

Management of 2023 Post-Election Crises in Nigeria: A Public Relations Approach

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Abstract

Based on debates and controversies following the declaration and inauguration of President Bola Amed Tinubu over the perceived winner of the 2023 presidential election and the current challenge of Nigerians over hike in pump price of fuel due to fuel subsidy removal which has resulted in high cost of living and hardship, this position paper serves as a contribution on how public relations approaches/strategies could be used in managing the 2023 post-election crisis in Nigeria. The three objectives that guided the paper were to: ascertain the issues that constitute 2023 post-election crisis in Nigeria; outline public relations strategies that could be used/adopted in managing 2023 post-election differences and establish how the identified public relations strategies will effectively curb the 2023 post-election crisis. This paper was anchored on Grunig and Hunt's Two-Way Symmetrical Communication Model of Public Relations with its main thrusts on dialogue, listening, understanding and two-way symmetrical methods to explain how effective communication, dialogue, balance in communication flow (horizontal flow) and understanding as against one-sided (asymmetrical) communication flow and discord etc. could be adopted/used in managing and possibly curbing the 2023 post-election differences. The paper adopted a library-based approach which essentially entails a review of existing literature as the basis for understanding the research issue and reaching necessary conclusions.

Keywords: *Election, Post-election Crisis, Management of Crisis, Public Relations, Two-Way Symmetrical Communication Model, Effective Dialogue.*

Introduction

In Nigeria, general election is conducted every four years in order to choose eligible leaders through democratic process. Election is a democratic process that allows people the opportunity to elect their choice candidate through exercising their voting rights. In the opinion of Idowu, Anikwe and Asekhamhe (2020) in many nations across the world, election is the accepted process through which individuals are chosen to represent a people or community in various organs of government. Similarly, Alaekwe and Ilomuanya, (2023) observed that under any democratic system, citizens who are qualified to exercise franchise are provided with opportunity to elect political alternatives and to make decisions that express their preferences. This unarguably implies that elections have become major factor in the stabilization and democratization of emerging democracies; and forms an important pillar that places the power to govern on the people as a litmus test for democratic institutions (Baidoo, Dankwa & Eshun, 2018).

As observed by Vande (2017) the sanctity of choice entrenched in the modern democratic idea presumes that the voting public has the freedom to choose those who governs them in a regular, free, fair and credible electoral process. Hence, for a legitimate

government to rule, the people must have the liberty of choosing their leaders through the processes that meet international good practices (Vande, 2017). Thus, whether federal, state or local whereby the freedom and transparency of exercising franchise by the electorates is not duly observed, did not meet international good practices and would often be criticized by the electorates because it is not in their best interest.

In Nigeria, the 2023 general Election was a highly competitive and fierce exercise among four more prominent candidates, Tinubu Bola Ahmed of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Atiku Abubakar of the People's Democratic (PDP), Obi Peter Gregory of the Labour Party (LP) and Rabiu Kwankwaso of the New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP). However, the election was contested by 18 registered political parties, with an unprecedented qualified 18 presidential candidates by INEC (Alaekwe & Ilomuanya, 2023).

The 2023 presidential election held on the 25th of February 2023 as scheduled by Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) across the 36 states of the nation including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the candidate of Nigeria's ruling party was declared the winner with 36% of votes after defeating two of his closest rivals in the most competitive election for

decades. His major contender, Atiku Abubakar, a candidate of major oppositional People's Democratic Party (PDP) lost, as well as the third, Peter Obi, a candidate for the Labor Party (Kohnert, 2023). The inauguration or swearing in of the president-elect (Bola Amed Tinubu) held on the 29th of May 2023.

The inauguration of President Amed Bola Tinubu of All Progressive Congress has continued to generate controversies from Nigerian citizens. These range from election tribunals, high cost of living, to the state of survival of Nigerians following fuel subsidy removal by President Amed Tinubu. The controversies also stem from the fact that Nigerians' expectation of the rightful winner of the 2023 presidential election based on their choice of candidate through the election process was not met by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Hence, the aftermath of 2023 general election has resulted in court cases between Labour Party (LP), People's Democratic Party and All Progressive Congress (APC) concerning the winner of the election based on Nigerian electoral constitution. The course cases as filled against APC by LP and PDP were based on undue rigging of general election that was obviously won by Labour party candidate which led to swearing in of APC candidate, inability of INEC to effectively perform their electoral functions during 2023 election etc.

Furthermore, the removal of fuel subsidy by President Bola Amed Tinubu after his inauguration on May 29, 2023 has equally generated a lot of debates among Nigerians. The fuel subsidy removal, as argued by Nigerians has resulted in high cost of transportation, high cost of living and hardship in the nation. The fact that the present administration is being charged to court by LP and PDP and criticized by other political parties for electoral malpractice is a major crisis that ought to be resolved. Also, the fact that Nigerians are facing the challenge of hike in pump price of fuel due to fuel subsidy removal which has resulted in high cost of living and hardship is equally a huge crisis confronting the present administration, which if not properly tackled, could escalate into national crisis which would be difficult to resolve. This paper therefore, posits that resolving these post-election crises would require appropriate public relations strategies as means of effectively managing the situation for peaceful regime and peaceful-co-existence of political parties and Nigerians at large.

The Problem

In Nigeria, general election is conducted every four years in order to choose eligible leaders through democratic process. However, the aftermath of the 2023 general election has generated a lot of controversies among Nigerians and the candidates of various political parties. The controversies were based the perceived

winner of the election. This has resulted in court cases between candidate of Labour Party (LP) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) versus candidate of All Progressive Congress. Also, the fact that Nigerians are facing the challenge of hike in pump price of fuel due to fuel subsidy removal which has resulted in high cost of living and hardship is a huge crisis confronting the present administration, which if not properly tackled, could culminate into National crisis which would be difficult to resolve. Therefore, tackling the post-election crisis would require appropriate public relations strategies as means of effectively managing the situation for peaceful regime and peaceful-co-existence of political parties and Nigerians at large. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to assess the public relations approach to managing 2023 post-election crisis in Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives

The main aim of this paper was to ascertain how public relations measures could be used to tackle the 2023 post-election crisis, especially the after of inauguration of President Amed Bola Tinubu.

Specifically, the paper sought to:

1. Ascertain the issues that constitute 2023 post-election crisis in Nigeria.
2. Outline public relations approaches/strategies that could

be used/adopted in managing 2023 post-election differences.

3. Explain how the identified public relations approaches/strategies will effectively curb the 2023 post-election crisis.

Theoretical Framework

Grunig's and Hunt's (1984) two-way symmetrical communication Model was used as the theoretical basis for this paper. This model focuses on dialogue that creates and sustains mutually beneficial relationship between an organization and its key stakeholders. It emphasizes the need to use communication to negotiate with the publics; and that open and honest communication is very important. It therefore, seeks to resolve conflict and promote mutual benefit, understanding, and respect between the individual, organization or government and the key publics/stakeholders.

According to this model, public relations practitioners use research and dialogue to bring about symbiotic changes in the ideas, attitudes and behaviour of both the organization/government and the publics or stakeholders (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). In other words, the PR practitioners conduct formal research on any conflicting issue and incorporates audience feedback communication strategies as a way of resolving the issue. The research helps the public relations practitioners to determine how to persuade the public to behave in the way their

organizations wish. According to Grunig (1992), two-way symmetrical communication is the best way to create a win-win situation when responding to activist contemporary publics.

This model was considered relevant to this study because resolving the 2023 post-election differences in Nigeria would not be achievable in a one-way process of sending out information to Nigerians and the political parties involved, but a two-way dialogue that involves listening, understanding and responding to the stakeholders. By engaging in a two-way symmetric dialogue with Nigerians and other aggrieved political parties, the present administration of President Amed Bola Tinubu can enhance its credibility, reputation and trustworthiness as well as learn/hear from Nigerian/other political parties and work/act pro-actively towards meeting their needs and expectations. Where the present administration has erred, it should acknowledge mistakes and correct them promptly, listen to the opinions of Nigerians and respond to their plights and concerns, engage in constructive dialogue and seek common ground and mutual understanding for the best interests of all. Thus, through this two-way process, a balance and harmonious relationship based on mutual respect, honesty and feedback would be achieved between the present administration and aggrieved

Nigerians and other political parties for a peaceful regime.

Conceptual Clarifications

(1) Public Relations and Crisis Management

Public relations simply means information based on absolute truth and honestly. It is about good will and good reputation. It is also the image of a person, a government or an organization in the mind of the general public. It is the perception (either positive or negative) of people about an individual, government or an organization based on the individual's governments or organizations actions and reactions. The essence of public relations is to maintain and sustain the relationship which has been established or yet to be established with friends and associates, business partners, colleagues and other people who know you and those who are yet to know you.

Several experts have defined public relations for better understanding of situations. According to the British Institute of Public Relations, Public relations is a deliberate, planned and sustained efforts to establish and maintain mutual understanding between and organization and its publics. This definition implies that public relations activities are very well planned and organized rather than done in a haphazard manner. The essence is to create understanding with the public or

people who are in relationship with a person, government or organization.

The Mexican Statement (1978) defines public relations as the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organizations leaders and implementing planned programmes of actions which will serve both the organization and the public's interest. This definition emphasizes the need for research in every stage of public relations in order to assess situations and predict effective outcomes.

Public relations as defined by Sam Black cited in Nweke (2001, p.16) "is the art and science of achieving harmony with the environment through mutual understanding based on truth and full information". Sam Black noted that public relations is the establishment of two-way communication to resolve conflict or areas of mutual understanding, interest, and the establishment of understanding based on truth, knowledge and full information. The implication of this definition is that adequate information is needed for achievement of good result and such information or communication should be based on truth and feedback or two-sided approach as against one-way communication approach. This definition is very relevant to our discussion because public relations approach of two-way communication brings balance and understanding which is needed in settling or managing issues/crisis rather than one-

sided communication pattern that tends to aggravate crisis than managing it.

Crisis is inevitable in every individual's, government's or organization's activities. Therefore, proper planning and arrangement have to be put in place to curb or manage the situation and this brings us to the issues of crisis management and management of crisis. Crisis is seen as an event, issue or occurrence that violates the natural order of things and produces a destructive force or threat to the organization (Ezeah & Odionye, 2017, p.81). Similarly, Nwosu (1996) as cited in Nweke (2001, p.85), defined crisis as "any event, issues occurrence or situation which could be described as a turning point for better or for worse with both negative and positive valencies or scores as a change agent or factor in organizational management".

Crisis management is a deliberate effort aimed at preventing an ugly situation from occurring or handling an unpleasant situation from escalating. According to Nkwocha (1999) cited in Ezeah and Odionye (2017) crisis management involves the application of appropriate steps to either prevent an issue from occurring or promptly controlling it once it occurs. Crisis management is an organization's ability to resolve any difference or put unstable situations under control (Okpoko, 2011). In crisis management, actions are proactive, preventive and preplanned ahead of the situation. Contrarily, management of crisis is the controlling of an

unpleasant situation which has already occurred. It is a reactive and fire brigade approach to problem solving. Ezeah and Odionye (2017) observed that managing crisis very wasteful compared to timely crisis management.

In crisis management, unlike management of crisis, appropriate measures are taken by planning and predicting an uncanny situation and preventing it from happening. Hence, crises could only be prevented when proper steps are regularly taken by public relations experts in order to control changes in the environment, especially in the area of communication and management. Effective public relations involve management of issues that help leadership to be kept informed on and responsive to public opinion (Keghku 2004). This explains the function of public relations in crisis management, as it analyzes trends by assessing past records of an organization or government. As such, when the organization or government has unresolved issues, it will be an indication that the publics are not satisfied with its activities. Hence, by analyzing the precedent of the organization or government, it becomes easy to predict the consequences of the organization's policies and plan a programme of action for possible solution.

Thus, when applying public relations in resolving crises, the fundamental issues have to be identified, the parties involved,

especially the aggrieved parties should be identified and the main cause of the crisis should equally be identified.

(2) Issues that constitute 2023 post-election crisis

From the literature review, a number of issues were observed to be the 2023 post-election crisis. These include but not limited to the following issues:

- (1) Uproar of Nigerians on election rigging by INEC in favour of All Progressive Congress candidate – Amed Bola Tinubu
- (2) Court cases between Peter Obi of Labour Party and Atiku Abubaka of People's Democratic Party Versus Amed Bola Tinubu of All Progressive Congress.
- (3) Fuel Subsidy removal
- (4) Plight of Nigerians concerning the state of the nation

Uproar of Nigerians on election rigging by INEC in favour of All Progressive Congress candidate – Amed Bola Tinubu

According to reports from Geopoll post-election survey of the 2023 Nigerian elections (Geopoll, 2023) the declaration of Bola Tinubu the winner of Nigeria's highest contested presidential election came with controversy. The recorded that on the election day, delays at the polling stations, technical difficulties and allegations of irregularities raised people's concern about INEC's planning and performance. After the election, glitches in INEC'S result viewing platforms and delays in

announcing the result amplified the concerns of Nigerians and other political parties.

Their study showed that dispute over electoral commission's handling of the vote increased people's perception of fraud. That those who disagreed or strongly disagreed that election will be/were free and fair more than doubled pre-/post-election, rising from 29% to 67%.

Reports from Geopoll post-election survey also showed that voters expressed significant dissatisfaction with INEC'S performance. The report showed that majority of the respondents (voters) disagreed and strongly disagreed with the fact that all parties and candidates were treated equally and fairly during election process. Only 31% agreed that all parties and candidates were treated equally and fairly. According to the survey, several independent observers, including European Union criticized the 2023 election for lacking transparency. The report also showed that the largest segment of respondents (39%) strongly disagreed that INEC performed their duties with honesty and integrity during the 2023 elections.

From Geopoll post-election survey, the delay in announcing the winner of the presidential election sapped the public of their confidence in a free and fair election. Hence, majority of the respondents (70%) strongly agreed that the delay in announcing a winner negatively impacted their perceptions of election integrity. Most (63%) also have very

little or no confidence in INEC's vote tally and declaration of a winner. According to the report, with disruption, delays and irregularities weakening public perception of transparency and integrity in the electoral process, 55% of the respondents indicated they are very dissatisfied with the way democracy works in Nigeria.

Court cases between Peter Obi of Labour Party and Atiku Abubaka of People's Democratic Party Versus Amed Bola Tinubu of All Progressive Congress

According to Geopoll survey (2023), before INEC formally declared Bola Tinubu the winner of the 2023 presidential election, opposition parties called for a re-run, alleging widespread vote rigging and violence. That the many opposition party disputed the legitimacy of the election and decided to take their grievances to court. This was based on Goepoll's finding that more than 37% of respondents' claim that they or their friend personally witnessed incidence of vote-buying, 40% witnessed vote suppression, 36% witnessed ballot tampering while 39% witnessed violence near polling station. The report however, said that the president appealed for reconciliation with his rivals and urged Nigerians to be united.

Fuel Subsidy removal

Fuel is a refined crude oil that serves the lubrication and life-wire of motor vehicle, motorcycles etc. Subsidy is

the deduction of price of an item such that the consumer pays a lower price than the actual price of that item. Fuel subsidy is therefore, seen as the deduction in the actual price of pump price of petroleum Motor Spirit by the government such that Nigerians to pay a prices that is lower than what the actual price would have been in the market.

Fuel, also known as petroleum Motor Spirit is a very important factor of production in almost all facets of the Nigerian economy. It is a vital source of energy in Nigeria, as the economy depends on it to drive economic activities (Agu, *et al.*, 2018). As equally stated by Okwanga, Ogbu and Pristine (2015 cited in Umeji and Eleanya, 2021, p.1) “petroleum motor spirit may not be used in the actual production of goods but it is used for their distribution; contributing to their final cost of production, which makes Nigeria is a high consumer of energy fuel”.

Nigeria has the second largest oil reserve in Africa at 37.2 billion barrels, seconding Libya and it is Africa’s largest producer of oil (Olisah, 2020; Adekoya, 2020). However, the subsidy on Petroleum Motor Spirit (PMS) has proven to be the biggest challenge to the managers of the Nigerian economy. Despite huge incomes from Nigeria’s crude oil export, successive governments have not been able to provide social amenities needed by her people for poverty reduction. This led to the introduction of fuel subsidy in the mid-

1980s to reduce the suffering of her people due to the high cost of pump price of fuel (Agu, *et al.*, 2018). However, scholars and international organizations, like the International Monetary Funds (IMF) demanded for the removal of subsidy from energy fuel because of its distortions to the actual market price resulting in failure to reflect the actual market cost (Okwanya, Ogbu, *et al.*, 2015).

Hence, President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan led administration, in 2012 started a partial removal of the fuel subsidy in Nigeria. Also, due to the recent recession in the country as a result of the Covid19 pandemic, the Nigerian government could no longer sustain the payment of subsidy on fuel because the cost of subsidizing fuel in the country keeps increasing just as population is increasing causing an increase in the demand for fuel (Umeji & Eleanya, 2021, p.1). As such, President Buhari administration announced subsidy removal from fuel in the country. Equally due to the pressure of international organization, Presidents Amed Bola Tinubu, on his inaugural speech announced the full subsidy removal with immediate implementation.

The removal of fuel subsidy has led to inflation thereby subjecting many Nigerians to poverty. In agreement, Umeji and Eleanya (2021) noted that the effect of fuel subsidy removal is that the poor will suffer more in the form of higher transport fare and increased price of food items and other commodities. The authors,

however, averred that subsidy removal is in the overall interest of the whole economy as funds will be channeled to improving infrastructural amenities especially in the health care, education and transport sectors. Umeji and Eleanya (2021) outlined the negative implications of fuel subsidy removal as follows:

- i. add to the hardship being currently experienced by the majority of Nigerians who are living below the poverty line. It will have severe negative implications for the poor in Nigeria. Removal
- ii. lead to a further increase in transportation cost which was recently increased by transporters due to social distancing as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, prices of food and other related products will skyrocket while household income remains the same for some households.
- iii. cause an increase in the cost of production as the Nigerian production and manufacturing sector is driven by fuel, either for production or for distribution.
- iv. Also, the cost of other thing - school fees, house rent to food items will increase. This will aggravate the hardship in the society as many households are yet to come to terms with the already existing hardship induced by the global public health crisis. The subsidy removal at this time will lead to astronomical increase

in the price of commodities, hence, a season of pains and hardship in the country especially for the poor.

When petrol prices increase, small businesses tend to raise their prices to cover the increased cost of operation which can lead to higher prices for consumers. This can make it more difficult for people to afford basic necessities, lead to a decrease in the standard of living and contribute to poverty and inequality (www.pwc.com/ng). However, this negative implication of fuel subsidy removal does not surpass have the benefit which include: Reduces government borrowing and the associated huge deficit; Reduce/remove incentive for smuggling and associated security risk; Stronger Naira and decline in imported inflation; Investment flow to the downstream sector; product availability etc (www.pwc.com/ng).

Plight of Nigerians concerning the state of the nation

This is a major threat to the government of President Bola Tinubu. This stems from questions asked by Nigerians. Has the current APC government addressed the change mantra they promised Nigerians? What is the state of the social contract between the electorate and the current government? Many Nigerians are not happy with current state of the economy, security, education and general performance of the ruling

party. Citizens are more impoverished, inflation has gone up, exchange rate has plummeted and students are more at home, skilled and unskilled labor are leaving the country for greener pasture (Idris & Vincent (2023). These are precarious issues that President Bola Tinubu led administration need to tackle.

(3) Managing 2023 Post-Election Crisis using Public Relations

In managing the 2023 post-election differences, it is expected that the present administration would be honest, transparent and fair in their actions, as this is very critical in boosting public trust in them. Hence, Keghku (2004) noted that the task for leaders and management is not only to resolve or suppress all forms of conflict but to manage them to reduce their destructive effect and gain from their good efforts. Since crisis is a situation that leads to turning point for better for worse, especially when not properly handled, it would take a disastrous dimension if it is disregarded until the fundamental causes of the issues are properly controlled. This implies that the present administration has to resolve the fundamental causes of the controversies by identifying the grievances and interests of Nigerians and aggrieved political parties and work towards satisfying those interest. It is believed that when this is done, there would be a great change, and a peaceful co-existence between the government and the governed.

For instance, the issue of fuel subsidy removal is an issue that is affecting almost all Nigerians, thus, to effectively tackle the issue, President Tinubiu's led administration should ensure that the poor population in the country are protected from any negative impact of this subsidy removal and also secure the necessary support needed to actualize that.

(4) Public relations approaches/strategies for managing 2023 post-election differences

With regard to crisis management, public relations could either be proactive or reactive. Proactive public relations is preventive in nature. Hence, it forestalls crisis and puts appropriate measures in place to prevent it from occurring. However, reactive public relations also known as fire-brigade approach to crisis management is curative in nature as its preparative measures to resolve crisis are taken when the crisis has already occurred.

However, in managing or resolving the 2023 post-election differences, the following public relations approaches/strategies were identified and x-rayed. These public relations strategies were premised on the attributes of Grunig's two-way symmetric model.

(1) Effective Communication – Communication in an interaction or exchange of message between one person and another or between one person and a group of people.

Effective communication or information management is a process whereby the receiver of the message has assimilated the message and sends the feedback to the source of the originating message (Ezeah, 2009, p.184). The ability to communicate effectively with citizens is a fundamental function of modern governance (Odionye, 2016). Communication is central to any attempt at inducing change in any society as it provides information that will enable people to understand and appreciate the need to participate in development initiatives (Ochonogor, 2016). As Kehgku (2004) noted, once the cause of the crisis has been identified and understood, the next step is to fix clear objectives that need to be met and can be achieved by communication with the target publics. Public relations is a sine qua non for crisis management and effective information and/or communication is an indispensable approach of contemporary public relations (Ezeah, 2009).

Hence, in resolving the post-election issues, the present administration of President Amed Tinubu should greatly employ all forms of communication- intra-personal, interpersonal, group and mass communication in various media in order to inform educate the people in order to inform and educate the people to keep them abreast with the measures they are taking to ameliorate the situation.

(2) Two-way flow of communication

– Modern management practice emphasizes the need for free expression and encourages open communication between superior and subordinate, between leaders and the led and also method of continuing consultation and negotiation (Kehgku, 2004, p.149). This is a process of information exchange. Hence, for communication to be effective, it must involve a two-way process of participation in which the receiver of the message responds or reacts in the appropriate way and this is used to determine whether the intended message was understood by the audience (Ezeah, 2009). This explains why Sam Black sees public relations as the establishment of two-way communication to resolve conflict or areas of mutual understanding, interest and the establishment of understanding based in truth and full information (cited in Nwosu, 2003). For crisis to be resolved, the communication process must be participatory and the parties involved given opportunity to freely contribute ideas to the issues being discussed. Hence, Baran (1999) sees public relations as a management that uses two-way communication to meet the needs and interests of an institution or person(s) with which that institution or person must communicate. The post-election crisis would be resolved if the present administration and other political parties and Nigerian citizens at large would base all their

communication on absolute truth and adequate information.

(3) **Dialogue and Interaction** – When applying public relations in resolving crises, the fundamental issues have to be identified, the parties involved, especially the aggrieved parties should be identified and the main cause of the crisis should equally be identified. Having identified the issues and parties involved in crises, the next step, as state by Nwosu (1996) cited in Ezeah (2009, p.186) is to “possibly get the parties involved in a round table conference of dialogue. The essence is to know the extent of provocation and the intensity of tackling it”. This strategy could also involve a phone-in programme with both parties involved in the conflict - Mr. President or his spokesperson and Nigerian citizens and other political parties whereby the aggrieved party would express their grievance and a compromise would be reached.

(4) **Negotiation** – This could be seen as a peaceful discussion between two or more parties with the aim of reaching agreement or settlement. Aligwe and Alegu (2018, p.106) see negotiation as a public relations strategy used in resolving conflicts whereby the parties involved discuss and agree to resolve their differences. This public relations strategy does not create room for third party because only the stakeholders from each side of the conflict are strictly involved. "Negotiation involves discussions,

arguments and counter arguments though with hope of resolving the conflict” Ogbuoshi (2011, p.169). Hence, in such discussions, arguments and counter arguments, the remote and immediate causes of the conflict are discovered and solutions and proffered (Aligwe & Alegu, 2018, p.106).

(5) **Public Opinion** – Public opinion also known as vox populi is the aggregate view or perception the general public concerning a burning issue of public importance. Aligwe and Alegu (2018, p.106) public opinion as “the views and opinions canvassed by the majority on an issue of public importance”. The public relations professionals use this strategy to gauge the feelings and attitudes of the people toward an issue and this provides a possible solution to the crisis. The public relations or spokesperson for the present administration would conduct a survey on the general opinion of Nigerians and other political parties concerning their grievances. With the information gathered, possible solution to the controversies could be arrived at.

(6) **Mass Media and Social Media** – The mass media, as public relations strategy are used in building national unity and integration. Disseminating information in such mass media as radio, television, newspapers, magazines as well as social media platform like twitter, facebook, Whatsapp, instagram etc. national crises such as hike in fuel price and

commodities as a result of subsidy removal and tribunals between Labour Part, People's Democratic Party and All Progressive Congress could be resolved. All the public relations professions or spokesperson of the present administration need do is to write convincing stories aimed at resolving such differences. Also, a good rapport between the public relations professionals and media professionals would facilitate fast resolution of the present controversies in Nigeria. Such rapport would motivate the journalists and editors to write objective reports on such controversial issues with comprehensive background and equally present convincing and insightful editorials aimed at resolving the current controversy.

Conclusion

For this present administration to function effectively, it must act in ways that solve the problems and satisfy the goals and interests of Nigerians and other Nigerian political parties. The task for leaders and management is not only to resolve or suppress all forms of conflict but to manage them to reduce their destructive effect and gain from their good efforts (Keghku, 2004). Since crisis is a situation that leads to turning point for better for worse, especially when not properly handled, it would take a disastrous dimension if it is disregarded until the fundamental causes of the issues are properly controlled. Therefore, in managing the

2023 post-election crisis, the present administration has to resolve the fundamental causes of the controversies by identifying the grievances and interests of Nigerians and other political parties and work towards satisfying those interest. When such, is done there would be a great change, and a peaceful co-existence between the government and the governed.

Recommendations

Based on the outlined issues that resulted in the 2023 post-election crises, the following recommendations were made to ameliorate the situation:

1. INEC should endeavour to be transparent in communicating their activities, especially during elections so as to avoid rumours of electoral rigging.
2. There should be two-way communication between the present administration/government and Nigerian citizens in order to resolve the issues amicably. By engaging in a two-way symmetric dialogue with Nigerians and other aggrieved political parties, the present administration can enhance its credibility, reputation and trustworthiness as well as the find out fundamental causes of the controversies by identifying the grievances and interests of Nigerians and aggrieved political parties and work pro-actively

- towards satisfying those their needs and expectations.
3. Resolving the post-election crisis requires appropriate public relations strategies as means of effectively managing the situation for peaceful regime and peaceful-co-existence of political parties and Nigerians at large.
 4. In managing the 2023 post-election differences, it also is expected that the present administration would be honest, transparent and fair in their actions, as this is very critical in boosting public trust in them.
 5. In resolving the post-election issues, the present administration of President Bola Amed Tinubu should greatly employ all forms of communication - intra-personal, interpersonal, group and mass communication in various media in order to inform and educate the people to keep them abreast with the measures they are taking to ameliorate the situation.
 6. The post-election crisis would be effectively resolved if the present administration, in their dealings with other political parties and Nigerian citizens would base all their communication on absolute truth and adequate information.

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