

INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION (IMC) AND THE FIGHT AGAINST INSECURITY IN NIGERIA: AN ANALYTICAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract

For the past two decades, insecurity has lay siege and gradually making Nigeria a failed state. From the militants in the Niger-Delta, to herders/farmers clashes in north central, to the Boko Haram insurgency in the north-east and the recent kidnapping of various school children and attacks, on passengers train in Kaduna state, terrorists have persistently, insistently and consistently besieged the country, leaving behind sorrow, tears and blood just as various communities have been burnt with many, dead, maimed and sacked from their various homes. The study is therefore, an attempt on how insecurity can be curb in Nigeria through the use of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). The study highlighted how the various promotion–elements - advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotion, and direct marketing can be integrated to fighting insecurity in general and terrorism in particular in Nigeria. Using the Analytical Discourse Research Method, the researcher advocated that if properly utilized, IMC can serve as a subtle and veritable weapon of war against insecurity in Nigeria and concludes that stakeholders should adopt IMC approach to fighting insecurity in Nigeria.

Keywords: Curbing, IMC, Insecurity, Nigeria, Promotional Mix.

Introduction

The concept of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is well determined. As Asemah, Nkwan-Uwaoma & Amah (2023) observed, IMC offers a strategic framework that recognizes the need for synergy among various marketing communication elements such as advertising, public relations, direct marketing, digital marketing and social media. They posited that by aligning these elements and ensuring a consistent message across touch points, IMC seeks to make the target audience have experience that will make them to be loyal to the product and service. However, IMC application can transcend product and services to include ideas that can rejig socio-political, socio-cultural and socio-economic progress of developing countries like Nigeria. There cannot be meaningful progress without the security of lives and properties and a conducive atmosphere for investors. Security of lives and properties is therefore important and all hands must be on deck to achieve it in Nigeria.

As a political and social entity, Nigeria has come to stay despite its numerous challenges. This is obvious due to her survival of a deadly civil war and various social unrests occasioned by poor leadership and followership. As the largest black populous country in the world, Nigeria has great promise to be one of the best

habitable plain on earth due to its vast human and natural resources. The vastness of the country, her cultural heritage and diversities which neatly coloured her landscape is something to write home about. Since the dawn of her independence in 1960, Nigeria has witnessed series of challenges. Thus, making it a pictures of paradoxes – resources rich but highly improvised and poor, a country of talented, vibrant citizens but still grappling with high rate of unemployment, a population rich in Diaspora exploits and innovations but nothing to write home about.

The distressed economic times spanned by years of mismanagement and corruption and Covid-19 pandemic have greatly worsened the economic state of Nigerians. This is apart from troubling climatic, environmental and food crises which is bedeviling the Nigerian nation. Add to these challenges are dissidents agitators, separatist groups, religious extremists, banditry and terrorists attacks. A keen observation of the Nigeria state, shows, that corruption and insecurity are the worms that are gradually destroying Nigeria's pride. SBN intelligence, as cited by Agosto and Co (2022), observed that in the first six months of 2020, and 2021, 2860 and 2,371 Nigerians respectively were reportedly kidnapped while 10,366 were killed in 2020. It is also estimated that between 2016 to 2021,

over five billion naira was paid as ransom to kidnappers. According to the 2022 Global Terrorism Index, Nigeria ranks third in the list of countries impacted by terrorism in the sub-Saharan Africa and sixth in the world. Space will not provide an opportunity to detail the Owo Catholic killings of 2022 and various killings in Benue state during the last regime. The recent call by the All Progressive Congress (APC) Party led administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu collective fight against insecurity is an attestation that the government may have been overwhelmed by the state of insecurity in the country. This is as various strategies civil or military suggested and implemented have yielded little or no result. Thus, all hands must be on deck to ensure that the Nigeria state does not degenerate into a complete failed state where anarchy will hold sway. It is against this backdrop, that the study explores ways that Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) can be used as a tool to fighting insecurity in Nigeria.

Statement of Problem and Objective of the Study

Liken to a product, the Nigeria state is a weak brand which has been ravished by different challenges that have hampered its socio-political, socio-cultural, socio-economic, and socio-technological developments. These challenges are multi-faceted and multi-dimensional. It ranges from bad leadership culture to poor followership disposition that have encouraged corruption, tribalism, nepotism, marginalization, underdevelopment, huge unemployment and general insecurity across the country. Despite all attempt to curb insecurity, sorrowfully, the spirit of nationalism is waning, the embers of division, segregation, religion bigotry and threat of extinction are increasing glowing and continue to rear its ugly head. Many factors could be attributed to causing insecurity in Nigeria. These factors could be divided into artificial causes and natural causes. Factors such as unemployment, marginalization, dominance of one ethnic group over others, corruption, insensitivity on the part of government to creating a conducive atmosphere for businesses to travail and unequal development of the country are some of the causes of insecurity in Nigeria. The basic problem is how insecurity could be reduced to barest minimum in Nigeria if not completely eradicated. This is why this discourse, examines

how IMC can be employed to curb insecurity in a pluralistic, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies of Nigeria. The paper attempt to ascertain and suggest ways IMC can be used to fighting insecurity in Nigeria. The objective of the study is to determine how and the extent to which IMC can be use as a tool to curbing insecurity in Nigeria.

Literature Review

The Concept of IMC

The term IMC was introduced in the 1980s and it refers to the unification and integration of all channels of communication to deliver a consistent experience about products goods, services or ideas (Bagaria, 2003 and Allen 2022). This includes online and offline marketing channels. Online marketing channels include podcast, internet, TV, e-mail, e-marketing campaigns or programmes among others. Offline marketing channels are traditional medium of mass communication which includes the print and broadcast media such as newspaper, magazine, radio, public relations, television, advertising and mail order. Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Amah (2023) are of the view that IMC offers a strategic framework that recognizes the need for synergy of various elements in the promotional means such as advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing, digital marketing and social media. There are various elements of IMC. All stressed previously, all communication channels can be regarded as elements of IMC especially when integrated. This however, is the view of the researcher. In literatures, scholars agreed that principles of integrated marketing communication is predicated on its ability to marry traditional marketing strategy with contemporary creative strategies designed to provide product or idea visibility for the purpose of patronizing the audience to accept the product or idea. Scholars such as Okhakhu & Bardi (2011), Patel (2023), Bagaria (2023), identified advertising, public relations, sales promotion publicity, personal selling, event marketing. This view is also supported by (Patel (2023). Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Amah, (2023) outlined the components of Integrated Marketing Communication, (IMC) as public relations, advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, publicity, content marketing, event marketing, customer relationship, influencer

marketing, corporate advertising and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Shimp (2000) captures the essence of IMC as it's relate to this discourse when he asserts that "IMC is the process of developing and implementing various forms of persuasive communications programmes with customers and prospects over time. The goal of IMC is to influence or directly affect the behaviour of the selected communications audience".

In practice, the goal of IMC is to create and sustain a single message from all the elements. Belch and Belch (2004) posit that a successful IMC plan will customize what is needed for the client based on time, budget and resources to reach target or goals. Vargas (2005) asserts that IMC involves the co-ordination of all promotion activities-media advertising, direct mail, personal selling, sales promotion, - to produce a clear, unified, consistent and compelling customer focused message about the organizations and its product.

From the above submission, it is clear that IMC involves the use of all offline and online promotional elements to sell an idea, service, produce or project in a consistent and unified manner which will compel the target audience to take a positive decision (Ekerikevwe, 2008). IMC makes use of all the promotional mix (offline and online) make use of online marketing channels, (e-making, email etc) the messages are unified, consistent and compelling. For the purpose of the study, however, IMC would be define as the process of selling idea, goods, or services to a target audience by integrating all channels of communication in a unified, consistent and compelling manner so as to elicit a positive disposition of the target audience. The channels of communication we refer to here are all available channels of communicating with and to the target audience such personal selling, public relations, advertising, e-mail, podcast, broadcast, mail order, sales promotion, etc. Ekerikevwe (2008) asserts that an effective IMC process comprises the following steps:

- Identification of the target audience. This requires a well thought out market segmentation and targeting process which may include secondary and/or primary market research.
- Determine the communication objectives. This can range from

generating awareness to educating the target audience.

- Design the message content: this should reflect the objective/purpose of the message, and the audience.
- Select the means for communication (media of communication)
- Define the mix of media
- Budget for cost
- Measure the effectiveness of the message

The concept of IMC has always been tailored toward the promotion of goods and services. However, this approach is new in that the researcher explores how IMC can be used to curb insecurity vis-a-viz the selling of security idea, promotion of security architecture and the promotion of security related tips and ways that security challenges would be reduced. It is pertinent to note that IMC cannot be use to sell an idea without existing reinforcement. This is because behavioural communication and attitude change may not be possible without existing and concert reinforcement. For example, all communication for behaviour change designed to discourage a commercial sex workers from their trade may fail if they are not empowered to take a more respectable and honourable profession or business. This study therefore assumed that all the variables that could result to insecurity such as unemployment, marginalization, oppression, and poverty among others are well taken care of.

The Current Security Situation in Nigeria

The current security situation in Nigeria is so poor and appalling that some scholars, researchers and commentators decried it and argued that if remain unchecked Nigeria will be non-existent within few years, (Agbelusi, 2022; Okoli, 2022; Oyewusi, 2022, Adepariusi, 2022; Augusto & Co., 2022). Insecurity has been a reoccurring decimal in the last two decades and it has continued unabated. From kidnapping, to killing due to herders/farmers clashes, Nigeria has continue to witness a tremendous phases of insecurity in the last two decades. It started with the Niger-Delta of Nigeria. Agbelusi (2022, p.1) captures the insecurity situation in Nigeria thus:

The issue of insecurity in Nigeria has become something of grave

concern to all well-meaning citizens, most of whom continue to wonder how the country arrived at such a dastardly situation where no one is safe; and worse still, rather than abate, the problem is escalating and now totally out of control. Insecurity in Nigeria is a recurring phenomenon that threatens the well-being of its citizens. The south-west of Nigeria is plagued by a surge in cybercrime, armed robbery, kidnapping, domestic crime, extrajudicial killings, herder-farmer conflicts, ritual killings, and banditry. The south-east is a haven for ritual killings, commercial crime, secessionist agitation, kidnapping, herder-farmer clashes, attacks by unknown gunmen, and banditry. The south-south remains threatened by militancy, kidnapping, and environmental agitation. The north-east has been subject to a humanitarian crisis lasting over a decade and caused by the Boko Haram insurgency and the Islamic state in West Africa province. Meanwhile, the north-west is enmeshed in illegal mining, ethno-religious killings, and banditry. It is, therefore, that insecurity in Nigeria has assumed a soft spot in political stance and that it has claimed thousands of lives and extensive damage and loss of property.

Oji, (2008) indentified different types of conflicts that were prevalent in the Niger Delta states which caused insecurity in the region. These are community oil company conflict; inter community conflict, inter-ethnic conflict, intra community conflict, intra ethnic conflict, militants government face off and illegal business related conflicts. To engaged in resolving these conflicts, the youths of the Niger-Delta massively employed the use of kidnapping etc to get the attention of those in authorities especially the government. Arhagha (2008) posits that kidnapping is a non-verbal

communication strategy in the Niger-Delta employed by Niger-Delta youths to draw the attention of government to the plight of the people in the region. The Nigeria physical space has become a mass graves for innocent civilians and military officers alike especially in banditry prone states such as Niger and Katsina. The list is endless but suffice to say that insecurity operatives arrested 30 suspected kidnappers in Orda-Osu Local Government in Imo State recently where Eze Ihianreho from Okegwe was kidnapped. Decapitated bodies were seen littered everywhere. Earlier, some school children were kidnapped in the same community. The banditry sprees which have resulted to several abduction and killings in Niger state has not been curtailed.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is undergirded on the Attitude Change Theory propounded by Damel Katz, Irving Sarnoff and Charles McClintock in 1960. Katz (1960) and his associates as cited by Anaeto, Onabajo & Osifeso (2008) suggested that the extent to which human beings act either rationally or irrationally depends on the situation and the motivation at the time among other factors. Katz (1960) argues that attitude formation and change must be understood from the functions that attitudes serve for the personality. As these functions differ, so will the technique, tactics and conditions of attitude change. He argued that it is vital to know the psychological need which is held by someone holding an attitude to be able to predict change of that attitude.

Katz identified four major functions that attitude can serve for the personality. They are, the instrumental, adjustive or utilitarian functions in which some persons held certain attitude because they are striving to maximize the rewards in their external environments and minimizing the penalties, the ego-defensive functions, where some attitudes are held because people are protecting their egos, the value-expressive functions that stressed that some attitude are held because they allow a person to give positive expression to central values and to the kind of persona one feels he or she is, and finally the knowledge functions which held that some attitudes are held because they satisfy a desire for knowledge or provide structure and meaning in a chaotic world.

Anaeto, Onabajo & Osifeso (2008) posits that Katz's approach suggests that a persuasive

message should be tailored to correspond to the motivational base for which an attitude is held. This theory is therefore essential in the way IMC can be used to curb insecurity in Nigeria. This is because if the reason(s) which have caused insecurity in Nigeria is ascertained, IMC can be used to maintain security of lives and properties by using it to discouraged negative attitude dispositions that promote and encouraged insecurity in the country. Another theory that is appropriate for the study is the innovation-diffusion propounded by B. Ryan and N. Gross in 1943 and Everett Roger in 1960. The theory assumed among other things that media as well as interpersonal contacts provide information, influence, opinion and judgement. Opinion leaders exert influence in audience behaviour via their personal contacts, but additional intermediaries (called change agents and gatekeepers) are also included in the process of diffusion. The information flows through networks and the roles opinion leaders play in them determine the likelihood that the innovation (message) will be adopted (Anaeto, Onabajo & Osifeso, 2008). Persuasive and behavioral change messages and contents with the aim of advocating peace, unity, togetherness and development of Nigeria can be integrated into the various online and offline promotional media to reach out to the various units of the country. This can be done through the National Orientation Agency (NOA). IMC as a communication strategy for curbing insecurity, is therefore relevant to the theory because IMC uses persuasive and behavioural change

tendencies on targeted audience since it is a synergy of all the promotional elements in a persuasive manner to curb insecurity in Nigeria.

Method of Study

The analytical approach was adopted for this study. It draws largely from literature such as books, journals, news reports and other printed materials. The researcher's observation of the changing dynamics of the current insecurity situation in Nigeria also proved invaluable and inferences were drawn from professional marketers, and researchers in the field of marketing and communication. In using this research method, the researchers is systematic and logical in the presentation of the submission and draw conclusion from it.

IMC and the Fight against Insecurity in Nigeria

The question is how we can use IMC to fight against the insistent insecurity in Nigeria? If well harnessed, IMC can be used to create a communication programme that would change the security narratives in Nigeria. To achieve this, advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing, social media, public relations, digital marketing and all other communication channels could be integrated to launch an effective communication campaign against insecurity in Nigeria. In other words, effective communication campaign using integrated marketing approach would go a long way in reducing the spate of insecurity in Nigeria as shown in the diagram below.

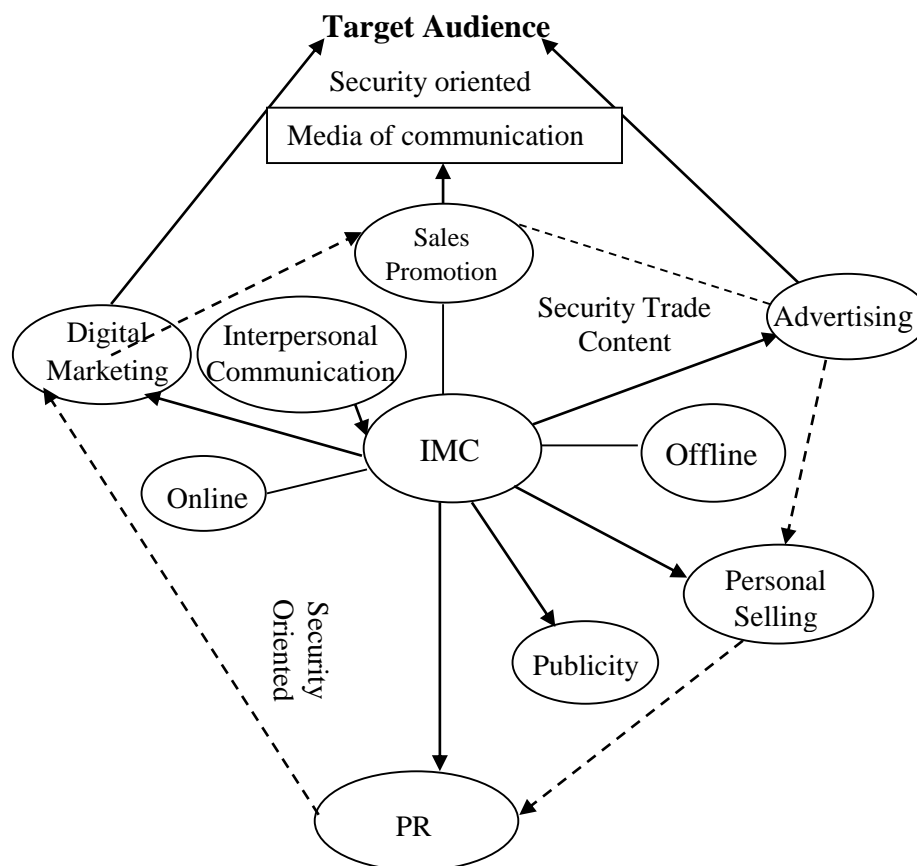


Figure 1: Ekerikevwe’s IMC hypothetical content creation model for fighting in insecurity in Nigeria.

The integration of all channels of communication to achieving specific objective(s) is the nexus of IMC. However, to curb insecurity in Nigeria, IMC, is a formidable approach, as illustrated in the diagram above. To fight insecurity in Nigeria well designed security oriented messages should be targeted at the Nigerian public using all the channel of communication. Advertising as a type of communication proposes that good, products and services including ideas are advanced for the purpose of patronage. As a component of IMC, advertising can be used to sell laudable ideas that discourage crime minded individuals. Personal selling as a communication strategy can be used by opinion leaders and politician to personally advocate the need for peace, unity,

and tranquility in Nigeria. This can be done through the internet and all associate digital media platforms such as Facebook, Emails and Whatsapp. This can also be used to project security consciousness among the Nigerian states especially as it concerns development and inclusiveness of the various region of Nigeria. The bottom line is that each IMC components should be used to sing a single message that could re-orient members of the public and discourage avoidable crimes.. Ekerikevwe (2008) had earlier developed four hypothetical stages of achieving peace in the Niger-Delta through IMC that can also be adopted in fighting insecurity in Nigeria. These stages are diagrammatically represented as follows:

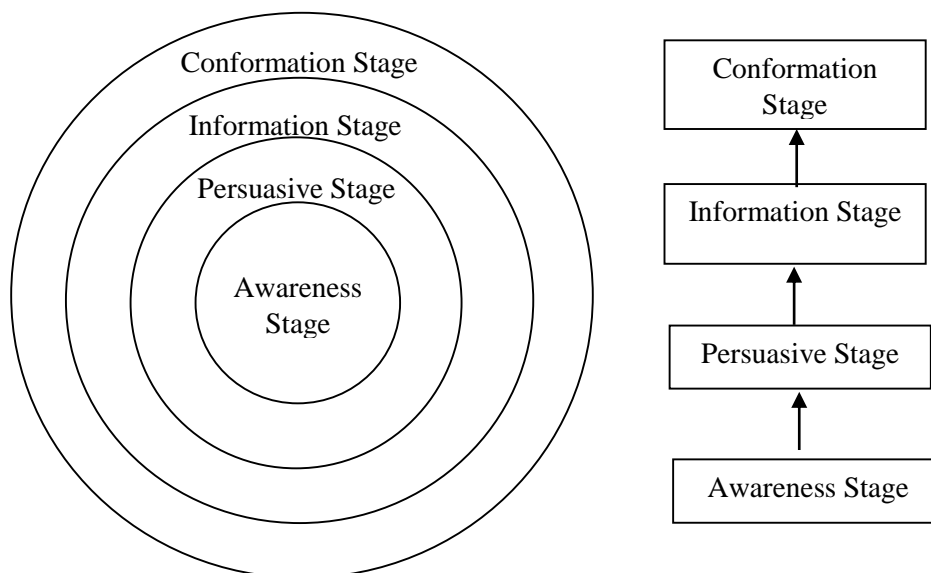


Figure 2: Ekerikevwe's hypothetical stages of how IMC can be used to fight insecurity in Nigeria.

- **The Awareness Stage:** This stage should be used to promote the concept of development, unity and togetherness of the various Nigeria federate units. The need of all-inclusiveness should be emphasized.
- **The Information Stage:** This stage should provide communication about the structures and constructs of the Nigerian government towards reducing the suffering of the masses. Establishments of industries and the empowerment of Nigerians as well as development initiatives should be stressed and implemented to assist the masses.
- **The Persuasive Stage:** Deliberate efforts should be made through IMC to persuade Nigerian to accept our noble callings achievement and development.
- **Confirmation Stage:** In this stage, the people are persuaded to confirm things for themselves.

IMC Process for Tackling Insecurity in Nigeria

To be effective in tackling insecurity in Nigeria, it will be expedient to follow the following steps.

a. Identify the Target Audience

There are many section of the Nigeria states are not satisfy with the dividend of their commitment to the Nigeria cause. These Nigerian must be identified. To this end, there is need for a general conference of all the sections of the Nigeria State. This is will enable them to present their grievances.

b. Identification of the Communication Channel

The different components of IMC may not be used to reach out to the target audience. However, there must be integration of the various channels to be able to achieve a unified, consistent, insistent and persistent voice for effectiveness and efficiency. Since the communication goals is the same in each of the components of IMC, the general assumption popularized by communication experts that the medium is the message cannot be true through the medium reflects how the message is packaged. Generally, the following channels will be suitable option for use:

1. Personal contact

2. Public relations through social responsibility
3. Television
4. Radio
5. Traditional channel of communication such as town crier, music
6. Social group e.g church, school and club
7. Internet using the component known as the worldwide web
8. Newspapers and magazines
9. Books

c. Designing the Messages

The message content should be designed using the formular CAP

C = Content

A = Audience

P = Purpose

The content of the message is a reflection of the purpose which is the objective(s) that the message is created to achieve. The objective may be to create awareness, provide information, educate, mobilize or sensitize the audience.

d. Define the Budget and the Mix Media

The media of communication that will be integrated in the communication process should be well defined and budget prepare for the purpose.

a. Communication

Using the various media, communication can then begin. The communication should done across various identified communication channels which are relevant and accessible to the target audience.

b. Monitoring

The communication process should be monitor to ensure that it is in line with set objectives. Communication should be monitored effectively to ensure its effective execution and reach in relation to the target audience.

c. Evaluation

The impact of the communication should be evaluated with the view of modifying subsequent communication process.

Conclusion

IMC growing importance in the marketing of good services and ideas has greatly impacted on the socio-economic development across the world. The adoption of IMC as a communication strategy in the fight against

insecurity in Nigeria cannot be underestimated. This is because IMC has play a vital role in the marketing of products, good, services and idea. Thus, if proper utilized, all things being equal, it can be use to create a formidable atmosphere of peace and oneness in a country that has been devastated by marginalization, corruption, unemployment, nepotism, tribalism, high rate of under-development, under-representation and insecurity all things being equal.

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