

PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES AND CORPORATE IMAGE: EVIDENCE FROM MULTINATIONALS IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

This study appraises the public relations (PR) strategies of selected multinational companies in Rivers State, focusing on Pabod Breweries and Daewoo Nigeria Limited. The study population comprised managers of both companies and residents of their host communities. Using a multistage sampling technique, a total sample size of 398 respondents was drawn, with purposive sampling employed to select participants. Questionnaires were used as the primary data collection instrument, validated for face and content by experts, and tested for reliability using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. Data were analyzed using tables, percentages, and weighted mean scores on a four-point Likert scale. Findings indicate that PR practices of Pabod Breweries (60.7%) were more effective than those of Daewoo Nigeria Limited (44%). Both companies, however, maintain relationships with their host communities. The study concludes that evolving dynamics in host–corporate relations necessitate a review of corporate PR policies. It is recommended that multinational companies strategically revisit their PR policies to implement stakeholder-centered practices that align with organizational goals, enhanced by increased stakeholder engagement research.

Keywords: Public Relations, Corporate Strategy, Stakeholder Engagement, Evaluation, Planning

Introduction

As far back as the creation of man, public relations have been in existence, (Nwosu&Nfloh 2005, p.26). There are many definitions of public relations as there are different authors. The professionally accepted definitions were more than 600 as at the last count in 1996, (Nwosu&Nffoh, 2005). Following the World assembly of public relations associates in Mexico City in August, 1978, this statement was agreed: "Public relations practice is the act and social science of analysing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organisation leaders and implementing planned programmes of actions which will serve both the organisations and the public interest, "Jefkins&Yadin (1998, p.7). Public relations could also be defined as "all forms of planned communication, outwards and inwards, between an organisation and its publics for the purpose of achieving specific objectives concerning mutual understanding, Yadin (1998, p.6). According to the (British) Institutes of Public Relations (IPR) in Jefkins&Yadin (1998, p.6), "public relations is the planned and sustained efforts to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics."

Furthermore, Cutlip, Center and Broom (1991), see public relations "as the management function that identifies, establishes and maintains the mutually beneficial relationship between an organisation and the

various publics on whom its success or failure depends on, (Nwosu 2005, p.14). It could also be defined as the art and science of building and sustaining a credible reputation for any organisation (Nwosu, 2013). According to Black (1990), the fundamental purpose of Public relations is to establish mutual understanding based on truth, knowledge and full information. According to Matthew (2012), the term "Public Relations is defined as the system of managing or controlling the interaction processes that take place between an institution and the public. The aim of Public relations is to draw the attention of the public to the views of the institution and also, to show that the institution has the interest of the public in mind. It is imperative to note that public relations are key to maintaining the growth and profitability of the institution.

Chukwu (2000) noted that the greatest assets an establishment can have is the goodwill of the public.... A public that is informed holds a positive attitude towards an organisation which is critical to its survival. It is important to note that the way and manner in which an institution and their public relations department relate with the public will go a long way to ascertain how well their business operation will grow. A functional public relations department will directly affect how the people perceive the institution. Organising promotional program will benefit the company or institution in the long run in terms of turnover and profitability and will also ensure longevity of that institution. One way to ensure that public relations program is functional is to ensure that the most capable hands are tasked with the responsibility of managing that aspect of the business.

In essence, a good public relations team will in a huge way determine the success of any institution and if the management of that institution employs the best brains for their business it will help them to gain the trust of the people

In planning and evaluation, key strategies are vital to the success of the business. These planning and evaluation programs will help the organisations to map out their aims and achievements, and it will also help them to find out the areas in which they are not meeting up to required target. It also helps to ascertain how effective and efficient their promotional plans are and how to improve on those plans if necessary. Planning is key to a successful business. This is because a good plan, if properly executed will improve the fortunes of any business and ensure that they remain relevant in the business world. It is not news to any business institution that competition will arise with time, the reason why planning and evaluation is necessary as it will help the business stay ahead of its rivals and gain other intangible assets like goodwill. Ajala (2005) deduced, that public relations and planning go hand in hand as without an effective plan, no form of promotional or interactive stunt by the company will yield the desired results. He also perceives public relations to be a continuous process, which involves several phases like decision making, program implementation and actionable planning. He opines that this will be definite factors that will improve the status of any business organisation. Companies usually adopt methods that they perceive to be vital for public relations programs, in line with their aim or aspirations for. Some of these strategies include the identification of products lines, ideas and innovativeness, message selections, object identification and

orientation and public opinion polls. All these are designed to give the business an informed idea on what to produce, when to produce and how to produce.

However, Ajala (2005) noted that another purpose of planning and evaluation is to improve the personal working skills of individuals. This, he note will help to boost the morale of employees and encourage them to be more productive in their business.

As stated earlier, the process of Public relations may include the adoption of promotional packages that will excite the public and lure them to the organisation. It is important to note that the essential objectives of Public relations is to increase awareness of the public as it relates to the organisation to discover and target relevant audience, to change personnel attitude in favour of the organisations, to extinguish doubt and create appropriate external and internal environment for the organisation (Onah, 2001, p.27).

Moreover, according to Igweobi (2006), the objectives of Public relations are derived from its various definitions. But that, the essential objectives of Public relations is to create a positive image for an organisation, ensure that the organisation's image is projected in its environment to make the public accept and appreciate the existence of the organisation in their environment and to ensure that a cordial relationship exists between the organisation and its internal and external publics.

According to Nnaemeka (2002), in Igweobi (2006,p.13), one of the major goal of Public relations work is to help establish lines of communication for faithful exchange of ideas and various public of its immediate constituency, on policies and programmes initiated for the community at large. Public relations strategies are therefore a veritable tool that will help establish lines of communication that will not only endear the organisation to its host communities but will largely contain distrust, agitation and negative perceptions that could lor its smooth operations in various communities.

Statement of the Problem

Multi-national companies are companies that carry of businesses across multiple countries and because they carry out businesses across multiple countries, they interact and interface with the various cultures, values, and practices of these countries. The tools of Public relations therefore become imperative for finding their way around the nuances of the social and cultural settings of the various environments that they find themselves in. Public relations is the faculty in which the multi-national companies are able to (like a chameleon), blend into any and every social and cultural settings which they find themselves in.

The problem before this study, therefore, is to unearth the ways and means with which select companies of the multi-national category, namely, Pabod Breweries and Daewoo in Rivers State meander or scale through the social-cultural settings of the business terrain. In other words, how do multinational companies find their way through the nuances of the business environment?

Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to appraise public relations strategies of select multinational companies in Rivers State.

The objectives are to;

1. Examine the public relations practices of the companies under study.
2. Identify what strategies Pabod and Daewoo adopt in maintaining relationship with host communities.
3. Find out the strategies in a generic sense, Proactive or Reactive.
4. Align the strategies of the companies with the social-economic dynamics of Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions have been formulated in order to guide the study to get the desired results:

1. What are the public relations practices of the company under study?
2. What strategies do Pabod Breweries and Daewoo E&C Nigeria Limited employ for maintaining good relationship with their host communities?
3. To what extent are these strategies proactive or reactive in nature?
4. How do these strategies align with the socio-economic dynamics of Rivers State?

Scope of the Study

The study looked at Pabod Breweries and Daewoo, which are both situated in Rivers State. These companies have been in Nigeria for many years and have risen to be one of the premier producers of soft drinks in the country. Secondly, the focus of this study is to stay within the boundary of customer's satisfaction, press release, host communities and the place of public relations in organisational performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

The Excellence Theory

The excellence theory was propounded in 1985 by James Grunig. This research was funded by the Foundation of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC). It is a general theory of public relations which "specifies that organizations perform more effectively, with the help of public relations strategy" (Grunig, 1992). It also talks about how public relations is managed and organized in order to meet the goals that have been set out by the organisation. He stated that the theory was based on a number of middle-range theories,

which also tested with surveys and interviews by seasoned professionals and CEOs in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada, and from this, a fact was proven that the Excellence theory provides a theoretical and empirical benchmark for public relations units.

Grunig (2003, pp.28-38), in his research titled "Constructing public relations theory and practice", identified the characteristics of effective public relations in four specific categories:

(i) The aggressive empowerment of the public relations function: Here, an effective and functional organisation should ensure that they empower public relations as a critical management function in order to attain set goals.

(ii) The communicator roles: It was suggested that public relations executives should be allowed to handle the managerial roles as well as administrative roles in the organisation.

(iii) The organisation of communication function: Public relations function, should be at the centre of any and every business or organisation. This means that it should be an integrated communication function, and at the same time kept apart instead of being merged with other departments like marketing and other management functions.

(iv) The public relations models: Every organisation that strives to be effective should focus on its internal and external forms of communication and relationship building by using the two-way symmetrical model.

The relevance of this theory to this study is that it helps organisations to set strategies on already laid out plans that they intend to carry out over a certain period of time. For these strategies to work, the PR unit of the organisation needs to make assessments on the best ways to effectively connect with the public. This aligns with our study as it talks about PR strategies and how effectively they are being used to attain set goals.

Social Exchange Theory

The social exchange theory which was propounded by John Thibaut and Harold Kelley in 1958 utilises the monetary representation of expenses and benefits to foresee conduct. It expects that people and gatherings pick techniques dependent on rewards and expenses. This theory, created by John Thibaut and Harold Kelley, applies to numerous fields of study, including relational correspondence, advertising, and speculations of organisations. Thibaut and Kelley (1979), put together their theory basically with respect to little gatherings related with dyadic connections. They utilised the reward-cost grids from the Game Hypothesis and found a few pieces of information of people's reliance, for example, the intensity of a gathering over one another, otherwise called the "correspondence" versus "non correspondence" of results. Also, they recommended that individuals can singularly influence their very own results in a relationship through picked practices. They could anticipate the conceivable course of a social cooperation through the examination of parts of intensity in an experience. They likewise probed how the results got in a relationship could characterise a person's attractions to connections. Social Exchange Theory states that people pick techniques depend on reward and expenses, factor in the results of their conduct before acting. By and large, individuals need to minimise their expenses and their prizes high.

The relevance of this theory to the study in view is that it seeks to ascertain the opinions of the targeted publics with respect to the organisations and the services they have to offer. Also the theory suggests that organisations have to seek the most rewarding method to conduct PR activities, which is in conformity

with the research. These methods however should be less expensive but at the same, very profitable to the organisation.

General Concepts of Public Relations

Public Relations is usually confused with advertising, press agency, propaganda, publicity. But these are merely tools that are used to carry out the PR discipline. An understanding of the definition of PR can help to enlighten people on its true meaning. Many scholars have made different suggestions and definitions to public relations

Lee and Bernays (1993, p.129) established their own definition of public relations as follows: "a management function, which tabulates public attitudes, defines the policies, procedures and interests of an organisation, followed by executing a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance". Grunig (1984, p.6) defined public relation as the "management of communication between an organisation and its publics".

Cutup, Center and Broom (1999, p.6) sees public relation as "the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and the publics on whom its success or failure depends"

Fiur (1984, p.94) simply defined public relations as, "the management function, primarily responsible for shaping and implementing policies of mediation growth and or survival of an organisation's basic franchise".

Black (1989, p.12) believes that public relations consists of all forms of planned communication, outward or inward between an organisation and publics for the purpose of achieving specific objectives concerning mutual understanding.

Ricardo (2000), threw his weight on the concept of public relations by stating that:

Public relations was once concerned primarily with publicity. It has now progressed to a higher plateau, concerned with anticipating the emergency issues and working with other members of management to create programmes of action, which are prompt, effective and enduring. It is also public relations job to communicate our messages in a way which wins both understanding to the public that our actions are indeed in the public interest (p: 180).

According to Edward 1. Bernay (), Public Relations is the attempt by information, persuasion and adjustment to engineer public support for an activity, cause, movement, institutions. John W. Hill () defines public relations as a management function which gives the cause organised and careful attention to the asset of goodwill as given to any other major asset of business.

The International Public Relations Association; "Public Relations is a management function of a continuing and planned character through which public and private organisations seek to win and retain the understanding, sympathy and support of those with whom they are or may be concerned by evaluating public opinion about themselves, in order to correlate, as far as possible their own policies and procedures,

to achieve by planned and wide spread information more productive cooperation and more efficient fulfilment of this common interest.

Seema Hasan (2013) posited that the first actual use of phrase, public relations was made by President Thomas Jefferson in 1807. While drafting his seventh address to the congress, he scratched out the word. State of thoughts in one place and wrote 'public relations' instead. Evidence of the practice used in modern day, public relation as scattered through history, one notable practice was Georgina Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire whose efforts on behalf of Charles James for in the 18th century included press relations lobbying and with her friend, celebrity campaigning, A member of the Spencer family, she shares a family celebrity trait with Diana, Princess of Dales.

Queen Elizabeth I of England who came to the throne in 1558 at 25 years of age had no previous administrative experience of any description. To realise what she was faced with, one has to consider the conditions that existed at that time.

The Kingdom was torn with dissension about political and religious. The National Sports were violence. The leaders of the different factions were ready to revolt on any pretext. Communication hardly existed, Elizabeth had no police force, no standing army and her subject had nothing but disdain for women in public life. Society was geared to strong arm methods. Yet Elizabeth controlled the country for 45 years, she raised it from a third rated poorer to first rate one. By the time she had completed her reign, she was the most popular monarch that had ever sat on the throne, possibly, man, people realising this because it is emphasised only in history books. What is not realized is how she accomplished it.

The first thing she did on taking office was to appoint people for their ability without regard to their background or position; indeed, this dedicated body of men who, in most cases, long been forgotten by history were not only her administrators but also her public relations men. They in turn, surrounded themselves with means of like dedications whose main objective was to explain to the people what the government was trying to do, Elizabeth herself, spent half the time on the throne, travelling up and down the country on appalling roads, listening to complaints of her subjects and explaining what she was trying to do.

A number of American precursor for public relations are found in public list, who specialised in promoting circuses, theatrical performances, and other public spectacles. In the United States, where public relations has its origin, many early Public relations practices were developed in support of the expensive power of the railroad. In fact, many scholars believe that the first appearance of the term public relations as appeared in the 1897 year Book of Railway.

METHODOLOGY

For this research work, the choice of design is the survey research design. The survey method was used to gather information from selected members of the host communities, and from the staff and management of the companies in view. Managers from both Pabod breweries and Daewoo will formed the first part of the population, while the residents of the host communities are the components of the second stream of

population. Oginigba and Eleme are the host communities of Pabod Breweries and Daewoo respectively. According to NPC (2019) estimated population of the residents of Eleme is estimated at 50,000 while that of Oginigha is about 12,100 (Source: NPC 2019 estimated population). The sample size was got from the estimated total population of the residents of the host communities and selected PR managers of the companies in view. Using the Taro Yamane formula, the sample size was approximately 398 for members of the public. Five managers were purposively selected from both Pabod and Daewoo because of their wealth of knowledge and experience in their respective organisations.

This sample size was got using the Taro Yamane formula

The instrument for data gathering for this study was a questionnaire administered to residence of the host community of Pabod Breweries and Daewoo Nigeria Limited respectively. The questionnaire consisted of two (2) sections, which were the demographic and psychographic sections. The demographic section elicited personal information from respondents.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

A total number of 400 copies of the questionnaire were administered to staff and residents of the host communities of Pabod Breweries and Daewoo Nigeria Limited. Out of this figure 368 copies representing a retrieval rate of 92% were successfully ticked and returned. The researcher supposes that this rate is fairly representative of the population used for the study.

4.1 Data presentation

Table 4.1.1" Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-26	56	15.2
27-34	104	28.3
35-43	132	35
44 and above	76	20.7
Total	368	100.1

Table 4.1.1 above shows that most of the respondents (132 or 35.9%) were between the ages of 35 and 43 years.

Table 4.1.2: Sex Distribution of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	206	55.978
Female	162	44.02
Total	368	100

Table 4.1.2 above indicates that most respondents were male (206 or 56.0%)

Educational qualification	Frequency	Percentage
None	10	2.7
FSLC/SSCE	131	35.6
University/Polytechnic Degree/Cert	194	52.7
Postgraduate Degree	33	9.0
Total	368	100

Assessment	Frequency		Percentage	
	Daewoo	Pabod	Daewoo	Pabod
Effective	84	108	44.2	60.7
Ineffective	96	59	50.5	33.1
Not sure	10	11	5.3	6.2
Total		368		100

PR Strategies	SD	A	D	SD	WMS	Decision
Item 7: The following strategies are adopted by Pabod Breweries and Daewoo for maintaining good relationship with host communities						

The companies engage the services of indigenous people to sensitize community on issues relating to their activities	20	23	50	48	84	89	24	30	2.4		Rejec ted	Rejec ted
The companies carry out their corporate social responsibility	40	27	88	58	31	61	19	14	3.0	2.2	Acce pted	Rejec ted
The company encourages local content for economic	27	31	73	69	58	70	20	20	2.7	2.9	Acce ted	Acce ted

empowerment of indigenous
businesses

Table 4.1.5 above indicates the top among the PR strategies adopted by both Pabod Breweries and Daewoo Nig. Ltd in maintaining good relations with their host communities is the use of indigenous and skilled personnel in their projects. This result are both weighted on the scales of 2.7 and 2.9 respectively.

Table 4.1.6: Assessment of strategies in line with contemporary PR practices

ITEM 8	SA	A	D	SD	WMS	Decision
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These strategies are consistent with contemporary PR practices

Table 4.1.6 above reveals that respondents agree that the strategies adopted by Pabod Breweries and Daewoo Nigeria Limited to maintain good relationship with their host communities are in line with contemporary public relations practices.

Table 4.1.7: Respondents rating of companies' relationship with host communities

Rating	Frequency		Percentage Pabod Dacwoo	
Pabod	Daewoo			
Friendly	120	82	67.4	43.2
Unhealthy	52	103	29.2	54.22.6
Not sure	6	5	3.4	2.6
Total	178	190	100	100
		368		100

Table 4.1.7 shows that the relationship between Pabod Breweries is friendlier (120 or 67.4) than Daewoo (82 or 43.2%).

Table 4.1.8: Respondents assessment of nature of PR strategies of Pabod Breweries and

Daewoo Nigeria Limited

Item 9: The embarking CSR by companies is reactive	36	54	86	10	46	15	10	19	2.8	3.0	Acce	Acce
				2							pted	pted
Item 10: The encouragement of local content for the economic empowerment of indigenous businesses is proactive	21	12	59	48	62	89	36	31	2.4	2.1	Rejec	Rejec
											ter	ter
Item 11: The companies use of indigenous and skilled personnel	26	31	56	69	68	70	28	20	2.4	2.6	Rejec	Acce
											ter	pted
PRStrategies	SA	A	D	SD							Decision	

in their projects is reactive

Table 4.1.8 above indicates that most respondents agree that the companies corporate social responsibilities are largely reactive. This is accepted on weighted mean scores of 2.8 and 3.0 respectively.

Table 4.1.9: Respondents' assessment of PR strategies alignment with socio-economic dynamics of Rivers State

Pabod

Daewoo

SA A D SD WMS Decision SD A D SD WMS Decision

Item 12: The strategies in item 7 are in tandem with the socio-economic dynamics of Rivers State.

- i. The companies engage 18 37 96 51 2.1 Accepted 11 31 78 46 2.0 Accepted
the services of indigenous people to sensitize community on issues relating to their activities
- ii. The companies carry out 21 26 98 30 22 Accepted 16 21 10 54 2.0 Accepted their corporate
social 2 responsibility
- iii. The company 30 78 65 8 2.7 Accepted 35 94 52 6 2.8 Accepted encourages local content
for economic empowerment of
indigenous businesses
-

Table 4.1.9 above shows that all three PR strategies adopted by Pabod Breweries and Daewoo Nigeria Limited are in tandem with the socio-economic dynamics of Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

Findings in research question one indicate that the PR practices of Pabod Breweries (108 or 60.7%) is more effective than Daewoo Nigeria Limited (84 or 44.2%). By this assessment, it can be deduced that the PR practices of Pabod Breweries seem to have far reaching effect on its publics. This is very significant, especially against the backdrop of the fact that PR practices should ultimately seek to boost an organisation's image in the cognitive positioning of its publics. This finding corroborates Seitel (2004) cited in Allenaibi (2015) that: Public relations are a leadership and management function that helps achieve organizational objectives, define philosophy and facilitate organizational change. Public relations practitioners communicate with all relevant internal and external publics to develop positive relationships and to create consistency between organizational goals and societal expectations public relations practitioners develop, execute and evaluate the exchange of influence and understanding among an organization's constituent parts and publics.

Understandably, the need to manage public perception of an organisation should be at the base of every public relations practice. Effective public relations practices help to create a platform for perception management. This informs why no organisation can operate inspite of public perception about it. The finding further confirms Tazin and Kaur (2017) who citing Bowen and Shannon (2006) note that "public

relations practices and alviss on ethical implications and maintenance of dialogic communication and relationships with public is important to create ethical organisational behaviour thus manage public relationship for reputation" (p.2). Accordingly, the value of public relations in managing perceptions is equally crucial to making the business sound. Ineffective public relations practices and management of stakeholder perception leads to failure to communicate with the parties (publics) concerned and it is the main risk of organisations (Tazin& Kaur, 2017).

In the same vein, effective public relations practices in itself is strategic. It is strategic in the sense that if public relations practices are effectively implemented, they could be far reaching in not only engineering public consent, but also among other things change public apathy, misunderstanding or ignorance. The finding again confirms Bernays (n.d), who argues that "our strategy will indicate our activities aimed at intensifying favourable attitudes and reversing or blanketing negative attitudes against the organisation" (p.298). In some instances, the organisation is often assessed by its public relations practices than its products or services. For instance, perceptions about public relations affect the perceived credibility of the profession and influence whether people see public relations as valuable to society and the organisation in particular (White, 2010).

More so, the parity in assessing the effectiveness or otherwise of the public relations practices of PABOD and Daewoo Nigeria Limited may not be unconnected with the organisations themselves perceive the importance of public relations. This finding further confirms Geremew (2017), who alludes that "the issue of public relations practices has been controversial within the field of communication" (p.138). Most organisations disregard public relations as an integral part of the organisation. In most instances, organisations only acknowledge the importance of public relations when things go wrong and in times of crisis (Geremew, 2017). The finding corroborates Geremew (2017), whose study showed that like with the case of Daewoo Nigeria Limited, public relations in Harar and Dire Dawa towns (where the researcher carried out the study) does not give due consideration to the public relations practice.

Stressing the importance of public relations practice, the finding is in sync with Olarin(2017) who maintain that:

A major mass promotion instrument is represented by the activity of public relations- creating good relations with various existing categories of the public, obtaining a favourable media representation, creating a company image in the public perception, and judiciously managing or removing the negative effects of rumours, accounts or unfavourable events that are harmful to the firm (p.99).

It further agrees with Ahmed and Khan (2019) whose study identified how effective public relations make good reputation of the organisation. They argue that "development of image depends upon the activities of PR section but it depends upon other consequences organisations relationships, abilities and other factors" (p. 100).

More so, result in research question two showed that both Pabod Breweries and Daewoo Nigeria Limited maintain their relationship with their host communities by using indigenous and skilled personnel on their

projects. Expectedly, the existence of corporate organisations in an area means the creation of jobs for the teeming host community youths both skilled and unskilled. Yet, crisis between host communities and companies in parts of the country, especially in the Niger Delta region has often been instigated by alleged nonemployment of youths. The implication of adopting the inclusion of indigenous and skilled personnel on companies' projects seems to not only endear the companies as host-community friendly but also creates a congenial atmosphere needed for both business and development to thrive. The finding, therefore contradicts Mier (2000) cited in Manpaa (2018), who links the agitation by Niger Delta minorities with the perpetual neglect suffered by the oil producing communities both from the Nigerian government and the multinational oil companies operating in the area. The inclusion of host community workers on projects is a shift from the ugly trend that has over the years characterised company-community relationship in the Niger Delta region.

Although the general impression previously was that the coming of companies positively transformed the local economy of host communities, the reality seems to be that the perceived changes may not in summary be said to be altogether positive in nature (Nwosu 2017). In another sense the engagement of host community workers by the companies is one of the potent recipes to addressing the perennial frosty relationship between the parties Nwosu (2017) contends that the emergence of conflict in the relationship between organisations and their host communities is largely due to the perceived role of the companies in the socioeconomic status of its host communities. This finding is also in agreement with Edokpolo (2013), who contends that when host communities are carried along by organisations in their scheme of things. It is deductible that such host community will not conceive in its wildest imagination of how to sabotage a public or private establishment within its domain; rather, it will peacefully seek for a visionary management that will galvanise the aspirations of the establishment's stakeholders, so that the host community interests will be well attended to in long run.

This finding, further confirms McLennan and Stewart (2005) cited in Amabipi (2016), where they argue that such gesture will bridge the gap and distrust between host communities and corporate organisations. The host community distrust and violence against (oil) companies had tremendous impact on the (oil) companies, the Nigerian nation, the business community and the host communities. Companies' exposure and fear of community distrust and violence has led to the movement of most companies from the host communities to the more expensive deep offshore exploration (McLennan & Stewart, 2005 cited in Amabipi, 2016). Again the finding confirms Weisbrod (1978) cited in Amabipi (2016) who states that the inclusion of host community workers by Pabod Breweries and Daewoo Nigeria Limited on their operations indicates "the switch from distrust to trust, which involves partners to engage in behaviours that could change the negative belief of their partners with the accomplishment of ideological collective agreement concerning the definition of the problem and how to tackle it" (p.22). It agrees with Das and Teng (1998), who argue that host community organisations partnership is sustainable when parties have the willingness to acclimatise to or contain the needs of each other and that, trust in a corporate-

neighbourhood community partnership could be established gradually, but, lost very quickly if one party is not ready to accommodate the other. In the same vein, the finding corroborates Alexander and Nank (2009): Lompo and Tram (2013) cited in Amabipi (2016) who contend that "strong community participation in developmental projects is a warranty of indisputable and sustainable partnership" (p.3 0). Incidentally, crisis in the Niger Delta has been partly occasioned by perceived neglect of host communities by multinational organisations operating in the region. According to Oloruntimilchin and Ayoade (2002) cited in Amodu (2012).

Most of the conflicts have arisen from complex environmental problems, and a long history of neglect and social development of peoples who have seemed helpless watching their land and water resources continually devastated by the intense exploitation for petroleum and gases without deriving any appreciable benefits by way of investment in their own development.

Similarly, the finding confirms Seitel (2007), who observes that more and more organisations are beginning to acknowledge their responsibilities to the community. Those responsibilities include helping to prevent pollution, providing jobs for minorities, enforcing policies that are in the interest of all employees and generally enhancing everyone's quality of life (Seitel, 2007).

Meanwhile, findings on research question three indicated that the nature of the corporate social responsibility of Pabod Breweries and Daewoo Nigeria Limited respectively are largely reactive. By implication, it does appear that both organisations do not have an implementable template for their corporate social responsibility policies to their host communities. That is to say, what they term as corporate social responsibility is predicated on the prevailing atmosphere that exists at certain times between the organisation and their host communities. This finding confirms Amabipi (2016) that:

It is very necessary and inevitable for companies to understand that social responsibility must be part of their policies in host communities due to issues of ethics, past behaviours of corporate organizations and the ever rising government failure in meeting their fundamental responsibility to society (p.72).

However, the finding contradicts Rangan, Chax and Karim (2015), who observe that organisations seem to be looking beyond the primary essence of corporate social responsibility, which is "shared value" - creating economic value in ways that also create value for society, to a multifaceted version of CSR that runs the gamut from pure philanthropy to environmental sustainability to the active pursuit of shared value. In another vein, the finding confirms Rangan et al. (2015) that although many companies embrace this broad vision of CSR, they are hampered by poor coordination and a lack of logic connecting their various programmes (p.6). Again the finding confirms Chang (2015), who argues that unlike proactive corporate social responsibility reactive CSR does not mediate the positive relationship between green organisational culture and green product innovation performance. Similarly, the finding confirms Rim and Ferguson (2017) that "proactive CSR has the ability to counter potential damage to corporate reputation caused by a crisis but not to serve as a remedy after crisis" (p.2). What plays out with host communities and organisations could be likened to the cat and mouse chase. So, that host communities get aggressive in

protest of the back of CSR by companies, and in reaction, the later try to assuage the situation by carrying out certain corporate social responsibility. However, the finding confirms Rim and Ferguson (2017) who argue that “for a preventable crisis, a company is better off choosing low fit reactive CSR than not engaging in reactive CSR at all” (p.6).

More so, the finding confirms Fang, Huang and Huang (2010) who argue that reactive CSR is an organisation’s strategies engaged to respond to the demands of stakeholders. They argue that accommodation strategy not only signifies the appropriate response to stakeholders’ demands, it also suppresses or changes the stakeholder demands that are detrimental to a corporation’s current situation through the use of other influencing powers, defensive strategy is the pre-emptive allocation of related resources to adapt to the possible change in demands of the stakeholders through predictions in the environmental scanning systems. In fact, Fang et al. (2010) contend that reactive corporate social responsibility is intensely a PR strategy. Response or reactive CSR strategy utilises specific capability to achieve the demands of target stakeholders; influence oriented CSR strategy u specific capability to guide a stakeholder’s demands to conform to the target and profits of an organisation (Fang et al, 2010).

Similarly, the finding contradicts the Economist Intelligence Unit (2005) cited in Franco (2015) that explains that the core components of proactive corporate social responsibility are:

...treating its employees well, preserving the environment, developing a sound corporate governance, supporting philanthropy, fostering human rights, respecting cultural differences and helping to promote fair trade among others.

All are meant to have a positive impact on the communities’ cultures, societies and environments in which companies operate (p.5).

The finding further supports Wong (2009) cited in Kriyantono (2015), who argues that “the development of democracy, technology and globalisation raises public claims to business companies to be ethical, environmentally and socially responsible. It agrees with Kriyantono2015) who argues that “the first business priority is to fulfil the human needs and put the environment as the second. However, it is acceptance that fulfilling the human needs requires certain action concerning the environment and natural world” (p.323). Beyond the conventional practice of providing infrastructure and other human capacity endeavours there is the advocacy for organisations to extend CSR programmes to the environment. This finding, therefore contradicts the Social Exchange Theory in this study.

More so, findings in research question four indicate that the PR strategies adopted by Pabod Breweries and Daewoo Nigeria Limited itemised in item 12 are consisted with the socio economic dynamics of Rivers State. Expectedly operations of these organisations in the state impact its socio-economic status. This further border on responsible organisation stakeholder’s relationship. When an organisation operates with the mind-set of not only maximising profit, but also giving back to the society or community within which it operates, it would have contributed to the socio-economic wellbeing of the people. This finding confirms the theory excellence theory used in this study. The theory contends that a good and strong

relationship with organisations' strategic or specific public, in terms of enabling the socio-economic climate, is very essential for it to build, develop and achieve goals desired by both the organisation and its publics. Organisations that are stakeholder conscious will not only increase profit by providing the essential and veritable products and services needed by the stakeholders, but will also be minimising the implication of negative publicity.

Again, the finding is consistent with the Social Exchange Theory used in this study. Blau (1964) cited in Amabipi (2016) explains that people get attracted to themselves for various reasons, which make them set up social cum economic alliance. Once such alliances are formed, the gains that they give to themselves serve to maintain and augment the relationship (Amabipi, 2016). Amabipi, adds that "host communities that are provided with socio- economic rewards from investors, but communities that do not get rewards, or see the partnership as more costly than beneficial to them are most likely to see the relationship as negative and not needed.

Furthermore, the finding contradicts Ogege and Ewhrudjakpor (2009) who argue that the partnership that exists between host communities and organisations in the Niger Delta seems to violate the principle of "reciprocity and fairness". The communities willingly gave their assets to the organisations to operate and expected to receive rewards like: improved standard of living, better occupation, social and structural development, etc. Instead of these rewards, the IOC's punish them and destroy their traditional liveliness with harmful impacts of oil production activities (Ogege&Ewhrudjakpor, 2009). It is the inability of these organisations to help improve the socio-economic status of host communities that has triggered the seeming frosty relationship that now exists between them and corporate organisations operating in the area. A partner becomes angry if he is denied an expected reward or receives an unexpected punishment, such anger then grows into hostile behaviour, which is repeated and becomes a more valuable habit to such actor (Ogege&Ewhrudjakpor, 2009). The finding also confirms Olufemi (2010), who maintains that the volatile nature of corporate-community relations, which has meant significant loss in oil revenue for government and decline in corporate profit for multinational (oil) corporations (MNCs), has elevated the obtaining of a special licence to operate from the periphery to the heart of strategic business thinking within the Nigerian business industry. As a result, multinational (oil) corporations (MNCs) have increasingly responded to this challenge by adopting partnership strategies as a means of contributing to community development, building a mutually beneficial relationship with local communities and reinventing themselves as a force for good to their host communities (Olufemi, 2010).

In the same vein, the finding contradicts Nwosu (2017) who notes that rather than address via their capacity, the issues brewing crisis between organisations and their host communities, the latter merely adopt partial or momentarily adjustive measures to modify their relationship with individuals or communities. Nwosu (2017) argues that this approach "leads to a displacement of priorities on the part of the Companies such that they no longer aim at devising a final solution to the unsatisfactory situation, but focus mainly on merely releasing the tension which arose from it" (p.46). Again, it confirms Nwosu (2017)

that “a more critical evaluation of the causes of conflict between host communities and organisations show that at the root of all these crises is the question of corporate social responsibility for communities. It is against this backdrop that the tension between host communities and organisations has been building up for decades primarily due to poor infrastructural development and non-responsiveness to the needs and aspirations of the indigenes of the host communities (Nwosu, 2017).

Similarly, Nwosu (2017) observes that despite their significant investments in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, there are limited job opportunities for the indigenes of their host communities. This is not withstanding the existence of the Nigeria Oil and Gas Industry Content Development Act, 2010, which makes it mandatory for foreign companies to give Nigerian Independent Operators first consideration in the award of oil and gas related contracts while Nigerian service companies should be given exclusive consideration for contracts for services. Basically, this law seeks to increase indigenous participation in the sector by prescribing a minimum threshold for the use of local services and materials and to promote transfer of technology and skills to Nigerians in the industry (Nwosu, 2017).

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In recent times, organisations are increasingly coming to terms with the imperativeness of strategically creating a congenial relationship with their host communities. This informs why many are repositioning their public relations unit to meet this onerous responsibility. Yet effective public relations strategies are critical to growing and sustaining host- corporate relationship. So that at the base of these strategies is how much host communities needs can be addressed, while maximising profit and garnering sufficient organisational goodwill. It is in view of the above that this study sought to comparatively appraise the public relations strategy of Pabod Breweries Nigeria Limited and Daewoo E&C Nigeria Limited.

The summary of the findings are presented below:

1. Finding in research question one indicated that the PR practice of Pabod Breweries is more effective than that of Daewoo E&C Nigeria Limited. This result showed that the level of effectiveness of the PR practices of Pabod Breweries is put at 60.7% while that of Daewoo E&C Nigeria Limited is put at 44.2%. The implication of this result is that the public relations practices of Pabod Breweries seem to have far reaching effect on its publics, particularly the host communities. It brings to the fore the need for organisations to effectively apply public relations practices towards managing public perception. The value of public relations in managing perception is crucial to making business thrive. Impliedly, effective public relations in itself is strategic and should be applied to achieve organisational goals.
2. More so, result in research question two showed that both Pabod Breweries and Daewoo E&C Nigeria Limited maintain relationship with their host communities by using indigenous and skilled personnel on their projects. This result is instructive as it reveals how the organisations adopted effective strategies aimed at addressing the seeming frosty relationship that had existed between them and host communities. That both organisations were not only carrying out their corporate social responsibility but are also encouraging local contents for economic empowerment of indigenous business is a significant shift

from the prevailing trend. Finding showed that the implication of adopting the inclusion of indigenous and skilled personnel on Companies projects seems to not only endear the organisation as host-community friendly but also creates a congenial atmosphere needed for both business and development to thrive.

3. Similarly, result in research question three revealed that the nature of corporate social responsibility of both Pabod Breweries and Daewoo E&C Nigeria Limited are largely reactive. The finding seems to imply that both organisations do not have an implementable template for their corporate social responsibility policies to their host communities. It again appears, by this finding that the organisations' corporate social responsibility programmes are reactive as they are impulsive. The finding showed that in many instances, corporate social responsibility emerges has a reaction to addressing growing agitations of host communities against the organisations operating in their areas. The finding suggests that beyond the conventional practice of providing infrastructure and other human capacity endeavours there is the advocacy for organisations to extend corporate social responsibility programmes to the environment.

4. Meanwhile, findings in research question four indicate that the PR strategies adopted by both Pabod Breweries and Daewoo E&C Nigeria Limited were consistent with the socio-economic dynamics of Rivers State. The result shows that organisations that were responsible to their host communities also helped in boosting the later's socioeconomic status. So that, they were not only maximising profit, but also contributing to the development of local economies through inclusion and partnership with host communities. The finding indicate that the partner in the economic value chain tended to benefit from each other when they operate the principle of reciprocity and fairness – more of a win-win situation.

Conclusion

The dynamics of host-corporate relations has informed the need for organisations to revisit their public relations policies. It does seem that public relations units of these organisations exist just to add up to organisational structure. It is expected that an efficient public relations department will be instrumental in not only endearing the organisation to its host communities but will largely contain distrust, agitation and negative perceptions that could mar its smooth operations in the community.

More so, the dearth of corporate social responsibility by this organisations is indicative of the there is no strategic plans to give back to host communities. This could inform why the corporate social responsibilities of these organisations are reactive as they are impulsive.

Such reactive corporate social responsibility momentarily assuaged agitations and tensions but don't address the nagging issues that continue to give rise to the frosty relationship that exist between host communities and multinational companies that operate in the areas. Organisations must come to terms with the fact that corporate social responsibility is a public relations strategy in itself. When proactive harnessed, corporate social responsibility has the potency to create a congenial atmosphere needed for organisations to maximise profit.

Incidentally, modem day business recognises the principle of reciprocity and fairness. Activities of organisations affect their host communities either positively or negatively. Responsible organisations set

up measures to ensure that host communities benefit from their operations. It is parasitic when organisations concentrate on maximising profit at the expense of the socio-economic development of their host communities. Suffice to say that host communities who are not given a fair opportunity to develop may stop at nothing to impede the growth and development of organisations. Relationship between organisations and host communities is expected to be a win-win if the former intends to maximise profit. Furthermore, the inclusion of community workers and other stakeholders in companies projects is a further indication that organisations are increasingly coming to terms with the importance of fostering the needed partnership. Imperatively, the transference of skills and technology to indigenous workers is critical for the development of local communities. More so, such inclusion is in conformity with the Nigerian Local Content Law of 2007. Again, beyond maximising profits, organisations must device means of making the people benefit both economically, environmentally and technologically.

Recommendations

Drawing from the conclusion above, the following recommendations are here put forward.

1. That multinational companies should revisit their public relations policies with a view of strategically identify and carry out public relations practices that are not only stakeholder-centred but will also help in actualising organisational goals. This could be better achieved with greater stakeholder engagement and research.
2. Following that the importance of corporate social responsibility cannot be over- stressed, public relations strategies should be designed in such ways that make both the former and later complimentary. In developing corporate social responsibility programmes, organisations should be guided on how best this will not only attend to the essential concerns of host communities, but will also not trigger agitations or distrust that could further bring about negative perception about them. In other sense, CSR when complimenting PR practices or strategies should be people-oriented and well thought-out.
3. While the inclusion of community workers on projects is commendable, organisations, as part of its socio-economic sustainability plans, could engage in the specialised and certified training of host community indigenes. This way more manpower raised with the communities to meet the requisite demands of the organisations. This in itself will not only engender a win-win situation, but create a congenial atmosphere for organisations to operate smoothly.
4. There is also the need for a regular interface between multinational companies and host communities. This should be coordinated by the public relations office. The meeting will enable stakeholders engage and address areas of friction and misinformation. Understandably, host communities resort to self-help following seeming frustration to channel their issues to these organisations. So, this could be far reaching in bridging the communication gap between parties.

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