
An Assessment of Public Relations as a Tool for Repositioning the Image of the Nigerian Police Force, a Study of Lagos Command

MRS. OMOLOLA OLUWASOLA

Communication and Media Studies,
Afe Babalola University,
PMB 5454, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria.

Email Address: lollyani@yahoo.com, omolola.oluwasola15@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research work assesses public relations as a tool for repositioning the image of the Nigerian Police Force using the Lagos State police command as a study. Over the years the Nigerian police have experienced public scorn and apathy due to unprofessional conducts, extra judicial killings, lack of commitment amongst others. It becomes necessary therefore to put in place mechanism that will address the inadequacies in the force particularly as it affects public perception of the institution. 200 copies of questionnaires were distributed to two study population. Data obtained from Lagos command police officers, members of the Nigerian public, two crime reporters, deputy police public relations officer, Lagos command and two public relations consultants were analyzed using several analytical techniques to examine relationship among variables under investigation. Findings from the research work showcased that although, the Nigerian Public Relations Department (NPPRD)'s activities is beginning to penetrate into the minds of the public, its current media relations practice must be addressed. Therefore, concerted efforts must still be made to completely erase police negative image. Such effort will achieve unprecedented success when backed by adequate funding by necessary authorities. Based on findings obtained from the study, the researcher therefore recommend that henceforth, police personnel that will be appointed to Man the NPPRD must be certified public relations persons. Also, the discriminatory media relations practice of the PPRO, Lagos command must be urgently addressed. More importantly, the study recommended that adequate funding must be provided to enhance the operations of the police.

Keywords: *public; perception; Nigerian police force; public relations.*

INTRODUCTION

The world over, certain state apparatus/mechanisms are set up by the government to maintain peace, national security, safeguard lives and properties, enforce law and order amongst others. In Nigeria, one of such bodies is the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). The amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914 was a precursor to the formation of the present Nigeria Police Force on April 1, 1930 with headquarters in Lagos.

Traditionally, the police set up since the era of the colonial masters (indirect rule) was saddled with the responsibilities of prevention and investigation of crime, apprehension of crime perpetrators, response to distress call by citizens, enforcement of laws and so on, Alemika(2010). However, it is quite nauseating that the Police have not been able to respond to the security challenges in the country due greatly to certain structural constraints.

The inability of the Nigeria Police Force to deliver to the Nigerian populace the core mandate of the institution coupled with corrupt practices, of course aided partly by some institutional inadequacies led to the poor public image and perception of the Police by Nigerians, home and abroad. Therefore, the public have lost their trust, respect and support for the Police because of the institution's ineffectiveness.

Apparently perturbed by the poor image of the police and the need to keep communication lines open, the late Kam Salem, former Inspector – General of Police (1966 -1975) established the Force Public Relations Department as a statutory function of the force.

It must be pointed out that inspite of creation of Police public relations offices, it was still being practiced by non-professionals because the Nigeria Police Force classifies public relations as a general duty function and it is subsumed under administration department. As such, less public relations impact is felt in Police activities.

Hence, the need arose to, as a matter of urgency devise a professional way of managing the crisis of battered image of the Nigerian Police Force.

Ferguson, Wallace and Chandler (2012:1), posit that when crisis hits an organization, public relations professionals are called upon as communication experts to play key roles in mitigating damage to and maintaining stakeholders confidence in such an organization.

Put succinctly, Aliede (2004: 227) points out that:” it is a professional obligation for public relations practitioners to periodically undertake a critical assessment of the performance, feelings, views and opinions of the people about their organizations and to juxtapose it with the performance and activities of the organizations”.

Keegan, Moriarty and Duncan(1992), public relations are activities that builds images, promote goodwill and understanding between an organization and its stakeholders.

Public relations is a management function. It involves counseling management at all levels in the organization with regards to policy decisions, courses of action and communication, taking into account the company's social and citizenship responsibilities.

Whatever the perspective, the underlining message of every definition still remains building a relationship that must be beneficial to all parties.

It emphasizes strategic planning, policies formulation, effective crisis management which involves overcoming misconceptions and prejudices.

The supreme advantage of using public relations plans and programs for image management and reputation is of course, well-planned effort to make a desirable impact on organization's image. Imperfections arising from using public relations as a method of image management are largely attributed to lack of holistic approach and extreme focus on communication. In essence, every available public relations tool suitable for use for such an organization's image must be used which includes press-releases, advertising, press conference, sponsorships, open door meetings with community or some stakeholders, organizing shows and so on.

Since public relations is about creating favourable image, Massey (2003:16) citing Treadwell and Harrison (1994), signaling the importance of Public Relations points out that organizational image management is important for two reasons; first, images determine stakeholders' cognitive, affective and behavioural responses towards the organization. Second, shared images make possible the interdependent relationships that exist between organizations and stakeholders.

In a nutshell, Image management should be tackled by an holistic public relations approach since the organization's reputation is driven by behavior, communication,

visual appearance, result/performance as well as exogenous factors (such as media messages, gossips, other stakeholders review and appreciation.

The Nigerian Police Force has failed in her statutory duties and functions to the Nigerian citizenry. Institutional inadequacies, numerous media reports on various vices, eye witnesses' accounts, recent photograph and video recordings of some corrupt police officers are all pointers to the insensitivity, inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the force. These, had in no small measure affected the public perception and image of the institution.

As such, the relationship between the Police and the public is generally hostile inspite of the popular saying that the 'Police is your friend'. Consequently, Nigerians' confidence in the police as a law enforcement agent has been eroded over the years.

Therefore, there is serious need to reposition the public perception and image of the Nigerian Police force which can be done through effective professional public relations practice.

The starting point to realize this objective is for the PR consultants to apply the seven stages of organizational image and reputation management identified by Orzekauska and Smaiziem (2007:94) namely:

- i. Backgrounding police image.
- ii. Analyzing internal and external environment: identifying and evaluating stakeholder.
- iii. Determining desirable image for the police.
- iv. Measuring present image of the police.
- v. Identifying police image through research.
- vi. Preparing a plan for reducing gaps between present and desirable image (programs for "curing", shaping or modernizing image).
- vii. Implementing program and evaluating its impact on organization's image and reputation.

In line with the foregoing, this research work attempts to see, in practical terms how Public Relations can be used to re-invent the image and conduct of the Nigerian Police. Specifically, it sought to establish the extent corruption has led to the degeneration of the image of the Nigerian Police, the significance of professional Public Relations expertise execution in rejuvenating the battered image of the Nigerian Police and to establish whether improved Media Relations practice by the Police can improve public perception vis a vis reduction in bad Publicity.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Public Relations researches suffers from lack of theoretical grounding. For instance, the public relations theory book of Carl baton and Vincent Hazlehm (1989) cited in Massey (2003:3) argue that there has been little of public relations research that is theory driven. To him, the diffusion of innovation, systems theory, Agenda Setting theory and so on cited by public relations scholars as theories are organizational, media and/or communication theories borrowed by public relations researchers and teachers in an attempt to explain, predict and manage organization – stakeholders relationships.

There are a number of models that provide good background to public relations practice. To this end, the researcher therefore discusses the models relevant to the subject of inquiry as follows;

- Public Relations Transfer process model
- Two – way symmetrical model and

PUBLIC RELATIONS TRANSFER MODEL

Of utmost significance to this research work is the public relations transfer process model propounded by Frank Jefkins in 1988. According to Nweke (2001:53), the model is an antidote against some negative developments in organisations. Jefkins (1988) cited in Nweke (2001) expatiates that when the negative situation is converted into positive achievements through knowledge, the result predictably, is the primary objective of public relations practice— understanding.

The model explains how practitioners can use and apply public relations tools and strategies towards changing hostility among an organisation's target publics to sympathy so as to be in a better position to convert prejudice into acceptance, develop interest when there is apathy and then, be able to communicate effectively to achieve knowledge where there is ignorance.

From the foregoing, it means that organizations can use Jefkins' public relations transfer process model to win the goodwill of the public so as to reduce crisis. Through communication, the public relations practitioner can convert the four negative attitudes of the public into four positive attitudes – ignorance to knowledge, hostility to sympathy, prejudice to acceptance, apathy to interest.

The transfer process model was considered to be relevant to this study in that, perfection is something humanity cannot attain but, always strive towards. Based on this premise, organisations are bound to experience hostility, apathy and prejudice from members of their publics, and once an organisation experiences any of these, the transfer process model comes in handy.

Two-way Symmetrical Model: This model to its proponents Grunig and Hunt (1984) is one that stresses a two-way information dissemination process between an organization and its publics. In other words, it has a two-way balance communication effect. From an organization to her target audience, from the public back to the company in form of feedback. The organization in turn notes, works on and responds to the publics' feedback and get the action(s) taken across to the public again. Companies that adopt this communication model often act as socially responsible organizations.

METHODOLOGY

For this research work, the researcher adopted survey method using the questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide. This was because the methods provided the researcher the opportunity of sampling adequately, the constituents of the study population.

The study population was of three categories: First, Police officers in Lagos State Command and Second, Nigerian populace from age 18 and above (for survey). The third population included professionals: Public Relations Consultants, Media Personnel and the Lagos command Deputy Police Public Relations Officer(In-depth interview). All the groups are in Lagos State.

From the three study population, a total sample of 205 respondents were drawn from 50 police officers of Lagos Command, 150 members of the Nigerian populace from 18 years and above, 2 Public Relations Consultants, 2 Media Personnel, and the Lagos Command Deputy Police Public Relations Officer. Both the probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used to choose respondents. The researcher used simple random for the Nigerian Populace, cluster for the Nigerian Police force and purposive sampling technique for Crime reporters, Public Relations practitioners and the Lagos State Command Deputy police Public Relations Officer.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Data presented for analysis in this study were elicited from selected respondents [Nigeria Police, Lagos Command, the Nigerian Populace, Public relations practitioners, crime correspondents, and Lagos Command Deputy police public relations officer]. A total of 200 questionnaires, 50 for police officers and 150 for the Nigerian populace were administered and all were retrieved which implies 100% response rate. The views and opinions expressed by respondent were subjected to critical analysis. To achieve this, the retrieved questionnaires were vetted and analyzed with the aid of computer software statistical package for social science (SPSS) (version 17) employing the tools of simple count and Percentages. Also, the entire null hypothesis raised were tested and rejected.

To ease the analysis, Data for the police (such as questionnaire items, pie charts and tables) were labeled A while those of the Nigerian Populace were labeled B. Furthermore, the interviews conducted were transcribed and analyzed with issues of interest extracted to support the findings of the study.

DATA INTERPRETATION

RESEARCH QUESTION ONE:

As an introduction, a question sought to establish to what extent corruption has led to the degeneration of the image of the Nigerian Police? This research question was asked to ascertain respondents' perception of the Nigerian police. The importance of this question is rooted in the fact that other research questions are tied to it.

Respondents' answers and recommendation were similar and varied. Their responses are presented in table 1

Table I sought to establish the perception of the police by both the police and the populace. Table I(A) above show that 29 officers (58 %) of the police sampled claimed the police had good image, 14 or 28% were of the opinion that the force's image is bad, 7 or 14% said it was better while none said it was fair. On the other hand, table I(B) reveals that only 4 or 2.7% of the populace sampled said police's image was good, majority, 107 (71.3%) Nigerians, believed that it was bad, 34 or 22.7% said it was better while 5 or 3.3% said it was fair.

From the above findings, it can be affirmed that the police denied having a bad image. Denial, one of the five macro strategies propounded by (Benoit 1995) is not an ideal image restoration mechanism. The denial by police of the institution's bad image was however contradicted in police officers' responses to other questions.

Comparing responses of the two populations, the researcher observes that there is sharp contrast in the belief of police officers on the institutions image as against what Nigerians believe.

On respondents' opinion of the cause of police bad image, table II (A) shows that 24 police officers (48%) said lack of commitment was that cause of police's bad image, 9 or 18% said it was insensitivity, while 10 or 20% were of the opinion that it was corruption. Seven officers (14%) said it was due to lack of incentives. On the other hand, in table II(B), 13 Nigerians or 8.7% of the populace sampled opine that lack of commitment caused the image problem of the police. 11 or 7.3% said insensitivity, another 30 or 20% said lack of incentives while majority of the respondents totaling 96 or 64% concurred that corruption was the cause of police bad image.

Police officers who denied having bad image in their responses to public perception of the police (in table II (A)) contradicted this stand in their responses to causes of police

bad image. Rather than ignore the question, majority of police officers sampled said lack of commitment was the cause of police bad image while majority of Nigerians attributed the image problem of the force, to corruption.

When asked their independent opinions of the causes of corruption in the force, information gathered from this question was quite revealing and clearly indicative of respondents knowledge of the activities of the police. The above table indicates personal opinions of the causes of corruption in the force. Responses to this question show similarities and variations in opinions of both populations. Both population said lack of adequate welfare, proper training & orientation, the police added demands for returns and irresponsiveness of government while the Nigerian populace further stated greed and lack of good insurance package as causes of corruption in the force.

Evidence in table III(A) shows that 13 members of the force, accounting for 26% said corruption in the force was caused by lack of adequate welfare. 15 Or 30% said it was due to lack of proper training and orientation. Demands for returns was pointed by 34% or 17 members while irresponsiveness of government constituted 5 or 8.7% of police officers' opinion. Also, table III(B) indicates that 28 or 18.7% of respondents agreed that corruption in the force was due to lack of adequate welfare, 41 or 27.3%. said lack of proper training and orientation. Majority of the members of the public 42.7% or 64 said greed was the main cause while 17 or 11.3% opine that it was due to lack of good insurance package.

Suggesting solutions to corruption in the police, police officers and civilians barred their minds on what they considered the way forward. Again, the open-ended question generated similar and diverse opinions from the two study population. Both the public and police officers suggested good training and proper orientation improved welfare (Insurance), adequate funding while the populace also added better remuneration.

For instance, from table iv(A), 14 police officers translating to 28% advocated good training and proper orientation, 26 Or 52% said improved welfare/insurance while another 10 indicating 20% of the police officers sampled suggested adequate funding. Also in table iv(B), 30 of the total number of Nigerians sampled believed good training and proper orientation will tackle corruption. 40 Nigerians, amounting to 26.7% said improved welfare/Insurance, 41 respondents or 27.3% said adequate finding while better remuneration accounted for 26% or 39 respondents' view.

On the whole, for research question one, findings obtained reveal that the police even though denied having a bad image contradicted the denial as evidenced in their reactions to subsequent questions. Meanwhile, the Nigerian populace has poor perception of the image of the police and this, was manifested in their responses to the questions raised. Police officers and the public sampled both attributed corruption in the force to institutional inadequacies but majority of the Nigerian populace were quick to add that greed is actually a key factor while proffering solutions of adequate finding, improved welfare/Insurance, good training & proper orientation and better remunerations to the problem.

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO: To what extent has the Nigerian police public relations department (NPPRD) been able to tackle the poor image of the police?

To ascertain the impact and effectiveness of police public relations efforts on public perception of the institution. Respondents were asked whether public relations can launder police bad image, rate the activities of NPPRD, state avenues through which they get police messages, disclose police public relations tool they find most

convincing and state the extent police public relations tools have been able to erase the institution's bad image.

To ease understanding of the analysis, responses on public relations efforts are categorized and summed up as public relations tools. These are: feature articles/news reports in newspapers and magazines, television programmes, community relations, press conferences addressed by IGP or PPRO, media relations and special events. These public relations tools were broken in the questionnaire to ease respondents' answers.

On respondents' opinion of police PR tools that respondents find more convincing. The table shows that respondents get police PR messages through a number of avenues. For the police, in table v(A), out of the 50 police officers sampled, 10 or 20% of them said they tend to be more convinced by feature articles and news reports in newspapers and magazine, 34% or 17 officers said they believed broadcast programmes, 9 police representing 18% said community relations while 2 or 4% said advertorial, 10 or 20% said press conference and the remaining 2 or 4% chose sponsorship. Reactions of Nigerians presented in table v(B) reveal that 51 members of the public amounting to 34% said they believed feature articles and news reports in newspaper and magazines, 13 or 8.7% of the populace said broadcast programs, community relations accounted for 15.3% or 23 respondents views, advertorial convinced 6 or 4% more while 8 or 5.3% believed sponsorship more. 32.7% or 49 Nigerians found press conference addressed by police IGP & PPRO more convincing. Responses on public relations tools above (apart from advertorial) are all summed up and as such, in all, 48 or 96% of the total number of police officers sampled and 144 or 96% of Nigerian populace sampled hinted that they found police public relations tools highlighted above more convincing. The remaining 4% or 2 officers said, they believed advertorial while 6 or 4% of Nigerians also believed advertorial.

Responding to a question on the extent police PR tools have been able to erase the institution's bad image. Information supplied presented in table vi show some disparities. To start with, in table vi(A), 40 or 80% of police officers said police PR tools have erased poor image to a great extent, 3 or 6% said little extent, 7 or 14% said some extent. Also, out of the 150 Nigerians sampled, 31 respondents translating to 20.7% said police PR effort has to a great extent erased the institution's bad image, 18 or 12.0% said little extent, 21 or 14% respondents said to no extent while the majority, 53.3% or 80 members of the public said some extent.

Findings from the above show that majority of Nigerians chose to some extent which is clearly indicative of the fact that in one way or the other, the populaces are exposed to messages from the police. Thus, it could be inferred that tools employed by PPRD are being registered in the minds of Nigerians.

When asked whether Nigerians opinion of the police has changed due to public relations oriented messages they get from the police, facts gathered from table vii show there is a close gap between those who now share favorable opinion of the police and those who do not. Their reactions presented in table vii represent a seemingly fair assessment of PPRD's activities. For instance, 89 respondents translating to 59.3% said no, while 61 or 40.7% said yes meaning their perception of force's image is changing. The researcher however observed a close gap between the figures above indicating that with improved PR practice, public perception of the Nigerian Police force might improve too.

In a nut shell, for research question two, a careful examination of respondents reactions reveals that responses of most police officers were colorations that do not depict the actual scenario whereas, responses of the populace indicate that PPRDs activities is

gaining some measure of visibility in the minds of the populace but has however not been able to completely tackle the image problem of the force.

RESEARCH QUESTION THREE:

Of what effect are the recent image management strategies (vis-à-vis) dismissal of three allegedly corrupt police officers on the public perception of the police force?

Two questions specifically answer this, relaying their interpretation of the dismissal and the extent to which they believed the sanctions, the two population sampled both concurred that the dismissal of three corrupt police officers in August and September, 2013 were image management and public relations strategies.

This research question was well attended to as it bothers on face saving effort of the police. Data analyzed in table vi(A) disclosed that 32 officers representing 64% of the total number sampled interpreted the sanctions as an attempt to repair police image, 16 or 32% of the force sampled said it was public relations, 2 or 4% said cover up while none of the officers believed it was stage play. It is interesting to note that, in table vi(B) out of the 150 civilians sampled, 62 Nigerians translating to 41.3% opine that the dismissal was image repairs, another 57 or 38% of the populace believed it was public relations effort, 21 or 14% interpreted it to mean cover – up while 10 or 6.7% of the respondents claimed it was stage play.

Since public relations is about image management, options of image repairs and public relations ticked by respondents on their interpretation of the dismissal were summed up to mean PR effort. As such from table vii, a total of 48 respondent accounting for 96% of the force sampled interpreted the sanctions as public relations strategy while a total of 119 Nigerians representing 79.3% were of the view that the dismissal boosted the image of the police. The remaining 2 or 4% of the officer chose cover-up while 21 or 14% and 10 or 6.7% of members of the public believed it was cover-up and stage play respectively. This accounted for the remaining 31 or 20.7% respondents.

While justifying their majority stance that the dismissal was public relations and image management effort, respondents rated the extent to which they believed the sanction.

Again, majority expressed great confidence in the sanction, thereby giving further credence to the

research question. Their ratings are presented in the table vii.

Facts in table viii(A) show that 37 officers indicating 74% said they believed the sanctions to a great extent, 4 or 8% of the officers said to a little extent, 2 or 4% said to no extent while 7 or 14% of the force sampled believed the sanction to some extent. In the same vein, in table viii(B), 53 respondents, which translated to 35.3% of Nigerians sampled expressed great confidence in the sanctions, 37 or 24.7% said little extent, no extent view was shared by 14 or 9.3% while 46 or 30.7% of Nigerian sampled said their believe in the sanctions was to some extent.

From findings presented above, the researcher opine that views of majority of the respondents who believed the sanctions to a great extent and those who believed the sanctions to some extent tend to tilt towards giving some measure of credibility to the image repairs and public relations efforts of the police force.

ANALYSIS OF HYPOTHESES

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Corruption has no negative effect on the image of the Nigeria police	13.314	49	.000	18.2000	15.453	20.947
Nigerian Police public relations department activities will not tackle the image problem of the police	15.408	49	.000	29.1600	25.357	32.963
The recent sanctions of erring police officer (image management strategy) has no effect on public perception	14.446	49	.000	28.7600	24.759	32.761

INTEPRETATION 1

Ho1; Corruption has no negative effect on the image of the Nigeria police.

DECISION RULE

When the calculated value of the test statistic exceeds the critical level (tabulated) at the appropriate level of significance and degree of freedom, we should reject the research hypothesis, the calculated value that is 13.134, which was greater than the value gotten from the tabulated value, which was 9.488 at 0.05 level of significance and freedom.

DECISION

Since the calculated value is 131.34, which is greater than the tabulated value 9.488 of 0.05 level of significance and the degree of freedom are 4. We therefore reject null hypothesis and accept alternative hypothesis that Corruption has negative effect on the image of the Nigeria police.

INTERPRETATION2

Ho2: Nigerian Police public relations department activities will not tackle the image problem of the police.

DECISION RULE

When the calculated value of the test statistic exceeds the critical level (tabulated) at the appropriate level of significance and degree of freedom, we should reject the research hypothesis.

DECISION

The calculated value that was 15.401, is greater than the value gotten from the tabulated value, which is 9.488 at 0.05 level of significance and freedom. We therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that Nigerian Police Public Relations department activities will tackle the image problem of the police.

INTERPRETATION 3

Ho3: The recent sanctions of erring police officer (image management strategy) had no effect on public perception

DECISION

Since the calculated value is 14.446 which is greater than the tabulated value 9.488 of 0.05 level of significance and the degree of freedom are 4. We therefore reject null hypothesis and accept alternative hypothesis that recent sanctions of erring police officer (image management strategy) has positive effect on public perception.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In the course of this study, it was discovered that the Nigerian populace had bad impression of the police due largely to corrupt practices, molestation of the citizenry, inadequate funding, lack of commitment and unprofessional conduct of operatives and other institutional inadequacies.

However, members of the Nigerian police debunked the bad image of the police. This denial, expressed by the Deputy PPRO and Nigerian Police officer is in tandem with the Denial Image Management Strategy of Benoit (1995). It must however be noted that denial, according to Benoit is not a desirable method in that such denials will not give room to effective corrective strategies.

This denial could not be sustained as their responses to other question contradicted their views that the image of the police is good. Rather than ignore the question, majority of police officers sampled said lack of commitment was the cause of police bad image while majority of Nigerians attributed the image problem of the force, to corruption.

Moreover, the Guardian Newspaper crime reporter on his own part believed that NPPRD is trying in its capacity to enthrone a favorable image of the force. He however added that curing the image problem will start from addressing the institutional inadequacies of poor funding and zero motivation of Police officers. This view was supported by his NAN counterpart when he said by virtue of his exposure to the PPRD, the government must really be up and doing in a bid to ensure good public perception of the police. This way, the effectiveness of PPRD's activities will manifest. As such, Police Public Relations programme, as a joint effort will start from the individual police irrespective of the cadre, being good ambassadors of the force.

In a nutshell, data gathered in the course of this research work proved that there is improved confidence in the force especially with the recent sanctions which Nigerians see as image repairs/ public relations effort. This PR move must however be sustained with adequate funding and professional expertise execution. The overall success of using public relations to rejuvenate police image is also largely hinged on a total re-direction and re-orientation of individual police officers as they all (irrespective of rank) project themselves as good ambassadors of the institution.

CONCLUSION

The golden rule of effective policing is human element as reflected in the police code of conduct launched recently. PPRO must see good public relations as an on-going process, which needs persistence, being positive and continuously looking for opportunities to position the force favorably and encourage trust in the long run. To be candid, applying public relations principles to restore police image requires visible policing which involves four key elements namely: adequate funding, preparedness, addressing institutional inadequacies and a changed disposition of officers to unprofessional conducts and the Nigerian populace. This, when instituted through sustainable and strategic public relations practices will definitely endear the police to members of the public thereby reducing or erasing all together the bad image of the force.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawn from facts gathered, the study recommends that:

- **Adequate funding and correction of institutional inadequacies.**
To achieve commendable success in the image laundering process of the police, government must be ready to fund forces' activities adequately including Public Relations and other operational activities. This way, PR efforts whether by the NPPRD or public relations consultants will be felt in the image restoration effort.
- **Empowerment of the citizenry to perform oversight functions on the police.**
The recent dismissals of corrupt officers from the force were engineered by the video tapes recorded by members of the public and blotted by the social media. Such practice should be encouraged. This way, the populace will perform oversight function and report erring officers in addition to the existing PCRC, PPCB and the human rights section of the police. Empowering the populace to perform oversight functions must not be abused however so that the police will not again be subjected to intimidation.
- **Training, re-orientation and sustained disciplinary actions for erring officers.**
Human beings make up the institution, as such; concerted effort should be made to invest in capacity development of police officers. This should further extend to re-orientation of police officers about professional conducts in the discharge of their duties. In addition, appropriate sanctions such as was meted on allegedly corrupt officials dismissed in August and September 2013 should be maintained and sustained. This way, the bad eggs in the force will be gradually checked or eliminated. Police officers must be trained to individually conduct themselves as good image makers of the institution.
- **Improved relationship with the public(Community Relations)**
Efforts at maintaining police public friendly relationship must be sustained since neither of the two parties can do without each other.

Since research is cumulative, it is suggested that future researchers may attempt to study the significance of public relations in restoring confidence in the weak image of a manufacturing company.

REFERENCES

- Alemika, E.E. (2010). Repositioning the Nigerian Police to meet the Challenges of Policing a Democratic Society in the Twenty-first Century and Beyond. Paper presented at the Biennial Retreat of the police service commission held in AkwaIbom, Uyo.
- Aliede, J.E. (2004) "Public Relations, Nigeria's Democratic Culture and Conflict Management" in Nwosu, I.E. (ed) Communication, media and conflict management in Nigeria. Enugu ACCE (Nigeria chapter) and Prime Targets Limited.
- Benoit, W.L. (1995) Account Excuses and Apologies: A theory of image restoration strategies, Suny Press, Albanj.
- Ferguson, O.P. Wallace, J.D. and Chandler, R.C., (2012) "Rehabilitating your Organziation's Image: Public Relations Professional Perceptions of the Effectiveness and Ethicality of Image Reprint Strategies in Crisis Situations." Public Relations society of America journal Vol. 6, No. 1

- Grunning, J. and Hunt, T. (1984). *Managing Public Relations* New York, Holt Rinehart and Winston Incorporated.
- Keegan, W., Moriarty, S. and Duncan T. (1992) *Marketing* Annotated instructor's edition. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc.
- Massey, J.E. (2003) "A theory of Organization Image Management: Antecedents, Processes and Outcome." Paper presented at the International Academy of Business Disciplines Annual conference, Orlando retrieved October 23, 2013 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/theoryof_organizational_image.
- Nweke, O. (2001). *Public Relations Practices and Concept*, Enugu. Harison Publishers.
- Orzekauskas, P. and Smaizieni, I. (2007) *Public Image and Reputation Management :Retrospective and Actualities* retrieved October 23, 2013 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/public_image
- The Punch (2005) January 26.

TABLES

TABLE I: RESPONDENTS VIEWS OF THE IMAGE OF THE POLICE

A(POLICE)				B(CIVILIANS)			
OPTI ON	FREQU ENCY	VALI D PERC ENT	CUMULA TIVE PERCEN T	OPTI ON	FREQU ENCY	VALI D PERC ENT	CUMULA TIVE PERCEN T
Good	29	58.0	58.0	Good	4	2.7	2.7
Bad	14	28.0	86.0	Bad	107	71.3	74.0
Better	7	14	100	Better	34	22.7	96.7
Fair	-	-		Fair	5	3.3	100
Total	50			Total	150		

SOURCE: field survey, 2013

TABLE II: CAUSES OF POLICE BAD IMAGE

A (POLICE)				B(CIVILIANS)			
Option	Frequ ency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Option	Frequen cy	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Lack of commitment	24	48	48	Lack of Commitment	13	7.3	7.3
Insensitivity	9	18.0	66.0	Insensitivity	11	8.7	16.0
Corruption	10	20.0	86.0	Corruption	96	64.0	80.0
Lack of Incentives	7	14.0	100	Lack of Incentives	30	20.0	100
Total	50		100	Total	150		

SOURCE: field survey, 2013

TABLE III: RESPONDENTS INDEPENDENT OPINION OF THE MAIN CAUSE OF CORRUPTION IN THE NIGERIAN POLICE (OPEN-ENDED)

A(POLICE)				B(CIVILIANS)			
Options	Frequ ency	Valid Percent	Cumula tive Percent	Options	Frequ ency	Valid Percent	Cumula tive Percent
Lack of adequate welfare	13	26.0	26.0	Lack of adequate welfare	28	18.7	18.7
Lack of proper training and orientation	15	30	56	Lack of proper training and orientation	41	27.3	46.0
Demand for	17	34	90	Greed	64	42.7	88.7

returns							
Irresponsiveness of Government	5	10	100	Lack of good insurance package	17	11.3	100.0
Total	50			Total	150		100.0

SOURCE: field survey, 2013

TABLE IV: RESPONDENTS SUGGESTIONS OF SOLUTION TO CORRUPTION(OPEN ENDED)

A(POLICE)				B(CIVILIANS)			
Options	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Options	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Good training & proper orientation	14	28.0	28.0	Good training and proper orientation	30	20.0	20.0
Improved welfare & Insurance	26	52.0	80.0	Improved welfare & Insurance	40	26.7	46.7
Adequate funding	10	20.0	100.0	Adequate funding	41	27.3	74.0
				Better Remuneration	39	26.0	100.0
Total	50			Total	150		

SOURCE: field survey, 2013

TABLE V: POLICE PR TOOLS THAT RESPONDENTS FIND MORE CONVINCING

A (POLICE)				B (CIVILIANS)			
Option	Frequency	Valid percent	Cumulative percent	Option	Frequency	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Features articles/News reports in Newspapers /magazine	10	20.0	20.0	Features articles/News reports in Newspapers /magazine	51	34.0	34.0
Sponsorship	2	4	24.0	Sponsorship	8	5.3	39.3

Advertorial	2	4	28.0	Advertorial	6	4.0	43.2
Broadcast programs	17	34.0	62.0	Broadcast Programs	13	8.7	52.0
Community relations	9	18.0	80.0	Community relations	23	15.3	67.3
Press conferences addressed by either the IGP or PPRO	10	20.0	100.0	Press conferences addressed by either the IGP or PPRO	49	32.7	100.0
Total	50			Total	150		

SOURCE: field survey, 2013

**TABLE VI:
EXTENT TO WHICH POLICE PR TOOLS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ERASE
POLICE BAD IMAGE**

A(POLICE)				B(CIVILIANS)			
Option	Frequenc y	Valid perce nt	Cumulativ e frequency	Option	Frequen cy	Valid Percen t	Cumula tive Freque ncy
Great extent	40	80.0	80.0	Great extent	31	20.7	20.7
Little extent	3	6.0	86.0	Little extent	18	12.0	33.7
No extent	-	-		No extent	21	14.0	47.7
Some extent	7	14.0	100.0	Some extent	80	53.3	100.0
Total	50			Total	150		

SOURCE: field survey, 2013

**TABLE VII:
HAS RESPONDENTS OPINION OF THE POLICE CHANGED DUE TO PR
MESSAGES THEY GET FROM THEM?(NIGERIAN POPULACE ONLY)**

Option	Frequency	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Yes	61	40.7	40.7
No	89	59.3	100.0
Total	150		

SOURCE: field survey, 2013

TABLE VIII
RESPONDENTS INTERPRETATION OF THE RECENT DISMISSAL OF THREE
ALLEGEDLY CORRUPT POLICE OFFICERS?

A(POLICE)				B(CIVILIANS)			
Option	Freque ncy	Valid percent	Cumulat ive frequenc y	Option	Freque ncy	Valid percent	Cumulative frequency
Image repair	32	64.0	64.0	Image repair	62	41.3	41.3
Public relations	16	32.0	96.0	Public relations	57	38.0	79.3
Cover up	2	40	100	Cover up	21	14.0	93.3
Stage play	-	-	-	Stage play	10	6.7	100
Total	50			Total	150		

SOURCE: field survey, 2013

TABLE VIII:
EXTENTS TO WHICH RESPONDENTS BELIEVE THE SANCTIONS

A (POLICE)				B (CIVILIANS)			
Option	Freque ncy	Valid percent	Cumulat ive Percent	Option	Freque ncy	Valid percent	Cumulati ve Percent
Great extent	37	74.0	74.0	Great extent	53	35.3	35.3
Little extent	4	8.0	82.0	Little extent	37	24.7	6.0
No extent	2	4.0	86.0	No extent	14	9.3	69.3
Some extent	7	14.0	100.0	Some extent	46	30.7	100.0
Total	50			Total	150		

SOURCE: field survey, 2013