

**Communication as an Instrument of Mitigation against the Human Rights Abuses
Associated with Migration across the Mediterranean Sea: A Public Relations Approach**

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Abstract

Unprecedented and catastrophic youth migration from Africa, Middle East and Asia is causing massive deaths across the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea. The youths move in droves in search of greener pastures in Europe. Most of them lose their lives as they defy the risks involved and restrictive measures put in place by European nations and international agencies to combat the scourge. It is attributed to politicians and policy makers' failure in their responsibility of providing means of sustenance and social security to their citizens at home. Yet, manipulative machinations of gangs/mafias and human traffickers who have no regard for peoples' human rights and dignity are aiding the persistent calamity that has raised more questions than answers. This paper explores the underlying factors which facilitate the plague, the human rights abuses associated with it and how the potentials of communication can be effectively harnessed as means of curtailing it. Qualitative and contextual analyses were adopted for accessing literary inputs into it. The study identifies unemployment, poverty, maladministration and human rights abuses in migrants' home countries as the major causes of the migration and the escalation of the sufferings of the migrants due to the intrigues of gangs, mafias and human traffickers who exploit the dire condition of the victims. The study, consequently, recommends effective harnessing of potentials of communication strategies, immediate addressing of the socio-economic situation in the migrants' countries, concerted and political will of all concerned governments and commitment of global agencies and stakeholders in ending the scourge.

Key Words: Communication, Mitigation, Migration, Human rights and Human rights abuses

Introduction

The complexity and scope of human migration is on phenomenal increase. As the day goes by, factors triggering peoples' movement from one part of the world to the other are multiplying (IOM, 2012). Attributed mainly to social, economic and political dynamics, United Nations' agencies estimate that there were 214 million global migrants in 2010, 3% of total global population, movement more pronounced from developing nations to developed countries. As Regan (2013, p. 156) observes:

Of today's 232 million international migrants, 59% currently live in regions of the Developed World. UN's Human Development Report in 2009 stated that there were also some 740 million internal migrants. In total, therefore, about 1 billion persons, or one in seven, currently live outside their country or region of origin" (UNDP, 2009 and UNDESA, 2011).

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Although the easily known reason for migration is search for greener pasture, it has taken a dangerous dimension of crisis situation with thousands of people losing their lives, particularly in the notorious dark corridor of Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea, their major points of crossing to Europe. As the scourge escalates with greater number of youths taking the risk, gangs and human traffickers are facilitating the ugly condition, endangering more lives and worsening the human rights abuses associated with the migrants' woes. As UNSCEBC (2013, p. 19) postulates that:

...there has been growing consensus that migration can be beneficial for all concerned if managed in ways that facilitate safe and empowering mobility, while ensuring that migrants' human rights are respected and protected (hence) international cooperation and partnership are essential in promoting the development potential of migration, while addressing its negative effects.

Yet, the recent situation has been tale of woes and despair, circumstance the former United Nations Secretary General, Banki-Moon in his 2013 Report to the UN General Assembly illustrates thus:

Migration continues to increase in scope, complexity and impact. Demographic transition, economic growth and the recent financial crisis are reshaping the face of migration. At the heart of this phenomenon are human beings in search of decent work and a better or safer life. Across the globe, millions are able to move, live and work in safety and dignity. Still, others are compelled to move owing to poverty, violence and conflict, or environmental changes, and many face exploitation, abuse and other human rights violations along the way, (UN, 2013, p. 111).

Kaplan (2015) a *Washington Post* reporter states "...of the worst ever migrant sea disaster on the Mediterranean - where as many as 850 migrants are thought to have drowned this weekend - had European officials scrambling to address the crisis at what is being called the world's "deadliest border crossing." In the past, migration had been ascribed to mainly conflicts and instability, but today it results primarily from underdevelopment and inversely causing more deterioration of the areas the migrants are departing from, as its direct consequence is "brain-drain", in the opinion of IOM (2012), which outlines the following as the reasons why migration strives:

1. The impact of remittances
2. The importance of labour migration
3. The place of highly skilled migrants
4. The question of human rights
5. The significance of female migration
6. Migration and environmental/climate change

Although the economic gains of migration abound, the negative impacts currently seemingly outweigh the advantages. The effects in terms of human casualties, misery, deprivation, loss of dignity and uncertainty is outrageous. The United Kingdom-based *Independent* (2017, p. 1) reports that “more than 2,000 migrants have died attempting treacherous boat crossings to Europe so far this year, following three more shipwrecks announced on World Refugee Day.” According to the newspaper, the United Nations’ Refugee Agency (UNHCR) also said 129 asylum seekers were missing and presumed dead after they were attacked by Libyan smugglers/pirates, making their boat to sink and “leaving only four survivors from Sub-Saharan Africa.” The newspaper quotes the UNHCR as saying that “the disasters were a reminder of the “grave dangers” facing people forced to flee their countries by war and persecution.” Ridgwell (2015) as well notes that millions of people are on the move across Africa, escaping poverty and persecution.

It is the opinion of Clegg (2017) of *The Guardian* that “without hope at home, thousands will continue to try to reach Europe” and advised that “the EU must not just step up relief efforts, but use its aid budget to help in the countries these people are fleeing.” This follows his report that “hundreds (of) dead last week. This humanitarian crisis on the southern shores of Europe is not new – more than 22,000 people have died trying to cross the Mediterranean since 2000. But we now appear to be seeing a sharp increase in the numbers attempting the perilous crossing, with the result that more people than ever are dying.” Similarly, Amara (2018) while reporting for *Reuters* states that Nigerians have recently been the largest national group among African migrants travelling to Libya and trying to cross from there to Italy by Mediterranean Sea. The Nigerian government waded into the crisis and arranged to evacuate about 5,500 migrants who were stranded and volunteered to return back to the country.

In the same vein, on January 6, *Reuters* (2018) reported that the deaths marked the first known deadly incident involving migrants in 2018, although rescue groups said countless dinghies likely sink each year while making the perilous crossing from Africa to Europe without a trace. More than 400 people have been brought to safety in Italy during the first days of 2018, the interior ministry said. Last year, 3,116 people died trying to cross the Mediterranean, according to the UN's International Organization for Migration, down about 40 per cent on the previous year. Among those who died, 2,832 were headed for Italy, 223 were headed for Spain and 61 were trying to reach Greece. This perennial massive loss of the youths, often after going through tortuous ordeals in the hands of traffickers and pirates is inhuman, degrading and not dignifying. It is, therefore, high time pragmatic measures are made, both in the short and long run to stem the tide. Search for viable solution to this is the main focus of this study.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following questions:

1. What leads the youth embark on the migration despite the ugly consequences?
2. What roles can communication play in stemming the tide of human suffering across the Sahara Desert and Mediterranean Sea?

Conceptual Clarification

Communication: communication is the distribution of perspectives, ideas, messages, information, opinions, knowledge, experiences, ideologies and culture between a source and the receiver/end user or a group and another or between and among nations on issues of common interest, (Nwosu, 1990). With it thoughts are shared between people. It is the transferring of information and messages to another party in a manner it is understood and acted upon, (Odorume, 2015). It is, therefore, a two-way process that involves a 'sender' (message source) and a 'receiver' (the message end user). The former can be an individual, group, institution/corporation, community, state or a nation, just as the latter can also be an individual, group, organisation, community, state or a nation. Communication takes place through the instruments of the mass media. These are technologically powered tools of mass communication/information and used to transmit information to large number of people scattered in space and often instantaneously, (Moemeka, 2016). He states that media technological devices are made to take facts and figures to the public (audience) in a one-way direction and thus are unidirectional in function. Their nature and functions make it a reliable tool for campaign and mobilisation, hence its relevance in attempting to minimise the migration scourge.

Mass Media: the media or press are technologically powered tools of disseminating information. They transmit information to large number of people scattered in space and time uniformly and simultaneously. Being the basis of mass communication informs why they are interwoven with mass communication. But they are second to none in their ability to disseminate information fast, far and wide to instantaneously reach millions of people in different parts of the world (Moemeka, 2016). They have made global communication and indeed globalisation possible, paving the way for regional and international communication. Mass media are broadly classified into: the print and the electronic; these all have had their scope and capacity expanded by technology. Their capacity has further been fast-tracked by the entrant of the new/social media. This new set of media have further closed the gap and space between nations, such that events happening anywhere in any part of the world are received instantaneously by everyone predisposed or with the information gadget, typified by internet, computer and smartphone. The media, therefore, are effective instruments for crusading for the protection of humanity, especially the vulnerable like immigrants.

Migration: migration, the movement of people from one place to another, often across international boundaries, is as old as mankind. UN (2012, p. 9) notes that “human mobility is a fact of life, people have always migrated to adapt to, or escape from, difficulties and disasters, or spurred by curiosity and dreams of a better life.” Migration as a social issue continues to assume complex and complicated dimension as more and more factors trigger the phenomenon. More than ever, its problems have reached some crisis point where the international community seems to have been overwhelmed by the magnitude of the issue with alternative means of its urgent resolution being sought.

Human Rights: ‘right’ as in the phrase human rights was coined from a Latin word *rectus* meaning ‘that to which a person has a just and valid claim. Human rights are based on the belief that members of the society have certain rights and claims that cannot be taken away from them. Disu (2012, p. xx) states that “these rights are inherent in any human being simply because of humanity – the birth right of all mankind. Disu further posits that, the expression “human rights” in its entirety embraces those civil, political, economic social, cultural, groups, solidarity and developmental rights which are considered indispensable to a meaningful human existence.” It is a perception that took a lot of revolutionary metamorphosis following series of legal and other events across the Atlantic, particularly in France, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Perhaps, it was the ordeal and ugly experience of mankind during the world wars that compelled the international community to enunciate the policy as a means of not only forestalling their reoccurrence, but also strengthening the protection of man’s birth rights and human dignity . This resulted in the United Nations Charter on Human Rights in 1945 and culminated in the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 2-21) on December 10, 1948. It charges the United Nations “to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples (and) to achieve international co-operation in promoting and encouraging freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion”, while members should “pledge themselves to take joint and separate action in co-operation with the organization for the achievement of these and related ends” (UN, 1948). This was further domesticated regionally and nationally. In Africa, the then OAU, now AU adopted the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, while in Nigeria it is a component of the Nigeria 1999 Constitution (Chapter IV). Among these alienable rights are those of migrants, people who move across national boundaries. Thus, the basic principles are already in place, remaining their implementation and enforcement.

Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of illuminating the study, two theoretical frameworks, agenda setting and transfer process model were applied.

The agenda setting theory states that the media place issues on the front burner as very important for the public to engage with. The theory originated from Lippman (1922, p. 34) who argues that the media shapes “pictures in our head.” Cohen (1963, p. 54) reinforced the idea and fine-tuned it by saying that: “the media may not always be successful in telling people what to think, but they are usually successful in telling them what to think about.” McCombs and Shaw (1928, p. 88) further endorse the agenda-setting functions of the media by stating that audience not only learn about public issues and other matters through the media, but also learn how much importance to attach to issues or topics from the emphasis the mass media place on them. According to McQuail (2005) the theory is seemingly the way the media through news, current affairs and documentary outputs, focus public attention on defined and limited set of selected issues while ignoring others.

The transfer process model was propounded by Frank Jefkins’ (1985). A strategic instrument for conflict management, the model states that under crisis situations public relations is capable of transforming an ugly state into a pleasant one. According to Jefkins, the effective and professional application of public relations in conflict situations enables changing *Hostility to Sympathy; Prejudice to Acceptance; Apathy to Interest* and *Ignorance to Knowledge*. It is, therefore, as utilitarian and suitable for conflict management in situations like the case in this study. In the context, the human tragedy and gross human rights abuses across Sahara desert, the Mediterranean Sea and in Europe can be revised if the mass media, communication/public relations are suitably applied. The awareness, consciousness, compassion, empathy and concerns it would raise will be a wakeup call for global concerted efforts and stakeholders’ actions to address the tragedy.

Migration as an Issue of Global Concern

Commenting of issues associated with migration in the world currently, Un (2008, p.9) posits:

Current migration flows have placed the issue of migration high on the international agenda. The magnitude and complexity of the phenomenon is such that international migration can no longer be considered peripheral to the mainstream of development policies. Today, every country is affected in some way by migration – either as country of origin, transit or destination, or sometimes a combination of these.

The perspective sums up the enormity and seriousness of the global migration crisis. It is an issue that by the nature of the ripple effects, concerns the entire international community. Until it got to this catastrophic stage, migration was globally welcomed as a healthy development; already more than any other country, the United States of America benefitted from the social phenomenon. Indeed, the United States then criticised the Soviet Union for its restrictive policies against migration, according to Hanson (2010). As well, laws were made to facilitate peoples’ movement from one place to

another. For instance, Grant (2005, p. 3) observes that “Free movement is an element of other economic integration areas, in Africa and Latin America, for example the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).” However, free movement in the European Union is not welcomed as such restrictions are placed to deter it, understandably as a result of political, economic, social and security concerns.

Of course, natural and man-made factors inherent mainly in developing nations not only induced migration, but also compelled resourceful and youthful citizens to leave for more conducive places mostly in Europe. Such circumstances include political instability, absence of good and inclusive governance as is the case in most African countries, economic recessions in most developing nations, hostilities and insecurities as obtainable in the Middle East and Latin America, and generally the search for greener pastures. Indeed, growing economic disparities between countries and lack of gainful employment, decent work, human security and individual freedoms are among the main reasons for current international migration Grant (2005, p. 3) identifies, causative factors of migration as: “international economic imbalances, poverty and environmental degradation, combined with the absence of peace and security, human rights violations and the varying degrees of development of judicial and democratic institutions.”

Ironically, increased spate of migration came with enhanced measures in developed and industrialised West to put more restrictions against free movement. A case in point is the running battle between the Trump administration in the United States and her neighbour, Mexico. Still, migrants are not deterred notwithstanding the odds. Consequently, thousands are drowned in the Strait of Gibraltar while attempting to cross from Morocco to Spain.

In one incident, which illustrates a much deeper tragedy, Italian authorities reported the rescue of a small boat which had run out of fuel, food and water on its journey from North Africa, leading to the deaths of most passengers; 15 out of an original boatload of 85 who were still alive were thought to be Somalis who had travelled from Libya” (Grant, 2005, p.6).

The story is the same as other regions where migrants, using the services of criminal agents, have lost their lives in the course of dangerous journeys – not only by ships, but also by land, including in refrigerated trucks, and by air in the undercarriage of aircrafts. This results from migration policies which rely on border control somewhat on resolving the remote causes and motivation of the risky movements, loss of lives and violation of the right to life, multiplied by the criminal activities of smugglers or traffickers. There is yet sufficient and effective global framework for addressing the nefarious activities of smugglers and traffickers, nor the human rights ‘deficits’ which create the conditions in which emigration – through whatever means – translates into a survival strategy.

Incidentally, rhetoric and platitudes at international fora like the United Nations have not transformed into meaningful actions capable of checking the menace. This is worsened by the fact that domestic issues like political and economic pressures have aided restrictive postures of policy makers and the political class from more liberal policy frameworks to either ease free movement or enunciate protective measures for the migrants. These, as well, have prevented consensus opinion that would have led to collective decisions at the European Union in respect of how to adequately cater for the migrants and their human rights and dignity. Rather, discrimination and inhuman treatments increase as the travellers are seen as rivals by citizens who need the inadequate job positions and other often scarce social services available in their countries. At the same time exploitative labour conditions do not make things easier for the migrants. These manifest variously like threats or actual physical harm to the workers, restriction of movement and confinement, debt bondage, withholding of payment or excessive wage reductions, retention of identity documents so that the worker cannot leave and threat of denunciation to the authorities, according to Grant (2005).

Minds are agitated over these trends in the face of decades' existence of UN-backed draft Principles and Guidelines, supported by Practical Guidance on the Human Rights Protection of Migrants in Vulnerable Situations as well as other related initiatives such as migrants in countries in crisis and the agenda for the protection of cross-border displaced persons in the context of disasters and climate change resulting from the Nansen Initiative, UN (2019). This is besides the United Nations Human Rights (UDHR) as legal entitlements for individuals and legal duties for states. There are worries over the magnitude of these sufferings and abuses in the face of global agencies with enormous powers, platforms and frameworks to act with political will to deter the perpetration of these massive inhuman treatments, abuses and deprivations.

The Human Rights Perspective of the Saharan and Mediterranean Debacle

Sellars (2002, p. vii) states that:

Human rights are as old as civilisation itself." Collaborating her, Pagels (1979, p. 58) observes that "the idea of inalienable rights of human being was often articulated by poets, philosophers, and politicians in antiquity...When Antigone, in Sophocles' play, written in 422 BC, says to King Creon, 'all your strength is weakness itself against the immortal, unrecorded laws of God', she invokes the higher law, the natural rights of man.

Notwithstanding its longevity, why has these human rights continually failed to protect global citizens from the scourge of abuses and inhuman treatment? The global concern over the catastrophe across the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea is not only that thousands of lives are lost there as mainly youthful emigrants attempt to cross for rosier fortunes across Europe, but regrettably the man-

made angle of additional deaths, sufferings and misery masterminded by pirates and human traffickers. They add to the suffering of the emigrants through detention, enslavement, sex-trade and outright sell, thereby suppressing their rights and human dignity. Yet, Hanson (2010, p. 4) notes that “freedom of movement is considered a basic human right.” and quotes the 1215 Magna Carta as providing that:

It shall be lawful to any person, for the future, to go out of our kingdom, and to return, safely and securely, by land or by water, saving his allegiance to us, unless it be in time of war, for some short space, for the common good of the kingdom: excepting prisoners and outlaws, according to the laws of the land, and of the people of the nation at war against us, and Merchants who shall be treated as it is said above.

This insightful remark was part of what eventually formed the UN Declaration of Human Rights; hence other countries including the United States later adopted it into their constitutions and legal frameworks. On their part, GMG (2017) notes that where ‘Migrants’ rights are protected, they are able to live in dignity and security and, in turn, are better able to contribute to society both economically and socially than those who are exploited, marginalised and excluded because human rights norms and standards can be powerful, programmatic and methodological tools for action. This view is in response to the concern generally expressed over the fragrant maltreatment meted out to vulnerable groups of migrants and refugees across the globe. Ironically, those who survive the trauma of abuses by pirates and human traffickers and cross the deadly Mediterranean Sea to Europe are still further subjected to additional hardships and deprivations by their host countries.

The deprivations the migrants face as they move to their destinations are increased by the activities of gangs and human traffickers whose exploitation and human rights abuses add to the uncertainties the migrants face. Unfortunately, though the instruments for checking such vices actually exist, they are weak. Guchteneire and Pécoud (2009, p. 1) regrettably observes that although the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW) was created as:

...the most comprehensive international treaty in the field of migration and human rights, the ICRMW suffers from marked indifference: only forty-one states have ratified it and no major immigration country has done so. Even though it entered into force on 1 July 2003, most countries are reluctant to ratify the treaty and to implement its provisions. This stands in sharp contrast to other core human rights instruments, which have been very widely ratified. This situation highlights shows migrants remain largely forgotten in terms of access to rights;

while the need to protect women and children, for example, is – at least on paper – uncontested, granting rights to migrants is not understood as a priority.

According to Guchteneire and Pécoud (2009), ICRMW which aims at protecting the most vulnerable groups of people, migrant workers, was adopted in 1990 by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly and is meant to set a global standard in migrants' access to fundamental human rights. With the rise in the number of migrants and evidence of their human rights abuses, such a convention is a vital instrument to ensure respect for migrants' human rights. Nonetheless, the Convention has not proven to be of any use. The human and labour rights of migrants remain neglected notwithstanding that "...migrants' labour is increasingly essential in the world economy". This is despite the claim by the Global Migration Group (2008, p. xx) that "Current migration flows have placed the issue of migration high on the international agenda". In any case, UN Human Rights (2013) observes that it is the duty of the United Nations General Assembly "to address in a comprehensive manner the human rights dimensions of migration at the international level and to foster more effective cooperation and coherence between states, international organisations, civil society actors and other stakeholders."

Justifying the migrants' ordeal, Grant (2005) notes that the special vulnerability of migrants stems from the fact that they are not citizens of the country in which they live, they have crossed an international border and – unlike citizens – they may generally enter and live in another country only with the express consent of its authorities. Grant further adds that their plights exacerbated following the 2001 terrorists attack in the United States when UN Security Council urged states to tighten border controls on migration.

Efforts to combat terrorism have placed state security at the forefront in discussions of international migration, often to the detriment of migrants' and refugees' rights. Where governments have introduced emergency measures and tighter immigration controls, they have not always succeeded in addressing legitimate national security concerns without undermining refugee protection and human rights standards. On one hand, migrants are discriminated against, while "the problem is compounded because the measures were introduced in an existing climate of growing hostility and restrictions on the rights of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, and fuelled racism and xenophobia, by presenting irregular migration as a national security threat, (Grant, 2005, p. xx).

As claimed by Martine and Schensul (2013) and Smah (2016) the quagmire is deepened by climatic conditions, as was observed by the former United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, who sounded a note of warning when he addressed a gathering of the world's business and policymaking leaders in no uncertain terms, that in the 21st Century, supplies are running short while the global

thermostat is running high and Ban-ki-Moon (2011, pxx) further states that: “climate change is showing us that the old model is more than obsolete; it has rendered it extremely dangerous; over time, that model is a recipe for national disaster. It is a global suicide pact”, (Ki-Moon, 2011, p. xx). Similarly, the UN’s Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005) warns that “Human activity is putting such strain on the natural functions of Earth that the ability of the planet’s ecosystems to sustain future generations can no longer be taken for granted”.

Communication Techniques/Strategies for Addressing Migrants’ Human Rights Abuses

Communication is subject to diverse definitions. Ogu (2012) observes that people from other disciplines like linguistics; sociology; psychology and philosophy study communication and thus proffer different descriptions to it influenced by their backgrounds. Notwithstanding, communication is the process of sharing ideas, opinions, knowledge, experiences, values and information between two persons or between group and group, or between and among nations on issues of common interest. Communication is relevant in all aspects of life. Indeed, communication directly or indirectly affects development in all sectors, fields and professions. Experts in the field, among them, UNESCO (1980), Bittner (1989), Dominick (1993), Vivian (1999), Okunna (1999), Baran (2004), Nwosu and Uffoh (2005), McQuail (2005), Chauhan (2007) and Moemeka (2012) attest to the potency of communication in aiding social, economic and political developments. Adeseye and Ibagere (1993, p. 3) agree with this claim and notes that communication entails:

(It is) the process by which any person or a group shares and impacts information with another (or group) so that both people (and groups) clearly understand one another. Any means by which thought is transferred from one person to another. Not just giving of information; it is giving of understandable information and receiving and, therefore, transferring of a message to another party so that it can be understood and acted upon.

Communication is a “social interaction through messages”, Gebner cited by Ogu (2012, p. 15). The forgoing explanations indicate that communication is a process that involves a ‘sender’ (message source) and a ‘receiver’ (the message end user). The sender can be an individual, group, institution/corporation, community, state or a nation, just as the receiver can also be an individual, group, organisation, community, state or a nation. This implies that communication flows between individuals and individuals; individuals and group; group and group, organisation and organisation, organisations and state or nation and between nations and nations. Therefore, types of communication range from intra-personal, interpersonal, group, organisational, mass communication and international communication.

The nature of the migration crisis places public relations, a genre of communication, as a veritable instrument for its management and resolution. Whenever informational and communicative tools are required in the resolution of crisis, public relations clearly stands out as a key solution, more so an issue of this scale at global arena. Perhaps, this stems from the pertinent role of public relations as an agent for cementing relations among individuals, agencies, organisations and governments; arousing awareness and consciousness on an issue; a platform for dialogue, diplomacy and negotiation and crusader for solutions to conflict situations, and a proactive tool for social mobilisation to stir the public into a particular behaviour, attitude and action. A truthful, honestly, planned and deliberately researched information based on, usually goal-oriented action or programme, public relations is targeted at creating understanding, trust and responding to issues, as well as revising public negative perceptions. This informs Black's (1989, p. 4) position that it is:

...a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organisation and its publics; involves the management of problems and issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasis the responsibility of management to serve the public interest and helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilise change, serving as early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and sound ethical communication techniques as its principal tools.

Thus, public relations, more so, in synergy with other tools of communication, have the capacity and efficacy to play critical roles in the management and resolution of the migrants and human rights crisis across the Sahara and the Mediterranean. This goal can be attained, among others, through raising of awareness and consciousness of the enormity of the catastrophe; arousing global sympathy for the victims of the disaster; making stakeholders spring to action against the monster, and calling for the strengthening of all vital laws and other frameworks and their enforcement against the calamity (Aliede, 2017). Its effectiveness as an agent of crisis management stems from its application of persuasion to get people involved in issues concerning them, helping them understand the issues, making them appreciate the enormity of a situation, its impact and encouraging them to take actions that will ameliorate the challenges. Nwosu (2003) upholds this view when he notes the functions of public relations to include:

...corporate and other communications, persuasion, attitude and opinion management, information management, counselling; corporate strategy and policy formulation, corporate image and reputation management, event management or event marketing, protocol functions, community relations, corporate social responsibility, employee relations, marketing support, financial public relations, research and evaluation, international public relations (IPR),

planning, publications, corporate advertising, publicity, audio-visual productions (e.g. documentary films), public enlightenment, corporate identity, issues management, crisis management and many other functions related to the list.

Besides its deployment of other communication instruments, public relations as an organ of crisis management, makes use of a variety of strategic implements which make its message reaching every available target audience, or publics possible. Thus, it is the most strategic genre of communication most suitable for confronting the migration monster. This is in line with Aliede's (2013) view that in the event of social crisis like the migration issue, public relations is the most tactical weapon, having been tested and proved in similar areas like environmental disaster. Aliede still observes that communication is the pivot of public relations, after all, conservatively put, communication constitutes about 85% of all public relations processes and activities, and hence resolution of the issue would highly depend on effectiveness of public relations communication inputs, their packaging and presentation.

As additional technique for realising the goal, recommends the seven Cs of communication which are quoted by Skinner, Von Essen and Mersham (2001, p. 77) as means of attaining result-oriented communication:

- i. Credibility: Communication must embody acceptability, believability, lead to confidence and high regard.
- ii. Context: It must reflect the realities of the environment. Should lead to participation and should reaffirm and support the prevailing social setting.
- iii. Content: The message should be meaningful in line with receiver's value. It should be relevant, rewarding and gratifying.
- iv. Clarity: Conveyed message must be in simple, in clear themes, slogans or stereotypes. There should be one voice and no ambiguity.
- v. Continuity and Consistency: There should be repetition for penetration. This is with variation to "factual and attitudinal learning."
- vi. Channels: Use conveyance vehicles familiar to the audience, if this must be massive accessibility and receptability.
- vii. Capability of the audience: Audience's condition should be put into consideration, their affordability, availability, habits, reading ability and level of knowledge and socialisation, all affect the effect and impact of communication, communicator must note this and put it into consideration while packaging their messages.

These guidelines are vital road maps while planning, scribing, producing and packaging social marketing messages like the migration crisis. On how to channel the messages, Ozoh (2001) while quoting Moemeka (1990) notes the need to use the right media, particularly if the aim is to affect change in people's attitudes. As he puts it, the right mass media should change from acting as channels of distribution and transmission to becoming "vehicles for participation, expression and discussion," in order to be effective in inducing culture-bond target audience to endeavour to change their attitudes by accommodating new and enhancing ideas that would engender the needed orientation. Nwosu and Uffoh (2005, p. 46-52) also they are derived such other disciplines like marketing and management advocate the following communication strategies and technique in a situation like this:

- i. Societal Marketing Strategy: This is a marketing philosophy. It uses corporate social responsibility and/or community relations in steering corporate bodies to assist their communities and the society. With these, they showcase themselves to the communities and the public as responsible, responsive and reliable corporate citizens, thereby endearing themselves to their public (stakeholders)
- ii. Social Marketing Strategy: It is different from societal marketing. It is more of a marketing strategy and mainly used in marketing non- profitable "goods, services, ideas and institutions." Examples are environmental issues and problems.
- iii. De-marketing Strategy: De-marketing is another marketing strategy. It is applied in stopping negative behaviours and attitudes like the consumption of harmful goods and services. Instances are cigarette, marijuana and negative behaviours: same sex relation, prostitution and polluting the environment through improper disposal of wastes.
- iv. Offensive Strategy: The public relations manager has "to take the initiative with his public relations actions and communications. It is also called proactive strategy or offensive marketing strategy.
- v. Proactive Strategy: Actions launched are done pre-emptively or with a view to first-hand taking advantage of an emerging situation.
- vi. Pre-emptive Strategy: Though similar to proactive strategy, pre-emptive strategy is applied 'anticipatorily' to counter attack, criticism, danger or an offensive.

Nonetheless the obstacles, the strategies can be aided by the several tools, instruments, channels, vehicles and platforms available for conveying public relations messages and communication. The diversity has been aided by the dynamism of science and technology which enhance the availability of information and communication technologies abundantly at the disposal of today's public relations audience. According to Aliede (2013, p. 14) "in all, these tools assist to address the diverse needs of the various customers and publics of the industry." The varied tools can be classified into three: print,

electronic and programmes/events. Some of them that can be applied to the anti-migrants crusade include: newspapers, magazines, books, billboards, press kits photo-news/photo-speaks, advertorials, supplements, pull-outs, newsletters and handbooks. They also include: radio, television, cinema/film/movie, internet, audio-visual recordings, Facebook Twitter, YouTube, Myspace, blogs and teleconferencing. Others are: advertising, promotions, publicity, events packaging, press conference, seminars, conferences, interviews, sponsorships, presentations, dramas/dances and lobbying.

Undoubtedly, the pursuit of any public relations campaign programme at global scale like fighting the evils associated with migration across the Sahara and the Mediterranean will not be a mean task. It is bound to be affected by numerous factors, some stemming from the migrants, their countries of origin and international policies. For instance, most of the migrants lack the right kind of information due to illiteracy, inaccessibility and fool-hardiness of weathering the storm no matter the outcome. Again, their home governments often do not care for their plights though they are the direct cause of the ugly situation due to lack of good governance and irresponsibility. On the other hand, there is absence of cooperative disposition among nations in implementing existing global frameworks or strengthening weak regulatory legislations required to tame the monster. More importantly, financing a campaign of this magnitude would be daunting due to the high financial requirement; and who provides the funds.

Conclusion

The study, taking a public relations approach, explores how communication can be employed as a tool of mitigating the gross human rights abuses associated with migration across the Mediterranean Sea. Migration has increased in lips and bounds in terms of its complexity, sophistication and even its deadliness; so do the spate of sufferings, deprivations, exploitations and human rights abuses associated with it. The misery associated with youth's migration in droves across the Sahara desert and the Mediterranean Sea in attempt to cross to Europe has risen to unimaginable global concern. As thousands loss their lives in this trendy scourge, there is apparently little or no efforts to curtail the misery. Still, migration has for long been means of economic and social value to the nations of destinations of the movements, as typified by the history of the entire West.

Though some legislative platforms exist for safeguarding the rights of the migrant, as upheld in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other crucial international laws, these seem to be merely principles as they are not really put into practice; they are mere rhetoric. Their effective implementation has never materialised people are perpetually moving to other countries on grounds of social, economic and political factors. As available institutional frameworks fail to act as panacea to this endless crisis, communication readily becomes a suitable tool for its management.

Communication, especially in this age when information and communication technology has positively aided massive human interaction, social cohesion and international relations, is a veritable tool, if effectively and professionally harnessed to curtail the trend. It is one of the numerous outputs of the mass media and has diverse outlets and platforms for its dissemination like public relations, advertising, publicity, promotions, marketing, public speaking and events management. When properly harnessed, communication can go a long way in managing the crisis.

It has the potentials for creating the necessary awareness and awakening of the dangers associated with migration especially in this axis of evil which is the main corridor for crossing to Europe. Besides, communication tools like public relations and advertising will engender warning mechanisms for those still contemplating to take the unnecessary and avoidable risks of going through the area. Equally, there are diverse instruments of communication that will be deployed in massively informing, education, sensitising and enlightening the international community of the essence of collective and urgent actions to end the carnage. They are capable of unifying the international press for massive action against the ugly trend. Such one voice has enormous ability to assist in finding solution to the problem.

Communication is equipped to provide the platform for rallying together all relevant stakeholders, including governments, local and international agencies and non-governmental organisations, for the necessary inputs, policy frameworks, legislations and other vital resources for effective enforcement of requisite measures for the protection of migrants. The mass media and other communication channels will create the congenial and efficacious avenues through agenda setting and transfer process, in line with the theoretical underpinning of the study, so as to effectively resolve the crisis and restore the human rights and dignity of the migrants in accordance with international laws.

Organs of public information, enlightenment, sensitisation, advocacy and national orientation should be mobilised in all the affected countries for socialising the youth against embarking on the dangerous voyages. The heterogeneous utilisation of the social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp which the youth are the major consumers will be effective for reaching them. Pertinently, governments of the countries of origin of the migrants should rededicate themselves to meeting the aspirations of their citizens by providing their needs and welfare in terms of employment opportunities, infrastructure and security, whose absence trigger the senseless mission.

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