

## **Public Relations in Political Party Support: An Assessment of PDP in the Fourth Republic**

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**Abstract:** *The work, 'Public Relations in political party support, An Assessment of PDP in The Forth Republic', is aimed at assessing the use of public relations by the PDP in reaching out its public to sell to them its political intentions. It also serves as a reminder to everyone, in this case, politicians particularly that their audiences cannot be taken for granted all the time, also, that they will not get away with their deceits all the time, as they as public servants are accountable to the public that they are supposed to serve. It is also intended to present the distinction between public relations and other strategies which are confused with public relation activities. The social responsibility theory which was used, implies among others, having to look after, manage, take blame or praise on behalf of one, etc, according to Harris(1991). this is the responsibility of the media to the public, bearing in mind that it owes them obligations as it is their eyes and ears and so takes information from the government to the people and vice versa. The discipline survey research design was adopted for the study, because descriptive study provides a sound basis for solution of social problems. At the end of the work, the conclusion drawn is that, public relations could become the 'curse of our times', if not approached with the right attitude and attributes. If Public Relation is capable of bringing to its practitioner good or evil, depending on how it is practiced, then it behoves on practitioners to make wise decisions considering the fact that Public Relations is undertaken by an organization to promote a favourable relationship with the public, and not as a means of deceiving the electorate.*

**Key words:** *Public Relations, Political Party, People Democratic Party (PDP), Assessment, Politicians, Fourth Republic.*

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### **I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Every organization is established with the aim of serving the people, but primarily looks forward to making its own gains. It however cannot successfully do this without first of all getting the acceptance and support of the people that it wishes to serve, it therefore, has to endear itself to them by selling itself to them in a manner that goodwill be created and established between them, which will subsequently lead to getting their support. By so doing, the organization presents itself as a good citizen who cares and can be trusted and relied upon. It is at this point that one begins to talk about an organization evolving a good corporate image. According to Adeyomola (2009), corporate image refers to the total, general opinion, impression or perception that people have about an individual, a group or an establishment or organization as the case may be, would strive to evolve a good corporate image knowing that this is one of the non-optional decisions to take in a competitive world if one must survive the competition. It is in the light of this that Ogunsanya (1991) in Adeyomola (2009) puts forward steps in developing a good corporate image; they include: (1) An effective management of resources, (2) Industrial harmony and (3) Social acceptance. The one that is most relevant to this work is the third, which states that, to achieve social acceptance, PR Practitioner and management should identify with the aspirations of their host community... even where there are observable weaknesses or errors of judgement in any area, an organization should be sufficiently courageous to admit it and indicate preparedness to walk the path of honour by rectifying its mistakes (Ogunsanya; 1991 in Adeyomola 2009).

So it is too with political parties, going by the fact that they are usually more than one in number and struggle for the electorates attention, support and votes, which could materialise through the laudable programmes of action as mapped out by the political parties, taking into cognisance the calibre of people that are to make up members of the political party and those who are already members.

The question however, is even when an organization develops a good corporate image, on paper, so to speak, it is usually put into practice. Do organizations portray themselves in the light that they usually present to their public? For politics and political parties, they most often take steps that would put them in charge and ahead of all others, they tend to be in control and for them, it does not matter what it takes. This kind of strategy, Goebbels, in Black (1990) refers to as propaganda which he describes as 'an instrument of politics, a power for social control... The function of propaganda is not essentially covert; rather, its function is to attract followers

and to keep them in line... The task of propaganda, given suitable avenues is to blanket every area of human activity so that the environment of the individual is changed to absorb (Nazi) movement's world view'' Going by the activities, actions and inactions of political parties, it is based solely on self-interest and in which it may be necessary to distort the facts or even to falsify them in order to achieve the purpose (Black, 1990).

On the other hand, since the impression that the politicians create in the minds of people is the practice of democracy, then it must be played by the rules. Democracy which is described as a government of the people and by the people, according to Black (1990), cannot function properly without good public relations. He says further that the electorate requires knowledge on how government functions, information on decisions being made in its name, and education in order to take full advantage of the facilities and services provided. There is clearly need for public relations activities to help citizens understand their privileges and responsibilities under any form of government. Clearly every government in power has responsibility to not just its electorates but to its entire citizens, and it believes in such a government to discharge such responsibility truthfully and without any form of biases.

To this end therefore, what is public relations.

Asemah (2010) says it is the management function primarily responsible for shaping and implementing policies of mediation among social, political and economic interests capable of influencing the growth and survival of an organization's basic franchise. He goes further to state that one among some misconceptions of public relations is that... It is based on truth and honesty.

Black (1989) puts forward the definition by the Institute of Public Relations (IPR) as the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between organization and its public. No matter how many definitions are referred to, the bottom line is that public relations seeks to create and establish a sincere relationship between an establishment or organization and its public and that anything outside this can only give birth to distrust and lack of progress. This is why Asemah(2010) affirms that public relations eliminates suspicion and friction thereby providing bridges of understanding upon which goodwill reigns between an organization and the public that deal with.

## **II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Communication is said to be the block for building any kind of society. It will not be out of place to say that no society can survive without one kind of communication or the other. Public relations activities by government by government or any organization for that matter need to be explained, promoted and publicised because it deals with so many public that need to be nurtured, understood and benefited from, through effective public relations practices that involve a two-way flow of information among other things (Nwosu 1990). Government policies and programmes can be effectively and promptly communicated to its public by use of the media, which are used to bridge the gap between the government and the citizens. The question is whether the message gets to the public that it is intended for, and if it does, what impact does it have on them.

There are theories that are put in place in different parts of the world to regulate the activities of the press, one of such theories is the Authoritarian theory, the press that is controlled by such a theory comes under the full control of the government in power, therefore, serving the interest of the ruling class. The press here have no independence, in all their publications they must ensure that they send out only that which are approved and endorsed by those in power. One of the characteristics of this theory is censorship, since there are laid down guidelines for the press to follow, any deviation is viewed seriously and such media organization does not escape punishment. Government allows for private or public ownership under the condition that it will be an instrument for effecting government policy. Criticism of political machinery and officials in power is forbidden. To ensure strict compliance, government appoints editors and heads of media organizations. Taxation and all forms of economic sanctions are imposed on the press, by so doing, the press is forced to rely completely on government, financially and otherwise.

Obviously this kind of theory is not practiced in democratic societies like ours where the media are known to set the agenda for the audience by, according to Schram and Porter(1973), choosing certain issues for emphasis and in this way have indirect effect on the audience.

There is also the social responsibility theory. According to Harris (1991), to be responsible means to be accountable for one's actions or deeds. It also implies having to look after, manage, take blame or praise on behalf of one, etc. He also says that in communication, social responsibility as a concept or doctrine imposes on the journalist certain obligations based on time-tested social values which should guide his editorial duties. In other words, the journalist in his attempt to educate, inform and entertain the people, should always put into consideration the social implication of his editorial write-ups.

Under this theory, the media is supposed to be self regulating but bearing in mind that it owes the society certain obligations that of ensuring that it is not denied information about government activities and so on. Under this theory, the media is controlled through community opinion, consumer action and professional

ethics. Serious invasion of recognised private rights and vital society interest are not allowed. The media is also privately owned, the authorities ensure that both sides, that is government and the public, are fairly represented and that the public has enough information to decide on.

From the two theories of the press stated above, it is obvious that the one applicable to Nigeria in the present political dispensation is the social responsibility theory, evident by the characteristics of both theories.

### **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Both politicians and public relations persons are leaders and communicators, or they should be. The work of both requires honesty, creativity and patience and their successes and failures are general public knowledge. The above statement by Reilhy (1981) points to the fact that public relations has no place for deceit and manipulations, there cannot be any form of secrecy, bearing in mind the fact that the media is aware of its responsibility to the public and discharges it promptly. The issue here is the use or application of public relations in the activities of the PDP as a political party to gain support for itself, win elections and consolidate its hold on power. The problem however, is, were the strategies employed by the PDP from its choice of members, its manifesto, electioneering campaign up to the implementation of its promises which is the point at attempting to consolidate power, public relations, propaganda, or lies and deceit, how much of the practice of public relations does the party know, and how much of it did it put into use. Were the party image makers able to differentiate between public relations and propaganda, lies, deceit, slander and the like in the discharge of their duties when they held sway? Were they mindful of the fact that the media is up and doing and will ensure that it discharges its responsibility to the public?

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. How has PDP implored public relations in the day-to-day running of the party?
2. To what extent has the PDP kept to the promises made to electorates?
3. How truthful is PDP in adhering to its electoral promises to its electorates?

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study are;

1. To seek to know the ways through which PDP implored public relations in administering the party.
2. To know the extent to which PDP as a political party kept to the promises made to the electorate.
3. To know how truthful PDP has been in adhering to the promises it made to its electorates.

## **III. LITERATURE REVIEW**

For us to have a good grasp of what our write-up is really all about, we will do well to take a look at a few definitions of Public Relations which will better serve as our compass or map to where we are heading.

The American Heritage Dictionary, according to Reilly (1981) defines Public Relations as the activities undertaken by an organization to promote a favourable relationship with the public.

This means that the activities of Public Relations as practiced by practitioners can turn bad news to good news, it can change an unfavourable attitude towards a person or organization to a favourable one, it can also, depending on the character or attitude exhibited by the person or organization or the image of himself or itself that it portrays to the public,, earn it an unfavourable relationship with the public.

Oso (1997) states interestingly that, it is reasonable to aver that Public Relations has its roots in politics, especially the class struggle for dominance among the groups jostling for power. However, in the jostle for power, Reilly warns that Public Relations is not merely publicity, it is not merely propaganda, it is not advertising, it is not interference with legitimate flow of news, it is not evasiveness, it is not manufacturing of benefits where none exist, and it is not a refuge or slick operators or amateurs.

He continues by saying that the success of these practitioners, all depend, of course, on who is engaged in Public Relations and what sort of person he or she is and on how much knowledge, judgement, and skill this person possesses. Without these attributes, Public Relations could become the "curse of our times".

Political parties are democratic institutions, structures and bodies that are used for the actualization of democracy and for implementing set goals by politicians. Political party or political organization comes under politics which according to Appadorai (1975) deals with the state or political society, society meaning by the term a people organised for law within a definite territory. He defines it as "the science concerned with the state and of the conditions essential to its existence and development. The New Webster's Dictionary defines it as the opinions, principles or policies by which a person orders his participation in such affairs.

Ogbuagu (1999) defines democracy as: a system of government by the whole population usually through elected representatives, any organization governed on democratic principles... favouring social equality; a system in which policy is decided centrally and is binding on all members.

Looking at the two terms put together, the application of one cannot be divorced from the other, therefore, and party politics cannot be successfully carried out without involving the electorates or the governed. It is in agreement with this fact that Oso (1997:46) insist that If democracy is anything at all, it is the active participation of the citizens of a country in the affairs of that country. One way of ensuring this is the existence of a public space, that is, “an autonomous arena of public debates”. In applying Public Relations for a successful political party activity and governance, Osho (1998) drew a conclusion after examining some wrong notions that some people have about the application of Public Relations, he says

Public Relations in essence provides an articulate, audible and effective voice in pleading for an idea, individual or organization before the seat of public opinion in the hope that the idea, individual or organization shall be accepted.

He goes ahead to say that the above statement points to social responsibility of all that are involved in the practice of Public Relations. In order words, the application of Public Relations to get support for a political party which would also be referred to as an idea, individual or organization will show the people to whom the activity is directed at that they are not being forced into accepting the idea and so on that is being presented to them, neither are they being deceived into accepting it. This is because in the long run the people should be able to see through the action of the political party or organization that they do, much more than talk, as in the words of Onaiyekan (2000) that “Public Relations as widely held by its practitioners is 90 percent doing the right thing and 10 percent talking about it, it is not linguistic acrobatics, untruths, and it is not mere publicity”.

Nwosu (1990), in agreement with Onaiyekan states that modern Public Relations involves doing right and talking about it, all in a planned and systematic manner, that it is not just lobbying, talking about ourselves all the time without backing our talks with concrete actions. This actions will no doubt endear the public more to the one that practices such sincerity, it can forestall distrust, suspicious antagonism and the like and encourage support. It would have also helped in building, according to Seifer in Reilly (1981), a backlog of goodwill that minimises misadventures.

In all democracies, there exist an institutional framework which ensures legitimacy and credibility in the operations of government which are normally taken care of in the area of operations of Political Public Relations. Those institutions Osho (1999) writes, “cannot be annulled or rampered with, without doing intolerable violence to the fabric of society, and so, developed societies do not accept any leader or political party that threatens those institutions”. Those institutions include:

The Executive Arm of government,

The legislature, Judiciary, press, and Public relations in electoral body among others

About the Executive arm, Appadorai (1975) writes that;

The term is used in a board sense to indicate ‘the aggregate or totality of all the functionaries and agencies which are concerned with the

Execution of the will of the state as that will has been formulated and expressed in terms of law”. In this sense it includes not only those (like

the president...and the cabinet) who exercise supreme control but also the host of subordinate officials like policemen and clerks, in term “the civil service” is used to connote all other executive officials taken together.

The application of Public Relations by those in the executive arm of government is according to Osho, essential just as in industry. This is because it enables government all levels to implement programmes policies and activities that are aimed at making better the lives of the people, and by so doing, the promises made during electioneering campaigns are seen to be filled.

The legislature on the other hand is saddled with the responsibility of passing laws in every democracy. The determine ways of raising and spending public revenue and discuss matters of public importance, they also play an important part in amending the constitution.

The use of public relations in the legislature helps in promoting its activities. It is also through the use of public relations that the legislature guides the executive in expressing the wishes of the electorate. It is also through the laws enacted by the legislature that legal backing is given to the people-oriented ideas and policies that are formulated. Osho (1993) points to the fact that “The implementation of the laws will have impact on the people and excite reactions which the media will report and use for commentaries and opinion moulding”.

The judiciary is another institutional framework that is saddled with the responsibility of interpreting the law and applying existing laws to individual cases. In reference to the judiciary, Appadorai (1975) state that “There is no better test of the excellence of a government than the efficiency of its judicial system; for nothing more touches the welfare and security of the citizen than his knowledge that he can rely on the certain, prompt, and impartial administration of justice, whereas, giving back to what Appadorai said, Osho maintains political Public Relations is required in the judiciary to promote democratic values of truth, justice and fair play.

The press which is the fourth estate of the Realm is also referred to as the watchdog of the society who operate as both print and electronic media, also require the services of Public Relations to promote their fairness,



Accuracy, honesty, social responsibility, and decency, all of which bring good to the society, say Osho which is in fact what members of the society want.

#### **IV. METHODOLOGY**

Any research must begin with a blue print which specifies how data relating to a given problem should be collected and analysed. It provides the procedural outline for the conduct of any given investigation. Nwogu(1991), classify research design into five. These include; historical, case study, causal comparative or ex-post facto, experimental and survey designs. Research designs provide the researcher with the necessary framework or blue print for tackling a particular social problem. From the foregoing, the descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. This reason is because, as Green et al (1992) remarked, descriptive study provides a sound basis for the solution of social problems even though it does not explain the nature of relationship involved. The basic principle involved is to find correlates of the behaviour it is desired to predict.

#### **POPULATION**

The population covers all people of voting age nationwide, that is people from 18years and above and who belong to all the political parties, it also covers those who may not really belong to any of the political parties. The study cuts across the sexes, social, economic and religious background. A sample of 600 were taken, out of which 480 representing, representing 80percent filled and returned the administered questionnaires.

#### **V. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

Three data collection instruments were used. These include; interviews, wherein questions were asked verbally, those who volunteered to provide answers to the questions. Secondary materials such as magazines also provided the needed data and of course the questionnaire which were administered to respondents who filled and returned them. This approach according to Ezejelue and Ogwe (1990) was to elicit relevant information from the respondents in order to maintain a high degree of precision. In effect, the instruments were adopted to allow for more flexibility in the research. Thus the circumstances of the interview with the research goals of valid and reliable information were matched.

The use of secondary materials is to get some facts from what other researchers have done in their works as they relate to this work. This was to make for better comparison of information gathered from the interview session and the questionnaire which enabled the researcher know whether the weight was more as regards what had been read. The questionnaire was also used to obtain information on a number of factors such as gender, socio-economic status, exposure and the respondent's knowledge of the subject matter and how they feel about its application by the PDP.

The questionnaire and interview session which were used to elicit information from respondents were personally administered by the researcher and a field worker who volunteered assistance especially in the area of interpretation where the need arose. Having administered the questionnaire, the researcher allowed the respondent complete it and collected it on the spot. As for the interview too, the respondents were asked questions and answers to the questions were written down as they came.

#### **VI. DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION**

##### **Introduction**

The process of analyzing data and making inferences from them can be viewed as involving a number of sequential steps, it must be noted that data processing and analysis are interrelated activities in a research process. This means that data analysis is carried out through editing, coding, tabulation. According to Akpa et al (2000), the inter-relationship may describe the sequence of data analysis process to entail three phases as follows:

Organizing the raw data into measured order such as arrays tabulation, data matrices, and percentages

- Summarising the data (graphical presentation, measure of central tendency and dispersion)
- Selecting and applying appropriate analytical methods to manipulate the data so that their inter-relationships and meanings become evident.

In effect the data collected to complete this research are presented, interpreted and analysed using appropriate statistical method to realize the objective of the study. Samples of 600 respondents were taken, out of which 480, representing 80 percent filled and returned the administered questionnaires.

Research question 1: How has PDP implored public relations in the day-to-day running of the party?

It was from research question one that questions (2,3 and 4) from the questionnaire were drawn. The three questions are presented separately in order to find out whether they actually provide answers to the research questions.

**Data Analysis**

This section has to do with analysing the data collected with frequencies and percentages. Presentations with frequencies and percentages helped in making observations and the remarks.

There are 13 questions in all which are relevant to providing answers to the relevant questions.

**Table 1a**

Question No. 1	Response	Frequency	Percentage
<b>PDP implores public relations in the day-to-day running of the party.</b>	Strongly agree	144	30
	Agree	192	40
	Neutral	0	0
	Disagree	144	30
	Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>480</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1(a) was designed to ascertain whether or not PDP uses public relations as a strategy to contain the problems that arise within the party. From the responses gotten, 144 respondents representing 30% strongly agree that PDP uses public relations, 40% or 192 respondents agree, there was no neutral respondents but 144 or 30% of the respondents disagree with the assertion that PDP uses public relations, there was also no one to strongly disagree.

**Table 1(b)**

Question No.2	Response	Frequency	Percentage
<b>PDP remains as an indivisible party</b>	Strongly agree	0	0
	Agree	240	50
	Disagree	240	50
	Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>480</b>	<b>100</b>

To ascertain the strength of the PDP, question 2 sought to know whether there is unity in the party enough to keep it as one, no respondent strongly believes so, 240 or 50% of the respondents disagree, non strongly disagree.

**Table 1(c)**

Questions	Response	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Does PDP comprise of men of honour and integrity?</b>	Strongly agree	0	0
	Agree	96	20
	Neutral	96	20
	Disagree	240	50
	Strongly disagree	48	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>480</b>	<b>100</b>

Question No 3 sought to know whether PDP can boast of men who can be vouched for anywhere and the responses where 96 or 20% of the respondents could not say whether or not they are men of honour and integrity. 240 respondents representing 50% disagree with the assertion while 48 or 10% of them strongly disagree that the party comprises of men of honour and integrity.

**Table 1(d)**

Question No.4	Response	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Is PDP implementing its programmes within the party according to its promises?</b>	Strongly agree	0	0
	Agree	144	30
	Disagree	336	70
	Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>480</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above provides answers to the question which sought to find out if PDP keeps its within the party according to its promises. No respondent was found to strongly agree, 144 or 30% however agreed while 70% or 336 respondents did not agree that PDP implements its programmes within the party according to its promises. No respondents strongly disagree with the assertion.

## VII.

## FINDINGS

Considering answers gathered from questions 1,2,3 and 4, the answer to research question one is that the use of public relations by the PDP, to take care of its internal problems is either not good enough, or it is not pursued with the seriousness and sincerity that it deserves because according to the 144 or 30% respondents who strongly agree and 192 or 40% of the respondents who agree that PDP uses public relations strategies, it is expected that the condition of events within the party and among the party members should not be as awry or sour as it is, because public relations strategies when applied to situations rightly, are supposed to promote laudable political advances, promote favourable relationship with the public, whether external or internal and is supposed to turn an unpleasant situation to a pleasant one, it shows that all is not well with the party because 50,50 can go either way which is not healthy for the party.

Furthermore, a look at table 1(c) which seeks to know whether the PDP comprises of men of honour and integrity, the responses were 96 or 20% agreeing with the assertion, the same number of respondents of 96 or 20% strongly disagree, giving clear indication that a lot is wrong with the party, not just internally but externally as well. According to Ogoh Matthew Idoko, a Political Science student of the Benue State University, men of honour and integrity do not go back on their words but that Obasanjo and the PDP did just that when they suddenly changed direction from their policy to address the problems of the suffering masses, thereby, dashing their raised hopes.

Austin Ohonsi, a staff of Chevron Warri, while in Makurdi briefly, corroborates Ogoh's claim when he said that, the PDP was able to identify the pressing needs of the people and promised them during its electioneering campaign that it would take care of these problems while in power, only to renege on its promise after getting the people's votes and so for this reason, the party cannot be said to comprise of people of honour and integrity.

As for whether the party remains one indivisible party or not, it is not surprising that the people who say no loudest, are members of the party, most of who have varying opinions on issues that affect the party at the national level where Modu Sherrif leads one and Makarfi leads another, is a clear testimony. This attitude is not a recent development, as far back as the year 2000, the Newswatch Magazine of July3, 2000 carved a bold headline of the cover story on page 14 which reads, 'A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF', where some founding fathers of the PDP bared their minds on the goings-on in the party which they are not in support of, in a communiqué, the group accused the Obasanjo government of subverting the national assembly through the installation of a senate president and speaker of the House of Representatives who can be manipulated at will'. The late Sunday Awoniyi, one of the contestant for the chairmanship position of the PDP then, who was also one of the founding fathers of the party had said that 'our party needs redemption'. He went further to state that 'we've got to a certain stage today in our party where people felt that we do not seem to be doing well, electorally, in the eyes of the electorate... Any PDP member who says that all is well with the party and with the organs which set up the presidency, itself and the legislature must certainly be living out of Nigeria, or cucooland.'

Also Albert Legogie, a onetime Deputy Senate president in the botched republic said that the PDP lost its soul during its convention. It was then that election was held to elect a new chairman for the party among others, Chief Barnabas Gemade emerged winner in an election that was said to be 'stage-managed by the people's Democratic Movement, PDM, a faction within the PDP headed by Atiku Abubakar, Vice-President'. Another case in point was when the late Okadigbo was Senate President, he and the then Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ghali Na'Abba were against the executive arm of government in the issue of the increase in the pump price of petroleum products. The crack on the wall in the house was also evident in the choice of Senate President by both the then President Obasanjo and then Vice-President Atiku, where Obasanjo was said to prefer the late Evan Eweren to Atiku's Okadigbo whose removal, Obasanjo was said to be instrumental to. The then Chairman of PDP also did not hide the fact of disunity in the party while answering a question from a reporter of the Newswatch Magazine of December 1999 said, 'I think the position of disunity in our party and the feeling of non involvement of certain group interests in our party today indicates that there is need for serious reconciliation'

One of the biggest acts of dishonour displayed by the PDP was "The cover up" as Janet Mba-Afolabi (1999) puts it in the case of forgery and falsification of documents levelled against Ibrahim Buhari, former speaker of the house of representatives Mohammed Kolo, an Abuja Chief Magistrate before whom Buhari appeared was said to have remarked sadly on the handling of the Buhari fraud scandal "by relevant authorities from all levels". Facts were said to have emerged which "indicates some government functionaries, security agents and party leaders for their role... the "the big cover up of the scam". The PDP national leadership was said to have "suppressed attempts by INEC and the SSS to verify the document presented by Buhari for the National Assembly election".

From the above statements, one can rightly infer that the PDP did not, and is still not practicing the kind of public relations that would yield positive dividends for it as evidenced by the problems that abound in the party, the responses from tables 1 (b, c, and d) testify to this fact.

**Research question Two:** To what extent has the PDP kept to the promises made to electorates. Questions 4, 5, 6 and 7 provide answers to the research question.

**Table 2 (a)**

Question No. 4	Response	Frequency	Percentage
To what extent has the PDP kept to the promises made to electorates	To a large extent	0	0
	To some extent	96	20
	Not at all	336	70
	To a negligible	48	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>480</b>	<b>100</b>

From table 2 (a) respondents who say that PDP kept to the promises made to electorates only to some extent are 96 or 20% while 336 or 70% of the respondents say the PDP does not keep its promises at all. 48 respondents representing 10% say it is only to a negligible extent that the PDP keeps its promises to the electorates.

**Table 2 (b)**

Question No. 5	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Did the life style of Nigerians improve under the PDP government	Strongly agree	98	20
	Agree	240	50
	Disagree	144	30
	Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>480</b>	<b>100</b>

As reflected in the table above 96 respondents representing 20% strongly agree that the life style of Nigerians improved, 240 or 50% agree while 30% or 144 respondents disagree, no respondent strongly disagreed.

**Table 2 (c)**

Question No. 6	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Did PDP programmes affect your life style positively?	Strongly agree	48	10
	Agree	288	60
	Disagree	0	0
	Strongly disagree	144	30
<b>Total</b>		<b>480</b>	<b>100</b>

Question 6 which sought to know if the programmes of the PDP affected the public positively got 48 respondents or 10% strongly agreed, those who agree are 288 or 60%, no one disagreed, 144 respondents or 30% strongly disagreed.

## VIII.

## FINDINGS

The responses provided in questions 4, 5 and 6 provided the answer to research question two which is whether the PDP kept its promises to the electorates or not. Judging from the responses in question No.4 which shows that those who agree are only 20% or 96 of the respondents and those who disagree being 336 or 70% of the respondents while those who strongly disagree are 48 or 10% of the respondents, it is obvious that the answer is that the electorates did not see the PDP keeping its promises to them. Claims from literature available supports these responses as well as from oral interviews conducted. The late Gani Fawehinmi, a radical lawyer and human rights activist said in Newswatch Magazine of June 2000 that ‘Obasanjo has not succeeded in riding the country of corruption as promised.’ Today it is this corruption that has accumulated over the years that the present administration of Muhammadu Buhari says ‘if we don’t kill it, it will kill us’. Furthermore Balaraba Musa, one time governor of Kaduna state, in his review of Obasanjo’s first year in governance said that when he was sworn in on May 29, 1999, Nigerians were happy that they would see fundamental changes, but unfortunately when appointments were announced, Nigerians became doubtful. Also, Edwin Ume-Ezeoke, one time speaker of the house of representatives in the second republic said that what was happening in the PDP runs counter to the dreams of the founding fathers and members of the party which was formed for the restoration of genuine democracy, good governance, promotion of honest and responsive government as well as restructuring Nigeria in the spirit of true federalism among others. In the Newswatch of October, 2000 too,



opposition groups in the country put their ‘Thumbs down for Obasanjo’ when the All People’s Party accused the PDP-led Federal government of failing the country by not living up to its electoral promises.

This accusation was put forward by the chairman of the All Peoples Party, he mentioned the PDP’s inability to halt the fuel scarcity at the time by making the refineries fully operational as it promised, and stop non-payment of worker’s salaries.

The Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), also noted with dismay among other things, the inability of government to stop devaluation of the naira which, as at October 2000, had devaluated at 35percent and people lost their jobs as a result of factories that shut down which was contrary to government’s promise of creating more jobs for the unemployed. Unfortunately, the devaluation has continued at an even more higher percentage and plunged the economy of the country into recession. All these run contrary to a statement credited to the then chairman of the PDP after his election as chairman in which he said ‘The management of these successes need strong hands as we enter the next millennium. In doing so, we have to be guided by the manifesto and programmes of the party, so that we implement the promises that we made to Nigerians and also to integrate all the various interests in the party.’

As for responses for question No.5 which sought to know whether the lifestyle of Nigerians improved under the PDP, the responses were 96 respondents representing 20% strongly agreed that the lifestyle of Nigerians did improve 240 Or 50% also agreed, whereas 30% or 144 of the respondents disagreed. Also question No.6 responses are that the programmes that were implemented by the PDP did affect the lives of the people positively, 288 or 60% also agreed, non disagreed, whereas 144 or 30% of them strongly disagreed.

The inconsistency in answers shows that not every Nigerian or electorate is satisfied with the position of government in its attempt at making the lives of the people better than it was. A look at some oral responses and some literature will prove this. Balaraba Musa, a former governor of Kaduna state in his view that the lifestyle of Nigerians had not improved, stated that ‘You can talk about democracy when the will of the people is real, but is it real in Nigeria? You talk about democracy when people have equal opportunity, but can you talk about equal opportunity in Nigeria where so many people cannot have one square meal a day?’ Late Gani Fawehinmi, the radical lawyer said that many Nigerians resorted to herbal medicine because they could not afford modern medicine and that the mortality rate in the country at that time was unbelievably high. He did not believe in the poverty alleviation programme of the government because according to him, unemployment rate was worse than before Obasanjo took over government. Also, the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) and National Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA) had at that time warned that the increase in fuel price no matter how infinitesimal, adds to the costs of production of goods in the country. Cadbury Nigeria PLC said it spends over N15million per year to fuel its plants, with the increase in pump price of fuel at the time, it meant an additional cost to its operational expenses. To recover cost, it may rationalise its work force or increase the price of its products.

**Research question three;** How truthful is PDP in adhering to its electoral promises to its electorates?

Questions 7, 8, 9 and 10 will provide answers to the question

Research Question Three:

**Table 3 (a)**

Question No. 7	Response	Frequency	Percentage
The PDP is truthful to the electorates	Strongly agree	0	0
	Agree	96	20
	Disagree	336	70
	Strongly disagree	48	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>480</b>	<b>100</b>

As indicated in table 3a, no respondent is thoroughly convinced that the PDP is truthful to the electorates, however, 96 or 20% of respondents agree while 336 respondents representing 70% disagree that PDP is truthful, in like manner, 10% or 48 respondents strongly disagree.

**Table 4 (b)**

Question No. 8	Response	Frequency	Percentage
The PDP is deceptive to the electorates	Strongly agree	48	10
	Agree	336	70
	Disagree	96	20
	Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>480</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4b shows that 48 or 10% of respondents strongly agree that PDP is deceptive to the electorates, while 336 respondents or 70% agree, 20% 96 respondents disagree with the assertion, while no respondent strongly disagree.

**Table 4 (c)**

Question No. 9	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Does the PDP take views and opinions of the electorates into cognisance in taking its decisions?	Strongly agree	0	0
	Agree	48	10
	Disagree	288	60
	Strongly disagree	144	30
<b>Total</b>		<b>480</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4c shows that respondent strongly agree that the PDP takes the opinion of electorates seriously in taking decisions, 48 or 10% of the respondents however agree, 288 respondents representing 60% disagree with the claim while 30% or 144 respondents strongly disagree.

**IX.**

**FINDINGS**

Considering questions 7, 8, 9 and 10, the answer to research question three is obvious since no respondent strongly agree that the PDP is truthful to electorates while only 20% of the respondents or 96 of them agree to the claim, 80% of the respondents do not accept the claim as 336 representing 70% disagree while 48 representing 10% strongly disagree, this can be found in the responses on question No.7. In question No.8 which asks whether the PDP is deceptive to electorates, 48 respondents representing 10% strongly agree, 336 or 70% of the respondents agree, while 20% of the respondents or 96 of them disagree, there was no one to strongly disagree. Question No.8 provides the following responses, to strongly agree that the PDP takes decisions bearing the views of the electorates in mind, no respondent did, 48 respondents or 10 % however agreed while 288 or 60% of the respondents disagree with the support of 144 or 30% of the respondents strongly disagreeing. Question 10 seeks to know whether PDP takes care of the electorate needs above that of the interest of party members, 96 respondents or 20% agree, 144 representing 30% of the respondents disagree, also 240 or 50% of the respondents strongly disagree. Let’s also take a look at a few interviews and literature that will support these claims so as to emerge with a definite answer.

The major crisis in the country in 2001 was that of whether the petroleum sector should be deregulated or not, while the general public was against the move, the federal government insisted that there could not be a better option even though conflicting statements kept coming up, while the then information minister, Professor Jerry Gana kept saying that the federal government had not yet taken a stand on the issue and that they were waiting for the views of the general public on the matter, President Olusegun Obasanjo was credited with a statement on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of march 2001 on the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, that deregulation was inevitable, meaning that whether the people wanted it or not, there was no going back on the matter, Comrade Boga Abuul, the then NLC chair in Benue State, in a statement during a demonstration against petroleum products deregulation, described the government’s moves as a betrayal of the confidence of the Nigerian people, also, while reacting to the issue, the then president of the Nigerian Labour Congress, Comrade Adams Oshiomole insisted that all government’s claims on the matter amounted to lying to the public.

Furthermore, in connection with the issue of furniture allowance to members of the National Assembly at that time, the late Gani Fawehinmi did say ‘Why did you tell us that you are not going to pay for furniture allowance, and you gave them N3.5million each? Why did you do that? You deceived the Nigerian people.’ This is because government had said that it was not giving the National Assembly members any furniture allowance because the general public was against it, but it gave them. Further instances to show that the PDP led government was deceptive was a case in point in the year 2000 when government and labour had agreed to settle on the pump prices of petroleum products at that agreement, a litre of petrol was pegged at N22, diesel N21 and kerosene N17. The newswatch magazine of June 2000 had reported that, it gathered authoritatively, that Obasanjo’s apparent surrender to the demand of labour was a ruse, and that the prices of petroleum products will rise further, sooner than later. It was also said that the president took the decision to increase pump prices without consultation, if the increase is intended to better the economy which will consequently better the lot of the people who are saying no to the increase, one wonders, why the insistence. Idris Abubakar, a senator in 1999 said that the refusal of president Obasanjo to consult the National Assembly before embarking on the price increase was a breach of trust and breach of obligation to the people.

## X.

## CONCLUSION

It was pointed out at the beginning of this work according to Reilly (1981) that; Public relations properly practiced can have a positive effect on society by presenting a deeper view of various social entities, it can calm dissidents, squelch harmful rumours, promote decent health habits, argue for safety, or promote laudable political advances. It can be rewarding to the practitioner, essential to the manager, helpful to the consumer.

He also states that public relations could become the 'Curse of our times,' if not approached with the right attitude and attributes, if public relations is capable of bringing to its practitioner, whether good or evil depending on how it is practiced, then it behoves on practitioners to make wise decisions considering the fact that 'Public Relations is undertaken by an organization to promote a favourable relationship with the public,' and not as a means of deceiving the electorate. It will be wise for politicians to wake up to the realisation that the general public are able to clearly differentiate between deceit or propaganda from public relations, therefore, to adopt a certain strategy and give it the name of Public Relations will only spell doom for the practitioner as it will not yield the desired result, this is evident from the responses and secondary materials where-in they claimed severally that the government was being deceptive to the electorates.

Furthermore, from the responses, it was gathered that some respondents had stated that at the initial stage when the various PDP governments, from 1999-2015 came on board, they created the impression that all would be well for Nigerians, but no sooner had they assumed office than they began to dance to new tunes which led to expression of disappointments, the thing to know is that the practice of Public Relations must be consistent, it is this inconsistency that leads some people to refer to even the real Public Relations strategy as propaganda and the like and when they see deceit, corrupt practices, they also refer to them as Public Relations, the line has to be drawn by practitioners.

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