1
Extension workers	81	20.4
Total	398	100%

Source: *Field Survey, 2014.*

Data contained in table 2 shows the most reliable sources of information on fertilizer among farmers in Benue and Plateau states. It is implied from the data that agricultural extension workers are the most reliable sources of information on fertilizer among farmers in the two states studied. This is followed by information obtained from traditional rulers and announcements in churches and mosques.

This implies that the interpersonal and group communication channels are more influential among the farmers in Benue and Plateau states, and could be inferred that the knowledge they have about fertilizer especially its availability and applications is from extension worker. Similarly, the data shows the influence of traditional and religious institutions in the lives of farmers in Benue and Plateau states, hence information from extension worker, traditional rulers and announcements in churches and mosques are deemed the most reliable sources on fertilizer among the farmers.

Research Questions 3: What are the information sources on fertilizer that best suit the needs of farmers in Benue and Plateau States? Data contained in table 3 provides information on the suitability of the information sources to the information needs of farmers in Benue and Plateau states.

Table 1: Suitability of Sources of Information on Fertilizer for needs of the Farmers

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	70	17.6
Television	13	3.3
Newspaper	6	1.5
Friends	34	8.5
Neighbours/Relatives	47	11.8
Traditional Ruler	62	15.6
Announcement in Church/Mosque	79	19.8
Extension workers	87	21.9
Total	398	100%

Source: *Field Survey, 2014.*

Information contained in the table shows respondents' rating of the sources based on their information needs. The respondents extols information from extension workers, announcements in churches and mosques, radio, traditional rulers and information from neighbours and relatives as most suitable to their information needs regarding fertilizer.

This implies that extension workers and local institutions as well as individuals with knowledge of fertilizer are very essential to agricultural productivity in Benue and Plateau states. To this end, farmers in Benue and Plateau states will be better equipped and assisted to enhance agricultural productivity through such channels. Overall, it is evident from the data that fertilizer is an essential commodity and helpful in increasing crops yield.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study as contained in the data presented reveals that over 70% of farmers in Benue and Plateau states rely heavily on informal sources of information on fertilizer. The findings indicate that informal sources such as extension workers, traditional rulers, announcements in churches and mosques, friends, and neighbours/relatives are the most vital for the farmers in Benue and Plateau states. These findings are consistent with those of Daudu, Chado, and Igbashal's 2009 study which found that 73.5% of farmers in Benue State source information on agricultural issues from friends and relatives. The findings also agree with those of Opera's 2008 study which found that farmers in Nigeria heavily rely on informal sources for agricultural information.

Similarly, the study found that farmers in Benue and Plateau states prefer a combination of the various information sources such as from extension workers, announcements in churches and mosques, radio, traditional rulers and information from neighbours and relatives as well as television and newspapers in fulfilling their information needs. This is also consistent with the observation of Inagaki, (2007) that, the Millennium Development Goals call for not only greater financial commitment in international assistance programme but also innovative strategies to tackle the serious education and other basic human problems in the developing world such as agriculture.

The findings of this study therefore, call for a renewed interest and commitment to agricultural practices that would advance the development of rural communities whom according to White (2008), constitutes majority of the population in developing countries such as Nigeria. The millennium development goals offers opportunity for scholars and agencies of government and non-governmental organisations to provoke a renewed debate on the global development issues that will provide an opportunity for development practitioners to integrate established methods and novel communication approaches into larger development initiatives in a greater scale.

Against this backdrop, the findings of the study support previous studies that the systematic use of communication for development historically has been flawed. It is therefore important that the agricultural sector be developed, in order to develop rural areas. This is because agriculture is the pivotal source around which livelihoods in the rural areas are sustained, and historically, the farming tradition has always been a part of the culture of Nigerians, particularly the people of Benue and Plateau, and indeed the entire middle belt region of Nigeria.

Conclusion

Following the findings available to the study through the analysis and interpretation of the research data, the study concludes that there is heavy reliance of farmers in benue and Plateau states on informal information sources such extension workers, traditional rulers, announcements in churches and mosques, friends, and neighbours/relatives. However, a good combination of the informal sources with the formal mass media would better help in equipping the farmers with authentic information. As such, there is need to integrate the mass media into key agricultural policies and programmes as well as increase awareness of the farmers on fertilizer availability and application to improve farm yields and agricultural produce in Benue and Plateau states that are the hub of Nigeria's food chain.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings and the conclusion reached, the following recommendations are made by the study:

1. Development information providers should always apply more than one channel in delivering information to the target farmers. This information should be provided in the right format and the right language especially where the mass media are used.
2. More efforts should be geared towards information dissemination to farmers especially on fertilizers availability, cost, procurement and methods of application as it will be of immense benefits to the farmers and as such should be taken serious by all stakeholders in the agricultural business.
3. Interpersonal sources which seem to be most suitable for the farmers should be integrated into agricultural policies, programmes and schemes because they have been found to be more effective and influential among farmers.
4. Efforts should be made to ensure that broadcast times on radio and televisions are appropriate and the area of coverage should be as wide as possible. Similarly, the time of broadcast, format and the language used should be conversant with the people.

5. Education and training of extension worker and other agricultural agents on interpersonal communication should be considered vital in the provision of extension services to the farmers.

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The Nigerian Leadership Experience: Lessons in Ahmed Yerima's Little Drops

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Abstract

Nigeria is one of the developing countries of the world endowed with diverse human and material resources. Unfortunately, social ills such as bad leadership, insurgency and corruption which appear to be on the increase, have negatively affected the nation politically, socially and economically. Certainly, these social maladies have been the bane of development for many years. Since independence, the country has been governed under military and civilian regimes at various times. The country's leadership, past and present came up with policies and programmes that articulate the vision of an ideal state. Despite the good intentions and efforts, not much has been achieved in Nigerian's nation building project. The sordid state of socio-economic experiences was further compounded by the civil war which halted meaningful development, tore the country apart and widened the gap between the "Haves and Have Nots". Thus a class structure society was created with a gloomy future. Perhaps, the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta in the late fifties, added another strands to the nation's woes. The region has become a crises-ridden society. Indeed, the Niger Delta issues have become topical, with serious national implications and have received global attention. This foreseen mirage could be as a result of bad leadership that has taken over the region by some selfish and insatiable Nigerians. Theatre practitioners, particularly dramatists seized the opportunity, captured and reflected in their works the crises in the region. In this paper, the researcher examines the recurrent leadership questions in Nigeria's quest for national development using Ahmed Yerima's Little Drops as paradigm. The paper concludes that, good Leadership in all ramifications and all over the world remains the pivot upon which any meaningful socio-economic and political development is achieved. If Nigerians begin to demonstrate good leadership qualities, then the dream of becoming one of the developed countries of the world in 20, 20, 20 will not be a mirage.

Keywords: Nigerian Leadership, Socioeconomic Experience, Lessons, Theatre, Drama

Introduction

A number of development discourses attribute Nigeria's lack of meaningful development to the multi-faceted problems of bad leadership. The post-colonial elites have consistently failed to provide the needed leadership to improve the lot of the teeming masses of this country. From the North to South, East to West, crises of leadership have engrossed Nigeria. Almost fifty four years now, Nigeria got her independence and the country still suffers from political instability, lack of legitimacy of political leaders, religious and ethnic intolerance, socio-economic disorder and corruption. Most countries in Africa are yet to improve the quality of life of the majority of their citizens. This is evident in the many crises that have bedeviled the continent of Africa in general and Nigeria in particular over the years. Doki decries the country's backwardness and asserts that:

Upon the attainment of independence, Nigeria has been plagued with one crisis to the other: civil war in 1967, sharia crisis in 1977, maitatsine crisis in 1980, the oil crisis in 1986, the declaration of jihad in Kaduna state in 1996, the Kaduna and Abia religious riot in 2000, Tiv/Awe communal clashes in 2001, Tiv/Udam crisis in 2002, and a host of other sporadic attacks at different times and places (2004:142)

Regrettably, most of these crises and clashes confronting Nigeria are linked with leadership challenges. In fact, the change of political leadership from the colonial masters to Nigerians marked the beginning of the search for true and selfless leaders in the country.

Today, the visible signs of Nigeria's bad leadership and underdevelopment are poverty, hunger, disease, ignorance, injustice and corruption which have ravaged the lives of many citizens. The failed state phenomenon, corruption and bad governance among other interrelated variables that had impeded the growth of this country tilt towards bad leadership. For instance, most Niger Delta states have had their revenue base improved than their Northern and Western counterparts through the 13% derivation accrued to the region since the beginning of democratic regime. However, how these monies are spent remains an issue of serious concern to many. The failure in the system and lack of critical infrastructure (be it governmental or private) is another issue blamed on the particular style of leadership at that region. Fortunately, the region has produced the incumbent president of this country. Yet, it still remains a habitation of the good, the bad and the ugly. This is evident in many political wranglings in the region especially the one recently witnessed in Rivers state which has snowballed into a national brouhaha and has become an indictment of the Jonathan's administration.

The United Nations Millennium Declaration was adopted in September, 2000. It enjoined both rich and poor countries to ensure significant eradication of poverty, promote human dignity, equality, peace, democracy and environmental sustainability. Based on these, Nigeria projected that in 2015, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) will be actualized. However, one year to the 2015 deadline, Nigeria alongside other African countries is no where close to achieving the MDGs. The constant clamour for control of either power or resources breed terror in the minds of the weak or perceived disenfranchised group who formed militia groups to protect themselves

and to fight the state. This has to do with accusations, allegations of neglect, oppression, domination, exploitation, victimization, discrimination, marginalization, nepotism and bigotry from our past and present leaders. From the Odua Peoples Congress, the Bakassi Boys, Egbesu Boys, Ijaw Youth Congress, MASSOB, MEND, Boko Haram, and recently the Ombatse Militia just to mention a few, have terrorized the country.

Again, socio-political and economic developments after Nigeria's civil war have further widened the monumental gap between the rich and the poor, thus creating a gloomy picture of the future and a class-based society. This statement agrees with Onah and Doki's argument that:

Certain leaders in socio-economic and political spheres precipitate dire consequences by creating avenues for the emergence of a new group of comfortable upper class, a situation capable of promoting mass discontent, reinforced distortion and disarticulation of the existing social and economic structures (2005:14)

No wonder! A Nigerian foremost writer, Chinua Achebe (1988:2) observes and strongly believes that, "the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely the failure of leadership". The Nigerian leadership problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to their responsibility which is the hallmark of true leadership.

From the seventies till today, theatrical plays in Nigeria were written to express certain ideological positions or to condemn decadent socio-political practices and to also entertain. The works of Wole Soyinka, Ola Rotimi, Zulu Sofola, Bode Sowande, Femi Osofisan, Kole Omotosho, Iyorwuese Hagher, Ahmed Yerima, Ojo Bakare Rasaki, Tor Iorapuu among others are good examples. Theatre today has entered another phase in history as a mediator between man and the happenings within his social milieu. The question is: does *Little Drops* as a play that connects ideologically with its setting-Nigeria have anything to teach us as lessons in leadership? This and many other questions will be examined as we progress in the course of the discourse.

The Concept of Leadership

The concept of leadership characterized all spheres of human endeavour. It is associated with social institutions such as the family, religion, traditional, politics, economy, education among others. Leadership of any kind brings with it the burden of responsibility and accountability. Leadership is an automatic response to a situation where a nation has leaders that are truly concerned about the welfare and wellbeing of its people. Danladi James, (2009:4) posits that:

Leadership is the ability of an individual to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute towards the effectiveness and success of an organization, society, community and country of which they are members. It involves taking oneself out of the picture and considering the needs of others.

Leadership is a bond between the leaders and the followership. It has to do with both parties playing their part in pursuance and achievement of their desired goals of society's growth and development. Hodget and Steven (1971:182) define leadership "as the process of influencing people to direct their effort towards the achievement of

some particular goals". Leadership is about people and the ability of the people to direct their energy and action towards the betterment of their lives and the society at large. The issue is not whether you influence people, but rather what kind of influence you will have on them. This implies that, the concept of leadership actually begins with a choice. Bass Martins, sees leadership as all encompassing:

Leadership is conceived as a focus of group processes, as a matter of personality, as a matter of inducing compliance, as the exercise of influence, as a particular behavior, as a form of persuasion, as a power relation, as an instrument to achieve goal, as an effect of interaction, as a differentiated role and above all as initiation of structure (1990:11).

This presupposes that, leadership is a process, a process that takes place at the level of individuals, groups and society. It encompasses everything man does to make himself and his society a better place to live. It is the preeminence of one or a few individuals or a group in the process of control or power relation.

However, one great mistake that is often made in the analysis of the word leadership is the mix up with the word divine. An average Nigerian believes that power is divine and has to be used supremely by the ordained. Most African rulers especially those who acquired power through elections tend to forget the norms of democratic rule. They want to stay in power forever. The case of Ghaddafi of Libya, Ben Ali of Tunisia, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal are good examples.

John Whitney and Tina Packer have made it simple in their masterpiece: "Power Plays". The book is about the themes of leadership in William Shakespeare's 39 plays. The thrust of their argument was that, Shakespeare has survived all the generations to remain the world's greatest writer because he:

Wrote twenty seven of his plays in one ten- year period; he finished the masterpieces King Lear, Macbeth and Anthony and Cleopatra in fourteen months. There is hardly a topic under the sun that he did not explore brilliantly. Good and evil, love and hatred, justice and mercy, pride and humility, guilt and innocence, war and peace. But the one subject he returns to again and again is leadership. (Whitney and Packer 2000:11)

Again, John Whitney and Tina Packer have explained who a leader is when they say:

A leader must understand the capabilities of his followers, not as they exist today, but as they would exist if they were stretched. The leaders' job is not to seek what is comfortable but what is possible and what will ultimately serve the purpose. Yes, the leader must also understand the mood of those he is leading, but not in order to pander; rather, to know where to place the ladder, so that he and his followers can climb together. And ultimately a leader must convince her (his) followers through action, example and argument, that this is the way to go and together they can do it (Whitney and Packer 2000:35).

This position vividly captures the true meaning of being a leader. However, the paradox of Nigeria's situation is that, leaders are more concerned about their personal aggrandizements while the teeming populace wallows in abject poverty in the midst of plenty.

The Nigerian Leadership Style

The problem of corruption is leadership related. Since independence, from the military regime to civilian the problem of Nigeria has remained that of true leadership style. The state of our country today is characterized by injustice, corruption, kleptomania, greed and inequality. "Nigeria is a nation with abundant material and human resources. Yet, considered an executive member of the club of the most corrupt nations as well as the club of the poorest nations on earth" (Hagher 2003:177).

Corruption among politicians has eaten deep into the fabric of our nation such that it has been legalized through unwritten laws among government officials and the citizenry and the worst of all our leaders. Leadership becomes a trade rather than a call to serve. Nigeria is where she is today because of the caliber of people Nigerians elect as leaders. Most of them get to leadership positions through foul means and with a misconception of what true leadership entails. To them leadership is not an opportunity to serve honestly but an opportunity to amass wealth, misuse power and undo all who stand in their way. It is these corrupt practices by our past and present leaders that are today responsible for the nation's backwardness and act of terrorism. The situation is pathetic as it is appalling. Agreeing with this, Tse Andera (2010: 23) says:

Those who are bereft of vision and leadership qualities are often the ones with the means to rig election and wangle their ways into seats of power and authority to enrich themselves to the detriment of the masses using political programme outlined in party manifestoes.

The issue of corruption cannot be divorced from politics; rather they are intertwined because one gives birth to the other. Umar Yusuf (2007:15) for instance, posits that:

Mallam Nuhu Ribadu the then former EFCC Boss has over time alluded that, 220 Billion Pounds were squandered between independence in 1960 and the return to democracy in 1999. If this figure is correct, it then means that, the nation since 1960 has lost what the entire African continent got in foreign aids to looters. Notable among them are some retired Army Generals and political elites. These people siphoned the wealth of Nigeria and circulated some to their allies and cronies.

These unpatriotic qualities are recurrent decimals in the Nigerian socio-political setting today. This is because, the dominant culture of the West characterized by capitalism continuously seeps down as it were, to corrupt the polity and give an impression that the failure of contemporary society seems to have no solution to our leadership problem. From the Abacha loot, Sani Na'aba saga, Tafa Balogun's scandals, the Alameseya scam, Eteh's crisis, Ibori's waterloo, and recently the crisis

that rocked the Rivers State House of Assembly just to mention a few, are practical examples of Nigerian leadership style.

Ahmed Yerima's Artistic Profile/Synopsis of Little Drops

Ahmed Yerima is a director, playwright, actor, scholar, and cultural administrator par excellence. He has held many public offices in Nigeria and has been an artistic consultant to many cultural events over the years. Yerima was the Artistic Director of the National Troupe of Nigeria. He is the most prolific of the third generation's dramatists in Nigeria whose works touched the nooks and crannies of this country. Yerima's drama is clearly in support of the struggle of the masses for a just and humane society. Drama and theatre to him, is a means of advancing society's need for change and consequent liberation from corruption, ignorance, poverty and injustice. Yerima's ideology is succinctly captured by Bakare Ojo Rasaki when he writes that:

Yerima does not send out to subvert. Rather than a theatrical discourse challenging the establishment with a view to rocking the boat, he would place his mirror beside reality, reflect it as it is, or simply celebrate what he finds worthy in the reality. He is after the mirror-image instead of counter-image. He does not sufficiently distance himself from the reality of his artistic creation so that he can offer it his critically dispassionate umpiring (2010:336).

Through his works that impacted greatly, he has provided some kind of leadership in the literary and theatrical circles, which manifested in the LNG award he received. Yerima is sure worried and concerned about the Nigerian state which greed, corruption and self centeredness tend to undermine national interest. He uses his artistic talent to hold the mirror up for the society to see itself vividly. He spares no segment of the society in his writing, but always ends up with hope for the betterment of the society. "No playwright in Nigeria is more direct in dramaturgical approach than Yerima. He refrains from couching the situations in phantasmagorias but present them as they are with visible references" (Adeoye 2010:192).

For some years, Yerima's themes seem to have dwelled more on the pains of the female folk and succeeded in wielding the image and messages that produce a powerful thesis for a feminist ideology. He has been able to use Little Drops as a socio-aesthetic mediation through which a modest attempt is made to reflect the contemporary national issues.

Little Drops, a play set in the swamp of the Niger Delta is composed of six characters, all women except Ovievie, a ghost and Kuru, a militant leader who is seeking an escape route out of the swamp. The others include: Memekezie, the old woman by the swamp, Mukume, a woman raped by three militants during her honeymoon, Azue, the queen who was present during the beheading of her husband (the king), by his militants subjects. Bonuwo, a teacher whose forty one students were killed by the JTF explosives. The play is a socio-political drama that depicts the transient nature of power-play that has bedeviled Nigeria. Yerima showcases both the Nigerian civil war and the militancy in the Niger Delta. He has made the lines between illusion and reality very thin through the use of language, images and characters that are very vivid in the representation of contemporary situations in the Niger Delta.

It is a reaffirmation of the absurdity and senselessness of war and any act of terrorism in whatever guise. The play also exposes the fact that at the base, the root causes of the crises in the region include corruption, greed, excessive accumulation and insatiable desire for power. The ideas which the play revolves around are drawn from the perspectives of women- the neglected innocent victims of the war of contradictions who became midday widows, orphans and victims of rape. In this play, the women bear the burden and pains which the collateral damages of the Niger Delta crises caused and fought by men. Yerima highlights the pains, shame and ridicules the people of the region have experienced over the years. However, in *Little Drops*, one subject that remains constant and which the playwright tries to bring to the fore is the question of effective leadership which the entire play revolves around and also remains the superlative theme in the play.

The Niger Delta Experience in *Little Drops*

Literatures about the Niger Delta region show gross devastations and negligence despite effort by individuals, companies, governmental and non-governmental organizations to key into finding lasting solutions to the problems of poverty, unemployment, disease, environmental degradation, inequality, marginalization and injustice which have necessitated the crises. The federal, state, local governments and multinational oil companies in collaboration with some unpatriotic leaders of the Niger Delta conspired to plunder the wealth of the region. The Region has been turned into a battle field as the militants engage in act of guerrilla warfare, cultism, terrorism, kidnapping, hostage taking, robbery and oil theft. These have become parts of the struggle. Anyone who is unsympathetic to the cause for justice and right of the people of the region is either maimed or killed by the militants as the enemy of the people. Mukume's words raise the question of who the militants are fighting for? While the militants themselves are quick to respond that they are fighting for the people, especially the women, children and youth: *"No. There was no way one could seat on the fence. No. you could not watch the world exploit your people. With so much neglect, you could not turn your face away. We all felt a sense of duty. We had to fight"* (P.48).

This situation is again portrayed in the dialogue between Bonuwo and Kuru. Kuru says: *"anyone ungrateful to the cause is deserved to die"* (P.52). This reflects the sordid situation perpetrated by different factions of the militant groups believed to be fighting for justice and freedom in the region. Unfortunately today, the crisis is on going even with the amnesty initiative, there are still horrendous and bloody killings in the region:

AZUE: First, the boys came and drank and ate. They danced and chanted his praise. They left driving like wild animals. Then came, the government boys. Again, they drank and ate with him, leaving bags of money in the palace. Unknown to the king he was being watched by his driver who was the informant of the boys. They came back, and there was confusion. They cut off the head of the king right in front of his family

MEME: Heeoo! The government men... what did they do?

AZUE: They came too late. By the time they arrived, the king was dead and half the palace was already burning... He was warned. Some of the chiefs warned him, but he would not listen. He spoke from both sides of his mouth. The boys called him vulture before they beheaded him (PP.22-23)

Here, the king is part and parcel of the crises in the community. He is romancing with the government and oil companies for personal aggrandizement and primitive accumulation at the detriment of the people and the community. This suggests how the present crop of leaders struggle for power to amass public wealth at the expense of the teeming populace and the country at large.

Negative leadership style has been one of the banes of the region's development, peace and stability. The Chiefs and some big lords cheat the people. They siphon what is meant for the people to even marry many women and please them with the ill-gotten wealth. For instance, Meme responding to Azue says: *"You speak as if you know her. If he did not have to please her, he would not have been a vulture to his people. We heard the chiefs and even big lords did it in the city, cheat the people. But, I never expected our king would be one of them"* (P.25). The people always respect their leaders. They are so powerful that principal government officials and owners of multinational oil companies come to pay them homage. Unfortunately, most of the leaders sell their consciences to corruption and greed thereby meting unnecessary pains on their people.

Over the years, the federal government of Nigeria has attempted to resolve the lingering crises that have bedeviled the region by granting an amnesty to militants in the region. The amnesty was meant for the militants to denounce their involvement in militancy and drop their weapons. Yet, instead of giving up the arms, they acquired more. The dialogues among Bonuwu, Kuru and Azue capture this situation:

BONUWO: Oh! he hurts me with his plea. Forty one children that is all I lost to the stupid war, forty one. And you were promised amnesty. But instead of giving up arms, you acquired more as we can see.

KURU: The Amnesty could not sell. There was no consultation with us who were to be granted the amnesty. Just a few men sat in the capital and worked out a one-sided agreement. Some of our leaders rejected it.

AZUE: Your leaders? Those who decreed the death of my husband? He was a kind and just man. He did not hurt anybody.

KURU: I am sorry, he hurt the people. He exploited us. He sold his conscience and sense of duty to his people for money. (P.60)

This experience has been evident in the region. What the people desire in the region today is peace, meaningful development and sustainable growth. The conversations between Kuru and Meme vividly express this:

KURU: All we are asking for is the development of the Niger Delta region which has a population of twenty eight million. Yes, and we are the owners of the raw materials but we don't have a say in the sharing. As a result, there is poverty and mass unemployment

MUKUME: The youths. How about the youths?

KURU: There is frustration among the youths; this is what draws them to violence. They need a sense of belongings, and then they will be less attracted to violence.

MEME: And the people?

KURU: People must be part of the division of wealth. The oil companies are playing a game of divide and rule with us. They think they are smart. There are some people in government and in high place who believe that the Niger Delta people must be taught a lesson... Even our big men are covered with too much tea drinking that they forget the true cause of their people. But we will see, we shall destroy everything, everything, and everything. Total break up!

MEME: That is not the answer... It will never stop. Innocent people will always lose their lives. Faith and commitment that is what we need. You must also have trust among yourselves. Then decide what you want for our future. Have faith in your decision and when you are committed to it, it will be easy to achieve peace. (PP 62-63)

The words of Meme have done justice to what the people of the Niger Delta region and Nigerians at large desperately need now to curb incessant crises that militate against the growth and development of the region and the country. Women rather chose peace instead of war, live instead of death, because they are aware that in the event of war, the female gender is more hit. Memekezie recounts her ordeal with a gory description of how she lost all her family in one day during the Nigerian Civil War even as a poor fisherwoman in the swamp of the Niger Delta: "*All my blood. My husband and two sons. They all perished the same day. During the Biafra war... Unknown to us there was a war. How are we to know in this swampy bush?*" (P.34). Memekezie's reference to the Civil War is to tell us that the country is not new to carnage and senseless killings of innocent Nigerians as is it evident today. However, she advocates for peace instead of war: "*We have not sent anyone to kill and die for us. We want peace. We are tired of burying our beloved ones...*" (P.52). Nigeria needs people like Meme who are proactive and good in decision making to transform the system.

Despite the shortcomings in Nigerian system of leadership, it is obvious that a few good leaders still exist. Some of them have shown Nigerians that true leadership exists with the people as demonstrated by their sacrifices, leadership skills and qualities. Governor Babatunde Fashola of Lagos state and the former NAFDAC

Director General- Dora Akunyili have been praised for their leadership style by many nationally and internationally. For Akunyili, these qualities were demonstrated when she was in NAFDAC. She has distinguished herself in her chosen career. She was ebullient, dogged, courageous and honest in her undertakings. Upon her assumption of office as NAFDAC Director General some years ago, the agency has since become a household name in the country and beyond. Fake drugs counterfeiters did not find it funny. She ordered the closure of different fake drugs companies. Her courage, honesty and doggedness earned her numerous awards of excellence within and without. For Fashola, it is evident in his development hallmarks and purposeful leadership skills and qualities being exhibited in Lagos state today. They could be likened to the character of Meme in the play whose earnest desire is purposeful and committed leadership.

Conclusion

Leadership in all ramifications and all over the world remains the pivot upon which any meaningful socio-economic and political development is achieved. It begins with a choice. The issue is not whether you will influence people; but rather, what kind of influence you will have on the people. When there is no true leadership, society stagnates. Progress is achieved when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better. The revolution in some parts of North Africa and the Middle East is a good example. The coup D'état in Mali, Guinea Bissau and the turmoil in Egypt, Libya among others speak volume of the problem of leadership in Africa. In reality, true leadership is, and has always been a selfless action. It involves taking oneself out of the picture and considering the needs of others.

The development of our country requires selfless, committed and transparent leaders who will deliver the benefits of democracy to the teeming masses and not take advantage of the masses to enrich themselves. When Nigerians put their personal interest above the national interest, the result is that, neither the nation nor the citizens would experience sustainable peace, growth and developments. The Niger Delta crises have succeeded in drawing the world to the region's plight. The Nigerian government recognized its own failures in the region. In order to redress the wrongs, it granted amnesty to the militants, set up Niger Delta Development Corporation (NDDC) and established the ministry of Niger Delta to accelerate development of the region. It means that, for a committed leadership style, Nigerians have to have a change of attitude and value-reorientation about what true leadership entails.

Osofisan as (cited by Gbileeka), has provided a way forward:

The way out of this is clear enough if we are to have development in the country, if the organization of our economic and political life is to become positive and fruitful then, this dominant and corrupting culture must be wiped out so that our political and economic life will yield positive and fruitful results (1997:361)

Therefore, whatever the artist writes about, he or she is writing about the social realities of life. The relevance of an artiste is subsumed in his/her ability to project without ambiguity the events, problems and issues of the moment. Through creative

writing, the artist finds some means of documenting issues that permit discourse and gives them a social meaning through dramatization. Emman Dandaura, (2002:2) maintains that “a playwright is a member of the society; so naturally, his artistic sensibilities are shaped and sharpened by the socio-economic conditions and political happenings of his time”. Ngugi Wa Thiong’o (1981:2) contends that:

A writer has no choice. Whether or not he is aware of it, his works reflect one or more aspects of the intense economic, political cultural and ideological struggles. What he can choose is one or the other side in the battle field: the side of the people or the side of those social forces and classes that try to keep the people down... Every writer is a writer in politics.

A practical schema for theatre intervention must be based on the analysis of what went wrong, why it went wrong and deal with the perceptions associated with the feeling of those who feel wronged. This is why most socio-political playwrighters write, not to please anyone, but to expose social miasma inherent in the society. If Nigerians begin to demonstrate good leadership qualities highlighted by Ahmed Yerima and others in most of their plays, then the dream of becoming one of the developed countries of the world in 20, 20, 20 will be a reality.

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Dynamics of Database Marketing, Direct Marketing and Telemarketing

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Abstract

Marketing has over the years been synonymous with advertising, hence the advertising been referred to as part of the marketing mix. The evolutionary trends in marketing have necessitated the use of certain strategies and tactics such as direct marketing, telemarketing and database marketing. In the 21st century, the use of databases of consumers (IMC) to improve on sales and costumer-relationships is on the increase and has erupted several gains and pains. Companies gain large profit margin, sometimes, as against the privacy of their consumers; such consumers, at other times, are bombarded with ‘unsolicited mails and messages’ via emails and phones. Using the social presence and social marketing theories, this discourse explores the benefits of database while relating it to the dynamism of direct and telemarketing. Scenarios and recommendations for the Nigerian marketer are also suggested for consideration.

Keywords: *Marketing, Direct marketing, Telemarketing, Database marketing, Advertising, Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC).*

Introduction

The concept of marketing is based on the promotion, distribution and selling of products or services. Arens (2006) defines marketing “as the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, distribution, and promotion of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfies the perceived needs, wants and objectives of individuals and organizations”. This definition can be summed up to mean that marketing is a process aimed at satisfying costumers’ needs at a given time.

The American Marketing Association (AMA), defines the concept as “the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives” (Belch & Belch, 2009:8). There is a similarity between the two definitions given above. The definitions focus on exchange as a central concept in marketing and the use of some processes to achieve a good relationship with the

customers. But, there are some non-profit organizations that embark on marketing without the exchange of money for goods and services provided for.

Thus, AMA (American Marketing Association) adopted a revised definition of marketing in 2007, as “the activity, set of institutions and processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients and society at large” (Belch & Belch, 2009:8). This revised definition has incorporated the role of communication in marketing.

Concepts such as direct marketing, telemarketing and database marketing are techniques which over the years have helped explain the need to understand consumers and strive to satisfy their needs while making them friends of the company or organization (Arens, 2006).

These three concepts are constantly intertwined and offer themselves a symbiotic relationship by complimenting each other every bit of the way. Belch and Belch (2009) argue that Direct Marketing, telemarketing and database marketing are integral elements in the integrated marketing communication (IMC) programme. The trio combines to proffer solutions to several marketing and sales challenges (Weymeyer, 2005).

Direct marketing had been used as far back as the 15th Century with the invention of the printing press. Its evolution however, has been peculiar mainly due to technological advances (Fletcher, Wheeler and Wright, 1992). The role of technology can never be underestimated in the development of database marketing and by implication direct marketing and telemarketing.

Database marketing as an arm of direct marketing is understood in some perspectives as a strategy while some other scholars see it as a tactic (Database marketing: Along term strategy for practice success, 2012; Cooke, 1994).

This discourse explores the various dynamics of using these unique marketing strategies and tactics to improve on consumer satisfaction, profit maximization and its revolutionary role in advertising and public relations.

Direct Marketing

Belch and Belch (2009) define direct marketing as a system of marketing by which organizations communicate directly with target customers to generate a response or transaction. This response may take the form of an inquiry, a purchase or even a vote. Belch and Belch also cited Peter Bennett’s definitions as;

The total of activities by which the seller, in effecting the exchange of goods and services with the buyer, directs efforts to a target audience using one or more media (direct selling, direct mail, telemarketing, direct-action advertising, catalogue selling cable TV selling, etc) for the purpose of soliciting a response by phone, mail or personal visit from a prospect or customer. (Belch and Belch, 2009:458).

Furthermore, Arens (2006) cites direct marketing magazines as a measurable system of marketing that uses one or more advertising media to affect a measurable response and transaction at any location, with this activity stored in a database. This definition has created an important aspect of direct marketing, which is the emergence of database.

It can be deduced from the definitions above that direct marketing is interactive in nature and is a system of marketing that enables the marketer have full details of the buyers. Asemah (2011) lists the elements of direct marketing as follows:

- It is a personal communication tool.
- It involves a two-way communication channel.
- It seeks direct response from consumers.
- It eliminates middlemen.
- It operates with a database of customers.
- It is direct communication with consumers.
- It is often targeted at a narrowly specified audience and ,
- It builds lasting relationship with customers.

Direct marketing is the oldest method of marketing but it is now growing fast and improving due to the introduction of the integrated marketing communication (IMC) programme to promote the products of an organization. Today, marketers prefer to use direct-response or action advertising to create a viable market for their products, this is because direct marketing efforts are always aimed at stimulating some action or response from the customer or a prospect.

Direct marketing offers customers private sceneries with their products. Hence, it (credit marketing) can be used or supported with other promotional mix like advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotion and other support media. For this reason many companies now consider direct marketing as an important component in the integrated marketing programmes. This involves employing a number of media to perform the function of reaching the customer or prospective buyer. According to Asemah (2011), each medium can be said to perform a certain or specific function, but they generally follow a one-step approach. The medium is used to directly obtain an order in the one step approach, while the two step approach involves the use of more than one medium.

- a. **Direct Mail:** Direct mail is the most effective method for closing a sale or generating to inquire (Arens, 2006:315). It entails sending information about marketing offers to customers through mails. It involves information about products; brands, prices, quality, sales outlets and phone number of the organization are mailed to target customers. It's straight forward advertising to a desired customer.

With the advent of internet, the use of e-mails has been popularized in direct mail marketing. Marketers flood e-mails of specific audience expecting to get a response. This kind of mail is called "Junk mails" and what Asemah (2011) calls "unsolicited mails".

- b. **Telemarketing:** From the name, it can also mean telephone marketing. It includes selling and prospecting by telephone, answering phone inquiries and providing sales related services to callers. This type of marketing is becoming popular in Nigeria. Telecommunication networks like MTN Nigeria, Etisalat and Globacom call their customers to inform them about some services or new products, even for survey about the quality of their services and products. Telemarketers develop a strong and lasting relationship with their customers whom they speak with often but have never met face- to-face.

- c. **Catalogues:** Catalogues are reference books that list, describe and usually picture the products sold by a manufacturer or retailer. It contains information about marketing offer and producers for ordering or buying the offer. In Nigeria, flyers handbills are usually used in place of catalogues for small and medium scale organizations to target customers.
- d. **Kiosk marketing:** This is the most common type of direct marketing in Nigeria. It involves the use of make-shift structures, small buildings, sales outlets or pre-fabricated buildings to sell products or provide information on how products could be purchased. Mobile shops or motorized kiosks are also common tools of kiosk marketing. For instance, fast food, provisions sellers/dealers, newspaper vendors, motor-parts dealers, G.S.M accessory dealers are example of businesses that use kiosk marketing strategy.
- e. **Direct Response Radio and Television Marketing:** This is interactive radio and television programmes that basically market goods and inform customers/audiences about a product or service. This programmes runs for 1 hour or 30 minutes explaining how a marketing offer could be used to solve a problem that bothers consumers. Audience can call in and ask questions about products, how to use them and where to buy them. Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd., a subsidiary of UAC Nigeria adopted this format using the popular *Home Front* of Peace FM 90.5, PRTVC Jos.
- f. **Ambush Marketing:** The marketer moves from one place to the other especially where he/she expects to see their target consumers and approach the consumers with the marketing offers as the consumer appears. This is an aggressive marketing technique to increase sales through setting techniques. Asemah (2011) gave an example of the 2003 National identity card registration exercise in Nigeria. One of the registration requirements was blood group of individuals. Most people did not know their group, so lab technologists used the ambush marketing techniques and went to the registration venues ready to immediately determine blood groups for any customer.
- g. **Direct Response Advertising:** It is an advert that asks the reader, viewer or listener to provide feedback straight to the sender. Any medium can be used for direct response, but the most common are direct mails, catalogues, radio, magazines and television.

Advantages of Direct Marketing

- (1) Marketers and companies have realized that, they can't do the job of sales and promotion with just one medium. That is the reason why customer database became key to retaining and growing customers. It enables the company build a relationship with the consumer and therefore, learns what they customers like, dislike, what and where they buy and their needs. As Arens (2006:311) puts it, "with a database, companies can choose the prospects they can serve most effectively and profitably- the purpose of all marketing".
- (2) Through direct marketing, companies can send discrete messages to individual customers. People like to see themselves as unique and not a part

of a crowd of mass market. Companies can use direct marketing to initiate, build, cultivate and measure the effectiveness of its loyalty to each customer.

- (3) By providing a tangible response, direct marketing offers accountability marketers can count the responses and determine the cost per response. They can also judge the effectiveness of the medium they are using and test different creative executions (Asemah, 2011). Direct marketing offers convenience to time-sensitive consumers and it offers precision and flexibility for cost-effective marketers. Most people are not home today, if they are, they are watching 150 different cable channels, which rather prime-time network T.V advert meaningless.

Disadvantages of Direct Marketing

- (1) Clutter: People are deluged with mails from commercial sponsors and marketers that appear in an irritating clutter. Most at times, they do not read the mails from advertising companies because they (consumer) tag them as junks. While many people believe unsolicited mail promotes junk products, others dislike being solicited and often throw out most of the junk mail they receive. Also, telemarketing is found irritating to many consumers. This creates image problem for the direct marketing industry. For instance when MTN Nigeria calls customers to tell them about their services, most people end the call immediately they realized that it's the service provider calling.
- (2) Accuracy: While direct marketing may have the advantage of targeting potential customers, the effectiveness of reaching the target customers depends however, on the accuracy of the list used. For instance, people move, change names, change occupation and even addresses, if the lists are not kept current, selectivity will decrease.
- (3) Many consumers are concerned with privacy. They do not like having their names sold by list renders.

Advent of Database Marketing

The beginning of database marketing can be traced to catalogue retailers based in the USA selling directly to customers. The principal channel used was direct mail and mailing of new catalogue usually took place to the whole database of customer (De Tienne and Thompson, 1996). The analysis of the results of the mailings led to the adoption of technique to improve targeting, such as Chi-squared Automated Interaction Detection (CHAID) and logistic regression (De-Tienne and Thompson, 1996; Magidson, 1988, Schoenbachler, 1999).

The addition of centralized call centres and the internet to the database marketing mix introduced the element of interactivity and personalization (Kelly, 2000). According to Castells (2005), there has been, in the last two decades, a process of structural transformation which is associated with the advent of a new technological paradigm which has resulted to several changes and the adaptation of numerous systems and concepts that liberate man from certain strenuous functions. Wehmeyer (2005) indicates that database marketing has existed since the 1960s with an upswing in the 1980s when computer technology was adopted. He further explains thus:

With the help of database technology, database marketing broadens and support the entire marketing mix. Its main applications are

segmentation, value analysis, controlling and reporting. After a thorough analysis of marketing practices, Coviella et al, come to the conclusion that database marketing is a more intense or closer form of transaction marketing, although they concede it to have a certain relational perspective (ibid 2005:244)

The emergence of database in marketing arose due to the need for companies to acquire more information about their customers and the need to do one-to-one marketing (direct marketing). It is an integral part of the overall IMC programme and has grown over the years to be a major contributor to profit in many organizations including domestic ones. Database, according to Arens (2006:311) “is the key to direct marketing success.” He sees database marketing as an improvement of the direct marketing concept, hence the two works hand in hand. Arens further indicates that database is a form of modern computer technology that enables manufacturers to have access to consumer information thereby compiling and analyzing them in unprecedented ways.

Since technology is dynamic and a product of societal needs (Castells, 2005), scholars have argued that a new and better form of database marketing is emerging known as Consumer Relationship Management (CRM) (Weymeyer, 2005; Blattberg and Deighton, 1991; Fletcher, Wheeler and Wright, 1992). They argue that the CRM has a stronger impact on the marketing universe and is the remedy, in many cases, for a company’s problems in sales and marketing.

Theoretical Framework

Two theories come handy in this discuss. They are; social marketing theory and social presence theory.

The social marketing theory is premised on the fact that information providers always seek to bring about useful, beneficial social change. The argument for this theory indicates that the quest to provide useful information provides a framework for designing, carrying out, and evaluating information campaigns. The social marketing theory pays attention to audience activity and the need to reach active audience with information needs (Baran and Davis, 2010).

The theory postulates that mass media-based information campaigns can be more effective through greater understanding and manipulation of aspects of societal and psychological factors. The theory does this by anticipating flow of information barriers and providing strategies for overcoming them, either deliberately or otherwise, through “the brute force of saturation advertising” (Goldberg, Fishbein and Middlestadt, 1997; Rice and Atkin, 1989; Grier and Bryant, 2004).

Linking the theory to this discourse, it is obvious as indicated above, that database marketing is a deliberate strategy for information dissemination to information seekers. Social marketing explains the basic principle of intimacy between source and receiver.

According to Baran and Davis there are seven features of social marketing theory which directly apply to database marketing, direct marketing and telemarketing:

- Methods for inducing audience awareness of campaign topics or candidates. A key first step in promoting ideas or candidates is to make people aware of their existence.
- Methods for targeting messages at specific audience segments most receptive or susceptible to those messages. Targeting is one of several concepts borrowed from product marketing research and converted to the marketing of ideas.
- Methods for reinforcing messages within targeted segments and for encouraging these people to influence others through face-to-face communication. Strategies to achieve this include visits by change agents, group discussion, messages placed simultaneously in several media, and door-to-door canvassing.
- Methods for cultivating images and impressions of people, products or services.
- Methods for stimulating interest and inducing information seeking by audience members.
- Methods for inducing desired decision making or positioning.
- Methods for activating audience segments, especially those who have been targeted by the campaign. Many campaigns fail because the lack a mechanism for stimulating action. Some techniques used to activate people include change agents, free merchandise, free and convenient transportation, moderate appeals and broadcast or telephone appeals from high-status sources.

On the other hand the theory of social presence was a product of three sociology scholars namely; John Short, Ederyn Williams and Bruce Chrisitie in 1976. The theory's basis assumption is that a medium's social effects are principally caused by the degree of social presence which it affords to its users. The awareness of a communicator of the presence of an interaction partner is the essence of this theory (Hurley, 2006). Promoters of the database concept of marketing intend that through direct, telephone and telecommunications marketing, strong presence of companies and organizations would be established in the minds of consumers and audience. They believe in developing a relationship beyond just buying the product to understanding the product (Belch and Belch, 2009).

Belch and Belch's (2009) idea of how the database the process works is a model that comes highly functional. They outline seven cardinal items in the process explaining that the process involves direct marketing and the overall IMC programme. In their analysis, the product is first (the consumer buys the product) and information are filed on coupon, warranty cards etc which are sent back to companies to form the database. The company digests the data by using sophisticated techniques and database softwares and separate consumers. After this, an ideal consumer emerges based on specific characteristics; hence the company is able to target those market segments. This knowledge can be put to use to produce new products, improve on existing ones and ensure that the right consumers know which products to choose through adverts. Companies could go ahead to share data with retailers, where they in turn acquire new information about buyers which, ultimately, refines the database and increases customer satisfaction.

Role of Database Marketing, Telemarketing and Direct Marketing in Relationship Marketing

Relationship marketing is a concept aimed at the construction of a durable relationship between the enterprise and the final client who are identified at individual levels. (Dumitresau, 2010). The idea behind marketing is to increase sales of goods through careful planning. These goods and services are only patronized by an entity called consumers. The need to lure them, woo them and persuade them to develop interest in a company's merchandise is the bane of relationship marketing. Virgil (2004) posits that the emergence of relationship marketing has forced the service providing enterprises to develop an efficient management for their relations with the clients, which is based on relevant and permanent up to date database marketing.

Virgil's argument is valid since database, telemarketing and direct marketing are the basic channels through which organisations connect with consumers on a more intimate platform. The strategy of database management emphasizes that clients' information are carefully used to transform them into loyal one as well as attract new ones. (Cespedes, 1995)

The Contexts in Nigeria

Nwokah and Nwokah (2012) while providing an argument for the future of database marketing painted a typical Nigerian case study in the utilization of database by Coca Cola "... products/prices to geo- demographics with less income will defer from that of geo- demographics with high income. In 1995, Coca Cola Nigeria for instance, briefly used these prices of Coca Cola products in the Nigerian universities campuses". This was only made possible because Coca Cola Nigeria used the available information gotten from a data base that predicted a higher return on save as against the low sales reported by retailers. The experiences of developing nations are nothing compared to advanced nations who have gone far in the utilization of direct marketing through database. (Tapp, 2008;Nwoka and Ondukwu, 2010). However, globalization and technology have provided a bridge across the digital divide and facilities such as telecommunications, advanced courier services, social networking sites and consumer credit cards have found common use in countries such as Nigeria (Belch and Belch, 2009).

Worthy of note amongst the aforementioned is the telecommunications sector which provides a pool of data for prospective companies and the network providers themselves. Several times people receive text messages imploring them to patronize such goods or services at discounted prices. In some other instances, the networks require the users to provide certain information about themselves which becomes useful both to themselves, companies and establishments in need of such, although this raises an ethical dimension to the issue. Other relevant application of database in Nigeria is in politics. President Goodluck Jonathan's "Neighbour 2 Neighbour campaign" of 2011 sought to intimate voters of the president's campaign promises through direct marketing. The use of coupon, warranty forms questionnaires and raffle draws by manufacturing companies is a viable strategy to gather adequate information about clients (Nwokah and Nwokah, 2012).

Strengths of Database in Direct Marketing

According to Belch and Belch (2009), the use of database in direct and telemarketing strategies forms the bases for any marketing success they identified the following as the strengths of the system:

- Improving the selection of market segments: Through the characteristics of consumers in the databases, markets are able to concentrate on the population that possesses the greater potentials of purchasing a product.
- Databases stimulate purchases: when a person makes a purchase where he gives certain information about himself, companies take it upon themselves to compliment him through e-mails or text messages. Naturally, it provides a stimulant for more purchase.
- Cross selling: a good consumer for one product is often considered as a potential good one for another product. Kamakura, Wedel, De-Rosa and Mazzon (2003) indicated that databases are strong sources for cross selling a product which helps to win in competition and introduction of new products and services.
- Databases help in customer relationship management: CRM demands that a company develops and maintain a significant amount of information about its client. Databases provide healthy information to manage such relationships.

Weaknesses of Database Marketing

Despite the benefits of database marketing, it suffers some impediments.

- It requires strategic and organizational changes beyond technological superiority to gain many of the benefits of its capabilities, cost of development, poor data and system quality, a lack of a database marketing strategy and a lack of a company-wide marketing orientation (Desai et al., 1998).
- Even, Shankaranarayanan and Berger(2010) identify a basic flaw with the use of database which has to do with the inequality in the utility of customer data. According to them, there is a rapid increase in the acquisition of data from consumers which has led to the mismanagement and underutilization of the data
- Furthermore, the management of data is costly and only large businesses can afford to manage such.
- As a technology based initiative, system failure could occur which will result to a total loss of consumer data as it is alleged to have happened to MTN.

ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES

A marketing company is faced with a plethora of moral challenges. Considering that it is the responsibility of a marketing company to provide services on behalf of other companies, it stands to reason that any unethical decision or approach reflects on the company being represented by the marketing firm. Moreover, antitrust concerns are always prevalent due to the fact that the marketing company has access to internal knowledge of many companies—some of which are competitors in the same market (Dean, 2010).

This perspective presents a platform for a better comprehension of the ethical issues associated with database marketing, in Nigeria and by extension, anywhere in the world. Marketers control a large volume of information about their costumers and they need to protect their integrity by safeguarding such information so that it would not end up in the wrong hands.

An infringement on this consumer right amounts to invasion of privacy, according to Milne (2000). He further indicated that the emergence of online marketing brings new privacy concerns that have resulted in scrutiny and review by regulatory bodies. Belch and Belch (2009) particularly pointed out that most ethical issues in database marketing bother on privacy – from unwarranted calls to unexpected text messages, from disclosure to misrepresentation of costumer information. Regulation of the excesses of marketers in the US is usually done by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). In Nigeria, two professional bodies that regulate the practice of marketing are the Nigeria Marketing Association (NIMARK) and the Chartered Institute of Marketers in Nigeria (CIMN).

Privacy has become public issue (Spiller and Hamilton, 1998). This has prompted researches in this field by marketing scholars. In a research conducted by Spiller and Hamilton (as cited above), an overwhelming majority of consumers from the United State are willing to pay a price just to have their names removed from all lists and databases in order to eliminate unsolicited marketing communication forever. Murphy (2002) identifies four fronts which he believes will help improve the status of ethics in marketing and resolve such challenges. They include; Regulation, organizational Leadership, Social Responsibility and Candid Communication. Murphy's point of view stands as a recommendation for new and existing marketers who are genuinely interested in creating a Customer Relationship Management programme.

The Future of Database Marketing

As indicated earlier, the stream of information acquisition and flow from customer to organization is on the increase and organisations are developing newer strategies to help them accommodate such needs. Stone (2010) observes that there is a changing phase currently underway between suppliers and consumers. He believes that smart utilities in energy and water usage will drive marketers into a new relationship with users. His argument is that consumers will behave differently and unsatisfactorily, hence the need to prepare better ways of managing them.

His argument necessitated the introduction of the Customer Relationship Management philosophy which according to Weymeyer, (2005); Blattberg and Dieghton (1991); Fletcher, Wheeler and Wright (1992) as an improved option to database marketing. Nwokah and Nwokah (2012) posit that it is hardly deniable that the future of database marketing in contemporary business environment is bright. They believe that database will help in accurate decision making processes. It will be used to track creative campaigns that deliver and will help marketers to customize their merchandise and receive prompt online feedback about their products.

Conclusion

Claeyssen (2009:111) considers that a marketing database is a "box with a living memory". A very important decision with regard to the usage of an effecting

marketing database is, according to Kotler (2008:251), the way the service providing company resolves the following four problems:

- i. The investment for creating and maintaining a marketing database can be very high;
- ii. The considerable difficulty in "forcing" the employees to focus on the clients;
- iii. The possibility that the hypotheses of the marketing database will sometimes not be verified.
- iv. The possibility that some clients do not agree with the collecting of personal information about them.

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Government Propaganda versus Terrorism in the Information Age

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Abstract

This article explores the reasons why governments have failed to maintain absolute control over information or media content in the recent age of terrorism. It uses Framing theory and Noam Chomsky's 'propaganda model' to explain theories and conceptualisations of global communications politics. Propaganda has become even more complex and dynamic concept as media systems have moved from a one-source-multiple-channels model, to a fragmented-sources-and channels model. The concept is no longer confined to government usage but terrorist groups and individuals, in a bid to influence information globally. These individuals use the internet which affords them cheap publicity and anonymity, to execute propaganda. It is argued in this article, that terrorists use violence to provoke governments into harsh and indiscriminate counterterrorism responses in order to radicalise and mobilise a population whose interests the terrorists claim to represent. (Mesquita and Dickson, 2007). This article discusses these factors, not only in relation to media and cultural institutions but the process of communication between countries, societies and cultures. It discusses the effect of propaganda on identity, in the area of gender, race and sexuality. It also explores the role of global communication in issues relating to conflict, and finally, it analyses some regulation policies of multi-national organisations like, the EU, UN, etc, in the area of terrorism while suggesting ways in which the media can combat terrorism.

Key Words: Information age, Internet, Cyber-terrorism, Terrorism, Propaganda, Identity.

Introduction

Today more than ever before, the concept of the 'information age' as a catalyst to global terrorism is becoming more evident as events keep unfolding to buttress the idea. A variety of technologies contribute to the information age; the development of print, telegraph, telephones, fax, radio, television and mobile phones which have become significant in recent years. These forms of communication combined with

computer technology have given birth to the internet which is the cornerstone of the information age. This essay focuses mainly on the characteristics of the information age that begins with the 20th century, which involves the emergence of the invention of computers, which has led to the rapid increase and flow of information and heavy dependence on information technology.

The information age is an era, where information, rather than labour, has become the capital of the post-modern society. In Toffler's (1980) stratification of economic evolution, the information age is classified as belonging to the 'third wave', a period, powered by information and technological machinery. For Hope and Hope (1997, p.3), 'the third wave economy' is the era of the replacement of the manufacturing sector of the economy with the service sector. On the cultural scale, Irvine (2009) defines the information age as the era that re-defines national identities, breaks down linguistic, cultural and ethnic identities and leads to the mixing of global cultures like never before. Politically, Dutton and Wan (2001) see the Web as a new tool that encourages rapid information exchange enough to coordinate political activity. The web provides the avenue for the masses to air discontentment about political process and even challenge the government. This challenge posed on the government has taken many forms. Since after the declaration of the 'the war on terrorism' after the 9/11 crisis, there has been an increasing struggle over the manipulation of information by governments who have been disadvantaged by the diversification of media outlets and free access to the internet. The terrorist attack on the United States of America showed how the world was nothing but a weak, interdependent and a 'global village' (Tehrani, 2002, p.58).

Propaganda and Framing Theory

Most discourses on terrorism significantly employ theories of framing (Papacharissi and Oliveira, 2008). The process of news reporting is often complicated, as events are not simply reported but are influenced and adjusted to reflect a certain reality. Frames socially construct reality by imposing meaning on actions, events and issues and organise them within familiar categories and narratives (Odhiambo et. al. 2013). Following familiar patterns, media select and emphasize certain facts and downplay others; their presentation of issues therefore shapes public perceptions and views of appropriate responses. Norris et. al (2003) find it a puzzle why certain frames are used instead of others, but the puzzle is solved by the propaganda model which identifies filters that exclude or marginalize certain information and sources (Herman, 2003). Patrick and Thrall (2008) identify propaganda model as part of a hegemonic approach that 'has dominated political communication literature on war and the media for over a generation'.

Key Perceptions on Propaganda

Propaganda has been defined as an attempt to manipulate and dominate discourses, some of whose manifestations are text (Barbe, 2008, p.115). It is also defined by the North Atlantic Alliance as any information, ideas, doctrines or special appeals disseminated to influence the opinion, emotions, attitudes or behaviour of any specified group in order to benefit the sponsor either directly or indirectly (NATO Glossary of Military Terms, pp.2-205). Snow and Taylor (2006, p.390) also state that

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the 20th century democratic governments in times of war deployed the 'Strategy of Truth' which was a propaganda tool used in the Second World War. This strategy involved the suppression of certain information that was said to hamper national or operational security. By virtue of this selection, propaganda was achieved. The meaning of propaganda has always been associated with government system of control and manipulation of information, especially in totalitarian regimes. Propaganda according to Taylor was always associated with 'disinformation' or 'misinformation' during political unrest. The negative meaning attached to propaganda according to Edward Bernays (1928, p.38) was as result of its usage by the Germans during the Nazi rule, propaganda as at that time, involved total domination, 'having the desire to control everything that can serve it' (Ellul,1973, p.14).

Bernays came up with one of the greatest propaganda in the 1920s that would be remembered in the U.S. He came up with an alternative idea, that if propaganda can be used during war, it can be used during times of peace; he came up with a term to replace propaganda which was public relations. According to Bernays, the idea of the 'consuming-self' during the industrial revolution, particularly in the United States, was an era of propaganda. Using Freud's idea of psychoanalysis, Edward set up a public relations firm in New York whose sole aim was the manipulation of human beings to buy what they did not necessarily need by 'connecting mass produced goods to their conscious desire'. At the time of Bernays' experiment, it was a taboo for American women to smoke. One of his major projects was to influence the American women to start smoking. He went into a deal with George Hill, the president of America's tobacco corporation who also wanted Bernays to break the chain in order to increase market for his product. Abraham Arden Brill, one of the first psychoanalysts from America came up with the idea that tobacco represented the 'phallus' and the superiority of man over woman. He suggested that in order to break the existing trend, it would be appropriate to come up with a technique that women's smoking of tobacco would be pictured as 'challenging' male superiority. During the annual East Day parade in New York, Bernays hired a group of rich 'American debutante women', asked them to hide cigarettes in their dresses, and at his signal, start smoking on the parade ground. Barneys then informed the press that he heard that a group of women were planning to carry out a protest by 'lighting up what he called tortures of freedom'. 'The next day, this story was not just in the New York times but in papers all over the world. The sale of cigarettes to women rose from that day; He had made cigarettes 'socially acceptable by a singular symbolic act' (pp.131-132)

By the 1980s, Noam Chomsky, in his book 'The Manufacturing Consent', came with a definition of propaganda, which was not limited to times of war, peace or authoritarian regimes. His argument being that just as there can be no authoritarian regime without coercion, threat or intimidation, there can be no democracy without propaganda. According to him, the world's fear as at the 1990's was to keep the statuesque, which was democracy in capitalism and in trying to achieve this, a lot of propaganda was being used (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). Chomsky's 'propaganda model' argues that the media is always subordinated to external powers. Most of his

study on propaganda was being applied to the United States democratic system of governance, portraying how the media was being used by the government to influence public opinion. The lies behind the weapons of mass destruction, called the 'Weapons of Mass Deception' by Tarcher (2003) would be regarded as one of the greatest propaganda in recent times to be used by the U.S government. More than half of the world was fooled into believing the story. The concept of the 'propaganda model' as a tool used to manipulate public opinion, or incite mass reaction, is being applied to address other forms of control, such as those carried out by individuals and less developed countries in this essay.

Terrorism, Propaganda and the Media

The recent growing influence of terrorism on the globe is characterised by the massive deployment of propaganda. 'Propaganda and terrorism are identical insofar as they both seek to influence a mass audience in a way intended to benefit the sponsor. Terror may be seen as a subspecies of propaganda' (Thackrah, 2004, p.206). Terrorism is a significant overturn in the history of government controlled propaganda. The declaration of 'the war on terror' since after 9/11 has been seen as one of the significant events that fostered not only the visibility of Islamic media, but the opposition it poses to western ideas and systems of control. According to Whittaker, (2003, p.5) terrorism implies the 'pursuit of power, the acquisition of power, and the use of power to achieve political change'. Terrorism is thus violence - or, equally important, a threat of violence. The major objective of terrorism is to produce public reaction and mould public opinion or change of opinion on a certain action or an issue. Hence, propaganda is a vital tool used by terrorists to achieve control and influence public opinion.

In the last 30 years or more, we have experienced increasing 'terrorist attacks from state and non-state actors' Thackrah (2004, p.44). Most of the terrorist attacks in recent years have been associated with America's activities of propaganda in the 1970s and 80s. One of such is the 'sponsoring of drug-trafficking Muslim warriors including those now in Al -Qaeda, this dates back to 1979-1989, sponsored in part by the CIA'S links to the drug laundering Bank of Credit and Commerce International' (BCCI) (Griffin and Scott, 2007, p.73). Again in the past years, the Western world has proved that it can use its sophisticated technological weapons to destroy its foes without incurring much damage upon itself. However, with the birth of terrorism, weaker states have been able to fight back oppression. This resentment is not limited to a specific territory according to Tehranian; it is a global resistance from the weaker states. We have now arrived into the era of prolonged politics and warfare between the 'haves and the have-nots' (Tehranian, 2002, p.59). Benjamin Barber cleverly called it 'Jihad vs. McWorld' (Barber, 1992).

Terrorist groups just like any other institution engaged in propaganda need the media in order to disseminate their information. According to Paletz and Schmid (1992, p.2), the main objective of terrorists is to 'seek publicity' to execute their 'psychological goals' and the utilisation of violence to bring about those 'psychological effects'. By so doing, they intend to dispirit their foes, displaying their movement's capability, winning 'sympathy', and generating 'fear and disorder'. According to Schmid and Paletz, in order for terrorists to achieve these goals, a

system of publicity is required, and this system works in two ways. First, they can increase their 'news value' by carrying out the event in a manner that will attract international news agencies and secondly, by using their media, to create content that would incite public action (p.31). In a general sense, the success of a terrorist operation depends almost entirely on the amount of publicity it receives" (Paletz and Schmid, 1992, p.7).

Radio, television, newspapers, and the internet are popular platforms through which major propagandas have been carried out. For example, the desire to establish a new media that will practice freedom of speech and expression by the U.S. government was turned against them. Radio Alhurra was the idea of the U.S. government to provide a media system in Afghanistan that would exercise 'freedom of speech and expression'. However, it was later used by the masses to criticise American judgement of other radio stations in the Arab world (Conway 2007, p.28) The 'Aljazeera effect' is a term coined by Philip Seib from the CNN effect which was a popular notion in the last 10 years. According to him, Aljazeera is a typical effect of new media influence, haven affected global politics and culture. Aljazeera was termed 'propaganda mechanism' because it was suspected to circulate coded messages to terrorists. This accusation was made by the U.S. In October 2001, after the videotapes of an interview with Osama Bin Laden were broadcasted by Aljazeera in Qatar (2008, p.6).

'Today, both sub-state and non-state actors are said to be harnessing or preparing to harness the power of the internet to harass and attack their foes' (Conway, 2007, p.25). 'Cyber terrorism', a term coined by Barry Collin represents the concurrence of 'cyberspace and terrorism' (Colarik, 2006, p.24). Conway cites an example with the late Al Qaeda leader Abu Musab Al Zarqawi, who used the internet as a platform to propagate ideas about his terrorist activities in Iraq. In an article published in Forbes by Lenzner and Vardi in 2004, it was stated that Al Qaeda formerly utilised the web to disseminate propaganda and make contacts with operatives, but a terror alert was being received in August, stating Al-Qaeda's strategies to destroy financial institutions in New York and New Jersey, this happened after the arrest of a Pakistan computer engineer, Muhammad Naeem Noor Khan. (Colarik,2009, p.9) This information leak destabilised Al-Qaeda's internet activity significantly.

According to Peter Burke, Al -Qaeda has been given the status of a 'multinational terrorist group of the 21st Century. Previous terrorist groups carried out their activities within local boundaries; however, Al-Qaeda is an organisation that incorporates staging 'wars against the west and even Muslim countries friendly to the west'. Al-Qaeda has over 3,000 supporters that are found in diverse Islamic nations. Practising the principles of global Jihad, 'Al-Qaeda has been able to 'politicise, radicalise and mobilise Muslims both in the territorial communities of the Middle East and Asia as well as the migrant communities of Europe, North America, and Australasia'. With such global spread, Al-Qaeda produces an added type of threat, previously unanticipated by 'counter-terrorism forces and security and intelligence professionals as well'. It was the strength of Al-Qaeda's sophisticated terrorist network of moving funds, goods, and personnel to attack its targets that enabled it to mount the 9/11 attack (Burke, 2007, pp.1-4).

Another significant example is the rise of cyber terrorism in third world countries. Rising terrorists groups such as Al Shabaab and Boko Haram are actively engaged in internet publicity and have been linked with Al-Qaeda (Uzodike and Maiangwa, 2012). These groups receive massive reactions from the general public in the form of either support or condemnation. The latest kidnapping of over 200 teenage girls from their school in Chibok, Borno State, Nigeria, received an outpouring of interests globally. This massive reaction seems to have elevated the group to a more equal status with other Al-Qaeda affiliates – at least on the vital modern battlefield of the Internet (Wassef and Reals, 2014). The internet is also used as Al-Shabaab's major medium besides radio because it is cost effective and reaches a wide range of audience. They use online forums and chat rooms in order to recruit young followers to their cause. Al-Shabaab's website which was long shut down, featured posts, videos and official statements in English, Arabic and Somali, as well as online classroom to educate followers (Ploch, 2011). Hence, terrorists according to Conway have understood the significance of the internet in information circulation. In Africa especially, it can be said that terrorists have succeeded in using the internet more than the government to perpetuate propaganda. The government in Nigeria has been accused of reacting to the Boko Haram crisis with more of a soft than heavy hand. While the government tries to initiate physical dialogue and negotiations with the terrorist group, their effort seems futile as the terrorist group keeps launching more violent attacks and using the internet and media to publicise their actions.

Terrorism and Counterterrorism

It has been argued by scholars that terrorism is a tool used to foster extremist causes (Pape 2003). Terrorist activities are perceived to be a calculated attempt that lures governments into rash responses that usually distorts their image, thereby winning more individuals in favour of the terrorists. Mesquita and Dickson cite an example with the Early Basque separatist members of ETA who adopted similar tactics in the 1960s, attacking Spanish targets with the goal of provoking government repression.

“The militants reasoned the selective attacks against government bullies would provoke the government into excessive and non-discriminately retaliation against all Basque residents.....the escalating spiral of government repression and civilian resistance would culminate with a Spanish government no longer able to afford an extensive, expensive and permanent occupation of the Basque country” (Zirakzadech, 2002, p.23 cited in Mesquita and Dickson 2007)

In recent times events in the Middle East have also reflected a similar situation, There has been a struggle of power between the Hamas and other Islamic groups for control of the Palestinians (Bloom, 2004). In most cases, the driving force of terrorism is to incite repressive Israeli reaction, radicalising the masses and improving support for extremists (Mishal and Sela, 2000). It is not surprising however that this tactic has yielded results. During the 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council election, Hamas won most of the seats and hence leadership of the Palestinian Authority.

This same situation was witnessed by the US in Iraq. US forces feared that actions of military counterterrorism against terrorism might lead to mass mobilization instead of eradicating violence. 'This Trade-off between security and mobilization was maybe most evident in the debate over strategies leading to the assault on Falluja in November 2004.

These cases reflect a dilemma for governments since terrorism is an act of propaganda intended to provoke governments in reacting harshly, thereby providing an avenue for terrorist mobilization.

Furthermore, aside from terrorism, there are significant activities of propaganda that serve as a threat to government controlled activities being utilised around the globe that are worthy of mention in this essay. With the growing use of new media platforms like 'Twitter', 'Facebook', 'YouTube' and 'MySpace', people practice 'entrepreneurial journalism' which according to Jeff Jarvis will be the future of journalistic practice. Media systems have moved from 'a one-source-multiple-channels model, to a fragmented-sources-and channels model'. The 'propaganda model' of news discourse is gaining credibility as a result of the strategies deployed by media institutions and individuals to control public opinion through information. The internet is becoming a tool used by not only terrorists but the general public to check government control. Seib (2008, p.120) before the death of Osama Bin Laden in 2011 stated, that Osama Bin Laden's next attack might not come from the caves where he is believed to be hiding but from 'cells around the world connected by the internet'. Government gradual loss of propaganda in China can be likened to what Lynch (1999, p.2) calls 'public sphere praetorianism', a situation where the state or any other political force fails to achieve control over the circulation of messages'. Cases of individual propaganda have been carried out in China. Citizens have continued to upload information that has been declared secret by the government. This has continued despite persecution. An example is an individual that uploaded the laws and ethics of the events at Tiananmen Square despite strict warning by the government.

Blogs have become an important source of information to the general public in America. News about politics, entertainment and information are readily available on blogs. Tremayne (2007, p.3) coins the term 'blogosphere' from the Herbasian 'public sphere'. 'Blogosphere' relates to the sharing of information via the connection of blogs and links. In relation to the Herbasian Public sphere, blogs serve as a public forum for the discussion of information, freedom of expression and the sharing of ideas. The effects of blogs are not restricted to mainstream media alone, blogs have been used to carry out propaganda and incite public reaction. Tremayne cites an example with 2004 U.S elections. The U.S. representative Ed Schrock gave up his attempt at re-election after a headline on Blogative.com read, 'The Republican from Virginia was Gay'. A write-up on the blog implied the statement was an attempt to frustrate public officials from office because of their hypocrisy. In October 2005, the website Hoopshype.com carried a number of stories under the caption 'Rumours'. The idea was to get away with any information contained even if it was not credible. The internet provides an effective platform for the personal opinions of the public to be heard even if the information contained is questionable. Unlike mainstream media,

where the credibility of certain media outlets are presupposed based on existing performance, blog content, in most cases is not rated based on authorship.

Policy, Content and Regulation

Most of government control over the internet is approached from the area of content. 'Content policy is usually approached from three standpoints: (human rights, (freedom of expression and right to communicate), government (legislated content control) and technology (tools for content control)' (Conway, 2007, p.25).

According to Conway, in as much as the United Nations endorses the freedom of speech and expression as a fundamental human right, it also fortifies the state to regulate this freedom based on 'morality, public order and general welfare'. According to her, the major problem the U.S. government is facing in terms of internet regulation can be likened to the concept of 'savage deregulation' which is a result of the weakening of state control as a result of extensive policy formation. The freedom of expression granted by the first amendment of the 'internet-based regulation, in the U.S., grants even the right to publish hate speech and similar material'. The greatest challenge of the government is how to control content in the light of this law, many court hearings have been held in an attempt to strike a balance between content and policy. The signing up for cybercrime convention by the U.S has led to its inability to sign for the additional protocol to the cybercrime convention. The protocol 'deals with the criminalization of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems' (Conway, 2007, p.26). The first agreement reached to stand against terrorism was signed by the European community in the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism in 1978 (Thackrah, 2004, p.91). EU countries that have the additional protocol can prosecute terrorists and their accomplices for the publication of terrorist or hate material. The U.S. on the other hand cannot, this is why so many terrorist web sites are based in the U.S. These internet laws have changed the role of the government from provider, to promoter and now regulator (Cairncross, 1997, p.15).

One of the important roles played by the UN in the war against terrorism is to follow up terrorist activities world-wide and try to cripple their activities. For example In September 2002, a United Nations report confirmed that it was becoming difficult to stop Al-Qaeda's movement of funds and that the group was still gaining substantial funds sufficient to carry out more attacks. (Rogers, 2004, p.179). Al-Qaeda's strength has become a major source of insecurity to the western world. In order to combat terrorist activities, Thackrah (2004, p.46), argues that the laws governing terrorism in some countries need to be changed in order to implement fully international agreements such as the Montréal agreement convention an aircraft sabotage, and the United Nations convention against taking hostages.

The Effect of Propaganda and Terrorism on Identity in the Information Age

Identity has been re-defined by the information age. The location of identity is being questioned as globalisation intensifies. One of the major ways through which identity has changed, is with the rise in terrorism and propaganda. Daniels (2009, pp. 661-662) uses Soley and Nichols' types of propaganda to unravel the instability of identity on the web. He addresses the use of 'black propaganda' on the internet to

carry out political agendas, he calls the websites used for such propaganda activities, 'cloaked websites'. He cites an example with a cloaked website created shortly after the election of bush as president, www.gwbush.com. This group according to him propagated views that were considered to be on the far left of America's political website. They were able to fool web users by using a 'domain name that was similar to the official campaign's Universal resource locator' (URL). There are many cloaked websites on the internet today that are aimed at 'cyber-terrorism' as well. Most of such websites hide their identities and pass information concerning terrorist activities to members globally.

Since after the 9/11 attack, the identity of the terrorist has changed dramatically. The idea of the 'other' as equally powerful and able to destroy the west is the greatest fear of the 21st Century. Prior to the attack, Aljazeera's identity was not popular and even if it was, it would have probably been regarded as 'one of those local Middle Eastern television networks'. However, when it became popular after the attack, it was perceived with a negative connotation, as a tool for propaganda. The United States has also lost its reputation in the Middle-East and most part of the world, with the unravelling of propaganda carried out by the government to influence mass reaction. Activities of propaganda, such as The weapons of mass destruction, the war on Iraq, the attempt to manipulate American public opinion by the bribing of Hill and Knowlton to create false stories in Kuwait, among many others.

In addition, there has been an existing gendered notion attached to terrorist propagandas. Terrorist activities are preconceived to be carried out by the male gender, even though there have been a number of female suicide bombers and children trained to become terrorists. There is a fundamental belief that women and children are driven into terrorist propaganda by men. A research about soviet health propaganda, portrayed women as victims used to propagate propaganda. The woman as 'mother', 'vulnerable' and 'innocent' is a constant image of the female which is used to carry out propaganda and win the sympathy of the general public. For example, during the war between Israel and the Palestine, the idea that children and women were being killed in Gaza was the constant picture portrayed by global media, and the residents of Gaza to depict the severity of the war. Similarly, the kidnapping of over 200 girls by Boko Haram in Nigeria received worldwide attention mainly because the girls were seen as vulnerable and unable to defend themselves. Hence, whether women and children carry out major propaganda activities or not, there is this preconceived notion that women and children are always the victims of 'male' or terrorist propaganda (Starks, 2003, p.411).

Over time the fear of terrorism has led to racial profiling where individuals of Middle-eastern descent are being attacked or discriminated against especially in the US. In recent times, however, terrorists have been seen to come from diverse races around the globe. The basic ideology of what a terrorist looks like is what is obtained from the media. The media has projected the idea that terrorists are Arabs, Afghans, and Muslims, etc.

In conclusion, the 'propaganda model' initiated by Noam Choamsky, not only reflects the propaganda of media institutions but of individuals themselves. Propaganda has gone beyond the state. According to Colarik, the depicting of 'young Arabs, Asians, blowing up themselves at checkpoints', with the intention of receiving

a reward in heaven, is old news. David Witzhum, the Chief Editor of Israel Television, stated that the media is used as an instrument to perpetuate conflict by governments, rebels and terrorists alike in order to achieve their aim- 'which is to show the effects of terror and violence. Their conviction is that the actual effect of terror is its representation in the media, without which its value and effect as weapon, is meaningless and limited'. (Witzum cited in Colarik, 2006, p.24). Hence, even the media's coverage of terrorism can also be linked to propaganda. The importance of the media as an outlet for terrorism has become increasingly central. Media outlets need to carry out their responsibility of being the fifth estate of the society by propagating anti-terrorism messages while reporting incidences of terrorism, similar to the case of the Cold war with the anti-Soviet Western radio listened to on the opposite side of the Berlin Wall. The reputation that terrorist seeks to protect should be destroyed by the media. Actions such as advertising the feats achieved by the government and individuals in combating terrorism such as the detention of a terrorist, the publication of their confessions, and of any act that shows their lack of loyalty to their organisation, and any measures that limits their heroic image should be publicised by the media. Also governments in creating policies that fight terrorism, need to be aware that they face a profound dilemma, as actions such as crackdowns are counterproductive, in the sense of increasing mobilization, but may have no other reasonable option for increasing security (Mequita and Dickson, 2007, p.30).

Finally, as highlighted previously, the use of propaganda is being intensified by the information age in which everyone is a propagandist. The desire inherent in every human to control opinion is the very nature of propaganda. Among these groups as discussed, are terrorists who have realised the growing importance of the internet to disseminate propaganda messages. Hackers are also giving governments a hard time to maintain secrecy; America is limited by her internet policies to punish terrorists, hackers or any other violators on the internet. These factors among many others have crippled government control over 'thought work' and given individuals and terrorist groups the mandate to carry out propaganda Lynch (1999, p.16).

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