

Walking a Tight Rope: Public Perception of Selected Image Reform Projects in Nigeria - 1984 to 2014

Josephat Ikechukwu Okoye

Abstract

For more than three decades, the past Nigerian military-cum-civilian rulers have made successive attempts to launder the image and reputation of Nigeria and Nigerians via series of image reform policies. There is therefore the need to appraise these image restoration programmes, to ascertain the extent of success or otherwise of such image reform policies initiated by various Nigerian governments right from the early eighties to the present day. In doing this, the researcher adopted descriptive research design and analysed research data from six randomly selected states from the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. Using Taro Yamane's formula at 0.5 error margin, a sample size of 400 respondents was statistically determined for the execution of the study. The findings of the study indicated that political corruption was perceived as the major source of Nigeria's image quagmire. The result of the study revealed amongst others, that Nigerian governments' insensitivity, prohibitive and deceptive approach to governance from the early eighties till date was perceived as the major impediments to the successful implementation of the country's image reform projects. To effectively surmount Nigeria's sagging image problem, the researcher recommended among others, that the Federal government should meaningfully engage a team of public relations experts, to assess the extent of success or failure of such projects like the 'Heart of Africa' and 'Rebranding Nigeria' project. The outcome of the enquiry should be adequately matched with deliberate planned and sustained multi-faceted actions aimed at revamping the image of Nigeria and Nigerians within and outside the country.

Key words: *.Evaluation .Public perception .Image problem .Image reform projects .Political corruption.*

INTRODUCTION

The multiplicity of socio-economic, political and ethno-religious crises that bedevilled Nigeria since she attained political independence in 1st October 1960, has to a large extent, dented the image and reputation of the country. Doubtless, the situation tends to portray Nigeria and Nigerians both at home and abroad in bad light.

Indeed, most social commentators and image experts believe that Nigeria's image problem is rooted in endemic corruption, unstable political atmosphere, devaluation of the Naira, unabated socio-political and religious crises, military intervention in politics and so forth. Suffice it to note that while these problems could explain lack of robust external image for the country, the incidences of unhealthy economy resulting in debt crises were crucial issues (Saliu, 2006, p.12; Aligwe, 2000, p.180; Ukozor, 2006, p.31; Egwu, 2007, p.4; Ndolo, 2011, p.6 & Aliede, 2010, p.68).

These social problems are incongruous with the noble dreams of the nation's founding fathers. The collective quest of the nationalist leaders to build a virile, united and peaceful nation upon independence was jettisoned by the country's military-cum-civilian leaders, who ruled the country at various times. Thus, instead of ensuring that the noble objectives or ideals set by the country's foremost nationalists are realised to the fullest, most past and present Nigerian political rulers often resort to primitive

accumulation of surplus wealth at the expense of the Nigerian masses they claim to represent at various levels of government.

More so, much of the rich and highly cherished cultural and religious values, which superbly served as a parameter for regulating the social conduct of our forebears during the early days, have been thrown overboard and in turn, the reverse order syndrome has gripped the country. The innumerable socio-economic and political factors responsible for these situations have combined to damage Nigeria's image abroad and smearing it at home. These myriad of factors which Ujam (1995, P.x) describes as "...social factors that frustrate Nigeria's great hope for genuine development", have reared their ugly heads since the attainment of our political independence. Consequently, they have undermined Nigeria's development according to Nwokeora (1990, p.13) and stagnated its progress in the view of Udeaja (1988, p.1). Similarly, Achebe (1983, p.1) blames it on what he calls poor leadership.

In spite of the accusations and counter-accusations levelled against past Nigerian civilian leaders by the military, yet the latter was not better. Besides, the cycle of coup d'états increased in geometric progression in the country as military coupists that belonged to diverse opposing political camps ruthlessly launched one coup d'état after another. This is evident in coup d'états staged by the country's military officers in 1983, 1985, and later part of 1990s. Indeed, the three successive coups of Generals Mohammadu Buhari, Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha trailed the emergence of the Third Republic.

At this stage, many Nigerians became disappointed and disillusioned with military rulership and were desirous of experiencing democratic government. However, the annulment of June 12, 1993 election by Babangida, which many saw as the freest and fairest presidential election in Africa plunged the country into more crises which he could not resolve. General Babangida handed over to Ernest Shonekan whose tenure was short-lived and he could not do anything to improve on the situation he met. General Sani Abacha forcefully took over power from Shonekan on November 17, 1993.

Still Nigerians continued to experience the same hardship and frustration became the order of the day. Indeed, Abacha's tenure earned Nigeria the worst condemnation from several world bodies. He prolonged the return to civil rulership and recorded the worst crimes under human rights abuses (Ukozor, 2009, p.33). Again, the reign of Sani Abacha as a maximum ruler created negative image within and outside this country. His regime became the greatest disappointment in the history of military rulership in the country as Abacha self-succession saga compelled international community to treat Nigeria as a Pariah state.

Likewise, after his eight years in the leadership saddle, Obasanjo toed the path of infamy via his inordinate quest for tenure elongation with its attendant damnable consequences on Nigeria and Nigerians. Moreover, Obasanjo civilian administration that succeeded Abdulsalami Abubakar regime was crowded with tales of corruption starting with "Ghana-must-go" bags which the executive arm of government allegedly used to induce the National Assembly to absolve his leadership of allegations of conflict of interest when he purchased Transcorp shares, which was kept in blind trust for him while he was still a sitting president (Johnson-Agba, 2006, p.62). Other corruption allegations against Obasanjo came to limelight during his legendary fight between him and Vice President Atiku Abubakar as they accused each other of misappropriating Petroleum Development Trust Fund (PTDF). In addition, when the war against corruption was fought during Obasanjo administration, anti-graft agencies like EFCC and ICPC were used to wage relentless war against the perceived enemies of the government while their cronies remain untouched.

In the same vein, the Federal government through its relevant agencies often utilised various media channels to convey vital information to its target audience. Put differently, media channels like radio, television, newspaper, magazine as well as social media networks are often utilised by Nigerian governments or its agencies for the dissemination

of image reform campaign messages to the Nigerian citizenry. The essence of doing this, is to educate, mobilize and sensitize the Nigerian masses on the need to imbibe the virtues inherent in image reform policies. Invariably, because of individual differences prevailing among the citizenry, the perception, internalization and retention of image reform campaign messages differs from one individual to another. As a matter of fact, the portrayal of image reform campaign message by relevant government agencies through diverse media channels often help the hoi polloi to toe the path of moral rectitude.

Based on the foregoing intellectual excursion down the memory lane on the past military-cum-civilian rulership in the country, it is obvious therefore, that Nigeria has poor image and reputation both at home and abroad. This is perhaps, why successive Nigerian governments since early eighties to date initiated several image restoration policies, such as War Against Indiscipline (WAI), Mass Mobilization for Social Justice Self Reliance and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAI-C), National Orientation Agency (NOA), Rebranding Nigeria Project (RNP) etc., to reposition the image and reputation of the country.

Statement of the Problem

The extent of success or otherwise of the image reform projects introduced by successive Nigerian governments from the early eighties till date is yet to be unravelled, hence the need for this study. More so, the way most cynics, image experts and public policy analysts within and outside the country perceive these seemingly unending image reform policies vis-à-vis the public uproar that greeted poor planning and implementation of such projects in recent years have not been adequately evaluated.

The import is that not much empirical studies have been done to ascertain the degree of success or otherwise of the diverse image reform programmes initiated by successive Nigerian governments right from 1984 to the present day. Few studies like those ones done by Aliede (2009, p.25-39), Nwodu (2012, p.30-61), Okoye (2014, p.2-19) and other scholars in this area were limited in scope as each of the studies concentrated on a particular period of Nigeria's socio-economic and political history. By implication, not much has been done to assess myriad of image restoration policies introduced by successive Nigerian governments from 1984 to the present day. The researcher considered this a major gap in knowledge which the present study aims at filling.

The burden of this study, therefore, was to empirically evaluate public perception of selected Nigeria's image reform projects introduced by past military/civilian rulers from the early eighties to date.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed:

1. How do respondents perceive the resources expended on the execution of Nigeria's image reform policies introduced from 1984 to 2014?
2. What do the respondents perceive as the major source of Nigeria's image problem from 1984 to 2014?
3. What do the respondents perceive as the major obstacles to the successful implementation of the nation's image reform projects from 1984 to date?

Literature Review

Conceptual Clarification of Image Reform Projects

According to Richard Stanley, image is the totality of impression about a company, an individual, or an organization as perceived by its various publics. The new International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary (2013, p.630) edition conceives image as the way in which a person or thing is popularly perceived or regarded; a representation in the mind of something...perceived at the moment through the senses; a product of the reproductive imagination or memory, of things seen, heard, touched and so forth. A synthesis of the

foregoing definitions depicts that an image is the mental picture or overall impression, or strong feeling members of the public have about an individual, organization, institution or country in conformity to the latter's observable traits over time.

Similarly, image reform projects literally refer to a series of organized actions or programmes intended to transform the negative perception of a country and /or inbuilt negative attitudes or preconceived notions of citizens of a given nation. Etymologically, perception refers to a process whereby members of the public become aware of, capture, recognize or apprehend through the senses, the existence of an object, issue or situation in a country.

Brief History of Selected Nigeria's Image Reform Projects (1984-2014)

The status of Nigeria both at home and abroad is a direct function of the orientation of its citizenry as manifested in their attitudinal dispositions, social mores and values. Prior and immediately after independence, the country was believed to be a relatively orderly, humane and value-based society, as family bonds were strong and individuals were more conscious of their responsibilities and obligations.

Doubtless, the oil boom of the early seventies opened the floodgate to various dimensions of social vices like corruption, avarice, selfishness, unbridled quest for materialism etc., which have virtually assumed the status of national culture. The implication of all these negative traits, was the enthronement of a society on the verge of degeneration and virtual disintegration.

It is in an attempt to reverse this ugly trend that the past successive Nigerian governments initiated series of reform programmes to reposition the image of the country and re-orientate her citizens. These image reform policies among others include: War Against Indiscipline (WAI); National Orientation Agency (NOA); Mass Mobilization for Social Justice Self Reliance and Economic Recovery (MAMSER); War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAI-C); Nigeria: Heart of Africa Project as well as Citizens' Diplomacy.

War Against Indiscipline: This image reform programme was introduced by Buhari/Idiagbon's regime (1984-1985). This image restoration policy like others that came before it was predicated on curbing official excesses of Nigerian political leaders and their subordinates. The WAI was launched in several phases and each phase addressed a particular form of indiscipline plaguing the Nigerian society.

This image reform policy according to Aligwe (2000, p.102), was initiated to eradicate bribery and corruption, abuse of public office and resources, lawlessness, impatience, unpatrotism, greed, graft as well as the desire to rip where one did not sow. Indeed, with deep sense of commitment and devotion displayed by the prosecutors of WAI reform programme, honesty, hard work, patriotism, patience, orderliness, meritocracy, fairness, justice, accountability as well as dignity became the order of the day.

Mass Mobilization for Social Justice Self Reliance and Economic Recovery: This image restoration policy was introduced by General Ibrahim Babangida's regime (1987-1993). This reform policy was designed to galvanize and re-orientate Nigerians to confront "with renewed faith and reinvigorated vision, the challenge of taking this nation to the greatness it deserves". Through the campaign, the then military regime had the hope of enthroning a society that would provide the conducive atmosphere for the attainment of its fundamental objectives of economic reconstruction, social justice and self-reliance.

The key functions of the Directorate as specified in Decree No. 31 of 1987, amongst others were to establish an appropriate framework for the positive mobilization and education of all Nigerians towards economic recovery and the development of a new social and political order; awaken the consciousness of all categories of Nigerians to their rights and obligations as citizens of Nigeria; inculcate in all Nigerians the value and spirit

of civil responsibility, commitment to societal justice and economic self-reliance through mobilization and harnessing of their energies and natural resources into productive use.

War Against Indiscipline and Corruption: This image reform policy was the brainchild of General Sani Abacha when he forcefully took over the reins of power from Ernest Shonekan (1993-1998). The thrust of this image reform programme revolves on the fact that indiscipline has been identified as the greatest threat to the attainment of national goals and rapid socio-economic development of the country. Therefore, there was need to restore discipline to our national life.

National Orientation Agency: By 1993, Babangida's regime realized the need to streamline the nation's machinery for the enthronement of a disciplined, morally conscious society. It was in this regard that the national Orientation Agency was established. The new agency absorbed the National Orientation Movement, NOM, WAI, MAMSER as well as Public Enlightenment Department of the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture.

Citizens' Diplomacy: This image reform policy emerged during Chief Obasanjo's second tenure as the civilian president of Nigeria (2003-2007). This image reform programme, otherwise known as people's diplomacy is a political concept that espouses that Nigerian citizens in Diaspora should always display positive attitudinal dispositions that are capable of repositioning the image of Nigeria and Nigerians. It also advocates that every Nigerian citizen overseas has the right or responsibility to help shape the country's foreign relations.

Nigeria: Heart of Africa Project: This image reform programme was initiated under President Obasanjo's administration in July 2004. The then Minister of Information and National Orientation, Chief Chukwuemeka Chikelu used this image reform policy to launder the image of Nigeria and Nigerians within and outside the country.

The primary objectives of this policy include amongst others, to redefine Nigeria's image and inspire pride in the hearts of her people all over the world; re-orientate Nigerians and promote national values; enhance the international perception of Nigeria, her people, economy and the value placed on her products. Chief Chikelu later handed over to Frank Nweke Jnr. as the chief executive of the then Ministry of Information and National Orientation, now Ministry of Information and Communications.

Rebranding Nigeria Project: This image reform policy emerged during President Umaru Yar'Adua's administration (2007-2010). It began on March 9, 2009 when the then Minister of Information and Communications, Professor Dora Akunyili used the image reform programme to reposition the image of Nigeria and Nigerians locally and internationally.

This image reform project was introduced to address the negative image perception of Nigeria and Nigerians by the international community, to give Nigeria a new name and image as well as attract foreign investment to the country.

An Appraisal of Nigeria's Image Reform Projects From the Early Eighties Till Date

The Buhari/Idiagbon regime which ousted Shagari's administration in December 31, 1983 initiated **War Against Indiscipline (WAI)** to launder the image and reputation of the country. In sheer modesty, this regime consistently strived to use resources at its disposal to wage relentless war against indiscipline and corruption in Nigeria few months after its emergence. Aligwe (2000, p. 102-103) agrees to the above claim where he affirmed that the brave soldiers of WAI annihilated bribery and corruption, abuse of public office and resources, lawlessness, impatience, unpatriotism, greed, graft, laziness and idleness, favouritism, mediocrity, cheating, disorderliness, dishonesty, fighting and quarrelling in public, drug trafficking, swindling, gambling as well as drunkenness. Though the Buhari

regime that threw up the image reform programme was shortlived, yet WAI to a large extent, succeeded in the eradication of indiscipline and corruption in the country.

General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida's regime came on board in 1985. The image reform policy tagged **Mass Mobilization for Social Justice Self Reliance and Economic Recovery (MAMSER)**, initiated by Babangida in 1987 was adjudged as the most ambitious and expensive image reform programme ever embarked on. In spite of the huge material and human resources sunk into this image restoration policy, the programme to a large extent, could not impact positively on the lives of Nigerian citizens because of lack of commitment and sincerity on the side of the initiator of the project.

Similarly, the image reform project christened **War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAI-C)** was initiated by Sani Abacha. Regardless of the huge amount of resources expended on the project, WAI-C became a political hoax, as it served as propaganda machinery to dress up innumerable atrocities perpetrated by the maximum ruler. Indeed, WAI-C like other past image reform policies that came before it, recorded colossal failure because of lack of commitment, insincerity and poor implementation. Instead of utilizing this image reform programme to launder the image and reputation of Nigeria and Nigerians, the dictator increasingly used it to witch hunt, hound and oppress his perceived political opponents/enemies.

Nigeria: Heart of Africa project, which was introduced by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, has been discontinued sequel to the fact that it could not impact positively on the challenges Nigeria and Nigerians are facing within and outside the country. According to Professor Dora Akunyili, Heart of Africa could not fly for many reasons, but the two most prominent reasons are: Firstly, the name is contentious; Malawi was the first to use the Heart of Africa. Secondly, Nigeria: Heart of Africa project was first launched overseas; and this automatically disconnected ordinary Nigerians from this project. This, no doubt, made the project look elitist in nature. The truth is that any image reform project that seeks to reposition the image of a country both internally and externally should start from home before it gets abroad. Despite the fact that huge chunk of money was sunk into this past Nigeria's image reform campaign projects like WAI-C, Ethical Revolution and MAMSER, the dreams of Nigeria: Heart of Africa project remain unrealizable.

The **Rebranding campaign programme**, which was introduced by Umaru Yar'Adua's administration stems from the need to ensure that it succeeds where others failed. However, most image reform experts and political pundits perceive this image reform project as a conduit pipe through which the country's hard earned financial resources are drained away by the executors of the project.

In summation, the major cause of failure of the past Nigeria's image reform projects include but not limited to the use of non-experts and unpatriotic individuals in various stages of project conceptualization, design and implementation. More so, lack of commitment, insincerity and deceptive attitude of our political leaders, inadequate provision of resources as well as outright alienation of Nigerian masses from taking active part in different stages of planning and implementation of image reform policies also gravely impeded the execution of such transformation programmes in the country. The truth remains that most Nigerian governments always **plan for and not with** the Nigerian citizens in the transformation process and this results in the failure of such restoration projects in the country, no matter the huge human and financial resources expended on such projects.

Strategies for Effective Management of Nigeria's Image Reform Projects

One of the significant advocacies of PR practitioners and image experts is that there should be massive mobilization of the citizenry towards adequate participation in the various stages of planning and implementation of Nigeria's image reform projects. Gone

are the days when planners/implementers of national image reform projects plan for and not with the targets of image rebuilding programmes.

Again, if what communication scholars did in mobilizing Nigerians towards nationalism, effectively co-ordinated post-independence national building efforts and the fight against military authoritarianism are anything to go by, then indigenous image experts and stakeholders can even do better now. The manifestations of such accomplishments are replete in the works of Omu (1978), Nwuneli (1985), Salama (1978), Ezera (1960), Okonkwo (1978) and Duyile (1987). Others are Uche (1989), Nwosu (1990), Umechukwu (1995), Okonkwo (1995), Osuji (2001) and Aliede (2003).

Previous empirical works obviously indicated that efficient harnessing of experts needed for the pursuit of similar campaigns in the past succeeded with the involvement of multi-media. According to some eminent communication scholars like Ekwelie (1980), Ogbodoh (1990) and Aliede (2006), the combination of traditional mode of communication with modern communication systems where necessary, will hasten the attainment of set goals in the desired quest for effective management of national image reform policies in the country.

In a similar vein, direct contact with Nigerian citizens should be made with the support of the local political leaders, group leaders and traditional rulers whom the people trust. These local leaders have what it takes to bring their subjects together with a view to persuading them to be part of the image restoration campaigns.

All in all, participatory image restoration campaign approach as advocated by Nwosu (2008, p. 1-19), persuasive campaign strategy, public agenda setting strategy as enunciated by Nwosu (2001), social integration campaign approach, community self-help approach, enduring media campaign strategy as well as enthronement of good governance are identified in this study, as the best strategies for the proficient management of Nigeria's image reform policies.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two theoretical constructs namely: perception theory and Jefkins' Transfer Process Model as expanded by Professor Ikechukwu Nwosu.

According to Berelson and Steiner (1964) cited in Severin and Tankard (1992, p.56), perception is the "complex process by which people select, organize and interpret sensory stimulation into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world". Bovee, Thill, Dovel and Wood (1995, p.97) conceive perception as the process of being exposed to a stimulus, paying attention to some degree, and then interpreting the received message.

Among the assumptions of perception theory, according to Anaeto, Onasanjo and Osifeso (2008, p.66), are that "mass communicators want audiences to pay attention to their messages, and make appropriate changes in attitude or beliefs, or produce the desired behavioural responses". The import of the above assertion is that during image reform campaigns, the executors of image restoration policies should convey campaign messages to the campaign targets (Nigerian citizens) through various media outlets, with the intent of persuading them to change their negative attitudinal dispositions. This will help them to shun fraudulent practices that are capable of tarnishing Nigeria's image locally and internationally and they will in turn, toe the path of moral rectitude.

Table 1: The Expanded Public Relations Transfer Model

Negative Situations or Dimensions		Positive Situations or Dimensions
Hostility	→	Sympathy
Prejudice	→	Acceptance
Apathy	→	Interest
Ignorance	→	Knowledge
Crises/War	→	Peace/Harmony

Source: Jefkins, F. (1988) As Expanded by Nwosu, I. E. (1996).

The Expanded Public Relations Transfer Model as illustrated above is an antidote against some negative developments in Nigeria. The transfer process model has been expanded by professor Nwosu to include the conversion of extreme situations of crises/war to peace/harmony and the “negative situations-cum-positive situation boxes”, as well as linking arrows, as shown in the above illustration. The relevance of this model to this study is that public relations strategies and tactics can be applied to douse off negative variables into positives by changing whatever hostile attitude of Nigerian citizens and members of international community to sympathy, converting prejudice to acceptance, apathy (disinterest) into interest and seek to erase ignorance through knowledge.

Methodology

This research adopted the descriptive research design wherein survey methodological approach was adopted. The study population was taken from six states selected from the six geo-political zones of Nigeria (Kaduna, Borno, Benue, Lagos, Enugu, Rivers, as well as the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja which is 33,524,645, according to the 2006 census results as obtained from the National Population Commission official website. Sample size of 400 was statistically determined using Taro Yamane’s formula at 0.5 error margin.

Table 2: Population and Sampling Frames

Geo-political Zone	State	Total Population	Sample	Percentage (%)
North West	Kano	6,113,503	73	18.2
North East	Borno	4,171,104	50	12.4
North Central	Benue	4,253,641	51	12.7
South West	Lagos	9,113,605	108	27.2
South East	Enugu	3,267,837	39	9.7
South South	Rivers	5,198,716	62	15.5
	FCT, Abuja	1,406,239	17	4.2
Total		33,524,645	400	100

Source: Collated from the National Population Commission Official Website

This paper adopted the survey research methodological approach. In this research context, the researcher studied the respondents selected from the six geo-political zones and FCT, Abuja in terms of their knowledge level of Nigeria’s image reform projects initiated by successive military/civilian rulers from 1984 to the present day.

The researcher adopted multi-stage cluster sampling technique, which involves sampling in successive stages, such that in each stage selection is made using any of the known probability sampling method (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2006, p.192). This sampling technique was more appropriate for the study because of the diverse, complex and heterogeneous nature of the Nigerian society.

The researcher combined purposive, simple random and stratified sampling techniques at the five stages of sampling as the case may be. At the final stage, the selected local government headquarters were stratified into three zones of North, Central and South respectively. The rationale for utilizing stratified sampling technique at this stage was to ensure that the composite characteristics of the study population were reflected in the sample to enhance its representativeness and minimize sampling error.

The researcher also used questionnaire in the collection of data. The questionnaire was considered appropriate because the respondents were scattered in the sampled locations (six states within the six geo-political zones of Nigeria and FCT, Abuja).

Data Presentation and Analysis

In this section, quantitative data generated through questionnaire were presented and analysed. Out of the 400 copies of questionnaire distributed, 4 copies were not properly filled, hence a mortality rate of 1.0%.

Research Question One: How do respondents perceive the resources expended on the execution of Nigeria's image reform projects introduced from 1984 to date?

Table 3: Resources Expended on the Execution of Nigeria's Image Reform Projects Introduced From 1984 to Date are Wasteful

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	104	26.3
Agree	217	54.8
Strongly Disagree	25	6.3
Disagree	44	11.1
Undecided	6	1.5
Total	396	100

Source: Field survey, 2014.

Data presented on Table 3 above reveals that the resources expended on the execution of Nigeria's image reform projects introduced from 1984 to date are wasteful as 104 (26.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed; 217 (54.8%) agreed; while it was only 25 (6.3%) that strongly disagreed; 44 (11.1%) disagreed and 6 (1.5%) were neutral on the issue. The implication of the respondents' reaction, is that though our political rulers may deem it expedient to initiate image reform projects with the intent of using them to restore the sagging image of Nigeria and Nigerians, experience has shown that they often use such projects to foster their hidden agenda. This amounts to running with the hare and hunting with the hound, as resources invested in such nebulous venture will certainly be a huge waste. This is perhaps, why all human and material resources invested in myriad of image restoration projects initiated by successive Nigerian military-cum-civilian governments since early eighties to the present day have been unrealizable.

Research Question Two: What do the respondents perceive as the major source of Nigeria's image problem from 1984 to the present day?

Table 4: Political Corruption as the Major Source of Nigeria's Image Problem From the Early Eighties to Date

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	118	29.8
Agree	210	53.0
Strongly Disagree	28	7.1
Disagree	33	8.3
Undecided	7	1.8
Total	396	100

Source: Field survey, 2014.

Presentation of research data on table 4 above shows that 118 (29.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed that political corruption is the major source of Nigeria's image problem, 210 (53.0%) agreed; 28 (7.1%) strongly disagreed; 33 (8.3%) disagreed; while 7 (1.8%) abstained from giving any answer. The respondents' reaction on this issue is indicative of the fact that corporate and political corruption exist side by side, but the latter is more devastating, hence it undermines democratic values and good governance in the country. This imports that political corruption is more dreadful than other types of financial and economic crimes as it wrecks the socio-economic and political foundation of the Nigerian society.

Research Question Three: What do respondents perceive as the major obstacle(s) to the successful implementation of Nigeria's image reform projects from 1984 to date?

Table 5: Nigerian Governments' Insensitivity, Expensive and Deceptive Approach to Governance Constitutes Major Impediments to the Successful Implementation of National Image Reform Projects Introduced from 1984 Till Date.

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	116	29.3
Agree	216	54.5
Strongly Disagree	27	6.8
Disagree	32	8.1
Undecided	5	1.3
Total	396	100

Source: Field survey, 2014.

Research data generated and presented on Table 5 indicate that the prevalence of Nigerian governments' insensitivity, prohibitive and deceptive mode of governance constitute major obstacle(s) to the successful implementation of the country's image reform projects introduced from 1984 to the present day. The reaction of the respondents on this knotty issue shows that 116 (29.3%) strongly agreed; 216 (54.5%) agreed; 27 (6.8%) strongly disagreed; 32 (8.1%) disagreed, whilst 5 (1.3%) of the respondents could not express their opinion on the issue. The implication is that Nigerian governments' insensitivity, expensive and deceptive approach to governance since early eighties till date, posed grave danger to the successful implementation of the country's image rebuilding policies.

Findings

After careful analysis, the following were the outcomes of the study:

- Evidence from research data shows that the actions or inactions of successive Nigerian military-cum-civilian leaders precipitated local and foreign negative image perception of Nigeria and Nigerians.
- It is also deducible from the research data that the respondents to a large extent, perceive the resources expended on the execution of Nigeria's image reform projects introduced from 1984 to date as monumental waste.
- The finding further reveals that respondents perceive political corruption as the major source of Nigeria's image problem.
- Evidence from statistical test also suggests that the respondents perceive Nigerian governments' insensitivity, prohibitive and deceptive mode of governance from the early eighties to date as the major impediments to the successful implementation of the country's image restoration programmes.
- Research finding further indicates that the respondents perceive poor planning and implementation of Nigeria's image restoration policies introduced from 1984 to 2014 as factors that precipitated the failure of the country's image reform projects.

Conclusion

The perceived failure of diverse image reform projects introduced from the early eighties till date, which were primarily caused by bad leadership and corruption does not speak well of Nigeria within and outside the country. It is not uncommon therefore to observe that public funds amounting to billions of Naira mapped out for the execution of image reform policies by past regimes/administrations since 1984 till date were often embezzled without conscience. As Nigeria's past military/civilian rulers lacked the leadership qualities and political will to implement image reform projects as originally conceived by them, they could not enjoy Nigerian citizens' maximum co-operation, trust and confidence. This often results to the failure of such projects, regardless of the euphoria that greeted their commencements. It follows, therefore, that strategies for effective planning and implementation and sustainability of such programmes must be put in place to avoid reoccurrence of our political leaders past mistakes.

Recommendations

It is pertinent to proffer some remedial measures to overcome non-realization of the dreams of Nigeria's image reform policies in future. Consequently, the following recommendations were made:

- Federal Government should offer necessary support to agencies and anti-graft bodies like National Orientation Agency, Federal Ministry of Information and Communications,

Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission as well as Economic and Financial Crimes Commission by providing them with all the requisite resources and conducive environment needed for the successful implementation of her diverse image reform programmes.

- There is need for Federal Government to engage a team of PR experts to assess the extent of successor otherwise of such projects right from 1984 till date. The outcome of their enquiry should be adequately matched with deliberate planned and sustained multi-faceted actions aimed at revamping the country's image.
- There is also the need for Nigerian political leaders serving at the Federal, State and local government levels to observe democratic principles and tenets, ensure prevalence of level playing ground in all electoral contests, drastic reduction in elective/appointive political positions vis-à-vis salaries and allowances that accrue to those who occupy such positions at the three tiers of government.
- There is also the need for the anti-graft agencies to devise effective measures to check the incidence of corruption and also step up strategies to discourage insensitivity, expensive and deceptive mode of governance often exhibited by our political rulers. This will help enthrone probity, transparency and accountability among our leaders.

References

- Achebe, C. (1983). *The trouble with Nigeria*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- Aliede, J. E. (2003). Mass media and politics in Nigeria: A historical and contemporary overview", In Nwosu, I. E. (Ed.) *Polimedia: Media and Politics in Nigeria*. Enugu: Prime Targets Limited.
- Aliede, J. E. (2006). "Advertising in Nigeria: An overview of the transitional trends from inception to the present", In Nwosu, I. E. and Nsude, I. (Eds.) *trado-modern Communication Systems: Interfaces and Dimensions*. Enugu: Prime Target Limited.
- Aliede, J. E. (2009). "An appraisal of Nigeria's local and foreign images", unpublished PhD Thesis. Makurdi: School of Postgraduate Studies, Benue State University.
- Aliede, J. E. (2010). "Rebranding Nigeria for national development: The challenges and ways forward", *IMT International Journal of Communication Arts*, Vol. 1 No 2.
- Aligwe, H.N. (2000) *Nigeria is coming: Interpretative analysis of events and issues in Nigeria*. Enugu: J.T.C Publishers.
- Anaeto, S. G., Onasanjo, O. S. & Osifeso, J. B. (2008). *Models and theories of communication*. Maryland: African Renaissance Books Incorporated.
- Baker, V. (2000). *Public relations and globalisation: managing change in a multi-cultural Society*", Paper Presented at NIPR Conference on Public Relations and Globalization: Managing Change in Multi-Cultural Society, Gateway Hotel, Abeokuta, June 26-29.
- Biereenu-Nnabugwu, M. (2006). *Methodology of political inquiry*. Enugu: Quintagon Publishers.
- Bovee, C. L., Thill, J. V., Dovel, G. P & Wood, M. B. (1995). *Advertising excellence*. United States of America: McGraw Hill Inc.
- Duyile, D. (1987). *Makers of Nigerian press*. Lagos: Gong Communication.
- Egwu, U. E. (2001). "Foreign media projection of Africa: The role of African communicators", *The Nigerian Journal of Communication*. Enugu: Prime Targets Limited. Vol. 1 No 1.
- Egwu, U. E. (2007). "Managing the image and reputation of Nigeria abroad: A critical appraisal and strategic options", *NIPR Public Relations Journal*, Vol. 3 No 2.
- Ezera, K. (1960). *Constitutional development in Nigeria*. Cambridge: Longman.
- Fab-Ukozor, N. (2002). "The use of public relations strategies in redeeming Nigeria's image: Searchlight on Abdulsalami Abubakar's Administration", M.Sc. Thesis, School of Postgraduate Studies, Enugu State University of Science and Technology.
- Jekfins, F. (1988). *Public relations technique*. Oxford: Professional Publishing Limited.
- Johnson-Agba, H. (2002). "Just how blind is transcorp's blind trust?" This Day, August 15.
- Ndolo, I. S. (2011). "Media as the fourth estate of the realm: real or imagined", In Ndolo, I. S. (Ed.) *Contemporary Issues in Communication and Society*. Enugu: Rhyce Kerex Publishers.
- Nwodu, L. C. (2012). "Empirical evaluation of Nigerian press coverage of rebranding, In Fort-Hare Papers, Vol. 19 No.1.

- Nwocha, J. (2002). "Leveraging Nigeria in the world media market", Paper Presented at NIPR Conference on Public Relations and Globalization: Managing Change in Multi-Cultural Society, Gateway Hotel, Abeokuta, June 26-29.
- Nwokeora, L. N. (1990). *Choosing an alternative (how Nigerian underdeveloped Nigeria)*. Onitsha: Ventas Publishers.
- Nwosu, I. E. (1990). "Public relations and advertising in the process of governance and economic recovery in Nigeria", In Nwosu, I. E. (Ed.), *Mass communication and National Development*. Aba: Frontiers Publishers Limited.
- Nwosu, I. E. (2001). *Integrated marketing communications and media*. Lagos: Dominican Publishers.
- Nwosu, I. E. (2008). "Building conducive policy environment for planning and executing advocacy, IEC and BCC projects/programmes on adolescent reproductive health in Nigeria", *The Nigerian Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 6 No.2.
- Nwuneli, O. (1985). *Mass communication in Nigeria: A book of reading*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers Limited.
- Ogbodoh, T. N. (1990). "Advertising development in Nigeria", In Okigbo, C. (Ed.) *Advertising and Public Relations*. Nsukka: Communication Research Project.
- Okonkwo, K. C. (1995). *The Nigerian press: How far...what Future?*. Enugu: Kens Communication.
- Okonkwo, R. C. (1978). The press and cultural development: A historical perspective, In Ogbu, K. U. (Ed.) *Reading in African Humanities (African Cultural Development)*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers Limited.
- Okoye, J. I. (2014). "An assessment of public perception of selected Nigeria's image reform projects (1984-2013)", unpublished PhD Thesis, School of Postgraduate Studies, Enugu: Enugu State University of Science and Technology.
- Okunna, C. S. (2002). "Re-engineering the social sector for challenges of globalization: The role of public relations, Paper Presented at NIPR Conference on Public Relations and Globalization: Managing Change in Multi-Cultural Society, Gateway Hotel, Abeokuta, June 26-29.
- Omu, F. (1978). *Press and politics in Nigeria: 1880-1937*. London: Longman Group Limited.
- Salama, G. (1978). *Television in a developing country*. Jos: Nigerian Television Authority.
- Saliu, H. (2006). "Nigeria's external image management", A Paper Delivered at a Roundtable on Nigeria's Reforms, University of Ilorin.
- Severin, W. J & Tankard, J. W. (1992). *Communication theories: origin, methods and uses in the mass media*. New York: Longman Publishing Group.
- Uche, L. U. (1987). *Mass media, people and politics in Nigeria*. New Delhi: Concept Publishers.
- Udeaja, P. (1988). *The way we are*. Enugu: Chika Printing Company.
- Ukozor, N. T. (2006). "Assessment of the use of public relations strategies in improving Nigeria's image during Abdulsalami Abubakar's regime" *The Nigerian Journal of Communications*, Vol. 4 No. 1 and 2.
- Umehukwu, P. O. J. (1995). *Mass media in Nigeria: students' companion*. Enugu: Jecon Association.