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**Elements of Public Relations Practice in the Administration
of Wukari Traditional Council**

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Abstract

This study focuses on those activities of the Wukari Traditional Council in Taraba State that are similar to modern Public Relations practice. The essence is to ascertain the authenticity of the claim that Public Relations is not alien to Africa even though its practice in the contemporary times might be quite different from the ways Africans understood it previously. In doing

this, effort is made to analyse some activities of the traditional council and how they conform to Public Relations practice. Face-to-face interview with key members of the traditional council was used to generate data for the study while data were analysed qualitatively using Explanation Building Technique. The research reveals that some activities of the Wukari Traditional Council are analogous to modern Public Relations in the area of image making, establishing and maintaining mutual relationship, conflict resolution, community relations and publicity. The study shows that Public Relations exists, at least in its rudimentary form, in native administration system in Africa. Therefore, Public Relations in the traditional political setting should be strengthened to enhance its contribution to national development.

Key words: Traditional Institution, Traditional Ruler, Traditional Council, Public Relations, Publics

Introduction

Traditional institution is an integral part of the African society and traditional rulers are usually men of impeccable character and great achievements. In most cases, traditional rulers are chosen from those who have served the society selflessly as well as from royalty. Traditional institutions, on the other hand, are usually understood as the instruments of social organization which have been tested and trusted over time. They constitute the roots upon which social change can be anchored especially in the rural areas where much enlightenment of the people is needed to bring about development. Before the advent of colonialism in Nigeria, the traditional institution was a formidable force for governance and the people had great respect for it. Commendably, the rule of law prevailed even at that time because the norms and values of the society were held sacrosanct, while traditional rulers were not only revered but wielded unreserved influence on their subjects.

The diversity and strength of a country lies at the traditional institution level because what the people believe in goes a long way to condition their perception of life generally which also defines their normative conduct. Traditional rulers, as the spiritual and temporal heads of the traditional institutions, are referred to as the custodians of the people's culture. Interestingly, traditional institutions could form an effective bridge between traditional and modern political norms thereby making the task of nation building easier and more efficient. Tradition, according to Samuel Flieschacker cited in Senyonjo (2002), is "a set of customs passed down over

generations and a set of beliefs and values endorsing the customs”. A philosopher, Kwame Gyekye recognises the value of traditions as reported in Senyonjo (2002), but argues that in practice, tradition is often questioned and modified by its adherents overtime. It means that ‘tradition’ is dynamic and in line with this view, Gyekye presents a new definition of tradition as “any cultural product that was created or pursued, in whole or in part by past generations and that has been accepted and preserved in whole or in part by successive generations, and has been maintained to the present”.

Senyonjo says further that the definition of tradition is very important for it is the key to understanding the importance of traditional leaders. Traditional leaders are the guardians of traditional norms that are respected in various communities from generation to generation. These include the people’s view of life, ways of resolving disputes, institutions they cherish among other things. As such, traditional leaders are important channels through which social and cultural change can be actualised.

In many societies in the time past, leaders were viewed as servants of the people. They were expected to uphold the views and aspirations of the community. They were also accountable to the community, and this was very important. Within families, clans and nations, leadership could be earned, learned and inherited. In many cases, elders were viewed as community leaders (Senyonjo, 2002). Nigerian communities are not left out of these societies discussed above. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic country with over 250 ethnic groups and approximately 500 languages (Nigeria Television Authority, NTA Rebranding jingle), but only three out of these are recognised as the major languages and ethnic groups. They are the Yorubas in the West, the Hausas/Fulanis in the North and the Igbos in the East. The ethnic groups have traditional rulers who serve their various societies selflessly and have their various titles such as the Oba of Lagos, the Olu of Ibadan, Oba of Benin, Otaru of Auchi and others in the West, while in the North there are the Sultan of Sokoto, Shehu of Borno, the Emir of Zauzau and the Aku Uka of Wukari among others. In the East are the Obi of Onitsha, Asagba of Asaba, just to mention but a few.

Administratively, the system of traditional rulership in Nigeria is the monarchical system of government. Monarchy, according to Wikipedia dictionary, is “the form of government in which the office of the head of state is usually held until death or abdication and is often hereditary and include royal house”. In some cases, monarchs are elected. The role of the traditional

institution and the leaders is to carry out other activities like mediating between the people they are ruling and the government of the country. Traditional rulers are responsible for resolving conflicts and crises in their communities. They are used as change agents through whom development can occur in their communities.

In performing the above roles in their various communities, the traditional rulers are assisted by several other people who form the native administrative system. For instance, in the Igbo traditional system, a traditional ruler is assisted by a council of elders who are elected by each community to represent them. These people are called the “Nze”. The Nze in turn elect a class of people called the “Ozo” who finally take any matter discussed as public information to the community or village town crier who is known as the “Otimeku” to disseminate to the people.

In the Yoruba Kingdom, the people assisting the “Oba” (the traditional ruler) form the Council of elders with the titles of Otun Oba, Osi Oba, Balogun, Yeye Oba and Iyalode. These people, after taking decisions with the ruler, would pass it down to the head of the various villages called the “Baale” who will instruct the town crier called “Akede” to disseminate the information to the people. Among the Hausas, the traditional ruler known as the “Emir” is assisted by the three senior palace officials known as the “Waziri” who is the Prime Minister and senior adviser to the Emir. Next are the “Galadima” who is the administrator of the headquarters and “Madawaki” who is the head of the army. Below this is the “Sarkin Dogari”, the head of the palace guards. When a decision is taken by these people, they will pass it down to the village head called the “Hakimi” who will finally give it to the town crier known as “Mai Chari” to pass to the people.

On the whole, traditional administration is saddled with the responsibility of maintaining law and order in the community and to foster peace among the people. This has a relationship with the practice of Public Relations. Therefore, it is not out of place to think that Public Relations has been in existence even in traditional African societies. We believe this claim because if the essence of Public Relations is to create a favourable image for an individual or a community with the objective of forging and sustaining a cordial relationship between two communities, individuals or groups, it means Public Relations has been in practice in this part of the world. For instance, in Africa, kings and monarchs sent and received emissaries who were resident in the royal courts or palace of the traditional rulers and this

was done in order to maintain a cordial relationship between kingdoms. It is on record that as early as the 15th century, Oba Ozolua of Benin had sent emissaries to the Court of the King of Portugal. This practice is similar to ambassadorial postings by countries today as Foreign Service. Also, when dignitaries visit, dances and such other cultural displays were always featured by host communities to showcase their cultural heritage and hospitality. Professor Chinua Achebe, the celebrated Nigerian writer is quoted as saying that “African people did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans; their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, that they had poetry and above all they had dignity. It is this dignity that many African people all but lost during the colonial period, and it is this that they must now regain” (Uwaezuoke, 2011).

Public Relations could be seen as an aspect of communication that involves promoting a desirable image for persons, groups of people, governments, nations, and organizations, who seek public attention. Public Relations strategies and policies are used to create interest in a person, idea, product, institution or business establishment. By its nature, Public Relations is devoted to serving particular interests by presenting them to the public in the most favourable light (Asemah, 2011, p.11). On his part, Nwosu (1992) cited in Asemah (2010, p.247) defines Public Relations as “winning friends, keeping and influencing them”. Through Public Relations, the author asserts, an organization will be able to win public acceptance.

From the above definitions, the role of Public Relations is clearly stated as creating mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. The role of Public Relations has sometimes been misconstrued by many organizations and institutions involved in its practice. Some see it as propaganda, bribery, organising parties while some go to the extent of deceiving their publics forgetting that Public Relations is based on truth, accuracy and honesty.

This study is set to examine the extent to which Public Relations practice reflects in the activities of the Wukari Traditional Council in Taraba State, Nigeria. In doing this, the study will identify the various ways in which the Traditional Council relates with its internal and external publics and how this could be improved upon for better governance at the grassroots.

Literature Review

Traditional Institution as an Element of Government

Traditional institution is an establishment or administration which is an important feature of a people or a given society's customs and devoted to promoting their culture and tradition. According to Otumfuo (2004), traditional system refers to the genuine traditional institutions, uncontaminated by colonial or post-independence modifications or distortions. He further says that most observers of traditional African political systems in pre-colonial history recognise two main forms, namely the non-centralised or fragmented traditional state and the centralised state. In the non-centralised state, there is no sovereign. Techniques of social control revolve around what Meyer Fortes, cited by Otumfuo (2004), called the "dynamics of clanship". The normative scheme consisted of elaborate bodies of well-established rules of conduct, usually enforced by heads of fragmented segments and in more serious subversive cases, by spontaneous community action. Examples of such societies are the Tallensi of Northern Ghana, the Nuer of Southern Sudan, the Igbo of Nigeria and the Kikuyu of Kenya (Otumfuo, 2004).

On the other hand, centralised states are organized under well-entrenched, highly structured and sophisticated political authorities. A political sovereign backed by well-organised law enforcement agencies is established and habitually obeyed by the citizenry. Infraction of well-articulated legal norms attracts swift sanction imposed by state officials. The king, chief or political sovereign, rules with his council of elders and advisers in accordance with the law, and although autocracy is not unknown, the rule of law is a cordial feature of this system of governance. Examples of such societies are the Dabgani of Ghana, Yorubas of Nigeria, the Zulus of South Africa and Barotse of Zambia.

Going by Otumfuo's opinion, it means traditional institution as a form of government is an institution set aside or assigned to regulate the day-to-day activities of a given society according to the customs of the people. It has to do with the people's collective agreement to surrender to a king or ruler power to control their lives and organize activities within their community. In the process, the people have always had clear understanding and agreement regarding the idea and principles that underlie their political system.

Traditional Council and Its Functions

A Traditional Council is a part or a parastatal of government that is saddled with the responsibility of native administration of a particular people that share common interest, culture, values, customs, norms, etc, with the aim of mobilising the people toward implementing government policies and programmes. A Traditional Council is a collection of a few traditional rulers and other members called the kingmakers, with the Chairman as the head. The most senior chief within the traditional council area is the President or Chairman of the Council with the Secretary running the secretariat of the Council.

The primary function of the traditional council is to maintain law and order so as to ensure peace and development in the society. It handles customary matters such as land disputes, traditional marriage, chieftaincy titles and festivals. Another function is conflict and crises resolution between religions and tribes in the Council area. Finally, traditional councils serve as mediators between the district, local and state governments and even the federal government by bringing the government closer to the people at the grassroots. It was in recognition of these fundamental roles of traditional councils in running the affairs of this country that they were given a constitutional role in 1979 which was later excluded from the 1999 constitution of Nigeria. This role, according to Akerekoro (2012), include advice to Chairmen of local governments on appointment of traditional rulers, installation of major and minor chieftaincies and regulating the appointments of honorary chieftaincies, advice on land matters, internally generated funds, security and environmental issues. Also, they are to see to log felling and payment of royalties within their areas of jurisdiction.

The Wukari Traditional Council

The Wukari Traditional Council, which is the focus of this study, came into existence following the Local Government Reforms of 1976 and the recommendations and suggestions offered by the Dasuki Review Committee of Local Government Administration. As at then, Major-General Muhammed Jega, the Military administrator of the defunct Gongola State promulgated an edict (The Emirate and Traditional Councils [Establishment] Order, 1984 which is deemed to have come into effect on the 29th day of August, 1976) establishing the Wukari Traditional Council alongside the Adamawa Emirate Council, Mubi Traditional Council, Muri Emirate Council, Numan

Traditional Council, Ganye Traditional Council and Sardauna Traditional Council.

The structure of the Traditional Council as at the initial stage consisted of “Kunvyi” that is the Chief Coronator, who is in charge of the coronation of the “Aku Uka”, the King of Wukari. Thereafter, the Kunvyi and the Aku Uka would cease to communicate verbally or see each other except through an intermediary called “Kado”. This is strictly still observed till date. The Council of kingmakers with the titles of “Abo-chio”, “Abo-ziken”, “Kinda-chio”, “Kinda-ziken” are also part of the Traditional Council. They also serve as advisers to the King and mediators between the people and the King who is thought to represent the gods of the land, which implies that seeing his face is like seeing the face of the gods. The “Nene” also serves as the Minister of Communication/Information to the Council. When it becomes necessary for the Aku Uka to interact with the people (subjects/visitors), the “Nene” relays what the Aku Uka says to the meeting. The Aku Uka does not speak directly to the people.

At the moment, the Traditional Council is structured slightly different from its customary setting. As a government parastatal, the Council has a Chairman, with the Secretary to the Council appointed by the Ministry for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs. The Secretary is responsible for handling all official reports and correspondences of the Council which are documented, filed and minuted to the Chairman. In other words, one could say that communication link between the traditional Council and the Chairman or his members and district heads is via the office of the Secretary. This places the administration of the traditional Council squarely on the Secretary.

The Wukari Traditional Council comprises the following portfolios:

- The Paramount Ruler in the area who is the only First Class Chief and President of the Council
- The Traditional Councillors from neighbouring Wukari, Takum and Donga Local Government Areas bearing titles like Gara of Donga, Yerima Donga and Gbana Donga. Abon-chio, Kinda-chio, Kinda-Ziken, Abon-Ziken Wukari; Ukwe Takum, Kuru-kpante Takum, Madaki Takum,
- All Chairmen from Takum, Ibi and Donga Local Government Councils

- The fifteen (15) district heads in the following order: Wukari, Avyi, Chunku, Assa, Nwoyo, Ginda-idi, Tsokundi, Akwana, Rafi-kada, Arufu, Kente, Chinkai, Matar-fada, Jibu and Bantaje.

Public Relations in Government

Black (1989) in Asemah (2010, p.246) says “Public Relations involves the establishment of a two-way communication to resolve conflict of interest, seeking common grounds or areas of mutual interest and establishment of understanding based on truth, knowledge and full information”. Going by Black’s definition, one could easily decipher that Public Relations is all about creating mutual understanding or interest through actions, information and communication management. It entails enriching people’s knowledge and using actions to affect proper understanding.

Information and communication management play a vital role in public administration, so the recognition and acceptance of Public Relations as a key communication link and a useful tool in the hands of government in any society goes a long way in the conception and execution of public policies and programmes. As the number and size of government and its publics increase, communication links between the government and its publics are seriously disrupted, complicated and rendered ineffective in most cases. People are, therefore, unaware of what their governments are doing and as a result, goodwill and understanding become elusive. Consequently, sustained Public Relations communication becomes essential if any government or organization is to explain its actions and policies to the public’s understanding, acceptance and good will thereby reducing distinctive areas of conflicts and ultimately averting crisis. Public Relations also acquires importance when governments, companies, social and political organizations recognise in the course of daily business that they have a social responsibility to serve the public (Asemah 2010, p.33).

In governance, public opinion should be considered or appreciated, by creating good communication and information links which will enable the smooth implementation of government’s policies and programmes. Any stable government is equally dependent on Public Relations because the latter’s input in the form of constructive advice on social relations and other issues like crisis management, image laundry, and reputation management would create mutual understanding between the government and its publics. Contributing to Public Relations’ role in government, Black (1991, p.113) cited in Asemah (2010, p.37) states that public Relation in a government

department has two main tasks: to give information on policy, plans and achievements of the department, and to inform and educate the citizens.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Two-way Symmetric Model which depicts a communication relationship where the sender/source and the publics share initiative and power more equally. The Public Relations model may be especially relevant when the aim is to solve problems and avoid conflicts and where a lasting communication relationship is required. Black and Byrant cited in Ugande (2010) as quoted in Asemah (2010, p.355) observe that in the two-way symmetric model, research, feedback and evaluation are used to effect genuine accommodation of differing viewpoints. The symmetric model sees the organization and the publics operating in a mutually acceptable world in which both can advance towards a common goal.

The two-way symmetric model of Public Relations practice uses research not only to shape messages, but also to change organization's behaviour when it is in disharmony with important publics. This model emphasizes the role of Public Relations officers as mediators between organizations and their publics with the goal of achieving mutual understanding.

The model is relevant to this study in the sense that the Wukari Traditional Council provides a link with which it mutually works together with its publics to achieve common goals in the community. The model explains how Traditional Councils strive to live in harmony with their publics by establishing a mutual relationship between them as well as creating and maintaining lasting communication links to achieve their goals.

Methodology

As an exploratory study, this research relies on qualitative method of data gathering and analysis. It is exploratory because no existing research work has been found on Public Relations and Traditional Councils particularly in the study area. Exploratory research, according to Answer Corporation (2012), "is conducted into an issue or problem where there are few or no earlier studies to refer to". Researchers use exploratory research when little is known about a topic and previous theories or ideas do not apply (Lettyann, 2011).

The research is qualitative because the researchers had to analyse the statements made by the respondents. Since the researchers did not use survey

method to gather data, the interpretation of data is not based on figures. Consequently, data were analysed using verbal summary, not percentages. Qualitative research focuses on gathering of mainly verbal data rather than measurements. Gathered information is then analysed in an interpretative manner, which may be subjective, impressionistic or even diagnostic (Experiment-Resources.Com, 2009).

The research method adopted for this study was interview. Rishante (2002, p.15) says interview involves “using of personal interaction to gather data necessary to address the questions studied”. However, face-to-face interview method adopted in this study is a social interaction which may be plagued by factors affecting any ordinary social interaction process. These factors could be time consumption, meeting with arrogant respondents, lack of funds for transportation to respondents’ destination and exposing the interviewers to dangers among others. Unyimadu (2005) says that in “face-to-face interview, information is obtained through direct face-to-face interaction with respondents”. This means meeting the respondents physically and speaking with them.

The researchers choose face-to-face interview because the information required for the study is such that necessitates explanation rather than quantifiable data. In addition, the researchers’ presence in the field made the respondents more attentive to respond to the questions provided more candidly and conversationally. Face-to-face interview also enables respondents to give their broad opinions to questions because room is provided for them to do so. The researchers would have used Focus Group Discussion for gathering data for this study. But due to the fact that all the members of the Council could not be found at the same time and in the same location because of their busy schedules and residences, the researchers decided to use personal face-to-face interview with the members of the Council that were available to generate data. Each of the respondents was interviewed individually.

Population/ Sample Selection

All members of the Traditional Council formed the theoretical population of the study. The Traditional Council comprises sixteen (16) members and extends its services to three local government areas and fifteen (15) districts mentioned earlier in this article. The researchers purposively sampled six (6) members of the Traditional Council who were readily available at the time of the study. In view of the Council’s low population and the common

characteristics which the members possess, the above number of respondents was considered adequate for the study. Moreover, the selected persons are key members of the Council who hold strategic positions and whose opinion could be taken as representative of the entire Council's stand on any issue. This goes in line with what Unyimadu (2005) says about purposive sampling that "purposive sampling selects individuals or objects on the basis of prior judgement about their relevance to the study". He further says that in purposive sampling "you use the unique characteristics they [the respondents] possess to decide who should be sampled".

The six members that were interviewed are:

1. The Aku Uka, Dr Shekarau Angyu Masa-Ibi who is the Chairman of the Council and Traditional ruler of Wukari,;
2. The Secretary of the Council, Mr Gabriel G. Aji
3. Wukari Local Government Chairman, Hon. Douglas Danazumi A. Angyu; and the king- makers who are
4. Manu Idi Agbu (Abon-Achio, Prime Minister,)
5. Manu Adama Atenwunu (Kinda-Achio, adviser)
6. Manu Akhi Angyu (Kinda- Ziken, adviser).

These persons (body of kingmakers) perform several functions in the Council among which are: Election of the Aku Uka, advising the King in settlement of conflict and dispute of all kinds among the people and between them and other ethnic groups, helping His Majesty on the day to day administration of the Council, representing the King in some public functions, serving as intermediaries between His Majesty and the public and the local Government Chairmen who run the affairs of the Local Government Areas.

The research instrument adopted for this study was the interview schedule. Interview schedule, according to Answers Organization (2012), "is an interview with pre-coded questions to produce quick, cheap and easy quantitative data which is high in reliability but low in validity". The instrument contains a total number of sixteen (16) questions which were responded to by the selected six respondents who are key members of the Traditional Council. The responses were documented by the researchers as the interviews were going on.

Discussion

Data used in this study were presented using summary of the responses of the interviewees. The statement of each interviewee was analysed in the form of Explanation Building Technique (see Nwammuo, 2012, p.220) from which deductions were made as follows:

Q1: How does the Traditional Council relate with other traditional Councils in other states?

Answer: A constantly occurring opinion among the interviewees was that the Traditional Council meets members of traditional councils of other states in gatherings like the Northern Traditional Rulers Forum to discuss and settle disputes and plan how to forge ahead in their domains. Sometimes, government (state and federal) invites them to meetings. Chieftaincy meeting was itemised as one of the fora in which the Wukari Traditional Council usually relate with other traditional councils. Festive occasions and even misfortune (e.g. death) were equally mentioned as other fora that bring traditional councils into close contact.

Q2: What does the Council do when it receives other traditional rulers, dignitaries or emissaries from other traditional Councils as visitors?

Answer: In the views of the interviewees, all traditional councillors will go and welcome the visitor(s) and a befitting reception for the visitor(s) is given. The Council supports the person(s) with transport money and presents them with gifts when they are about going. The Council also will send someone to go and check if the visitor arrived his destination safely.

Q3: What impression does the Traditional Council wants to create in the minds of its visitors when it hosts them?

Answer: The impression the Council wants to create is to let the visitors know that the people (the Jukuns) are one irrespective of area of domicile; the Council members agreed that the Council wants to create the impression of being a kind, loving and caring people. The Council wants to create a good relationship between it and the visitors and to gain support from the latter when the need arises.

Q4: What do the Jukun people believe in that they want the whole world to know about them?

Answer: The Jukun people, according to the interviewees, believe in promotion of peace and unity. The people fight wars to ensure fairness and justice and not to make trouble. Also they are a great kingdom and are proud of their culture.

Q5: Is peacekeeping and peacemaking part of the activities of the traditional Council?

Answer: The members of the Council in their views said that peacekeeping and peacemaking was a primary function of the Traditional Council.

Q6: How is this pursued by the Traditional Council?

Answer: The Council calls together the entire village heads, ward heads and religious heads to deliberate on related issues. They meet with the local government council to decide how to go about security matters.

Q7: Does the Council feel concerned about the following issues: marriage, inter-tribal relations and religion to make the community more peaceful?

Answer: The Council members expressed the same view that everybody is entitled to their religion and all religions within the community whether Christian, Muslim or idol worshippers are allowed to worship in the Aku Uka palace. With regard to marriage, the Council settles cases on divorce and also regulates bride price by making sure the man pays the complete bride price to the parents of the bride. The Council has set Five thousand naira (N5000) as a bench mark for bride price. Concerning inter-tribal relations, the Council allows people from other tribes resident in the community to form their unions. The Council also takes advice or seek opinion of various tribal representatives within its domain on some crucial issues. The representatives come to the traditional Council for meetings with the Council members only when the need for it arises and they serve as intermediary between the Council and their tribes.

Q8: Does the Council publish any material or encourage any publication that would promote the cultural heritage of the people?

Answer: The Council encourages the publication of books, calendars and sometimes newspapers, while supporting such efforts with resources like ideas, time, funds and documented materials. An example of

such publications is TAJU calendar which was first launched in 2010 and is widely distributed among the indigenes and non-indigenes. Books like Landmarks of the Reign of Dr. Shekarau Angyu Masa-Ibi, The Jukuns and their Kingship, Shape of Destiny, and Challenges in the Throne of Aku Uka in the 21st century, among others are also published or supported by the Council.

Q9: In what other ways does the Council promote cultural heritage?

Answer: The members of the Council interviewed said the Council organizes cultural festivals and carnivals that have prominent people in attendance especially those from Kwararafa (Jukun) Kingdom and the festivals are covered by the mass media. The interviewees further stated that the Council supports research for documentation and also sponsors media documentaries. The Council is making frantic efforts to put some materials about the cultural heritage of the people in the Internet while planning to build a museum that will enable all researchers to have access to information on the culture. Example of the festivals is the Jukun Youth Day that had just been celebrated in Wukari as at the time of writing this article.

Q10: How does the Council use the coronation of the Aku Uka to promote the Jukun Culture?

Answer: Unanimously, the Council members said the coronation of the Aku Uka is open to all irrespective of tribe and cultural background. There is no restriction to witnessing the occasion and media organizations are invited to cover the event. Things like presentation of kingship to the newly crowned Aku which include Nyipo (regalia), Kahwa (Sword of Justice), Atso-shi (Mysterious Spear) are symbolically performed. Traditional dances and masquerades are displayed to entertain the guests and all sons and daughters of the Jukun Kingdom both home and in the Diaspora are expected to appear in the traditional attire "Adire" as a mark of celebration and honour to their spiritual and political head. All the above listed things are geared towards promoting the cultural heritage as it relates to kingship.

Q11: Does the Council exchange emissaries with traditional Councils elsewhere as it used to be in the time past? If so why?

Answer: According to the interviewees, the Council still exchanges emissaries bearing the title “Jifin-Nge” with other traditional Councils elsewhere in the country as it was in the past. The exchange of emissaries covers virtually all the traditional Councils in the North like the Kano Emirate Council, Sardauna Traditional Council, Sokoto Emirate Council, Adamawa Emirate Council, Mubi Traditional Council and Ganye Traditional Council, just to mention but a few. The Council members added that the Council has a long established relationship with these Councils right from the pre-colonial era when there were only three empires in the North. These were the Kwararafa Kingdom, Kanem-Borno Empire and the Sokoto Caliphate. From these empires emerged other kingdoms which are now collectively known as Northern Nigeria. This has made the present day traditional Councils to maintain and sustain the relationship till date.

Q12: What is the relationship between the Council and the state/federal government?

Answer: The Council members expressed the same view that the traditional Council is part and parcel of the government at all levels in Nigeria. The Council helps in mobilization of the people as well as implementation of government’s policies and programmes. The Council also advises the state and federal government where necessary. An example of issues where the Council had rendered advice is the menace of Boko Haram. In this relationship, the Council collaborates with all the relevant ministries that need or require its assistance.

Q13: How is this relationship maintained?

Answer: The interviewees responded unanimously that the Council as one body works hand in hand with the federal and state governments. Usually, the Chairman of the Council represents the Council at the government level and attends some meetings depending on the issue at stake. The Council members added that the Council has a direct link with the Bureau for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs at the state level. That is where the salaries of the Council members and other funds for running the Council come from.

Q14: Who else does the Council relate with outside its environs?

Answer: The Council relates with corporate organizations both private and public that want to start up business or are already operating in the community. When these organizations come in, they announce their presence in the community by going straight to the Aku Uka's palace on a familiarity visit. The Aku Uka would then attach them to the district head in charge of the district where they intend to do business and then the Council would ask them to sign an agreement to perform their corporate social responsibility to the community. The Council also relates with institutions like the T.Y. Danjuma Foundation that gives free health care to the people as well as institutions like the newly established Federal University, Wukari, Federal University of Technology, Owerri and Kwararafa University, Wukari where the Aku Uka is the Chancellor.

Q15: Are you satisfied with what outsiders know about the Jukun culture?

Answer: The responses of the interviewees show that the Council is not satisfied with what other people know about the Jukun culture because people have expressed ignorance about the culture. For instance, due to religious influence, people seem to regard the culture as fetish and characteristic of idol worshipping. Religious laws concerning marriage now serve as counter laws to the customary laws governing marriage in the land. Another aspect is in the use of language and names which are common identities of a culture but the people in the land prefer speaking and naming their children in Hausa and English at the expense of the local language. This is making the culture to gradually fade away.

Q16: If the level of awareness is unsatisfactory, what is the Council doing to achieve better results?

Answer: The interviewees noted that the Council is making frantic efforts to organize more cultural days as annual events. It is believed that such an event would attract people the world over. The interviewees added that the Council was equally making efforts to design a website where information on various aspects of the culture would be displayed. That is also the same reason why the Council supports publication of materials to promote the culture as earlier noted in this study.

Findings

This research shows that the Wukari Traditional Council in its administration establishes and maintains relationship with other traditional Councils in other parts of the country particularly in the North. The study also reveals that the Traditional Council lavishes hospitality on its visitors with a view to showcasing the fact that the Jukun people are accommodating. This is geared towards creating a good impression in the visitor's mind as a way of projecting the good image of the people.

The findings also show that the Traditional Council believes in and pursues peaceful coexistence, truth and fairness among all classes of people. The council ensures peace in the community through the use of opinion leaders like village heads, district heads, and religious leaders. The Council considers religion, marriage and inter-tribal relations as paramount in making the community peaceful.

The Traditional Council is deeply involved in promoting its cultural heritage through publication of books, Calendars, as well as organizing cultural festivals and carnivals. The coronation of the Aku Uka is another avenue of showcasing the cultural heritage of the people. The Traditional Council also exchanges emissaries with other traditional Councils especially in Northern Nigeria which is similar to the present day diplomatic relations among countries. The Council relates well with both the federal and state governments. It helps in mobilizing and enlightening its people on issues of national importance. The Council further relates with organizations that do business in its domain by providing an enabling environment for the latter to operate.

Conclusion/Recommendations

This research has shown that the Wukari Traditional Council involves itself in Public Relations activities in its daily business in the area of image making, establishing and maintaining mutual relationship, conflict resolution, community relations and publicity. The findings indicate that the Council recognises the importance of Public Relations practice in its administration even though no office is created for such a purpose. In essence, the claim is valid that Public Relations practice has been in Africa long before the advent of its modern form in America and Europe. The fact that the Traditional Councils use Public Relations strategies evidently supports this claim although they do not call it Public Relations as it is now known.

Considering the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

The Council should create a Public Relations unit to be run by an official with a vast knowledge of Public Relations. Government at the three tiers should give priority to Public Relations practice in the traditional institutions setting by strengthening its practice. The Nigeria Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) should also extend its services to embrace traditional institutions in the country through seminars, workshops, conferences among others.

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