



# Communication: A Game-Changer for The Nigerian Brand

BY

**SUNDAY EZE IKEOKWU**

**Masters Student**

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ADVERTISING,  
FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES,  
UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT,  
CHObA, PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA.

## ABSTRACT

Communication plays a major role in promoting Direct Investment fostered by rebranding organizations' corporate image. Communication as gateway and economic engine fuels change for new opportunities and resources, and often described as live-wire of human society and potent force in bringing organizational efficiency and influencing group actions. Businesses and investments are conducted both locally and internationally through communication. Adequate change in the mode of connecting and conducting businesses with investors begins a lasting change chain in business strategies. The issue of direct investment has become part of the public debate about the global perception on many organizations, and how these organizations are depicted in the international scenes. Therefore, this study examines the role of communication as a game-changer for the Nigerian brand. The Social Judgment Theory and Development Media Theory provided the theoretical framework, while the survey research design was adopted for the investigation that used a set of questionnaire as instrument for data collection, with a sample size one hundred (100). Data were collected using the purposive and convenience sampling techniques. Data gathered were analyzed using simple percentages and frequency table. The findings suggest effective Public Diplomacy, Nigeria's image, and its ability to attract Direct Investment. It also pointed out that lack of good governance, transparency, corruption, failed leadership and others remain critical problems associated with Nigeria's current international image. The paper, therefore, recommends among others the strengthening of good governance and public diplomacy as a means of improving Nigeria's international reputation.

**Keywords: Communication, Game-changer, Organization, Brand.**

## Introduction

Communication as a hidden foundation upon which all activities of mankind rests, implies communicating with ease and comprehension on the part of the listener. The best avenue to achieve this is to select a language that seems to be generally comprehensible to a vast majority. Asadu and Usua (2011) averred that, for communication to effectively take place, both parties must be in the same frame of reference or the communication will mean noise. One of the greatest challenges man ever faced on earth is the need to effectively communicate his thoughts, feelings, ideas, opinions, as initially intended, without being misunderstood. This particular problem becomes more complex when man's need increases as the speech community where he belongs get even more complex as a result of an increasing social contact (information dissemination) and interaction with other people from different speech communities. Asadu and Usua (2011) explained that, as human society grows, the need for communication also increases and becomes more complex.

According to Kunle (2005), communication is the process by which an idea is transferred from a source to a receiver with the intention of changing his or her behavior. Therefore, media and public relations experts, knowing the importance of communication skills and strategies should endeavor to sensitize those in the corridor of power to acquire the skills that will enhance peace, harmony and national development in Nigeria, which in turn will bring about foreign investments and boost the country's economy. Communication plays a major role in promoting direct foreign investment, fostered by rebranding organization's corporate image. Communication as gateway and socio-economic engine, fuels change for new opportunities and resources, and often described as live-wire of human society and potent force in bringing organizational efficiency and influencing group actions. Businesses and investments are conducted both locally and internationally through communication, and adequate change in the mode of connecting and conducting businesses with investors begins a lasting change chain in business strategies. The issue of direct investment has become part of the public debate as regards to global perception of many nations and organizations, and how these organizations and nations are depicted in the international scenes.

## **Aim and objectives of the study**

The aim of this study is to evaluate the role of communication in setting the agenda for direct foreign investment. Whereas the specific objectives are:

- a. to ascertain the positive influences of effective communication in changing the Nigerian brand;
- b. to determine the negative impacts of ineffective communication in changing the Nigerian brand;
- c. to find out the strategies to be used to improve effective communication to change the Nigerian Brand.

## **Research questions**

- a. What are the positive influences of effective communication in changing the Nigerian brand?
- b. What are the negative impacts of ineffective communication in changing the Nigerian brand?
- c. What strategies can be used to improve effective communication to change the Nigerian brand?

## **Theoretical framework**

The Social Judgment and Development Media Theories were used as anchors for this study.

### **a. The Social Judgment Theory**

This theory was developed by Sherif Muzafer, Carl Hovland and Sherif Carolyn in 1961. Social judgment theory popularly called the SJT, is a persuasion theory always applied to attitude change. The theory shows the internal decision-making processes a person goes through when confronted with persuasive messages intended to cause behavior change. Nwachukwu, Asak and Asadu (2013). According to Smith, Atkin, Martell, Allen & Hembroff (2006), the Social judgement theory is based on the premise that the effect of a persuasive message on a particular issue depends on the way that the receiver evaluates the position that the message puts forth (O'Keefe, 1990). Sherif (1965) claimed that an individual's attitude toward a particular issue or behavior is not adequately reflected by a single alternative or position among those available. Research in the SJT tradition determines the limits of the position of the receiver "relative to the bounds of possible alternatives defined by the

extreme positions on the issue’’, in terms of the latitudes of acceptance, non-commitment, and rejection.

In SJT, each receiver judges the range of alternatives individually, and then these judgments can be combined “to reflect the consensus, defined by social norms, prevailing among given people’’. Thus, SJT allows for delineating group patterns that emerge from perceptions of individuals. Additionally, SJT claims that the members of the population in question are also affected by these patterns. The members develop and adopt a variety of practices, customs, traditions, and definitions that mark off latitudes for acceptable attitudes and behavior and for objectionable attitudes and behavior among members in various matters of consequence to the group. Furthermore, Nwachukwu, Asak and Asadu (2013) explains that, with the social judgment theory, people tend to accept messages that are very close to their attitude very easily than the ones that are wide apart. In this case of communication, organizations will greatly utilize the importance of communication for national and foreign benefits if the awareness is very close to them and consistent, but on the other hand, they will reject the idea which the organization or nation is trying to portray, if there is no sufficient and consistent communication for awareness to cause a change of behavior within them.

#### **b. Development Media Theory**

The development media theory seeks to address the imbalance in development and information flow of third world countries and provide solutions to the technological problems facing them. The theory came into being as the outcome of the recognition that the press or the media in developing countries have greater and wider responsibilities to their society beyond the traditional, universally recognized role of the media. The theory was propounded by Dennis McQuail in 1987. According to him, there is need for a more positive version of media theory which focuses on national developmental goals as well as the need for autonomy and solidarity with other nations in a similar situation across the globe.

## The major assumptions of this theory

The media should accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with best practice international standards and nationally established policy. Freedom of the media should be open to economic priorities and development needs of the society. The media should give priority in their content to national culture and languages, The media should give priority in news and information to links with other developing countries, which are close geographically, culturally or politically. Journalists and other media workers have responsibilities as well as freedoms in their information gathering and dissemination tasks, In the interest of development ends, the state has a right to intervene in, or restrict media operation, and devices and direct control can be justified in line with the rule of law .

This theory arose out of the concern to describe and prescribe the norms of journalism practice in the developing world, as the earlier four normative theories of the press by Seibert, Peterson and Schramm's (1956) authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility and soviet communist have limited application and potential benefits for these developing countries. The normative element of this emerging development theory 'are' especially, opposed to dependency and foreign domination and to arbitrary authoritarianism. They are positive uses of the media in national development, for the autonomy and cultural identity of the particular national society. The developing media theory was postulated by Dennis McQuail to favor grassroots involvement and participative communication.

McQuail lists the main principles of the theory thus:

‘Media should accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy; freedom of the media should be opened to restriction according to Economic priorities and development needs of society; media should give priority in the news and information to links with other developing policies and priority of the state which are close geographically, culturally, politically and otherwise. Journalists and other media workers have responsibilities as well as freedom in their information-gathering and dissemination tasks; and in conclusion, he stressed the interest of development ends, he also stated that the state has the right to intervene in, or restrict, media operations, and devices of censorship, subsidy and direct control can be justified’ (McQuail, 1987).

Communication can help to design projects that take properly into account the perception and capacities of the intended beneficiaries, thereby gaining their participation; it shifts emphasis from 'top-down' approaches to bottom-up approaches, it brings about participation of people in situation analysis, development planning and management, and decision-making. Secondly, development communication can help to mobilize people for development action and promote better co-ordination and linkages.; it can spread knowledge of mutually decided proposals, it can spread knowledge of successful development experience, it can ensure that people are linked to each other by information, and to sources of learning and education, sources of planning and decision-making and it can organize and manage systems to promote exchange of information horizontally and vertically.

Thirdly, communication can be vitally useful in improving the reach and impact of training and extension in rural areas, whether in training of extensions and other development agents in the field, or in the passing of information to rural people. Development communication is consistent with values central to development including personal or social transformation, purposefulness, participation, responsibility, and education. The development media is said to be social transformation and development. The fulfillment of basic needs such as the individual becomes an active partner and not a mere object of communication, the variety of messages exchanged increased and the extent and quality of sole representation or participation in communication is augmented. This approach which is in line with "New World Information and Communication Order" (NWICO), thus postulates that bottom-up approach incorporate the element of participatory communication which is at the heart of developmental journalism: participatory communication takes into consideration the views and input of the receiver of information. It initiates an inquiry process leading to sharpened consciousness of social, human and political development... participation is the key element to awakening people's desire to assess their problems critically, to ask why these problems occur and how to overcome them using their own wisdom, experience and knowledge. According to the basic assumption of the theory, media should adopt and carry out development tasks, part of the ways this can be achieved is through involvement in the process of development and through domestic

(local) broadcasting, meaning that developmental issues can be brought closer to the people to propel societal and subsequently national development through foreign engagements.

## **Review of literature**

### **Communication: an overview**

The term “communication” comes from the Latin word “communicare” which means “to share”. Communication is a major task which every human must carry out so as to exist and run his day-to-day activities (Ndimele & Innocent, 2009). Communication is the passing of information, feelings and emotions from one person to another. According to Omego and Nwachukwu (2013) it is a chain of events in which the message is a link. Communication is the live-wire of every human society, permeates every sphere of the human existence, for without it there cannot be any form of socialization. The effects of communication often depend on how much it threatens the inner consistency of beliefs and attitudes which everyone tries to preserve. The role of communication in the society is crucial to the functioning and organizational efficiency and that the central purpose of communication is not only to effect a change in the behaviour of the addressee, but also influence group actions (Ndimele, 2006). Communication touches every aspect of human existence, from one point to the next. It is a major aspect of human existence and interactions; whether for the purpose of passing messages or for interpersonal relationships or for a much larger audience through the broadcast media.

The aim of every communication is to communicate with ease and comprehension on the part of the listener(s). The best avenue to achieve this is to select a medium and language that best suits comprehension to the vast majority connected in the broadcast media. One of the greatest challenges man has ever had to face on earth is the need to effectively communicate his thoughts, feelings, ideas, opinions (as initially intended) to his fellow human beings without being misunderstood by them. This particular problem becomes more complex when man’s need increases as the speech community where he belongs get even more complex as a result of an increasing social contact (information dissemination) and interaction with otherpeople from different speech communities. Asadu and Usua

(2011) also state that, “As human society grows, the need for communication also increases and becomes more complex.”

According to Omego and Nwachukwu (2013), for communication to be effective, the sender and the receiver must have a shared meaning. Communication can be effective if what the speaker intends to communicate to the receiver is understood exactly the way he intends it. Communication does not just entail giving out message but, also understanding it the way the message is communicated. According to Ndimele and Innocent (2016), to live is to communicate. According to Victoria (2020), man has the great ability to communicate and create. People's ability to interrelate through ideas, the ability to record thoughts and information, and the way each individual or group has to deal with other groups through a communicative process is fundamental to the whole nature of social relationships of the human species. Communications are basic to the daily existence of every modern individual and every organization, whatever it's size. Every organization needs to know what is happening to the groups that influence it and how to reach the various audiences it deals with (Victoria, 2020). Humans communicate to make important ideas common knowledge such as foreign investments, which could be in any form, ranging from mechanise agriculture , agro food production chain , tourism to oil production , exploration and exportation etc.

### **Direct Investment: An overview**

According to the IMF Statistics Department (2015), Direct investment involves both the initial transaction between the two entities and all subsequent transactions between the two entities and all subsequent transactions between the two entities and between fellow enterprises, both incorporated and unincorporated. Direct Investment arises when an investor resident in one economy makes an investment that gives control or a significant degree of influence on the management of an enterprise that is resident in another economy. All enterprises that are under the control or influence of the same direct investor are considered to be in a direct investment relationship. According to Obeta (2009), an entity or group of related entities that is able to exercise control or influence over another entity resident in another economy is called the “Direct Investor”.

Entity subject to control or influence is called the “Direct Investment Enterprise”. In some cases, an entity may be both a Direct Investor (DI) and a Direct Investment Enterprise (DIE). Control and /or influence may be direct or indirect, as described in the Framework for Direct Investment (FDI) . Framework direct investment relationship (FDIR ) provides criteria for determining whether cross-border ownership results in an FDI , cross-border ownership results in an FDI relationship, based on control and/or influence relationships. Direct investment enterprises can be either directly or indirectly owned by the direct investor, and comprise branches, subsidiaries and associates. Direct investment enterprises that are in a direct investment relationship with a direct investor are also in pp a direct investment relationship with each other (Obeta, 2020).

### **Theory and Concept of Foreign Direct Investment**

Okomoh (2004:5) fully captures the concept of FDI thus:

The United States Department of Commerce defines Foreign Direct Investment to include all foreign business organizations in which a US citizen, organization or affiliated, group runs an interest of 10% or more. This definition is limited in scope because It considers the share capital perspective of FDI in isolation of any consideration for the corporate control aspects. The United Nations on the other hand has defined it as investment , as enterprise located in one country but "effectively controlled" by residents of another country. This definition not only considers FDI from an investment point of view but also equally defines the status of corporate control.

Foreign direct investment is not simply or even primarily an international transfer of capital but rather, the extension of an enterprise from its home country into foreign host country. By this enterprise extension philosophy, foreign direct investments bring in their trail, flow of capital, technology, entrepreneurial skills and even best management practices to the host economy where they are combined with the local factors in the production of goods and services. Foreign direct investments equally enhance human capital development and stimulate competition in host countries as the enterprise development therein by the transnational (TNC's) and multinational (MNCs) corporation spurs businesses in the host country.

Generally, FDI enhances the profile of host country trade and investment and as such makes it's (host country) more globalized or globally competitive. Furthermore, notes OECD (2002), FOI can contribute to gross domestic product (GDP), gross fixed capital formation (i.e. total investment in a host economy) and balance of payments. And importantly too, FDI according to United Nations Millennium and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Appraisals from Asiedu (2005) would help Africa in achieving its MDGs of reducing poverty rates in the continent by half in 2015 as 48% of the populations live on less than one dollar a day as compared with the 4% for Eastern and Central Europe and 2% for the Middle East. From the above it is evidently ironical and paradoxical to note that FDI which, should be a tool for economic development and poverty reduction especially for hunger-prone countries like Nigeria (which the UN report shows, 70% of its citizens living in poverty), which ought to benefit more from the global investment flows becomes the least benefited as the the hunger and poverty countinues deepening. This again brings to sharp focus as Gardiner (2000) explained that the rationality of the rebranding campaign which, at least, should be able to erase the negative perception of the country by the international

investors so as to adequately sign them in into the country's investment profile. Only when Nigeria is able to harness the benefits of FDI through a sustainable foreign investment flow would the journey to Nigeria's true growth and development have commenced. This is the challenge of the current rebranding campaign of Nigeria.

### **Significance of FDI to Developing Countries**

Generally speaking, Gardiner (2000) declares that, foreign direct investments are targeted at developing countries or least developed countries (LDCs) which is why UNCTAD was originally established. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is an agency of the United Nations with the mandate of harnessing foreign direct investments from multinational (MNCs) and transnational corporations (TNCs) for the benefit of developing or least developed countries. Therefore, Agbese (2009) opines that FDIs obviously have direct bearing on the growth

and development of mainly less developed countries like Nigeria. The overall benefits or significance of foreign direct investment for developing country economics are well documented. Jacques (2000) further states that, given the appropriate host country policies and a basic level of development, a preponderance of studies shows that foreign direct investment triggers technology spillovers, assists human capital formation, contributes to international trade integration, helps create a competitive business environment and enhances enterprise development. All these contribute to higher economic growth, which is the most potent tool for alleviating poverty in developing countries (Agbese, 2009).

## Methodology

The survey research design was adopted for the investigation. This is because survey typically focuses on people and the necessary information about them, e.g. opinions, beliefs, attitudes, motivations and behaviours. The universe of the study was segmented along the line of male and female adults. This means that, the both gender formed the population of the study from Port Harcourt Metropolis. The survey of this study consists of residents of Port Harcourt metropolis, which is about three million, three hundred and twenty-five thousand (3,325, 000). A sample size of three hundred and eighty-four (384) was used for the study, determined by the Philip Meyer's population template. The researcher used one hundred copies of the questionnaire as instrument for data collection. Data were collected using the purposive and convenience sampling techniques. Data gathered were analyzed using simple percentages and frequency table.

## Discussion of findings:

**Table 1: Responses on the positive influences of effective communication in changing the Nigerian brand**

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Information free-flow	18	18
Mutual harmony	31	31
Increased productivity	19	19
Foreign investments	32	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above shows that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that effective communication brings about foreign investments, followed by those who agree that it brings about mutual harmony.

The respondents were of the opinions that ability to communicate is the best feature of successful rebranding of the Nigerian brand through foreign investments. The second

category were of the opinion that mutual harmony between countries will be fostered by effective communication. Furthermore, effective communication brings about increased productivity and a free flow of information from the local media and international media. This means that, proper communication of the Nigeria's image by the press will bring about direct foreign investments into Nigeria through rebranding of the Nigeria(n) image.

**Table 2: Responses on the negative impacts of effective communication in changing the Nigerian brand**

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Corruption	21	21
Crisis and conflicts	17	17
Misinformation	18	18
Failed leadership	33	33
Inadequate governance	22	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above shows that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that one of the negative impacts of ineffective communication is failed leadership. Followed by the category which stated that inadequate governance and corruption are also products of ineffective communication in changing the Nigeria(n) brand.

The respondents stated that one of the negative impacts of ineffective communication is that, it shows how inadequate the governing structure of the country is. It shows the failed leadership system, depicts corruption, showcases misinformation on both the local and international scene, and then

breed crisis and conflicts in the country, which contribute negatively to the nation's economy, thereby discouraging foreign investment.

**Table 3: Responses on strategies to be used to improve effective communication in changing the Nigerian brand**

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Good leadership</i>	27	27
<i>Public diplomacy</i>	45	45
<i>Proper information</i>	28	28
<i>Total</i>	100	100

The table above shows that majority of the respondents agree that public diplomacy is the best strategy for changing the Nigerian international reputation, followed by those who are of the opinion that proper information is a good strategy in changing the Nigeria(n) brand.

On this account, respondents opined that there are preferred strategies which can be employed to bring about improvement effective communication in the change for a rebranded Nigeria. These they stated that proper information on the part of the Nigerian media, public diplomacy from the government and good leadership from leaders in all spheres of affairs will lead to a better international reputation for Nigeria and a good originator of foreign investments and national development.

### **Recommendations**

1. Nigerian government /leadership should establish a good channel of communication with their followers.
2. The Nigeria government should through the ministries of communication , information and foreign affairs enhance the countries image by involving public relations (PR) professionals in branding, rebranding and handling information as relates it`s foreign activites and policies .
3. . Communication, if properly handled , reformed with transperency and sense of humour, shall be the katalysator to Nigeria`s economic growth and development

4. The body of Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) should step up with their constitutional duty, by making sure that public relations standard are strictly upheld as empowered and by Public Relations Decree No.16 Of 1999 of Nigeria constitution as amended (now called “Act of the National Assembly”).

5. I recommend that the Nigeria government and its communication handlers (PR) should rather see democracy as a complete and comprehensive kitchen table, associated with negotiations through communication, than a political gimmick or war.

## Conclusion

Communication is a living and dynamic field of knowledge, and an abstract phenomenon among the various intelligence values of human existence, and any being without the intelligence or stimuli to communicate or communicated to is considered dead. Therefore, since all sphere of life requires effective and sincere communication to exist, survive, develop and to grow, society, businesses, organizations, and Nigeria economy needs effective branding through effective and efficient communication practice to grow. Therefore, Nigeria needs a comprehensive communication reform as an enabler to entrepreneurship and economic development.

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