PALGRAVE STUDIES OF
PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA

Public Sector Marketing Communications Volume I

Public Relations and Brand Communication Perspectives

Edited by
Ogechi Adeola
Paul Katuse
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Palgrave Studies of Public Sector Management in Africa

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Preface

Over the years, scholars have largely overlooked public sector marketing communications and focused more on marketing communications in the private sector. This leads to questions of whether the concept is universally applicable. The value of marketing communications in the public sector cannot be underestimated since it promotes the dissemination of information about offerings, programmes, and projects to target audience. Public sector institutions can attract and sustain relationships with citizens and stakeholders through various marketing initiatives, techniques, and strategies. An analogous argument can be made that by adopting a citizen-centric approach, marketing communication principles and practices can help governments across the globe build trust and loyalty with the public and receive timely information on issues, challenges, and dynamics that shape the changing needs of the populace.

In Africa, public sector communications can bridge the gap between society and government. In recent years, the relationship between the government and the governed in Africa has become less cordial due to the government's inability to provide basic social amenities, improve the standard of living, and, to some extent, resolve the ineffective communication of policies. This high level of distrust between the government and the governed has had a negative effect on the public sector brand, despite efforts made over the years to build development-oriented and people-centred institutions. Government agencies are still being privatised in an attempt to meet the needs of the populace, and problems that have characterised public sector management for decades seem to be on the rise. One of the many causal factors associated with this decline is the lack of a marketing orientation that would improve communication between the public sector and the citizens.

Marketing in public sector management involves effective communication with the people, treating them as valued customers and providing services that meet their needs. This edited book documents how effective and efficient marketing communications in Africa's public sector can be appropriately positioned to achieve multidimensional goals; concepts that will serve as a teaching and learning guide for students and academics in public sector marketing. Scholars and practitioners focusing on public administration will benefit from the perspectives on how public sector communications can be enhanced in Africa.

Building a relationship with the public through appropriate communication tools and platforms is considered in this book, sacrosanct to restoring public sector image and trust. To this end, the first volume of this two-volume edited work focuses on communication perspectives related to branding, marketing, public relations, trade fairs and exhibitions, and marketing communications strategies and ethics in public sector communications.

Structure of the Book

The authors of this book's chapters wrote in response to practice and academic demands for a better understanding of the role of public sector marketing. Their constructive approaches to marketing in the public sector in Africa utilise familiar marketing communication strategies such as advertising, public relations, trade shows, and social media to inform actionable practices that will re-orient the system, create value for stakeholders, and improve public sector performance.

The book is structured to cover core issues that will promote the adoption of marketing communications principles and practices in Africa's public sector. Notably, the subjects researched in this book span marketing themes that have enabled the performance of profit-oriented firms, which should be applicable also to public sector organisations. Authors' contributions are categorised into three interrelated themes.

Part 1: Public Sector Marketing Communications and Brand Management

Chapter 1, "Introduction to Public Sector Marketing Communications in Africa", by Ogechi Adeola, Paul Katuse, Kojo Kakra Twum, and Isaiah Adisa introduces the book's focus, identifies core issues of discourse, and provides the needed background for readers.

Chapter 2, "Public Sector Branding in Africa: Some Reflections", by Olusegun Vincent and Olaniyi Evans explores opportunities for African countries to take charge of brand identities to overcome social, economic, cultural, and political struggles. The authors' informed perspective of these opportunities suggests that public sector branding strategists need to transcend visual identity to incorporate wide-ranging facets of sectoral development.

Chapter 3, written by Nguyen Phong Nguyen and Emmanuel Mogaji, examines "Marketing Communications Strategies for Public Transport Organisations". The chapter highlights the need to communicate a unique brand identity through touchpoints and artefacts. Similarly, digital transformation deliverables such as websites, mobile apps, email marketing, live updates, social media, and chatbots as virtual assistants should be integral in transportation business operations in Africa.

Nguyen Phong Nguyen and Emmanuel Mogaji also authored Chapter 4, "Positioning Public University's Brand Through Marketing Communication". The authors' key theoretical contribution to ongoing bodies of work around higher education marketing offers insights to university managers and practitioners committed to developing public university brands which include identifying a clear relationship between positioning and the target group at each stage of communication, communications goals to achieve positioning, creative concepts matching brand values, and using multiple media mix to achieve branding objectives. The chapter suggests some checklists and questions for managers to consider regarding their communications strategies.

In Chapter 5, Gloria K.Q. Agyapong, Daniel Ofori, and Christina Appiah-Nimo discuss “Internal Marketing Communications in Ghana’s Public Sector: Conceptualisations and Extension”. The authors explore the development of an architectural framework for the concept of internal marketing communications in public sector institutions. The chapter also discusses the use of new media in internal marketing communication in the African public sector due to the advancement in internet-related technologies.

Part II: Public Relations and Trade Fairs

Chapter 6, “Public Relations in the Public Sector in Africa”, written by Joyce Nzulwa and Paul Katuse examines the public relations (PR) methods used during public sector crises. They describe selected PR crisis management scenarios across the continent and conclude that public relations efforts in Africa’s public sector are nascent but developing.

In Chapter 7, Emeka Agu, Ogechi Adeola, Oserere Ibelegbu, and Ebes Esho, authors of “Public Relations in Africa’s Public Sector: A Crisis Situational Analysis of South Africa and Nigeria”, suggest that offline communication and digital media have played a significant role in Africa’s public relations efforts over the past decades, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Online tools such as digital media were deployed in reputation management, crisis communication, information sharing, and feedback.

Chapter 8, “Trade Fairs and Exhibitions in the Ghanaian Public Sector: Meaning, Relevance, and Requirements”, by Gloria Agyapong, Osman Light and Kojo Kakra Twum establishes the meaning, forms, relevance, and requirements of public sector trade shows, emphasising that such shows/fairs are solution-oriented, which means the coming together of decision-makers, commercial leaders, and innovators from different units in the public sector to exhibit how public organisations are improving service delivery, efficiency, and value for money.

Part III: Public Sector Communication Ethics and Recommendations

In Chapter 9, “Public Sector Communication Ethics in Africa”, Samuel Wakuloba Wabala discusses how the formulation of and attention to positive communication ethics shapes the perceptions and levels of satisfaction members of the society have about the public sector. High standards of ethics-based communication build trust between the government and its stakeholders. Suggestions for policies and practices in the public service sector address pertinent issues for the African continent.

Chapter 10, “Roadmap for Effective PR and Brand Communication in Africa’s Public Sector”, by Ogechi Adeola, Eric Kwame Adae, Kojo Kakra Twum, Isaiah Adisa, and Paul Katuse wraps up the book by presenting recommendations and identifying topical issues in PR and brand communications that public sector organisations must put into consideration to achieve success. The authors recommend the incorporation of African philosophies that promote sustainability, and the interest of multiple stakeholders is recommended in reimagining the future of public relations on the African continent.

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Contents

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Part I

Public Sector Marketing Communications and Brand Management

1

Introduction to Public Sector Marketing Communications in Africa

Ogechi Adeola, Paul Katuse, Kojo Kakra Twum, and Isaiah Adisa

Introduction

Communication is a fundamental aspect of every society as it fosters unity, creates a path to understanding government policies, and is a tool for resolving conflict towards nation-building. Effective communication has been identified as a crucial tool that must be promoted across all business practices—people management, finance, production, and

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marketing (Jahromi & Jahromi, 2021). Among all these practices, communication is more pronounced in marketing-related activities, given its impact on organisational outcomes (Šerić et al., 2020; Zephaniah et al., 2020). Communications in marketing practices, also known as marketing communications, encompass a range of activities that engage and inform consumers in an effort to promote an organisation's product and service offerings and stimulate a favourable reaction.

In profit-oriented firms (i.e., the private sector), marketing communications generate customer loyalty, repurchase behaviour, and increased profitability from customer satisfaction (Zephaniah et al., 2020). The concept has received less attention from scholars and researchers in the public sector. The focus has predominantly been on marketing communications in the private sector (Batra & Keller, 2016; Kitchen & Proctor, 2015; Zephaniah et al., 2020). The question is whether the concept is universally applicable and the models, similar. Public sector marketing communications' distinctiveness is due to the nature of the product and service offerings and the challenges it faces in the communication process. To a large extent, public sector marketing communications focus on citizenry communication, crisis communication, inter-institutional communication, and stakeholder communication. Despite these differences, the communication tools used by public and private sector organisations are not too dissimilar and should yield the same results when adequately utilised.

The public sector is defined as a range of institutions developed by the State to handle specific activities (Lane, 2000) or, similarly, government enterprises designed to meet specific needs in a society (Popa, 2017). The public sector can thus be described as a nation's government institution responsible for meeting the needs of the citizens. Public sector organisations refer to entities owned and operated by the government to implement public policies, coordinate resources, and provide services to the citizens. These organisations are set up by law to carry out services on behalf of the government and are owned or controlled by the government (the State) (Masenya, 2022).

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Despite the success achieved by private sector organisations through the adoption of marketing communications orientation and practices, the public sector in Africa is yet to take full advantage of the opportunities in marketing communications found in the private sector. Over the years, Africa's public sector brand image has been negatively affected by systemic corruption, government insincerity, poor public institution performance, and economic waste, all of which have characterised public agencies across the continent (Hope Sr., 2021; Mlambo et al., 2019). Governments' relationships with the governed are strained in most parts of Africa due to lack of trust in government products and services—even policies (Adeola, 2022). In some instances, the African populace tries to avoid the public institution brand because of the public agencies' perceived lack of effectiveness and high level of bureaucracy. Private organisational offerings are often preferred over government-sponsored offers of something similar (e.g., government schools vs private owned schools). Therefore, cordial relationships between private organisations and consumers built through marketing communications, are suggested in this book as long-awaited solutions to public sector brand-related challenges requiring re-orientation to earn acceptability from the citizens. This is evident in the development of the New Public Management (NPM) concept and practice centred on incorporating private sector core practices in public sector organisations. Notably, the adoption of marketing communication tenets in public sector organisations is an integral part of NPM. Therefore, this book extends the discussions on NPM in Africa (see Hinson et al., 2021) by focusing on an important aspect of NPM orientation—public sector marketing communications.

There are few studies on marketing communications in Africa's public sector, with more focus on marketing communications in the private sector (Duffett, 2020; Oluwafemi & Adebiyi, 2018). Considering the numerous issues bedevilling the public sector in Africa, it is quite surprising that there is little attention in practice and theory on the applicability of marketing communications to bridge the gap between the government and the citizens. Proper orientation on marketing communications in the public sector in Africa will help manage crises, establish inter-institutional communication with stakeholders, and establish a valuable and functional public sector environment driven by marketisation.

State bodies and agencies' various approaches to communicating with their target audiences range from an integrated marketing communications (IMC) mix to traditional or digitised tools. Public sector communications managed through community relations, lobbying, and intentional government actions contribute to alleviating socio-economic challenges and policy-based activities. Matos et al. (2020) posited that public sector marketing entails a lot more than just the adaptation of traditional marketing strategies; focusing on enhancing more of its influence to create a positive image among its citizens holds more value. Although some government-owned institutions are engaging various tools in their marketing communication efforts (Coffie et al., 2022), there must be a mix of traditional and contemporary marketing communication approaches if expected success is to be achieved. This introductory chapter provides a background for the discussions on public sector marketing communications in Africa and lays the foundations for key themes presented in Volume I (public relations and brand communication perspectives) and Volume II (traditional and digital perspectives) of this two-volume edited work.

Public Sector Marketing Communications

Public and private sector marketing communications use similar tools and should yield similar effective outcomes in public institutions in Africa (Nita, 2021). The value of public sector marketing communications cannot be discounted since it can be expected to boost the dissemination of information about the public sector's offerings, manage relationships, and build citizens' engagement. By adopting marketing communication tools, initiatives, techniques, and strategies, public agencies are provided with the opportunity to maintain a sustainable connection with the citizens. Among the various public institutions' marketing communication tools are multimedia advertising, trade shows, emails, and newsletter campaigns, any and all of which can be used to manage their relationship with the citizen, build trust and loyalty with the public, and provide an outlet for citizens to express their need for information on issues, challenges, and dynamics of government plans and actions.

Typical examples of public sector communications include public sector manager's involvement in public debates, press conferences, press releases, the use of mass media, information brochures, paid advertisements, mailing letters and emails, websites, periodicals and participation in fairs (Pasquier & Villeneuve, 2018). Communication departments manage these communication activities.

In the African setting, there exists the use of official websites for government communications. An example is www.gov.za, which is the official website for the government of South Africa. This website has a short communication that reads, "Let's grow South Africa together". In Ghana, www.presidency.gov.gh is an official website used to manage the communications of the Office of the Presidency. In Nigeria, the website, statehouse.gov.ng/ provides the latest news and updates from the Presidency. Other state agencies have their communication mechanisms. For instance, Nairobi City County's water and sewerage company uses its website to communicate to customers regarding tariffs, pay points, and interruption notices (Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company). The online presence of various government agencies shows that some public sector organisations are actively involved in using digital communication as a means of interacting with their citizens.

Maintaining interactions with the public via marketing communication tools would emanate a positive feeling to the citizens about efforts being made to have an efficient, better performing public sector. A crucial aspect of marketing that would change the narrative for the public sector is the development of social products that will meet social needs; those infrastructural amenities, and intervention programmes that will improve the lives of the populace. For example, public higher learning institutions can tailor some of their courses to provide training that would complement government policy implementation. One of such partnerships was launched in January 2022 when the University of Nairobi and Smile Train established the "Smile Train–UoN Scholarship Program" to train qualified African-based medical doctors in plastic and reconstructive surgery. Upon graduation, these candidates will offer free services to children born with cleft lips (UoN, 2022). This adoption of marketing communications orientation will make public sector organisations more effective in meeting societal needs in Africa (Pasquier & Villeneuve, 2018).

Platforms used in marketing communications in the private sector can also be adopted in the public sector by government agencies to share their economic development plans, create awareness of public opportunities, and ensure citizens' understanding of prevailing social issues. For example, social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook played a significant role in Nigeria during the pandemic. The Ministry of Health constantly provided awareness with facts and updates on the spread of COVID-19. As with the pandemic, every decision and action made by the government in the interest of the citizens can be passed through the same digital platforms private organisations use to market their products and services. Just as private sector firms communicate their prices for goods and services, public transport organisations can share their price schedules based on socio-demographic statistics (e.g., the fare setting procedures followed by Rwanda's Kigali Bus service) (Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, 2021).

Marketing communications in public sector organisations are adaptions of management practices familiar to Africa's private firms. Public sector stakeholders will benefit from "the how" of implementing and adopting marketing communications that address mutual areas of interest.

Marketing Communications in Africa's Public Sector: Issues to Consider

The selection of appropriate channels and tools is integral to the success of marketing communications in the public sector. The emergence of new websites and social media open channels supports public sector organisations' efforts to expand their marketing communications, enhancing their reach and effectiveness. Under the marketing communications mix, the tools used to communicate with potential or existing customers include direct marketing, multimedia advertising, events, exhibitions, and press releases. In the private sector, these tools are utilised by firms to connect, engage and interact with their customers. In a research focused on South African banks, Tsitsi et al. (2013) established that the banks had adopted social media for their communication purposes, primarily Facebook and Twitter. However, they also found that regulatory and legal issues were still impediments to the adoption of social media. Digitalisation is redefining the African advertising market given the increasing internet and mobile penetration (Guttmann, 2021). This trend has implications for the public sector marketing communications in the continent. Some key themes in marketing communications that are considered relevant to the public sector include:

Marketing Communications as a Promotional Tool in Africa's Public Sector

The communications dimension is an integral part of marketing, even in the public sector. Government agencies would benefit from applying the 4Ps of the marketing mix—*product*, *price*, *place*, and *promotion* (Kotler & Lee, 2007). The promotion aspect of marketing in the private sector, which involves all communications between organisations and customers, can be transformed to improve public sector performance (Kotler & Lee, 2007). The promotional mix of marketing communications in the private sector are intended to ensure the effectiveness of internal and external communications, branding, and awareness creation by disseminating information, engaging the target audience, and soliciting feedback from that audience. Marketing communications in the public sector deliver service offerings to the general public and build relationships between organisations and stakeholders. In the view of Pasquier and Villeneuve (2018), communications in the public space provide an important platform for informing, influencing, promoting value, and accountability. Many public sector organisations providing services such as transportation, education, health, and utilities use marketing communications to deliver superior value to beneficiaries.

The Role of Public Relations in Public Sector Organisations

Public relations efforts are aimed at promoting positive rapport with organisations' stakeholders (Pasquier & Villeneuve, 2018). The evidence of public relations activity in the African public sector is limited due to the nature of government systems. However, extant literature confirms that political trends towards democratisation and social changes have promoted the use of public relations as a communication tool among Africa's public sector organisations (Holtzhausen, 2005).

It is worth noting that public relations models are not applied differently in the private and public sectors (Liu & Horsley, 2007). In the public sector, government organisations are undoubtedly influenced by the development in the public relations discipline (Liu & Horsley, 2007). It is also important to acknowledge some challenges affecting the use of public relations, such as political tensions, legal constraints, poor public perceptions, lagging professional development, and little value given to communications (Liu & Horsley, 2007). Glenny (2008), using the public sector as a case study, posits that public relations is adversely affected by its poor reputation. Therefore, practitioners must ensure that public relations tools are never used as a tool for hiding the truth or misleading the public for political benefits (Glenny, 2008). More importantly, public sector organisations must aggressively pursue public relations schemes that facilitate value co-creation processes among stakeholders to drive social change, shape institutional arrangements, encourage public discourse, and provide an opportunity to receive and generate feedback on stakeholders' concerns (Fehrer et al., 2022).

The Use of Public Service Advertising Campaigns

Public service advertising is a promotional tool used to address issues of general concern to citizens, increase public awareness of social problems, and influence beliefs and behaviours (O'Keefe & Reid, 1990), an example being South Africa's public service advertising campaign to raise public awareness of the spread of HIV/AIDS (O'Barr, 2012). O'Barr (2012) posits that the need to get the general public to take action for the good of society is as old as governance itself. Lee et al. (2018) state that public service advertisements, marketing and communications tools, promote changes in behaviours and attitudes. In the view of Ahn et al. (2019), the effectiveness of public service advertisements depends on the messages' source characteristics and the enticement of their appeals.

In Africa, a particular challenge to understanding public service advertisements is lack of education (Yeboah-Banin et al., 2018), a reality that makes it important to design clear and easily understood advertising messages. Studies that seek to examine the effectiveness of public service advertising are encouraged.

The Use of Trade Fairs (Exhibitions) Organised by the Public Sector

Trade fairs have been recognised as a marketing communications medium for promoting the sale of products (Blythe, 2010). Trade fairs are also common marketing communication tools used by governments to promote trade in domestic and international markets. Trade fairs fall under meetings, conventions, and exhibitions, which bring together different stakeholders and exhibitors (Shereni et al., 2021). In developing countries, trade fairs are relevant in building networks and promoting innovation through knowledge sharing (Zhu et al., 2020). Another study by Sarmento et al. (2015) acknowledges the beneficial use of trade fairs, a strategy frequently applied by African governments to promote trade, develop relationships among trade partners, and advance the marketability of products. The Ghana Export Promotion Authority provides trade fairs and exhibitions services for businesses in Ghana. The Ghana Trade Fair Company Limited is responsible for organising trade shows for businesses in Ghana. Also, in Nigeria, the various city, state, and bilateral Chambers of Commerce effectively utilise trade fairs and exhibitions as marketing tools to display and promote local and foreign products and services. A study by Shereni et al. (2021) in Zimbabwe indicates that organisers of trade fairs can enhance the quality of trade fairs by improving the product positioning benefits, interacting with key stakeholders, improving accessibility to venues, and adopting effective communications.

Brand Communication, Image, and Reputation of Public Sector Organisations

It has been long accepted that "branding" is a term associated with private sector rather than public sector organisations (Whelan et al., 2010). The increasing use of branding by public sector organisations calls for understanding how these organisations effectively apply branding principles (Leijerholt et al., 2019). To gain legitimacy, public sector organisations' attempts at branding require a focus on uniqueness and differentiation and assurance that service will be provided at a level equal to that of private institutions, for example, higher education institutions (Sataøen, 2019; Sataøen & Wæraas, 2015). Carefully crafted internal branding strategies are crucial to ensure public organisations engage stakeholders who are key actors in delivering brand values (Clark et al., 2020). Increasing competition faced by some public sector organisations, especially education and healthcare, demands that they adopt branding to enhance reputations and perceptions of value.

Social Media Adoption in Africa's Public Sector

Just as the use of social media by individuals and businesses is growing, there is a corresponding increase in the use of social media by government organisations (Sharif et al., 2015). In Africa, scholars such as Nduhura and Prieler (2017) have acknowledged the importance of social media in the functioning of public institutions. For example, across the continent, police departments and other law enforcement agencies have recently begun using social media for criminal investigations, intelligence gathering, operational tasks, communications, and engagement with the general public (Dekker et al., 2020). Bertot et al. (2010) assert that social media has helped promote openness and transparency among public sector organisations.

In the public sector, government institutions' adoption of social media is influenced by technological, environmental, and organisational factors (Sharif et al., 2015). Technological factors include perceived risks and benefits, social media policies, and the acceptability of media tools and channels. Environmental factors include the public's demand for social media, the public's response to success stories of organisations that have adopted social media platforms (bandwagon effect), and the trendiness of social media communication platforms (faddishness). The organisational context factors include management drive, social media policies, and the degree of formalisation in terms of structure.

Social media adoption by the public sector faces identifiable barriers. Dekker et al. (2020) found that government agencies' typology of social media adoption barriers includes structural constraints, cultural issues, and citizen-related challenges. The structural issues that negatively affect social media adoption include legal constraints, shortage of trained personnel and technological skills, lack of coordination between agencies and media providers, and technological limitations (Dekker et al., 2020). Cultural hindrance to social media adoption is linked to the mistrust of the bureaucratic culture, resistance to change, and fear of untested innovations (Dekker et al., 2020). This is particularly relevant to the African continent, where public sector institutions need to enhance their brand image through trust-building (Adeola, 2022), increased accountability and improved communications with the citizens.

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) in Africa's Public Sector

The development of the internet has led to a more consumer-driven and focused marketing environment. Kitchen and Burgmann (2015) defined IMC as a promotional mix of elements applied harmoniously to affect behaviour. Holm (2006) reported that investments in marketing communications had shifted away from mass media and traditional advertising and towards IMC, which has proven successful for competitive private sector companies and institutions, state enterprises, and political parties. Edmiston-Strasser (2009), advocating for the use of formal and informal communication channels to enhance institutional brand equity, posits that institutional leaders are the most important drivers of IMC schemes in their organisations. In Africa, integrated marketing communications can serve as a marketing tool for enhancing the communication effectiveness of public sector organisations.

Public Sector Communication Ethics

Broderick and Pickton (2005), citing Christy (1999), stated that marketing communication ethics relate to issues of misleading communications and public relations (PR) communications that distract rather than inform. Ethics are issues of right and wrong and could affect communication in the public sector. One challenge facing public sector organisations is maintaining high ethical standards in communication, particularly during a crisis. PR communications practitioners must consider what practices constitute ethical and unethical communications as well as their corresponding effects (Jin et al., 2018). Kolić Stanić (2020) also provides the need for PR practitioners to adhere to some guidelines, including (1) Truthfulness, (2) Transparency, (3) Professional Integrity, (4) Professional Competence, (5) Loyalty, and (6) Social Responsibility. PR practitioners must adhere to ethical principles, including law-abiding, balancing, openness and privacy, and avoiding conflict of interest.

Therefore, PR practitioners must adhere to ethical communication practices in the public sector domain. Many African countries have adopted international codes of ethics in their operations. For instance, in Ghana, the Institute of Public Relations Ghana adopts the code of ethics of the International Public Relations Association (IPRA), known as the Code of Athens. Public relations managers in public sector organisations in Ghana who are part of this association will have to adhere to strict ethical standards in performing their duties.

Conclusion

Leaders in the marketing communications field advocate for the adoption of proven marketing orientation and practices in Africa's public sector institutions. The contributions of this book's chapter authors provide readers with valuable material for the revitalisation of Africa's public sector institutions by adopting tested communication tools and strategies to manage governments' relationships with citizens, thereby building respected and reputable public sector institutions across the continent. In the concluding chapter of this volume, recommendations for effective public relations and brand communication in Africa's public sector and a discussion on the application of African philosophies in reimagining the future of public relations in the African continent are presented.

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2

Public Sector Branding in Africa: Some Reflections

Olusegun Vincent and Olaniyi Evans

Introduction

The application of branding has been extended beyond its private organisational context to public sector institutions (Leijerholt et al., 2018, 2019). Public sector branding aims to differentiate public sector organisations and nations by ensuring sustainable and unique competitive advantages. It is possible to identify certain differences between the private sector and public sector branding; a major difference is the dominance of economic objectives in private sector branding and marketing in contrast with public sector branding, which encompasses socio-economic and political objectives (Whelan et al., 2010).

Public sector branding is also concerned with securing legitimacy and improving reputation (Sataøen & Wæraas, 2013). Governments may require organisations in the public sector to be more attentive to

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customers and their needs, that is, to become more customer-oriented or welfare-oriented instead of increasing the number of customers. Other elements of branding, such as building awareness and loyalty, could co-exist in both public sector and private sector branding. Government and other regulatory agencies aim at expressing their identities through marketing and branding strategies.

The issue of public sector branding has recently become an interesting topic of growing contention as various academics, and public sector personnel have argued about the nature, existence, and value of branding a public sector. Simon Anholt, a British brand consultant who coined the term “nation-building” in 1996, explains that just as corporate organisations have learned to “live the brand”, nations should also take their reputations into consideration because that is what statecraft is all about in a globalised world (Kaneva, 2011). This sort of branding characterises the different forms of persuasion used by the public sector to advance its political, economic, and cultural agendas.

Studying public sector branding can be a demanding task as the field is still in its infancy and comprises mostly descriptive and prescriptive studies (Papadopoulos & Hamzaoui-Essoussi, 2015). Besides, studying public sector branding in Africa is more challenging, as the continent is severely under-researched and ill-understood (Matiza & Oni, 2013; Papadopoulos & Hamzaoui-Essoussi, 2015). Notwithstanding, the current study is essential, as the current brand of the African public sector is viewed as a significant threat to the future progress of its countries and sectors. The threat pertains to the prevailing view that African countries are “underdeveloped”, which creates a continental brand effect with negative ramifications for all African public sectors. The African continent has gone through significant challenges, especially since the 1950s, attributable to political instability, military coups, and social unrest, which have “nonstop” tarnished the continent’s image in various ways. In 2021 alone, there were six coups or attempted coups. The continent’s tarnished brand has motivated the current researchers to explore the prospects of improving the competitiveness and appeal of the public sector brand in Africa.

Conversely, there is an emerging view that Africa is possibly at the cusp of increased growth, considering the progress in various sectors in terms of political and economic liberalisation, tourism surge (Owusu-Frimpong et al., 2013), rise in FDI and key sports events (Fullerton & Holtzhausen, 2012). In that regard, public sector branding is expected to significantly contribute to solidifying, projecting, and driving the optimistic outlook (Papadopoulos & Hamzaoui-Essoussi, 2015). Perhaps in recognition of the threat and the opportunity of the African public sector brand, several African countries are engaged in systematic public sector branding to differentiate themselves, promote their strengths, and amend the negative elements of the continental and national brand effects. In that regard, this chapter aims to examine the challenges and prospects of public sector branding in Africa grounded on previous research.

A study of this nature is important for many reasons. First, despite the growing need for branding in public organisations, its application is still nascent in many African countries. Second, there is a need for the relevant bodies to have a greater understanding of contextual factors affecting the applicability and effects of branding efforts in the public sector. Third, a greater understanding of these factors will help public practitioners successfully implement brand communication in public corporations. The long-term survival of the government and its organisations in African countries and beyond still depends on the re-evaluation of their governance systems, organisations, and brand identities.

Benefits of Brand Communications in the Public Sector

In recent times, the literature has recognised the efforts of government authorities utilising marketing procedures to boost the quality and reach of public services (Marland et al., 2017; Reghunathan, 2021). For example, Leijerholt et al. (2018) suggest that brand communication in the public sector develops central organisational assets, strengthens relationships with internal stakeholders (such as public servants), and establishes relationships with external stakeholders (such as citizens and voters). These organisational assets comprise trust, credibility, and legitimacy. A typical example is the public health sector. Factors including reliability, referent influence, and corporate social responsibility are vital for a robust relationship of the masses with the public health sector brand (Leijerholt et al., 2018).

According to Reghunathan (2021), brand communication facilitates trust in the provision of services. Considering the large number of public sector divisions interacting directly with the general public, the capability to create a sense of trust can bring about improved public participation in the promotion of the facilities and skills offered. Arya et al. (2019) argue that trust brings about emotive attachment to a brand. When a particular government employs a properly designed brand communication policy, it is easy for the public to understand its aims and identify themselves with it, thus removing any misunderstanding that the public may have. Since a good brand basically communicates a unique value, the branding of a government programme or service enables the citizens of a country to be more aware of governmental service delivery.

Brand communication indicates the origin of a product or service and what makes it distinct; this necessitates a closer link between the brand message and its source (Karens et al., 2016). For instance, encouraging the citizens to design mascots is a common action in Olympics host countries. In the Olympic Games, mascots are symbols of entertainment and marketing; it personifies the Olympic values and spirit with a colourful and playful character of the history and culture of the host countries. Thus, generating ideologies from the citizens has the objective of developing a sense of participation in the Olympic Games.

The transition to digital governance has also enabled government authorities to advance the efficacy of public sector administration (Bryson et al., 2014; De Vries et al., 2016). The integration of digital media, governance, and brand communication has provided easier and quicker access to information, thus improving public service delivery (Marland et al., 2017). As information technology avenues continue to be tapped for governance purposes, the mechanisms of consuming information have gone beyond recognising and communicating public policy issues through the unidirectional broadcast spectrum. Instead of public communication conducted by a limited set of actors (e.g., policymakers and other groups such as journalists), the spread and adoption of digital technology has transformed the diffusion of information, thus reducing information asymmetry (Mahama, 2020). Therefore, digital technology provides an opportunity for interactive communication of public policy.

Aside from its significance and implications for public sector organisations, brand communication has myriad advantages for the nation. A key idea of nation branding is to create a simple, unambiguous, and distinguishing concept centred on emotional qualities denoted verbally and visually, which can be comprehended by diverse audiences in various circumstances. In order to function efficiently, nation branding has to embrace political, cultural, economic, and sports activities. For example, a study by Ahn and Wu (2013) shows that the arts, cultural sector, and the government have positive effects on a nation's brand image.

When viewed as a synonym of a product-country image, nation branding has the clear aim of using the country's image to promote revenue generation and exports. The name of the country or logo can be utilised either by a single firm or by an organisation to emphasise the country of origin. For example, The New Zealand Way takes advantage of the country-of-origin effect as a mark of quality to promote exports. Also, the Cool Britannia era in the UK, which took place in the second half of the 1990s, was an era of increased pride in the culture of the UK and was inspired by Swinging London from 1960s popular culture (Fan, 2006). In the years since this period, the creative industries have been viewed as a favourite of the British government and media (Campbell & Khaleeli, 2017). Another case in which arts and culture have transformed the image of a country is the rising interest in Korean popular culture (music and the arts). Also, manipulating images of a particular country against those of enemy countries can be used as a powerful tool in propaganda. This spans from the Soviet Empire in the Cold War to the labelling of countries as the "axis of evil". Furthermore, a term could also be generated to brand a region. For example, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea are collectively regarded as the four Asian Tigers due to their high levels of economic prosperity since the 1960s decade.

In general, a positive public sector brand image increases investor confidence, promotes tourism, increases access to global markets, improves international ratings, and reverses the brain drain. Often, capital movements are guided not only by rational economic reasoning but also by perception and image (Pantzalis & Rodrigues, 1999). An example is the flight of investors from some African countries due to economic mismanagement and political risks. The country's brand image can also be used to explain investor perceptions in the economies of "the Asian Tigers" (Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea). According to Pantzalis and Rodrigues (1999), these four countries share a similar brand image despite their considerable differences in socio-economic systems. Hence, investors' perceptions of countries as brands influence the movement of international capital and are, therefore, considered crucial in attracting global capital.

Brand Communications in the African Public Sector

Inspired by the notion of corporate branding, many public sector organisations aim to define their identities in a direct and consistent manner. The belief that government-owned firms and organisations are more likely to succeed in the long-term with a well-defined brand identity is one of the arguments that support public sector branding (Serrat, 2017). In an era where there is a lot of emphases attached to global rankings, a country or region's position, for example, in the Ease of Doing Business Index, Corruption Perception Index (CPI) and Global Competitiveness Index, could be used for branding purposes if it is positive (and ignored if it is negative). This is often done to separate nations from others. Branding through association or alignment with prominent international organisations and groupings, including the G20 and the BRICS, can also provide a sense of prestige in the global context.

The tourism sector represents the starting point for branding in many nations (Osei & Gbadamosi, 2011). The development of the tourism sector is strategic, able to lead to significant positioning across various countries in particular regions (e.g., safaris in sub-Saharan Africa) and hence to competition across countries and their sectors (Dos Santos & Campo, 2014). Public sector branding is particularly crucial in the tourism sector in Africa, as the sector is the fastest growing in the continent, only second to the extractive industries. In many African countries, the potentials of the tourism sector are rich and diversified. Pitt et al. (2007), in a study of the tourism websites of ten nations in Africa, showed that they communicate an amazing mélange of different tinges: for example, "competence" for South Africa, "ruggedness" for Kenya, and "sincerity" for Botswana. In many cases, however, there are confusing similarities in slogans: for example, "Warm Heart of Africa" for Malawi versus "Heart of Africa" for Nigeria. According to a study by Tsaur et al. (2020), such tourism slogans and logos help potential tourists comprehend individual nation's tourism resources.

Another significant sector engaged in branding is the sports sector. The first time the World Cup took place in Africa was the 2010 World Cup which was hosted in South Africa. Mega-events such as this get an entire nation's attention and thus serve as a unique opportunity for branding. This is evidenced by the media exposure gained through the event. For instance, more than 700 million people watching the finals alone gathered over 200 television crews from all over the world (Knott et al., 2015). Furthermore, the event created opportunities for tourists to visit the country, leading to a deeper knowledge and understanding of the country.

Certain sectors of a country may be less conspicuous than investment, tourism, and sports but nevertheless count as brand assets. An important example is education sector. Improvements in the public education sector and higher education per se make for effective sector branding. Several African countries view higher education as essential to international competitiveness, and their massive efforts to improve educational offerings, have overturned the trend of students travelling overseas for learning (Buchanan, 2013) and transformed the host nations into places of attraction to inbound international students. South Africa, for instance, has been an attraction to a growing number of students across the continent, making education an important element of its brand among other African countries.

Indeed, the public education sector in Africa is poised to provide high-quality education, improve competitive positioning, and maintain financial strength (Fomunyam, 2020). Administrators at different universities across the continent have recognised the need to function as a business, utilising various branding strategies to market their offerings. For example, the University of Cape Town in South Africa, one of the leading universities on the continent with a tradition of research excellence, boasts a robust social media presence with thousands of followers on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. The same social media presence can be said of the University of Namibia, Kenyatta University, University of Dar es Salaam, University of Ibadan, and the University of Ghana. The social media presence helps the universities not only to create brand awareness but also to foster engagement with both current and prospective students. According to Fomunyam (2020, p. 15985), these universities use branding as a public relations technique to differentiate themselves and stay ahead of the pack: "These universities emphasise on their achievements, affordability, unique courses, duration to complete courses and their facilities. All this is done with the aim of attracting a prospective student who is looking to enrol at a university".

A Glimpse at the African Brand

Currently, Africa is the second most populous continent after Asia (Abessolo et al., 2022). Sub-Saharan Africa, which is home to over one billion people (50% of whom is predicted to be below 25 years old by 2050 [Odufuye & Ajuwon, 2020]), is a diverse region that offers both human and natural resources with the potential to eradicate poverty in the region. With the largest free trade area in the world and an over 1.2 billion population, the continent is gradually establishing a new development path and harnessing its vast potential (The World Bank, 2020). Although the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are severe, the sub-Saharan African economy is gradually recovering from the 2020 recession as it is set to grow at 3.7% in 2021 and 3.8% in 2022 (IMF African Department, 2021). Even though the growth rates are still very modest compared with developed nations, the economic potentials of Africa, brought about by human and natural resource potentials, can make a difference in how "brand Africa" is understood globally.

Cities, regions, and countries have promoted themselves, especially to boost important sectors such as tourism, since the period of antiquity. However, since the early 1990s, different international developments, including the decline of communism, the rise of emerging markets, health challenges, and globalisation, brought about an increase in global competition and intensified the importance of how countries are viewed by their target markets (Nguyen, 2011). This is especially vital in the African context, where different inter-country and inter-tribal rivalries, its colonial past, and other factors have created a relatively "bleak" image of the continent. However, with the evolving focus on nation branding, emphasis is placed on the potential of the current "African Renaissance" for marketing various sectors, including tourism, natural resource, manufactured exports, foreign investment, and higher education (Papadopoulos & Hamzaoui-Essoussi, 2015).

There are three motivations for nation and public sector branding in Africa: (i) almost every nation has adopted branding today; (ii) branding is more imperative for developing countries, as obtainable in Africa, who intend to emerge from their poor past; and (ii) the nations are motivated to distinguish themselves from other African countries to avoid the continental brand effect (Papadopoulos & Hamzaoui-Essoussi, 2015). As studies such as Kotler and Gertner (2002) have clearly suggested, everything has a brand—and, considering the applied interest in nation branding in the past decade, the enthusiasm for nation branding is mirrored in Africa, where it is fast penetrating the continent's mindset (Marandu et al., 2012).

Among African nation brands (Brand Botswana, Brand Kenya, Brand Ghana, etc.) included in most international indices (Ibrahim Index of African Governance, Afrobarometer, etc.), Brand South Africa is the most researched (e.g., Amalu, 2013; Pentz et al., 2014). Not surprisingly, one of the countries in Africa that is striving towards achieving a positive national brand image is South Africa. This is carried out through "Brand South Africa": an entity tasked with delivering integrated and coordinated marketing, communication, and reputation management solutions as it markets the country's brand both locally and internationally. Brand South Africa is aligned with the country's development plans to improve South Africa's brand image and reputation. Through Brand South Africa (formerly known as the International Marketing Council), the South African government is meeting the need for the nation to be positioned as an investment hub, a stakeholder in global governance, and to enable the achievement of important national objectives. The 2021/2022 positioning strategy deals with the brand proposition: Inspiring New Ways. The initiatives included in this strategy are reputation management, nation brand advocacy, and securing of local and international stakeholder partnerships (Brand South Africa, 2021).

While South Africa is actively engaging in the brand positioning strategies, minimal effort is observed in the “Brand Africa” continental brand. The lack of enthusiasm for the continental brand initiative can be attributed to the development of individual nation branding programmes (such as Angola, Ghana). Also, there could be the issue of comprehension of national branding as a competitive discourse of zero-sum gains. In other words, the countries view themselves as competing with other African countries instead of competing with other continents (Browning & Ferraz de Oliveira, 2017). Small countries may also worry that their distinctiveness will be lost within a wider continental brand. Countries such as Rwanda are engaging in national branding activities to be a technological hub through urban planning visions (especially its capital city, Kigali). Nevertheless, these motives in the individual countries can have an impact on the overall image of Africa if the right strategies are put in place.

Challenges of Brand Communications by the African Public Sector

The case to brand African countries and public sector organisations is necessary to dispel Afro-pessimism. Rebranding the public sector can assist in promoting the existing opportunities. However, several African governments are finding it challenging to adopt branding strategies due to certain challenges. Public sector branding, though advantageous, have certain challenges which must be adequately addressed before the brand communication process can be successful. These challenges are barriers to the African government in achieving a positive and sustainable brand image.

One of the key challenges includes the identification of a brand communication strategy that embraces the various industries, ministries, cultures, and the population as a whole simultaneously. The inconsistent values and multiple identities challenge African public sector organisations in brand communication. Often, public sector organisations are characterised by multiple identities and are less likely to be attributed to a single identity definition. These organisations are expected to serve the interests of the public and other broad political and socio-economic interests. These functions most times turn the organisations into complex units with inconsistent values.

Moreover, public sector organisations exist to handle problems that the market has little capacity for solving. These include the provision of public goods, issues of monopoly, crime, environmental crises, and income redistribution (Wæraas, 2008). This challenge led Brunsson (1989) to assert that these organisations are "depressive" units largely characterised by dilemmas and conflicting difficulties. Serving public interest and accommodation of individual interests simultaneously brings about dilemmas and inconsistencies. Tax organisations, social welfare offices, regulatory agencies, and other public institutions whose tasks comprise mostly casework face this issue. For example, they must respond to elected government officials by being efficient and rule-oriented, but they must also be able to emphasise equality, justice, fairness, and the protection of individual rights. All forms of public organisations are exposed to such challenges, especially those working closely with elected officials and making direct choices on their behalf. Thus, there is an inherent difficulty in establishing a unique brand identity in these organisations and communicating this to the relevant stakeholders.

Another challenge of brand communication in Africa is that of leadership and conduct. If the political leadership is viewed negatively, the public sector as a brand suffers, and ultimately, brand communication suffers (Qobo, 2017). It is more difficult to build productive international relations or attract foreign investment if leadership in a region, country, or continent is perceived corrupt. Consequently, one of the key questions in measuring how reliable a region, country, or continent is as a brand is how efficient the leadership is at any point in time.

In many cases, African governments, parastatals, and local authorities are responsible for the provision of utility services and public infrastructures with heavy financing requirements. Most, however, lacks the fiscal capacity to effectively finance the needed infrastructure to improve their brands. A vibrant infrastructure uplifts a nation's brand (Dinnie, 2008), leading to increased visibility and identity. Infrastructural provisions are, moreover, problematic for the various public sectors in the continent. A noticeable example is Zimbabwe. Air Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority, and the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ), amongst others, are monumentally failing (Chigora et al., 2021). The meagre infrastructure poorly reflects on Africa as a brand.

Most sectors of the African economy have waning international tourism, foreign investments, international trade, and social welfare (see Masango & Naidoo, 2018), and infrastructural gaps cannot be overlooked. Particularly, foreign direct investment (FDI) into the continent is adversely affected by the negative image (Sikwila, 2015). Studies such as Lu et al. (2014) have stressed the importance of the quality of host country institutions to FDI. The small proportion of FDI in Africa's public sector is explained by weak institutional arrangements and political risk considerations (Makoni, 2018; Shan et al., 2018; Ado, 2020; Kamal et al., 2020). Since a country's reputation affects its appeal as an investment location (Búrcio, 2013), public sector branding can be a veritable piece of the solution to the challenges of investment promotion in the public sector for many countries in Africa perceived to be institutionally weak (Matiza & Oni, 2013).

Another problem in the implementation of public sector branding is the direction and control of a nation's brand. Hankinson (2010) asserts that a nation's brand is not owned or monitored by only one establishment but by a system of public sector establishments. Consequently, a major component of nation branding is that there are many stakeholders and very little management control. Typical stakeholders involved in nation branding include tourist boards, chambers of commerce, cultural institutes, ministries, NGOs, agencies, ministries, and companies. Although various stakeholders participate in nation branding, Anholt (2007) asserts that the government bears most of the responsibility for this. The major pillars of public sector branding, tourism, exports, foreign direct investment, and culture, require various stakeholders and participants, but the major burden of nation-building is often placed on the government. Thus, African countries and public sector organisations should be able to implement strategies to attract investment and improve tourism and trade to achieve the overall aim of improving brand image and solving different socio-economic challenges that the continent is currently facing.

Other issues include poor understanding of what public sector branding entails, unrealistic expectations, limited flexibility, negative images (including corruption), inadequate resources, absence of coordination as well as poor transparency and evaluation, and competition among countries in Africa that leads to territorialism (Wanjiru, 2006; Purushottam & Rwelamila, 2010). In fact, in an empirical study based on ten African countries, Pitt et al. (2007) showed that poor government participation, absence of coordination among the different levels of government, art, business, media, and education agencies, and low originality are some of the problems associated with public sector branding.

The Critical Success Factors for Public Sector Branding in Africa

Many African public sector organisations are experiencing waves of reforms which has the capacity to lead to rebranding. However, these efforts remain hidden either because they are viewed as incapable of achieving effective outcomes or because the African public sector has not employed the correct strategies to make known these potentials. It must, however, be stated that the success of public sector branding within the public sector requires different success factors.

The branding of individual public sector organisations in many African countries is very weak. Branding of public corporations or organisations owned by the government is still a relatively new concept as branding is usually associated with private sector organisations. However, strategies for creating a unique brand identity for public sector organisations exist. Gromark and Melin (2013) highlight important factors that drive the success of public sector branding. Firstly, brand orientation should have a very strong stakeholder focus, since the corporate brand plays a vital role in brand-oriented organisations. It is important for a public sector organisation to balance all the interests of the various stakeholders against the mission, vision, and core values of the organisation. Unlike market orientation, which primarily has a customer focus, brand orientation deals with all stakeholders and is an important factor in achieving a favourable public sector brand image.

In addition, public sector organisations need to function with a holistic perspective, that is, focusing on collective welfare or benefits rather than individual welfare or benefits to create better efficiency. Effective brand orientation is also characterised by an interactive process based on the interplay between internal and external stakeholders. The process is also based on mutual influence and interdependence. However, this process must be grounded in the mission, vision, and values of the organisation. Lastly, apart from contributing to revenue generation, brand orientation should generate viewpoints that align with the democratic ideals that form the foundation of public sector organisations. This is important for maintaining the legitimacy of the organisation in the long run.

In addition to the aforementioned, there has to be trust between the state and the society. According to Adeola (2022), trust makes it easier for citizens and the public to adapt to policy programmes. However, a low level of trust reduces the support for public policies and weakens their validity, resulting in lower compliance. Accountability, transparency, and integrity of public sector officials are necessary to develop a trustworthy and reliable public sector brand in Africa.

The transition of the African brand from that characterised by wars, corruption, and poverty requires adequate long-term planning and cooperation of relevant stakeholders as well as transparency on the part of public sector officials. Another way to tackle public sector brand communication challenges in Africa is to appreciate the internal diversity in corporate branding. The idea is not to put aside the general essence of branding but to achieve consistency in the complex nature of the public sector.

Consequently, there is a need for a more adapted version of branding that accounts for the features of public sector organisations better. Firstly, multiple identities can bring about inconsistency, but they can also make a brand unique. Instead of searching for an ultimate brand communication statement, public sector organisations should recognise their existing attributes as a unique accumulation of features that can be utilised in the branding procedure. Also, public sector brands should take advantage of the diversity of their identities and match with the diversity of their constituencies.

According to Osei and Gbadamosi (2011), different factors can help improve Africa's branding strategy. One crucial factor is the celebration and emphasis on Africa's success stories. In other words, one of the unique selling propositions of achieving a positive brand image is to emphasise the unique selling point (USP) of each nation in the media space. Every country has its unique selling points. For example, Mauritius is known for its ease of business operations, and South Africa is regarded as one of the top nations globally for protecting investor interest. Ghana is known for peace, security, and democracy. This is reportedly the major reason why former US President Barack Obama chose Ghana as the first African country to visit during his tenure as President (Rundell, 2010; *Financial Times*, 2009). Africans thus need to raise awareness regarding the vast opportunities in the continent and achievements not just in Africa but also by Africans in the diaspora. This is called a generation of brand awareness (Aaker & Moorman, 2017).

It is also important for African countries to acknowledge the critical role of marketing communications in affecting the behaviour and attitudes of the potential audience. Several empirical studies have shown that marketing communication and advertising assist greatly in attaining brand equity (Pappu & Quester, 2010; Dahlén et al., 2009). Therefore, it is not surprising that countries such as Malaysia and Scotland carried out advertisements on UK television advertising their "Malaysia, Truly Asia" and "Visit Scotland" slogans, respectively. Countries such as Switzerland decide what aspects of "Swissness" to communicate to their audience. It could be to promote Switzerland as a country, tourist destination, Swiss goods, and services, or integration of these themes (Osei & Gbadamosi, 2011). Both African governments and the public sector should therefore endeavour to identify their target audience for the particular brand they want to promote as well as the features of their target audience.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The branding of the public sector is not a mere synonym for propaganda and is not restricted to influencing public opinion by advertising or public relations. It should be viewed as a means of reconstituting not only the public sector but also nationhood through marketing and branding models. Considering the growing rise in global competitiveness among countries, strong brands in the public sector are vital in promoting foreign investment and exerting political impact. This is especially important in the African context as the continent brand is often associated with its negative problems.

Therefore, the drive for a proactive rebranding and repositioning of the African public sector must go beyond mere communication to a comprehensive reconfiguration of the continent's brand. Hence, public sector branding requires the countries to take charge of their brand identities to overcome social, economic, cultural, and political struggles (Tecmen, 2018). It is imperative for public sector branding strategists to transcend visual identity to incorporate wide-ranging facets of sectoral development. To do this, the contemporary public sector in African nations must become more entrepreneurial and business-oriented in socio-economic programming to conquer the global competition.

It is recommended that the African public sector engages in all-inclusive branding. First, it needs a brand proposition that is competitive in the global market. Investment, technology, and well-utilised resources are required in order to carry this out as the image of a sector, country, region, or continent reflects serious political and socio-economic factors. Without a good product, branding will not yield good results. Branding serves as the final touch in the transition to vibrant sectoral development. If sectoral development is like finishing a huge jigsaw puzzle, branding is most likely the final piece.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This chapter has added to the literature by offering a broad discussion of branding in the public sector, presenting the prospects in Africa. Although the study is limited to simply discussing the issues, it brings pertinent information that can be tested in different country settings. With respect to the challenges of branding in the public sector, it is imperative to implement more rigorous studies, seeking to empirically understand these factors and others different from the ones discussed in this study. In addition, future research can delve into a deeper examination of the literature and existing debates involving emerging prospects of branding in the public sector. In this regard, there is a compelling need to proffer new questions about branding in the public sector not only in Africa but in other regions. Also, it is evidently crucial to continue to study branding in the public sector, and to carry out a broader and deeper theoretical analysis of the viewpoints presented here.

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3

Marketing Communications Strategies for Public Transport Organisations

Nguyen Phong Nguyen and Emmanuel Mogaji

Introduction

Commuters cannot overemphasise the value of public transportation in creating opportunities, providing access, and connecting people (Mogaji & Nguyen, 2021). Public transit plays a crucial role in society; many people rely on these services to access economic, social, and other activities (Vicente et al., 2020). In most cases, these public transportation services are run by the government for the public, but there is a growing

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number of privatisations that give private companies control of transport operations. However, this privatisation has not excluded the role of the public institution from supporting the sector and the need to engage with different stakeholders (Savage, 1993). The need to engage with stakeholders highlights the role of marketing communications in the public transport sector (Mogaji & Erkan, 2019).

Specifically, marketing communications are essential in the public transport sector (Mogaji, 2020). First, increasing car ownership has resulted in numerous problems for governments, including traffic congestion and air pollution. The image of public transport is relatively poor compared to owning a private vehicle (Vicente et al., 2020). It is necessary to implement suitable marketing communications for public transport to improve the overall brand image, attract new users, and prevent current users from switching to private vehicle use (Hensher, 2018).

Second, the pandemic has changed the dynamics in public transportation (Mogaji, 2020). At the beginning of the pandemic, there was a national lockdown, and people were not allowed to travel and use public transportation; and as the lockdown ceased, many people were reluctant to use public transport because of their fear of contracting the virus (Kopsidas et al., 2021; Adeyanju et al., 2022). There is a new and emerging perception about public transport as the hub of getting infected with the virus. Many people avoid it or seek alternative forms of transportation (Mogaji et al., 2021a). Hence, how can public transport organisations adopt marketing communication strategies to change these negative narratives about public transport and reassure people about the safety measures?

Third, considering the growing concerns about climate change, it is becoming more important for public transport organisations to create more awareness about the benefits of public transport, highlighting the role of public transportation in reducing traffic congestions, decreasing carbon emissions, improving air quality, and helping people get active as they must walk to access the public transport (Tang, 2019; Sharifi, 2021). Effective communications of these values are of considerable benefit to the transport service providers and the customers.

Fourth, considering the insufficient transport facilities and infrastructures in many emerging countries (Mogaji et al., 2021b), public transport operators need to engage with their customers and provide updates about congestions, service updates, and any disruption along the way (Zhu & Goverde, 2019). It is important to reassure customers that even though the infrastructure is not enough, the organisation is doing its best to enhance the service quality. Lastly, diverse people use the transport network, and they need to be supported appropriately. We have the less abled commuters, children, and aged people who need to be informed and updated, albeit using different inclusive communication strategies (Mogaji & Nguyen, 2021).

These reasons highlight the need for public transportation companies to revaluate their communication strategies and liaise with their stakeholders (Mogaji et al., 2021; Mogaji, 2020). Marketing communications is ideal for internal communications, brand and identity development, user education, user information systems, marketing campaigns, user feedback systems, online engagement, public relations, and external communication (Mogaji & Erkan, 2019).

Specifically, this chapter addresses how public transport organisations can use marketing communications to reposition their brand, especially post-pandemic. The study adopts a conceptual format, providing a holistic overview of the sector and relevant managerial implications. By using Nigeria as a case study, considering it is one of the most populated countries globally but still struggles with managing transport operations and insufficient travel infrastructures (Mogaji, 2020; Adeleke & Ogunsusi, 2019), we adopted an integrative literature review approach to critically review and synthesise the literature on marketing communications strategies for public transport organisations to enable us to develop a new theoretical framework and perspective (Snyder, 2019).

This study provides a theoretical contribution to bodies of work around transport service quality, marketing communication, and public sector engagement with their stakeholders (Adeleke & Ogunsusi, 2019; Maduekwe et al., 2020; Mogaji et al., 2021), highlighting the fact that organisations, irrespective of public or private ownership, need to effectively engage with their customers to enhance service quality and build their brand reputation (Mogaji et al., 2020). In addition, managerial implications for transport managers, administrators, and front-line staff are provided. These implications focused on the need to understand the customers, the media, and engaging with the customers through the right channel.

The Public Transportation Context

Public transportation is a system of transporting people in groups available to the general public, unlike privately owned individual modes of transportation (Adeleke & Ogunsusi, 2019). The public transportation system will have designated stops, runs at a specified time, and ply a fixed route (Maduekwe et al., 2020). Public transportation often excludes air travel, including buses, trains, trams, and ferries (Mogaji, 2020).

There are different arrangements for managing these transport systems. In many developing countries, the public transportation system is managed by an informal network of drivers and riders, who have private cars and buses and ply different routes. These networks of drivers are not regulated but often unionised (Mogaji et al., 2021). In some developed countries, the public transportation system has been deregulated. In 1986, the British government deregulated most of the local bus industry. This deregulation changed the industry dynamics, which involved cutting the subsidy for transportation, and many public bus companies were privatised (Savage, 1993). These two ends of the ownership spectrum—informal private ownership and privatised public transports—highlight different possible modes of ownership structure within the public transport system. Table 3.1 illustrates five different types of public transport ownership.

Identifying these public transport ownership structures is essential to understanding this chapter's focus and value. The chapter explores marketing communication strategies for government-owned and franchised ownership structures, specifically in Nigeria's emerging economy. It aligns with earlier findings on transport infrastructure in Nigeria, the lack of consumer engagement (Mogaji et al., 2021), and the need for public sector organisations to adopt marketing promotions efforts to improve service delivery and customer satisfaction (Giovanni & Sofia, 2019). It is anticipated that these public sector organisations can use the understanding of marketing communications (promotions) to interact with their stakeholders and improve service delivery.

Marketing communications enable the brand to deliver the message through a suitable medium at the right time to maximise sales volume (Bakti et al., 2020). Companies are expected to deploy creative, concise, clear, coherent, and consistent marketing messages to ensure that the

Table 3.1 Different types of public transport ownership

Public transport ownership structure	Characteristics
Informal private owned	• Privately owned by individuals operating in an informal setting • They are not regulated but often unionised • Prices can be increased with no notice, following market demands • They are not designated for any route. They can choose to ply any route or find it commercially viable • Examples are the Danfo and Molue[a] in Lagos, Nigeria
Formal private owned	• An individual or company privately owns them • Not regulated but may not be unionised • Technological-driven innovation to meet travel demands • Prices can change/surge due to demands and supply • They may have a designated route and can also be flexible • Examples are shared mobility like Uber and Bolt
Government owned	• Infrastructure, fleets, and operations are owned and managed by the state or municipal government • Designated route and time • Transport fares are often subsidised to ensure access to transportation for everyone • Profits from profitable routes subside unprofitable routes (maybe because of low ridership) • They are not profit-driven; profit is invested back into the system • An example is Blackpool Transport, serving Blackpool, Fleetwood, Thornton Cleveleys, Lytham St Anne's and Poulton-le-Fylde for over 100 years
Government franchised	• The government owns the infrastructure, but service operations are franchised to another company to provide the services • The government has considerable control over who runs the route • The route franchisee can be changed, contract renewed, or contract terminated • There are set performance targets that are closely monitored to ensure services are of the highest quality • Still designated route and time • It may not get a company to run the unprofitable route, and government may need to take over those routes • Examples are the Transport for London (TfL) franchised bus networks across London and the Primero Transport Services Limited, the operator of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in Lagos, Nigeria

(*continued*)

Table 3.1 (continued)

Public transport ownership structure	Characteristics
Privatised	• They are responsible for the infrastructures, fleets, and operations management in that area • Responsible for setting routes, fares, and service frequency. Services are operated on a commercial basis; they are profit-driven • Fares can be changed, albeit with advance notice • Designated for a particular area or region • Competitions with other providers in the region may have to upgrade their services provision and investment in their infrastructure, often including Wi-Fi and USB charging points, digital ticketing, and audio-visual announcements • Examples are Arriva, First, Go-Ahead, National Express, and Stagecoach in the UK

[a]Danfo and Molue are Lagos (Nigeria)-based commercial public transport owned by individuals and distinctively painted yellow with black stripes. These buses are often not in the best condition

target audience and stakeholders understand and act upon the message. Public transport companies will gain a competitive advantage by ensuring that the selected strategy conveys a message that suits the target market's unique needs (Berdiyorov, 2020). By using effective marketing communications strategies, the companies will establish suitable communications channels that can be used to deliver the message to the target demographic segment. For instance, social media can target younger generations while older generations receive their messages through mainstream media (Navarro-Bailón, 2011). Selecting the right marketing avenues for the targeted demographic segments will enable the companies to position themselves by appealing to the right audience effectively.

Integrated Marketing Communications

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is an audience-driven business process of strategically managing stakeholders, content, channels, and results of brand communication programmes (Kliatchko, 2008). IMC recognises the value of engaging with stakeholders to achieve the overall communications objectives. These stakeholders can be either internal or external, highlighting the need for internal and external communications strategies. Internal communication constantly happens within organisations, involving the staff, management, and leadership team, while external communications include stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, and regulatory bodies (Araújo & Miranda, 2021; Dolphin, 2005; Welch & Jackson, 2007). In like manner, public transport organisations need to engage their stakeholders through marketing communication to build and further develop their brand.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the conceptual framework for this study, highlighting how public transport companies can develop and position their brand. This framework recognises three main constructs, which are: (1) the role of the manager and the management team in curating the brand and communicating its core values, (2) the brand's responsibility to engage with the commuters through various user information systems and external communications, and (3) the transport company's responsibility to provide an enabling platform for customers engagement. The framework also recognises the country context in which the transport company may be operating. These constructs are further discussed in the subsequent sections.

Manager's Responsibilities

Strategic positioning of the company starts with the Manager and management team in reflecting what their brand stands for—the public transportation brand. Are they just to move people from one point to another or they stand for a greater purpose? The fact that they are a public company does not exempt them from creating a brand for their service provision. The Management team must be able to develop their core brand values which must be communicated to their internal and external stakeholders. Stakeholders in the public transport ecosystem include government agencies, politicians, travel-oriented non-profit and profit organisations, current and prospective public transport customers, drivers, local business owners, and environmental groups (ITDP, 2021). This diverse group of stakeholders challenges the organisation on who and

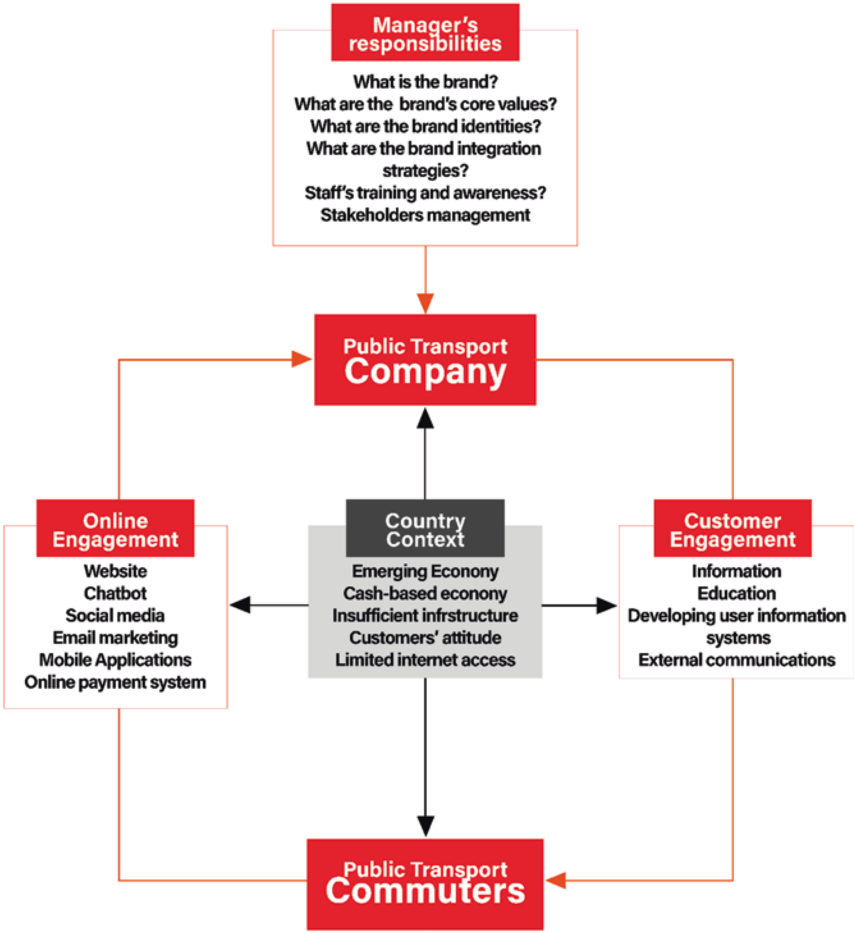

Fig. 3.1 Conceptual framework for marketing communications strategies for public transport organisations

when to communicate and, ultimately, their marketing communication strategies (Mogaji, 2020).

It is often not surprising that there is limited interest in the transport organisation's brand positioning (Giovanni & Sofia, 2019). Many people often feel there is no one taking responsibility for the brand. Therefore, it is left to no one's attention. Wayne et al. (2020) discussed these challenges regarding the brand identity of public universities compared to the design of public university's brand identity. While the private organisations are very mindful of the competition around them and the need to be positioned as a valued brand, there is often less motivation for the public brand. This lack of motivation needs to change.

The public organisation has a duty and responsibility to provide quality support to the customers (Mogaji, 2021); they are run as a government parastatal is not an excuse for inadequate services (Olaleye et al., 2020a). Therefore, the staff must recognise that they work for a brand; they work for an organisation with core values, vision, and mission (Adeleke & Ogunsusi, 2019; Vasudeva & Mogaji, 2020). However, the leadership of the organisation must evaluate its mission. It may be necessary to revisit this and develop new values that reflect the type of services the organisation wants to provide. The need to evaluate the brand's core values is the responsibility of the leader of the organisation (Hinson & Mogaji, 2020). Marketing communications are expected to build on this core strategic plan, and it is essential to have the big plan well documented and get the buy-in from everyone.

Internal communication is a crucial tool to sell the values of public transport companies (O'Neil et al., 2021). These internal communications include social media contents, blogs, intranet, emails, newsletters, and events such as leadership-generated communication, employee-generated communication, peer-to-peer communication, change/campaign communication, information communication, culture communication, and crisis communication (Staffbase, 2022). Under this internal communications segment, all company employees are regarded as stakeholders who need to be engaged, reminded, and aware of the organisation's core values. These staffers are brand ambassadors, and their interactions with customers are perfect opportunities to maintain and reinforce the organisation's core values (Mogaji, 2021). However, to efficiently serve as brand ambassadors, the employees need to comprehend the brand's values adequately. This task is fulfilled through internal communications (Burukina, 2021). Suitable internal communications channels can ensure that the employees identify with the brand to sell the company's values to the public. It involves communicating the importance of the brand and the company to all employees.

Effective internal communications include the avenues for the employees to communicate upwards. It can be implemented by developing protocols that enable street-level employees to report issues encountered or observed and disseminate information about the significance of specific projects, events, and decisions to higher-level decision-makers (Weber et al., 2011). Effective internal communication strategies will create suitable channels for the employees to express ideas and persuade high-level decision-makers to adopt those ideas. It will be a practical approach to brand positioning since the core of all marketing activities revolves around communication. This intervention will enable the public transport companies to position themselves by treating the employees as brand ambassadors who will communicate the benefits of the service to the customers and convince them to continue using the service (Anyogu & Wayne, 2020). It also provides a suitable opportunity for the internal customers to get energised about its vision and ideals, making the service more special.

Public transport companies can use marketing communications to position their brand by building a strong service brand. A strong brand determines the customers' perceptions of the product (Lin et al., 2021). To create a successful brand, the company should define its core values. The core values entail the brand's foundation and should be incorporated into all communications for the public transport system (Krishnamurthy & Kumar, 2018). Communicating the company's core values through suitable channels will represent the brand to the public by indicating the nature of operations, appearance, and the overall quality of services. According to Krishnamurthy and Kumar (2018), effective marketing communications strategies will enable the companies to build a strong brand by developing appealing public perceptions of the services offered. It also allows the companies to evade the negative perceptions of traditional public transport services. Marketing communications also enable the company to appeal to the passengers by embodying the core values with the interests of potential riders so that they can easily relate to the brand (Adeleke & Ogunsusi, 2019; Farinloye et al., 2019).

Public transport companies can use marketing communications to create a common brand image for their range of services (Mogaji, 2021). It enables the company to portray its identity and represent itself as a unified service provider in the marketplace (Ibraeva & Sousa, 2014). Creating a common brand image is to distinguish the company and its services to increase the number of users and create suitable conditions for effective communication with the target market. According to Ibraeva and Sousa (2014), various complex branding measures can identify the service, attach the desired value or image, and communicate with the target market using different marketing strategies such as advertising, promotion, and design. Fundamental components to be included in the company's marketing communications include the name, logo, and colours, and these components can be displayed on the buses, websites, bus stops, and other avenues (ITDP, 2021; Mogaji, 2021).

The company's brand integration can include getting endorsements through famous personalities, especially comedians and skits makers, which are a growing trend in Nigeria (Ojomo & Sodeinde, 2021). This may not advertise any product or service but bring the brand to people's attention, create awareness, and integrate the brand identity. These endorsements can also be vital for disseminating information about its operations and benefits (Silva et al., 2019). It also taps into the essential vectors of influence that determine the use and access to the company's services. It could be simply as using a celebrity taking public transport instead of using their car, educating customers about the enormous advantages of public transportation in reducing traffic congestion and protecting the environment. However, it is essential to ensure that the public transport lives up to that expectation, especially around service quality. Prospective commuters should be able to trust the message of the endorsers and be rest assured the public transport will not disappoint.

Customer Engagement

It is imperative for organisations to engage with their customers. For a transport company, their customer engagement strategies are directed towards their commuting stakeholders (including children, aged and disabled commuters), transport-focused organisations, and prospective partners. The organisation should be aware of the unique needs of these external stakeholders and try to communicate, engage, and educate

(Mogaji, 2021). Marketing campaigns enable the companies to communicate existing aspects of the service, such as comfort and safety (Gökerik et al., 2018; Farinloye et al., 2019), and adequately engage with their customers.

The customer engagement strategy capitalises on the key factors influencing the perceptions of the public transport users, including reliability, frequency of service, cost and savings, service hours, safety, and cleanliness. Having these factors is an advantage, but the brand requires suitable marketing campaigns to inform the customers of its existence (Moosmayer & Fuljahn, 2010). Building public and political support involves acquiring the help of other individuals who will not necessarily use the system and informing them about the benefits of the transport system. Public and political support has many benefits, including increasing discretionary passengers and obtaining other incentives such as funding for major projects (Mogaji & Erkan, 2019). The following sub-sections discuss these examples in more detail.

Information

Customers rely on public transport services to plan their activities, and they want to know when they will depart from the bus stop so that they can plan how soon to leave the house; they want to know if their routes will be running or if there are delays to the services (Farinloye et al., 2019). These are all part of reliability as a construct of services quality. Public transport organisations must provide the customers with relevant and reliable information (Mogaji & Erkan, 2019). This information is significant for customers to plan their lives. Information provision constitutes another way public transport companies can position their brand. Providing information to the customers enhances navigation for the passengers by making it easier for them to use the services independently regardless of age, capacity, or literacy level (Ibraeva & Sousa, 2014).

Disseminating information about the services offered by the company is extremely important because it increases the frequency of use and acquisition of new customers (Farinloye et al., 2019). A study conducted on a railway service between Liverpool and Chester indicated that disseminating information positively influences the number of trips (Ibraeva & Sousa, 2014). Communicating information about the service through brochures and posters increases the number of new passengers (Manyedi, 2017). The information can be disseminated through real-time information displays. Providing information about public transport makes it easier for the passengers to plan their trips, making it more comfortable.

Public transport companies can use print advertising to increase ridership, extraordinary events (Farinloye et al., 2019). They can use brochures and other promotional materials to inform the target customers about the essential destinations served by the public transit systems, shopping districts, street fairs, and specific events (Trivedi et al., 2019). This kind of marketing appeals to the convenience aspect of the public transit system. Print and outdoor advertising can also promote the transit systems by announcing fare changes and service improvements. Communicating about service improvements attracts more customers because it generates a positive brand image. According to Weber et al. (2011), promotional campaigns achieve the same purpose because they convey information about free or discounted fares for specific events or certain groups of people. A perfect combination of marketing, branding, and advertisement in the public transport sector will enable the entities to gain a competitive advantage by leveraging all aspects of the brand equation.

The public transport companies can also leverage anticipating and avoiding criticism as suitable public relations and external communications strategies (Parkinson et al., 2018). It involves providing as much information as possible before a necessity arises. This technique is crucial for service improvements and other disruptions resulting in adverse reactions (Mogaji & Erkan, 2019). Managing expectations is also suitable for external communications because the company will communicate the benefits expected from the services without overselling the potential benefits.

Education

Public Transport companies can use user education as a marketing communications tool for brand positioning. It involves educating the users using high-level messages and iconic personalities (Weber et al., 2011). This education became more prominent due to the COVID-19 pandemic, where transporters were educating commuters about social distancing, handwashing, and personal hygiene to manage the spread of the pandemic (Mogaji, 2022; Mladenović & Rrustemi, 2021). Providing information makes the systems familiar to the users since unfamiliarity with the transport system often deters private vehicle owners who occasionally prefer to use public transport. Ensuring that the systems are familiar to all users is a suitable marketing approach that will contribute towards retaining the existing customers while acquiring more new customers. According to Weber et al. (2011), making the systems familiar involves providing vital information about the boarding process, fare collection, and other service aspects. User education is essential for public transport systems continuously advancing by adding new facilities and other service improvements. Making the systems familiar to the customers also helps answer possible customer questions concerning new routes and systems implemented by the company (Mogaji & Nguyen, 2021).

Developing User Information Systems

Developing user information systems is another suitable marketing communications solution for positioning public transport companies. It involves the company's information to enhance efficiency, usability, quality, and understanding (Tavares et al., 2015). Providing user information systems in the entire transport system enables more straightforward navigation for passengers regardless of their age, ability, or literacy levels. The user information systems should be located at decision points to make them easily accessible to all target customers. These systems should be designed for easier management and maintenance and display temporary information. According to Tavares et al. (2015), the usability aspect involves the placement of the user information systems such as maps, kiosks, signage, and ticketing at suitable locations, making them easy to use for all passengers. Companies should also develop information systems that make it easier for customers to establish connections between routes and destinations (Mogaji, 2021).

External Communications

Public relations and external communications are suitable strategies for positioning public transport companies by controlling the narrative around the entity. External communications help develop a good brand image and tell the story behind the company (Maulidiyanti, 2018). Public relations involve proactively addressing challenges and negative perceptions to limit the negative perceptions that often accompany reactionary stories. Effective external communications also involve developing meaningful relationships with the media. It will make it more comfortable for the journalists to contact the company and disseminate essential facts and key messages about the service. It also limits the risk of spreading negative stories about the brand due to a lack of accurate information.

Online Engagement

As illustrated in the conceptual framework, the commuters are expected to reciprocate the engagement, and they will require different platforms to enable these engagements and complete the loop. An organisation needs to strive for an interactive marketing communications strategy for repositioning its brand. This can be explored in an omnichannel context which allows the transport organisation to be able to engage across different channels but ultimately relying on developing suitable propositions, generating offers, and communicating the requests to the target customers using an appropriate medium (Farinloye, 2018; Farinloye et al., 2020).

It enables two-way communications between the company and its potential customers (Camilleri, 2017). This communication process can occur through social media, email, and blogs. It enables the company to convey precise messages to the target customers, and the messages can be customised to become more relevant to the customers. Interactive marketing techniques capitalise on open engagement with the customers (Fu et al., 2021). This capability is provided through digital media such as blogs, websites, and micro-blogs since they are interactive. Several technological applications enable interactive marketing in public transport, including media and content syndication, web forum, mashups, message boards, tagging, customer ratings, and evaluation systems (Camilleri, 2017). Other applications include podcasts, online videos, and blogs. Interactive marketing can be deployed to generate a suitable brand image by linking it to content marketing. In this case, the company produces relevant content shared on many platforms to reach more potential customers.

This interactive marketing enables the company to generate personal relationships with the customers and elicit possible responses. Its attractiveness generates direct customer responses, making it easier to measure positive results (Abbu & Gopalakrishna, 2021). Interactive marketing is an effective brand positioning technique because of data availability across different channels and customer touchpoints. This technique entirely relies on a fully functional database that can be easily generated using the current advances in data collection and management (Amin & Priansah, 2019). Consumer data collection is growing exponentially, and the data is continuously stored in vast amounts by different search engines (Camilleri, 2017).

Additionally, more information is gathered through social media platforms. The data is combined with technological advancements to allow marketers to know about their potential customers at more personal levels. Therefore, the internet makes it easier for companies to evaluate the results of their direct marketing campaigns. This section highlights key platforms considered relevant for enabling online engagement between the commuters and the company.

Website

Public transport companies can leverage online engagement as a brand positioning tool. Online engagement provides new ways for accessing information since most customers rely on online platforms to acquire information (Alvarez-Milán et al., 2018). Establishing a consistent online presence is a significant marketing intervention that will significantly impact the customers. Online engagement enables the company to engage users before they arrive (Olaleye et al., 2020b). It can be easily accomplished using a fully functional website that provides crucial information about the schedules and maps before getting to the boarding points. The site can also give information on the expected travel times and potential delays or other issues that may affect the commute. According to Alvarez-Milán et al. (2018), online engagement involves maintaining a robust digital presence. Digital presence is an essential marketing strategy in the current digital world. It enables the company to adapt to the preferences and behaviours of the consumers quickly and effectively engage with the target audiences (Silva et al., 2019). A functional website enables the public transport agency to cultivate a positive image among the customers. It is also essential for informing customers about the available service offerings alongside other communications essentials such as the company's vision, mission, and values.

Social Media

Social media also provides an additional platform for online engagement with commuters. Marketing the brand on social media involves maintaining an online presence on various social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn (Valos et al., 2017). Social media is a simple and cost-effective marketing strategy. It leverages the current trends that have seen many people resort to social media platforms for research, reviews and ascertaining social validation for various products and services (Farinloye, 2018). A strong social media presence will enable public transport companies to enhance their brand awareness while maintaining effective and frequent communication with the target customers. According to Valos et al. (2017), social media is a viable marketing tool because it allows organic and paid advertising. It enables the brand to generate awareness through likes, trip planning, visits, among other forms of user engagement (Ojomo & Sodeinde, 2021).

Additionally, the companies can build digital relationships with real-world partners. Email marketing is an action-oriented marketing strategy that enables public transit agencies to deliver consistent brand messages to the target customers. It provides leverage for partner cross-promotion and can drive the readers into other digital channels.

Email Marketing

Email marketing is an effective tool for brand positioning since it is one of the easiest ways to keep the company at the top of the users' minds. It is also suitable for generating leads and increasing revenue due to the simple modes of operation (Zhang et al., 2017). This marketing strategy gradually builds familiarity with target customers and develops strong brand awareness. Some relevant emails that can be disseminated to the customers include welcome emails, invitations to connect, newsletters, and promotional emails (Sahni et al., 2018). This technique is quite effective since it is easier to implement because numerous tools automate email marketing campaigns. Public transport companies can use it to complement other marketing strategies. Text messaging can also be included as part of this online engagement, where commuters subscribe to receive alerts and notifications on their mobile phone as a text message.

Mobile Applications

Transport operators need to recognise the growing popularity of web applications to access services. With consumers' growing access to smartphones, even in emerging economies like Nigeria (Abdulquadri et al., 2021; Soetan & Kieu, 2020), mobile apps have attracted an increasing amount of attention as an engaging platform for marketing communication, offering a variety of brand-related content, including brand identifiers and virtual products (Kim et al., 2013). Customers should access information about the services, get updates about any delay, and push notifications (Mogaji & Erkan, 2019). It is essential also to recognise that data analytics and artificial intelligence have tremendous opportunities to understand the customers and shape service provision (Dwivedi et al. 2021; Balakrishnan et al., 2021). Public transport organisations must also note that the mobile app is a substantial digital transformation strategy that may involve a lot of financial commitment. Still, as Zhao and Balagué (2015) noted, brands should consider communication, customer relationship management, sales, product innovation, and marketing research as key business objectives that their apps should address. Likewise, Kim et al. (2016) encourage the app to be informative, practical, easy to use, and cost-effective, perhaps to make it accessible for customers to download.

Chatbot

This integrated marketing communications approach enables the staff members to understand better the target customers' perceptions and preferences for public transport services. Learning about these perceptions and intentions will allow them to adapt their marketing messages to suit individual customers. The chatbot is advantageous for brand positioning because it is a conversational and interactive method of promoting its services. It enables the company to target precise market segments (Abdulquadri et al., 2021; Soetan et al., 2021). The companies can use the chatbot to provide real-time information to customers. Effective use of the chatbot enables the company to retain existing customers while encouraging new ones. The chatbot can leverage responding to customers' complaints as a suitable opportunity to strengthen relationships with customers. It is ideal for brand positioning, enabling the company to communicate differentiated services to different customers and fill in the gaps where other marketing methods may fall short. However, as Abdulquadri et al. (2021) noted, companies must be very mindful of the technology investment needed in integrating chatbots, especially in an emerging economy like Nigeria.

The Country Context

The conceptual framework recognises the country context in which the transport company operates. Considering the focus is on public companies, there are bound to be some inherent challenges that will affect their business operations. Mogaji (2022) has explored the implication of transport infrastructure in Nigeria and recognises that emerging countries often struggle with their transport services. Therefore, policy recommendations and practical implications need to be explored in light of some of the inherent challenges. While many of the developed countries may have a different approach and experience, it is imperative to consider these marketing communication strategies amidst the country context of developing countries with their institutional challenges with infrastructure, human, and financial resources (Ede et al., 2019, Soetan et al., 2021; Kaur et al., 2022).

Conclusion

This chapter posits that marketing communications strategies can be used for brand positioning in the public transport sector and increase its usage. Irrespective of their ownership structure, it is anticipated that public transport organisations will be creative, concise, clear, coherent, and consistent with their messaging (Maduekwe et al., 2020; Mogaji & Nguyen, 2021). This communication strategy should involve internal and external stakeholders and inform and educate stakeholders, develop user information systems for marketing campaigns, and leverage public relations. This study makes a critical theoretical contribution to work on marketing communication in public transport bodies. First, it contributes to the dearth of literature about African public institutions and how they adopt marketing communications (Adeleke & Ogunsusi, 2019). Second, it focuses on the transportation structure, highlighting the ownership structure and prospects of adopting marketing communication to build brands (Mogaji et al., 2021). Third, the study provides three key integrated marketing campaigns for the public transport organisation to increase its brand equity (Giovanni & Sofia, 2019).

Recommendations for Managers

The major managerial implications for implementing these marketing communications strategies revolve around the self-sufficiency of the public sector, direct control aspects, accountability regimes, and constrained democracy. The managers will need to devise new management measures to ensure that the team understands the integrated marketing campaigns strategies and is willing to support them. Managers will also have to address the constrained democracy aspect to involve more social actors in the policy formulation. The manager needs to recognise the political dynamics in their operation but should not be discouraged in implementing these brand repositioning strategies. Here are some key recommendations for Transport Managers as they endeavour to adopt marketing communications strategies in their business operations.

1. Managers should identify the core brand value of their organisations—their promise to their customers. They should identify WHAT they stand for, what they want to give to their customers, and what customers expect from them. For example, Transport for London has adopted selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership are their core values, and they are committed to acting according to those principles. Importantly, Managers should ensure that these core values are publicly displayed to hold everyone accountable. The customers should have access to it—on the website, around the bus stops and terminals, and through various communication channels. Likewise, the staff must be reminded about these core values and what customers expect from them. The team needs to think beyond their public ownership structure and recognise the work for a brand that should deliver value.
2. Managers should ensure ongoing internal communication between the management team and the staff. This internal communication could be via email, newsletters, or broadcast through other collaborative tools like Google Workspace, Microsoft Teams, Slack, or WhatsApp. Staff must feel like an integral part of the organisation. Managers should provide regular updates, celebrate milestones, and keep the team motivated.
3. While internal communication with staff is essential, Managers should also endeavour to build on their external communications. Specifically, they should communicate with their customers and update their transportation services. These updates could be through email, posters around the stations, or a pop-up customer service desk. Managers can

provide information about upcoming routes and developments across the network and advise on the transport network and even how to save some money, perhaps travelling off-peak instead of the peak period. Consumers should feel they matter to the organisation.

4. Brand integration is also crucial for managers. These integration strategies could start from designing a unique brand identity, like the Roundel, London Underground logo, or the Subway logo of the Scottish Partnership for Transport (SPT) subway in Glasgow. Getting a professional to design this logo and other liveries (including colour and fonts) is essential in integrating the brand. In addition to having a logo, its consistent use is also crucial. The brand should be consistently presented, from the design of the bus stops to the ticket and even the posters on the stations. It is also recommended that Managers should get their brand guidelines to ensure the consistent use of the brand identities by both internal and external stakeholders.
5. Digital transformation should also be on the agenda of the Managers. This means starting from having a website to social media presence and chatbot to support customers' queries. Managers should invest in these digital platforms to enhance their engagement with their customers. Commuters should get live updates, buy tickets, and engage with customer service staff on the website, social media, or mobile app. Managers should also explore the possibilities of email marketing developing platforms and communities for capturing zero-party data. The organisation can send regular updates, personalised offers, and information to customers through emails and push notifications on their smartphones. Text messaging can also be included as part of this online engagement, where commuters subscribe to receive alerts and notifications on their mobile phone as a text message.

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4

Positioning Public University's Brand Through Marketing Communications: Practical Recommendations and Implications

Nguyen Phong Nguyen and Emmanuel Mogaji

Introduction

Universities are the foremost public institutions expected to contribute to society, co-creating knowledge and shaping leaders of tomorrow (Olaleye et al., 2020b). Even though there are growing numbers of private universities and transnational partnerships, universities are still seen as public institutions that need to be funded by the governments (Ndofirepi et al., 2020). Therefore, this often puts universities' responsibilities to showcase their values and contribute to society (Hinson & Mogaji, 2020).

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Showcasing value involves positioning the brand to attract prospective stakeholders (Mogaji, 2021a) and for higher education institutions, this involves positioning their brand through strategic brand management. Powell and Dusdal (2017) noted that brand management in higher education is gaining much interest as universities are making effort to improve their brand equity, remain competitive globally, and attract great talents. It is not surprising to see many universities rebranding and changing their logo (Wayne et al., 2020), showcasing their world ranking on websites and prospectuses (Kiraka et al., 2020), and even university leaders using social media to engage and build their brand (Sharma et al., 2022a). Institutions around the world are spending huge amount of money to improve their brands and enhance their brand image as they engage with their different stakeholders.

Different stakeholders expect different things from the universities (Farinloye et al., 2020b), and there must be effective communications from the universities to engage their stakeholders. These are all attempts to position the university as a brand that can attract better staff, students, and funds (Mogaji & Yoon, 2019). However, the question remains that considering the growing competition within the higher education market, how can public institutions like universities position their brands through marketing communication. This chapter aims to address the question with a specific focus on Nigerian universities.

Focusing on Nigerian universities in this chapter is essential for specific reasons. First, Nigeria is one of the largest emerging economies in the world (Mogaji, 2020). Second, with over 200 million people, the country is the most populous nation in Africa (Soetan et al., 2021). Third, it has the largest higher education system in Africa, with over 170 universities. These characteristics make the Nigerian university system unique to study (Adeyanju et al., 2019). One university that stands out in Nigeria with regard to their brand positioning is Covenant University; they take pride in showcasing their world ranking, publication records, and their achievements. Aririguzoh (2020) explored how Covenant University, a Christian private university, is making itself appealing to prospective students, using products, people, work processes, and serene physical location to attract new students.

Considering Nigeria is an emerging economy, there are limited funds for the universities (Olaleye et al., 2020b) and especially the public universities; many reports have highlighted how the Nigerian universities are underfunded, with the troubled sector receiving a meagre 5.6 per cent of the total budget, much below the recommended international benchmark which is between 15 and 20 per cent (Olufemi, 2020). In addition, with the growing population, there are limited spaces for prospective university students, and there are many prospective students who are unable to attend universities because there are no spaces at the public universities and the private universities can be expensive (Adefulu et al., 2020; Adeyanju et al., 2019; Olaleye et al., 2020b). These inherent challenges of Nigerian universities present an opportunity to explore how universities with these challenges can position their brands and engage with stakeholders with these types of challenges.

This study adopts the university stakeholders' communication model (Mogaji et al., 2021) as its theoretical underpinning and an integrative literature review approach to critically review and synthesise the literature on higher education brand positioning and stakeholders for marketing communication which enables us to develop a new theoretical framework and perspective (Snyder, 2019)Nguyen & Mogaji (2022). The study recognises that universities need to engage with various stakeholders to build their brand. This study makes a theoretical contribution to public institution marketing communications (Ndofirepi et al., 2020; Kiraka et al., 2020), especially from the education sector and an emerging economy perspective; it recognises how public institutions saddled with many challenges can still communicate their brands. Likewise, there are managerial implications for university administrators, university brand managers, and practitioners working on higher education brands to enhance their brand values and communicate with stakeholders.

The remainder of this chapter is as follows. Section "Higher Education in Nigeria" explores relevant literature around marketing higher education. Section "Stakeholders for Marketing Communications in Nigeria" discusses the theoretical framework underpinning this chapter, and Sect. "The Marketing Communication Plan for Public Universities in Nigeria" highlights the practical steps and recommended action plans for university managers in developing their brands. Section "Conclusion" concludes the chapter with concluding remarks, limitations, and an agenda for future research.

Higher Education in Nigeria

The higher education sector in Nigeria is the largest in Africa, with over 170 universities; the sector has the highest quantity of universities of any country in Africa but maybe not the quality of universities as seen with universities in South Africa and Egypt being ranked among the top universities in the world (Farinloye et al., 2020a; Adefulu et al., 2020). Though Nigerian private universities are doing well globally, this has not been cascaded down to most public universities. There are some pre-existing notions about public universities in Nigeria which overshadows their achievements and their huge possibilities. There is consensus about the underfunding of universities (Olufemi, 2020). The public universities often owned by the state or federal government have not received enough funds for their operations (Farinloye et al., 2020a). This is not an isolated case considering the economic nature of the country and how much is provided for other vital sectors like health. Nigeria has often struggled with funding its universities to cater for the growing population, and this has provided room for many private universities to fill the gap (Olaleye et al., 2020b).

In addition to the inherent challenges with the funding structures, Olaleye et al. (2020a) observed that the public/private dichotomy in higher education in Nigeria presents a marketing dynamic that often excuses the public universities to put effort into their marketing strategy. It is observed that the demands for higher education places in public universities are more significant than the supply. It is not surprising that students are waiting to be admitted even if these public universities do not market themselves (Olaleye et al., 2020a). This idea of the market dynamics has often questioned the motivation for public universities to develop marketing communication strategies and position their brands. Perhaps there are no pressing needs for them because they have many prospective students they cannot admit.

However, it is essential to recognise that marketing higher education is not just about administering students or marketing the courses and programmes offered by the university; it's about building brand equity and improving the universities' reputation. The best universities worldwide are still investing resources in building their brand, and even more prominent brands in the commercial scenes are still advertising. Therefore, it is no excuse for public universities in Nigeria not to develop their brand.

The inherent challenges in developing and implementing marketing strategies are, however, acknowledged. The motivating may not be present, and likewise, the human resources and financial resources may not be insufficient. It is, however, important that awareness about the need for marketing communication is not considered a challenge. University administrators should be aware of their stakeholders and communicate and ultimately build their brand equity effectively. This is an area this chapter aims to address. It contributes to more knowledge about marketing communications, albeit from a public institution perspective, allowing managers to build their university brands.

It is essential for university managers, including the vice challenger, to take responsibility for their university's brand equity. The VC being the chief fundraiser needs to explore opportunities to reposition their university to attract grants, endowment, and another form of support (Chattopadhyay et al., 2022; Oginni et al., 2022). This chapter presents initiatives that individual universities can adapt without relying on the government, the Nigeria university commission or any other regulatory board. This task involves university administrators taking responsibility for their brand and doing their best to communicate their values and effectively engage with stakeholders.

Branding Higher Education in Nigeria

Brand management in higher education institutions has been gaining attention over the recent past due to increased global competition among learning institutions (Powell & Dusdal, 2017). Currently, a university is not only regarded as an institution of higher learning; instead, it is also a business (Chapleo, 2010). Since these institutions exist in a competitive marketplace, they have become aware of the business metrics. Rankings by various publications (Chapleo, 2010; Kiraka et al., 2020; Mogaji & Yoon, 2019) and change in brand identities (Vasudeva & Mogaji, 2020; Punchng, 2021) have become major benchmark for higher learning institutions regarding their brand management. Therefore, the institutions are spending huge on branding budgets to enhance the brand image and improve their rankings.

Covenant University is known to often flaunt their ranking on the Times Higher Education Ranking, showcasing being one of the best universities in Africa (Aririguzoh, 2020). Likewise, the interest in Nigerian university logo design is growing. For example, upon joining the Honoris United Universities network, Nile University of Nigeria rebranded and changed their brand identity replacing its predecessor which had been in use since 2016. The university unveiled its new logo on June 21, 2021, while retaining the blue (representing the 'sea of knowledge') and green (representing the widely acclaimed African vegetation) colours of its former logo; the university included 'Honoris United Universities' to its base, symbolising Nile University's affiliation to the Honoris network (Punchng, 2021). The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) has also made considerable effort to integrate their brand identity; the university recognises the logo as 'the soul of the institution'. The logo had colours of green and white which are the national colours of Nigeria (NOUN, 2022). Likewise, the Federal University Lokoja shared the interpretation of their logo on their website and acknowledged Ben Okubile Atanu, a Chief Lecturer, Department of Industrial Design, Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja, as the designer (FUL, 2022).

It is, however, imperative to understand that branding is more than just having a logo; it encompasses the overall FEEL of the university from the student experience, the staff branding, and stakeholder perception. If you mention university of XYZ, what comes to mind? Though there has been a considerable effort and a growing body of work to understand branding in Nigerian higher institutions, there is still a huge gap in our knowledge. Vasudeva and Mogaji (2020) reported on how African universities are on the quest for world domination and so they make huge claims and aspirations on the mission and vision statements. Aririguzoh (2020) has also explored the strategies being adopted by how Covenant

University, one of the Christian private universities, are building their brands through marketing communications, using serene physical location to attract new students. Olaleye et al. (2020b) and Farinloye et al. (2020b) also explored how universities in Nigeria are using marketing communications on social media to build their higher education brands, engage with students, prospective students, and advertise their programmes and call for application, but Mogaji (2019) was of the notion that branding universities in Nigeria is still an unexplored territory, suggesting that despite the competition and the privatisation drive within the higher education sector, Nigerian universities are yet to fully adopt branding as an essential element to distinguish the universities and offer a competitive advantage.

Ajilore and Suleiman (2020) examined the corporate identity of Nigerian universities and liked it with students' enrolment and concluded that university administrators should put effort into strategic formulation and projection of a distinct corporate identity to attract students and increase their enrolment figures. This aligns with the need for university to look beyond their brand identity when conceptualising their marketing communication strategies, to recognise it's a holistic approach that requires the effort of all stakeholders. There are still many unexplored areas and the need to better understand the stakeholders responsible for managing and integrating Nigerian universities' brands (Farinloye et al., 2020a). To address this gap in knowledge, this study adopted an integrative literature review approach to critically review and synthesise the literature on higher education brand positioning and stakeholders for marketing communication which enables us to develop a new theoretical framework and perspective (Snyder, 2019; Nguyen & Mogaji, 2022).

Stakeholders for Marketing Communications in Nigeria

Mogaji et al. (2021) presented a typology of university stakeholders for marketing communication highlighting that universities engage in recruiting, retaining, and reporting to their stakeholders. Specifically, they recognise that universities engage with students and parents to recruit, engage with staff and students to provide updates and information, and alumni research partners and press are provided with reports about the universities' activities. This present chapter adopts this theoretical underpinning to evaluate the stakeholders in public university communication strategies.

Prospective students are critical stakeholders for the universities. They need to be updated about the university's progress, but the question remains around the effective way of engaging with these stakeholders in Nigeria. As Adefulu et al. (2020) found, students will often rely on word of mouth through parents, families, and siblings to choose a Nigerian university they will attend; this question if prospective students are following and engaging with social media content of a particular university, to see various activities going on in the University or if they have (Mogaji, 2016b). Notwithstanding, universities need to change these dynamics and endeavour to provide relevant information and nudge students to engage (Anyogu & Wayne, 2020).

Present students at the universities also have a role in this communication ecosystem, especially around their user-generated content, about activities going on campus, various events, and the quality of facilities notwithstanding; universities also need to engage with these students (Farinloye et al., 2020b). Likewise, it is anticipated that parents will keep themselves abreast with information about the universities their children are attending; perhaps they are expected to subscribe to newsletters from the universities, follow them on social media, or rely on their children to give them information (Olaleye et al., 2020a). However, the universities must engage with parents in one way or the other, perhaps to consider the parents as external stakeholders that need to be updated about the progress of the universities.

There are also many other external stakeholders that universities need to engage with and communicate with, but it is essential to understand the level of communication and what may be available in the public domain (Mogaji et al., 2021). Universities engaging with the funder, regulatory bodies, and government parastatal should be through different channels, but outcomes of these engagements need to be communicated to the broader university community, perhaps a visit from the regulatory body, accreditation of a new programme, or a visit from research partners. These are relevant information for the university wider community to build brand awareness and ultimately brand equity (Olaleye et al., 2020a).

The role of the university press team cannot be underestimated at this level. Universities are expected to share this information strategically and consistently across all media platforms (Mogaji et al., 2021; Olaleye et al., 2020a). Working with different media organisations, including news media and bloggers, is essential, but the idea is to achieve a coherent message. The responsibility for this coherence should, however, be within the marketing communications team. This department within the university needs to ensure that all information is well managed and distributed among the stakeholders. The question, however, remains, how many universities have a dedicated marketing communications team? It is essential also to recognise that this is different from the public relations or media team but a whole team responsible for coherently communicating messages to internal and external stakeholders. The following section explores this part of the university business operations and identified key questions that need to be answered to communicate the university brand effectively.

The Marketing Communication Plan for Public Universities in Nigeria

The Marketing Communication Plan is a holistic plan that involves a lot of stakeholders, starting from the Vice-Chancellor. Figure 4.1 illustrates a conceptual framework of strategic marketing communication for a university. It highlights the marketing communications team's marketing communication plan, aligning with the university's strategic plan. This section highlights four critical constructs of the conceptual framework: the university's strategic plans, the marketing communications team, marketing communication plans, and the key performance indicators.

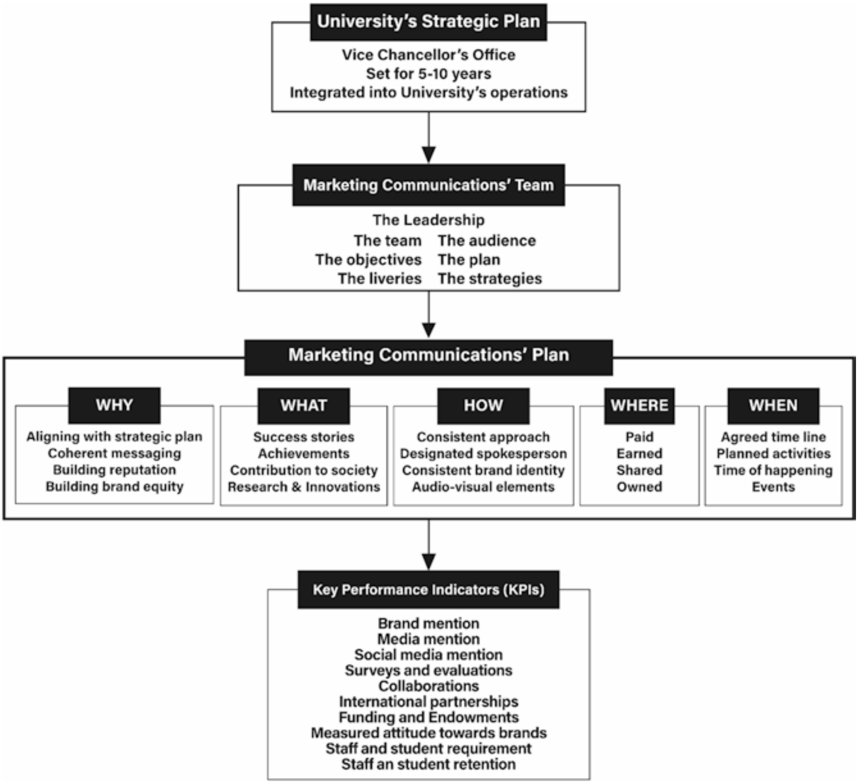

Fig. 4.1 Conceptual framework of strategic marketing communication for a university

The Strategic Plan

Universities should have set plans and future aspirations and highlight what they plan to achieve and how they will accomplish this (Kiraka et al., 2020). The plans are often set out in a strategic plan. Universities often develop this strategic plan as a long-term declaration of what they aspire to be. There are critical features of this plan.

First, it is set out for a five- to ten-year period, allowing for long-term changes and improvement to the university. Lancaster University's

Strategic Plan 2021–2026 was for sustainable and transformative change. The University of Hertfordshire has the Strategic Plan 2020–2025 to support a diverse range of students, staff, businesses, researchers, and community members.

Second, these are plans cascades to all business operations, faculties, and departments of the university. Oxford University has a strategic plan 2018–2024 which sets out a framework of priorities for the university, its divisions and departments.

Third, considering its encompassing documents, there is engagement with all stakeholders through staff input and focus group meetings. Ensuring stakeholders' involvement allows for an inclusive, practical, and achievable plan.

Fourth, this plan is strategically led by the vice-chancellor. New leadership or vice-chancellor often develops these strategic plans to set an action plan for their administrative tenure.

Fifth, as a form of accountability and desire to make the plan work, these strategic plan documents are readily available for the public, often shared and made available for download on the university websites. This is no secret to this plan.

As part of the strategic plan, marketing communications play an essential role. Often, there could be plans to create a new identity for the university, setting out rebranding strategies that may include changing the logo, setting a new vision and mission plan, and core values of the universities (Vasudeva & Mogaji, 2020). It is also essential to recognise that it should emerge and align with the university's strategic plan before implementing any marketing communication plan. The question now remains if public institutions have a strategic plan and what measures they have put to achieve this.

The strategic plan is the foundation upon which all other plans are built. Therefore, universities should endeavour they have this plan. As indicated earlier, these are plans set out by the vice-chancellors and a huge buy-in from all stakeholders. This is a plan that should not be rushed but developed with caution. Understanding the available resources and inherent challenges of the universities should also be reflected in the plan. For the university to implement and actualise its marketing communications plan, there must be support from the university's leadership through its strategic plan. The university administrators should be mindful of their resources when setting the plans; ultimately, this should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely (SMART). These plans should outline the desired overall goal and set out outcomes and impacts.

The Marketing Communication Team

The marketing communications team is the bridge to actualise the expectations between the university's strategic plan and the marketing communications plan. This team within the organisation plays an important role, and it is paramount for universities to evaluate the part of this team and make a possible effort to have a dedicated team tasked with the responsibility of internal and external communication with stakeholders (Olaleye et al., 2020a; Farinloye et al., 2020a). This section highlights seven key considerations for the marketing communications team.

The Team

It is essential to have a designated team within the university to address all the internal and external communications strategies. This may, however, depend on the size of the university and the size of the stakeholders they want to communicate with. In some cases, there is the internal communications team that engages with the staff and students. At the same time, the external communications departments also develop and implement an external relations strategy to enhance the university's reputation regionally, nationally, and internationally. Irrespective of their job description or their target stakeholders, it is essential to have that designated team.

The University of Manchester established the Division of Communications and Marketing and Communications and Marketing Leadership Team (CMLT) as the bodies responsible for the leadership, governance, strategy and coordination of university communications and marketing activity, including approval of marketing plans and campaigns, and coordination of resource. To achieve this type of set objectives for the team, it is expected that the team with experiences around marketing communications, public relations, communications designs, and even digital assets management like the social media and websites are assembled (Farinloye, 2018). The team should be tasked with developing an integrated Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system that supports a consistently high-quality experience for all stakeholders.

The Leadership

The marketing communications team needs a leader that can ensure the university's strategic plan is reflected in the university's marketing plan. Ultimately the leader needs to be experienced, especially in higher education marketing and be aware of the dynamics within the higher education, media, and target audience. Again, as earlier indicated, depending on the university's size, the university may need a designated Chief Marketing, Communications Officer, Head of the marketing communication team, or Heads for other internal and external communications stands. In 2015, the University of Limerick, a higher educational institution in Ireland, appointed a Director of Marketing and Communications with the purpose of 'leading the development and performance of a university-wide marketing and communications strategy and plan'.

A 2021 advertisement for the role of Head of Communications and External Relations at the University of Creative Arts expects the selected candidate to 'lead on the development and delivery of corporate communications, internal communications and PR, as well as overseeing our content development strategy, and will work with the Vice-Chancellor and our Leadership Team on a range of corporate communications issues' and 'to bring the experience of creating and delivering PR strategies across global markets and a proven track record of achieving press coverage to enhance reputation. [The candidate] will have experience of digital, print and social media and the ability to work with senior stakeholders on complex corporate communications'. Here, the vacancy indicates the typical job description of the head of communications and, notably, the unique set of skills and experiences the university is looking for to reposition their brand through various marketing communications strategies.

The Audience

As Mogaji et al. (2021) indicated, universities communicate with various stakeholders, including the staff, students, partners, and regulators. This audience could be internal stakeholders like staff, students (undergraduate, postgraduate, and PhD), student union, governing council, and external stakeholders like alumni, parents, prospective students, prospective staff, professional bodies, donors and prospective donors, funding agencies, regulators, competitors, news media, and visitors. Considering this diverse group and limited access to resources in public institutions, it is essential for the marketing communications leadership team to properly evaluate the audience with which they will want to engage and how best to do that with their limited financial and human resources (Olaleye et al., 2020b; Mogaji, 2016a).

There are often internal and external communications strategies to understand who and how to communicate with a diverse audience. Would a university want to invest more in their external communications to position their brand to external stakeholders, funding bodies, and international bodies and highlight their innovative research, events, and activities? Would they want to use a foreign media platform to curate a global brand based in Africa? Do they have the resources to do this, or better still, would they want to focus on their internal stakeholders and anticipate improving their brand perception through word of mouth? Ultimately both external and internal stakeholders are essential, but there should be a strategic direction on how to go about this.

The Plan

Ultimately this marketing plan needs to be documented as it highlights the key stakeholders, target audience, and what needs to be achieved. This plan should be based on the university's strategic plan, and the objectives of the marketing communications need to be presented and shared with the team. The University of Virginia noted that in support of their institutional strategic plans, their University Communications' plan shared priorities will develop focused distribution strategies for delivering stories across owned, paid, social, and earned media to reach and influence our key audiences effectively. This connection between the marketing and strategic plan should be recognised and integrated within the marketing communications team.

The Liveries

These are all the brand elements and channels of communications for the university. It is anticipated that the marketing communication teams will be responsible for managing these liveries, which includes the mission and vision statement of the university (Vasudeva & Mogaji, 2020), ensuring that stakeholders are aware of the university's vision and are working towards sit. The brand identities of the university, including its logo and coat of arms, are also included in the liveries that need to be managed by the marketing communications team (Mogaji, 2021b). Digital assets like websites, social media, email, marketing, and other digital media must be managed by the marketing communications team to ensure a coherent message to all stakeholders (Ndofirepi et al., 2020; Olaleye et al., 2020a). The University of Virginia planned to 'develop a cohesive, distinguishing, and timeless style and tone through design, video, photography and marketing copy that communicates, is authentic and dynamic and presents UVA uniquely and compellingly'. This highlights the value of the brand guideline to ensure this consistent approach across all the universities' brand liveries (Mogaji, 2021b). It is also essential to inventory these liveries, know who is responsible for what, know when they need to be updated, and, if possible, things to be discarded.

Marketing Communication Plan

The marketing communications of a university is expected to address five key questions, which are addressed below. It highlights key considerations for the university's managers and the marketing communications team.

Why Are We Communicating?

This is a question for the marketing communications team that has been set up. The leaders and the team member need to understand the reason behind their team and their reasons for communicating the university's message. Provided all the team members are professional, it will not be difficult to answer this question. As indicated earlier, this should align with the university's strategic plan as it would have aligned the university's key objectives and strategic goals. The team needs to recognise the need to have a coherent message to all stakeholders across the different communications channels. These messages should be coordinated by the team and reflect the values of the university and their attempt to reposition the university brand. The university marketing communications team need to recognise their ultimate goal is to contribute to the brand equity of the university (Mogaji, 2021b) by using their marketing strategies skills to enhance the positive attitude towards the university brands (Vasudeva & Mogaji, 2020) to build affiliations and networks and position the university brand as a global brand open to collaboration and investments (Mogaji & Yoon, 2019).

What Are We Communicating?

Considering the marketing team has provided answers to why they have to communicate, it is essential to identify what needs to be communicated. As Mogaji et al. (2021) shared in their model around stakeholders' communications, universities should endeavour to communicate their success stories, and this could be news around accreditation, partnership with another university, or gaining a form of recognition, achievement of staff, and students also need to be communicated for the stakeholders. The team needs to recognise the prospects of framing their messages to present the university in the best possible way.

Universities may also want to highlight resources, organisations, and international partners that directly support their students, student access, and opportunity (Adeyanju et al., 2022). The university may also want to showcase its resources, infrastructures, and facilities that support student excellence, perhaps telling what they can achieve with their limited resources. The university can also highlight the students, programmes, and staff that have contributed to the growth of the university and society. In addition, the university needs to communicate its contributions to the community and their research findings and innovations. No matter how small it may be, these are news worth sharing and can build the brand awareness of the university. Ultimately this news needs to be strategically shared and aligned with the core values of the university (Mogaji & Farinloye, 2017).

How Are We Communicating?

These are strategic approaches to communicating a brand message (Mogaji, 2021a). Universities need to recognise that there is much possible news out there, and there are many contents to be curated and shared, but there should be a strategic approach to this, albeit a consistent approach to the messages; this could be achieved by having a spokesperson or press officers who are responsible for dealing with messaging and enquiries professionally. Notably, the university should be creative, concise, clear, coherent, and consistent with its messaging, and it should avoid jargon and technical language that its target audience may not understand. Keeping it simple is also an excellent idea about how to communicate with diverse stakeholders.

The brand identity of the university also influences how the messages are communicated (Ndofirepi et al., 2020; Mogaji, 2021a). This influence may involve using a consistent template and design; for example, when the university has to release a statement, the messaging should be shared with consistent elements like font, colour, and design, which may have been highlighted with the university's brand guidelines. Images and photographs also shape how these messages are communicated. The choice of images to convey the correct meaning is essential. This involves the conscious creative effort at commissioning a photograph or getting a professional photographer to capture the events and activities. Storytelling should also be integrated into these strategies, developing engaging, emotionally appealing, and enticing content for people to share with their network.

Where Are We Communicating

This question addresses the need for auditing the liveries to identify what the university has and how best to use it. Often the university may have a newsletter as part of the internal communication strategies, but it is essential to evaluate if it will be in paper form, shared across the department, pasted on notice boards, or shared digitally through emails. This approach further questions if the university students have an official email address to communicate. These are issues around the digital transformation in Nigeria and higher education (Abdulquadri et al., 2021). How about student portals on university websites? What are the measures put in place to engage the students and also the staff? Where to communicate will be determined by the university's access to different. This can be structured around the Paid, Earned, Shared, and Owned (PESO) media model.

Marketing messages can be shared on paid media like TV, newspaper, radio, and even social media. This paid media also includes strategies such as search engine ads (SEA) and retargeting. Accessing paid media is when the university will pay the media owner to share their messages on the platform. The most pragmatic way to reach a large audience that may have never been aware of the university brand is using paid media. This, however, needs to be used strategically—ensuring the chosen paid media aligns with the target audience. Are the students watching TV to see the university's latest invention, or perhaps the intention will target the parents and partners?

Earned media are exposure that the university received through other sources which the university cannot control. This could be a form of review from a study body, blogpost, or user-generated content. The universities are not paying for this, so they may not be able to influence whatever the source is saying about their brand; it is only anticipated that the right messages are being communicated.

With the rise of social media platforms, universities need to recognise the growing prospects of shared media, and it will continue to play an important role in university communications strategies and, likewise, the user-generated content from the students (Farinloye et al., 2020b; Olaleye et al., 2020a; Gökerik et al., 2018). Shared media recognises the huge possibilities of users engaging with the university's content, retweeting, and sharing it on their page. It gives additional exposure to the university brand. Shared media integrates content marketing, social media, and earned media where customers share information about the university to their audience.

Owned media is the ultimate of all these media in terms of control (Timson, 2018). The owned media includes websites, blog, prospectus, newsletter, and social media account. These are the media platforms owned and controlled by the university, and they can use these platforms to enhance the narratives about the university. Angela Wiesenmüller, EMEA Marketing Director, Meltwater, said that 'owned media is powerful because it allows brands to communicate controlled messages to their audience'. It is expected that universities will use all these media platforms to share their message coherently.

When Are We Communicating

Many factors can influence when the university decides to communicate, and ultimately the university should aspire for a consistent and coherent communications strategy. In some cases, there could be a need to have a content planning strategy or a content calendar that highlights when a message will be published and how it with be published (Beckingham, 2017; Farinloye, 2018). This approach is essential for activities and content planned ahead of time, which may be the usual regular social media post that needs to go on all social media platforms and other owned media. There could be an agreed time and scheduling mechanism to know what media to use, how long to keep communicating the message and the duration for using the media. This scheduling strategy allows the marketing communication team to plan and put actions in place. Managers should set a realistic timeline and milestones split into 'preparation', 'implementation', and 'review' and factor in a bit of flexibility (Beckingham, 2017).

In another situation, the content could be shared and messaged communicated as a matter of urgency, maybe when there is an incident on campus. The university needs to send out some press releases on the earned media and their owned media, which may not have been planned. Still, measures should be put in place to recognise hierarchy and measures for quality control, and there should be chains of command in place to ensure that a coherent message is passed out. Activities on campus can also be integrated into the content calendar to cover the event and possibly organise a press release. This part of the marketing communication plan involves a lot of planning, and that is why it is essential to have the right team to coordinate these activities.

Key Performance Indicators

It is acknowledged that universities will want to see rewards of their investment in a marketing communication team and in their marketing communication plan (Ndofirepi et al., 2020; Farinloye et al., 2020b); there are key performance indicators (KPIs) that indicate how well the team is doing and possibly how their work can be improved to enhance the brand of the university. The team should record quantitative and qualitative impacts, write case studies, and demonstrate return on investment (ROI) (Beckingham, 2017).

Brand mention is one KPI for the universities—to understand how often people remember their names and mention it in news, social media, and on different media; brand mention tools can be used to understand better how the brand is being spoken; these tools can track and analyse relevant conversations about the brand and providing insights that can be used in updating the plans. This brand mention can also include social media mention, evaluating the key metrics of the campaign, how people are commenting, liking the universities social media pages, social media referrals to the website, and the number of unique website users.

This evaluation also includes the open rate, click rate, and bounce rate of the email marketing communication strategies, perhaps to understand how these stakeholders engage with the newsletter sent to their emails. Google Analytics, for example, can also provide deep insights into the marketing communication strategies, allowing managers to track their organic, referral and paid traffic. Universities can also use many of these third-party options to gain readership analytics, content consumption, viewership, social media influence, engagement and sentiment assessments, and track their performance across any number of advertising platforms (Timson, 2018). Having a brand consultancy agency to value the university brand could also be a good idea, maybe to compare it at the start and the end of the strategic plan duration (Mogaji, 2021a).

Universities can also survey their stakeholders to understand how well their marketing communications change the perception about the university, attitude towards the brand, and willingness to engage with the university. It could also be a form of employee culture survey to measure employees' points of view and establish their commitment, motivation, a sense of purpose, and passion for their work and organisation (SHRM, 2020). While public universities may not want to measure student enrolment success, they may explore student retention, staff hiring, and so on. A survey as a form of evaluation could include measuring attitude towards the university brands, how well the students will recommend the university to their siblings, or how staff will recommend someone to work at the university. Universities want their stakeholders to feel compelled to engage with and support; this can take the form of enrolling at university, aspiring to work, or conducting research at the university.

Likewise, universities can measure the effectiveness of the marketing communication strategies through opportunities opened for collaboration, partnership, funding, and awarded grants. The marketing communication would have put the university on the radar of many other stakeholders, and they may now be more interested in working with them (Jain et al., 2022b). However, university managers need to recognise that it takes time to build a brand, some of these KPIs may not change in a year or two, but consistency is essential. Little success should be celebrated while learning from mistakes (Beckingham, 2017).

Conclusion

This chapter recognises the need for public universities to enhance their brand reputation and reposition their brands to appeal to diverse audiences. Even though the market dynamics suggest that they have many students willing to fill their limited spaces (Olaleye et al., 2020b), they still need to improve their brand assets and, therefore, beyond their abounding student number and have a holistic view about the changing and evolving higher education landscape (Anyogu & Wayne, 2020; Wayne et al., 2020).

Theoretical understanding of the higher education market in Africa is still in its infancy, but there is a growing effort to extend knowledge about this subject area (Jain et al., 2022a; Olaleye et al., 2020b). This chapter presents a key theoretical contribution to ongoing bodies of work around higher education marketing. First, it recognises the unique market dynamics of higher education in Nigeria (Olaleye et al., 2020a), which may suggest why marketing communication is not considered an essential part of the business operations because even without marketing, the universities have a huge number of prospective students. Second, the studies extend the stakeholder communication framework developed by Mogaji et al. (2021) to present the conceptual framework for marketing communication in higher education, highlighting the link between the university's strategic plan and the communications plans with the marketing communications team saddled with the responsibilities of effectively engaging with the internal and external stakeholders. Last, the study presents the PESO framework that aligns with the communication strategies of universities, providing insight into relevant media that can be used for integrated marketing communications.

The chapter raises critical questions for university managers on the motivations and values for developing their marketing communication plans. The study presents insights for university managers and practitioners on developing public university brands. Specifically, the study suggests some checklists and questions for managers to consider regarding their communications strategies. These questions include:

- Does the university have a strategic plan for five years?
- Does the university have a recognised mission and vision statement
- Does the university have a dedicated marketing communications team
- Does the university have a Marketing Communications Manager?
- Does the university have an inventory of their owned media?
- Does the university have a brand guideline?
- Does the university provide the information their stakeholders want?

Addressing these questions will make universities evaluate their marketing communications strategies and possible act. This implementation could involve having the vice-chancellor take a leadership role or perhaps a new vice-chancellor taking over the leadership of a university to develop the strategic plan. Having this plan is not just enough but ensuring that there are resources to follow them through Importantly, a university can also hire a brand consultant and other professionals to work with them on this project; it could be worthwhile having input from professionals, especially for universities who may never have had to develop a strategic plan. They are also needed to support the staff and equip them with resources to become a good ambassador of the university, for example, those presenting at international conferences using the university powering sides (Mogaji, 2021b). Universities should also consider the prospects of integrating technology, digital transformation, and artificial intelligence into their marketing communication strategies (Dwivedi et al., 2019; Sharma et al., 2022b).

Specifically, there are key recommendations for university administrators who are concerned and interested in branding their public universities.

1. *Carry out a brand audit*—This could involve working with a brand consultant, non-academic and professional staff within the marketing communication department or academic staff and researchers within the business faculty. You want to understand stakeholders' perception,

association, experience, brand equity, and salience towards the university (Brandão et al., 2020; Suhardi et al., 2022).

2. *Create a strategic plan*—based on your brand audit; you want to develop a strategic plan for the university. While the plan may be encompassing, the marketing communication section should be clearly presented. This chapter has provided detailed information about the strategic plan; additionally, see Morphew et al. (2018) for strategic plans of research-intensive universities in Northern Europe and North America.
3. *Consider creating a new brand identity*—It will not be surprising that many public universities have been using the same logo since they were established. The administrator must consider creating a new brand identity. Remember, this is just beyond the logo, but the logo is always a good place to start. You want to bring a new and refreshed identity. It is imperative not to fall into the trap of the familiar shapes and icons of school logos (see Wayne et al., 2020, who analysed the logos of the top 200 universities in Africa to understand the creative elements adopted in creating the visual brand identities for these universities). The new identity should be well thought through; stakeholders must be involved and get professional help if needed. The logo doesn't need to be designed by a staff or student.
4. *Communicate the new identity*. It is essential for stakeholders to know of the new identity, to be aware that something is changing. Therefore, the university should put effort into building its digital presence. This effort includes updating the website (see Anyogu & Wayne, 2020. Mogaji, 2016b and 2021b about university website design) and ensuring the social media presence of the university is well-curated (see Farinloye et al., 2021; Olaleye et al., 2020a, Mogaji et al., 2021, for social media strategies and Sharma et al., 2022a, for the usage of social media channels by higher education leaders). Other marketing communication strategies (including press releases, email marketing, and newsletters) will be essential at this stage.
5. *Continuously build the brand*—Simply having a logo is not just the end. Branding is a continuous process (Mogaji, 2021a), and the administrator must ensure that the strategic directions are followed through. Staff and students should be continually reminded about the

mission and vision of the university. Staff should be obligated to use the provided brand identities (including on PowerPoint slides and complementary cards). Stakeholders should be encouraged to take pride in the brand and be a good representative of the university brand wherever they go.

It should be noted that this is a conceptual piece based on various literature reviews, research, and practitioner experiences of the authors. Further research may be conducted to empirically establish the prevalence of Nigerian universities' marketing communication plans and strategic plans. Secondly, this chapter is not based on any particular institution, but instead, a holistic understanding is providedwith practical implications that are relevant for universities with an existing marketing communication plans and those who may be considering developing their marketing communications plans. Future studies could be carried out to understand the lived experiences of universities in managing their university brands and to understand better how this conceptual framework can be modified to address their immediate needs.

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5

Internal Marketing Communications in Ghana's Public Sector: Conceptualisations and Extension

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Introduction

Internal Marketing (IM) refers to the activities and strategies put in place to project an organisation in a positive light, to employees who are considered internal customers. The term has been widely used to describe the practice of turning the established marketing techniques inwardly by

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focusing on employees. Thus, internal marketing can be viewed as an aspect of holistic marketing orientation that makes a case for ensuring the needs and wants of internal customers, such as employees, distributors, suppliers, and other trade partners, are met. Internal marketing includes all organisational functions, activities, communications, and elements used to create effective inter-linkages that lead to effective delivery to the final consumer (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003). In the public sector, several complex functional areas exist to ensure the delivery of products to the final consumer, calling for a need to use communication to link these various activities. Ahmed and Rafiq (2003) noted that one of the common internal marketing practices is internal marketing communication strategies, which deal with better preparing staff, constructing behaviour of employees, and ensuring employee satisfaction. *Thus, in the view of* Pungnirund and Sribunreng (2019)*, internal marketing is a branch of marketing science that is largely influenced by quality management and service marketing, which emphasises the importance and necessity of creating quality throughout the service delivery process.*

Since public sector organisations are faced with increasing pressure to be competitive, it is imperative to adopt strategic marketing practices that would facilitate and increase their effectiveness. However, internal marketing communications are not well understood in the existing literature. There is a lack of clarity on what the concept is, what it is expected to do, how it should be done, and who is supposed to do it. One major contributing factor to this confusion is that there is no single unified definition of the meaning of internal marketing communications. A deeper dive into the literature reveals how this phenomenon arises and how it affects the organisation. Internal and external marketing communications, employee treatment, and ideas for execution in a realistic environment are among the change techniques in the public sector.

Internal marketing communications focus on engaging the firm's internal customers, who in this case are the workers or working staff. Internal marketing is defined as the application of marketing-related tools to the employee market within a company (De Bruin et al., 2021). Despite more than two decades of scholarly and managerial debate on the subject, there is still considerable ambiguity about what internal marketing is (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000). The concept has a wide range of interpretations and meanings, as well as goals and focus, in the available literature. In reality, the ability of a service organisation to meet the needs of its internal customers has an impact on its ability to meet the demands of its external customers.

A conceptual model proposed by De Bussy et al. (2003) indicates that the use of new media such as email, internet, intranet, in internal marketing communications will lead to ethical work climate, mutual trust, innovation, and goal alignment. Also, Ferdous (2008), in a study, shows that internal marketing communications may enhance profitability resulting from employee buy-in, trust, and commitment. To design internal marketing communications in the public sector, lessons can be drawn from the integrated marketing communication framework, which focuses on (1) creating an atmosphere for communication, (2) application of IMC tools (3) measuring the IMC programme, and (4) seeking feedback for corrective action. Many researchers (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003; Jahanshahi & Bhattacharjee, 2019) have underscored the importance of communications in implementing internal marketing programmes. Extant literature has shown that organisational culture influences communications climate which subsequently impacts employee communication and commitment to service delivery (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003; De Bussy et al., 2003; Othman & Harun, 2021). It is also evident that there is an enormous literature on private sector competitiveness, but limited work on the public sector (Jahanshahi et al., 2015; Srivastava et al., 2001). Meanwhile, marketing scholars have emphasised that most public organisations compete with private sector organisations in the same industry; hence the need for internal market orientation to improve competitiveness (see Jahanshahi & Bhattacharjee, 2019; Lings, 2004).

The Ghanaian public sector organisations have laid down communication processes between management and employees. Thus, public sector organisations like hospitals and other government agencies have tried in recent years to reduce employee dissatisfaction through improved internal communications. With much attention given to internal marketing by marketing researchers and professionals, it is important to know the conceptualisation and the extent to which public sector organisations in Ghana implement marketing communications to their internal customers (employees) (Huang, 2020; Ferdous, 2008) Even though literature exists on integrated marketing communications and their application in the private sector, the definitions and conceptualisation of internal marketing communications in public sector organisations are vague and limited. This chapter contributes to the current debate and the literature on the strategies for internal marketing communications in the Ghanaian public sector. The chapter thus discusses the conceptualisations of internal marketing communications in the public sector. The chapter further provides the development of internal marketing communication using the integrated marketing communication approach in the public sector, the use of digital media in internal marketing communications in the public sector, and proposed outcomes of internal marketing communication in Africa's public sector.

Literature Review

This section provides conceptual and empirical literature on the conceptualisation of internal marketing in the public sector, the development of internal marketing communications using integrated marketing communications, and the use of new media in internal marketing communications.

The Conceptualisation of Internal Marketing Communications in the Public Sector

Internal marketing is the process of attracting, developing, motivating, and retaining talented people by providing job products that meet their requirements. Internal marketing is the attitude of treating customers—or, to put it another way, "wooing employees …" and the strategy of creating job goods to meet human needs (Parasuraman et al., 1991). Various authors have a similar understanding of what internal marketing communication ought to be. The major aspect to note is that all workers must be considered consumers, which entails developing requirements, raising awareness, and conducting market research to identify expectations.

Sasser and Arbeit (1976) were among the first to argue for the notion that through internal marketing, a service organisation's primary market is its employees. The term "internal marketing" appears to have been first used by Berry et al. (1976) Internal marketing was characterised as treating people as internal consumers, jobs as internal products, and supplying internal products that meet these internal customers' requirements and wants, while keeping the organisation's goals in mind (Gounaris, 2008; Huang, 2020). Berry et al. (1976) identified the following as internal marketing measurement factors: employee recruitment and selection, employee socialisation, empowerment, involvement in decision-making, and the generation of accurate and transparent information between employees and management. Grönroos (1982) offers a widely cited perspective on internal marketing, arguing that a marketing-like internal approach and the application of marketing-like activities internally can most effectively influence and motivate an organisation's internal market of employees to customer consciousness, market orientation, and sales mindedness. According to Ahmed and Rafiq (2003), there is a clear recognition that IM can help a company achieve its strategy. Today, IM is viewed as a way to reduce departmental isolation, internal friction, and reluctance to change. It is now used by a wide range of organisations, not just service providers. Ahmed and Rafiq (2003) conclude that, like external customers, internal customers want their needs addressed and that employee satisfaction grows when demands are met.

Internal communication and external communication are two types of communication. Internal communication, such as organisational goals and objectives, is linked to the information provided by organisations, mostly to their employees. On the other hand, external communication is offered to customers and the community through advertisements. External clients and staff should usually receive fresh information about the company simultaneously. According to IM, new information should be shared with employees first and later with the general public (Conduit et al., 2014). Internal market orientation and work satisfaction are positively connected, according to Gounaris (2008). Internal Market Orientation was discovered to be a key determinant in employee work satisfaction, implying that applying it can make the internal market genuinely successful. As a result, businesses should pay attention to their workers' needs, and internal market orientation could be addressed. According to Melten et al. (2005), the internal support concept is based on the idea of service-contact personnel as consumers of internal resources generated and given by others within the company. Internal marketing was utilised to demonstrate how organisational marketing in the public sector may be used across the board.

Internal public relations, sometimes known as internal relations, arose from the limited literature on the subject in the public sector, which views employees as internal stakeholders (Cutlip et al., 2006). Regarding how the two fields handle internal communication, there is no differentiation between public relations and corporate communication (Oliver, 1997; Cornelissen, 2008). We disagree with Cheney and Christensen's (2001) argument that the fluidity of organisational contexts necessitates the integration of internal and external communication, and that the distinction between the two is becoming meaningless or even misleading. Internal communication is one of the top-duty areas for public relations and communication management practitioners, according to empirical studies in applied communication among current firms (Welch & Jackson, 2007; Mishra et al., 2014; Men et al., 2018; Mishra et al., 2019). Internal communication is evolving as a new specialism in practice, as indicated by practitioner publications on the subject that have gone through numerous editions in a short time (Quirke, 2008; Smyth & Mounter, 2008).

Internal marketing orientation, in particular, focuses on ways to improve work aspects to increase employee happiness. The implication is that happy employees will perform better and have a favourable impact on customer satisfaction (Berry, 1981). Satisfied internal customers will remain loyal and are less likely to change jobs, resulting in lower turnover. According to Gounaris (2008), internal marketing research includes activities such as identifying value exchanges for employees, understanding labour market conditions, recognising specific internal segments of employees with different characteristics and needs, and developing internal-market strategies. Internal marketing likewise uses mass communication tactics to great success. Marketing communications can act as a differentiator, particularly in public sector firms that operate a service business such as hospitals and banking services, where there is little to separate competing products and brands of other competitors. In these cases, the images created by the firm's internal marketing communications enable the internal customers (workers) to differentiate one brand from another and position them so that their confidence and attitudes are developed positively.

In most businesses today, internal marketing communication is essential, especially in the public sector, which is dominated by services. A well-designed and implemented internal marketing communication in the public sector results in building a strong organisational commitment which emphasises a person's strong desire to stay a member of the organisation, willingness to commit to high levels of work for the organisation, and belief in and acceptance of the organisation's values and goals. Improved work performance, higher tenure in the company, decreased absenteeism, lower tardiness, and less turnover are among the possible advantages of a public sector firm with effective internal marketing communications programmes.

Development of Internal Marketing Communication Using the Integrated Marketing Communication Approach in the Public Sector

The effect of internal marketing communication in promoting effective communication through the integration of new media is empirically recognised. The study of Duncan and Everett (1993) revealed that integration of internal communication to internal customers is imperative to reduce inconsistency and variation in the content and style of messages sent out to these internal customers. The empirical work of Asif and Sargeant (2000) examined the impact of new media, particularly, internet-related technologies, on internal communication with a focus on the relative merits of different channels of communication in an internal marketing context as well as the dimensions of the internal marketing communication construct itself. Their study was premised on the idea of dialogic communication, which represents the potential for new media enhancing communication with stakeholders, specifically public relations scholars. Such communication has even become more infinitely complex, hence, the need to examine the attitude of various stakeholders towards new media communication in an organisational context. Subsequently, the study of Laurie and Mortimer (2019) emphasised that despite the challenges of adopting integrated marketing communications in engaging organisations' various stakeholders, developing a strong collaboration between the organisation and its clients will help in the successful implementation of integrated marketing communications.

Therefore, it is evident that internet communication technologies empower employees and contribute to the democratisation of the workplace (Asif & Sargeant, 2000). The stakeholder is imperative for creating an ethical organisational climate, and a concomitant atmosphere of mutual trust is highly relevant in this regard. Thus, effective two-way communication cannot occur without the satisfaction of those preconditions. To support the foregoing argument, Ahmed and Rafiq (2002) indicate that organisations that do not integrate their communications tools effectively in communicating to employees can result in a lack of clarity and understanding of brand values and positioning. Thus, they emphasise that to reduce poor communications among employees, foster buy-in, and increase employee commitment, organisations need to integrate their internal communications effort. Hence, advertising tools such as newsletters, company newspapers, and notices could be used in an integrated manner to communicate with employees.

The importance of integrated marketing communication in an organisational context is well reflected in the empirical study carried out by Nutsugah et al. (2020). The study contextualises IMC as a mediating variable with the capacity to transmit the effect of environmental performance on firm performance in a developing country context. The study reconceptualises environmental performance as "the formulation, implementation, evaluation, and analysis of a firm's operational processes (planning, organising, leading, and controlling) aimed at enhancing positive environmental gains as well as minimising negative environmental impacts of the firm's environmental inputs (materials, energy and water) and outputs (emissions, wastes, and effluents)". Similarly, it redefines firm performance as an objective and/or a subjective measure of the effectiveness (extent of objectives realised) and efficiency (economic use of resources) of an organisation's inputs, operations and outputs, expressed in financial and/or non-financial terms. In the case of IMC, the study recognises the concept is conceptualised and defined differently by different scholars from different perspectives (Martin et al., 2020). Therefore, IMC, in the context of the study, is adopted from the definition offered by Porcu, Barrio-Garcıa, and Kitchen (2012, p. 694) as "[t]he stakeholder-centred integrative process of cross-functional planning and alignment of organisational, analytical and communication processes that allow for the possibility of continuous dialogue by conveying consistent and transparent messages via all media to foster profitable long-term relationships that create value". Major dimensions of IMC considered included consistency, stakeholder focus, stakeholder interactivity, and organisational alignment.

The study of Porcu et al. (2012) situates IMC as playing a significant integrative role in the work context, hence recognising the importance of good communication in the development and implementation of organisational strategies. Thus, IMC is recognised as a firm-specific capability with a significant impact on performance outcomes. Using firms in the extractive, manufacturing, and service industries, the study proved environmental performance negatively and significantly influences firm performance directly. However, the introduction of IMC into the direct relationship changes this effect. IMC was, therefore, found to have a partial and complementary mediation effect on the relationship between environmental performance and firm performance. Conclusively, the study proves that although environmental performance does improve firm performance, the presence of effective IMC in the work context, given the nature of relationships existing among the various driven systems in such relations, helps to better explain the impact of environmental performance on firm performance. Therefore, IMC adopted in communicating to internal customers is seen as a driving force for improved firm performance, including cashflows, cost efficiency, profitability, stakeholder satisfaction, growth, and stakeholder loyalty.

There has been growing interest among academics and practitioners in the role of communications in public sector organisations as well as the extent of application of private management models in the public sector. Thus, the importance of internal communication in the successful implementation of marketing programmes has long been emphasised (Morgan, 1990; Gummesson, 1991). Ferdous (2008) suggested some imperatives for the successful implementation of internal integrated marketing communications. First is the creation of the appropriate organisational atmosphere for communication—which deals with organisation context and the ambience in which communications take place. Hence, for successful integration of internal marketing communications, Top management must be brand ambassadors and develop an atmosphere that communicates consistent messages to employees (Bijoor, 2003). An emphasis has also been laid on the organisational culture of communication which permeates throughout the organisation. The second is the integration of the internal marketing communications tools. According to Young and Post (1993), organisations have much to gain from integrating internal communications as from communications targeted at external customers.

Just like the integration of marketing communications tools to achieve optimal communication goals with external customers, Ahmed and Rafiq (2003) noted that internal communications tools such as advertising and other promotional tools such as personal selling can be used to obtain employees' buy-in and commitment to organisations mission and values. Thus, for public sector organisations, it is imperative to consistently adopt such marketing communications tools to improve employee response and service delivery. Further, organisations also need to segment employees and decide which internal communications tools will be suitable to obtain the optimal response from them. Strauss and Hoffman (2000) suggested Business TV as another tool with a high potential to enhance internal communications. The authors argue that Business TV helps to minimise differences that arise within the communication process and is effective in communicating organisations' brands to various employees in a cost-effective way. Again, the use of Business TV could help employees decode messages received through bulletins, newsletters, and memos (Strauss & Hoffman, 2000).

The third and the fourth imperatives of integrating internal marketing communications are evaluation and feedback. Ferdous (2008) intimated that the effectiveness of an integrating internal marketing communication programme lies in asking for feedback from employees. Hence, to evaluate integrated IMC, surveys, focus group discussion, and face-to-face meetings could be employed in addition to other techniques such as projective techniques, word association, and sentence completion. Effective evaluation should then be strategically used to continuously improve the internal communications process by taking corrective actions that might result from communication gaps within organisations.

The Use of Digital Media in Internal Marketing Communications in the Public Sector

The public sector's continued growth is due in part to the widespread use of new media (digital) technologies, the global convergence of consumer needs, and the need for companies to find new and effective methods to interact with internal customers. The various applications of digital technology in the public sector businesses have transformed the way the company's information is created, distributed, and consumed dramatically. The characteristics of effective internal marketing communications have been identified using marketing theory. The issues of ethics and trust are crucial from the standpoint of stakeholder theory (Jones, 1995). Firms in the public sector are increasingly relying on mobile technology to reach out to new customers and deliver value-added services. New media platforms are more complex and intuitive, as well as more inexpensive, small and light, and capable of higher resolution and colour reproduction thanks to nanotechnology. Kim et al. (2019) emphasise that digital marketing communications in the last decade have been continually adopted by organisations to inform both internal and external customers.

In this chapter, the impact of new media, notably internet-related technology, on internal marketing communications is examined. Despite the importance of effective two-way communication to internal marketing, limited attention has been paid to the relative merits of various communication channels in an internal marketing context. The opportunity for new media to improve stakeholder engagement, notably what public relations academics refer to as dialogic communication (e.g., Pearson, 1989; Botan, 1997), has been recognised (Botan, 1997; Kent & Taylor, 1998); and the internet is transforming the way businesses communicate with their stakeholders (Wielkopolska, 2021). In today's world, communication in the public sector is no longer unidirectional; as employees or workers communicate with one another (whether regarding the organisation or not, as the case may be), communication becomes immensely more complex (De Bussy et al., 2003). The use of digital/new media in internal marketing communications in the African public sector is discussed next.

Digital/new media are innovative tools adopted by businesses to facilitate their communications with external customers (Boulianne & Theocharis, 2020). Any media encoded in a machine-readable format is referred to as digital media (Boulianne & Theocharis, 2020). Digital media is a combination of two words, "digital" and "media". Digital media, for instance, focuses on any data represented by several digits; whereas media focuses on a way of communicating information or broadcasting (Block, 2020). Thus, digital media refers to any information which can be spread over the internet. Digital media, according to Block (2020), can be created, distributed, listened to, modified, and preserved on digital electronic platforms. Digital media transmits information, notably video, audio, and graphics, between or among people and/or entities (Habes et al., 2020). It can also be viewed as the exchange of information through a digital screen or device. Digital media generally comprises digital images, social media, video games, software, digital data, and database. It also includes digital audio such as electronic books, MP3, and electronic documents. Al-Maroof et al. (2020) revealed that digital media combines personal computing and the internet to transfer information from one person or entity to another.

Digital media has made it easier for businesses to easily access, modify, and share information with stakeholders, especially customers (Al-Maroof et al., 2020). It has also improved brand awareness by serving as a marketing communication platform to reach a large audience. For example, if a business intends to create awareness of its new clothing line, it can easily post those products on its website and social media platforms. According to Erlangga (2021), digital media plays a vital role in facilitating social interaction between a business and its customers or audience. The author added that digital media promotes social interaction, allowing businesses, and people to remain connected regardless of location. Arguably, individuals use social media to receive support, express sympathy, exchange information, and share messages with family and friends.

On the other hand, businesses use this tool to stay connected with their customers, most importantly employees, market their products, and develop strong relationships. Dwivedi et al. (2021) revealed that digital media has helped businesses to access more resources from different geographical locations across the globe. This has helped expand businesses across several geographical locations; which could have been extremely difficult without digital media. Digital media, therefore, provides an online platform for businesses in both developed and emerging economies, to stay connected with their employees (particularly those in remote areas), customers to share information, receive feedback, and create brand awareness.

According to UNCTAD (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the shift towards a more digital world. With the rapid developments of new variants of the COVID-19 virus and employees working from home, digital media use has seen exponential growth. Online shopping purchase has gone up 6 to 10 percentage points across many product categories, including electronic goods, pharmaceutical, household products, education and online products (UNCTAD, 2020). The report also highlights the growth of digital giants such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Zoom.

The era of COVID-19 has again pushed businesses to embrace social media, a predominant digital tool and one of the innovative ways of communicating with internal customers who have to primarily work from home or other remote areas. Social media is generally a computer-oriented technology that fast-tracks information and thoughts through virtual communities and networks (Tuten, 2020). It is also defined as an internet-based platform that gives faster electronic communication to users (Cornelissen, 2020). Social media has evolved tremendously from merely interacting with family and friends to providing a platform for businesses to communicate with employees and other users. Social media possesses the enviable power of connecting and exchanging valuable information with several people at any time. The contents on social media include documents, personal information, photos, and videos; and users engage in social media through tablets, computers, iPads, laptops, and smartphones (Appel et al., 2020). According to Castillo et al. (2021), over 3.8 billion of the world population are active users of social media; in the

United States, an advanced economy, for instance, the number of users of social media has been projected to rise by 257 million users in 2023. Similarly, in Ghana, a developing economy, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to an unexpected rise in social media users (Tabong & Segtub, 2021). The continuous increase of social media users has provided a huge platform for businesses to communicate with internal customers (employees) and external customers through virtual networks. The use of company websites, emails, and intranet is supported significantly by social media, dominated by Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Instagram, which have become powerful marketing communication tools in the twenty-first century.

Businesses, for instance, use social media to provide valuable information about their products and services to customers. Social media also serves as a platform for businesses to engage or interact with their customers, and improve brand positioning and loyalty. As organisations adopt some of these social media platforms to communicate with internal customers, they develop systems by which social media platforms can be used by internal customers in engaging external customers. A recent report by Digital Ghana in 2021 revealed that users of social media are relatively young, with almost 76.4 per cent of the users between the ages of 13 and 34 years. The report also found that the most used social media platforms were WhatsApp 83.9 per cent, Facebook 70.8 per cent, YouTube 69.7 per cent, and Instagram 56.3 per cent, justifying why businesses continue to embrace social media in a bid to capture these groups. Thus, with the changing structure of the workforce that is dominated by the youth and tech-savvy individuals, managers need to adopt innovative ways of engaging with these internal customers. Social media could therefore be a key platform for interacting with employees, determining their needs, and gauging changing labour market trends while increasing employee commitment through internal promotional activities. Also, social media has the strength in collecting and storing information that can help public sector organisations to improve their efforts and employee wellbeing.

A public utility company in Ghana, for example, has adopted the use of Microsoft outlook as an internal communications tool. In addition to the use of bulletins, notice boards, and memos as means of internal communications between management and employees, this outlook has been adopted and is being used within the organisation. This has made communications and feedback more effective. The company has also adopted video conferencing apps such as Microsoft teams in their regular meetings, seminars, and other conferences. This has, therefore, reduced costs relating to travels from employees in other regions to the headquarters only to attend meetings. More importantly, the stress on employees and travel frequency has decreased significantly.

A leading producer of cement in Ghana has various ways it communicates to its customers, both internally and externally. Being a public company, it has many branches across the country, and this makes it very important to first communicate to its internal employees about new products and brand values, their plans for a particular year, and changes in company activities. These communications are made possible through one of the integrated marketing communication tools—direct marketing. Looking at a large number of employees, and to be able to reach them, communications are made through emails, telephones, fax, text messages, and telegram. As such, this information gets to their employees in time, which enables employees not only to act but also provides the necessary feedback. COVID-19 and the frequency of new variant detection have also led the company to adopt other video conferencing tools, such as Zoom for inter and intra-departmental meetings, seminars, and conferences.

Proposed Outcomes of Internal Marketing Communication in the Public Sector of Africa

The internal and exterior aspects of a service firm's marketing campaign are inextricably linked. The "employee-customer interaction" aspect of services has to be given more attention by service businesses. Employee attitudes and conduct influence the company's marketing performance. Positive consumer attitudes and behaviour can eventually lead to increased business performance, as measured by market share, revenue, profitability, and other financial parameters.

The main goal of the internal marketing concept is to make employees feel that management is concerned about them and their requirements. Human resource professionals may argue that they are already in charge of this task. Despite this, successful application of the IM idea results in good employee attitudes towards their jobs, such as organisational commitment, job involvement, work drive, and job satisfaction (Tansuhaj et al., 1991).

The IM programme has typically focused on employee training, inspiration, and communication. In this approach, the diverse functions that surround a programme are seen as a variable that may be manipulated (Wu et al., 2010). Various dimensions have been examined in the IM literature (e.g. Huang & Rundle-Thiele, 2014; Saenko et al., 2016; Zboja & Hartline, 2010). The most often utilised metric was also internal communication. According to some academics (Bearden & Netemeyer, 1999; Tsai & Tang, 2008), managers must communicate effectively to deliver the organisation's vision. Furthermore, excellent communication can aid in the more efficient operation of teams as well as the strengthening of connections (Helm et al., 2006). Internal market research (Chang & Chang, 2009) has been promoted as the third dimension of internal marketing since it can assist companies in determining employee demand. Internal marketing is thus a multifaceted strategy in this regard. Internally focused IM studies have dominated IM studies by far, with managers and employees' perspectives dominating. Internal marketing communication, as discussed in this study, has a variety of implications for managers of service delivery personnel.

First, if service managers in the public sector in sub-Saharan Africa regard jobs as products, they may affect their employees' behaviour, by (1) making them happier with their positions, (2) making them more motivated to assist customers, and (3) making them more likely to stay with the company. Instead of focusing solely on the demands of the company, such an approach involves developing work schedules with the needs of employees in mind. Treating jobs as products encourages public service managers to devote the same amount of attention to job design as they do to product or service design, and the same methodologies apply. Further, managers obtain a better grasp of the things that employees value in their occupations as part of the process of developing jobs to match their needs (i.e. adopting an internal marketing orientation). Such information can be obtained through formal internal market research, as is often the case in the external market, but because of the close physical and psychological proximity of service managers and their employees, informal routes such as conversations and "hall talk" can also be used to obtain information about wants and needs.

Second, to ensure exterior aspects of organisational performance, such as customer happiness and loyalty, public services managers must ensure that internal dimensions of organisational success, such as employee satisfaction, retention, and dedication, are maintained. As a result, it is critical to undertake internal research to assess the internal marketing orientation (IMO) strategy's effectiveness in terms of ensuring personnel satisfaction, retention, and commitment. The IMO strategy should then be modified accordingly, and the impact of such modifications assessed. Therefore, 'IMO' should be incorporated into the organisation's ongoing strategic planning cycle and resources allocated to the IMO strategy.

Finally, the consequences of IMO are crucial for marketing science as well as a marketing practice. This chapter shows that marketing should have an internal focus to balance the outward focus on customers and competition; nevertheless, most operationalisations of marketing are still unfamiliar with this notion. In modern marketplaces, customers want services to accompany the things they buy and, as a result, staff behaviour and communication are as crucial as product quality. Thus, viewing marketing as having a purely exterior focus with the customer "as a king" may be an antiquated paradigm. Firms must therefore take care of their employees by establishing and maintaining quality communications channels that will better equip them to handle external customers.

Recommendations for Enhancing Public Sector Internal Marketing Communications

Effective Internal communication has been identified as a prerequisite for organisational success. Thus, how organisations communicate to their employees reflects employees' response to external customers. Several arguments have been put forth on the need to integrate internal marketing communication, particularly within the public sector which is dominated by service organisations. The adoption of apps such as instant messenger Outlook, Slack, and emails are some of the ways by which public sector organisations in sub-Saharan Africa could improve internal marketing communications.

To be able to effectively integrate internal communications, public sector organisations need to first understand employee categories. For many public sector organisations in Africa, communication follows a bureaucratic process that stifles decision-making and employee innovation. Thus, effective segmentation of employees will help public sector managers in sub-Saharan Africa determine appropriate internal communications tools to use in providing information as also sharing company vision and objectives. It will also help to shorten communication flows between levels and among units. With deregulation across sectors and industries and the constant change in the environment, public organisations need to adopt strategies that will make them competitive in the dynamic environment. Thus, public sector organisations in emerging economies should adopt specific internal marketing communications apps that provide visible platforms for employee interaction and engagement.

Adopting and implementing internal marketing communications require an organisation-wide change in culture and employees' values. The effective and successful implementation of integrated internal marketing communications will result in employees' satisfaction and thrust. Therefore, this requires top management support in providing the necessary resources to ensure the continuous adoption of innovative ways of communication within the organisation. Importantly, since employees, particularly field staff, serve as the mouthpiece of organisations to external customers, there is the need to keep the internal communications app as active as possible to assure employees of goal alignment.

Finally, evaluation mechanisms and avenues for feedback should be available to obtain the optimal response from employees. For public sector organisations in Africa, there is the need to develop and adopt strategies for evaluating internal marketing communications. One way of achieving this is to employ communications objectives to ensure staff have access to and understand the current changes in the communication environment to secure their acceptance, support, and engagement. Managers in Africa's public sector organisations could also measure the success of their internal communications by examining the effectiveness of the various communication channels in delivering messages and engaging employees. Some of the key metrics that could be used include response rate to internal memos and emails, message recall concerning newsletters and bulletins, and the monitoring of apps, such as the use of the intranet.

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Part II

Public Relations and Trade Fairs

6

Public Relations in the Public Sector in Africa

Joyce Nzulwa and Paul Katuse

Introduction

The twenty-first-century operating environment for both private and public sector organisations has remained highly competitive, leading to concerted efforts to enhance all managerial processes for strategic alignment. The multidisciplinary area of marketing found itself at the forefront of this move (Kotler & Lee, 2007). The American Marketing Association defines marketing as the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society. Marketing cuts across advertising, direct marketing, branding, packaging, online presence, printed

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materials, public relations, sales presentations, sponsorships, and trade show appearances, among others (Anderson, 2009). Marketing thus sets out to create brands, among other things, that customers can perceive as superior and choose to buy (Kitchen & Schultz, 2003). One of the ways to build on marketing strategies and create a solid online reputation is through the practice of public relations. Successful marketing should thus be supported and complemented with appropriate public relations efforts.

The complementary role of PR to marketing is realised through deliberate messaging and positioning of an organisation as newsworthy among its relevant public, thus creating brand credibility. The foregoing resultantly helps marketing efforts to reach their goal by sending the right message to the right people and place, which essentially creates a reputable brand (Lawrence, 2014). Globally, public sector organisations in the wake of the prevailing competitive operating environment began to reach out and engage with citizens or their voice mechanisms to shape positive perceptions regarding service delivery and shared governance (Edwards & Hodges, 2011). This lends credence to the rationale for the role of PR measures as a tool for the public sector to maintain favourable relations and image (Spaulding, 2022). Despite the fact that PR has steadily grown around the globe in both private and public organisations, existing literature points out that PR still lags in developing countries and specifically in Africa. The foregoing thus provides a gap to extend home-grown knowledge, literature, and discourse on the PR front (Okereke, 2002; Zaheer & Rashid, 2017; Seliga, 2017; Willis, 2016). It is anticipated that African-specific studies on PR will go a long way in helping to demystify negative publicity. The foregoing is partly seen as a sign of limited knowledge of PR and/or nascent literature in general marketing communication in Africa's public sector (Ophukah, 2003). This chapter, therefore, seeks to discuss the concept of public relations (PR) as a marketing communication tool for the public sector with a specific focus on Africa.

The Concept of Public Relations

Public relations plays an integral collaborative part in marketing and marketing communications. Although PR is still obscure in Africa, it is not new, and the practice has come a long way (Cutlip et al., 2000). Its techniques date back to the earliest civilisation where in ancient Egypt, the pharaohs proclaimed their achievements through word pictures on impressive monuments (Podnar & Golob, 2009). In most African cultures, the task of the spokesman to the chief or king was similar to that of a PR practitioner (Okereke, 2002; Rensburg, 2002). Ophukah (2003) opines that PR started in the 1940s, a period that was dominated by colonial masters in Africa. The PR landscape in Africa has continued to evolve alongside the clamour for democratic space, accountability, and transparency (Akinfeleye et al., 2009). Despite its documented importance in public sector affairs elsewhere, limited empirical evidence on the practice of PR in Africa has been recorded (Akinfeleye et al., 2009; Zaheer & Rashid, 2017). Generally, scholars contend that PR is not an easy concept to define; thus, a singularly acceptable definition of PR has been elusive (Edwards & Hodges, 2011). Notably, most of the PR definitions in use are therefore drawn from western contexts.

Bernays (1995), touted as the father of PR, defines PR as the process through which a company conducts a variety of activities to promote and protect its image, products, and policies in the eyes of the public. Barney's definition depicts PR as a process whose overall goal is to manage an organisation's public opinion. The foregoing also points to the fact that PR is first and foremost a managerial function whose primary role is to evaluate the organisation's "publics" and decipher their perceptions, attitudes, and thoughts on the organisation's products, position, processes, strategy, and resources. The second perspective is to identify and/or develop effective plans, structures, policies, and procedures through which the organisation can address the mapped publics' interest. This, in turn, could enhance public trust, understanding, and acceptance, thus complementing the role of marketing because customers mostly buy the brand they trust. Elsewhere, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA, 2012) defines PR as a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their public. This definition makes PR a highly meticulous and competitive process and a core driver to strategic advantage. The definition also shows that PR is characteristically a value-creating process.

Perhaps one may want to ask why an organisation would invest in building a relationship between itself and the public. In other words, do organisations and their publics have mutual interests? To answer this question, one needs to understand the rationale behind PR, whose efforts ideally seek to cultivate a sound and deliberate storyline that portrays the organisation positively and as well-intentioned in the minds of the public. The overall aim is for organisations to derive a perceptually great reputation upon which the public chooses to indulge or engage with the organisation. The Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) defines PR thus: "Public Relations is about reputation—the result of what you do, what you say and what others say about you..." (Taylor Bennett Foundation, 2019). PR is, therefore, a set of communication whose aim is to create and maintain a positive image as well as a strong relationship with the public or audience. In contemporary terms, PR practitioners such as Meli and Koshy (2020) advance that PR is a deliberate practice aimed at managing the release and spread of information between an individual or an organisation for the purpose of accruing reputational capital. In summary, the foregoing definitions delineate the nature, stature, and scope of PR as follows:

1. Management function—PR must be effectively and efficiently planned, organised, sustained, led, staffed, and controlled.
2. Reputation development—ensures that the organisation and its related products and inputs send a distinct brand message to its public.
3. Publics—that the organisation effectually maps its publics within which PR efforts will be directed.
4. Messaging—ensuring that all of the organisation's message and communication to its public are effectively represented and interpreted.
5. Proactive—PR is about staying ahead of time and anticipating what public interests are, and addressing them beforehand.
6. Art—as a managerial process, PR is an art that requires creativity, persuasion, and convincing others (publics) about the organisation's powerful poise on its brand, products, processes, and strategy.
7. Relationship building practice—PR is a two-way process by which an organisation communicates with its public and vice versa. The activity seeks to cause a behavioural change and build mutual rapport and trust.
8. Awareness Creation—PR is all about attention, attraction, and awareness spread in lieu of a firm's brand through media relations/coverage,

advocacy, employer branding, social media relations, partnerships, and owned content strategy among others.
9. Public image—PR is everything but a tactical messaging strategy done to create or maintain a subject's public image in a specified target group (publics).

The Characteristics of Public Relations in the Public Sector

Although PR efforts may possess common characteristics (similar to other managerial processes) across multisectoral organisations, slight variations exist between the private and the public sector owing to differences in the nature and purpose of their activities. This difference was initially propagated by a conservative approach that sought to label public sector PR as different from the private sector. The wall of difference between the two has since collapsed, and it should be noted that in the twenty-first century, the two sectors mirror each other. This has been occasioned by the fact that the two share a similar competitive operational environment (information and communications technology—ICT). For instance, public sector actors and citizens receive their information from multiple sources at the same speed and time as their private sector counterparts because both live in similar techno-savvy contexts. It is thus right to presume that both sides of the divide are equally aware, vigilant, information-sensitive, and information angry. Both segments are therefore bound to demand equal or higher accountability in line with their organisational promises and commitments.

Arguably, gone are the days when the public sector mode of operation on communication matters was a monologue and asymmetrical. Modern citizens demand constant and consistent engagement and a symmetrical approach to communication. It is therefore only sensible that PR efforts in the public sector reflect the ensuing dynamics and paradigm shift. Logically speaking, the theoretical underpinning of both private and public sectors rests on similar theoretical frameworks. This framework comprises theoretical perspectives, such as relation-building theories, cognitive and behavioural theories, conflict resolution theories, persuasion and social influence, mass media, use, and gratification theories, and finally contemporary theories. It is anticipated, like in all other areas, that the PR theoretical body will continue to grow and evolve as PR evolves.

Public Relations Theory and Models in Use in the Public Sector

The theoretical exposition begins with the Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1958, cited by Lee, 2008). Social exchange theory is a social psychological perspective that explains social change and stability as a process of negotiated exchanges between parties. At the core of the social exchange, the theory is the belief that all human relationships are formed by the use of subjective cost-benefit analysis and the comparison of alternatives. The foundation of social exchange theory leans on assumptions that humans tend to seek out rewards and avoid punishments, and human interaction seeks to gain maximum profit with minimal cost. For example, if a person enters a new relationship after a succession of failed friendships, that person's expectations at the start of a new relationship will be lower than those of a person who has a tight group of friends. In general, people want their costs low and rewards high, just like in the quick rich schemes. This theory implies that PR practitioners in the public sector need to deliberately create messaging models that elevate the publics' benefits and minimise their costs while relating with the organisation.

Bandura (1963) proposed the Social Learning Theory emphasises the importance of observing, modelling, and imitating the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. The theory considers how both environmental and cognitive factors interact to influence human learning. It also expounds on how one can learn new behaviours by observing others. In this regard, human beings form and adopt not only opinions from modelling others but also their behaviours, particularly those behaviours they see modelled for them in the media. One of the ways public relations professionals can model PR in the public sector from the social learning theory is through advertisements and promotions. When a person sees an idea or action continuously ringing in their environment through television, social media, and print, there is a high tendency that the person will conform to that behaviour. Buying decisions are triggered by the behaviour and influences in one's surroundings. The social learning theory is important to public relations because many professionals want to get their audience to perform a certain behaviour. Whether it is buying a product or translating a message, this theory can affect the decision-making process in an individual, including the public in the public sector.

Von Bertalanffy (1972) propounded the Systems Theory on the premise that organisations are open systems and the complex whole of interacting elements and environments. The organisational environment plays out as a triad with three components: the organisation, its public, and its goals. Naturally, organisations are constantly changing and so are their subsystems and environments. Such changes or adjustments require feedback. The systems theory is used to model PR dynamics and emphasise that public relations professionals must constantly monitor their environments. The attitudes and actions of an organisation or public contribute to a cause-effect chain reaction within their environment. The actions of one part affect the others. Such effort will help enlist intended goals, actions, and feedback from stakeholders and publics in order to make necessary changes to fit within the environment and state of equilibrium. If the organisation as a system receives no feedback from its public, then it cannot make wise adjustments or survive; hence, a two-way flow of information between an organisation and its environment is key. It is incumbent upon the public sector to maintain a good balance, and PR experts should act like doctors to ensure a stable orgasmic equilibrium and health.

McCombs and Shaw (1972) crafted the agenda-setting theory, which refers to how the media's news coverage determines which issues become the focus of public attention. The theory advances that media has the potential to either build issue or product awareness. Alternately, media can increase an issue's degree of salience. A high degree of similarity exists between the agenda-setting theory and the framing theory, proposed by Goffman (1974). Framing pre-supposes that the media sends messages which largely carry a pre-existing set of meanings. Media and PR professionals use framing in an attempt to have certain messages perceived in certain ways; thus, one can argue that PR seeks to pre-construct an "agenda" (Kleinnijenhuis et al., 2012). In other words, framing is a set of seemingly neutral information placed within a certain field of meaning or "agenda". The sender uses their prerogative to decide and choose how they want the receivers of their message or information to perceive it (Shehata & Hopmann, 2012).

Scheufele (1999) later sought to differentiate between framing and other similar terms, arguing that mass media actively set the frames of reference that readers or viewers use to interpret and discuss issues. It is possible for public relations professionals and the news media to use framing. Specifically, in PR, framers may strategically attempt to influence and shape how audiences perceive and comprehend situations, events, and products through persuasion, inclusion, or exclusion of facts (Kleinnijenhuis et al., 2012). Frames can also be designed to deliberately model and reconstitute areas of reality surrounding the deliberation of a public issue in the public sector. They could be carefully selected to knead chosen information, ideas, argument, judgments, claims, and value statements into a tightly compressed narrative that guides the frame holder's interpretation of events as well as discourse related to them (Lim & Jones, 2010).

Hallahan (1999) developed a seven-point model for framing in public relations. Attributes refer to characteristics of objects and people which are accentuated, whereas others are ignored. This results in biased processing of information in terms of focal attributes, Choices, which refers to posing alternative decisions in either negative (loss) or positive (gain) terms. This could bias choices in situations involving uncertainty, yet it is in sync with the prospect theory, which suggests that people take greater risks to avoid losses than to obtain gains. Actions, in persuasive contexts, refer to the probability that a person acts to attain the desired goal and is influenced by whether alternatives are stated in positive or negative terms. Issues refer to the fact that social problems and disputes can be explained in alternative terms by different parties who vie for their preferred definition of a problem or situation to prevail. Public relations experts in the public sector need to consider that building frames of dialogue is necessary for good relations with the public. Framing can be used to even frame "white lies" in the nature of propaganda and to whitewash the not-so-good stories. Frames may also involve attempts to create non-physical images with "soft attributes like care for the community, benevolence for employees, and environmental protection".

Grunig and Hunt (1984) developed their four models of public relations that describe various management and organisational practices in PR. The model comprises the press agent/publicity model, the public information model, the two-way asymmetrical model, and the two-way symmetrical model. Communications professionals use persuasion to shape the thoughts and opinions of key audiences. The agent/publicity model underplays the place and importance of accuracy. Their second model, the public information model, departs from the sort of manipulative tactics used in the press agent model. Although still a one-way pattern of communication, it presents more accurate information. PR practitioners utilising this model need not conduct audience analysis research to guide their strategies and tactics. The third model is the two-way asymmetrical which presents what can be termed a more "scientifically persuasive" mode of communicating with the public. The role of the PR expert using this model is to initially conduct research for a better understanding of the audience's expectations, attitudes, and behaviours. The resultant information becomes the foundation upon which the PR message is created, and appropriate strategy crafted.

The fourth and last model is the two-way symmetrical model, whose underlying argument is that public relations practitioners should act as the liaison between the organisation and its key public. The PR efforts are driven by negotiation rather than persuasion. PR practitioners use communication as a tool to ensure that all parties involved in the process benefit. The model is characteristically viewed as mutually beneficial to both the organisation and the public; hence, its "symmetrical" nature. Willis (2016) opined that the two-way symmetrical model is the most ethical and applicable model. PR professionals are thus encouraged to use it in their everyday tactics and strategies. Nonetheless, this four-structure model is crucial as a foundation and guideline for creating PR programmes, strategies, and messages for organisations.

Grunig (2001) developed the situational theory to explain and predict why there are some active and passive publics. The situational theory identifies which publics within the stakeholder categories are likely to communicate actively, passively, or not. The author tested the theory using problems that would create active and passive public and came up with four kinds of publics: All issue publics, apathetic, single-issue, and lastly hot issue publics. All-issue publics, which are active on all issues. The apathetic public is inattentive to all issues. Single issue publics, which are active on a small subset of the issue that only concerns them, and hot issue publics, which are active on a single issue that involves nearly everyone and receives a lot of media attention. Those publics who do not face a problem are nonpublic while those who face the problem but do not recognise it as a problem are latent publics, those who recognise the problem are aware publics, and those who do something about the problem are active publics. Grunig's theory models a system for PR to categorise publics, and create tailor-made PR strategies and interventions for specific publics.

Liu and Horsley (2007) proposed a model labelled the most complex model of public communications management. They presented eight factors determining the way of communications in the public sector. These constitute, first, the political dimension deemed as of great importance and can influence not only relations between institutions but also links between different lobby groups. Second, the goal behind establishing public institutions and agendas is the public good so there is less attention paid to market aspects of their activities. The third was legal constraints; the fourth the media scrutiny; the fifth devaluation of communication, which results in cutting costs on these activities in public budgets; sixth, poor public perception where public opinion sees communication processes as a form of propaganda; seventh, lagging professional development of public sector behind private sectors; and eighth, federalism. The foregoing resulted in creating a government communication model, namely the wheel model, based on four coexisting, complementary microenvironments (Liu & Horsley, 2007).

The model provided an opportunity for theory development in line with government communication in the public sector and can be structured to draw frameworks for multilevel PR collaborations, intragovernmental PR systems, internal institutional PR agencies, intergovernmental PR processes and interactions, and external PR strategies to deal with stakeholders such as private sector and NGOs. The models provide an opportunity for a segmented, yet collaborative, approach to PR issues and design. Nevertheless, there are other numerous applicable PR models and discourses that, as indicated earlier, can be applied to both the public and the private sectors owing to the evolving nature of their collaboration, partnership, and mutual co-existence. Essentially the private sector or enterprise comprises mainstream government functions and state-owned enterprises whose ownership is vested with the State. Therefore, the essence of PR in the public sector is by nature as versatile as the sector itself traversing across the complex web that encompasses interactions and communications between various state organs and the publics.

These interactions cover aspects of anticipating and interpreting public opinion, researching programmes of action to educate the public, and setting objectives and plans to convey particular and appropriate messages, among others. As such, a strong multi-model government relations practice is core to the public relations in public sector organisations. Governments and state-owned agencies majorly focus on how they can interact with their publics (citizens) as well as private-sector agencies and other multisectoral constituents who partner with them in their national and international mandates. There is also a need within and among government bodies to build positive relationships and supportive interactions as guided by the theoretical foundations (social exchange, social learning, systems theory, agenda setting, and the four-, seven-, and eight-stage models).

Characteristics of PR in the Public Sector

The Characteristics of PR in the Public Sector Include the Following:

Managerial Function

Public relations is characteristically a core public sector managerial function and integral to organisational functions and mandates. A core conviction within the top management views PR as a managerial philosophy to build and maintain good relations with the public. As such, just like in the private sector, PR in the public sector operates as a special department to serve under somewhat a bureaucratic establishment named the public relations department. The primary role and purpose of the PR department are to plan, organise, staff, direct, and control all matters that entail creating and maintaining constructive relations between the government as a whole or as represented by the particular organ with its different and varied interests. The managerial function of PR takes concrete steps that are purposeful, universal, collaborative, professional, effective, and efficient.

Propaganda

It is used as an effective tool to shape public opinion and action. Regardless of how propaganda is employed, the common techniques used to manipulate others to act or respond in the way that the propagandist desires include bandwagon—used to convince the public to think, speak, or act in a particular manner or simply “jump on the bandwagon”; snob appeal—involves convincing the public to behave in ways that are agreeable to the propagandists and serve their purposes; vague terms—swaying public opinion by using empty words that provoke audiences to expend their energy on interpretation rather than critiquing; loaded words—use excessively positive words or those with agreeable associations; transfer—propagandists conjure up either positive or negative images, connect them to an unrelated concept or item, and try to move the public to act; and unreliable testimonial—propaganda can hinge on the ability of an unrelated person to successfully sell an idea, opinion, product, or action.

Publicity

This is nearly an extension within the continuum of public relations. It is concerned with getting favourable responses from mass media about the public agency, its products, and its activities, while public relations is concerned with creating and maintaining constructive relations with various publics over time. The two are thus complementary, and as such, publicity is a characteristic of PR.

All-Encompassing

PR involves lots of activities to build and maintain long-term and positive relations with a large set of interesting public constituents that are formal and informal. Such a venture includes multiple interactions such as contacting, inviting, informing, clarifying, responding, interpreting, dealing, and transacting, among others. The purpose of public relations is to make these interactions and parties build positive attitudes about a company, hence the need to be all-encompassing.

Lifelong

PR is a process that should commence at the inception of an entity and continue as long as it exists. Public agencies must commit to doing PR always and not relax PR efforts when and if a good image and reputation have been realised. The point is to entrench PR in the culture and foundation of the agency and embrace continuous improvement efforts on PR across all processes, activities, and entirety and with varied parties at different places.

Multilevel and Multisectoral

All persons within the agency must be aware, appreciate, and embrace PR mode and tenets. Developing and contributing to positive relations with different organisational publics is a duty of every member of the organisation, including all officeholders and managers. In the evolving role of the public sector, where public and private sector partnerships are key, members of the organisation also need to take part and safeguard good relations with multisectoral actors. PR should not be only viewed as a top-down affair but as the joint duty of all the employees from bottom to top.

Profession

Public relation is a profession with its own body of specialised knowledge, theory, and practice; hence, the need for formal education, ethical codes, service motive, and continuous development, among others. The profession seeks to guide on how to build, improve, and/or maintain public relations. Hence, only those trained and certified as PR professionals should guide the process and function. Suffice to say that the profession has its own unique calls to attention to detail, thick skin, and multi-skilling, among others.

Art and Science

Following the characteristic of PR as a managerial function, it mirrors the character of management as an art and science. Being an art includes the creative process, good writing skills and speech, tact, quality, and talent to make the public think positively about the organisation. Being a science involves utilising scientific methods, research, logic, and reasoning to enlist programmatic steps and systems for successful public relations.

Flexibility

PR is one of the fields that continue to experience major changes and shifts owing to its close link to information and communication technology. PR has benefitted from modern technology advancements, including gadgets, improved connectivity, and social media. Working in PR is currently not only fashionable but sophisticated and highly progressive. There are high demands for flexibility and requirements for continuous learning in PR because of the high turnover of life situations, information landscape, compliance changes, public awareness, sensitivity, and demands.

Vigilance

PR is about building relationships that bear lasting connections with the public. Therefore, success in PR is inclined on the ability to maintain rapport, cultivate quality conversations, and nurture relationships. These efforts must not only be decisive but supported by a propensity for vigilance towards public needs, perceptions, interests, and sensitivity. Such vigilance will ensure that PR efforts create a brand that is responsive to the needs and desires of the public.

Public Relations Strategies During Crisis

A public relations crisis can be described as the occurrence of negative events or reviews which attempt to threaten a brand's reputation. Willis (2016) argues that crisis is the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organisation's performance and generate negative outcomes. A crisis is also defined as a significant threat to operations that can have negative consequences if not handled properly. In crisis management, the threat is the potential damage a crisis can inflict on an organisation, its stakeholders, and an industry (Coombs, 2006).

Therefore, it follows that those strategies employed during a public relations crisis can make or break an organisation. Organisations remain vulnerable to a diverse range of unexpected threats during and post a crisis event. The effects of negative publicity may also lead to devastating effects on revenue, customer acquisition, and loyalty as well as impact other important business-related outcomes (Meli & Koshy, 2020). Organisations have to develop, put in place, and prepare themselves with deep-insight strategies to navigate crises through robust and proactive PR efforts (Coombs & Holladay, 2006). Such strategies may include, though are not limited to:

1. **Early warning PR systems**—serve to detect potential crises and causes before they happen; hence, it is a proactive strategy to deal with a PR crisis. This strategy helps the organisation to be alert to crisis events. Such a system may also include effective monitoring, which helps to arrest potential PR crises beforehand. An effective response to a PR crisis can only be sustained if an organisation is privy to at least what, how, and where may have gone wrong.

2. **Planning and preparedness**—Strong planning is the foundation of good management of public relations crises, which can be done by forecasting possible crisis scenarios and proactively designing response

plans ahead of time. One of the proactive ways to plan ahead for a crisis is to have a response structure and effectively train the management team to be available to provide the right answers. Public relations crisis management training provides the management team with a foundation in crisis management techniques and prepares them to respond in a manner that mitigates damage intelligently.

3. **Over-communicate**—when a PR crisis has taken effect, the organisation should communicate, communicate, communicate, and repeat. Over-communication ensures that people understand what has been said. When things are repeated over and over again, the multiple publics are bombarded with the "facts" and they could get clear about the facts as more repeats are done.

4. **Ownership and sincere transparency**—taking absolute responsibility and owning up to what went wrong is a great PR strategy during a PR crisis. It is a show of remorse, leadership, and honesty and has a numbing psychological effect on the public on what went wrong. It also provides reprieve and cessation of finger-pointing whilst allowing time to find a solution with the quiet that comes with ownership. A good apology shows that the organisation is listening to the public and empathises with them.

5. **Being present**—when a crisis occurs, the top leadership should stay present and available to the public. Therefore, it is important to postpone or cancel some of the organisation's engagements, activities, or trips. It is most important for the leader to be present when significant challenges arise. This is when real leadership is born and displayed, and the publics regain confidence.

6. **Competitive intelligence**—this involves keeping tabs on social and other media platforms, channels, and news as far as competitors or partners are concerned (Taylor & Kent, 2007). This is done with a view to tracking and keeping alive to the ongoings so that any wind of a potential issue regarding their PR, or a PR crisis, can be picked fast. Such will allow the organisation to distance itself from the affected brand and its looming crisis.

7. **Social media**—social media can be used to issue statements that amplify and echo press statements. While at this, the entire management team should know what the organisation's position is and how the crisis is being managed. It is important to prepare and distribute statements, questions, and answers to prep employees. Partners are likely to receive questions and send out answers in response to media queries. Establish a structure to also respond to social media queries regularly.

Examples of PR Crisis Responses in Governments in Africa

This chapter presents some examples of PR crises in Africa and how there were managed by the respective governments:

Westgate Mall Siege—Kenya

Despite the horror of the incident in 2013, the Kenyan government handled the crisis in a remarkable way. There was a frenzy of media attention from across the globe, yet the government managed to take control. For instance, no journalist made it into the mall to capture an exclusive interview with a fleeing hostage. There were regular updates on the situation from various senior government officials, who stayed present and responded quickly to the crisis in an attempt to reassure and inform the public. There was also the use of online updates. The hallmark of the PR effort was the integration of all communications for the overall management of a crisis situation. There was synchronisation between government and the media in a seamless fashion rather than in silos. Although Kenya was negatively impacted by the horrific act of terrorism, the robustness of the crisis communications effort did more to limit the damage, which is the whole point of a PR crisis.

Bouknadel Train Accident—Morocco

In October 2018, a tragic train derailment led to severe injuries of 125 people as well as the death of seven people. It was heartbreaking for citizens to watch videos and pictures from social media with no ambulances or auxiliary forces on hand. The government's response did not improve in the hours to come. While passengers and bystanders were trying to help each other get out of the derailed train, Morocco's National Railway Office (MNCF) remained mute. Moroccans took to social media to commiserate with the affected families and also to call out their government for being non-responsive and irresponsible. The MNCF tried to react later with a counterattack that called out the press for spreading "fake" news. They threatened legal action in a bid to minimise public rage. However, that did more harm than good to the government agency's public image.

Abduction of Schoolgirls—Boko Haram, Nigeria

The abduction of schoolgirls by the Boko Haram militant group continues to bedevil the Nigerian government. Local human rights groups have been piling pressure on the government to resolve the matter amidst an international uproar. Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation and largest economy. The government is concerned that rising unrest sparked by the kidnappings continues to be politically costly with looming elections. The government is worried that things had taken a different turn leading to calls for the removal of the government and demands for accountability in service delivery. The government's move to turn the atrocity into a politically motivated uproar and sort of get away from its blame may be viewed as a PR gimmick to improve the government's image and repair its transparency amidst intense local and global media scrutiny.

South African Xenophobic Crisis

The world was taken aback in 2019 when attacks and looting directed at foreign-owned businesses began in South Africa, following a nationwide protest against the employment of foreign drivers. Road blockades and torching of foreign-driven cars and businesses ensued. The incident came in the wake of high unemployment, with the locals blaming foreigners for taking their jobs. South Africa faced varied retaliations from other African nations. The government owned up to the matter and issued a statement clarifying that rioters were arrested, labelled the violence an embarrassment, and regretted all violence against Africans from other countries. It also initiated diplomatic talks with its African counterparts and announced a five-year action plan to deal with xenophobia.

Conclusion

This chapter examines public relations in Africa's public sector. It explains public relations as part of the more extensive multidisciplinary subject of management, specifically the subfield of marketing, highlighting its importance in the competitive operating environment of the twenty-first century for both public and private sector organisations. The chapter also covers definitions of the term "public relations" as well as an overview of the theoretical foundations utilised in public relations. Different aspects of public relations in general and the public sector, in particular, are also explored. In addition, the significant and vivid distinctions between the public and private sectors are highlighted. The chapter discusses public relations strategies and gives examples of selected PR crises in Africa and how they were managed.

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7

Public Relations in Africa's Public Sector: A Crisis Situational Analysis of South Africa and Nigeria

Emeka Agu, Ogechi Adeola, Oserere Ibelegbu, and Ebes Esho

Introduction

The public sector in Africa has been faced with various cultural, social, economic, and political issues over the past decades. The outbreak of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), rising unemployment figures, extreme poverty, corruption, bad governance, insecurity, social tensions, and political instability have led to increased criticisms and loss of confidence in the public sector by the citizenry (Bojang, 2017; Zwanbin, 2019). Public relations (PR) have become imperative in the face of these

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challenges to restore public trust, manage public sector reputation, and understand public opinion. With the advent of digital technology, modern and sophisticated communication technologies have gained traction, and the public sector must be aware. For instance, social media has enhanced public relations practice in the African public sector. The success of PR in the public sector, according to Garcia (2017), is influenced by organisational factors (strategic management objectives), institutional factors (selecting, designing, and information technology implementation), and contextual factors (environmental issues).

The citizens and other stakeholders in the public sector make constant demands from the government. These include the safety of lives and property, quality education, good governance, transparency and accountability, quality infrastructure, and an adequate healthcare system among others. Government organisations are not expected to use the one-way communication model that focuses on disseminating accurate information; rather, government institutions, as stated in Grunig and Jaatinen (1999), should adopt a two-way symmetrical communication model that embraces dialogue and serves the interest of both government and the public. Hence, this chapter seeks to examine public relations in Africa's public sector, considering public relations model and its implication. Additionally, the chapter considers the use of offline and online media in crisis management. Offline media represents communication channels that utilise traditional media such as television, radio, billboards, pamphlets, and in-person events, while digital media leverages online communication channels such as social media to present or exchange information.

In the remainder of this chapter, we discuss the concept of public relations and public relations models. Subsequently, we highlight the strategic utilisation of public relations during a crisis; thereafter, we present case studies of the use of public relations in South Africa and Nigeria respectively. Next, we explore the public relations challenges encountered in Africa's public sector. Lastly, we present the discussion of findings, recommendations, suggestions for further studies, and the conclusion.

An Overview of Public Relations

The independence gained by most African countries in the late 1950s and 1960s heaped enormous responsibilities on the public sector (Haque, 2001). The essential function of the public sector, which constituted several organisations for the formulation and implementation of policy decisions, was to ensure the provision of goods and services to citizens based on the realisation and accommodation of public interests (Haque, 2001).

However, the failure of the public sector to meet its responsibilities and its indifference towards public needs led to the New Public Management (NPM). Indahsari and Raharja (2020) stated that the NPM is a public administration approach that extensively utilises management and other disciplines' information and practices to enhance the performance and effectiveness of the public service in modern bureaucracies. The new public management is based on a public sector administration that is not policy-focused but performance-focused (Indahsari & Raharja, 2020), and good public relations.

Before the advent of the digital revolution and the universality of social media, print and electronic media were utilised for engaging the stakeholders (Agha, 2017). The major attention of a public relations publicity campaign was about showcasing and achieving good coverage in television, radio, and dailies—however, with considerable number of internet users in Africa (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), it has given public relations practitioners the opportunity to collect, engage, and analyse public opinion (McAllister & Taylor, 2007).

Public relations refer to the management function that analyses attitudes of the public, determines organisational policies and operations with regard to public interest, and implements programmes of action to gain general understanding and acceptance (Ogbuagu, 2003, as cited in Mengistu & Hasen, 2020). Public relations involves a policy of enlightened self-interest in which business institutions or organisations consistently attempt to win the goodwill of its customers, employees, and the public (Ogbuagu, 2003, as cited in Mengistu and Hasen, 2020). Wilcox and Cameron (2009) define public relations as a process involving various subtle and far-reaching aspects; it involves research and analysis, formation of policy, programming, communication, and feedback from numerous public. The public relations practitioners operate on two unique levels: consultants to their clients or top management of an organisation and technicians who develop and circulate messages in numerous channels (Wilcox & Cameron, 2009).

Black (2011) defines public relations as the art and practice of analysing trends, forecasting their effects, advising an organisation's leadership, and executing planned programmes of action that will serve both the organisation and the public interest. Kiousis and Strömbäck (2014) view public relations as a management proceeding where an organisation or an individual, for political reasons, utilises persistent communication and action to persuade, create, set up, and manage productive relationships and prestige with the public to aid in accomplishing its mission and goals.

A functional definition of government public relations is perceived as the effectual utilisation of public relations principles, methodology, and strategies by the government to expedite governance procedures (Princewell & Vincent, 2015). Government public relations presupposes that the government should provide regular updates of its policies, affairs, events, and challenges, among others, to the public, to ensure that common understanding and trust can subsist between the government and its citizens or multiple external and international publics (Princewell & Vincent, 2015). The media creates multiple technology-based platforms ranging from print media, mobile, broadcast, and film which constitute how the public sphere is most commonly articulated in the twenty-first century (Hadland, 2010).

Rensburg and Cant (2009) stated that public relations functions as balancing organisational interest and that of the public through relationships management; this relational aspect of public relations has been examined in numerous contexts and in terms of multiple public relations functions, such as public affairs, community relations, issue management, crisis management, and media relations. This is consistent with major theoretical concepts such as systems theory and the two-way symmetrical model of communication. The responsibility of the government regarding its public relations is to circulate information and policies to increase public knowledge and participation (Hasnawati & Salamah, 2017). Government public relations also strengthens communication between government and public, embrace and promote public aspirations, and enhance public trust to improve government image and reputation (Hasnawati & Salamah, 2017).

Yang (2010) identified some public relations functions as being of utmost significance in organisations; these are media relations, image building, crisis management, community relations, programming, speechwriting, counselling, research, issue management, public relations training, and publications. Other PR functions include staff recruitment, promotions, employee relations, government relations, evaluating public relations programmes, sister organisation's relations, the spokesperson, fundraising, alumni relations, and guest reception (Yang, 2010). Lee et al. (2012) stated that public relations can assist a public administrator to perform effectively, particularly, in executing the agency's central mission and discharging the democratic responsibilities inherent in government. Lee et al. (2012) also noted that public administration practitioners can enlarge their scope and focus to encompass the practice of public relations which is a valuable and productive way of administering government agencies—public relations can be used to carry out the democratic responsibilities affiliated with the public sector, execute the basic missions of their agencies on a cost-effective and efficient basis, and commit to their agencies' public support goals (Lee et al., 2012).

Theoretical Perspectives on Public Relations

Grunig and Hunt (1984) propounded four models of public relations. These include the press agentry/publicity model, public information model, two-way asymmetrical model, and two-way symmetrical model (see Fig. 7.1). They serve as guidelines to create programmes, strategies, and tactics. Shiflet and Roberts (2018) further explicated the four models as follows:

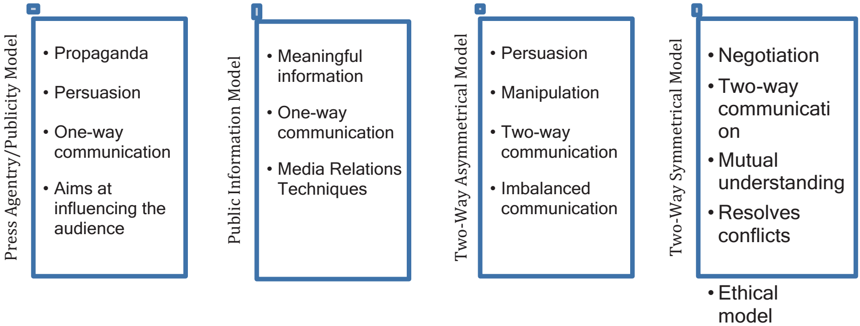

Fig. 7.1 Four models of public relations. (Source: Adapted from Grunig and Hunt (1984))

Press Agentry/Publicity Model

In this model, communications experts and practitioners utilise persuasion to influence the views, ideas, and opinions of key audiences. Exactness is not relevant in this model, and organisations do not require reaction and response from the audience or carry out audience analysis research. A publicity model is a one-way form of communication—one good illustration is the propagandist techniques developed by news media channels in North Korea.

In the public sector, the press agentry/publicity model typifies government press releases and announcements as well as presidential addresses during a crisis and important issues of public concern. For instance, the Kenyan government announced various restrictions in the country to tackle the spread of COVID-19 despite its impact on the citizens and the economy (UNDP, 2020).

The Public Information Model

This also utilises a one-way communication pattern but does not follow the manipulative tactics adopted by the publicity model and provides more authentic information. In this model, public relations practitioners do not carry out audience analysis research to direct their strategies and tactics. Several newsletters and press releases are produced based on this model when the audience is not necessarily the focal point or researched in advance.

The public information model, despite being a one-way communication, is designed to inform the public which sets it apart from the press agentry model that uses persuasion. In the public sector, the public information model typifies the effort of the Togolese government through its agencies and partners to achieve a nationwide awareness campaign against human trafficking in Togo (US Department of State, 2020).

The Two-Way Asymmetrical Model

This model focuses on a more "scientifically persuasive" way of interacting and relating with critical audiences. In this model, content producers carry out research to analyse and comprehend the behaviour and attitudes of the audience, which invariably guides the message strategy and creation. However, this model utilises persuasive communication in favour of the organisation more than the public; hence it is viewed as asymmetrical or inequity. The two-way asymmetrical model is predominant in advertising and consumer marketing, as well as fields that are particularly focused on increasing an organisation's revenue.

The two-way asymmetrical model can be illustrated in the case of a top Nigerian government official who asserted that no one was killed by the security officials during the #EndSARS protest in 2020 despite a report by a nine-member panel of enquiry stating that unarmed protesters were killed (Obiezu, 2021). This is a deliberate attempt to sway the public on the one hand and to protect the government's image on the other hand.

The Two-Way Symmetrical Model

This model posits that public relations practitioners should pose as a veritable link between organisations and the critical public, instead of a persuader. Public relations practitioners are mediators in this model, and communication is used to satisfy all interested stakeholders, not just the organisation that utilises them. This model tends to produce a mutually beneficial situation which is why it is referred to as "symmetrical". The two-way symmetrical model is considered the most equitable model—one that public relations professionals should seek to utilise in their daily tactics and strategies.

The two-way symmetrical model in the public setting describes the Rwandan government's participatory policy in 2000 geared towards gathering public opinions to find the best governance model that will significantly tackle the post-genocide problems (Interpeace, 2016).

Situational Theory of Publics: In addition to the four models discussed above, Grunig and Hunt further developed the situational theory of publics to describe and explain why some publics are active, and others are passive. Grunig's situational theory of publics (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) posits that the inactive public is slow in problem identification and participation and does not ponder about challenges. Managers often encourage public relations practitioners to channel their focus and resources to active and knowledgeable publics. However, as a result of the rising potential effect from the inactive public through digital media utilisation, especially with the effect of social networking sites on crisis communication of an organisation, the organisation must ascertain the inactive public's expectations, especially the organisation's reaction to threat. However, to perform optimally, organisations must consider the anticipation of distinctively intended publics in crises (Kim & Cameron, 2016).

Contemporary Models of Public Relations

Coomb's Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT)

This is one of the most important models of public relations propounded by Coomb in 2007 to analyse and comprehend crises and crisis response strategies (Coombs, 2007). Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) posits that individuals will persistently seek to identify causes of events—in the context of an organisation, it is perceived that stakeholders always try to criticise organisations when there is a crisis; the more publics attribute the burden of a crisis to an organisation, there is a strong tendency of publics perceiving and reacting on the negative images of the organisation (Coombs, 2007). SCCT also argues that stakeholders' response to a crisis can have behavioural effects on an organisation and that an organisation's actions and inactions in a crisis can impact its reputation. In these kinds of circumstances, organisations can utilise several response strategies with regard to the gravity and time frame of the crisis (Rensburg et al., 2017).

In the public sector, Coomb's situational crisis communication theory demonstrates the opinions of many Africans on government institutions and their leaders. African leaders are seen as corrupt, and many citizens perceive public institutions as incompetent and ineffective to deal with the demands and aspirations of the people (Mbandiwa, 2020).

The Systems Theory

This model asserts that all systems in the environment (i.e., anything that stimulates change pressures) belong to a higher order supersystem with smaller subsystems, each divided by boundaries requiring communication structures (Cutlip et al., 1994). Since communication is an integrated process, it is paramount to comprehend that systems must always adapt to uphold states of equilibrium or balance between the message, the sender, and the receiver. As argued by the systems theory, a system is a set of interacting units that thrives by reacting and adapting to change pressures from the environment to accomplish and reach a state of equilibrium.

A system comprises four components: objects, attributes, internal relationships, and environments. An object refers to the element, part, or variable in a system. An attribute is the distinctive feature of the system and its objects. A system should also maintain and support internal relationships between its objects. It is imperative to note that all systems are found in an environment, such as information, matter, inputs, and energy. When these internal relationships do not react appropriately to environmental pressures, old relationships are undermined. Public relations—a sub-unit or subset of an organisation—is part of an organisation's purpose and modifies behaviour to accomplish set goals. Hence, the systems theory can be adopted into various facets of public relations.

Public relations, is, therefore, an organisation's public system that regulates the interactions and relations the organisation develops and sustains with the public (Cutlip et al., 1994).

The critical function of public relations is to pose as an open system and assist organisations to respond to change in their environments; thus, they must observe and identify environmental factors and work with management to design organisational strategic plans of change and adaptability. After problem identification, the most important tasks public relations practitioners perform are researching and interpreting environmental factors such as cultural shifts, economy, technology advancement, natural environment, social change, public opinion, and political movements—as well as forces in the organisation. If public relations practitioners investigate and identify conflicts with mutual interests of organisations and their public, they adapt appropriately and resolve the conflicts before they escalate (Cutlip et al., 1994).

The Nigerian government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic is a good example of the public relations' systems theory. The daily press conference chaired by the Secretary to the Nigerian government, the consultative and participatory approach of the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), and the Coalition Against COVID-19 (CACOVID) served as a synergistic relationship and collaboration to solve a public problem (Coronavirus) (NCDC, 2020). In South Africa, the President, Cyril Ramaphosa, consistently addressed the public periodically on efforts to combat the pandemic after consultations with researchers and relevant public agencies. Decisions were also made only after consulting with research and public agencies.

A Crisis Situational Analysis of PR Adoption in South Africa and Nigeria

A crisis is a condition that can threaten the image of a government or organisations, thus affecting public trust. Hence, crises provide a need for communication (Coombs, 2007) to improve stakeholders' awareness of the crisis and assure them that the management is in control of the situation (Mazzei & Ravazzani, 2011). Sub-Saharan Africa has encountered lots of crises in the past decades. These include political instability and war in Somalia, DR Congo, Eritrea, Libya, South Sudan, and Ethiopia, as well as insecurity in Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, and Burkina Faso, where Boko Haram was able to thrive, taking advantage of many common issues that affect countries in the Sahel Region (Mahmood & Ani, 2018). Other forms of crises include hunger, malnutrition, and chronic poverty, particularly in the Central African Republic, Mali, Madagascar, and Burundi; xenophobia in South Africa, and the latest, which is the COVID-19 pandemic that affected the health system of all the African countries and the world at large.

Case 1: Public Relations in the South African Government During Xenophobia

Xenophobia, the fear, disdain, hatred and hostility towards strangers or foreigners, has become an issue in South Africa (Choane et al., 2011; Claasen, 2017; Handmaker & Parsley, 2001). The country has witnessed a series of xenophobic violence and some of them have made international headlines in 2008, 2015, and more recently in 2018 and 2019. These attacks are a result of anti-immigrant sentiments (Tarisayi & Manik, 2020; Tella, 2016). They are also caused by numerous factors such as poverty, inequality, relative deprivation, township and informal settlement politics, and general frustration with the government (Claasen, 2017; Kerr et al., 2019). In South Africa, xenophobic attacks are perceived to be incited by the steady migration of foreigners into the country. In the course of these violent attacks, foreigners, particularly of African origin, are maimed and murdered along with South African nationals; a significant number of their economic means of survival are destroyed and looted, hence displacing individuals, inflicting pains and poverty on them (Asakitikpi & Gadzikwa, 2015). The government, according to Tirivangasi and Nyahunda (2020), has continuously interacted with numerous stakeholders on a better approach to combat xenophobic attacks which is the formulation of a good policy framework.

These stakeholders encompass business owners, sports professionals, trade union members, arts and sports fraternities, religious leaders, community formations, youth associations, people with disabilities, and traditional institutions. This measure enlightened both the government and the public, assisted in the formulation of policy and consultation process, and advised the stakeholders on how they can assist the government to facilitate easy adaptation and incorporation of foreigners into the society.

South Africa, as a valuable member of the world's politics, also interacted with leaders in other African countries on economic, socio-cultural, and political issues; the diplomatic society was informed of government plans and countermeasures to address the situation and maintain its positive relations with African countries (Williams, 2015). Furthermore, the South African government interacted with communities in South Africa with the sole purpose of informing them on the imperativeness of dealing and living peacefully with foreigners; top government officials sometimes pay a sympathy visit to the affected communities in an attempt to console and re-integrate foreigners into the society they lived before xenophobic attacks (Williams, 2015). These approaches to tackling xenophobia underscore the use of the two-way symmetrical and systems model of public relations. By having meaningful conversations with stakeholders in South Africa and other sub-Saharan African countries on ways to stop xenophobic attacks, the government simply adopted a two-way symmetrical and systems model of public relations. This also involves getting feedback to aggregate public opinions, paying sympathy visits to affected communities, and incorporating the views of the people in the policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation stages.

The utilisation of sophisticated technologies to resolve current societal challenges is increasingly prevalent across the world; the South African government adopted advanced technologies to combat xenophobic attacks. According to the Department of Science and Technology (2015), the South African Minister of Science and Technology at that period declared the development of mobile applications to combat xenophobic attacks in South Africa. "We are Africans" was a mobile technology–based application developed by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) to create an online channel to enable South Africa to declare its solidarity with government's fight against xenophobic attacks. The mobile application tremendously increased public awareness on the position of the government on xenophobia.

The South African Ministry of Science further ensured that the mobile application is available to the public through multiple channels; and several institutions such as cultural organisations, religious leaders, and civil organisations were consulted to assist the government's effort in building a South African society free of violence. The leaders declared that the citizens should be resolute and not portray the country as an entity that encourages crime against humanity, which would massively affect South Africa relations with the international community as well as in its quest to build and sustain feasible economic relations with other countries (Department of Science and Technology, 2015).

Mavhinga (2019) stated that the South African government formulated and implemented the National Action Plan to fight xenophobia, discrimination, and racism, which was an essential measure to resolving the extensive human rights abuses emanating from racism, discrimination, gender-based violence, and xenophobia that have ravaged the society. However, the National Action Plan did not successfully resolve the major problem that incites xenophobia which is an inadequate measure to account for xenophobic attacks in South Africa. The government and the law enforcement institutions, in a bid to fight xenophobia, need to openly admit that attacks on foreigners and their properties are xenophobic and do the needful, which is not limited to conducting accurate police investigation of xenophobic crimes but also prosecuting the culprits. This depicts the use of public information model of public relations as the government executed a policy deemed to tackle racism, gender-based violence, and xenophobia in South Africa. This involves providing essential information on the National Action Plan for the citizens and non-citizens and implementing the policy. Every individual (South Africans and non-citizens) is expected to comply with the directives irrespective of their opinions.

Table 7.1 presents some public relations campaigns by the South African government and other stakeholders in a bid to stem xenophobia.

Table 7.1 Public relations campaigns during the xenophobia

S/N	PR campaigns	Objectives of the campaign	Stakeholders	Communication channel
1	"We are Africa" mobile application (app) (Department of Science and Technology, 2015)	To create an online platform for the people of South Africa to support the government's campaign against xenophobic attacks To communicate any occurrence or prospective occurrence of violence or instigation To enhance the capacity of appropriate authorities such as the SAPS or the Metro Police to timely respond and prevent the occurrence of violence, or to execute the law where the violence has happened	South African government	Social media
2	National Action Plan (Republic of South Africa, 2019)	Stimulate data collection regarding racism, racial prejudices, xenophobia, and related injustice and encourage a thorough needs assessment to successfully tackle it To ensure that the concerns of individuals and groups facing racism, racial prejudices, xenophobia, and related injustice are significantly handled Increase the efficacy and consistency of the course of action against racism, racial prejudices, xenophobia, and related injustice inclusive of funds and human resources Encourage dedication to eliminate racism, racism, racial prejudices, xenophobia, and related injustice through relevant programmes geared towards reaching attainable targets Intensify the implementation of programmes for individuals and groups facing racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related injustice in education, housing, health, employment, food security, social services, and access to justice Expedite the recognition of laws that should be reformed and or reviewed to enhance the safety of victims Build a society based on equality and reinforce the rule of law and democracy	South African government	Offline and digital media

3	The Roll Back Xenophobia campaign (Parsley, 2003)	To totally condemn xenophobia as an infringement of human rights To ensure that the fundamental rights of non-citizens of South Africa are respected, guarded, and promoted as stated in the South African Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the country's international obligations	South African government agencies and NGOs	Offline and digital media
4	The One Movement (UN IOM, 2009)	To counter attitudes that lead to, xenophobia, discrimination, racism, and tribalism To adopt media campaigns, community engagements, youth aggregation, curriculum interventions, and human rights education, in partnership with a significant number of civil societies to stimulate a tradition of tolerance, human dignity, and oneness in diversity across southern Africa	Foreign government, NGOs, and the South African government agency	Offline and digital media

Source: Authors' compilation

Case 2: Public Relations by the Nigerian Government During the COVID-19 Pandemic

According to the Nigeria Centre for Diseases and Control- NCDC (2020), communication is a veritable instrument for a two-way exchange of spontaneous information and useful for educating and informing the public about the environment and the imperativeness of risk control. Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) is an important aspect of any response to disease outbreak; regarding COVID-19, the RCCE's objective is to facilitate real-time information and exchange opinions and advice between frontline health workers and the community outreach workers and community members. The strategic plan of the RCCE, a pillar of the Presidential Task Force and National Emergency Operation Centre in NCDC to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, functions as a pathway for formulating and executing an integrated risk communication system during public health emergencies in a holistic manner with multi-stakeholder engagement. The five major pillars of the integrated risk communication model include risk communication systems; internal and partner communication and coordination; public communication; communication engagement with affected households and communities; and dynamic listening and rumour management (NCDC, 2020). The model also encompasses multi-sectoral community involvement to enhance risk communication and stimulate lasting individual and community positive behavioural change to combat COVID-19 in Nigeria (NCDC, 2020).

The Presidential Task Force (PTF) is the apex institution responsible for coordinating the National COVID-19 response in Nigeria. At the policy level, the PTF's risk communication pillar provides vital leadership, well-planned oversight and monitoring stakeholder and resource mobilisation, harmonising efforts at governmental levels and across sectors, and providing support to adequately disseminate information for

RCCE. The PTF resolves key challenges raised from the field by the pillar, establishing a swift response to prevent communication-related crises. At the technical level, the RCCE pillar at the National Emergency Operation Centre functions as a technical support system and facilitates stakeholder communication and engagement. The pillar also assembles and empowers the capacity of state teams to organise and execute an integrated RCCE strategy; and provides coordination to embrace the state integrated RCCE strategy (NCDC, 2020).

Opinion leaders and influential personalities were consulted in the fight against COVID-19 to assist in disseminating information to the public in a bid to elicit behavioural change among the people and control the spread of COVID-19. These leaders communicated with the people using multiple media channels such as radio, television, and social media. Furthermore, well-documented information was prepared and shared among these leaders to enable them to effectively convey accurate information on COVID-19 issues. These leaders include health experts, leaders in religious institutions, youth leaders, community leaders, market leaders, social media influencers, and celebrities. The communication media include print media, mass media, daily press briefings, mobile networks, social media, NCDC call centre, media engagements and chats, and community mobilisation (NCDC, 2020). The Nigerian government and the NCDC utilised the systems theory of PR to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. All the stakeholders in the society were consulted, engaged, and incorporated in the fight against the pandemic. This aptly demonstrated that all the units (stakeholders) in the system (Nigeria) were given specific tasks such as advisory, disseminating the right information, data collection and sharing, educating, and influencing. They were able to tackle the pandemic through cooperation, interdependence, and collaboration.

Table 7.2 presents some public relations campaigns of the Nigerian government and other stakeholders during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 7.2 Public relations campaigns during the COVID-19 pandemic

S/N	PR campaigns	Objectives of the campaign	Stakeholders	Communication channel
1	World Mask Week (WMW) "Mask up Naija" (WHO Africa, 2020)	Reiterating the essence of wearing a face mask Putting on a face mask is one of the most productive ways of reducing community transmission of the coronavirus Informing everyone that they have a role to play in protecting each other, saving lives, and containing the spread of coronavirus worldwide	Nigerian government, private sector, NGOs, and individuals	Offline and digital media
2	"Powerful H.A.N.D.S." (NCDC, 2021)	Educating the people that the power to eliminate COVID-19 is in our H.A.N.D.S The H.A.N.D.S. acronym means H—Have your hands washed or sanitised frequently A—Always cough or sneeze into your elbow N—No going out without face mask D—Distance of at least two arm's lengths should be maintained S—Stay indoors and self-isolate if you feel sick	Nigeria government agency	Offline and digital media

3	#TakeResponsibility (Premium Times, 2020)	Reemphasising the essential NCDC guidelines and safety precautions to contain the transmission of coronavirus such as: Frequent washing of hands with soap under running water for 20 seconds Utilising alcohol-based sanitiser where water is unavailable Utilising tissue when coughing or sneezing and dropping used tissues into a wastebin instantly or coughing or sneezing into the elbow Practising social distancing, such as staying away from large crowds Maintaining physical contact to no less than 2 metres Consciously wearing a face mask in public places Wiping and cleaning all surfaces regularly with disinfectants Refrain from disseminating fabricated information about the virus by obtaining information only from reliable sources (like the NCDC and WHO)	Nigeria government agencies and private sector	Offline and digital media

(*continued*)

Table 7.2 (continued)

S/N	PR campaigns	Objectives of the campaign	Stakeholders	Communication channel
4	#Celebrate Responsibly (This Day, 2022)	To lower the transmission of the COVID-19 during the yuletide To sensitise individuals, families, and institutions on what they should do in safeguarding each other by strictly following the public health guidelines and social measures on COVID-19 To encourage Nigerians to comply with approved guidelines and measures by the NCDC and other public health organisations as they commemorate Christmas and New Year To inform Nigerians to desist from all non-essential travels within and outside Nigeria to curtail the risk of spreading COVID-19	Nigeria government agency	Offline and digital media

Source: Authors' compilation

Public Relations Challenges in Africa's Public Sectors

The following have been identified as public relations challenges in Africa's public sectors.

i. **Restricted Environment for Public Relations**

The problems encountered by public relations practitioners in the twenty-first century are to comprehend and analyse political dynamics, handle the effects and consequences, and capitalise on these dynamics (Opukah, 2004). Actualising these will be possible where rule of law, freedom, and democracy are permitted and encouraged to thrive; hence, the government needs to improve and facilitate freedom of the press, freedom of speech, an independent judiciary, democratically elected lawmakers, and protection of human rights to enhance a dynamic environment of public relations (Opukah, 2004). According to Roodt (2011), the political landscape in a country affects public relations. A major factor that hinders public relations practices in South Africa is the increasing lack of confidence and trust between the government and other stakeholders such as business organisations, labour unions, media, and civil society because of bad governance, kickbacks, and lack of integrity.

ii. **Neglect of Public Relations Professionals**

Public relations in contemporary society have been subjected to political manipulations; political appointments, for instance, are made in top communication positions by patronage without taking into consideration the business expertise, qualifications, and diplomatic skills of appointed individuals to manage and resolve complex public relations challenges in an ever-turbulent and unpredictable environment. The fact is there is enormous government wastage and shocking corrupt practices under the guise of public relations, and this has led to credibility crisis in South Africa (Roodt, 2011).

iii. **Inadequate Public Relations Funding**

Findings from Onyiengo (2014) revealed that shortage of financial resources has negative effects on Kenya's public relations office performance; many government institutions are experiencing lack of funds, which impacts negatively on the performance of the PR office in Kenya. Organisations were financially constrained; thus, they are decreasing budgetary allocation and expenses for public relations activities because government officials do not prioritise public relations. Furthermore, Onyiengo (2014) asserted that the challenge of ineffective and insufficient media has great implications on internal public relations. For internal public relations professionals to cause a behavioural and attitudinal change of the internal public, they must develop an effective media that can identify and accommodate the personal differences of the receivers.

iv. **Underutilisation of New Media**

Regarding government's adoption and utilisation of the new media in public relations space, Dilenschneider (2010) identified the following public relations constraints that need to be addressed, which include: (a) the urgency to change from business in the form of a restrained and firmly written message conveyed through a top-down approach to business in the form of an interaction; (b) organisations must seek to amplify the viewpoints, reputations, services, careers, and leaders and engage in a conversation demands, that is, interactive tone or a human voice. Furthermore, Dilenschneider (2010) asserts that an organisation that seeks to resonate with the public must understand that stakeholders determine the specific media channels an organisation adopts and how it is utilised; monitor and observe the views and perception of the public on the organisation; transform attacks and criticisms to organisation's opportunities by instituting strategic response system and proactive crisis management plan; understand that goal measurement is dependent on set goals; and must become sensitive to the progress of ongoing activities to detect deviations and utilise course corrections or change of strategy.

Ogbu (2019) stated that public relations practitioners who are not vast and ready to evolve with the dynamics of the social media space may become irrelevant because of the rising rate of social media acceptance and internet usage in Nigeria. Accessibility to information is on the rise, and it enhances public awareness and expectations with great implications. For instance, it is increasingly difficult to manage public and private organisation's corporate image in Nigeria's Niger Delta region because Ogoni and other oil-producing communities engage in regular protests of untold hardship from oil spillage and environmental degradation from oil exploration. This has led to arms possession and the resultant destruction of lives and properties, which are publicised on the social media. The public relations strategy to promote cordial and productive relations between the parties concerned, in this regard, is not through the utilisation of expensive PR campaigns to rebrand the organisations' image, but to ensure that organisations strictly adhere to global best practices in their operations and engagement with their host communities.

Discussions

The public sectors in Africa are grappling with reputation management, building trust and maintaining good relations with the public who are beneficiaries of government policies. This is a result of decades of civil unrest, rising unemployment figures, extreme poverty, corruption, bad governance, insecurity, wars, social tensions, health crisis, underdevelopment, and political instability, hence leading to increased criticisms, election malpractices, loss of confidence, and perception of the public sector as weak and incapable of carrying out its constitutional obligations for the interest of the public. The opinion of the overwhelming majority of the public has pushed the public sector to utilise a mix of media channels such as radio, television, social media, opinion leaders, health professional association leadership, religious leaders, community and traditional leaders, key marketplace and trade association, social media influencers, and celebrities, among others, to convey information and receive feedback in a bid to winning back public trust through its public relations strategies.

The crisis management strategies of the public sector in sub-Saharan Africa over the past decades aptly underscore the model of public relations utilised. For example, in Nigeria, the NCDC used a mix of the two-way asymmetrical and public information models. It was reported by the Centre for Policy Impact in Global Health (2020) that the Central

Bank of Nigeria (CBN) offered a stimulus package—a credit of 3 million naira (US$7,289.33)[1] to indigent families impacted by COVID-19. The Minister of Humanitarian Affairs stated that all the tribes in Nigeria received the COVID-19 palliatives, and it was evenly distributed (Agbedo et al., 2020). However, this information was shocking to affected Nigerians who did not receive the palliatives that were meant for them. Subsequently, some Nigerians justified the massive looting of COVID-19 supplies when mobs of citizens overran several government warehouses and looted COVID-19 palliatives which were not distributed during the lockdown (Obiezu, 2020). In South Africa, it was reported that only few persons have been convicted for past outbreaks of xenophobic violence that led to the displacement and death of thousands of foreign nationals (Mavhinga, 2019). These incidents and a lot more in sub-Saharan Africa have negative consequences on the image of the public sector.

It is believed that stakeholders often seek to apportion blames on the organisation in the wake of a crisis. The more publics attribute crisis responsibility to an organisation, the stronger the publics develop negative images of the organisation. What an organisation does or says during a crisis might affect its reputation (Coombs, 2007; Rensburg et al., 2017).

Conclusion

We conclude by remarking that offline and digital media have played a significant role in Africa's public relations over the past decades, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. A mix of offline and digital media channels such as radio, television, prints and publications, social media, opinion leaders, health professional association leadership, religious leaders, community and traditional leaders, key marketplace and trade association, social media influencers, and celebrities assisted in favourable corporate image, reputation management, crisis communication, information sharing, and feedback. However, the prevalent models and strategies of public relations utilised in Africa are ineffective in building public trust and resolving crises.

[1] Exchange rate at 1 dollar to 411.56 naira.

Recommendations

This chapter recommends that a mix of offline and digital media channels should be employed by the public sector to reach the citizens in the digital age. Offline media should not be neglected because of the nature of the African society where the majority of the population is poor and resides in rural areas.

Additionally, the public sector, in its quest to build public trust and resolve crises, should adopt theories such as the situational theory of publics, the situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), and the systems theory, for effective PR and crisis management in Africa. It is not sufficient to disseminate information and receive feedback; public opinions need to be aggregated and the wishes, desires, and aspirations of the citizens must be met. The image of the African public sector will be portrayed positively when the citizenry sees itself as an indispensable subset of the government system.

Lastly, the African public sector must ensure the peace, security, and political stability of the continent by resolving insecurity issues, rule of law, respect for human rights, zero tolerance to corruption and bad governance, and massive investments in infrastructure. This will enhance trust among key publics and improve the public image of the African public sector.

Future Research Directions

This chapter reviewed existing literature on public relations in the public sector with reference to sub-Saharan Africa; hence, no empirical data were exploited; this offers potential for future research. Empirical research can be conducted on the role of public relations in the sub-Saharan African public sector in the pre- and post-COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. Such research could produce results that identify the effect of public relations strategies on different countries in the sub-Saharan African public sector. Furthermore, empirical studies can be carried out on public relations theories/models utilised by Africa's public sector during crises management. Additionally, future research can investigate the impact of the situational theory of publics, the situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), and the systems theory, on crisis management in Africa's public sector.

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8

Trade Fairs and Exhibitions in the Ghanaian Public Sector: Meaning, Relevance, and Requirements

Gloria Kakrabah-Quarshie Agyapong, Osman Light, and Kojo Kakra Twum

Introduction

A trade fair is an assembly of different stakeholders in a particular location or environment within a specific duration, thus providing an opportunity for them to interact with each other (Han & Verma, 2014; Rai & Nayak, 2020). In this book chapter, trade fairs, expositions, exhibitions, and trade shows will be used interchangeably (Kirchgeorg et al., 2010), and where applicable, will be referred to as public sector shows. Trade

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shows could be carried out either vertically or horizontally (Luo & Zhong, 2016). Vertical exhibitions are used to promote particular public goods/services to the pre-qualified audience (Brailly, 2016; Luo & Zhong, 2016). With horizontal trade shows, a wide range of goods and services from diverse public sector organisations or units are exhibited to a diverse audience (Brailly, 2016).

Public sector shows bring together stakeholders like exhibitors and visitors (industrial buyers, architects, consultants, etc.). The attention of public sector shows has shifted from being a selling platform to a more deliberate step to create and foster communication and relationships (Kwiatek & Leszczynski, 2020). Public sector shows are now organised to serve the needs of both the governments and the citizenry. Therefore, for public entities to craft strategies that will generate positive attendee post-event behaviour (repeated visitations), they need to have a proper understanding of the needs of the attendees (Bathelt, 2017). Through public sector shows, attendees are opportune to learn about new solutions, products, and suppliers; while public organisations can enter new markets, build reputation, trust, credibility, and cement positive relationships (Siemieniako & Gębarowski, 2017).

According to Shereni, Ncube and Mazhande (2021), logistical arrangements and event atmospheric are important resources for a successful trade fair. In the public arena of Ghana, Ghana Trade fair Company Limited is mandated to manage the international trade fair centre of the country (Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2021). Trade shows in the public sector have been a tool to have live contact with the masses or a chosen group of persons. In this century, public sector shows could be conducted either on physical platforms where participants interact face-to-face (physical public sector shows) or on virtual platforms, where participants interact via computer-mediated aids (virtual public sector shows) (Sarmento & Simões, 2019). An app like Zoom Meeting can aid in virtual public sector shows.

Despite the numerous opportunities that public shows provide, trade shows in Ghana have received poor patronage (Dery. Graphic News Bulletin, February 2017). This has been attributed to poor public show organisational practices. There are complaints that organisers charge huge participation fees without instilling measures that can allow visitors to recoup their investment. Also, there are complaints that organisers only limit shows to serve as an opportunity for selling. In addition, the Ghana Trade Fair Centre, which was a hub for public shows, has now become a pale shadow of itself (Dery. Graphic News Bulletin, February 2017). This is an indication that the ideology of trade shows has not been fully understood in the public sector. Scanty literature exists in the Ghanaian public sector context. Hence, the essence of this chapter is to establish the meaning, forms, relevance of public sector shows and requirements for public sector shows.

Meaning of Public Sector Shows

Scope/Definition of Public Sector Shows

A Trade fair is an activity that brings individuals, entities, and groups into a single location to interact with each other for mutual benefits (Han & Verma, 2014; Rai & Nayak, 2020). Trade fair was usually linked to sales; thus, the number and value of commercial contracts were the determinants of a successful trade fair (Siemieniako & Gębarowski, 2016). In the quest to attract more exhibitors to a trade fair, attention was now given to potential visitors to the show. In the literature on sales and marketing, the trade fair was examined mainly from the seller's (exhibitor) perspective, with less attention to the needs, preferences, and behaviours of the buyer (visitor) (Gera & Fatta, 2020). However, in contemporary literature, trade fair is a showcase for the development and dissemination of innovation. It has become an intermediate point where the expectations of both the visitor and exhibitor are met (Favre, Brailly, Chatellet & Lazega, 2016).

Over the years, public sector shows have brought together decision-makers, commercial leaders, and innovators from different units in the public sector to exhibit how public organisations are improving service delivery, efficiency, and value for money. Public sector shows have been solution-oriented (Fitriani, Wahjusaputri & Diponegoro, 2021). They have become platforms for showcasing and networking among stakeholders and policymakers for different sectors in the public horizon.

The focus of public shows has moved from the conventional mindset of just sales to a knowledge-based economy where visitors do interact not only with the sales personnel of the exhibitors but also with the technical staff and staff within the research and development units (Proszowska, 2018). Public shows as a knowledge-based economy have an atmosphere where actors in a value network meet at the same time. It has become an opportunity for both the visitor and the exhibitor to share and build knowledge (Gottlieb & Bianchi, 2017). Interaction between the visitor and the exhibitor is the platform through which new solutions and information on marketing offerings are acquired. Visitors usually gather tacit knowledge on marketing offerings that would ordinarily have been difficult to access on a normal business basis (Lin, 2016; Gottlieb & Bianchi, 2017).

Key Stakeholders in Public Sector Shows

There are three stakeholders in the public sector shows. They include the organisers, exhibitors, and visitors (Jiménez-Guerrero et al., 2020) (Fig. 8.1).

Visitors

They attend public sector shows to access exhibitors' products/services, and technical and transactional information. The visitors are usually

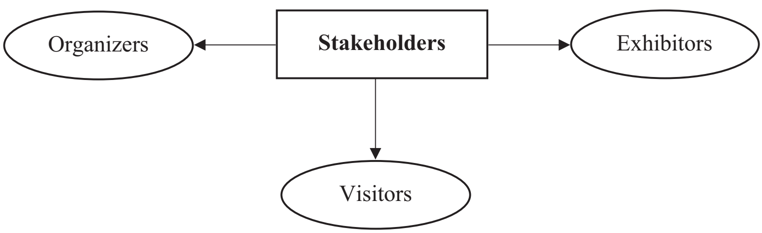

Fig. 8.1 Key Stakeholders in Public Sector Shows. (Source: Authors' Construct [2022])

described to be the target of the exhibitors; hence, exhibitors must go all out to get their attention and patronage (Jiménez-Guerrero et al., 2020).

Organisers

The organisers are responsible for creating an enabling environment for the exhibitors and visitors to meet. The organisers must invest in attracting both the exhibitors and the visitors (Jiménez-Guerrero et al., 2020).

Exhibitors

Exhibitors constitute the individuals and firms that market their products/services at the trade show. They are the centre of attraction to the visitors. The exhibitors prepare to answer all the likely questions of the potential visitors (Shereni, Ncube & Mazhande, 2021).

Importance of Public Shows

The importance of public shows cannot be overemphasised. Some of the importance of public shows is as follows:

Public shows have become an avenue for exhibitors to enter into new markets, build reputation, and create and maintain healthy business relationships (Silva et al., 2021).

Public shows are seen as an agent of information exchange; thus, joint exhibitions, seminars, and conferences have become activities in a public show (Bauer & Borodako, 2019).

Public shows serve as a tool to have live contact with the masses or chosen group of persons. In this century, public shows could be conducted either on physical platforms, where participants interact face-to-face (physical public sector shows) or virtual platforms, where participants interact via computer-mediated aids (virtual public sector shows) (Sarmento & Simões, 2019).

In the context of public sector education, public sector shows serve as a networking opportunity for public policy actors (exhibitors) and local school systems, schools, and teachers (visitors) to interact on how to enhance systems, structures, and activities (Player-Koro et al., 2019).

Forms of Public Sector Shows

Public sector shows represent a concentrated market zone where different buyers, sellers, suppliers, distributors, and intermediaries meet at a particular location to promote sales, build new-relevant networks, and exchange knowledge (Silva et al., 2021). Trade shows exist in diverse forms depending on the angle being examined.

Vertical and Horizontal Public Sector Shows

From the perspective of the industry profile, trade shows could be either vertical or horizontal (Rinallo et al., 2017). Vertical trade shows pay attention to the promotion of a single industry category to a group of professional clients. Horizontal trade shows promote a diverse range of products to broad and diverse shows (Rinallo et al., 2017). The Universities, Entrepreneurship, and Enterprise Development Africa (UEED) Exhibition by the University of Cape Coast in 2021 was an example of horizontal trade show. Manufacturers, processors, and service providers from different industries were the exhibitors and the general public was the visitors.

Industrial and Consumer Public Sector Shows

From the perspective of visitor profiles, trade shows could be categorised into industrial and consumer trade shows (Tafesse & Skallerud, 2017). Industrial trade shows focus on specific professionals and organisational buyers. Consumer trade shows target individual consumers and the general public. An example of an industrial public show was the Ghana Industrial Summit and Exhibition 2018, which brought together different industries with a focus on conferences, B2B interaction, local content policy discussion, networking, and exhibitions.

Regional, National, and International Public Sector Shows

Based on market coverage, trade shows can be classified into regional, national, and international trade shows (Coşar & Fajgelbaum, 2016). The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (2021) was an international show organised by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture. The show brought 150 exhibitors and 500 trade visitors from the continent of Africa and the world as a whole.

Technology Industry Public Sector Shows

Technology was almost omnipresent in 2021, and more visible at tech shows. Entrepreneurs, innovators, CEOs, and consumers from all over the world flock to technology trade exhibitions to explore what is new in the worlds of electronics, robots, computers, and more, depending on their size and public visibility (Si-hang & Yun-long, 2021; Sepasgozar et al., 2018). Africa Build Show, Accra 2020 was an example of a technology industry show for the global construction tech, building materials, and equipment industry.

Manufacturing Industry Trade Shows

Manufacturing is a distinct commercial sector with a lot going on in 2021. In the context of manufacturing, something new is continually happening, including the development of new processes and materials for green construction (Davoudinejad et al., 2019). An example of an industrial public show was the Ghana Industrial Summit and Exhibition 2018, which brought together different industries with a focus on conferences, B2B interaction, local content policy discussion, networking, and exhibitions.

Healthcare Industry Trade Shows

Because healthcare is one of the world's fastest-growing professional areas, it is no surprise that trade shows that focus on healthcare technology, specialities, and jobs attract enormous large crowds and a lot of media coverage (Ferry & Slack, 2021; Harris et al., 2018). An example of a healthcare industry show was the 1st Healthcare Summit and Trade Fair Ghana—Germany in 2021, which provided the opportunity for visitors to meet the relevant players in the Ghanaian and German healthcare market.

Restaurant and Food Industry Trade Shows

Restaurant- and food-related trade shows are on the lighter side of the trade show spectrum, but that does not make them any less significant to the businesses that participate. West African Food and Beverage Exhibition, which was held for three consecutive days in Ghana, was a food industry trade show. The show provided the perfect platform for the participants to showcase the latest products and services associated with the food and beverage industry. Products like alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, catering packs, energy drinks, liquid foods, and processed foods are usually displayed during this show. The attendees have the opportunity to interact with the key industry leaders and market players from the food and beverage industry and also to discuss the modern trends related to this industry.

Arts and Crafts Industry Trade Shows

Skilled artists will discover possibilities to meet new consumers and expand their reach at arts and crafts shows. There are hundreds of arts and crafts expos in areas of vintage, jewellery, and pottery to photography and sculptures (Mascia-Lees, 2020). The Ghana Export Promotion Authority (GEPA) organised the September 2021 edition of the Accra Arts and Craft Market Exhibition to showcase the products of local art dealers whose businesses were affected during the COVID-19 pandemic.

An understanding of these forms of trade shows is imperative in the trade show decision-making process. This is so important because it allows the organiser of a show to know the category of exhibitors and visitors to target (Jha et al., 2019).

Relevance of the Public Sector Shows

Due to the introduction of virtual platforms, public sector shows have gone beyond face-to-face interaction to computer-mediated interaction among participants (Lee et al., 2016). The relevance of public sector shows cannot be overemphasised. The twenty-first-century trade fair is cost-effective and time-saving for participants. Public sector shows have become a promising avenue for creating awareness among geographically distant prospective customers. The virtual capacity of the public sector shows makes it valuable in contexts where it is challenging to ensure physical proximity (Sarmento & Simões, 2019).

From a relationship marketing point of view, public sector shows offer favourable conditions and platforms for interactions that can positively impact the business relationship. The public sector shows play a business role by creating a learning process between individuals and entities (Brown et al., 2017). Information gathering and knowledge sharing at public sector shows are agents of business learning and innovation. Exhibition firms do not merely use public sector shows to market products and engage buyers, but also to get feedback on their products and acquire information on new technologies and market trends (Gottlieb & Bianchi, 2017).

In the public context, public sector shows provide an opportunity for information and social exchange in both formal and informal settings. This tends to reduce relational distance and heightens the trust between business partners. In Ghana, public sector shows are part of export promotion programs for exporters to explore and exploit the potential of the foreign market to improve their business performance on both the local and international frontiers (Quaye et al., 2017).

The government of Ghana invests in the public sector shows for some of the following reasons (Quaye et al., 2017):

(a) Publicity: Trade shows can send a message to a large number of visitors or attendees.
(b) Cost-effective networking and advertising: A large pool of participants is attracted to one spot for interaction and relationship building.
(c) Building of database: Firms can get in touch with potential clients to ascertain their tastes and preferences. Also, firms can know current trends and development in their industry, as well as related industries.
(d) Lead generation: Exhibitors can market and sell their products to visitors.

Requirements for Public Sector Shows

Planning a Public Sector Show or Exhibition

The success of a public sector show is dependent on how it is planned and carried out. In planning an exhibition, attention must be given to:

Form and Size of the Public Sector Show

There is a need to settle on the form and size of the trade show. The type could be a horizontal or vertical show. The size could be municipal, regional, or national. This decision can assist the organisers to know the number of exhibitors and visitors to invite as well as logistics decision making (Sarmento & Simões, 2019).

Market Research

A survey must be carried out to determine the needs and preferences of the intended target audience. Questions that can be asked in the survey are product needs of potential visitors, prices they are likely to pay for those items, and whether exhibitors have products/services that will meet potential visitors' needs. Through market research, an appropriate theme could be crafted for the show (Kourkouridis et al., 2021).

Define the Public Sector Show Goals

It is very important to clearly define the goal or objective of the trade show. If the goal is to generate sales for exhibitors, then horizontal trade shows might be considered (Kwiatek & Leszczynski, 2020).

Date, Location, and Duration for the Public Sector Show

Organisers need to state a date, duration, and venue for the trade show. It is always better to set a date that allows enough time for awareness creation and other preparations. The venue should be spacious enough to accommodate the expected number of visitors. Duration could be a day, two days, three days, or a week, depending on the objective of the show (Kwiatek & Leszczynski, 2020).

Develop a Marketing Plan

The marketing must cover the pricing, participation, licensing, exhibitor, procurement, supporting events, and visitors' promotion. The marketing plan could be used to get funding and sponsorships (Sarmento & Simões, 2019).

Budgeting/Funding Plan

There must be a well-planned budget to avoid tendencies of incurring a deficit. In securing funds for the show, government institutions and industry players could be attracted as sponsors (Kourkouridis et al., 2021).

Trade Show Team

A team must be formed to manage the tradeshow. The leader of the team could be a professional in the trade show organisation (Kwiatek & Leszczynski, 2020).

Cost Factors for a Trade Show

The framework is a list of cost items in organising a trade show (Fig. 8.2).

Duties of Organisers and Exhibitors

In the planning process, it is also required that the duties of organisers and exhibitors are clearly stated and precise. Some of their duties are captured in Table 8.1.

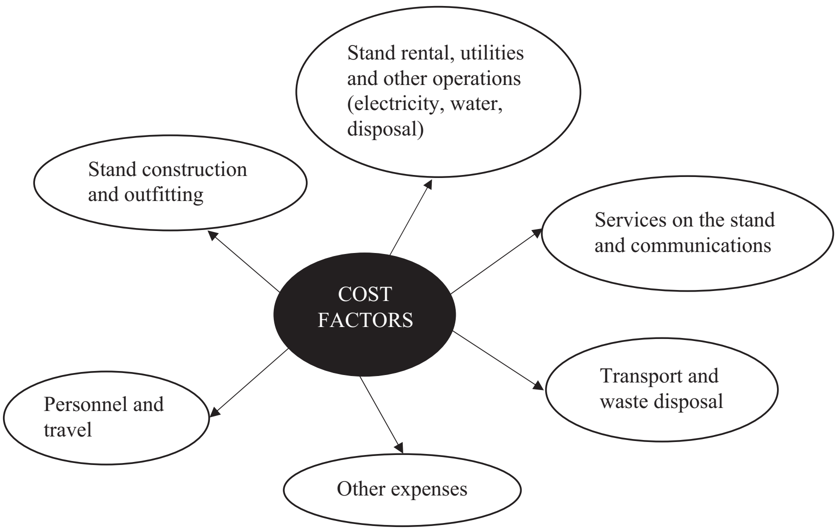

Fig. 8.2 Cost Factors for Trade Show. (Source: Association of the German Trade Fair Industry 2019)

Table 8.1 Duties of organisers and exhibitors

Organisers	Exhibiters
Preparation of the fairgrounds	Give adequate information on product details and other relevant information
Provide booth space and security system for the exhibition	Manage the show professionally
Provide detailed information about the show and advertising tools like billboards posters, fliers among others	Compliance with rules and regulations governing trade shows
Get a person with language power in other relevant languages to communicate relevant information to shareholders.	Conduct a feedback evaluation survey on the show

Source: Shereni et al. (2021) and Gottlieb and Bianchi (2017)

Organising a Public Sector Show: Things to Be Assessed

Organise a Local Partnership for the Show

Private and public agencies for tourism, transportation, industry, commerce, customs, conference, and other service providers can help with the organisation and execution of some of the trade fair's features at the local level. The organisers should, in any case, provide the coordination and administration of the integrated set of parts (Lin et al., 2018).

Local Participation

The majority of participants are usually local enterprises and other sectoral stakeholders. It is critical in a developing country to be able to mobilise a complete or substantial representation of the local industry. To enable such involvement, the organisers must have a high level of reputation in the corporate community (Ummulkulthoum & Jianhua, 2017; Okolo et al., 2017).

Risk Assessment and Mitigation

Potential issue areas must be recognised, as well as the expected steps to be taken to foresee and avoid them, monitor the source of the problem, and reduce the effect. Risks might be internal or external, and they can be connected to the objectives, the situation, the operations, the expenses, and so on (Abebaw, 2016).

The Trade Show's Long-Term Viability

A trade show provides cash, particularly in terms of stand leasing, service offering, and perhaps, publicity. Self-sustainability, on the other hand, may typically be thought of as a medium- or long-term goal that develops over time as the event grows in size and efficiency improves. As a result, the organisers should build their strategy on the assumption that local and international financial sponsors would continue to support future events, even if it is at a decreasing rate (Doherty et al., 2013).

The initial evaluation for the viability of the project should be an examination of strengths and weaknesses of the above-mentioned variables, as well as the identification of measures to guarantee that those needs are satisfied. It is also crucial to establish whether the nation has adequate lodging infrastructure and whether the hotels, in terms of quantity, quality, and location, can meet the needs of the trade show (Lin et al., 2018).

Trade Fair Participation Checklist

The items in Table 8.2 are the checklist for participating in the trade fair.

Registration Checklist for a Trade Fair

The following information is needed to register for a trade show (Table 8.3).

Table 8.2 Trade fair participation checklist

No	**Checklist**
1	Define corporate objectives and expectations
2	Are new products or services ready for use at the beginning of the fair?
3	Check economic situation, sales opportunities and distribution
4	Cost expectations, return on investment
5	Company decision on participation at the trade fair
6	Budget approval
7	Appoint project management/company team
8	Internal coordination
9	Request trade fair documentation
10	Determine stand size
11	Registration/allocation
12	Selection of exhibits
13	Stand planning
14	Selection of stand construction company
15	Advertising/gifts
16	Briefing of a stand construction company
17	Order
18	Trade fair catalogue entry
19	Supporting advertising measures
20	Presentation by the stand construction company
21	External staff, hostesses
22	Dress code, uniform
23	Commission catalogues/brochures
24	Request communication lines/electricity/water supplies
25	Determine stand personnel
26	Graphic
27	Mailings to customers/invitations
28	Begin briefing stand team
29	Name badges
30	Press activities
31	Hand-over by the stand construction company
32	Visitor survey
33	Success controls
34	Observation of competitors
35	Orderly dismantling and return transport
36	Analysis of the participation
37	Corporate objectives achieved?
38	Follow-up/customer contacts
39	Cost recording
40	Consequences for the future
41	Determine return on investment
42	Decision on next trade fair, stand size

Source: Association of the German Trade Fair Industry (2019)

Table 8.3 Registration checklist for a trade fair

	Checklist
1	Minimum and maximum stand area dimensions in metre square (m^2)
2	Stand location in the hall or at the outdoor area
3	Length and width of the stand
4	Type of stand (row stand, corner stand, end of block or island stand)
5	Alterations to the proposed layout
8	Type of construction (one- or two-story construction)
9	Alterations to the proposed type of construction
10	Information on the products on display (classification according to industry)
11	Co-exhibitors and any other companies that are to be represented
12	Anticipated volume and types of waste

Source: Association of the German Trade Fair Industry (2019)

Conclusion

In terms of meaning, public show is an arrangement by an individual or entity (organiser) whereby a certain class of individuals or entities (exhibitors) exhibit their products, process, service, or knowledge to gain the attention and patronage of attendees (visitors).

Concerning the forms of public shows, the most popular or known forms are vertical and horizontal shows or exhibitions. Furthermore, vertical and horizontal shows could be regional, national, or international shows.

In terms of relevance, a public show or exhibition is seen as a multifaceted platform or arrangement for stakeholder interaction, networking, knowledge sharing, and building of long-lasting and profitable cross-sectorial relationships for service innovation, policy innovation, formulation, and implementation. Furthermore, a public show is a holistic arrangement that seeks to establish a mutual benefit among the three key stakeholders (organisers, visitors, and exhibitors) in an exhibition setting.

Regarding requirements for a successful public show, attention needs to be given to specifics like planning; cost factors; duties of organiser and exhibitor; and organisational assessment, participation, and registration checklist. In the line of planning, organisers must decide the form and size of public shows; conduct market research; define the public show goals; come out with the date, location, and duration of the show; develop a marketing plan; develop the budgeting/funding plan; and form the public show team. The likely cost factors are about renting stands, utilities, and other operations (electricity, water, disposal); services on the stand and communications; transport and waste disposal; stand construction and outfitting; personnel, and travel.

Recommendations

Organisers of public trade shows must move from the conventional mindset of merely sales to a knowledge-based economy where visitors are able to interact with the sales personnel of the exhibitors, the technical staff, and staff in the research and development units. Furthermore, organisers should adopt an approach that considers the interest of both the exhibitor and visitors.

Government must see public shows as a strategic tool for public sector marketing. Hence, all the necessary attention and resources must be duly supplied. In addition, the government must formulate policies that support and advocate for public shows, periodically.

All strategic stakeholders for a public show must work as a team and not as individual units. With teamwork, public shows could effectively and efficiently accomplish set goals and targets. Furthermore, stakeholder analysis needs to be carried out as part of the public show planning process to categorise the various stakeholders according to their degree of interest in a public show.

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Part III

Public Sector Communication Ethics and Recommendations

9

Public Sector Communication Ethics in Africa

Samuel Wakuloba Wabala

Introduction

Ethics entails being cautious of the effect our actions have on the society—how we live and act in a good or bad way, right or wrong, being fair or unfair, responsible or irresponsible (Trevino & Nelson, 2004). It is a moral philosophy that explains ethical concepts, and examination of decent claims intended to test their genuineness, validation, and sufficiency. It encompasses constructing a wide-ranging perspective by elucidating the interconnections among ethical ideas and values, giving moral guidance action through practical judgment (Cooper, 2006). Public sector communication mirrors the nation's moral standing before its public; that is, how its citizens perceive it, is dependent on the extent to which the government is transparent, socially responsible, and loyal to its public. Lee (2012) states that the government must strike a balance between political marketing or propaganda and democracy while presenting itself

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as a voice that informs its citizens and promotes bidirectional communication.

Communication ethics in Africa, specifically media ethics, is affected by a lack of established, profound value commitments among journalists and others working in the media sector (Mfumbusa, 2008). Public relations practitioners have a special obligation to ethically practise their craft while observing the highest standards of transparency, accuracy, fairness, and responsibility to the public. The society should value peace and uphold essential values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, shared responsibility, and respect for nature. In this chapter, emphasis is given to communication ethics and principles, discusses communication ethics in the public sector, role of government in enhancing positive communication ethics in the public sector, government communication capacity, ethics-based government communication, factors that can contribute to trust between the government and its citizens, interaction and communication, the complementary role of virtues and principles, and perceptual challenges to public sector communications ethics.

Communication Ethics and Principles

This type of communication is predicated upon business values, including but not limited to truthfulness, conciseness, and being responsible and accountable for an individual's words or speech and the resulting actions thereof. Hence, one's thoughts and communication are expected to be conveyed and expressed effectively and concisely. The resulting actions or consequences will potentially be solely based on how the message is communicated. Therefore, ethical communication defines a framework of acceptable principles that align with an enterprise of a society's acceptable ethical code of conduct (Jiang & Men, 2016).

1. Honesty

Being honest entails communicating what is known to be true to a listener, with no intent to deceive or present only parts of the truth. It also means being as objective as possible, that is, not tailoring the story based on what the speaker wants the listener to believe (Hermans et al., 2017). It involves letting the listener take the data that is objectively presented and believe what they choose to believe, which is a core goal of ethical communication. Ethical communication should be based on accurate information and facts—in a word, do not lie.

Honesty should be the guiding prism in every communication. Facts and figures should be correct to the best of a preparer's knowledge. Precautions should be taken to protect any sensitive information contained within. Honesty should also prevail when communicating goals, expectations, decisions, feedback, or judgments to employees. Ethical communication assumes that communicated information is always presented (and received by the listener) according to one's subjective perception, even if only in the most minimal way, and thus, the goal of ethical communication is to be as objective as possible when communicating with others to ensure that every recipient receives the same message.

2. Active Listening

There is a difference between hearing someone and listening to them. For ethical communication to be effective, it is necessary for the recipient to pro-actively listen to the speaker, and not only to hear what they want to hear, but also pay attention to parts of the conversation. This also means asking questions when any point is not entirely understood, for the sake of clarification.

3. Non-Judgmental Speech

Ethical and conscious communication entails speaking in a non-judgmental manner with every recipient while negating unnecessary conflict, which typically creates a breakdown in communication, and as a result, causes misunderstandings. Conflict results from unethical communications, accusatory and overly critical comments often acting as a catalyst for communication breakdown.

4. Consider the Recipients' Preferred Channel of Communication

You risk losing an audience if you use a communication channel that is not preferred by your intended receiver. To effectively communicate with your listeners, use the most preferred communication channel: face-to-face, email, conference call, phone call and messenger apps, amongst others. Ensure that the channel used conveys the message as intended.

5. Strive to Understand

It is encamped upon listeners to make every effort to fully understand what is being said before responding, even though it is important to be proactive while listening. Listeners should think about what has been said before replying. Reading "in between the lines" is also an important skill that allows for the understanding of what is not said, but was implicitly expressed or implied.

6. Avoid the Use of a Negative Tone

It is assumed that in ethical communication, the speaker avoids being rude by being polite and professional with tact while communicating. Conscious of what to say and how it is said, the communicator is expected to use the right tone as one of the critical facets of communication. The use of a hostile tone could lead to a listener not getting what was intended to be communicated. Controlling one's tone goes along with self-control, a soft skill that allows one to know how they wish to reply to a terse business message (for instance) versus the most effective manner for answering. Essentially, keeping the tone positive or neutral is best, as the tone of a written message—or of one's voice—is always picked up by the receiver, and can alter how the message is received and/or understood.

Additionally, while it is acceptable to be honest, and open, tact—and professional maturity—means knowing when it is inappropriate to speak up, and when it is crucial to. Tact also means knowing that being completely honest does not equate to being rude or negative—it is possible to be completely honest and open with one's thoughts and feelings while still remaining polite and respectful (Siegrist & Zingg, 2014).

7. Avoid Interrupting Others

Allowing others to speak is important for creating a civil, effective working environment. Interrupting others results in misunderstandings, unnecessary conflicts, and a breakdown in workplace communications, hindering corporate progress and creating problems. Interrupting others shows a lack of respect and does not allow the listener to fully grasp what is being said, which often results in incorrect assumptions being made.

8. Respect Privacy and Confidentiality

Most businesses should include a clause in their code of ethics defining what is appropriate for honouring client and employee confidentiality and privacy. This can have a wide range of implications, including minimising workplace gossip and mitigating toxic conversations about the private lives of clients and/or personnel.

9. Accept Responsibility

A core tenet within any ethical communication framework is taking responsibility for the actions that result from one's words, be it good or bad. This includes both short-term and long-term consequences of one's communications. Owning one's words reinforces the importance of being conscientious about ethical communication.

Communication Ethics in the Public Sector

Public sector communication ethics is, to a large extent, dependent on the degree to which the public is prepared to trust the government. This is strongly influenced by perceptions of the general ethical standards of that government. The public's perception of whether or not a government is "ethical" is central to whether that government is seen as acceptable. Since ethics is the application of moral principles about morally reflective decision making, it is important for every public servant to be conscious of what they say and how especially while interacting with members of the public. Embracing and practising high ethical standards in the public sector sets a benchmark of conduct that is emulated by members of the public and, as a result, provides guidance to those who aspire to meet the standards.

How to Encourage and Embed Ethical Communication in the Public Sector

To encourage and enforce good conduct and professional etiquette administratively calls for the need to practise different mechanisms, structures, and both proactive and reactive approaches that comprehensively take into consideration culture and behaviour, guidance, and means of enforcement. According to Mafunisia (2008), unethical behaviour seldom begins at the senior level of public service leadership in Africa, where public service values are embodied and promoted by civil servants. This, in the opinion of Mafunisa, is attributed to a lack of accountability for adhering to procedures and rules as opposed to focusing on the delivery of quality public service, effectiveness, and efficiency, for instance, in South Africa (Dorasamy, 2010).

Embedding ethical communication in the public sector would include.

- Standard setting—for example, offence provisions, legal obligations, legislated statements of values, jurisdiction-wide codes of conduct, agency codes of conduct.
- Expectation setting—for example, establishing and maintaining an organisational culture that articulates the norms and the standards of administrative practice and good conduct expected of staff.
- Prevention strategies—for example, removal of opportunities through fraud prevention measures, disclosure of interests registers, gifts and benefits registers, merit-based selection, records management legislation, internal and external audit, proper supervision, ethics training.
- Enforcement mechanisms—for example, offence provisions in the whistleblowing legislation, internal disclosure policies, complaint policies, obligations to report corruption to the anti-corruption body, investigation capacity, management legislation and policies, and merit reviews of administrative decisions.

- Deterrence mechanisms, such as watchdog bodies, internal and external audits, disciplinary action, and prosecutions.

The public has explicit expectations regarding the behaviour of public office holders, which are consistently in line with the expected public service principles. The behaviours that members of the public expect of public office holders include:

- Being committed to the public sector as opposed to personal goals (Selflessness and integrity).
- Being open and honest in communication.
- Communicating in light of the best evidence (objectivity).
- Accepting accountability, especially for those holding senior public positions.
- Exemplary leadership in public office.

Role of Government in Enhancing Good Communication Ethics in the Public Sector

Availing sufficient information on priorities, programs, and activities for citizens contributes to government legitimacy. The development and maintenance of effective communication capacity give those working in the public sector legitimacy as players in the sector. Public accountability and responsibility are integral to public administration service delivery. The realisation of improved life for all depends on a responsive public service that provides satisfaction to members of the public (Dorasamy, 2010).

This makes it possible for the players in the sector to take stock of the citizen's needs and preferences while fostering a more calculated public space for multi-stakeholder participation, informed policy debate and development effectiveness. This goes a long way in sealing loopholes that could have existed, allowing the practice of unethical communication in the public sector. Critical issues for consideration include, but are not limited to:

- **The Communication Function of Government**
  The main communication functions of government consist of informing, advocating/persuading (for policies and reforms), and engaging citizens. However, effective public communication efforts and participation notwithstanding, the majority of the nations have not embraced the culture of consultation and participation, exacerbated by low literacy rates and lack of information provision. This challenge extends to internal communication among government agencies.
- **Government Communication Incentives**
  Government awareness of the incentives of communication is critical to ethical public communication. The realisation by the government that communication is a fundamental function in enhancing ethical communication in the public sector. There is, therefore, a need to be intentional while handling communication in the public sector. Governments need to have communication budgets, secretive laws relating to communications; there should be no limitation to the choice of the media house to be used to communicate government-related issues (Canel & Sanders, 2016).
- **The Role of Ethics in Government Communication**
  It is the mandate of the government to send persuasive messages to the members of the public and explain working policies while creating awareness of the citizen's rights and the government. All stakeholders should be made to have confidence in government communication and not treat it as propaganda at any given time. Media and communication ethics are significant in democratic governance in Kenya. Media shapes and forms the view of the population. For instance, blame was apportioned on the media for infuriating the volatile situation in Kenya's disputed presidential elections in December, 2007. This led to media ethics being questioned, raising issues on whether it was appropriate to report on matters that provoked populations in regions deemed peaceful (Chepkemei et al., 2012).
- **The Enabling Environment for Government Communication**
  Policies that are well-drafted, legally binding, enforceable, and provide access to information are crucial in creating an enabling environment, with media literacy and enhanced media organisations. According to Norris (2010), there is a likelihood of one dismissing the truth that

there has been extensive progress in democratic governance in the world today. The media has the responsibility of pushing for reforms urgently required to advance responsiveness, transparency, effectiveness, and accountability of governance institutions for democracy to be realised for the poor in Africa (Chepkemei et al., 2012).

Government Communication Capacity

It is imperative for governments to ensure that they embrace and practise professionalism in communication in the public sector. This can be enabled by availing the requisite infrastructure for effective communication. Governments' public relations efforts focus on engaging journalists and news outlets in order to prompt media coverage on topics of key interest to the government (Eshbaugh, 2011). Information development can be enabled by supporting the government's communication capacity. This is made possible through a culture of disclosure where the government needs to make relevant information available at all times. Further recommendations may include:

- Political "buy in" by leaders who are likely to perceive communicating with the public as a risky engagement. It calls for demonstrating the role of government communication in better governance and development outcomes. This can be accomplished through highlighting success stories and models where government communication has improved effectiveness, responsiveness, and accountability.
- The capacity of government communication can be improved by drawing on the traditional systems of communications that are currently in place and developing professional associations among spokespersons. It is important to have robust coordination among government departments. This shall make methods adopted in communication to be more attractive, citizen-based and focus on peer-to-peer learning as key tools in establishing communication capacity in the sector.
- Lack of journalistic professionalism is an issue that requires consideration, bearing in mind that some countries and governments are reluctant to work with the media due to a lack of trust since they are not

objective while reporting on the perception of the government. Therefore, there is a need to embrace and be intentional in training journalists, a component that will go a long way in improving government communication capacity.

- Government communication is dependent on attitude and aptitude since there are instances where governments fully own, manipulate, and/or intimidate the media in the affected nation. The prevalent culture within the institution or organisation often plays a critical role in determining the government's approach to communication. There is, therefore, a need to be innovative to build trust and reach consensus among key stakeholders, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), media, and government.

Many governments tend to focus on the content of what media presents, looking for a discourse that is skewed in their favour instead of focusing on an ethical analysis of the consequences of their actions (utilitarianism) or the list of their duties (deontological ethics). It is argued that the real foundation of moral life and ethical-political coherence lies in the character of the media agent, whether a public relations practitioner or politician. The responsibility of depicting and dispersing government messages usually falls on the communication professionals. Those working in the public service may belong to a communication department/service within different government bodies at the national, regional, and local levels, depending on government structures. They are the ones with the mandate of ensuring that citizens are informed, hence improving public knowledge about public policy and the way it is created, while promoting bidirectional communication and feedback to journalists and citizens (Lee, 2012).

The twenty-first century is media-dominated because crisis, image, and scandal management have become the government's main concern in many spheres. Living in an era where ubiquitous technology is dominant, no single political leader can afford to be casual about his/her public image anywhere or at any given time without caring about reputation and visibility in the public domain. Notwithstanding the blurring boundaries between public and private acts, no deed in the private sector sphere is left free for the media attention. Hence, the government communication sector has a critical role to play in ensuring that the media agenda is under strict scrutiny to instil controls in the sector.

It is now evident that political consultants, public relations practitioners, press officers, and communication consultants are keen on the state of the political system with the intent to strengthen the government communication professionalism due to the decline in the citizen's confidence in the government and the public institutions and, in due course, the weakening of democracy in many nations across the globe.

It is, however, regrettable that the role of communication professionals in government governed institutions emanates from their association manipulation or spin). "Spin" is a term used in the context of press officers that manipulate journalists and, in the process, end up compromising public opinion on behalf of political parties of the government itself. It is a fact that politicians and their advisors end up as manipulators or liars due to adopting the spin doctor narrative. The growth and expansion of this culture led governments to be compelled to embrace and draw up ethical and deontological codes or codes of conduct for conducting government communication. The world has experienced a new innovative trend towards gathering digital data, computerisation, and automation in day-to-day life. This has, as a result, made privacy to be "a relic of the pre-internet age" (Big Brother Watch, 2018). Hence, it can be described as a life lived in a state of "surveillance realism" where one has to accept things as they are and "not raise questions or contest the state of things, defines our world today". Surveillance has been and will always remain part of the construction of the nation (Dencik, 2015).

Professional values play a critical role in the body of knowledge and professional training and certification, in the definition of a profession. Values are presented in the form of five pillars of ethics (Parsons, 2008), including beneficence or to do well, confidentiality or to respect privacy, non-maleficence or to do no harm, fairness or to be fair and socially responsible, veracity or to tell the truth. Values usually shape the direction of any profession, and, in many instances, members of the general public appraise the profession to verify whether practitioners adhere to the values they subscribe to and defend them at all costs, collectively and as individuals. Codes of conduct have been widely accepted due to the establishment of professional bodies at the national and local government levels as self-regulatory practice guidelines (Gilman, 2005). It is suggested in some quarters that the written code of ethics is the best way to encourage professionals, unlike where they are to relay subjective judgments while internalising the professional values.

Ethics-Based Government Communication

Government communication process across the globe is faced with the ethical impasse or stalemate from the ethical stand of stakeholders in the sector. The dilemma is in relation to conflict informed by personal interests relating to (honour, material drive, career, etc.) and public interest, common good, if it addresses the political expectations of political parties. All stakeholders, including the public relations professionals involved in the government processes and the private organisations, face the same ethical dilemma, having to prioritise the client's interest or those of the public for the "common good". The outbreak of COVID-19 in late 2019 resulted in social and economic crises changing the trend of events in many sectors (Buomprisco et al., 2021). There is a school of thought that believes issues become more complicated with the neoliberal trend towards privatising functions.

Government issues raised in the governmental communication process, including, but not limited to, manipulation of statistics and information, lying and intimidation, go a long way in acting as edges of the government communication process, whether in the private or semi-private sphere of those they govern. Some of the issues bedevilling the government include nepotism, unfair favours, and corruption. For instance, Uganda's freedom of information record is not essentially in a better state despite the current state of things showing a slight departure from the violent past (Oloka, 2001). Situations where people doubt the legitimacy of the content of any kind of communication can lead to media events that disrupt the communication process. Despite individual opinions, ethical shortcomings are frequently observed while managing crisis communication.

Role of Public Sector Communications Ethics in Building Trust Among Citizens

There are numerous definitions that have been generated over the years on trust; a few shall be discussed in this chapter According to Oomsels et al., (2014) trust is associated with morality, and the trustworthiness of a person is equated to honesty, benevolence, friendliness, truthfulness, and high predictability. Kim (2005) explains trust in the context of the psychological state of mind between the parties. In a nutshell, trust generation requires positive enthusiasm for cooperation in each other's interest before engaging in any kind of mutually beneficial relationship (Oomsels et al., 2013).

Nature dictates that men live in a very unsystematic, savage society governed by laws of nature, submitting their natural rights to an authority that had the ultimate source of legitimacy to govern. This is what was referred to as the government at that time. The government's legitimacy was hence derived from the people. On this basis, trust in government works as an underpinning of a legitimate regime. This is informed by the fact that in a system, of oblique democracy, people entrust their sovereignty to the actors of public and political institutions, emphasising that such mandate will be operated in the same way they expect it to function. On the contrary, a lawful government becomes unauthentic when it fails in multifarious assignments of the state.

On the other hand, in the public sector, inequality, unfair treatment, and extensive abuse of the public office for personal gain complicate the functions of public practitioners and corresponding initiations and, as a result, portray them as dysfunctional in the eyes of members of the public. To a great extent, it affects the creation of trust among persons concerned, leading to distrust feelings. The process contributes to distrust in regimes, public institutions, and the government at large. Therefore, it is noteworthy that every form of relationship, whether social, economic, or political, requires trust, since all kinds of transactions between the principal and the agent call for transparency. This is important in Africa and also across the globe. In a study conducted by the Pew Research Center, a significant number of the US citizens had trust in the government based on media information. Standing at more than 70% decades ago, however, this state of affairs took a nosedive, dropping to 19% in 2015 (Pew Research Center, 2021).

One of the main reasons that could have led to the state of decline is apportioned to the public disinterestedness over several issues. One of the reasons is that the nation focuses on issues of national security at the expense of individual citizen's interests and political stability. A good example is where the European countries' recession of 2008 resulted in increased unemployment, and debt leading to the erosion of faith in the governments of the day among the affected lot (Foster & Frieden, 2017). The Asian Tigers were equally affected by the discriminatory bureaucratic set-up of colonial rule, which augmented the practices of corruption in the administration, judiciary, and other branches of government. Malpractices such as unfair favours for patrons, relatives, and friends; kickbacks and persuasion in service attainment became inseparable in those regions' cultures. These had negative implications on the public perception of the government. Governments are hence required to work towards reducing and, if possible, eradicating uncertainty, social complexities and give affirmation that at no point shall any government organ apply adverse selection, moral hazard, hold-up, or any other vulnerabilities in particular exchange that is likely to lead to the exploitation of the vulnerable in society. Therefore, this calls for the adoption of a method of coordination built on assisting to reduce transaction costs by replacing formal contracts with informal networking that is more accessible as opposed to the other type. Government officials are legally responsible for their behaviour and, at the same time, account for their conduct in public. Bodies mandated to manage corruption are responsible for building trust among their stakeholders (Moti, 2013).

The Process of Trust Formulation in Government

Trust exists as a relationship between two actors where one is treated as a trustor or grantor, who grants trust to the other person, while the other party is the trustee or grantee who acquires or accepts trust. Trust is enhanced when the outcome of the interaction between the government and the citizen becomes positive, which in the process builds trustworthiness, a qualitative attribute deserving trust of others. This will eventually lead to a binary relationship geared towards building confidence where one entity is assured of the other party's intent to act beneficially for both parties. Hence, the government is expected to demystify the notion that it cannot be trusted by walking in transparency.

The government is entrusted with an enormous responsibility of handling extensive functions such as an appraisal of government-owned state institutions, and execution of work by technocrats to verify the quality of their services and work. On this premise, the government sometimes finds itself in a precarious position to justify its actions. The government's action or inaction is usually interpreted in line with the perception of the party involved, hence the need to clarify some of the issues by setting the record straight on contentious issues.

Factors That Can Contribute to Trust Building Between the Government and Its Citizens

Trust between society and its government officials, including the elected legislature, is a vital component of a healthy governed society. The socio-demographic variable, such as the degree of variation, is dependent on demographic factors such as age, gender and the level of income. Building trust where social distance exists at times proves to be challenging due to the disparity in many aspects, including the age gap, religious background, gender role difference, economic status, and ethnic heterogeneity (Gleave et al., 2011). It is worth noting that as people advance in age, they tend to be collectively oriented and aware of the development of the welfare state since it is at this stage that they are so dependent on others for support in many aspects. It is on these grounds that they form their understanding of how proper societies are managed. Hence this predictable way of reasoning helps them resolve prior challenges related to dealing with administrative personnel and political issues (Jamil et al., 2015). Education has its place in enhancing the role of the government to its citizenry, since those endowed with some education can conceptualise and analytically draw objective conclusions.

Economic solvency with a social position goes a long way in stimulating trust among members of the public to the government since those who happen to be socially and economically impaired are disadvantaged since they do not stand a chance of being heard by policymakers (Jamil et al., 2015). Intentional intervention by the government of the day to resolve conflicts leading to violence, eradication of gender bias, and class discrimination while affirming representation of all ethnic groups in all sectors of administration not only sends a message that resonates well with the citizenry but also generates faith and trust among the citizens towards the government of the day. Social capital as a norm of reciprocity and connectedness among individual persons and social networks plays a critical role in building a synergy between the government and members of the society where there is mutual understanding. This kind of arrangement contributes to enhanced trustworthiness, hence availing benefits associated with such unions. There are also cases where individuals engage the government to secure a position to assist members of society. Engagement in civic education gives people the confidence to extend their trust to close local and government representatives instead of familiar circles.

Civic engagements allow citizens to express their trust in known circles and close community to the local and national representatives and government as well, even where the latter performs dismally. Improvement in the social capital by the government contributes to optimism among citizens about the government of the day and, as a result, induces trust among the citizenry. Media has a critical role in ensuring that they do not only exhibit professional conduct but also act as a bridge that fosters the relationship between the government and citizens of the nation (USAID, 2016). These notwithstanding, there is a need to build a good political will dealing with corruption and abuse of power that, in many instances, leads to a negative perception among citizens about the government. Citizen's confidence in other key government organs, such as military and religious institutions, sets the ground for civil rights of all, which includes freedom of information. It is the responsibility of the government to appraise the citizens about the prudence of their contributions and be accountable for the same. The government has different organs that act as guardians to others to observe and scrutinise the malfunctions and breaches of conduct that lead to negative perceptions about the government's position regarding any issue.

Interaction and Communication

Communication is a key component in drawing the government to its citizenry, especially where it is done professionally. Interactions occur through social relationships, and regular contracts act as a precursor to trust. Effective communication depends on the media content and how that information is disseminated to its intended audience. This may involve engaging citizens actively and not as passive recipients but ensuring that they are participating through feedback and constructive engagements. This makes it possible for both parties to be beneficial to each other as it goes a long way in enhancing the faith of the incumbents, the public officials, and the government, respectively.

Virtue Ethics and Its Application to Communication

Problems that are ethical in nature are complex and novel; ethical issues are viewed in different contexts, especially where conflicting principles are at stake. Virtue ethics tends to focus on the development of an individual's character who, in most cases, deals with ethical dilemmas. Virtue ethics appreciates that resolving challenges depends on the virtues of those engaged in making such critical decisions. On this basis, one needs to note that virtue ethics focuses on an individual's character as opposed to a particular action. However, when one chooses the kind of actions to carry out, they go a long way in defining the character of that particular person. Virtue ethics proposes that a person can be empowered in the concept of virtues to embrace excellent behaviours or habits associated with a person's way of thinking. This kind of decision makes it possible for the individuals or entities concerned to make optimal choices when an opportunity presents itself.

It is worth noting that virtue ethics plays a critical role in addressing the mistrust between the government and the nation's citizens. Virtue ethics is based on the positive nature of human beings. It takes into account that humans are inclined to recognise excellence in others, especially those they can look up to as role models and, in the process, gain fulfilment from a life lived virtuously. Virtue and habits of excellence are self-reinforcing behaviours that ought to be practised with the objective of self-regulation which the government can leverage to build confidence in the recipients of the information disseminated. These notwithstanding, some hold a contrary opinion, virtue ethics on its own cannot adequately explain or justify the need for people to act in the right way, since, in their opinion, virtue ethics does not essentially account for the intrinsic value of the virtues since it focuses on the agent's success when intuitively a person's ethics should be motivated by the opportunity to develop or better the lives of others (Hurka, 2001). It is hence worth noting that living virtuously is, in most cases, rewarding and contributes to habit or character formation. The two aspects complement each other in many aspects.

The Complementary Role of Virtues and Principles

The Greek philosopher Aristotle's account of practical wisdom is translated as good deliberation and sensitivity to salient features. Those who follow or practise principle-based ethics appreciate the significance of practical wisdom as well. Proper application of the principle calls for situational appreciation, including the capacity to identify, in any given situation, features that are considered morally upright or salient (Hursthouse, 2013). A vituous moral actor directly responds to a situation in a more intelligent way that takes into account all essential factors realistic and applicable and develops through experience and manifests as excellence in deliberation, helping people discern when a situation calls out for virtues (Annas, 2011).

In the opinion of Martin and Lantos (2005), while ethics should be able to draw a distinction between "what is good and what is excellent" virtue ethics is more concerned with the individual's character. The system adopted and the value system in place will always determine the assessment of the level of adherence to the required set standards. An individual's personality comes in strongly when dealing with complex scenarios that are rare but do occur in isolated cases. Therefore, the call of one virtue may lead to a different course of action. For instance, bravery can stimulate approval of human study of a new drug, whereas the virtue of restraint may suggest that more work on animal models would be given priority. On the other hand, the virtue of honesty can, on the contrary, can lead one to critique a proposal involving covert observations of social phenomena, as opposed to the virtue of fairness, holding the position that covert observation is necessary to identify and address societal problems.

Acting virtuously does not, in most cases, imply that a solution to an ethical dilemma has been resolved (Resnik, 2012). Virtue ethics focuses on the importance of developing the habits of the thought life and an individual's character to engage and resolve dilemmas associated with ethics taking into consideration ethical principles.

Perceptual Challenges to Public Sector Communications Ethics

It is now a trend that many institutions have lost confidence in public institutions, making it difficult to sell any government agenda. This is mainly attributed to the fact that government officers have not been consistent in the messaging, prompting the stakeholders concerned to doubt any communication from the government. This hence calls for selling communication that constitutes trust and demystifies any kind of distrust. To regain the trust in communication, there must be those entrusted with the responsibility of changing that narrative through different ways, including, but not limited to, engaging social networks with a message that communicates care and transparency. There is a need to establish and empower those entrusted with selling the positive message to members of the public. For a long time, public sector communication ethics has proved to be a thorn in the government's communication sector, calling for concerted efforts to change the perception.

The choice to participate in the decision-making process and the interactive communication between government employees and its citizens, intended to build trust in government and the public, is quite demanding. This is because many governments are faced with a lot of challenges such as unsatisfactory economic performance, corruption due to dissent from members of the public, bureaucratic stoicism in increasing social needs, breach of checks and balances in government or state-owned organs, less trust among the citizens, and inefficiency in service delivery. These contribute to the justification of the public sector's discontent with the governments' performance. There are cases where distrust is seen as a deterrent to some of the misconduct among government officials to enhance monitoring, control, and vigilance.

Trust dilapidation turns out to be an existing political challenge in this era and, as a result, has, over time, caught the attention of scholars and governments. In the ancient days, men lived in a very disorganised way due to the savage society whose source of governance was natural law, which required one to submit to their natural rights, an authority that held the ultimate source of legitimacy to govern them for their own benefit. Therefore, this implies that the government of the day derived its legitimacy from the citizens. On the contrary, what goes on in most scenarios is the opposite. This scenario calls for governments to try their best to ensure that trust is built between the two sectors. Government trust works as a foundation of a legitimate regime since in an environment of unpredictable democracy; people tend to hand over their democracy to the actors of political institutions, assuming that such mandate shall be operated in the exact way anticipated. On the contrary, any legitimate government works hard to ensure that it is not viewed as spurious, especially when shown up failing multifarious duties such as communication to the public.

In the public domain, some of the issues that contribute to the negative perception of the government function include, but are not limited to, unequal and unfair treatment, extensive abuse by public office, especially for an individual or for private gain, thus making the role of public officials and all the affiliated institutions in doubt. This tampers with the trust that could have existed, if any, among members of the public. These will lead to the erosion of the trust members of the public could have had in the government, hence creating feelings of distrust in the communication process. The process contributes to the persons and institutions concerned abating their confidence in the government of the day and the regime. This is a critical element in any given relationship, be it social, economic, or political. Therefore, there is a need to have consistent engagements between members of the public and the governments of the day to settle disparities emanating from the communication lapses that widen the gap between the government and members of the public.

The practice of public relations as a corporate conscience is indeed part of the self-identity of public relations practitioners who play the role of disseminating information focused on addressing public interest issues (L'Etang, 2003; Bowen, 2008). However, one of the challenges bedevilling the sector is the reliance on unqualified staff and the lack of the requisite tools to accomplish their assignments. Where that is the position, it is inevitable that efficiency challenges will arise. For mutual understanding and trust to exist between the government and members of the public, there is a need to enhance transparency, trustworthy behaviour, and authentic and verifiable representation by those entrusted to do so. Building a positive perception among members of the public regarding communication proves to be a complicated process due to the many ethical challenges posed by a very demanding society in the current dispensation. Some of the problems include, among others, the personal conduct of an individual, especially where it touches on moral inclinations. Failure to hold people accountable for their deeds encourages such characters to continue misbehaving. Building working ethical principles requires theorists to look beyond cases of ethical dilemmas and challenges associated with public relations. There is a need to handle each in its context and avoid adopting similar approaches that may not work well in certain instances. Ethical issues bedevilling the relationship between the government and the public include individual ethical problems and public relations as a profession where the central role of the profession and how it impacts the overall relationship. Nevertheless, extant literature shows that post-apartheid history is marred by local government administration challenges that have contributed to citizens protesting for improved service delivery.

Public relations practitioners are faced with varied challenges, some of which could be alluded to the individual character of the practitioners. Some of the personal shortcomings include accepting or offering bribes and gifts to present communication favouring certain quarters. They are sometimes tempted to divulge information to unexpected quarters, falsify time records, conceal errors and lies, or engage in selective reporting. There is a need to stipulate rules that can help resolve some of the raised challenges. Public relations practitioners face ethical problems in their relationships with their colleagues. Competition among practitioners and selfishness could be contributing factors to widening the gap between one sector against the other, a fact that is the main undoing of the entire communication sector. The issue of gender-based discrimination could be another key issue that requires attention. There is contention on whether journalists and public practitioners are obliged to be wholly transparent and sincere in communicating with the public and media about the government entity. The irony is that journalists anticipate honesty and openness while the public relations practitioners, on the other hand, are of the opinion that they have no duty to or are not in any way obliged to completely truthful about their clients. Other challenges include lack of transparency, holding on to secrecy to avoid misinformation, hype and exaggerations in reporting (Fitzpatrick & Panenchar, 2006).

Secrecy in handling issues affecting the government and the general public leads to negative implications, including: shutting down criticisms and feedback that could improve judgment if embraced, minimisation of chances of reducing the likelihood of good choices, secrecy eliminates accountability to others while increasing the temptation of not being willing to corporate with others. Secrecy is hence inflicting harm on the person and the public that is denied information and the individual or public that keeps the information. Publicity in some quarters can be a solution to the challenges posed by secrecy.

Conclusion

Governments in Africa have a role in ensuring that positive communication ethics is practised by all persons concerned. Public sector communications help in building trust among citizens. When members of the public have confidence in what the communications sector of the government does, it enhances a mutual relationship between the bodies. The prevalent culture within the institution or organisation often plays a critical role in determining the government's approach to communication. Virtue ethics plays a vital role in addressing the mistrust between the government and the nation's citizens. Despite individual opinions, ethical shortcomings are frequently observed in situations that involve managing crisis communication. Communication ethical principles shape the pace and mode of communication. These include honesty, active listening, being non-judgmental, consideration of the recipients' preferred channel of communication, a desire to understand, and respect for privacy and confidentiality.

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10

Conclusion: Effective Public Relations and Brand Communication in Africa's Public Sector

Ogechi Adeola, Eric Kwame Adae, Kojo Kakra Twum, Isaiah Adisa, and Paul Katuse

Introduction

Public sector marketing communications is an intentional, but holistic practice that enhances the performance of public sector institutions through effective public relations and branding. Ensuring the improved performance of public sector institutions has been a topical issue due to the

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increasing need for government institutions and agencies to deliver on their expected responsibilities. Constant disappointment from public sector institutions in Africa has increased the level of distrust towards the government (Adeola, 2022), creating a government-citizen antipathy. Governments in Africa have abundant natural resources that can be utilised to drive the socio-economic development of African nations; and effectively communicating their efforts toward the achievement of this goal is important.

Marketing communications have yielded unprecedented success in private organisations, and adopting similar strategies in public sector institutions could change the narrative. Authors of chapters in this book have considered topics such as public sector branding, marketing communications strategies, branding and marketing communications in public universities, internal marketing communications, public relations in Africa's public sector during a time of crisis, public sector communication ethics, and opportunities in trade fairs and exhibition towards creating relevance for public sector institutions. The suggestions from the contributing authors were engendered by the prevalence of several issues that threaten the effectiveness of public sector institutions. Issues of role conflict, lack of strategic communication practice, poor leadership, traffic congestion, air pollution, and many others have been detailed in Table 10.1.

The practical issues and challenges in public sector institutions in the context of public relations (PR) and branding in Africa's public sector evoked suggestions that should be adopted in the public sector. Some of the identified issues and associated suggestions do not necessarily imply they are contemporary or futuristic, considering they are practices already adopted in the private sector. Private organisations have increasingly adopted digital tools and social media platforms; however, many public sector institutions may be ignorant of their usage in meeting citizens' needs. Public institutions in Africa must keep up with the pace of their

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Table 10.1 Current realities of PR and brand communication in Africa and suggestions from contributing authors

Chapter	Author	Title	Current realities	Suggestions
Chapter 2	Vincent Olusegun Evans Olaniyi	Public Sector Branding in Africa: Some Reflections	• Identification of a brand communication strategy that embraces various industries, ministries, cultures, and the population • Role conflict • Leadership conduct is a major problem of the public sector brand	• Re-branding and repositioning of Africa's public sector must extend beyond mere communication to a comprehensive reconfiguration of the continent's brand • Africa's public sector must engage in an all-inclusive branding
Chapter 3	Nguyen Phong Nguyen Emmanuel Mogaji	Positioning Public University's Brand through Marketing Communications: Practical Recommendations and Implications	• Poor brand reputation and positioning among public universities • Underfunding of public universities • Demand for higher education is greater than supply in public universities	• Carry out a brand audit • Create a strategic plan • Consider creating a new brand identity • Communicate the new identity • Continuously build the brand
Chapter 4	Nguyen Phong Nguyen Emmanuel Mogaji	Marketing Communications Strategies for Public Transport Organisations	• Poor image of public sector transportation system • Increasing car ownership has resulted in multi-faceted problems for governments, including traffic congestion and air pollution	• Managers should identify the core brand value of their organisations • Digital transformation should also be on the agenda of the managers

(*continued*)

Table 10.1 (continued)

Chapter	Author	Title	Current realities	Suggestions
Chapter 5	Gloria Kakrabah-Quarshie Agyapong Daniel Ofori Christina Appiah-Nimo	Internal Marketing Communications in Ghana's Public Sector: Conceptualisations and Extension	• Limited internal marketing communications strategy in the public sector • The need to adopt an integrated marketing approach	• To be able to integrate internal communications effectively, public sector organisations need to understand employee categories • Adopting and implementing internal marketing communications require an organisation-wide change in culture and employees' values
Chapter 6	Joyce Nzulwa Paul Katuse	Public Relations in the Public Sector in Africa	• PR practice still lags in developing countries and specifically in Africa • PR practice in Africa's public sector needs to be documented	• Deliberate initiatives in training • Research and development should be expanded to enhance the profession and embed excellence in theory, policy, and practice
Chapter 7	Emeka Agu Ogechi Adeola Oserere Ibelegbu Ebes Esho	Public Relations in Africa's Public Sector: A Crisis Situational Analysis of South Africa and Nigeria	• Underutilisation of new media • Inadequate public relations funding • Restricted environment for public relations • Neglect of public relations professionals	• The public sector should employ a mix of offline and digital media channels to reach the citizens in the digital age • Adopt appropriate theories such as the situational theory of the publics, the situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), and the systems theory, for effective PR and crisis management in Africa.

Chapter 8	Gloria Kakrabah-Quarshie Agyapong, Osman Light,Kojo Kakra Twum	Trade Fairs and Exhibitions in the Ghanaian Public Sector: Meaning, Relevance, and Requirements	• Poor patronage of trade shows in Ghana • Some identified organisational practices contribute to the poor patronage of public shows • The ideology and value proposition of trade shows have not been fully understood in the public sector	• Organisers of public shows must move from the conventional mindset of sales to a knowledge-based economy • Government must view public shows as a strategic tool for public sector marketing • All strategic stakeholders for a public show must work as a team and not as individual units
Chapter 9	Samuel Wakuloba Wabala	Public Sector Communication Ethics in Africa	• Lack of established value commitment among government agencies and stakeholders • Presence of unethical public sector communication practice	• Ethics play a vital role in addressing the mistrust between the government and a nation's citizens • Communication of ethical principles must be incorporated into public sector communication practice

private sector to experience similar performance. Based on the observed challenges and issues in Africa's public sector institutions, the book's authors have made suggestions detailed in Table 10.1. There are tested marketing communication practices that public sector institutions in Africa can adopt. We believe that these practices, some of which are subsequently discussed, will contribute to more effective PR and marketing communications in public sector institutions in Africa.

Marketing Communication Practices in the Public Sector

Marketing communications in the public sector is influenced by the changing citizen demographics, globalisation, and the rapidly evolving digital landscape. The digital revolution particularly has challenged public sector institutions to be more strategically aligned with technological realities, in order to adapt and effectively communicate their offerings. In addition to the traditional marketing communications, Africa's public sector institutions should incorporate the following contemporary techniques to enhance their communications with citizens and other stakeholders:

i. **Storytelling and marketing communications**
Storytelling is increasingly yielding profitable outcomes for privately owned businesses, and public sector institutions should look in this direction to position the public sector brand in the minds of the consumers. Consumers are becoming more inquisitive; hence, telling historical stories about issues that the citizens would be interested in can be a good strategy to position public sector brands. Public sector institutions must consider storytelling as a form of PR in Africa's public institutions, utilising this technique with both traditional and digital platforms.

ii. **PR and technology**
Technological adoption has increasingly gained attention in the literature and practice. There is, therefore, a need for every sector to consider the adoption of technology in PR activities, including public sector institutions. Public sector institutions can adopt several technological tools in their communication strategies. Public sector

institutions must place social media tools and platforms at the top of their digital PR strategies. Also, technology-driven public relations strategies and tactics must incorporate contemporary concepts such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, augmented reality, and the Internet of Things.

iii. **Influencer marketing**
Celebrity/influencer marketing is also an aspect that government institutions must begin to consider and adopt. Celebrities in Africa can influence social actions and behaviour, which is evident in the #EndSars protest in Nigeria. To create a positive brand image of the public sector, public institutions should engage celebrities that the citizens trust on issues related to trust rebuilding. A similar strategy must be considered in other areas where public attention and cooperation are needed.

iv. **Branding through thought leadership**
Thought leadership is another crucial marketing communication trend that public institutions must consider. Thought leadership is an important PR strategy that allows leaders in the public sector to initiate or encourage thought-engaging conversations on social media through their social media handles to build engagement on topical issues in governance. This will help build the required credibility in the government.

v. **Use of short-form content**
Short-form content, a short-written copy that can be up to 1000 words, can be used to demonstrate thought leadership through government public relations handles. In this case, the government puts out content that will promote engagement with the public on issues that interest the general public. This PR strategy does not necessarily aim to obtain feedback but to build public awareness and position the government brand in the minds of the citizens. These issues are topical in the private sector organisations, and they can also be considered in the public sector to create more product and service awareness, citizen engagement, and enhance the effectiveness of the public sector institution in Africa.

Reimagining the Future of Public Relations in the African Continent

Within the context of general consternation concerning the widening “democratic deficit” (Cronin, 2018), there are stringent moves to reposition public relations and make it more relevant, future-leaning, and future-ready. Among these initiatives are efforts to dissociate public relations from the widespread misperception that the field mainly serves as a tool for pursuing the strategic ends of corporations and their investors, and the view that it mostly has mass manipulation, propaganda, spin-doctoring, deception, and anti-democratic proclivities as its stock-in-trade (Adae, 2019).

Cronin (2018) contends that with the increasing “democratic gap”, reflecting the growing disjuncture between government promises, relative to what they can deliver, through its nascent “social broker” function, public relations, and the other promotional practices are conceptualised as stepping up to the plate and seeking the greater good through commercial speech. Primarily, public relations is described as facilitating the public’s desire for adequate representation, voice, and agency, while managing truth, brokering new forms of public promises, and enhancing sociopolitical ties between corporations and the citizenry in a post-truth epoch by fashioning and normalising new forms of the social contract (Adae, 2019). In the process, this “social broker” role of public relations is deemed to be effectively displacing sociopolitical engagement “to the realm of the commercial where the promises of commercial democracy are growing in significance in proportion to the decline of the promises of the conventional social contract” (Cronin, 2018, p. 107).

Globally, the very essence of public relations has been under careful scrutiny and revision, designed to make it more relevant in pursuing multiple stakeholder interests (Pompper, 2015). Evidently, professional bodies are spearheading this improved rebirth of the field. For instance, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) in 2011 adopted what has become known as a “modern definition of public relations” in profiling the field in more relevant terms as “a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their publics" (Corbett, 2012a; 2012b). This definition clearly underscores the social relevance and moral-ethical spirit of the field (Tilson, 2014).

We applaud these positive developments and keep these in mind in reimagining public relation's future in Africa. Admittedly, the way forward of public relations must surmount diverse stereotypes and misrepresentations concerning the African continent. These perceptions frame the current state of public relations on the continent to "lag behind" with policies that can be described as "lopsided" and "not holistic" because of the observation of the tendency of the field's practice to be focused only on interested parties with booming economic activities. A corollary to this perception is the view that public relations consultants on the African continent are "hired guns" and that the field only serves to perpetuate the view that public relations on the African continent is only designed to pursue the corporate profit-maximising logic and shareholder supremacy (Sriramesh & Verčič, 2007, pp. 356–357).

In modern times, these misperceptions continue to loom largely about the African continent and the state of public relations. Though there are unethical practices in the field, they should not be regarded as the norm. Buckle (1999) argues that most traditional African societies are based on a solid moral ethos of the general welfare, benevolence, magnanimity, reciprocity, good stewardship, and the pursuit of collective rather than individual interests. As the cradle of humanity, traditional African societies display many indigenous philosophies and cultural values that form an ethos that aligns with an uncommonly broad sense of community and other collectivities of multiple stakeholders, including ancestors, future generations, and the biosphere (Tilson, 2014) and the seen and unseen world.

Pre-colonial African societies and prior to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade showed a bedrock of "social responsibility [which] existed many years before it became … fashionable … in America and … Europe" (Buckle, 1999, p. 5). Examples of such traditional philosophies, values, mores, and folkways abound, such as the virtual nonexistence of orphans, the destitute, or the homeless in pre-slavery Ghana, as the extended family and indeed the entire community joined forces to cater for the weak and vulnerable (McKissack & McKissack, 1994).

Given these misrepresentations and the general whitewashing of public relations and most fields, *Afrocentricity* is a paradigm that is a pro-African perspective that valorises the African genius, worldview, and values (Asante, 1987). It argues for the re-centering of African values, voices, and visions in every conceivable phenomenon (see, e.g., Asante, 1987; 1989; 2003) and actively promotes the deliberate analysis from the perspective of the agency of African people and culture (see, e.g., Asante & Dove, 2021; Asante, 2017; Mazama, 2003).

Pompper and Adae (2022) describe *Afrocentric Philosophies of Sustainability* as traditional African philosophies, belief systems, and worldviews that align with contemporary definitions of public relations by resonating with current sustainability tropes and promoting multiple stakeholder interests. These customs and usages are never in short supply on the African continent. These include *Bilchiinsi* of the Dagbani people in northern Ghana (see Mohammed, 2022), *Ma'atic philosophy* (see Asante & Dove, 2021), *Caritas*, *Negritude*, *Ujamaa*, *Consciencism*, *Bantu philosophy*, *Ubuntu*, *the spirit of Harambee*, *Akan philosophy*, *Yoruba epistemology* (see Pompper & Adae, 2022) Ewe/Fon gnosis (see Gbolonyo, 2009), among many other genres of African holism and human-centred mores.

Sankofa philosophy derives from the Akan culture in Ghana, a reference to the need to "go back and fetch it", "return to your past", and "it is not a taboo to go back to retrieve what you have forgotten or lost" (Temple, 2010, p. 127). Sankofa philosophy is seen as a genre of cultural revivalism and a potent cure for the cultural degradation and disarticulations caused by colonialism, slavery, and capitalist exploitation on the African continent (Odamtten & Getz, 2019). It is a clarion call on the people of Africa and all Africanists to reawaken and exercise their agency in rediscovering their traditional wisdom and epistemologies and lead from the front in helping players become more human in the future (Mawere & Mubaya, 2016).

Fortunately, there are growing calls for the adoption of responsible management principles in emerging markets (see, e.g., Adae et al., 2021), which produce such Afrocentric inclusive capitalist ideologies, such as the Ubuntu-rooted *Africapitalism* (Elumelu, 2012). *Africapitalism* is built on unique worldviews which set it apart from neoliberal capitalism, including such special notions of progress and prosperity, parity, harmony, place, and belongingness, and advocates for the greater participation of Africa's private sector in the continent's socio-economic transformation through diverse partnerships (see Amaeshi & Idemudia, 2015).

We are heartened to note that driven by such Afrocentric worldviews, the right environment is being created for public relations to continue to play significant roles in driving desirable outcomes on the African continent. Pratt (1993), for instance, observed the strong influence of public relations professionals in social development. We advocate for a more deliberate rediscovery of such alternative African epistemologies to help drive a more meaningful, forward-leaning, and future-ready field of public relations on the African continent.

The re-infusion of Afrocentric philosophies is not the only trend we foresee in the evolution of public relations on the African continent. Going forward, technology will drive virtually every facet of the field. These will include the use of technology-driven public relations strategies and tactics, including artificial intelligence, virtual reality, augmented reality, and the Internet of Things.

For the field of public relations to be positioned for its pivotal role in the Africa of tomorrow, efforts at professionalism and certification would have to be scaled up. Molleda (2001) conceptualise professionalisation as comprising such factors as the extent to which the field is institutionalised and specialised, studies of the field in institutions of higher learning, the existence of professional associations, existence of ideological and ethical standards, and the effect of formal scientific knowledge, employment, and occupational mobility. It is gratifying to note that more countries on the African continent are taking some humble steps in this direction. More efforts are needed not only to deepen the numbers of public relations institutes and associations on the continent, but that such bodies must be driving professional standards and certification, including promoting the profession among employers.

Public relations professional bodies on the African continent must also lead the charge in growing the global recognition of the contribution of Africa and African public relations scholars and practitioners in research and practice. For instance, there is the need for impactful thought leadership series, special high-profile global events, and research activities of African origin.

With growing competition and demands to justify public relations budgets by showing proof of performance, we see the heightened role of metrics and measurement in the future of public relations on the African continent. A great mindset shift is, however, required for this shift to take place. Client organisations, public relations departments, and consultancies must be more willing to include and commit more resources to formative, process, and evaluation of public relations research.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this volume, public sector marketing communications have been discussed, focusing on public relations and branding concepts with suggestions on how best to practise public relations in Africa. The identified issues and suggestions in this volume are not exhaustive, as digital public relations practices with the associated offerings for public sector institutions must be considered. Public sector institutions remain pivotal to the development of Africa; hence, researchers and stakeholders must continue to seek ways to improve the performance of public sector institutions in Africa.

Stakeholders must benchmark private-owned organisations and adopt the business mindset that has created so much success in the private sector. Government must understand that citizens are its consumers, and they must offer social products and services to satisfy their changing needs with a process devoid of corruption. This will result in an efficient service-oriented public service across the African continent.

Finally, there is a call to use more approaches that will be effective on the African continent. Institutions must view public relations as a way of pursuing strategic ends. This implies the non-use of public relations for mass manipulations, deception, anti-democratic proclivities, and propaganda. Also, the perception that public relations is a tool designed to pursue corporate profit-maximisation must be addressed by following African philosophies that promote effective communications and the interest of multiple stakeholders. Overall, public relations in the continent must adopt responsible management principles.

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