

CORRUPTION AND TOURISM: RESTRUCTURING NIGERIA'S IMAGE FOR DEVELOPMENT USING PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES

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Abstract

This study focuses on how to curb corruption to aid true image and tourism development in Nigeria through public relations strategies. Transparency International, an independent global watch on corruption ranks Nigeria among the five most corrupt nations in the world, an inglorious record that has stunted growth in all areas in Nigeria. These are impediments to nation development and tourism in particular. The data analysis based on the empirical primary and secondary data were employed. Primary survey method employed structured interview as an instrument, while secondary data is presented in tabular form and analyzed. The study recommends that since there are enough rules to prevent corruption, the application of such rules should be applied in a blanket form and not randomly. This will instill fear into all the stake holders. It also concludes that instituting probe panels or laws by themselves can not achieve the said objective, except effective public relations efforts, strategies and proactive approaches are imbed and practicalized.

Key Words: Corruption, Tourism, Public Relations Strategy and Development

Introduction

The major challenges that faced the Nigerian Nation over the years is the issue of corruption and its' devastating impact on the tourism, national image and development. Corruption has become so deep-seated in the country that it had stunted growth in all sectors and has been the primary reason behind the country' s difficulties in developing fast.

Nigeria polity is a system of do or die affaire, were thugs and toads have taken the control of the political system denting the image of the country. These resulted to illiterates and

semi-illiterates in control of power. Nigeria is no longer safe for foreign investors and tourism. Tourism which is a key economic sector that boasts the economy, foreign investment is now a forgotten issue. Due to dented image of Nigeria globally which has impeded development in all ramifications. It is a serious issue that needed an urgent call for effective public relations strategies to restructure Nigeria's image for national development.

There are many unresolved problems in Nigeria, yes!, but the issue of the upsurge of corruption is troubling, and the damages it has done to the polity are astronomical. The menace of corruption leads to slow movements of files in offices, queues at passport offices, ghost workers syndrome, rigging of election etc. Some eminent scholars say that corruption is endemic in all governments, and that it is not peculiar to any continent, region and ethnic group. It cuts across faiths, religious denominations and political systems and it affects both young and old, man and woman alike.

Recently, the International Olympic Committee [IOC] had to relieve some of its officials of their posts because they had taken bribes. And all the commissioners of the European Union [EU], resigned because they have been found to be corrupt beyond acceptable limits. Corruption is found in democratic and dictatorial politics; feudal, capitalist and socialist economics, including Christian, Muslim and Hindu are equally bedeviled by corruption.

Corrupt practices did not begin today; its history is as old as the world. Thus, "corruption has been ubiquitous in complex societies from ancient Egypt, Israel, Rome, and Greece down to the present Lipset and Lenz, [2000, pp112-113]. This does not, however, mean that the magnitude of corruption is equal in every society. Some countries are more corrupt than others, as George, [1996 p109] in his *Animal Farm*: "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others".

Since corruption is not new, and it is a global phenomenon, it is not peculiar to Nigeria. However, corruption is pandemic in Nigeria and in many other African nations. The

leaders as well as the followers are found wanting in corruption. Transparency International, an independent global watch on corruption ranks Nigeria among the five most corrupt nations in the world, an inglorious record that has stunted growth in all areas of endeavor in the country. These are impediments to tourism mostly, and other barriers: lack of required modern infrastructural facilities; the acute conditions of underdevelopment and poverty in some parts of country made it difficult for tourist and foreign investors to tap the richness and diversity of Nigeria's tourism resources.

For instance, there are a wide variety of tourist attractions such as extended and roomy river and ocean, beaches ideal for swimming, unspoiled nature ranging from tropical forest, magnificent waterfalls, and also traditional ways of life preserved in local customs, varied handicrafts and other colorful products depicting of native arts and lifestyle etc. However, many of these attractions are still largely untapped, even some of them are at their raw states as a result of corruption and its debilitating ancillaries such as bribery, graft, fraud and nepotism etc.

The menace of corruption which has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigeria would require all the necessary medicines to effectively control it. In other words, no single and simple remedies will cure it; and the problem cannot be solved overnight because as we have noted, corruption has been ingrained into the fabric of the society. Nigeria has in theory the solutions in the book to tackle corruption; but like other issues [poverty etc] bedeviling the nation. Implementations of the laws are the Achilles heel [a vulnerable point] of the society [The Guardian, July 10, 2002].

Dahl, [1998], contends that one of the reasons why the measures against corruption have not been fruitful in Nigeria is that they have "operated at a level [of mere] symbolism".

Osoba, [1996] said yes, corruption has defied all measures adopted to combat it in Nigeria, because those waging the corruption-wars are themselves corrupt. In the name of turning Nigeria into a corruption-free society, the nation has experimented with many policies. It has tried the judicial commissions of enquiry, the Code of Conduct Bureau. It had wrestled with the Public Complaints Commission to no avail. Also it fiddled with the

Mass Mobilization for Social Justice and Economic Recovery [MAMSER], and the National Open Apprenticeship [NOA], but corruption instead blossomed. Then, General Buhari clobbered Nigerians with his horsewhip branded the 'War Against Indiscipline Council' [WAIC], without success.

President Olusegun Obasanjo instituted an Independent Corrupt Practices Commission [ICPC], which seems to have power only over the corrupt poor. The government's campaign against corruption manifests also in the setting up of the Due Process Office. This office oversees and demands that standard processes be followed in the execution of government activities and projects, which is the part of the reasons for granting Nigeria debt forgiveness by the Paris Club.

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission [EFCC] was set up to tackle financial crimes and related crimes which has made significant successes so far. Many fraudsters have been arrested and prosecuted by the EFCC since it started. It has also prosecuted officials involved in corrupt practice. Examples are: Patricia Etteh former House Speaker, Tafa Balogun, Dieprye Aliamesyia etc that were caught of embellishment and stealing

With renewed confidence in the government to combat and reduce financial crimes and other corrupt practices, foreign investors have the guarantee of achieving their objectives in Nigeria. While the problem of corruption has been around for a while, it is important to note that the will to combat it has become more resilient and with the expected co-operation of the international community, it will be reduced if not completely eliminated from Nigeria in due course.

Today, the Federal government and other agencies in position of trust are more vulnerable on the issue of corruption, their integrity are jeopardized by public officials who use the resources of their office for personal, professional, or financial gain. Nigerians suffered because corruption made it hard to run government transparently. Scandals became rife, Projects were plagued by corruption which even seeped into some many private areas of people's lives. Obsession with materialism; compulsion for a

shortcut to affluence; glorification and approbation of [ill-gotten wealth] by the general public are among the reasons for the persistence of corruption in Nigeria.

Our philosophy, unfortunately, has been: if you can't beat them join them. It will be difficult for anybody in true conscience to accuse successive administration in Nigeria of not doing enough to let everybody know that corruption is a major problem in the polity. Almost all past governments have delivered in the area of tackling corruption through enlightenment campaigns and effusive rhetoric, yet corruption is seems to be perpetuated. Without the full involvement of public relations principles, efforts and strategies, other efforts of instituting probe panels will only work for awhile.

Nigeria is a society where national priorities are turned upside down; hard work is not rewarded; but rogues are often glorified. Arthur Schlesinger said of America in the 60s, "Our [the] trouble [with Nigeria] is not that our capabilities are inadequate. It is that our priorities ...which means our values ...are wrong".

Max, 1967, opines that scandals associated with corruption sometimes have the effect of strengthening a value system of a society as a whole. This is probably true in relation to Nigeria. The scandals associated with the Abacha era [looting of the treasury and human rights violations], not talk about Patricia Etteh the former House Speaker, Tafa Balogun, and Dieprye Aliiamesyia etc, and have given the nation some food for thought. Nigeria is still perplexed and reoccupied with the issues of how to strengthen the nation's essential governmental structured to avoid the reoccurrence of these kinds of looting and atrocities in future. However, in some cases, how people behave in a society depends on how they see and perceive others behave. If the prevailing behavior in a country is bad, others could imitate the behavior which is the worrisome issue that necessitated this study.

Based on the above assertions, this study sought to determine effective public relations strategies and tools that would be used to curb corruption to aid true image and tourism development in Nigeria. And to sensitize the government on the importance of tourism as a key economic sector, also to reinforce the promulgation of tourism as the number 6th

priority by the former president Olusegun Obasanjo, and as well as to inculcate in tourism in the Vision 2020 Agenda in order to achieve national development in Nigeria Furthermore, to make recommendations as to how effective public relations strategies [proactive] can curb corruption and its devastating effects on tourism, image and national development. Finally to call for synergic efforts from all and sundry and with the expected co-operation of the international community combat the epidemic of corruption in the country.

Methodology

This study focuses on how to curb corruption to aid true image and tourism development in Nigeria through Public relations strategies. The study employed empirical primary and secondary data as sources of data collection. Primary survey method adopted structured interview as an instrument, while secondary data was presented in tabular form and analyzed. The responses to the interview questions constituted the basis of analysis of research questions.

Theoretical Framework

Corruption whenever it occurs is a moral issue and moral issues are ethical issues. This discourse can best be based on ethical theories outlined by Christians, Rotzoll, and Fackler [1991, pp11-20]. They are:

Observational Learning and Imitation Behavior Theory

Folarin [2002:82] contends that both theories assume that people, especially children, tend to learn from the mass media and to model their behavior on that of the Dramatis personae. The process is similar to that by which children imitate the behavior of adults around them.

This theory has proved that how people behave in a society depends on how they see and perceive others behave. If the prevailing behavior in a country is bad, others could imitate

the behavior. However the lousy argument would be that others do the same. This was one of the cited “reasons” for corrupt behavior when the Italian parliament investigated “the linkage between corruption and the Mafia in 1993”. Thus, corrupt behavior encourages other corrupt behavior, especially, when the culprits go unpunished.

Aristotle’s Golden Mean connotes the idea that moral virtue is appropriate location between two extremes. For human beings to be virtuous, they need high regard for justice, courage, wisdom and temperance. **Kant’s Categorical imperative** encourages all to act on that maxim which if one wants to become a universal law. This imperative implies that what is right for one is right for all. **Mill’s Principle of Utility** urges us to seek the greatest happiness for the greatest number. In this case, we are to determine what is right or wrong by considering what will produce the best consequences for the welfare of human beings.

These theories tend to guard behavior and would not allow corruption to escalate, if all and sundry in the country underpin their behaviors with these moral precepts, knapping, violent cultism, sexual harassment, embezzlements and looting, academic fraud etc would become unattractive.

Concept Analysis, Definition and Explanation

What is Corruption?

Corruption is mainly seen as, “wrongdoing by those in a special position of trust” Microsoft Encarta [2006]. The term is said to apply to self-benefiting behavior exhibited by public officials and all those dedicated to public services. Frisch [1996] observes that corruption is the abuse of public power for personal ends. *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary [2000]*, defines corruption as a dishonest or illegal behavior, especially of people in authority. Corruption is an activity, it is also a mindset sustained by ideas that are largely false and misleading.

The Nature and Characteristics of Corruption

Some studies have taken a holistic [broader] approach in the discussion of corruption by dividing it into many forms and sub-divisions. These are:

Political corruption takes place at the highest levels of political authority. It occurs when the politicians and political decision-makers, who are entitled to formulate, establish and implement the laws in the name of the people, are also corrupt. It also takes place when policy formulation and legislation is tailored to benefit politicians and legislators. Political corruption is sometimes seen as similar to ‘corruption of greed’ as it affects the manner in which decisions are made as it manipulates political institutions, rules of procedure, and distorts the institutions of government [NORAD chap. 4 Jan. [2000] [The Encyclopedia Americana, 1999].

Bureaucratic corruption occurs in the public administration or the implementation end of politics. This kind of corruption has been branded ‘low level’ and ‘street level’. It is the kind of corruption the citizens encounter daily at places like the hospitals, schools, local licensing offices, police etc. Bureaucratic ‘petty’ corruption, which is seen as similar to ‘corruption of need’, occurs when one obtains a business from the public sector through inappropriate procedure.

Electoral corruption includes purchase of votes with money, promises of office or special favor, coercion, intimidation and interference with freedom of election [Nigeria is a good example where this practice is common. Votes are bought, people are killed, losers end up as the winners in elections and votes turn up in areas where votes were not cast].

Embezzlement is theft of public resources by public officials. It is when a state official steals from the public institution in which he/she is employed. In Nigeria the embezzlement of public funds is one of most common, perhaps due to lack of strict regulatory systems.

Favoritism is a mechanism of power abuse implying a highly biased distribution of state resources. However, this is seen as a natural human proclivity to favor friends, family and any body close and trusted.

Corruption in office involves sales of legislative votes, judicial decision or governmental appointment. Disguised payment in the form of gifts, legal fees, employment, favors to relatives, social influence, or any relationship that sacrifices the public interest and welfare, with or without the implied payment of money is usually considered corrupt [The Encyclopedia Americana 1999]

Bribery is payment in money or kind that is taken or given in a corrupt relationship. These include kickbacks, gratuities, pay-off, greasing palms etc Bayart [1997, pp11].

Fraud involves some kind of trickery, swindle and deceit, counterfeiting, racketing, smuggling and forgery [Ibid. p11].

Extortion is money and other resources extracted by the use of coercion and violence. It is often seen as extraction 'from below' [The police and custom officers are the main culprits in Nigeria, Bayart [1997].

Nepotism is a special form of favoritism in which an office holder prefers his or her kinfolk and family member. Nepotism which is also common in Nigeria occurs when one is exempted from the application of certain laws or regulation or given undue preference in the allocation of scarce resources.

The Causes of Corruption

The causes of corruption are myriad and they have political and cultural variables. Some evidences prove that there is a link between corruption and social diversity, ethno-linguistic fractionalization, and the proportions of country's population adhering to different religious traditions Lipset and Lenz [2000]. Compulsion for a shortcut to affluence, glorification and approbation of ill-gotten wealth by the general public are reasons for the persistence corruption in Nigeria,

Ndiulor, March 17 [1999]. Flamboyant affluence and conspicuous consumption syndrome has led some people get into dubious activities, including committing ritual murder for money-making. The typical example is in 1996 when late Clement Duru [alias 'Otokoto'] ritual killing episode at Owerri in Imo State of Nigeria was reported to have been killing and selling the body parts of some of the travelers that checked into his hotel at Owerri.

The lack of ethical standards throughout the agencies of government and business organizations in Nigeria is another reason. Bowman [1991] contends that ethics is action, the way we practice our values; it is a guidance system to be used in making decisions and it encompasses a broad range including a stress on obedience to authority on the necessity of logic in moral reasoning, and on the necessity of putting moral judgment into practice..

Extended family pressures and polygamous household are other reasons; Onalaja & Onalaja [1997] assert that influence of extended family system and pressure to meet family obligations are more in less developed societies. Lawrence Harrison acknowledged that the extended family system is an effective institution for survival, but notes that it poses a big obstacle for development.

Edward Lotterman cited in online Vanguard June 4, [2002], opines that bad rules and ineffective taxing system which makes it difficult to track down people's financial activities breed corruption. Ineffective taxing system is a serious problem for Nigeria, and the society should institute appropriate and effective taxing system where everyone is made to explain his or her sources of income at the end-of- the- year income tax filing, [Lotterman April 25 [2002].

The Nigeria's reward system is perhaps the poorest in the world. Nigeria is a society where national priorities are turned upside down, hard work is not rewarded but rogues are often glorified. It is no longer news that workers in the society are not paid regularly, without getting paid they would devise ways to meet their family obligations even if it involves breaking the law [Lepset and Lenze [2000].

What is Tourism?

Tourism is defined as the travel for recreation or instruction, often in organized groups, Microsoft @ Encarta [2000] opines that in order to have an adequate knowledge of the

effect of corruption on tourism, it is important to look at the tourism sector of a country and see how corruption has affected tourism.

Impediments to Tourism

- Corruption being the greatest challenge of tourism in Nigeria for decades is a major obstacle to tourism development.
- Lack of required modern infrastructural facilities and some parts of the country's acute conditions of underdevelopment and poverty in which many potential tourist may not like to be confronted with is another problem.
- Most of Nigeria's beautiful beaches locations are still largely without accommodation facilities.
- Policy inconsistency constitutes one of the major hindrances to the development of tourism in Nigerian. Experience shows that private and public sectors have failed to make needed investments in the industry because of bureaucracy, poor planning, and lack of funds pose as hindrances.
- Inadequate legislations and insufficient manpower are the bane of the tourism industry in Nigeria. This was the submission of some legal practitioners who participated in the recent National Tourism Sensitization Workshop held in Abuja by the National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism [NIHOTOUR].

Despite of the discouraging situation, the tourism industry in Nigeria actually has undergone a gradual, but progressive evolution which is reflecting its growing importance in the national economy. Studies showing Nigeria's great potentials for the development of the tourism sector has made Federal government now sees the need for the country to take tourism seriously. The Federal government is planning to set up a tourism bank in order to encourage greater participation of both local and foreign investors in the tourism sector in Nigeria. Since, the issue of corruption is not fully addressed and eradicated or minimized which constitute the greatest impediment to tourism sector, the hope of achieving our objective will not come.

Effects of Corruption

Corruption is the major among other variables that are disintegrating the Nigeria's reputation. This has demolished the image of the country and caused a lot of problems for the government and the good citizens of the nation. Many people have been caught in Europe, America and other parts of the world engaging in a corruptible act in one way or another in a fraudulent, drug trafficking, child and women trafficking etc. Most leaders and the citizens are guilty of this act. These crimes have a damaging effect on socio-economic and political aspect etc in the country. Corruption tarnishes the image of a nation, perhaps Nigeria suffers more than most societies from an appalling international image created by its inability to deal with bribery and corruption.

In 1996 Study of Corruption by the Transparency International and Goettingen University ranked Nigeria as the most corrupt nation among the 54 nations on the study, with Pakistan as the second highest. Moore [1997] in 1998 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index [CPI] survey of 85 countries, Nigeria was ranked 81 [Lipset & Lenz [2000]]. While, in 2001 survey ranked Nigeria 90 out of the 91 countries studied [second most corrupt nation in the world] with Bangladesh coming first.

Corruption is destructive of governmental structures and capacity It destroys the legitimacy of a government and makes governance ineffective. It may alienate modern-oriented civil servants and cause them reduce or withdraw their services and to leave a country [the 'brain-drain' episode is tied to corruption, [Shekarau 2003].

Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete of Tanzania, the president of ATA Congress with the theme, 'Bringing the World to Africa and Africa to the world', was particularly concerned about the various impediments to tourism growth in Africa. Chief among his concern is to make Africa easily accessible by tourists from outside the continent, particularly from major tourist source markets of America, Europe and Asia. He contends that many countries in Africa are not adequately served airlines from major tourist markets in the developed world, and very few African airlines fly to these tourist source markets. This makes Africa lose many potential tourists who have come to Africa spending about 24 hours in a

journey that should be three hours. He also said that African countries have been tagged for decades now to be highly corrupt and unsecured.

He comes out with a consensus that with more positive coverage of Africa events and developmental projects, beauty and tourism potentials, the continents tourism sector will benefit tremendously. He also warned that governments in Africa should tackle self inflicted strifes such as conflicts and corruption which attract the attention of the Western Press. That Africa's future is very bright in all areas of tourism particularly in beach eco-tourism, culture, and heritage. That Nigeria has at least eight national parks which are homes to rare animals and birds not seen in East Africa or elsewhere. The Cross River National park is the only known natural home to drill monkeys, so are exotic birds at the Nguru/Hadejia wetland for bird watchers.

President Kikwete narrated his recent visit to Arusha which he says that provided a practical evidence of what a clean environment can do to attract tourists. Apart from Arusha, all about 30 towns and villages on the road leading to Ngorogoro Carter and Conservation Areas are clean devoid of heap of rubbish that are common sight in Nigeria. Motor Parks in and around Arusha are clean, well organized and without the menace of miscreants and area boys. That throughout his one week stay there he did not see any armed police man or police patrol vans on the street blowing siren which is indicative of a nation at peace and always ready to receive tourists.

Mauro [1997] contends that corruption negatively impacts the economic growth and reduces public spending on education. The effect of corruption on education is well stated in statement made by Costello [2001] at a European Commission [EC] meeting in support of Nigeria's anti-poverty efforts says that Nigeria has enough money to tackle its poverty challenges, if the government can win this [its] battle against corruption and mismanagement, the money will be effectively utilized to functioning schools, health services and water supply, thus laying the foundation to eradicate poverty".

Dike [2003] cited in Lipset & Lenz [2000] have tied poverty and income inequalities to corruption. Cooksey [1999], opines that corruption reduces the size of a nation's economic cake' thereby exposing some segments of the population to poverty. Because of corruption, Nigeria and her abundance material and human resources is ranked 26th poorest nation in the entire globe. Corruption is politically destabilizing and it leads to social revolution and military takeovers. Bribery and corruption create the culture of late payment and delays and refusal to pay for services already executed in Nigeria.

Any Remedy to Corruption in Nigeria?

Osoba [1996], contends that any society with the challenges of corruption will continue to find ways to break the circle. Nigeria cannot effectively control the menace of corruption in the nation by merely instituting probe panels. It was suggested that to tame the surge of corruption in Nigeria, the general population should be re-orientated to a better value system. This is because Nigerians have for long been living on the survival of the fittest and grab-whatever-comes –your-way mentality. The re-orientation of the youth in Nigeria to a good value system could help in the war against corruption. The World Values Surveys of 1990-1993 has a lot of attitudes and values information, which notes a relationship between values and corruption [World Value Study Group, [1994]. Preaching the gospel and practice of virtue is the ultimate solution to behavioral change and reduction in corruption.

Also, to win the apparent war on corruption in Nigeria, the Obasanjo's slogan of there must 'be no sacred cows,' should not be a mere political rhetoric. It should be put into practice by prosecuting all the known corrupt political 'heaven weights' in the society, as they contribute in making the nation's inchoate laws inoperable [Kanu Agabi, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice noted at a meeting with state commissioners of police]. Some of our leaders are doing everything they can to make the work of the police impossible. Big men are the greatest criminals and except you go after the big criminals and bring them to book, the rate of crime may not reduce. [But] if you bring three or four of these big men to book, the rate of criminal activities would reduce", He declared, "Arrest ministers, arrest [the] big people and others would fear [The Vanguard, 30th; March 2002].

Adherence to ethical standards in decision-making must be the foundation of the nation's policies. Without ethics [set of moral principles or values or principles of conducts governing an individual or a group [Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, [1980] in the conduct of the affairs of the nation [public and business], the apparent wars on corruption in Nigeria will not be successful. In other words, without ethics, any money budgeted toward fighting corruption in Nigeria is a thing cast to the wild cat. Aristotle insists, the aim of ethical philosophy is practical-'to make us better men'-[The Philosophy of Aristotle, Bambrought [ed.], p.280; ThisDay, May 26 [2002].

Dahl [1998], opines that to win the war on corruption, Nigeria has to fortify the institutional 'checks and balances among the country's major social forces and the separation of powers within the government. The nation has to make sure that those entrusted to execute the war on corruption are men and women of virtue, those who recognize and always do what is right. Virtuous leaders [in government and business] are persons of honesty, integrity and trust. The mass media has a crucial role to play in the campaign to educate the people of their rights as citizens and in exposing the rogues. Nothing chills nonsense more than exposure to thin air. The nation should erect permanent structures in the society to constantly tackle corruption, instead of setting up ad-hoc corruption –panels here and there. The citizens have a role to play in the war against corruption and they should always try to resist the temptation to offer bribes to corrupt government officials as it takes two to tango.

Alatas [1980] asserts that to deal with corruption in ancient time, many bureaucrats were paid a 'corruption-preventing allowance' –yang lien- as "incentive to remain clean and law-abiding" help reduce corruption through what he calls "income effect", as the officer who get this payment may be "less in need of making a quick buck". This type of payment will also have what he calls "substitution effect". The officer receiving the payment would know that corrupt behavior may involve serious loss of a high-salary employment if things were to go bad. Finally, it is appropriate to emphasis the importance of good and enforceable policies toward controlling corrupt behavior. And

the policies should be reviewed periodically to close any loophole and to catch-up with events in the society.

How can Nigeria's image be restructured?

In restructuring Nigeria's image and development, Public relations strategies are to be employed to tackle this issue, by creating awareness workshops on corruption and its danger and destructive tendencies by employing newspaper and other media of communication for dissemination of such information.

What is Public Relations?

Nwosu, [1995] states that Public Relation' is the profession that influences public opinion or attitude in such a positive direction, understanding and acceptance. It establishes a two-way communication to ensure mutual understanding, or resolve conflicts of interest between individuals, organizations and their publics. In these definitions a common observation and perhaps the prescriptions of public relations relevant to this work include influencing public opinion or attitude in a positive direction.

Grunig [1984], contends that public relations is the practice of managing the communication between an organization and its publics, or to gain an organization or individual exposure to their audiences using topics of public interest and news items that do not require payment. Bernays [2008] sees public relations as the attempt by information, persuasion and adjustment to engineer public support for an activity, cause, movement or institution. Phillips, [2006] also sees public relations as the manipulation of public behavior for the benefit of the manipulated publics as well as the sponsoring organizations. Since public relations is a strategy in the modern world that help institutions to cope successfully with many problems. It also builds prestige for an individual or a group, to promote products and to win legislative battles. Public relations is all about doing good, and a 'power- pack' that has various methods, tools and strategies that can ward-off the bad image that Nigeria is dented with due to corruption. It can create a good image and reputation that can attract foreign investors or tourists into the country for investment which will boost the economy of the Nigeria.

What is Public relations strategy?

Public relations strategy involves the “big picture”- the overall plan, how the campaign will achieve organizational or national goals and objectives. It involves deciding who the important publics are and which of them will be the recipients of the messages [i.e., “target audiences”]. The public relations strategies include:

Communication strategy:

Poole [2008], asserts that communication serves as the basis for control and coordination in organizations or nation. It provides information essential to effective completion of national mission. Farace, Monge, and Russel [2005], define communication as the exchange of symbols or verbal strategy [oral and written] that uses words or pictures. These include: newsletters, flyers, news releases, brochures, direct mail, advertising, themes, slogans, the World Wide Web [www], and other initiatives that use words and language as their basis. The public’s perception of credibility and validity depends largely on the successful transmission of verbal and non-verbal messages and the sharing of information at all links through the appropriate channels. The objective of influencing public opinion, changing or forming a new one can only be achieved through good and effective Public relations. Hostility could be changed to friendship thereby resolving the conflict occasioned by corruption, misunderstanding and misconception. Public relations can exhibit Nigeria’s potentials using the above tactics.

Issues Management

This is to control the different variables that impinge on the eradication of corruption or successfully reduce its impacts in Nigeria. Nwosu [1996:115], opines that issues management involves tracking, analyzing, collating, presentation of data and making practical recommendation to the management or administration of the organization on issues and problems that may have negative or positive impact on the growth and survival of the organization. It involves a lot of research or data collection and analysis and tends to be futuristic, advisory, predictive or forecasting-oriented in its recommendations, even though it also handles the analysis of past and present trends.

This would enable PR practitioner to weight the corruption and its devastating impact in Nigeria, and to make reasonable recommendations to all the stakeholders on how to checkmate corruption, in order to boost the image of Nigeria.

Action Events involves non-written tactics such as special events, demonstrations, exhibits, parades, community contributions [manpower, talent, advice, money] and other non-verbal activities can be used by public relations to project the image of Nigeria in and among international communities.

Advertising is a form of commercial mass communication designed to promote the sale of a product or service or intended to promote an idea or influence behavior, for instance, encouraging people not to use illegal drugs or smoke cigarettes. It can be used in re-positioning Nigeria's image and reputations internationally, and as well as to ward-off some miscreants in Nigeria. It can also be used to expose the abundant tourism potentials in the country, the richness and diversity of tourism resources coupled with economic liberalization policies and investment opportunities in various areas in Nigeria

Exhibitions and Expositions are public displays of industrial or commercial products. Exhibitions are a display of such products or arts for a short period while exposition is for a longer period and usually on a larger scale. Both exhibitions and expositions may be regional, national or international and can be used to expose the traditional ways of life preserved in local customs, varied handicrafts and native arts and lifestyle of Nigerian and African in generally.

Propaganda is a dissemination of ideas and information for the purpose of inducing or intensifying specific attitudes and actions. Though, it is often thought that propaganda is false or misleading. This view is relative, even though some propagandists may intentionally distort fact but others may present it as faithfully as objective observers. However, the essential distinction lies in the intentions of the propagandist to persuade an audience to adopt the attitude or action he or she espouses. Propaganda is a powerful

strategy that public relations uses to influence behavior or public opinions. It can be used positively in promoting the image of the country.

Lobby Groups should be established to influence government policy, corporate or public opinion. Such groups claim to represent a particular interest. When a lobby group hides its true purpose and support base, it is known as a front group. It can equally be used by public relations in order to sway public opinion or perception both within and outside the country to create good image of the country.

Spin is a technique that involves careful choice of timing in the release of certain news that can take advantage of prominent events in the news. The technique of “spin” includes selectively presenting facts and quotes that support one’s position. But in public relations, “spins” is sometimes a pejorative in one’s own favor of an event or situation. In this method, practitioners use propaganda to indoctrinate or actively influence citizen opinions. Privately run media also uses the same techniques of “issue” versus “non-issue” to spin its particular political viewpoints; such can be used to re-orient ‘new’ Nigerians for positive change and to create favorable image in Nigeria.

Discussion of findings:

The summary of the responses from the structured interview questions

What is your perception on corruption in Nigeria?

More dangerous is the general perception that corruption has become a way of life. We celebrate corruption in our daily life heaping praises on people with wealth and deriding those who had plum positions but refused to soil their hands. We make heroes of villains and despise the righteous. Each time we do that, the message we send to the coming generation is that the only way to get to the top is through the avenue of corruption. We invariably destroy their sense of decency and damage their psyche. A man that has been indoctrinated to see corruption as acceptable by the society would definitely indoctrinate those who look up to him and the vicious circle continues.

In your own opinion what are the impacts of corruption?

The impact is more telling on the society, seeing lawyers who cannot defend the integrity of their qualifications let alone defend a client before a court of law. With corruption

there can be no sustainable development or political stability, corruption invariably strangulates the system of social organization. The fact is that corruption is a major cause of the country's underdevelopment. It engenders a better society and enthrones a culture of meritocracy.

Can corruption be prevented or militated?

The present activities of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, [EFCC] and Interdependent Corrupt Practices Tribunal have begun to change the perception of Nigeria as a corruption-riddled country. Arrests and prosecution of those who engage in corrupt practices in the private and public sectors are now becoming the norm. Top government officials including governors, ministers, local government chairmen, have been dragged before courts to answer to corruption charges. This is a departure from the norm in a country that glorified money bags and worshipped wealthy public officers irrespective of how they make their money. Yes, corruption can be prevented in government places if there are enough well-fare packages for public officers to discourage them, and adequate reward for any public officer that blows the lid on corruption.

SECONDARY DATA

STATISTICS OF CRIMES COMMITTED BY NIGERIAN YOUTH

Sources: Annual abstract of statistics, FOC, Abuja, 2009. page180

Offences	2005	2009
Assault	591	947
Murder	760	14,262
Armed robbery	1,020	685
Sex offences	999	2194
Robbery	2250	5972
Sedition	462	195
Stealing	20892	97140
Affray	451	727
Debt	942	2921

Treason	112	516
Abduction	182	97
Traffic offences	142	725
Indian hemp offences	949	281
Unlawful possession	1147	10190
Forgery and altering	440	710
Escaping from lawful custody	290	521
Offences against native law	764	96
Other offences	2091	5125

The table above reveals a growing number of youth's involvement in violent crimes [Nigerian prisons 2005 and 2009]. It equally proves the point that if the prevailing behavior in a country is bad, others could imitate the behavior as well. Thus, corrupt behavior encourages other corrupt behavior. From all indications, this work has been able to investigate its subject matter.

Conclusion

Chief Obafemi Awolowo once opined that it would be practically impossible to completely eradicate corruption in Nigeria, but some extend, it is true. But there are also general beliefs that a reduced level of corruption would engender a better society and enthrone a culture of meritocracy. That is why we must be careful in our electoral choices, and must endeavor to elect leaders who are ready to sustain the culture. Therefore, instituting probe panels or laws by themselves can not achieve the said objective, except effective Public relations efforts, strategies and proactive approaches are imbed and practicalized.

Recommendations

- There is need for serious Public relations campaign for re-orientation exercise of the public service in general, with all sincerity of purpose to disabuse the minds of not only the public servants but also the general populace against the perception

that fraud is a share of the National cake and that only corrupt officers can make headway in the society.

- Since, there are enough rules to prevent corruption; the application of such rules should be applied in a blanket form, and not randomly. This will instill fear into all political office holders, civil servants, contractors etc.
- Well-fare packages of public officers in general should positively and continually be reviewed against prevailing economic situation so that public officers would not cut corners to survive

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