RE-BRANDING THE NIGERIA POLICE FORCE THROUGH THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY POLICING

*JUDE E. MADU, PH.D ** ANGELA N. OGBULIE *** AJA, E. EGELE, PH.D

*OFFICER INCHARGE EBONYI STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY POLICE STATION ABAKALIKI, EBONYI STATE. NIGERIA

** Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki Nigeria.

***Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

The Nigeria Police Force is presently battling with image problem, hence the organization needs re-branding. Some measures have been tried in the past to re-brand the force but to no avail. The objective of this study is to identify how community policing concept can be used to re-brand the force. Questionnaire was administered to a sample size of 555 respondents selected using the Yaro Yemen's formula from a population of 5000 Police Personnel serving in Imo State Nigeria. A review of related literature was also done using text books, journals, newspapers, police crime records and the internet. Data obtained were analyzed using the percentage method. Major findings include: Nigeria Police Force currently has poor image as a result of poor quality of police services to the citizens, therefore it requires re-branding; the Nigeria Police can be rebranded with the community policing concept, but majority of the police personnel are not trained on community police and even the few that are trained do not practice the concept. Based on the findings, it is recommended that the Nigeria Police Force should practice community policing by ensuring that police personnel are adequately trained on community policing and public relations practice; posted to all the communities with adequate policing equipments to enable them interact and collaborate with the citizens and other relevant agencies; and adequately motivated.

Keywords: Brand, Branding, Re-branding, Community policing, Citizens, Police Force, Quality service.

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

In the early years of Nigeria independence, crime was a strange language. Even when it occurs the perpetrators are identified by the police at the shortest possible time. The Nigeria Police Force was both active and proactive in the discharge of their duties. Nigerians were always scared of the visibility of Police officers because it signified something strange (crime) have taken place. Every Nigeria prayed to have a Policeman as a friend, neighbor or relation because they believed in the unique importance of the police. Ojukwu (2011) notes that Many Nigerians were willing to avail Police officers useful information that could be used to avert the occurrence of a crime or prevent such crime from occurring at all. Policing in fact was a dignifying profession. Nigerians had trust and confidence in members of the Nigeria Police Force. The Nigeria Police had good image because criminal activities were low. Unfortunately, criminal activities became more noticeable in the 1980's and continued to be on the increase till present day where more serious crimes like kidnapping, armed robbery, cult activities, militancy and terrorist activities are common and perpetrated with sophisticated weapons. This is noticeable in the crime statistics shown below.

Table 1.0   CRIME DATA FROM 1984 TO 2014

OFFEENCES AGAINST	1984	1994	2004	2008	2009	2014
PERSONS	5938	38955	38055	55109	68086	901585
PROPERTIES	8788	39397	47626	64286	79243	87450
TOTAL	14726	78352	85681	119395	147329	989035

Source: Nigeria Police Force Crime Statistics Department, Abuja.

Table 1.0 above shows an astronomic increase in crime from 1984,through 1994 to 2004, 2008,2009 and 2014.The data represent criminal activities against persons and properties in all states of Nigeria. The trend is worrisome given the percentage increase between 184 and 1994, and even between 2004 and 2014.Worse still, reports posted to the internet reveal that Nigerians are not happy with the performance of Police personnel in Nigeria. They belief that the Police personnel are incompetent, corrupt, and unable to detect authors of crimes. Though most experts concur that the Police inefficiency is because they are extremely poorly equipped, poorly trained and poorly paid. To overcome these weaknesses, the personnel resort to corrupt practices. The resultant effect is the unprecedented increase in criminal activities.In his contribution, Amuta (2009) states that the rise of kidnapping, armed robbery, terrorist and militant undertaking in all parts of the country, represent a threat to both the young democracy and economic growth of the country. The glaring evidence of an avalanche of criminal activities in the country proves that the Nigeria police have failed to live up to expectation, thus attracting negative image to herself. Akinbami (2009) notes that successive administrations of the force and even government at various levels have developed strategies aimed at curbing criminality in the country but to no avail. Some of these efforts include:

- Increase in capital allocations to the Police force
- Procurement of patrol vehicles

- Renovation of barracks and accommodations.
- Increase of salaries of personnel
- Development of 10-point policing strategy
- Development of operation fire-for-fire and many more not worthy of public consumption.

These strategies have failed to regain the confidence of Nigerians in the police. The negative image of the police is to the extent that Nigerians are no longer willing to give any assistance that could help the police eradicate crime even in the communities, Madu (2013). Therefore, to regain the confidence of Nigerians, the Nigeria Police force needs to be re-branded. According Keller (2003), Re-branding means change of attitude, image or quality to a better one. Kotler and Keller (2006) see re-branding as changing the image of an organization or its product(s). Since the Nigeria Police force was a good brand in the past, it means that the organization needs re-branding. This we believe based on our experience can be achieved through community policing. Ehindaro (2008) sees community policing as partnering with the people in a community to police that community. As identified by Okeshola and Mudiare (2013), Community policing means a more proactive approach rather than reactive approach by first regaining the confidence of the Nigeria society on the Police. It is also policing the people with the people. In his contribution, Arase (2015) proposed a community driven policing as part of an alternative plan to effectively curb insecurity in Nigeria, saying an effective community driven policing would also help tackle inadequate man power profile in the Nigeria Police Force. He also stated that the dynamics of crime requires that modern policing should be built on community vigilance and partnership. Supporting this philosophy, President Mohammadu Buhari as quoted in Arase (2015), states that no policing can successfully function without the support of the community and identified   youth empowerment as one of his administrations' approach to solving problems of insecurity in Nigeria. These and many other assertions prove that community policing is a veritable tool for re-branding the Nigeria Police force. How to achieve this is the objective of this study.

METHODOLOGY

To realize the objectives of this study, the survey approach was used. This took the form of obtaining primary and secondary data through questionnaire and review of related literature respectively (Agbonifoh, Ogowo, Nnolim, and Nkamlebe (2007). For the questionnaire, questions related to the study in both structured and unstructured forms were produced and administered on a sample size of 555 Police officers obtained from a population of 5000 using the Yaro Yemen's formula. The respondents comprise of officers and men of the Nigeria Police Force serving in Imo State Nigeria. The convenient sampling method was adopted to select the respondents who were reached at their duty posts and or offices. For the review of related literature, text books, journals, newspapers, crime records of the Nigeria Police Force and the internet housing topics related to the study were utilized. Data obtained were analyzed using the percentage method. Result of the analysis and the literature review form the basis for further discussion.

BRANDING AND RE-BRANDING A BRAND

Kotler and Keller (2006) see brand as a product that adds other dimensions that differentiate it in some way from other products designed to satisfy the same need. These differences may be in the form of (1) rational and tangible (related to product performance of the brand); and (b) more symbolic, emotional and intangible (related to what the brand represents). These definitions above   mean that what distinguishes a brand from others and

gives it equity is the sum total of consumers' perceptions and feelings about the product's attributes and how they perform, about the brand name and what it stands for, and about the organization associated with the brand. In their contribution, Onah and Thomas (2000) state that the sum of all efforts aimed at distinguishing a brand from other brands by attracting superior attributes and performances that attract positive customer perceptions and feelings represent re-branding. Rebranding therefore is an improvement on a brand as a result of identified weak customer perceptions and feeling.

WHAT MAKES A POLICE BRAND GOOD/STRONG

Madu (2010) state that to police means to provide for security or guard against insecurity. The Nigeria Police Force is a constitutional enactment contained in sections 214 (1) (2) (a), (b) and (c) of the 1990 constitution as amended. The sections stipulate that apart from the duties that may be proved by the National Assembly when the need arises, the Nigeria Police shall subject to section 4 of the Police Act chapter 359 Laws of the federation of Nigeria 1990, perform the following duties:

1. Prevention and detection of crime
2. Apprehension of offenders
3. Protection of life and properties
4. Due enforcement of all laws and regulations with which they are directly charged
5. Performance of such military duties within or outside Nigeria as may be required of them or under the authority of this or any other Act.

As foundational equipment that would enable the Police Force achieve its mandate, section 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30 of same Police Act conferred and provided powers on the Police Force. These powers include:

  i.   Power to prosecute offenders
 ii.   Power to arrest with or without warrant
iii.   Power to serve summons
 iv.   Power to detain
  v.   Power to stop and search
 vi.   Power to take finger print
vii.   Power of ingress (that is to brake in/out of premises to execute lawful duties or escape attack)
viii.   Power to stop/disperse unlawful assembly and processions
 ix.   Power to issue and execute warrant or arrest and search warrant
  x.   Power to arrest a person who refuses to aid police.

The ability to realize the functions as stated above makes the Nigeria Police Force a good brand, otherwise it is a bad brand which would encourage the market (citizens) to feel dissatisfied and seek for an alternative brand to satisfy their security needs (Madu:2013). Unfortunately, the later is the case for the present day Nigeria Police Force. Members of the Nigeria Police Force even gave credence to this assertion through their response as represented below.

Question: Based On Your Experience, How Would You Asses The Image Of The Image Of The Nigeria Police Force Presently?

TABLE 2.0

S/NO	NATURE OF IMAGE	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
a.	Positive	211	38.00
b.	Negative	344	62.00
	Total	555	100.00

Source: primary data

From table 2.0 above, 38% of the response state that the image of the force is positive, while 62% state that the image is negative. This is very alarming. In fact, this feeling affected their response on the quality of police services rendered to Nigerians as represented below.

Question: From Your Personal Experience, How Would You Rate The Quality Of Police Services In Nigeria?

Table 3.0

S/NO	NATURE OF IMAGE	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
a.	Very high	33	6.00
b.	High	56	10.00
c.	Poor	344	62.00
d.	Low	122	22.00
e.	Very low	0	0.00
	Total	555	100.00

Source: Primary Data

From table 3.0 above, 6% of the respondents say the quality is very high, 10% say the quality is high, 62% say the quality is poor, while 22% say the quality in low.The assertions above is a clear evidence that the Nigeria Police force urgently needs re-branding because it is obvious that the present day Nigeria Police Force is not a good brand.

WHAT MAKES A BRAND GOOD

The basic factors that make a brand good or strong are summarized under two headings (Stanton: 1981) as brand awareness and brand image.

Brand awareness consists of brand recognition and brand recall performance. It is the ability of the consumer to always remember and prioritize a product anytime a similar need arises as a result of the satisfaction derived from the product in the past. It is not surprising to discover that people refuse to give genuine information to the police or assist the police because of the disappointing performance of the police in the past. This according to Madu,Ederevhebe and Egele (2015) can also be achieved by reinforcing positive information about the police. Infact, brand awareness enables the citizens get enough information about the police through promotion and education. It also attracts the citizens to the police even though there is no clear substitute to police services.

Brand image means the position of the brand in the customers' mind or memory. Pareasuraman and Berry (1991) state that brand image is created with marketing programmes such as service quality assurance, managing the promotional activities and the price strategies and making the services available when needed. If the citizens see the police as the best place to get adequate security anytime they need it without unnecessary cost, they will also call the police anytime they have need for security. That means that brand image of the police in good.

BUILDING GOOD POLICE BRAND

From the constituents of a good brand, a good police brand can be developed through the following activities;

(1) The service quality of police must be high and appropriate, this according to Palmer (2005) will take the following forms:
  (a) **Reliability**   = the ability to perform police services dependably and accurately with no cost paid by the citizen.
  (b) **Tangibles** = the provision and appearance of physical facilities, equipments and personnel to prove ability of providing quality service.
  (c) **Responsiveness** = the willingness to respond and provide police services promptly to citizens distress calls of insecurity.
  (d) **Assurance** = the courteous nature of police personnel and their ability to convey trust and confidence to the citizens.
  (e) **Empathy** = the provision of care and individualized attention to citizens.

(2) Elaborate and continues promotional activities aimed at boosting the image of the police force must be executed. Madu and Anyanwu (2010) state that the promotion must be appropriate and appealing.
(3) The citizens should not be subjected to pay monetary price for basic security needs. The price should be their unannoyed assistance to the police and being law-abiding.
(4) The physical evidence of the police must be visible enough to the extent of proving hope for police security.
(5) The process of obtaining police service should be short or insignificant to the extent of ensuring promptness of response when alerted with the slightest alarm or call.
(6) Every police personnel must be capable of instilling confidence in the mind of the citizens.
(7) Policemen should be visibly seen at all parts of the country/community and must have the ability of coping with emergency situation which is associated with crime.

It is believed that all these can be achieved through community policing. This means that all police personnel must have the knowledge of community policing and adequately trained for it. The responses from the respondents below will buttress these points.

Question: Have You Received Training For Community Policing?

Table 4.0

S/NO	OPTION	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
a.	Yes	111	20.00
b.	No	144	80.00
	Total	555	100.00

Source: Primary data

From table 4.0 above, 20% of the respondents have received training on community policing, while 80% have not. This means that even if the police personnel have heard of the concept of community policing, they are yet to receive training about its implementation. This therefore generates the need to explain the concept of community policing and how it works.

MEANING AND NATURE OF COMMUNITY POLICING

Community policing as a policing strategy was formally launched in Nigeria on 27th April, 2004 by the then President Chief Olusegu Obasanjo. In his inaugural speech. Obasanjo as quoted by the Police Website (2004) states that community policing is founded on the principle that in a democratic society, the police are entrusted by their fellow citizens to protect and serve the public's fundamental rights of liberty, equality and justice under the law. To fulfill that privileged role, Bursik and Gransmick, (1993) recommend that   the police must be a part of and not apart from the communities they serve. Based on this mission statement and earlier definitions, a definition of community policing proposed for this study reads thus:

"Community policing is policing the people with the people and for the people".

Furthermore, Obeagu (2014) noted that the need for community policing stems from the fact that the traditional approach to policing have failed to yield the needed outcome which is satisfying the security needs of the people. The inevitable outcome of the traditional approach is that the police image suffers, public confidence declines, and citizens withdraw their voluntary support and cooperation. It is also worthy to note that community policing concept or philosophy is synonymous with the marketing concept or philosophy. Borrowing from Stanton (1981), marketing concept or philosophy is a customer focused; coordinated personnel efforts and result oriented based philosophy. On the order hand community policing philosophy according to Bala (2009) seeks to serve democratic and humanitarian ideas by being transparent, fair, apolitical, accountable and responsive to public perception and expectation. Its significant bench marks of performance are public satisfaction, trust and confidence.

PRINCIPLES OR CHARACTERISTIES OF COMMUNITY POLICING

Deducing From the assertions above, effective community policing will achieve the following key Principles:

(1) **Policing is visible and accessible =** this shall be achieved by assigning patrol officers to beats in all communities to patrol, interact with the citizens so as to gain their confidence and corporation, and even develop local knowledge through the citizens' assistance.

(2) **Policing involves community consultation, conservation, cooperation and interdependency** = this means that the police identify and prioritize the security needs of the citizens, plan with the citizens on how best to satisfy these security needs, then engage the citizens through their volunteers schemes to execute the plans and strategies for satisfying the policing needs of the citizens.

(3) **Policing involves multi-agency collaboration** = the police must not work in solution of other statutory agencies. To address crime and insecurity in the communities, the police must liaise and collaborate with other relevant agencies.

(4) **Policing in essentially proactive** = the underlying causes of crime, anti social incidents and public complaints should be identified, analyzed and nipped on the bud rather than reacting after they had occurred. This proactive approach to policing will be achieved through police- community and other agencies partnership approach.

(5) **Policing is accountable** = this means that police managers should make open their strategies affecting the community for evaluation and scrutiny, and the citizens should be given the opportunity to make open their complaints or grievances against the police for possible redress.

(6) Policing is about providing quality service = this requires that the police must develop a culture of service excellence. This is achieved by setting standards and measuring performance against the set standards

From the above discussions, the principles of community policing seem to be clear, but there is doubt if the present day Nigerian police force is practicing it after it's initial launch in 2004. This doubt emanates from the response of Police personnel as shown in tables 4.0 and 5.0.

Question: **Presently, Do You Practice Community Policing In Your Duty Posts Or Beats?**

TABLE 5.0

S/NO	OPTION	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
	Yes	222	40.00
	No	333	60.00
	Total	**555**	**100.00**

Source: primary data

Question: **From Your Experience, Do You Think Community Policing Can Help Re-Brand The Nigeria Police Force?**

TABLE 6.0

OPTION	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
Yes	488	88.00
No	67	12.00
Total	**555**	**100.00**

Source: Primary Data.

From table 5.0, only 40.00 percent of the respondents claim they practice community policing while 60.00 percent say they do not practice community policing. In table 6.0, 88.00 percent of the respondents say community policing can help re-brand the Nigeria Police Force, while 12.00 percent say the practice of community policing can re-brand the Nigeria Policy Force.

The foregoing proves that community policing is not yet fully in practice by the Nigeria Police, but is capable of re-branding the Nigeria Police Force given its stated underlying principles and philosophy.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

From the analysis and discussions so above, the following constitute the major findings of the study:

(1) Currently the image of the Nigeria police force in poor.
(2) The poor image of the force is as a result of dissatisfaction of citizens over quality of police services.
(3) Nigeria police force requires re-branding.
(4) Community policing concept is a veritable tool for re-brand the Nigeria Police Force.
(5) Majority of police personnel in Nigeria are not practicing community policing
(6) Most police personnel in Nigeria are not trained on community policing.

CONCLUSION

The duty of every responsible government is to protect lives and properties of its citizens. The major apparatus of government to protect lives and properties and enforce the rule of law and order is the police. Therefore, if the Nigeria police is unable to realize it`s mandate of providing security for Nigerians, the Nigerian government in already heading to the rock. For the present day Nigerian Police Force, community policing is the most veritable tool to achieve re-branding of the Police Force. Re-branding the Nigerian Police Force is pertinent now because the personnel are willing to serve despite the lack of man power, equipment and facilities. Community policing will enable the Nigerian Police Force synergize with other relevant agencies and the citizens through their communal and voluntary assistance to the police. These collaborations will not only compliment but also supersede the week manpower and policing facilities that have remained the albatross to present day Nigeria Police Force.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, it is recommended that every personnel of the Nigeria Police Force should henceforth practice community policing. To realize the essence of community policing, the management of the Nigerian Police Force should carry out the following activities:

1. Increase the man power of police personnel and post police patrol teams to every community in the country.
2. This patrol vehicles and individual police personnel should be provided with relevant working tools especially safety vest, communication gargets and arms.
3. Every police personal should be trained and re-trained on community policing practices.
4. Management of the police force should motivate the personnel. Part of the motivation should be reward for excellent or extra ordinary performance.
5. Every police personnel should be a public relations officer to the force. Therefore, part of the training of police personnel should be on the knowledge of public relations practice.
6. Police personnel should utilize their skill of public relations to interact with every member of the community where they are posted. They should build the confidence of the citizens to belief in the police. By so doing encourage the citizens to avoid committing crime, give useful information and assistance to the police.
7. There should be partnership between the Nigerian Police Force and other security agencies and even the press.
8. There is need to review the training curriculum of the Nigerian Police Force to include public relations and community policing strategies.
9. The laws and enactments that establish the Nigerian Police Force should be reviewed to be in line with contemporary policing needs.
10. Police personnel most not   indulge in corrupt practices such as asking for or receiving money before or while rending police services.

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