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THE LIBRARY, INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS, ADVERTISING, AFRICAN ORAL TRADITIONS AND CHALLENGES OF COVID-19

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Abstract

COVID-19 pandemic is a world issue. It has claimed lives globally, jeopardized economic, political, social and religious activities in the world beyond human imagination. Several approaches have been adopted including, physical and social distancing, vaccination, lockdown, cleanness, disinfectant usage, wearing of face mask et cetera. There had also been wide local public relations, and advertising within countries of the world with relatively low international public relations and advertising. The library itself makes much impact in tackling the challenges of COVID-19, likewise Africa oral tradition. It is on this background that this research finds the problem that forms the study on the backdrop that a well sophisticated international public relations and advertising, library upliftment, and highly preserved African oral tradition are seriously lacking. It is discovered in this research, that earnest upliftment of sophisticated international public relations and advertising, library, and African oral traditions will go far and seem better than putting more interest on the local public relations and advertising, library outfits and African oral traditions. The study therefore aims at re-echoing the role of international public relations and advertising uplifted library status and improved oral traditions in Africa in intensifying efforts in tackling the challenges associated with the pandemic COVID-19.The research recommends among other things that the library, African oral history, mass media and its related components should be involved in tackling the challenges of COVID-19. Phenomenological and historical research methodology are employed, data were generated from primary and secondary sources, e.g. interview, dictionary, Journals etc. The data got were analyzed with descriptive style of data analysis.

Keywords: Library, African Oral Tradition, COVID-19, International Public Relations, Advertisement.

Introduction

Public relations advertising library, oral history of African people would never be put in place without the recognition of certain components Grunig and Hunt (1984:12) have identified four components which include: management, communication, organization and publics. Management deals with how best to co-coordinate activities of an enterprise to effective output. Communication deals with understanding whatever message that is being sent across. Organization stands for any group organized with or for a common aim or interest. Public is any group or groups of people held together by a common interest. In most cases, the public do not necessarily have financial stake tying them because they relatively differ in terms of stakeholders.

Advertising on the other hand, is always in most things people do, but the problem is that people appear to be unaware of it. Benett etal (2020:4) point that: "advertising uses every possible media to get its message through. It does this via television, print (newspapers, magazines Journals etc), radio, press, internet, direct selling, hoarding, mailers, contest, sponsorship, posters, clothes, events, colours, sounds, visuals, and even people." When public relations and advertising are placed independently, they are seen assisting each other favourably. At a time, they appear to find it difficult to exist in the absent of the other. They are for the public, they are for organization, they are for effective management, and finally, they are for communication and use communication as a viable tool. These components are applied at any level of public relations and advertising.

The library itself, without adequate collaboration with other sources of information on a very high standard would not yield extra-ordinary results on the face of COVID-19 challenges. The library would need to connect with African oral traditions for sourcing and preserving information that are historical in nature on occurrence of a similar respiratory related health issues and how they were treated or managed. This can make the library to assist in promoting African health care measure that the outer world relegates. In the same vein, the library, international public relation and advertising can offer a wide spread awareness. A serious look at the fact that the library, African oral tradition, and public relations and advertising provide effective results in tackling issues affecting human health and otherwise, and for the fact that COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating the entire welfare of the universe, more assiduous attention on library, African oral traditions public relations and advertising at international standard and elevated levels would proffer most reliable panacea to the control and termination of the pandemic COVID-19. This research has perceived low application of interest on highly upgraded library, oral traditions of African origin and international public relations and advertising as a problem in the study. The paper finds out that upgrading of the public relations and advertising, the library and African oral tradition in fighting COVID-19 will be of utmost benefit to the world. The research therefore, aims at re-focusing on the attention of the world towards using the library, African oral tradition, international public relation and advertising as viable tools for the eradication of COVID-19 for humanity. It also recommends among other things that the mass media, library, African Oral history, and their related integrals should not be taken for granted in the course of tackling COVID-19 pandemic and its associated challenges. The research adopts phenomenological and historical research method. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources which include oral

interview, the internet, dictionary, textbooks, journals and so on. These data were analyzed with descriptive analytical style.

Classification of terms

The terms that are clarified in this work are: COVID-19, International public relation and advertising, library and African oral tradition COVID-19 has been buttressed by World Health Organization (W.H.O) in Okafor (2020:305) thus:

> COVID-19 is the name given by the WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO) on February 11, 2020 for the disease caused by the novel corona virus SARS/COV2. It started in Wuhan, China in late 2019 and has since spread worldwide. COVID-19 is an acronym that stands for coronal virus diseases of 2019. Historical on December 31, 2019 strange new Pneumonia of unknown cause was reported to the Chinese case or country office. A Chester of these cases originally appeared in Wuhan… China, and COVID-19 is a respiratory infection that originated from Wuhan, has gone round the world disturbing, virtually all aspects of human livelihood.

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease. Though a virus that originated from Wuhan, China. Within African states there are records of respiratory infections that oral traditions have provided information for their treatment and management. The library can also get such health information and preserve them. International public relations and advertising can relate and advertise them to countries of the world for global widespread.

Library on the other side of the coin is defined by Haider (2017:1) thus:

> Library, traditionally collection of books used for reading or study, or the building or room in which such a collections is kept. The word derives from the Latin *liber* "book" whereas a latimized Greek work, bibliotheca, is the origin of the word for library in German, Russian, and Romance languages. From their historical, beginning as places to keep the business, legal historical and religious records of a civilization, libraries have emerged since the middle of the 20th century as a far-reaching body of information resources and services that do not even require a building. Rapid developments in computers, telecommunications, and other technologies have made it possible to store and retrieve information in many different forms and from any place with a computer and a telephone connection.

The library keeps written records in hard and soft copies / forms in the fast developing and developed world. The library from all indications is a means of presenting information or data. Oral tradition had been the major means of circulating and preserving information among Africans. In fact, it is the library of Africans. This is one of the reasons why the Africans reverence the aged because they belief the elders are information storage unit of their various communities. Ugwu and Ugwueye (2004:22) point thus:

> …African Traditional Religion has no written scriptures, founders and reformers, one then wonders about where researchers in the subject can get information. African Traditional Religion has authentic sources of information

> but since these sources are not written, they are better designated "Oral traditions". It is these oral traditions that form the background of information in African traditional society, on every aspect of their lives, be it social, economy, religion, politics, health etc.

Idowu (1973:85) adds that: "these oral traditions are our only means of knowing anything at all of the people's interpretation of the universe and the supersensible world, and what they think and believe about the relationship between the two". Oral traditions have been the data or information base of Africans centuries ago, and in the contemporary time.

International public relations could be seen as efforts to establish mutual beneficial relations with the public of other nations. The involvement of many nations could trigger problems of language differences, long chain levels of media and public relations development, antipathy cum apprehension toward U.S, companies, as it concerns cultural, economic, political and military influence. Despite these barriers, available remedies can curb or manage them. The International corporate public relations design a new age of global marketing for extensive international business. Burchell (2010:2) defines International public relations as: "the planned and organized effort of a company institution or government to establish mutually beneficiary relations with publics of other nations". International public relation covers several scopes of relations between countries. As the study goes on, more of these information on public relations, advertising, library and oral tradition or history of Africans essence, in tackling COVID-19 pandemic and its associated challenges would be emphasized.

Advertising is commonly viewed among individuals as an affair that concerns marketing and commerce. Summers (2001: 20) defines advertising as: "the activity or business of advertising things on television, in newspapers, etc". Advertising as an activity extends beyond commercial activities to politics, governance, cultural, technological, academic, health and other activities. The essence of advertising here is for tackling the challenges associated with COVID-19

The Essence of Library, African Oral Tradition, International Public Relation and Advertising in Tackling Challenges Associated with COVID-19 Pandemic

The library has some importance on emergency situations. COVID-19 pandemic and its associated challenges could be seen as an emergency situation that to attracts the attention of the world at large. During the COVID-19 pandemic, libraries appear to have turned to disaster management centres IGI Global (2020:1) states thus:

> …response to COVID-19 mandates teachers, students, and librarians globally are being forced to transition to an online – only environment, as many prominent schools, libraries, and universities are closing their campuses. Through this transition, all parties within the educational system are being challenged to quickly adapt to this new environment, with librarians being responsible for ensuring all library resources are available from a remote location. However, according to a recent wired article, reference materials often goes beyond providing reference materials, as many libraries are being turned into emergency care centers for patients with COVID-19 and resource hubs for the latest COVID-19 news and updates…

Librarians and institutions alike are enacting emergency plans and adapting to this critical role, libraries are serving as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread. However, this is not the first instance where libraries were utilized in crises or emergency. Many schools – secondary and tertiary diverted their libraries to tackle and manage the emergence of COVID-19. This is more reason why libraries should be sophisticated to a very high standard, where libraries would have toilet facilities, feeding, and medical outfits, security, traditional and local field workers, etc. in this respect, the library should collaborate with international public relation and advertising, and African oral traditions sources for more encompassing coverage.

African oral traditions are being relegated to the dust in the world. Some of these secondary schools and tertiary institutions with libraries are sited in remote villages and communities. The library would equip itself more if serious connections are made between it and African oral tradition. Iche Ojukwu Thomson (personal communication, 11 June, 2020) explains that in his community, one boy who was HIV positive came from Lagos, and started spreading HIV to women in their village. When sensitization programmes on COVID-19 pandemic came to their hearing, the villagers mistook COVID-19 for HIV. But when they got to understand the nature of COVID-19 very well, they began to adapt to use of some natural remedies to respiratory infection which oral tradition has provided. For example, consistent use of hot water, bitter kola, scent leaves, ginger etc. For him, he concludes that practice which has been preserved by their African oral traditions must have assisted their community and other neighbours till today, in the sense that so far no COVID-19 case has been recorded in their locality.

The library ought to associate with African oral tradition for more extracts of traditional health information which would be helpful to domestic and international communities. The international public relations and advertising can transcend them beyond local limitations. Mr. Nnakezie Ozo-Igbo (personal communication, 17 May, 2021) says that African oral traditions have provided information about superstitious belief, for example, sickle cell anemia, etc as spiritual diseases. Collaboration with such oral tradition would help to make Africans correct such misconception, World Health Organization (2020:2) stresses thus:

> The study of 1000 new or modification of existing technology that have been developed worldwide to target different areas of the COVID-19 response funds that Africa accounts for 12.8% of the innovations. The response areas include surveillance, contact tracing, community engagement, treatment, laboratory systems, and infection, prevention and control. In Africa, 57% of the technologies were ICT-driven, 25% were based on 3D printing and 10.9% were robotics… COVID-19 is one of the most serious health challenges in a generation, but it is also an opportunity to drive forward innovation, ingenuity and entrepreneurship in life-saving health technologies.

The library, international public relation and advertising would encourage great innovations on the treatment and management of COVID-19 when deep insightful information from the media and library is extracted from African oral traditions to see if hidden efficacious medical solution against COVID-19 could be got from Africa for universal consumption, Dr. Ejike Obuka (personal communication 2 March, 2021), is of the opinion that information remains

information. Therefore, for the fact that African oral traditions provide information, likewise library international public relation and advertising, there is serious need for joint input in providing information in tackling about COVID-19.

International public relation can go a long way in helping nations in tackling their individual challenges. Public Relations Society of America (2009:12) points that "public relations helps an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other". Public relations are too gainful because it is sustained in mutual relations. Tavangaran (2017:3) states thus: "typically, International public relations specialists need a minimum of 5 years experience in domestic public relations. Once more, the salary for position ranges for $56,000 to $70,000 a year depending on company and location… The International public relations specialist must act as a spokesperson in the global and domestic business realm". This duty can span from external damage control to internal memos within the organization. Overall, the communications aspect of international relation requires impeccable writing skills, cross-cultural knowledge and strong sense of the company's mission and desired perception.

Public relations are a profession that requires experience that is expected to develop domestically. With such developed experience, it will discharge efficiently the targeted interest for the international ends and ruminations for the experts who function as media links. Advertising also plays similar importance. Encyclopedia Britannica (2021:8) stresses that:

> There is no dispute over the power of advertising to inform consumers of what products are available. In a free-market economy effective advertising is essential to a company's survival, for unless consumers know about a company's product they are unlikely to buy. In the criticism of advertising it has been argued that the consumer must pay for the cost of advertising in form of higher prices of goods; against this point it is argued that advertising enables goods to be mass marketed, thereby bring prices down. It has been argued that the cost of major advertising campaigns is such that few firms can afford them, thus helping these firms to dominate the market. On the other hand, whereas smaller firms may not be able to compete with larger ones at a national level, advertising at the local or online enables them to hold their own. Finally, it has been argued that advertiser's exercise an undue influence over the regular content of the media they employ…

In all International advertising and public relations no doubt would aid the efforts towards tackling the challenges associated with COVID-19 pandemic in the following ways: as far as COVID-19 affects economic, social, religious and educational affairs of the world, it is therefore pertinent that international public relations and advertising become a sustainable for communication between countries and continents. Many countries restrict movements but if there is international public relations mutual relations will assist in catering the less privileged countries. With International advertising, commodities and services that were normally done with physical contact shall also continue to flourish in the local and International markets comfortably. On the basis of inter governmental communication, international public relation will provide guides considering the situations between countries around the globe. Statistical records of needs and health cases would circulate easily with advertising and services that will be given by more specialized countries be rendered.

On the relevance of newspaper reportage in transitivity and language use Ogayi and Umeh (2019:12) emphasize that: "language can be used in many different ways in order to reinforce and manipulate message… Newspapers are often assigned a very powerful role when it comes to having influence over their readers. During the COVID-19 observations and lockdown people were restricted within their domestic domain where the languages remained means of communication. For the fact that interactions are physical jeopardized and language could be one of international relations and advertising, effort ought to be made to introduce most known Lingua franca round the world to foster measures of tackling certain challenges of COVID-19 which could be informed of social, economic and religious challenges . Obiozor (2019:39) opines thus; "Digital technology in this paper refers to all modern computer technologies applied in film which can be either technology that used to produce the film itself, or the digital film transmission technologies. The international public relations and advertising can be used to promote business, organizations". Programmes, government affairs by going on higher digital technologies which could be presented inform of films etc and people will not experience severe burden COVID-19 would have wielded on the masses, at the same familiarizing people more with the global village.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. It is recommended in this study, that the mass media and its relevant components must be considered in efforts toward tackling challenges of COVID-19.
2. International public relations would be given opportunities to effectively co-relate with advertising to achieve expected result. Even though, international public relations and advertising could be given priority, domestic public relations should also be promoted because they form the base for foundation experience of the experts.
3. Incentives and encouraging salaries should be made available for experts in the area of specialization.
4. The library has shown itself as an emergency resort. Government, non-government organization and other individuals and communities to prepare the library and librarian for research materials outreach.
5. African oral traditions should be provided with experts that will be able to filter information from local communities.

Conclusion

The library international public relations, advertising and African oral traditions are in formation and data based. While library and African oral traditions are more concerned with storage and preservation of information, and research materials (data), international public relations and advertising are more concerned with discharge and circulation of information. The outbreak of COVID-19 awoke people's regard for these entities or variable with special attachment to their relevance in talking, treating, controlling or managing COVID-19 in the world. COVID-19 brought minds the introduction of face mask, vaccines, lockdown, physical or signal distancing, etc. All these precautions and preventive measures and even treatments will be most circulated and applied when the library, international public relations, advertising and African oral traditions are jointly and effectively utilizes.

International public relations and advertising are paramount to cordial relation between countries especially in times of trouble of COVID-19 likelihood. If international public relation

was very active, the problem of hiding COVID-19 palliatives would have be revealed before the End SARS protest in Nigeria. It would notify the local and international donors to devise better ways of distributing palliatives.

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