

**THE PRINT MEDIA AND IMAGE REBRANDING IN NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY  
(1999-2014)**

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**CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this study was carried out by OGUNTUBERU Femi Samson, of the Department of International Relations under my supervision.

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Almighty God who is the author and finisher of my life. And also to my parents Mr. Joseph Oguntuberu and Late Mrs Florence Oguntuberu, whose parental care and upbringing made me who I am today.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

WAI – War Against Indiscipline

MAMSER – Mass Mobilization for Self Reliance Social Justice and Economic Recovery

OOH – Out of Home

CNN – Cable Network News

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

USA – United States of America

FCT – Federal Capital Territory

NIIA – Nigerian Institute of International Affairs

NOA- National Orientation Agency

CIA – Central Intelligence Agency

NTA – Nigerian Television Authority

VON – Voice of Nigeria

NBC – Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation

NUJ – Nigerian Union of Journalist

CPJ – Committee to Protect Journalist

FGN – Federal Government of Nigeria

OPEC – Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries

MPLA – Movement for the Peoples’ Liberation of Angola

ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States

IMF – International Monetary Fund

OIC - Organization of Islamic Conference

3Rs – Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation

IPI – International Press Institute

CBN – Central Bank of Nigeria

NYSC – National Youth Service Corps

SAP – Structural Adjustment Programme

AFF – Advance Fee Fraud ('419')

UN – United Nations

AU – African Union

NAM – Non-Align Movement

GTA – Green Tree Agreement

ICJ – International Court of Justice

EU – European Union

S&P – Standard & Poor's Rating Services

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

EUEOM- European Union Election Observation Mission

PTDF- Petroleum Trust Development Fund

CPI – Corruption Perception Index

FSI – Failed State Index

TAC – Technical Aid Corp

ICPC – Independent Corruption Practices and Other Related Offences Commission

EFCC – Economic and Financial Crimes Commission

NEPAD – New Partnership for Africa's Development

NADECO - National Democratic Coalition

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

ADB – African Development Bank

FDIs – Foreign Direct Investments

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## ABSTRACT

The study identified Nigeria's image problems in foreign policy between 1999 and 2014; investigated the efforts made at addressing these image problems; examined the print media's role in rebranding Nigeria's image; and finally evaluated the factors that militated against the print media's contribution in the rebranding efforts. These were with the view to understanding the roles of the media (print media) in image rebranding in the context of Nigeria's foreign policy objectives.

The study utilised both primary and secondary data. Primary data were sourced through the conduct of in-depth interviews with scholars, staff and officials from different academic institutions; print media organizations; and federal government ministries and agencies. Thirteen respondents were interviewed. The 13 respondents were interviewed based on their knowledge in the area of the media, image rebranding and Nigeria's foreign policy. Four scholars who are experts in Nigeria's foreign policy and the media were interviewed, two each from the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and University of Lagos, Akoka. In addition, one senior research fellow from the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Lagos was interviewed. The choice of these institutions was informed by the fact that they have conducted vast research in the area of Nigeria's foreign policy. Also two senior officers from the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Abuja and one senior officer, each from the Ministries of Information and Foreign Affairs, Abuja who played pioneering roles in past image rebranding initiatives/efforts were interviewed. Furthermore, four foreign news editors, each from the Nation Newspaper, Lagos; the Punch Newspaper, Lagos; Leadership Newspaper, Abuja and Guardian Newspaper, Lagos were interviewed. Secondary data were sourced from textbooks, journals, newspapers, reports and lecture series. Data collected were analysed using descriptive method of analysis.

The finding showed 92% of the respondents agreed that Nigeria had one form of image problem or the other between 1999 and 2014. The result also revealed that internal factors such as; corruption, insecurity, human rights violation, trans-border crimes and non-observance of democratic ethos were responsible for the Nigeria's image problem, as it made all efforts to rebrand its image a mere nomenclature. This was attested to by 85% of the respondents. The result further revealed that efforts/initiatives like the "Nigeria Image Project"; "Heart of Africa Project"; and "Rebranding Nigeria Project" launched by past administrations to address the Nigeria's image problems between 1999 and 2014 were misplacement of priorities which at best was an effort to 'market a bad product'. Finally, the study showed that the print media were not properly involved in past image rebranding efforts/initiatives between 1999 and 2014 as attested to by 62% of the respondents. Hence, it militated against the print media's contribution to rebranding the Nigeria's image.

The study concluded that attempts at incorporating image rebranding in Nigeria's foreign policy between 1999 and 2014 failed to yield significant results largely because the government neglected the influential role of the print media.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

The perception of any country's image is an important gauge for judging its standing in the international system. A good image translates to respect, influence and prestige (Egwemi, 2010). On the other hand a bad or negative perception of a country's image indicates that such a country lacks respect, influence and prestige in the international system. As a consequence, all countries endeavour to build, maintain and enhance their images in relation to other countries. The factors that determine a nation's image (for good or for bad) can be both internal and external. Internally, a succession of regimes with bad policies and practice can impair the image of the country concern. Externally, it could be through participation in foreign military and humanitarian missions. An image problem usually occurs when there are both internal and external factors that sway the pendulum towards a bad/negative image. Whatever the source of an image problem, many a country would do all that is necessarily possible to overcome such an image (Egwemi, 2010). Holsti (1996) further clarifies this point when he define image as an individual's perception of an object, fact or condition in terms of badness or goodness as well as the meaning ascribed to, or deduced therefrom. It maybe extrapolated and concluded that image-building must necessarily constitute a fundamental element of a nation's foreign policy, suggesting that the way a country is perceived, especially in the 21st Century, is a function of its national image (Adeniyi, 2012, cited in Fayomi, Chidozie, Ajayi, 2015).

Nation branding is crucial in the current global order because it enhances public diplomacy, global socio-economic competitiveness, and soft-power promotion (Szondi, 2008).



The image and reputation of a country can attract both tangible and intangible benefits, including tourism revenue, investment capital, and foreign aid, and can boost its cultural and political influence in the global arena. Accordingly, there has been increasing awareness in recent years that the reputation of a country, city, or region behaves rather like the brand image of a product or company and is crucial to its progress and prosperity (Anholt, 1998). Images arising from an individual's cognitive systems will not become visible until they are communicated. This makes the media a key player in projection and laundering of a country's image (Kunczik, 1997). This is because, images of objects are embedded in the minds of individuals, limited by internal and external factors. The media is an essential channel through which people get information on both local and international issues, contributing heavily to national image projection. Every public image begins in the mind of individuals and only becomes public as it is transmitted and shared (Boulding, 1956).

Nigeria's external image has swung between periods of extreme positivity to periods of extreme negativity (Egwemi, 2010). Over the years in the country's political history, Nigeria juggled between a good image at certain periods (e.g., between 1960-1967, 1970-1983, 1999-2007) and a bad image at other periods (1993-1999, 2007-date) (Saliu, 2002; Egwemi, 1998, 2003, 2007; Egwemi and Usman, 2007). During periods of negative external image, the various governments have responded via different programmes and policies aimed at turning around and improving the negative image. For example, the Jaji Declaration by the Obasanjo military government (1975-1979), shortly after the Shagari-led civilian interlude, the Buhari/Idiagbon regime (1983-1985) launched the War Against Indiscipline (WAI) campaign. This was followed by the MAMSER and Not in Our Character initiatives, promoted by the Babangida and Abacha dictatorships, respectively (1985-1998). The return to civil rule witnessed a revamping of image

laundering in the country as exemplified by the Heart of Africa and Image Re-branding policies of the Obasanjo (1999-2007) and Yar'Adua (2007- 2010) administrations, respectively. To further fight corruption and ensure transparency, the Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (BMPIU) that further instituted the 'Due process' system under the Oby Ezekwesili's watch was another effort of the government to ensure full compliance with laid-down guidelines and procedures for the procurement of capital and monitoring of capital projects as well as associated goods and services.

Despite the over three decades of re-branding efforts, Nigeria's image has remained "an insignia of dishonest, dishonour, and disrespect" (Bamiduro & Aremu, 2012). This call to mind some questions: Would the relative failure of past initiatives be linked to the limited role performed by the media? Which in the opinion of Alimi (2010), the media is supposed to form the 'strategy for foreign policy formulation and implementation in any country when well-focused...' Why would previous administration in the quest to rebrand Nigeria's image employ the services of foreign media firms thus, undermining the local media capability in rebranding the country's image?

Studies on Nigeria's foreign policy have affirmed that the long years of military rule had negative impacts on the image of Nigeria in the international community. The high point of this pathetic situation was the eventual pariah status that the country earned before the restoration of democratic government in 1999. Nigeria's transition to democratic regime in 1999 saw a shift in foreign policy which was directed towards reviving and rebranding Nigerian image. No doubt, various writers (Alimi, 2005; Adeniyi, 2012) have advanced unique positions vis-à-vis the quest to examine the role of mass media in Nigeria's foreign policy since the inception of the fourth republic in 1999. In fact mass media role as agenda setting actor, as watchdog, platform for

criticism, tool for enlightenment, agent of news and so on have received attention. But, little attention has been given to the role of local print media towards ensuring that Nigeria's image is rebranded for better diplomatic relations. It is against this backdrop that the study seeks to identify Nigeria's image problems between 1999 and 2014; investigate the various

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