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AN EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MEDIA AS A TOOL FOR RESOLVING CRISIS

BY

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PG/M.Sc./93/18259

A RESEARCH PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT FOR THE AWARD OF M. Sc. DEGREE IN
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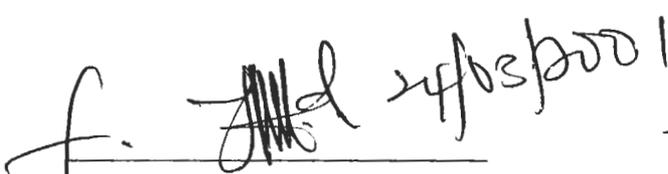DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING
FACULTY OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA
ENUGU CAMPUS

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i

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this Research work was duly carried out by UGWU FELIX NWABUEZE of department of Marketing, University of Nigeria Enugu Campus, having satisfactorily completed the requirement for the Course and Research work for the degree of Masters of science in Public Relations.

The work embodied in this report has not been submitted in part or full for any other diploma or degree of this or any other university.

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DR. ALEX N. IFEZUE   C. B. ACHISON

(SUPERVISOR)   (AG. HEAD, MARKETING DEPARTMENT)

DEDICATION

This Research work is dedicated to my Father Mr. George .E. Ugwu – *In Memoriam.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to use this medium to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to my Project Supervisor Dr. Alex N. Ifezue for his advice and patience throughout this research work. Your contribution to the success of this project has been immeasurable.

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My special thanks go to my Brother and friend SBC Ugwoke, who inspired me to take to this programme.

To my colleagues, especially Mr. IK Ubah, I say thank you very much.

I wish to state that I owe much to published and unpublished sources and acknowledge my indebtedness to authors too numerous to be cited in this paper.

Finally, may I plead guilty for any errors or omissions discovered in this report.

UGWU, FELIX .N

ABSTRACT

This study is aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of media as a tool for resolving crisis that engulfed corporate organisations. This is because an organisation in its endeavour to meet its corporate goals and objectives at times negatively affects the lives of its numerous corporate publics. And when such an unstable or crucial state of affairs in which a decisive change is pending, especially one with a distinct possibility of a highly undesirable outcome, such an organisation or establishment even individuals is in a crisis. By the nature of corporate institutions, crisis is more often than not an inevitable occurrence in human affairs. It in this regard therefore, that it is only within the atmosphere of peace and tranquillity that progress and prosperity can be achieved whether within a nation or institutional frame work.

The objective of this study includes:-

➤ To find out whether Government owned media houses are likely to criticise government corporate institutions involved in crisis situations;

➤ to ascertain whether the ownership of the media houses affect coverage of crisis situation negatively or positively.

➤ to determine whether members of the audience often perceive the media as credible sources about issues and events;

➤ to find out whether media houses have sufficient press freedom to make meaningful contributions in crisis situations;

➤ to determine whether the effectiveness of media houses in resolving crisis is likely to depend on how objective they are in making their reports.

It is important to note that the scope of this work covers the entire Enugu State. We drew our respondents from institutions and publics because of the nature

of information that are required. For the purpose of obtaining a balanced information; some communities were selected and visited. The survey research method was employed as an avenue to effectively record the feelings, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour of the audience in relation to media coverage and portrayal of a crisis. Reference were made to documentary sources, published and unpublished. Also consulted were books, journals, official report and statistics, newspapers, magazines, and records of institutions to enable us draw an empirical conclusion or analysis of this study so as to come up to a fairly objective findings. Structured questionnaires constituted a major source of primary data, while oral interview were also used as a follow up to collect more information. The questionnaires were structured as a fixed set of four and three alternative answer questions. There are two major areas. The first area focused on the demographic variables such as age, sex, and educational qualification while the second area contained the substantive questions relating to the subject matter of inquiry. A total of 200 copies of the questionnaires were produced and distributed. The staffs of corporate institutions, both management and line staff were the respondents. There were also selected publics and a few communities that formed the respondents. The questionnaire was pre-tested to reduce ambiguities and it resulted into minor changes in wordings and sequence. Out of its total of 200 questionnaires distributed, 198 were received and that shows we recorded 99 percent return rate.

Results:-

1. Government owned media houses are not likely to criticise government corporate institutions.
2. Ownership of media houses are likely to affect the coverage of crisis negatively or positively.

3. Members of the audience do not perceive media houses as credible sources.
4. Media houses do not have sufficient, press freedom to make meaningful contribution in crisis situation.
5. The effectiveness of media houses in resolving crisis is likely to depend on how objective they are in making their reports.

It recommended that for effective public relations management to occur, those at the helms of affairs of the public relations department must not only be at policy and management hierarchy but must be well grounded in the principles and practice of modern public relations.

Such persons must be vast in her/his grasp of the social sciences and social forces.

Organisations and corporate establishments should from the on set incorporate public relations as a philosophy and principles of management. This is because it has the tendency to place good and welfare above any other thing.

There is an urgent need for continued research and public relations in all spheres of human endeavour. This is because of increased public awareness and sensitivity.

TABLE OF CONTENT

CHAPTER ONE

1.0   Introduction

One of the areas of management in which public relations has staked out a special interest and developed real expertise in recent years is that of crisis management. There are some good reasons for this: -

A crisis, emergency or disaster is usually a very public event and the performance of any organisation caught in crisis is subject to immediate public scrutiny as it tries to deal with the many consequences of a crisis situation. The organisation's performance at such a time will be remembered and in some cases, memories of how poorly it responded may sooner or later, contribute to driving it out of existence.

A crisis for any organisation involves a serious threat to its interests and existence with which it has to deal quickly in order to minimise its consequences. Managers making decisions within an organisation in crisis are subjected to high levels of stress, as they are forced to take decisions under time pressure, often with insufficient information.

White (1991: 110)

Human situations are subject to frequent changes. The actor often may not even be aware of the changes occurring around him or even if he is aware of the impact of the changes of his own relationship with himself, with others and with his environment. Where in his own opinion, the changes are for the worse, it is left to him to try to control the situation, but his power to do so depends not only on the strength and discipline of his own inner self, but on the strength of forces external to himself.

Okigbo (1993: 174)

1.1 Background to the study

Public relations helps to manage important relationships at time of crisis by paying close attention to communication and to the way information about the crisis is managed. Its contribution is in sustaining important relationships, for example, with employees and their families, the media and the general public through the crisis and its aftermath, and meeting public interest as well as those of the organisation itself. Public relations at a time of crisis contributes to helping to maintain the organisation's reputations through the crisis which is partly achieved by the way the organisation responds, and is seen to respond to public and special group interests.

Public relations has come to play a central role in crisis management to the extent that crisis management is now one of the public relations most prominent contributions to management.

In dealing with crisis, its contributions are made at three stages: first, public relations are an anticipatory practice and can assist in crisis planning, the efforts made by organisations to predict and prepare for possible crisis.

Secondly, public relations are an important part of the overall management task at time of crisis.

Finally, it has a contribution to make to dealing with the aftermath of crisis. White (1991: 110)

From the perspective of marketing, public relations is part of the promotional activities and an aid to customers relations. This is because,

at the point of sales, public relations together with advertising and other promotional activities form the marketing communication process. One of the leading communicators on marketing practice, Philip Kotler had supported this view and suggested that public relations should be managed as part of marketing.

Public relations is defined by Institute of Public Relations London "as the deliberate planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its Publics". It is a distinctive management function, which helps to maintain two lines of communication between an organisation and its publics.

According to a Mexican statement signed by representatives of more than thirty national and regional public relations Associations in Mexican city on 11th August, 1978 states that of a public relations practice is the art and social science of analysing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organisation's leaderships and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve both the organisation's and the public interest".

Harlow (1989: 4) a veteran Public relations practitioner, defined public relations as a distinctive management function which helps to establish and maintain mutual lines of communications, understanding, acceptance and co-operation between an organisation and its publics.

The effectiveness of a media as a tool for resolving crisis have the ability to create and nurture vivid images of events in the people's mind through the amount and style of effective publicity given to an event. Event that are important are often easy to distinguish from others in terms

3

of the prominence given to them by the media and the frequency with which accounts of these events are presented to the audience.

Crisis is a decisive moment in illness or health or in history or a radical change of status.

Okigbo (175)

In economics, or politics it is a turning point or a time of danger. Move to the point, a crisis represents an unstable state.

A problem develops into a crisis if it persists over a long time and on an increasing scale and the action expected to rectify it not only fails to do so, but pushes the system further away from the desired result.

There are occasions when catastrophe-minor or major-demand immediate and effective action rather like a fire engine or a lifeboat responding to an SOS. This type of public relations practice is usually termed as 'crisis public relations' or crisis management.

Black (1989: 30-31)

Peace and stability are essential pre-requisites for oil industry operations. Consequently, the public relations department scrupulously monitors the relationship between the industry and the communities in which the industries operates in order to ensure that understanding and harmony prevail at all times. This is done through periodic meetings with opinion leaders of the various communities in the oil producing areas and identifying with the developmental aspirations of these communities.

1.2   Statement of the problem

The essential element of society is the interaction of human beings in such a manner as to mutually benefit and supports one another. If man

4

is to live in society and corporate body is to exist, there must be a way of steering the affairs of society. by the nature of human affairs, there is an inherent tendencies for disabilities and disharmonies. We live in a competitive world and competition whether subtle or brazenly aggressive is a necessary pre-condition for the progress of man and society.

And so, an organisation in its endeavour to meet its corporate goals and objectives, at times negatively affects the lives of any of its numerous corporate publics. When such an unstable or crucial state of affairs in which a decisive change is pending, especially one with a distinct possibility of a highly undesirable outcome, we say that an organisation or establishment, even individuals are in a crisis.

It thus becomes imperative that by nature of a nation-state, like Nigeria and the nature of corporate Institutions, crisis are more often than not an inevitable occurrence in human affairs. In this study, our emphasis is on crisis that affects a corporate Institution. In this regard, therefore, it is our thesis that is only within the atmosphere of peace and tranquillity that progress and prosperity can be achieved whether within the framework of a nation or Institutional framework.

The media is recognised universally through empirical observation, as a vehicle for moulding public opinion, feelings, attitudes and behaviour of people exposed to its contents. However, no one is sure of its effectiveness in resolving crisis situations involving Corporate Institutions.

The specific problems to address includes the following:

1. Are the government owned media houses likely to criticise government corporate institutions involved in crisis situation?

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2. Does ownership of media houses affect coverage of crisis situations negatively or positively?

3. Do members of the audience often perceive the media as credible about issues and events?

4. Do the media house have sufficient press freedom to make meaningful contributions in crisis situations?

5. Is the effectiveness of media houses in resolving crisis likely to depend on how objective they are in making their reports?

1.3   The purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of media houses in resolving crisis situation.

1.4   The objective of the study

The objectives are:

1. To find out whether government owned media houses are likely to criticise government corporate institutions involved in crisis situations.

2. To ascertain whether ownership of media houses affect coverage of crisis situations negatively or positively.

3. To determine whether members of the audience often perceive the media as credible sources about issues and events.

4. To find out whether media houses have sufficient press freedom to make meaningful contributions in crisis situations.

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6

5. To determine whether the effectiveness of media houses in resolving crisis is likely to depend on how objective they are in making their reports; and

6. To make recommendations in line with our observations.

1.5   Formulation of hypotheses

Ho_1: Government owned media houses are likely to criticise government corporate institutions.

Ho_2: Ownership of media houses is unlikely to affect coverage of crisis negatively or positively.

Ho_3: Members of the audience often perceive media houses as credible sources.

Ho_4: Media houses have sufficient press freedom to make meaningful contributions in crisis situations.

Ho_5: The effectiveness of media houses in resolving crisis is unlikely to depend on how objective they are in making their reports.

1.6   Significance of the study

The study is significant in varying ways. Firstly, it is an attempt to document problems of the media in relation to crisis resolution.

Secondly, information or data generated in this study will be invaluable to media corporate bodies, media practitioners, the academics, students of mass communications, marketing and marketing communications.

Similarly, authorities in government will find the work invaluable in making policies and programmes especially in the area of national communication.

Nation building is an onerous job that requires resources of all kind. No contribution no matter what sector it is coming, is little. Every effort at sensitising, crystallising and evaluating nation problems, no matter from the ramification is not only invaluable but also a step in the right direction.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The greatest constraints on this study will be getting adequate and correct information from the respondents. This is because corporate bodies more often than not are likely not willing at giving out information since they think it is aimed at prying into the organisation. They also do not show adequate interest in the face of the seemingly labour unrest in the country and lack of conducive working environment in the country.

It is also worthy of note that the high cost of living due mainly to poor remuneration and inflation due to the economic situation in the country coupled with the high cost of transportation affects seriously the nature of this research work.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0   REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Early research in mass communication began after the First World War. The research was focused on propaganda and the effect of communication. So strong was the use of the mass media as instrument of propaganda that the media was to be feared as very powerful. Communication, according to Schramm, (1971), was seen as a magic bullet that transferred ideas or feelings or knowledge or motivations almost automatically from one mind to another. However, later research findings come to invalidate the bullet or hypodermic need theory. This revision of thinking on the power of the media was necessitated by the new theories as individual differences, perspectives, social categories and social relationships.

In the vein of argument that people could not be led around by their collectives, or be buffeted according to the way the wind happened to be blowing.

Cassata and Asante: (1979)

As emphasis shift from the powerful effect (bullet theory) theory of the media, a new consensus was arrived at. The new model emerged in the 1940's called Limited Effect Model. The thrust of the new approach was that selective perception could reduce the effectiveness of a message.

Klapper (1960) expounded the model well in his book, the effect of mass communication, some of his postulations in the book includes:-

1. Mass communications ordinarily does not serve as a necessary and sufficient cause of audience effects, but rather functions among through a nexus of mediating factors and influences.

9

2. These mediating factors such that they typically renders mass communication a contributory agent, but not as the sole cause in a process of reinforcing existing conditions.

By mediating factors, Klapper was referring to the selective processes, selective perception, selective exposure and selective retention. In general, the limited effect of mass communication is also referred to as "the law of minimal consequences". This phrase is coined by Hope Lumin Klapper, wife of Joseph Klapper.

Lang and Lang: (1968)

In the 1970's, new developments led to revision of the limited effect model. The revision is a realisation that though the mass media may not be that powerful as explicated by the bullet or mechanistic S – R theories as advocated by the limited effect theory. It has certainly moderate effect on cognition, perception and behaviour of the audience. This proposition is called the moderate effect model. This model includes a number of approaches; the information seeking paradigm, the uses and gratification approach, the agenda setting function and cultural norm theory. These approaches are audience-based theories within the broader Moderate Effect Perceptive. These approaches have the following assumption in common:

1. That the limited effect model overstated the smallness of the effects of mass communication, and that in certain situations mass communication might have important effects.

2. That past research has to a large extent looked for efforts of mass communication on attitudes and opinions, where as looking at other department variables might have found greater effects.

3. That past research has been one-sided in conceptualisation in that it has asked, "what is mass communication doing to the audience members to the exclusion of another important question". What does the audience members do with mass communication.

4. That past research has studied short-term effects of mass communication almost to the exclusion of long-term effects.

From the foregoing theoretical overview we can conveniently state that the mass media is a tool for social transformation. Traditional agents of socialisation are the family, the school and peer group.

Though, these variables still subsist in their social functions, the media have continuously assumed an enviable positions as agent of change. In consonance with this postulation, we go ahead and theorise that the media is an effective tool for resolving crisis. Cohen (1963) succinctly demonstrates the effect of the media thus "The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about."

This postulation is aptly in accord with the moderate theory. It is within this premise that this research study is anchored.

2.1   Index of Crisis

That Nigeria is a colonial creation is a truism. What has remained a perennial subject of debate and controversy is the effect of such colonial and imperial legacy on the development and stability of the country. Nigeria as amalgamated in 1914 was rather a question of administrative and political exigency for the colonial power rather than a socially and

politically stabilising structure created with the yearnings and aspirations of the people of Nigeria at heart.

It is over 37 years since Nigeria attained political independence from imperial Britain. At independence while the union jack was being lowered and the Green-White-Green of Nigeria being hoisted many Nigerian in the euphoria of the moment celebrated total emancipation of Nigeria. The era ushered in a new spirit of dreaming. Dreaming of economic growth, good health, political stability and the realisation of individual potentials in an atmosphere of credibility. But alas, since independence, the nation has witnessed a myriad of crisis and conflict that many today question the wisdom of Lord Lugard in forcibly making a "Nation" of an obviously contradictory nations of people's of Nigeria.

Such unholy alliance can only at best breed unending crisis because of inherent dysfunctional system of political structure. Competition and rivalry is usually rife among the contending units in this case tribes and people numbering over 250. It is this heightened state of affairs that breed crisis as religious intolerance political instability and leadership crisis, economic poverty and general level of deprivation and under development, faulty educational system and attendant fallen standard, unending health problem, dictatorship and abuse of human and civil rights and even constitutional rights of the people, mistrust and disloyalty are some of the delitating and destabilising factors in the system that are potentials like a keg of gun power in crisis. Every nation has its own share of crisis. In other words, crisis is a national cause of human sociology. But the problem before us is the level of crisis in a system when compared to other systems.

Let us take an aspect of the problems just mentioned and see what professional or scholarly views are on it. The problem of political development, political instability and leadership crisis in Nigeria. Almond and Powell (1966) says that "Development results when the existing structure and culture of political system is unable to cope with the problem or challenge which confronts it without further structural differentiation and cultural secularisation".

In this regard the challenge which the political system has to cope with according to Almond and Powell are:

1. State Building: this is the problem of establishing or maintaining authority of penetration and control. The problem of state building may be externally generated, or it might arise internally as determined demands for radical change, which might endanger the survival of the status quo.

2. Participation: The problem of coping with the pressure from groups in the society for having a part in decision making of the system.

3. Distribution and welfare: The pressure from domestic system to redistribute income, wealth opportunity and honour.

4. Nation Building: This is the problem of winning for the political system, the loyalty and commitment of its subjects.

Commenting on this postulation, Claude Ake (1979) in his book social science as imperialism – Theory of Political development noted "this classification of the problems or crisis of political development as in Almond and Powell differs somewhat from the classification we find in Pye

and in the Princeton series where we have the following classification of the crisis of political development. Pye (1966)

1. Identity Crisis: This is the problem posed by the fact of having traditional forms of identity ranging from tribe or caste to ethnic linguistic groups. The problems to shift identity from these levels to the ecumenical level of the state.

2. Legitimacy Crisis: This is the problem of achieving agreement regarding the legitimate nature of authority and the proper responsibilities of government.

3. The Penetration Crisis: Essentially the problem of government in reaching down into the society and affecting basic policies.

4. Participation Crisis: The participation crisis occurs when there is uncertainty over appropriate rate of expansion and when the influx of new participants creates serious strains on the existing institutions.

5. The Integration Crisis: The problem of integration deals with the extent to which the entire polity is organised as a system of interacting relationships.

6. The Distribution Crisis: This is the problem of how governmental power is to be used to influence the distribution of goods, services and values throughout the society.

We have taken this painstaking elaboration in order to demonstrate that the Nigerian Nation state is by every sense of the word politically unstable hence the potency for crisis eruption and to a large extent conflict.

14

According to Ake (1979: 13) Almond and Powell tells us how to explore the relation between challenges and responses. First, we should describe this relation in terms of the three functional levels: Capabilities, conversion of functions and system maintenance and adaptation functions. Thus we might talk of a crisis arising because of a decline in one of the system capabilities, for example distribution capacity. Second, the way that the political system responds to this crisis may be described in terms of how the performance of the conversion function is affected.

In conclusion, Almond and Powell (1966: 38) succinctly demonstrated the function and responses of subsystems to a crisis situation, as is expected the media is not left out in this calculation.

Thus, when we say that Britain was confronted with the challenge of participation in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, we must describe her response to this challenge in terms of what happened to the conversion functions and to interest groups, political parties, media of communication, parliament and cabinet which performed these conversion functions.

We want to reiterate our decision and confidence in elaborating on the political development aspect of the way variables that can lead to crisis because of our belief that political stability can greatly affect the way other sector progress. It is equally our resolve that the mass media can effectively contribute to both conversion functions and systems maintenance and adaptation functions.

Kepplinger (1983: 61) in Micheal Kunczik (1991: 236) concluded that the media originally located outside the political system have taken over a place within the political system. "The media have become a

political force that no longer only reacts, but also essentially acts, and since the media an autonomous force, define the extent of the political possible indirectly co-governs". On the significance of the mass media in political life, Karl (1982: 144) writes, "The media are increasingly a part of the process (if not the entire process) in the communication between government and policies about international politics". Kunczik is also of the view that once a government come under pressure from what is already on media record, in the event of a potential or actual conflict, negotiated solutions could become more difficult if it seemed that such a new conciliatory approach might because of an earlier media expressed hard line involves a loss of face.

Quoting Karl (1982: 152) again, in an age of media diplomacy, stagecraft may become the hostage – if – not the victim of stagecraft. Only the media have a first strike capability on both national and international level.

Broadly, from the foregoing it is our view that crisis is present in only nation state as well as in business organisation. And the media, as the Fourth Estate of the Realm, have strong roles to play in determining the course of a crisis. The way the media select report and amplify a news item determines the level of public perception and importance attached to it.

In this regard, the media by setting public agenda and conferring significance and importance on issues or crisis situations help shape and determine public opinion. It is not only the public that is so affected, the government also is affected and influenced by the level of media coverage of events.

16

The ability of the media to confer status and significance to events and issues is what is theoretically called agenda setting function of the media. The agenda setting theory is set in casual terms. It pre-supposes that a relationship exist between what the media audience discuss as important and what the media presented prominently and frequently.

In other words, it is the positive relationship that exists between media coverage and the salience of a topic in the public mind.

(Defleur and Dennis: 1988; Cassata and Asante: 1979)

No organisation can succeed without the goodwill and public understanding towards its activities. The media is one institution that can help generate these positive attributes or mar the business fortunes of an organisation especially during a crisis engulfing such business concern.

2.2 The Nature of Public Relations

Public relations have assumed great importance in the affairs of not only corporate organisations but also government, politicians and individuals who have any thing meaningful to do with the public. The days are gone when business organisations do business without regard for the feelings and opinions of their various publics. They not only need the co-operation, understanding and goodwill of their publics but their unflinching support and loyalty. In 1882, when William Henry Vanderbilt was credited as saying "The public be damned...I don't take any stock in this silly nonsense about working for anybody's good but our own because we are not".

(Bertrand Canfield)

17

It is now 116 years since this "infamous" statement was made. Today the public of any forward-looking enterprise now receives premium attention in organisation policies, plans and programmes.

In spite of the vital position public relations occupy in social and business organisations, it is one concept and phenomenon that is often misunderstood, misinterpreted. There are many communication concepts related to public relations, which often get confused with public relations. These include publicity, press agentry, propaganda, journalism and marketing. This state of confusion has led to variegated definitions and interpretations of public relations. (Salu: 1994; Nolte: 1979; Thomas: 1979; Nwosu: 1996; Idemili: 1990)

Idemili (1990) recorded some derogatory definitions of public relations thus, "public relations has been described by its critics as the invisible sell", the engineering of consent; and projecting corporate image, its practitioners have been referred to as press agents, image merchants, and hidden persuaders who surreptitiously seek to influence public opinion in favour of courses of questionable merit. (Confield: (19)

A newspaper columnist once wrote scornfully that public relations are only an aristocratic term for publicity or press agentry.

Jeffers (1977: 3-4) noted that public relations practitioners are often characterised as obstructions in the newsman's path to the truth... presenting only the 'good side' of the story."

The foregoing are some of the misrepresentations of what public relations is and the vantage position it occupy in the management of business organisation, government and individual affairs. In order to refute these misconceived, misconstrued and cynical views of the place of

18

public relations in public life, we shall attempt to present some empirical and professional definitions of public relations.

Considering the fact that public relations is used in several ways, and perceived in diverse ways, it is usually difficult to present a consensus front or definition that is accepted to all. However, from empirical observations and professional insights, according to Defleur and Dennis (1988:297), people do agree however, that public relations is a planned and organised communication process that links particular elements of society together for particular purposes.

Stressing, he wrote that a leading public relations text by Cutlip and centre (1978:4) the term public relations is used in at least three senses. The relationship with those who constitute an organisation's publics or constituents, the ways and means used to achieve favourable relationship and the quality or status of the relationships. Thus one term is used to label both means and ends to name a condition and to express the conduct or actions related to those conditions.

Confield (1968: 4) see public relations as "a social philosophy of management expressed in policies and practice which are communicated to the public to secure its understanding and goodwill". Other popular definitions of public relations are that the Institute of Public Relations in Britain (IPR) and the public relations news of New York. The former defines Public Relations as "the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics".

Black (1970: 30-4) the later which Idemili (1970:217) says has gained widespread acceptance, defines Public Relations as "the

management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or an organisations with the public interest, and plans and executes a programme of action to earn public understanding and acceptance".

From whatever perspective one sees public relations, the truth is that it is the descriptions of the communication process, which relates an organisation with its various public. It is a relational affair that strives for a balance between the parties involved in an atmosphere of mutuality.

Defleur and Dennis gave credence to the communication stand point of public relations in the following veins.

Like advertising, public relations are a communication process. It is planned and organised and depends at least in part on the mass media to carry its messages. But unlike advertising, it is not controlled. Stressing further "Basically, if (public relations) is a communication process whereby an individual or unit of society attempts to relate in organised fashion to various groups or public for particular purposes. The purposes usually centre on a positive public image". The primary message of any public relations activity taking insight from the foregoing plethora of definitions, it is an exercise in building favourable climate of opinion.

2.3   Public Relations at Work

Going by the public relations news of New York definition, (quoted earlier) public relations has four basic attributes in (S.O. Idemili)

1. It has a social philosophy and functions of management. This is an attribute of the management of an organisation, which places the

interests of people first in all matters pertaining to the conduct of the organisation.

2. It studies and evaluates public attitudes that are capable of affecting its operations.

3. It executes a programme of action to earn public understanding and acceptance.

Cutlip and centre (1978: 138-230) posit that any public relation programme must include four fundamental steps. See also Defleur and Dennis (1988: 301-304), Idemili (1990: 225-235)

1. Fact-finding and feedback. This state includes background research on the audience to be researched by the programme, including impressionistic observations by knowledgeable observers as well as scientific studies of public opinion. The public relations practitioner uses this information to define the problem and identify the audience to be reached.

2. Planning and programming: The public relations practitioner takes the information from the fact finding stage and puts it to work by plotting a broad strategy for the public relations programme. This strategy includes a timetable, budget and probable targets for the message.

3. Action and communication: In this stage, the public relations programme is initiated using whatever tools and media that are appropriate. This is the actual communication in which pamphlets are distributed, speeches are given, or news releases are sent to media organisations.

21

4. Evaluation: After the programme is initiated and carried out, it is assumed in several ways – by measuring changes in attitudes and opinion among particular publics, by counting news clipping or reports on radio and television to evaluate the success of contacts with the news media by interviewing key opinion leaders. It carried to its logical conclusion evaluation that should affect future public relations activity depending on what worked and what did not.

In actual practice, public relations campaign begins with the recognition of a problem or a perceived need for an image change of some sort. We shall return to how a public relations campaign can be used to tackle bad publicity and attendant negative image using a hypothetical crisis situation.

There exist numerous publics of Public relations:- Some internal and other external. And the kind of communication used in every situation depends whether the public concerned is internal or external publics.

According to Defleur and Dennis (1988: 304-305) "Internal communication is communication within the organisation itself to its internal public. For example, a labour union communicates to its members through newsletters, meetings, bulletin, boards and other media. Internal messages are aimed at a discrete group of people. This is not communication with the general publics through public media. External communications, on the other hand is communication to large diverse public or to particular segments of population outside the organisation usually through the mass media". It is important we appreciate the fact that internal and external publics each has its own value, experiences and

22

objectives that make them distinct from each other and thereby demands specific approach.

Thomas (1979:55) To underpin the differences says, "the stronger prejudices of external publics can constitute an additional screen through which a message must pass" when juxtaposition with the internal publics.

2.4   Publics of an Organisation

No two organisations are exactly the same. But some common approaches guides the identification listing, analysis and description of publics. The number of publics open to an organisation is sometimes a reflection of the organisations size, its products or services, the structure of organisations and the level of relations with other organisations and bodies.

What then is public? A public says Nolte (1979:125) is everyone interested in or affected by an organisation or whose opinions can affect the organisation.

This applies to individuals, ideas, products, or services as well as to organisations. The public has a dual nature. It can be affected and it can affect. In general, there are two publics – the employee public and the outside public.

Lawrence Nolte divides the public of an organisation into three broad categories. This will serve our purpose.

They are:-

(a) Primary publics: These are employees, owners, customers and the community in which the organisation operates.

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23

(b) Secondary Publics: These are educators, government, suppliers, dealers and competitors. These publics are classified as secondary because they are not common to all situations and because the bulk of public relations activity is directed towards the four primary publics.

(c) Special public: There are usually interest and pressure groups. Although Nolte did not include media public in his categorisation. We shall here fill that gap because of the special place and role the media today occupy in the scheme of all human relations.

2.5 Public Opinion

In a synthetically definition of public opinion Harnessy (1981: 4) said that public opinion is the complex of preferences expressed by a significant number of persons on an issue of general importance, Nolte (1979:99) gave two definitions of public opinion, one a modification of the other "Public opinion on any subject (or person or organisation) is the sum of individual opinions on that subject (or person or organisation)". Slightly modified as public opinion is the sum of individual opinions on an issue affecting these individuals. Public opinions affect every person, organisation or government. No individual or institution is immune from the power prevalence and pervasiveness of public opinion.

Opinion is an expression of attitude, and since public opinions, the only way to sway public opinion is to sway individuals. If we must sway the opinion of people, we must just affect their attitude, which is the source of the opinion. An attitude is described as a learned predisposition to evaluate or an enduring tendency to respond consistently to an object, person or event in either a favourable or unfavourable way. Casetelle and

Zalkind (1963) define attitude as "a predisposition to act or speak or think in a favourable or unfavourable way about a particular subject". On the other hand, Worchel, et al, (1988:200) sees attitude as "one's liking or disliking for any object, person, idea, and so on". We can see from the proceeding discuss that attitude and public opinion are inseparably tied together. To further underscore the vantage position, public opinion occupies in this study and in all other facets of institutional relations let us documents this comment by Nolte (1979:99) "The power of public opinion is almost limitless. No king or dictator ever succeeds without public support... Even the commonest control fails when people refuse to obey...soviet...dictatorship... continually cultivates favourable public opinion with a never ending barrage of propaganda".

Anytime crisis erupts in an organisation, determined effort is usually directed towards managing it. In essence what an organisation attempts to manage during the event of a crisis is public opinion as it relates to the crisis and organisations future. It is the prerogative of the public relations department of such an organisation to map out public relations campaign designed to bring the crisis under control and retain public goodwill, understanding and support. In this regard, other concept imperative to this study is the nature of crisis and crisis management and media effect. The thrust then is, how best can a public relations department effectively employ the media in tackling particular crisis.

2.6   The Nature of Crisis

We had earlier looked at crisis from the political dimensions and how it can hamper or impinge on business environment of an

organisation. Now we move closely to the thrust of this study-crisis in an organisation and how best public relations principles and practices can be dutifully applied via the media of communication to its eventual resolution.

The Webster's Nineth New Collegiate Dictionary defines crisis thus:-

a. "An unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending, especially with a distinct possibility of a highly undesirable outcome (a financial crisis)

b. A situation that has reached a critical phase (the energy crisis)".

Similarly, Collins English dictionary sees crisis as "crucial stage, turning point, time of actual trouble or danger". Crisis therefore can be seen as a threat to the maintenance of social or business order or as a state of 'static disequilibrium' crisis has a disruptive tendency to the well being of business organisation. Crisis could emanate within the organisation or from outside as a result of the organisations policy and activity. It may have consequences on the lives of the people within the organisation and or among the organisation publics. Such unsalutory state of affairs portends danger to the survival or profitability of the organisation. When crisis erupts, it generally affects the opinion and attitudes of an organisation's publics. It is the reaction, public opinion of the publics so affected that determines the fate of such a company. However, to a great extent, the outcome of a crisis depends on how much it is managed. Management of corporate or business crisis is a prime function of public relations. And the extent to which the public relation executives harness media potentials in resolving the crisis determines its success or failure. In other words, communication is pivotal in the

management of crisis. In this connection, Schramn (1963: 7-8) asserts that communication is the process through which we select data from events occurring in our world and process these into information towards some goal.

Often some crisis come unannounced while at other times they evolve out of a smearing trouble spot. Whatever is the nature of a crisis scholarly evidence abound that research can always serve safety mechanism for unveiling potential trouble spots. When such is discovered there usually exist strategic tool available within the management emergency arsenal to tackle such before it degenerates like a festering tumour. Crisis resolution is the act or process of reducing a simple or manageable context of an unstable state of affairs to a state conducive for business operations, continued public goodwill understanding and support. The ultimate goal of public relations executive should always be aimed at ensuring that a potential or actual crisis situation does not manifest into conflict.

2.7   Crisis Management

We had defined public relations else where (PR news of New York: 1947) as "a philosophy and function of management which evaluate public attitude, identifies the policies of an individual or organisation with public interest and executes a programme of actions to earn public understanding and acceptance". In this vein, effective crisis management begins with the identification of a potential crisis spot or situation or eruption of crisis.

"From the perspective of corporate change, change dynamics and change management". Crisis can be defined as "any event, issue, occurrence or situation that could be described as a turning point for better or for worse". Nwosu (1996: 106) He contends that crisis has both positive and negative valencies or score as a change agent or factor in organisational management.

Salu (1992) pointed out that according to Canadian public relations consultants, "when viewed in the continuum of an organisations development, a crisis is also one of the most effective agent of change imaginable. A crisis causes something in the same way never to be the same again".

From the foregoing perspective, we see crisis as a negative development, which is capable of disrupting the mutual co-existence of an organisation with other members of the system. In this systemic umbrella, an organisation is a subsystem that seeks balance and mutually within the larger setting. According to Nwosu, "crisis management...involves taking appropriate measures to prevent a crisis before it occurs or manage/control it well when it occurs". A whole lot of issues or situations can bring about a crisis that negatively impinges on the operations of an organisation. We shall later list a litany of situations that could generate crisis.

Michael Regester posits as reported in Salu (1994:398). "Crisis Management is about seizing the initiatives, taking control of what has happened before it engulfs the company. Planning for a crisis is the key to corporate survival".

In reviewing the remaining segment of this section, we shall adopt Adekunle salu's three broad perspectives of crisis management beginning with policy, corporate change and crisis.

Policy unarguably the corporate survival of any organisation is prerogative of Board of directors. Such aspirations are exemplified in organisation policy.

Therefore, public relations ideally can be at all times at the heart of the responsibility of every board member policy is the fundamental principles which governs the operations of a company. Policy ensures "sound working relationship among the operating departments within the organisation on the other hand, and between the corporate entity and the various publics whose activities impact on the organisation or which the organisation seeks to influence. On the other hand, in order for the entity to achieve its corporate goals, whatever these goals may be". Salu (1994:379)

Image, every organisation has certain impression about itself, so also do its various publics hold some impression or basic attitudes and orientation towards it. The kind of image an organisation has affects negatively or positively the product or service provided. Every product or services offered by an organisation elicits a particular kind of image among its publics.

And because various kinds of image exist, there is the overwhelming need for the public relations department to always through research ascertain the kinds of image with which the organisation is identified.

Salu (1994: 380-381) identifies six kinds of images:-

-The Mirror image

-The Current image

-The Wish image

-The Corporate image

-The Multiple image

-The Good or bad image

The mirror image is the kind of image people in an organisation especially its leaders believes to be the impression outsiders have of the organisation. Current image is the type people outside the organisation have about the organisation. This might be based on experience or on poor information and understanding. Wish image is the kind of desired image the management wants to posses. This related to new phenomenon which the organisations publics are completely uniformed. Corporate image refers directly to the organisation as a whole rather than its product or service. The composite elements of corporate image may include the organisation history, financial success and stability, quality of production, industrial relations, social responsibility and reputation as an employer.

Multiple image envisages diverse image held separately by organisations public resulting from different faces the organisation present at diverse time and places. This does not make for uniform or total image. The problem according to Salu, can be solved by the use of uniforms, symbols, badges, staff, training, name display, interior layout and display materials.

Good or bad image: An organisation can have good or bad image. The ideal public relation image should be a true image based on

experience, knowledge and understanding of facts. Public relations believe that a better image has to be earned by putting right the causes of the bad image. To attempt to falsify is an abuse of public relations. It is therefore important that the image of the organisation, its products or services should be highly rated at all times.

We had earlier submitted that crisis is a turning point in an organisation that has the tendency to be disruptive or which upsets the socio-economic equilibrium of a business environment. Our mission statement in this study is to evaluate ways and means through which a resolution can be arrived at. From empirical and scholarly perspectives, it is now evident that an understanding of the kind of image held by an organisation's public in the event of crisis is a step toward solution.

Often times, when a crisis does visit an organisation, the natural consequence is bad image. A Company's product kills people; a major industrial accident threatens lives and prevents series of major air crash involving a brand of aircraft, consumer demonstration etc.

Any of these could stimulate negative public opinion and galvanise mass public or governmental sanctions. The economic of financial consequences cannot be over-stressed.

Salu submits that "Because most crisis bear directly on the corporate image of organisations, certain policy guidelines have evolved. They have led to the establishment of certain measures, which help to either anticipate crisis and prevent the out break of crisis or to control crisis when they breakout rather than be controlled by the crisis.

In continuation of our evaluation of the nature of crisis, Salu (1994:383) advised that the following questions might sound pertinent: -

a. What is the nature of the emergency?

b. How did it start? Is it continuing?

c. Who is responsible for starting it?

d. Who is responsible for tackling it?

e. What are risk involved? To an organisation? To individual?

f. What are the possible outcomes?

There are pertinent and cogent questions imperative in course of resolving a crisis. A plan or programme of action packaged through the media should effectively address these questions if such media campaign must succeed.

The work of Canadian public relations consultancy "Crisis communication management system" as reported by Salu (1994:385-386) sheds light on your elements of crisis thus:-

(a) A trigger: Part of every crisis is an unexpected event which has the potential to drastically alter how people perceive an organisation, example;

(i)   When a computer virus wipes out the most delicate irretrievable data.

(ii)   An investigator from government agency asks embarrassing questions.

Each of them can trigger unexpected repercussion and subsequent inquiry or probe.

(b) A threat: An alert public relations practitioners ears and eyes wide open, must follow up a trigger to ascertain whether or not it poses a threat to the organisation. Among the threats to look for will be:

- danger to human life
- risk to the environment or property
- financial loss
- damage to corporate image

© An uncontrolled situation: Experts believes that a crisis will always involve turbulent circumstances (instability) that make the situation beyond management control for sometime.

(d) Urgent attention needed: Surely if the first three elements are indicated, there will be the need to give urgent attention to the matter.

Micheal Regester, Nwosu (1996:108-109), Salu (1994:398-399) provides a 15 points scheme plan to be addressed in crisis management.

1. Faced with a disaster, think of the worst possible scenario and act accordingly.

2. When the dust has settled, look to see what lessons you might be able to teach the rest or the industry from your experience, again act accordingly.

3. Have a crisis management plan.

4. Be prepared to demonstrate human concern for what has happened.

5. In communication terms, be prepared to seize early initiatives by rapidly establishing the organisation as the single authoritative source of information about what has gone wrong and what steps the organisation is taking to remedy the situation.

6. When ever possible, look for ways of using the media as part of your armoury for containing the effect of crisis.

7. At the out set of the crisis, quickly establish a "WAR ROOM" or emergency control centre and staff it with senior personnel trained to fulfil specific roles designed to contain and manage crisis.

8. Set up telephone hot line to cope with the flood of additional calls that will be received during a crisis. Have personnel trained to man the hot lines.

9. Get your opponent on your side by getting them involved in resolving the problem.

10. Know your target audience and listen to their grievances.

11. Add credibility to your cause by inviting objective, authoritative bodies to help end the crisis.

12. In communicating about crisis, avoid the use of jargon. Use language that shows you care about what has happened and which clearly demonstrates that you are trying to put matters right.

13. Have a clear picture of what grievances are held against you by those affected by the crisis. If possible, use research to verify your beliefs.

14. Whenever possible, seek out side expert advice when drawing up crisis contingency plans.

15. Training: As an integral part of planning to deal with crisis look at what specialised training programmes may be required to ensure you have a professional group of people around you handling the organisation external communications.

What we have done this far is to put in perspective the most fundamental aspect of crisis management. This is borne out of the resolve that to effectively manage a crisis through the media, we must first as a

matter of priority be grounded in the nitty gritty of crisis and crisis management. Before we bring in the media dimensions, in the rear, suffice it we briefly examine some cases in crisis management.

2.8 TWO CASE STUDIES IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Crisis identification, truth and empathy are fundamental to assessing and managing crisis. A Company's position as to truth and empathy especially where it involves the company's publics, is an early indicator as to whether it will succeed or fail in its bid to control or manage a crisis in the overall interest of the company and the public involved. We here present two celebrated cases of crisis management in the United States of America.

The first is an Arch type or perfect example of how not to handle a potential trouble situation and how not to handle a crisis. The second type exemplifies the proper way to react to and handle not only a potential trouble situation but also the eventual trouble itself.

According to Dennis Wilcox, " when a corporation finds itself caught in a major crisis that threatens its reputation, its management and public relations department are put under severe stress. The way in which they handle the bad news demonstrates company philosophy and their state of preparedness. One company reacts with candour, open communication and obvious concern for public good. Another company tries to ride out of the storm by brushing aside media and public questions, belligerently denying the existence of trouble, and creating the impression that it puts self-interest above public safety and welfare.

"The forthright company emerges stronger in the public eye than before the crisis. The Cover-up Company harms its reputation so badly that it is damaged for years to come".

CASE STUDY ONE
2.9 THE FIRESTONE TYRE AND RUBBER COMPANY'S DISASTER

In spite of earlier internal and external warning concerning Firestone's Radial 500 tyres (which was highly advertised and publicised) poor quality, the company did not heed this early warnings in spite of the fact that many accidents were been attributed to Radial 500 tyre defects as the cause. Instead of the company withdrawing the faulty tyres from the market, it continued to praise the products as good, within five years the tyre came into the market, 24 million Radial 500 tyres at about $50 each was sold.

As complaint mounted, many interested groups kept on the heat on firestone. The company won a court case suppressing an independent survey result on Radial. The matter reached congress. Dennis Wilcox (see Salu: 419) reported, " The four days of congressional sub-committee hearings, heavily covered by the news media, were extremely harmful to the company".

Evidence abounds that Firestone had prior knowledge of the unusually high number of complaints and of the tyre defect.

Boomerang: As lawsuits ensure against the company, 41 deaths were attributed to the defective tyres. Over 250 lawsuits piled up against the company from accident victims or their survivors.

Firestone settled out of court for $1.4 million in one case involving two deaths and a survivor who became a quadriplegic.

Finally, continued Wilcox, the cumulative disclosure, public anger, and government pressure forced Firestone into the huge recall. It agreed to replace free some 7.5 million radial tyres purchased after September 1975 and to replace at half price up to 6 million older ones.

The company's stock holders were not left out in the vain of anger over negligence and insensitivity, they equally sued, a Federal Judge approved a $3.2 million settlement that Firestone must pay to stockholders.

In this end, the image and reputation of Firestone was badly damaged and colossal financial waste followed. Wilcox sums up the antecedents that was the social and economic woes of Firestone thus:

Lack of candour and factual honesty a belligerent attitude towards questions and criticism, a history of resistance to media inquiries, use of a spokesman – lacking in public relations finesse, and an effort to blame its customers, all these created a public perception of firestone as a selfish corporation determined to protect its profits even at the price of public safety".

2.10 JOHNSON AND JOHNSON, HEALTH PRODUCT MANUFACTURER'S TRIUMPH

Johnson and Johnson was twice hit (1982 & 1986) but on each occasion, despite loss in human lives, huge financial loss due to staggering loss of market share, the company within amazing short period, not only controlled and contained the crisis, but bounced back as market leaders against the back drop of book makers. The company's effort in the crisis involving its valued products – Cyanide-local capsules of extra-strength Tylenol – has been described as classic and exemplary case of effective crisis management and resolution. Defleur and Dennis: 302-303, Nwosu: 111, Salu: 420-424)

Tylenol is manufactured by McNeil consumer Product Company, a subsidiary of Johnson and Johnson. Tylenol was a pain reliever that was medically endorsed and vigorously publicised and sold across the United States. The aspirin free medication was substantially in demand more than its competitors. With $ 400 million in annual sales, Tylenol controlled 37 percent of the market. However, Defleur and Dennis reported the market share dropped from 35 percent to 7 percent in 1982 when trouble first brewed. (This is in variance to 37 percent documented by Dennis Wilcox in Adekunle salu).

When crisis first struck, on September 29, 1982, the company recalled 93,000 suspected bottles of Tylenol. Seven people had died in Chicago area following cyanide-local capsules of Extra strength Tylenol. Poisoning was believed to have been introduced by saboteurs, tampering with the Tylenol package within two months, the company withdrew the

drug from 34 states. It also stopped producing the capsules and suspended advertising. Within the same period, the capsules were withdrawn from across the United States.

Tylenol was also for the second time poisoned in 1986 by tempering with the packaging. The response was swift as first incident. Johnson and Johnson altogether stopped manufacturing Tylenol and in the process lost fortunes by retaining its good name and its market share. The discontinuation of the capsules cost the company $150 million in 1986 alone. The company other substitutes of Tylenol capsule continued in the market. One of the out come of the crisis was the introduction of tamper proof package - with several layers of protection.

James Burke, Chairman Johnson and Johnson was at the centre of it all. In both crisis, he made series of television appearances on popular programmes. Combined with coupons of free caplets and advertisements stressing the company's trust worthiness and concern, Burke piloted the product through the second storm as well...

Though Burkes believes that the Johnson and Johnson reputation, for quality played the largest role in helping Tylenol through the crisis, this would not have been enough without a strong public relations and advertisement campaign to save the products. Credibility, Burke admits that his own television appearances were effective.

"The public he says, know if you are being straight with them and they usually sense if you aren't".

Defleur and Dennis (1988:303).

2.11 MEDIA EFFECT

We live in an information age. An age that information is power. Information in this respect has an empowering tendency that it confers on the holder the power to make possible a social change. Information in itself has no legs or arms. It cannot move from person to person nor from place to place without through a conduit. A lot of channels exist through which information can be animated. The inter-personal channel has mass communication channel and some of these avenues of information dissemination.

In this study we shall not limit ourselves to only the interested media of mass communication but must include such minor media as hand bills, telephone calls, posters, leaflets and pamphlets. However, emphasis is on the mass media.

Communication is rooted in human society. Society is not only a network of political and economic arrangements, but also a process of learning and communication. in the words of ken ward, (1985:5) "social interactions, acts of communication, define the society by reflecting and reaffirming particular forms of relationship between individuals and institutions. They take place through specific channels, in particular languages and symbolic coding and are particularly associated with the organisations of power in society".

Communication scholars are of the consensus, even some argue, rightly though, that Harold Lasswell's (1946) linear description remained a major stepping stone of most communication studies that attempts to

evaluate the effect of mass communication (Ken ward: 1989, Ikechukwu Nwosu: 1990, Defleur and Dennis: 1988; Schramm and Roberts: 1971). Harold Lasswell, an American social scientist provided a verbal model for mass communication thus: who says what, to whom, through what channel, with what effect. This proposition emphasises the role of the medium (which is particular significant in our study) and states more specifically the social importance of the effect of the message upon the receiver, in this case, the audience. Much criticism has been direct at Lasswell's model especially the "effect" component. We will not go into the dialects and shortcoming of his model.

What is quite obvious about Lasswell's model is that communication has effect, what has remained subject of debate is the level of effect. We had talked the effect controversy in the opening segment of this chapter-theoretical overview there we adduced that though the media may not have powerful effect, due to intervening variables, it does definitely have moderate effect on the audience.

The mass media have certain roles which make them relevant as a social force in modern civilisation. The mass media are organs of communication. As carriers of communication, they play the same role as communication. The MacBride commission (1980: 14) articulates eight functions of communication, nay the media, information, socialisation, motivation, debate and discussion, education, cultural promotion, entertainment and integration.

Synthesising the pivotal importance of communication, the commission submitted "communication functions are linked to all people's needs, both material and non-material". A broad function of the media

was added by Harold Lassewell (see wright: 1975: 9) as surveillance of the environment, correlation of the parts of the environment and transmission of social heritage.

It is certain that the media or more specifically the mass media as a social phenomenon has great influence on the society. They carry information which Donald Roberts (1971:350 and 377) defines as "any content that helps one structure or organise those aspect of the environment which are relevant in a situation in which he must act". Continuing he concluded thus "mass communication may have a great deal to do with how we structure the word over the long term and with how we organise new aspects of the image, from new opinions and belief".

In the final analysis, it is fact from what we have adduced that the media have the capacity to influence not only individual, but the entire society on which it mounts surveillance on. In this connection issues and events, such as crisis become important to the extent they receive searchlight and coverage.

2.12   SUMMARY

We have so far looked at the media and crisis from a general premise. Using the logic of syllogism and deductive analysis, we here postulate that the media is not a sole casual agent of change but an indispensable reflector and intensifier of social reality as crisis. And because it can re-structure social reality it does structure the worldview of the audience and by so doing, influence their opinion and behaviour. Therefore, by being able to structure the social reality in a national

environment, assuming the duty of public relations department and organisation has been religiously carried out, the media as one of the intermediating variables in a crisis has the capacity to effectively assist in crisis resolution.

The message is clear here. That the media is not a magic wand in crisis resolution, rather it is an effective and indispensable conduct all things being equal for crisis resolution. The implications of this deduction are many. But for the purpose, of this study, we shall limit our self-examination to two.

One, that the media like a cruise missile will only take of on course if our strategic and tactical plan about the target audience is well grounded.

The media, like a cruise missile can bring about a quick intrinsic relationship to the media. A cruise missile is a guided missile that has a terrain seeking radar system and that flies at moderate speed and low altitude. The media like the missile is guided and has a purpose and effect. Also, as the cruise missile flies moderately the media effect we had earlier stated are moderate too.

The second implication of our deduction relates to the phrase "all things being equal" it does suggest that for the media to perform effectively, we must understand the nature of crisis and methods of combating it which includes the media. Again like the cruise missile, not done in the military arsenal - the media is not alone in the task of crisis resolution. The only difference quoting Micheal Kunczik (1991: 237) "only the media have a first strike capability...".

Overall, the place of public relations in crisis resolution cannot be over-stressed. In this connection, a public relations is well rooted in an organisations market mix. In other words, a crisis resolution is through the media an aspect of marketing communications.

Charles Scheme (1987: see Nwosu: 1996:22) lends credence to this when he wrote, "The entire marketing mix operates as a communication system".

Edeani (1996: 261) aptly notes the basic difference between marketing and public relations "while marketing sells the organisations goods and services, public relations sells the integrity and general image of the organisation".

In the final analysis, the media has been recognised as a conduit for crisis resolutions and not a substitute for organised relation work and responsible company disposition to a crisis. The organisation engulfed in a crisis must display truth, sensitivity and empathy to the issue and or people involved and the media is a veritable avenue to express that concern and win public understanding, goodwill and understanding when a crisis looms.

Crisis management is about recognising crisis, seizing the initiatives, taking control of what has happened before it engulfs the company. Planning for a crisis is key to corporate survival (Marie Jennings, and Michael Regester reported in Salu 1994: 396-398)

Referring back to the two case studies mentioned earlier in the study. The lesson is that the media must be adequately cultivated while truth, sincerity and empathy remain our watchword. Dennis Wilcox (see salu 1994: 419) reported that heavy media coverage of the odds against

firestone tyre and Rubber company was "extremely damaging" while the candour open communication and obvious concern for the public good saw Johnson and Johnson through. Johnson and Johnson massively used the media in resolving the two crisis of 1982 and 1986. In an elated and almost patronising tone but sincere evaluator of its media relations during the crisis, Johnson and Johnson's chief executive thanked the media for the fair responsible way in which the reporters and editors rarely hear. "We were very much aware that the public welfare was at stake, and that the news media were the means by which we could rapidly disseminate warnings, allay mounting fears and put the crisis in perspective.

Good reporting helped to reduce those tensions... you, the media were the first to make the evaluation that our company and our product were also victims of this strategy. You have treated us accordingly and we are appreciative".

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 SCOPE, RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope

It is important to note that the scope of this work covers the entire Enugu State. We choose to draw our respondents from Institutions and Publics as our respondents because of the nature of information that are required.

For the purpose of obtaining a more balanced information, some selected communities were visited.

3.2 Research Methodology

The survey research method was employed as an avenue to effectively record the feelings, attitudes, belief and behaviour of the audience in relation to media coverage and portrayal of a crisis. Some reference to documentary sources – published and unpublished is a vital preliminary to all researches. In this regard the researcher has consulted books, newspapers, journals, official reports, and statistics, magazines, and records of institutions to enable us draw an empirical conclusion or analysis of this study so as to come up with a fair and objective findings.

Structured questionnaires constituted a major source of primary data in this research work while oral interview were also used as a follow up to collect more information from some of the respondents especially the corporate institutions by way of clarification of the responses obtained in the questionnaires.

3.3   Structuring the Instrument/Pre-testing

The questionnaires were structured as a fixed set of four and three alternative answer questions. Two major areas were covered. The first area focused on the demographic variables such as age, sex, educational qualification, while the second area contained the substantive questions relating the subject matter of inquiry.

A total of 200 copies of the questionnaires were produced and distributed. The staff of corporate institutions, both management and line staff were the respondents. Also selected publics and a few communities formed the respondents.

The questionnaires were pre-tested to reduce ambiguities and it resulted into minor changes in wordings and sequence.

3.4   Sample size determination

The sample size of this study was determined through a pilot survey of a random sample of 20 (twenty) respondents drawn from the critical areas of the study. Out of this, 15 agreed that the media has the capacity to mediate in crisis situation involving a corporate institution. Based on this, a formula below applies to give a sample size at 5% standard T error.

$$n = \frac{Z^2 P_q}{e^2}$$

where n = sample size desired

z = desired level of confidence (95%)

p = probability of positive response (institutions)

q = probability of negative response (individuals)

e = limit of tolerance error

Substituting these values:

$$z = 1.96$$

$$e = 0.05$$

$$p = 0.75$$

$$q = 0.25$$

Therefore = $\dfrac{(1.96)^2 (0.75) (0.25)}{(0.05)^2}$ = 294

Approx. = 300

Approximate sample size of 300 for ease of convenience and ease of administration.

3.5   Sampling procedure

The sampling procedure adopted is the simple random sample. Since the population of this study encompasses Nigerians exposed to media message and are capable of being affected by mass media contents. The scientific sampling technique is used to make sure that every unit that exists in the population has an equal probability of being included in the sample. This makes it possible for us to generalise the result of the study to the entire population. It is equally simpler, cheaper and quicker than trying to study the entire population. Rather than listing .all the families dwelling in a city, a list of all the wards in the city is made,

and then selects at random a certain percentage of these cluster and include all families dwelling in the selected wards.

3.6 Method of analysis

The data generated were presented in tables. These data were statistically and empirically tested using percentages, mean, variance and standard deviation. At the inferential level, the chi-square goodness-of –fit test were also used in testing the hypothesis raised to determine if any significant relation exist between the observed frequency and the expected frequency.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 MARITAL STATUS OF RESPONDENTS

From a total of 198 respondents, result collected shows that 110 respondents are married representing 55.6 percent while 88 respondents are single representing 44.4 percent.

TABLE4 – I:

MARITAL STATUS OF RESPONDENTS

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	110	55.6
Single	88	44.4
Total	198	(100%)

Source: Field survey, 1999

4.2 EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF RESPONDENTS

This is divided into three categories, which includes primary education, secondary and higher education. At the primary educational level, we have 31 respondents representing 15.7 percent, secondary education have 88 respondents representing 44.4 percent and higher education has 79 respondents representing 39.9 percent.

TABLE 4 - 2

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF RESPONDENTS

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Primary Education	31	15.7
Secondary Education	88	44.4
Higher Education	79	39.9
Total	198	(100%)

Source: Field survey, 1999

4.3 SEX OF RESPONDENTS

Respondents show that 112 representing 56.6 percent are males while female respondents are 86 representing 43.4 percent.

TABLE 4 - 3

SEX OF RESPONDENTS

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	112	56.6
Female	86	43.4
Total	198	(100%)

Source: Field survey, 1999

4.4 AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Greater number of the respondents cluster around the productive age which is 28 – 37, and 38 – 47 years group. This

is because at this age bracket, you find the concentration of the working population.

TABLE 4 - 4

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS.

Distribution	Frequency	Percentage
18-27	38	19.2
28-37	64	37.3
38-47	51	25.8
48-57	24	12.1
58-67	21	10.6
Total	198	(100%)

Source : Field survey,1999.

$$\overline{X} = \frac{\Sigma fx}{n} = \frac{7,675}{198} = 38.8$$

The average age of the respondents is approximately 39 years

$$\text{Variance} = S^2 = \frac{\Sigma f(X-\overline{X})^2}{n-1} = \frac{1320.4}{197} = 6.7$$

$$\text{STD} = \sqrt{\frac{\Sigma f(X-\overline{X})^2}{n-1}}$$

$$= \sqrt{1326.6}$$

$$= 36.4$$

4.5   LEVEL OF EXPOSURE OF TELEVISION

The number of people exposed to television every day is 102 giving 51.5 percent, while people who do not get exposed to television is only 2 persons representing only 1.0 percent. This has been made possible by the fact that many people now watch television giving their level of exposure and message that the medium convey.

TABLE 4 - 5

LEVEL OF EXPOSURE TO TELEVISION

Exposure	Frequency	Percentage
At least once a week	39	19.7
At least thrice a week	40	20.2
Every day	102	51.5
Rarely	15	7.6
Not at all	2	1.0
Total	198	(100%)

Source: Field survey, 1999

4.6   LEVEL OF EXPOSURE TO RADIO

From the above table, 149 persons are exposed to radio every day representing 75.2%. Only one person is exposed to radio rarely representing. 0.5% while those who do not listen at all do not exist. This goes to show that radio is veritable instrument by which message is

conveyed to the people giving its wider reach and its ability to communicate in local languages.

TABLE 4 - 6

LEVEL OF EXPOSURE TO RADIO

Exposure	Frequency	Percentage
At least once a week	16	8.1
At least thrice a week	32	16.2
Every day	149	75.2
Rarely	1	0.5
Not at all	-	-
Total	198	(100%)

Source: Field survey, 1999

4.7 LEVEL OF EXPOSURE TO NEWSPAPER

The table below shows that 107 persons representing 54.0% from the respondents rarely read newspaper while 43 persons representing 21.7% do not read at all. An insignificant number of 15 persons who represents 7.6% are exposed to newspaper once a week. This is so because many respondents cannot afford the high cost of these papers. Again they pay more attention to television and radio whose cost are less and do not consume much time.

54

TABLE 4 – 7:

LEVEL OF EXPOSURE TO NEWSPAPER

Exposure	Frequency	Percentage
At least once a week	15	7.6
At least thrice a week	11	5.6
Every day	22	11.1
Rarely	107	54.0
Not at all	43	21.7
Total	198	(100%)

Source: Field survey, 1999

4.8 DEPENDENCE ON THE MEDIA FOR INFORMATION

Greater number of the respondents rely on the media for their information; This is given by 113 respondents representing 57.1% as against 75 respondents which represent 37.8%

TABLE 4 - 8

DEPENDENCE ON THE MEDIA FOR INFORMATION

Dependence	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	113	57.1
No	75	37.8
No idea	10	5.1
Total	198	(100%)

Source: Field survey, 1999

4.9 ANXIOUS ABOUT RESOLUTION OF CRISIS

Most respondents favour the idea of crisis resolution. This is given by 143 respondents representing 72.2% that are anxious about resolution of crisis as against 24 respondents represented by 12.1% that say No.

TABLE 4 - 9

ANXIOUS ABOUT RESOLUTION OF CRISIS

Anxious	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	143	72.2
No	24	12.1
No idea	31	15.7
Total	198	(100%)

Source: Field survey, 1999

4.10 SOURCE OF INFORMATION CRISIS

Most respondents depends on the media for the source of information that bothers on crisis. This is shown by the number of respondents that favours Radio, TV, and newspapers for their source of information representing 70.2% as against 59 respondents representing 29.8 percent.

TABLE 4 - 10

SOURCE OF INFORMATION CRISIS

Source	Frequency	Percentage
Friends/Relations & neighbours	59	29.8
Radio, TV, & Newspapers	139	70.2
Total	198	(100%)

•Source: Field survey, 1999

4.11 MEDIA CREDIBILITY

Most respondents have confidence in the ability of the media as credible source of information especially the foreign media. This is shown by the respondents that favours the BBC & CNN which is 152 respondents representing 76.6% as against Radio Nigeria and NTA with 35 respondents representing 17.7 percent.

TABLE 4 - 11

MEDIA CREDIBILITY

Media	Frequency	Percentage
Radio Nigeria & NTA Abuja	35	17.7
BBC & CNN	152	76.8
No idea	11	5.5
Total	198	(100%)

Source: Field survey, 1999

4.12 MEDIA PORTRAYAL AND INFLUENCE ON THE AUDIENCE

The way the media portrays information goes a long way to influencing the audience. Since most people depends on the media for information it then depends on how the media portrays the information that audience tends to see it.

TABLE 4 - 12

MEDIA PORTRAYAL AND INFLUENCE ON THE AUDIENCE

Influence	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	48	24.2
Agree	91	46.0
No idea	13	6.6
Strongly disagree	17	8.6
Disagree	29	14.6
Total	198	(100%)

Source: Field survey, 1999

4.13 EFFECT OF BIASED MEDIA REPORT

When media report is biased, it affects the perception of the audience adversely. This could be positive or negative depending on which side the media favours. This could be seen from the audience response below:-

TABLE 4 - 13

EFFECT OF BIASED MEDIA REPORT

Effect	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	86	43.4
No	77	38.9
No idea	35	17.7
Total	198	(100%)

Source: Field survey, 1999

4.14 MEDIA POSITION AND CRISIS RESOLUTION

The position adopted by the media in crisis situation affects its resolution. Where the media blows a crisis out of proportion helps in escalating the situation. This is seen by the table below which shows:-

Agreement continuum = 70.7%

Disagreement continuum = 29.3%

TABLE 4 - 14

MEDIA POSITION AND CRISIS RESOLUTION

Resolution	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	39	19.7
Agree	101	51.0
Strongly disagree	10	5.1
Disagree	48	24.2
Total	198	(100%)

Source: Field survey, 1999

4.15 AUDIENCE REACTION TO COMPANY'S ACTIONS

The audience is highly favoured when the company's action towards them is taken into consideration. The company's openness and truthful goes a long way in crisis resolution.

TABLE 4 - 15

AUDIENCE REACTION TO COMPANY'S ACTIONS

Reaction	Frequency	Percentage
Be favourably disposed to it	123	62.1
Be unfavourably disposed to it	50	25.3
No idea	25	12.6
Total	198	(100%)

Source: Field survey, 1999

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Results and Discussions

From the result collected it shows that more married respondent representing 55.6% were involved as against those that are single. At the educational level more respondents are from the secondary education category which is closely followed by those with higher education.

Males constituted more of the respondents as against the females. The ages of the respondents were more at the working class level because concentrations were larger between the ages of twenty-eight and forty seven years. Radio and television indicates that most respondents have very high exposure to it. This mainly due to its reach, ability of the television to convey motion pictures and colour and more importantly also, the ability of both medium to convey their messages in local languages. They also make extensive use of jingles. They are capable of being repeated and most times during prime periods when the attention of most audience will be focused. Radio and television can be very effective in crisis resolution when effectively employed and properly managed because of its wider acceptability while in the case of newspapers, it has a poor reach because of its cost, literacy level and most times not readily available. Very few persons are exposed to newspaper and that has made it very difficult because it takes care of few segments of the audience.

Many respondents agree that they depend on the media for information and also anxious about its ability in crisis resolution. The media constitute the authentic source of information and its credibility. This is because the way the media portray information goes a long way to

influencing the audience. This could be negative or positive depending on the media position in the crisis. When a media is biased in reporting certain issues, it goes a long way to have effect on the audience reaction. The media therefore, is a veritable instrument for crisis and conflict resolution.

5.1   DISCUSSIONS

The thrust of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of media as a tool for resolving crisis. Crisis like accident does not ring bell before it occurs, so every corporate institution every day faces the possibility of a crisis. The way and manner a crisis is managed to a great extent determines the stability and future of the corporate entity involved. The public relations department of an organisation is more often than not saddled with the onerous responsibility of nipping such a crisis in the bud or containing it.

Because we live in an era that the media keeps every one and every institutions under surveillance. Whatever we do, especially those with a tint of drama and conflict is within the preview of the mass media hence they have to be recognised as a vital denominator in a crisis resolution. It is therefore, the object of this research study to evaluate the media as a veritable vehicle in crisis resolution. To do this five hypothesis were raised and tested. The five hypotheses received empirical and statistically support.

5.2 TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

Decision Rule: Accept the research hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis if the calculated value is greater than the table value

Formula for chi-square: $X^2 = E \dfrac{(O-E)^2}{E}$

Formula for degree of freedom: K-I

5.3 HYPOTHESIS ONE

H_1: Government owned media houses are likely to criticise government corporate institutions.

H_0: Government owned media houses are not likely to criticise government corporate institutions.

TABLE 5 – 3.1

MEDIA PORTRAYAL AND INFLUENCE ON THE AUDIENCE

Influence	O	E	O-E	$(O-E)^2$	$(O-E)^2/E$
Strongly agree	48	39.6	8.4	70.56	1.8
Agree	91	39.6	51.4	2641.96	66.7
No idea	13	39.6	-26.6	707.56	17.9
Strongly disagree	17	39.6	-22.6	510.76	12.9
Disagree	29	39.6	-10.6	112.36	2.8
Total	198	198			$X^2 = 102.1$

$X^2 = 102$, df = 4, P. $\geq$ 0.01

Table value = X^2 = 13.277

63

Decision: We reject the null hypothesis and accept the research hypothesis because the calculated value (X^2 = 102) is greater than the table value (X^2 = 13.277)

Result: As shown in table 10, 70.2 percent of the respondents are of the view that media portrayal of a crisis influences their attitudes and opinions about the crisis. This view is statistically supported with chi-square value of X^2 =102.

5.4 HYPOTHESIS TWO

H_{O2}: Ownership of media houses is unlikely to affect coverage of crisis negatively or positively

Ho: Ownership of media houses is likely to affect the coverage of crisis negatively or positively.

TABLE 5 – 4.2

EFFECT OF A BIASED MEDIA REPORT

Effect	O	E	O-E	$(O-E)^2$	$E(O-E)^2/E$
Yes	86	66	20	400	6.1
No	77	66	11	121	1.8
No idea	35	66	-31	961	14.6
Total	198	198	0	1482	22.5

X^2 = 22.5, df = 2, P ≥ 0.01

Table value = 9.210

64

Decision: We reject the null hypothesis and accept the research

hypothesis because the calculated value (x^2 = 22.5) is greater than

the table value (x^2 = 9.210)

Result: Table 14 confirms the statistical and empirical evidence that a

partisan media is a veritable tool for escalating a crisis to a conflict

level. It thus follows that the observed difference in sample

response was statistically significant from the expected frequency.

5.5 HYPOTHESIS THREE

H_3: Members of the audience often perceive media houses as credible

sources.

H_0: Members of the audience do not perceive media houses as credible

sources.

TABLE 5 – 5.3

MEDIA CREDIBILITY

Credible sources	O	E	O-E	$(O-E)^2$	$E(O-E)^2/E$
Strongly agree	39	49.5	-10.5	110.25	2.2
Agree	101	49.5	51.5	2652.25	53.6
Strongly disagree	10	45.9	-39.5	1560.25	31.2
Disagree	48	49.5	-1.5	2.25	0.05
Total	198	198	0	4325	x^2 = 87.1

x^2 = 87.1, df = 3, P$\geq$0.01

Table = 11.345

Decision: We reject the null hypothesis and accept the research hypothesis because the calculated value ($X^2 = 87.1$) is greater than the table value ($X^2 = 11.345$).

Result: It does follow as is also observed in table 11 (where 76.8%) supported the hypothesis that the media is a credible source of information and is certain to influence the resolution of a crisis than the media, which adopts the reverse.

5.6   HYPOTHESIS FOUR

H_4: Media houses have sufficient press freedom to make meaningful contribution in crisis situation

H_0: Media houses do not have sufficient press freedom to make meaningful contribution in crisis situation.

TABLE 5 – 6.4

MEDIA POSITION AND CRISIS RESOLUTION

Effect	O	E	O-E	$(O-E)^2$	$E(O-E)^2/E$
Yes	123	66	57	3249	49.2
No	50	66	416	256	3.9
No idea	25	66	-41	1681	25.5
Total	198	198	0	5186	$X^2 = 78.6$

$X^2 = 78.6$, df = 2, P$\geq$0.01

Table value = 9.210

66

Decision: We reject the null hypothesis and accept the research hypothesis because the calculated value (X^2 = 76.6) is greater than the table value (X^2 = 9.210)

Result: As portrayed in table 9, where, 72.2% supported the hypothesis, it does follows that a corporate body engulfed in a crisis should exhibit openness, truth and empathy in order to win the favour of the media whose report on the crisis influences audience reactions and dispositions.

5.7 HYPOTHESIS FIVE

H_5: The effectiveness of media houses in resolving crisis is unlikely to depend on how objective they are in making their reports.

H_0: The effectiveness of media houses in resolving crisis is likely to depend on how objective they are in making their reports.

TABLE 5 – 7.5

AUDIENCE REACTION TO A COMPANY'S ACTIONS.

Effect	O	E	O-E	$(O-E)^2$	$E(O-E)^2/E$
Yes	173	66	47	2209	33.5
No	75	66	9	81	1.2
No idea	10	66	-56	3136	47.5
Total	198	198	-18	5426	82.2

X^2 =.82.2, df = 2, P≥0.01

Table value = 9.210

Decision: We reject the null hypothesis and accept the research hypothesis because the calculated value (X^2 = 82.2) is greater than the table value (X^2 = 9.210).

Result: As shown in table 8, 57.1% of the respondents are of the view that dependence on the media for information affects the attitude or views held against an organisation. This view is statistically supported with chi-square value of X^2 = 82.2.

Hypothesis one received empirical and statistical support with a calculated value of X^2 = 102 as against a critical or table value of X^2 = 13.277. It does follow that the "power" and effect of the media is not discountenanced when planning and designing strategies for crisis resolution. This is not to say that the media is the sole casual agent rather than the media as a salient contributory factor.

In hypothesis two, the statement of proposition is tested and it received both empirical and statistical support. It is supported with a statistical value of X^2 = 22.5 as against a table value of X^2 = 9.210. The implication is that the audience in their scale of analysing a given event values media contents. And so, the need to cultivate media practitioners to the position of the crisis manager or public relations manager perspective cannot be over-emphasized.

The view and thesis in hypothesis three is empirically and statistically supported. The decision supporting the hypothesis is predicated on the fact that empirically, the hypothesis is supported

68

by 76.6 percent of the respondents as against 5.5 percent who opposed it.

Similarly, the hypothesis is statistically supported with a calculated value of $X^2 = 87.1$ as against a rejection of value of $X^2 = 11.345$. The import of this finding is that the media is a resolute factor in attitude and opinion formation.

The need to ensure that the media remain neutral at all times becomes central as the society gradually and definitely transforms to a hyper – communication melieu, where information and communication take the centre stage of human affairs.

As the preceding three hypothesis, the fourth one is also supported empirically and statistically. At the empirical level 72.2 percent supported the hypothesis. The postulation is again supported statistically with a critical value of $X^2 = 78.6$ as against a critical rejection of $X^2 = 9.210$.

The fifth and the last is empirically 57.1 percent supported the hypothesis. This postulation is supported statistically with a critical value of $X^2 = 82.2$ as against a critical rejection of $X^2 = 9.210$.

In all the five hypothesis confirmation is a signal that the media in a modern society has assumed principal position in not only shaping the minds and hearts of the audience, but to some extent can suggest and point the pattern of audience behaviour in relation to a crisis situation significantly covered by the media.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

This study titled "Evaluation of media as a tool for resolving crisis" was a social scientific inquiry to evaluate the media in its ramifications as a potent tool for social transformation. Crisis as we noted in this study is a destabilising social phenomenon that tends to rock the status quo or bring about a social disequilibrium. For society to survive, there is need for continuity, stability and control of disintegrating social variables in all strata of the society.

It is our thesis in this study that, the media is a veritable social sub-system with capacity for social transformation. The various functions of the media are carefully synthesised within the framework of this inquiry.

We did also posit that, for a public relations department or managers to effectively cultivate the media as an indispensable tool in their hands at both the strategic and tactical levels of crisis management. They need to understand the nature and psychology of media practitioners, the power and limitations of the media and above all, be open and truthful in its crisis management with the optimum goal of crisis resolution. We did also postulate that though the media may not stood out solely as a magic wand in the hands of public relations managers, it may in the same vein be necessary catalyst for goal attainment.

In order to arrive at a conclusive premise towards empiricism from which steady generalisation or theorisation can the media we adopted

the social scientific process of inquiry. In this connection, research problem was raised, questions and hypothesis, as well as research objectives were delineated in order to ensure both internal and external reliability and validity.

The five hypotheses raised received empirical and statistical support. Hypothesis one, Government owned media houses are likely to criticise government corporate institutions. Hypothesis two addressed ownership of media houses are likely to affect coverage of crisis negatively or positively. Hypothesis three, members of the audience often perceive media houses as credible sources. Hypothesis four is that media houses have sufficient press freedom to make meaningful contributions in crisis situations. While hypothesis five is the effectiveness of media houses in resolving crisis is unlikely to depend on how objective they are in making their reports.

6.2 CONCLUSION

In difference to the questions, objectives, hypothesis and the consequent observations made there from, it is logical to conclude:-

(a)   That public relations is a communication process that requires effective management through skill acquisition in diverse fields, which may include communication, mass communication, public relations; management, psychology. etc.

(b)   That the basis of effective crisis management is truth and openness in dealing with the media.

(c)   That people would readily resort to the media for report, update and analysis of an on going crisis and as such, the way

71

and manner the media portray such a crisis to a great extent determine, audience perceptions and disposition.

(d)   That aside from truth and open communication, it is vital to always exhibit candour, concern for public good and empathy in the face of a crisis. Brushing aside media and public questions, belligerently denying the existence of trouble, and creating the impression that puts self-interest above public safety and welfare could be catastrophic.

(e)   And lastly, the media is increasingly assuming vital powers in the affairs of men and such, to discountenance its power in the face of a crisis affecting a corporate body, It is to do so at the peril of the establishment. In other words, it is our thesis in this study that the media is an effective tool for resolving crisis especially in a democratic melieu.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In relation to the general framework of this study, consequent findings and conclusions reached there from, it is imperative we make recommendations on two general premises. The first premise concerns policy while the second pertains to research and intellectual scholarship.

POLICY:

It is our reasoned view that for effective public relations management to occur, those at the helms of affairs of the public relations department must not only be at policy and management hierarchy but must be well grounded in the principles and practice of modern public relations.

In addition, such persons must be vast in his/her grasp of the social sciences and social forces.

We also do recommend that organisations and corporate establishments should from the on-set incorporate public relations as a philosophy and principles of management. This is necessary because it has the tendency to place public good and welfare above any other thing.

RESEARCH AND INTELLECTUAL SCHOLARSHIP

The need for continued research and the need for public relations in all spheres of human endeavour cannot be over-stressed. This becomes particularly urgent and demanding as we now live in an era of increased public awareness and sensitivity.

There is also the need for research on public perception of public relations field and functions. This is important because of public relations, some of which, it has become hackneyed to say are derogatory.

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QUESTIONNAIRES

Tick as appropriate in the boxes provided.

1. Marital status

(a) Married ☐

(b) Single ☐

1. Educational Level

(a) Primary education ☐

(b) Secondary education ☐

(c) Higher education ☐

1. Sex ☐

(a) Male ☐

(b) Female ☐

1. Age

(a) 18 –27 ☐

(b) 28 –37 ☐

(c) 38 – 47 ☐

(d) 48 – 57 ☐

(e) 58 – 67 ☐

1. How often do you watch television?

A. At least once a week ☐

B. At least thrice a week ☐

C. Every day ☐

78

D. Rarely ☐

E. Not at all ☐

1. How often do you read newspaper?

(a) At least once a week ☐

(b) At least thrice a week ☐

(c) Every day ☐

(d) Rarely ☐

(e) Not at all ☐

7. Do you depend on the media for information and development on a particular event?

(a) Yes ☐

(b) No ☐

(c) No idea ☐

8. Do you like following the course of crisis anxiously to know how it could be resolved?

A. Yes ☐

B. No ☐

C. No idea ☐

9. If your answer to question 8 is yes, whom do you depend on to furnish you with information concerning the crisis situations?

(A) Friends, Relations and neighbours ☐

(B) Radio, Television and Newspapers ☐

10. In your evaluation, which media will you believe more in an event that happens Nigeria?

(a) Radio Nigeria and NTA Abuja ▢

(b) British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) & Cable Network News (CNN) ▢

(c) No idea ▢

11. The tone and frequency the media report crisis situation influences your opinion and attitude towards such crisis.

A.	Strongly agree	▢
B.	Agree	▢
C.	Strongly disagree	▢
D.	Disagree	▢
E.	No idea	▢

12. Do you believe that the manner the media favours one side in a crisis can further deepen the situation?

a.	Yes	▢
b.	No	▢
c.	No idea	▢

13. In your evaluation, the media that calls for dialogue, compromise and truth is likely to influence the outcome of a crisis.

(a)	Strongly agree	▢
(b)	Agree	▢
(c)	Strongly Disagree	▢
(d)	Disagree	▢

14. How will you react to a company that tells the truth, is open and sympathise with victims of its actions, inaction or omission?

    (A)   Be favourably disposed to it   ☐

    (B)   Be unfavourably disposed to it ☐

    (C)   No idea   ☐