Communicating Africa by Africans from African to the World: the Need for Attitudinal Orientation and Re-Orientation in Communicating for Development

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Abstract

Scholars have posited the relevance of communication to human existence in general and development in particular. The developed nations have deployed communication for national development. Meanwhile, the developing and underdeveloped ones are struggling to do so. This resulted to an imbalance in the world communication order which tend to be worsened by globalization and the advancement in information and communication technology. The concern of this paper is that in this emerging scenario, Africa is the worst hit. In the communication world today, it is the western voice, political agenda and propaganda as well as culture and economy that is pushed out by the westerners to the world. China is contending to have a pride of place, while Africa is at the receiving end. Giving the fact that communication is a two-way affair, this paper calls for concerted effort by African leadership stakeholders to reverse or at least reduce the level of communication imbalance. This can be achieved by ensuring that through attitudinal orientation/re-orientation of all their leaders and citizens as well as mobilization of human, material and financial resources, Africans will begin to communicate Africa from Africa to the world. This will translate to communicating for Africa's development.

Keywords: Communication, Africa, Need, Attitudinal, Orientation/Re-Orientation

Background to the Study
According to Teri and Michael Gamble (2013), Communication is defined as the deliberate or accidental transfer of meaning. It is the process that occurs whenever someone observes or experiences behaviour and attributes meaning to that behaviour. They further maintained that as long as the behaviour of one person affects or influences the behaviour of another – communication is occurring. For communication to have taken place two ways must be involved – sending signals ∕ messages and receiving

signals/messages. Such messages sent could be intentional and sometimes unintentional. The definition of communication given above, encapsulates the different aspects of communication which include;

1. Intrapersonal communication (communication within self)
2. Inter- personal communication (communication with another person).
3. Group communication (communication within a limited number of persons)
4. Public communication (communication involving the persuasion of members of an audience to hold certain attitude values or beliefs).
5. Mass communication (communication involving a large audience and sometimes with a long distance).
6. Online/Machine assisted communication (communication building relationships with others using computers and the internet).

Harub, Thompson and Miller (2003) treatise have located the origin of both language and communication to be at the Garden of Eden, opposing the view of evolution theorists. Also, Alwood (1993). Capturing the role of communication to human existence and development stated that, "without communication, most human collective activities could not exist". Communication is relevant at both the macro and micro levels of social activities of both the developed and the underdeveloped societies.

The observed level of imbalance in the levels of development between the west and Asia, Latin America and Africa especially, after the 2nd world war gave birth to development communication. It was part of the post war package of international aid programme through the United Nations to countries in the mentioned regions of the world that were confronted with the challenge of poverty, illiteracy, poor health, lack of economic, political and social infrastructures. It was reasoned that communication could be deployed as a tool to fast track development. Development here is linked up with political democracy, rising levels of productivity and industrialization, rising literacy rates, longer life expectancy, sustainable environment Iwuchukwu (2006). We wish to add cultural and linguistic independence as additional yardstick to measure development. Several years after the entry of development communication with its lofty objectives, not much have been achieved in balancing both the world economic order and the communication order,

Contemporary issues in the world communication order tend to justify the position of the Dependency Theorists. This paper is anchored on the Dependency Theory of Development Communication. According to this theory, Waisbord (2013) argued that the problems of underdevelopment were not internal to third world countries but were determined by external factors and the way former colonies were integrated into the world economy. They opine that the problem of the underdeveloped world were political rather than the result of lack of information. They blame the dominant position of the western powers in the global order. They argued that the third world (developing nations) were politically and culturally dependent on the west, especially the United States.

This is in addition to the internal problems of the nations themselves that failed to use development programmes to address unequal land distribution, Lack of credit for peasants, and poor health care service, It does appear still that though the world is more closely knit together as a global street due to globalization and advances in information and communication technology, the logic of advancing, lack of information to be the bane of Africa's underdevelopment is fast waning.

Global Communication Imbalance

As the gap in the global development imbalance between Africa and the west, widens, so is the gap in the global communication imbalance in particular. While Africans even in the remotest parts, can access information from the west about the west by the west, the reverse cannot be said to be the case. The implication of this is that the current global communication structure is flawed, lopsided and bereft of the genuine characteristic of any true communication enterprise-sending out message and receiving a feedback As the west sends out her messages, Africans can receive it with just a click on the button. The African message on the other hand does not get to the west. There is no real feedback. In few cases where African messages are to be communicated to the west, it has to be through the hand of the westerners not Africans. Even before this happens, the original content of the message must have been filtered to please and align with the messages from the west. The communication flow is clearly unidirectional. For Africa, the gains of advances in information and communication technology tend to be only in the acceleration of her citizen's access to information from the west as well as disregard and decimation of her indigenous communication systems. While William Payne in Wilson (2015:47) admits that "African people in spite of their great ethnic and linguistic diversity, have been communicating among and between themselves, in a wide variety of ways for long time; Wilson (2015:50) states that,

> "This abandonment of our traditional communication process and preference for process that seem to be more efficient but ineffective, faster but limited in effective reach and satisfaction of the critical population, heterogeneous but alienating, time-saving but expensive modern processes which are after all, culturally threatening to the process which are after all, culturally threatening to the process of democratization and legitimization, has been a source of concern to committed scholars."

An effective and balanced global communication structure therefore will only be achieved when there is an encoding and decoding (sending and receiving) of messages from both sides of the globe (west/the rest of the world vs Africa) in a manner of reciprocity. Originating information from each side of the globe by the people of that side should be accessed, respected, digested and responded to in a manner devoid of master-servant relationship. The present situation where only the western voice, political agenda and propaganda, as well as culture and economy is pushed out to Africa without any from Africa by Africans to the West/the rest of the world cannot promote development in Africa. Africa's voice must be heard. The imperative of this to her (Africa's) development cannot be overemphasized.

Communicating Africa by Africans from Africa

The dominant communication tools in the world today, either in the mass media or social media are based in the west or are bent on advancing their socio-economic, political, cultural and linguistic interest. In whatever way and manner they are projected and promoted in Africa, this is the underlying fact. There tends to be no truth in any attempt of claim by them to project and pursue the development of Africa as would Africans from Africa. For example, the West led by the United States, have accepted homosexuality, lesbianism, gay marriage and marriage to beasts, divorce, abortion, nudity, etc. Things not only alien to the African psyche but also abomination to God- the Creator of the world. These they have encoded in messages of human right, alternative lifestyle, libertinism, cultural emancipation, modeling, etc., and pushed out to Africa in particular and the rest of the world. The Western communication tools have a mandate to sell this and convince the Africans to queue behind them. Thus, in pursing their professional task of entertaining, educating and informing, they have crafted these agendas very well into it. Their building of this agenda into their entertainment, programming, education and information consistently is already achieving a gradual de-sensitization of the psyche, mindset and emotion of the Africans who had called a rebuff of this initially. As long as this is not checked, it is a matter of a few years away, before Africans will take over championing the promotion of these for now which still sees vices and aberrations as fundamental human rights.

Africans were once united and unequivocal about their resistance and resilience to these western information propaganda as encoded. However, Africans did not and have not communicated back to the West that position through Africans from Africa in similar ways as done by the West. The Western de-sensitization programme is already raising discordant tones across Africa presently. A voice or voices from Africa by Africans deploying her Linguistic repetoire and indigenous communication systems as well as the mass and social media carefully embedded in her education, entertainment and information programming would not only have positively sensitized the people, but also consolidated and harmonized their opposition to the western propaganda. It would have further put it to the west that attachment of a string such as support for gay marriage, etc as a condition for financial aid or security collaboration, amounts to human rights abuse and perpetuation of the prevalent master–servant relationship. Such servants as echoed by dependent theorists cannot bring about Africa's development. Those cannot be any true democratization when people are coerced or intimidated to take to a particular course that promotes the Western interest.

Attitudinal Orientation / Reorientation and Implication for Communication Development

The entire leadership stakeholder in the African development project as well as her citizenry must awake and realize the disparity in the global information communication trend and its dangers to Africa's development. This is predicated on the fact that it is only with such awareness and understanding that pragmatic steps could be taken towards reversing the trend by making Africans voice message to be heard and to count. Appropriate political will, articulate legislative crafting and deployment of massive

economic and human resources are required to be deployed in carrying out attitudinal orientation/ re-orientation of her leadership and citizenry. This is pertinent because those who see anything Africa as inferior or a hen-pecked servant of the west, cannot take Africa to the next level of development is to catch up with the west. Only such oriented/re-orientated minds could harness Africa is indigenous languages communication systems, cultural (identity, economic and human resource to west and the rest of the world. Only such informed and liberated leaders and citizenry could combine her indigenous resources and the colonial languages as well as the modern tools of communication to irresistibly penetrate the west and others and let them know Africans value, philosophy, culture, language, beliefs, customs, institutions, history, technologies as well as her political agenda and propaganda.

As information through whatever means is communicated to Africa from the West or any part of the world, it will equally flow in the same manner (either in response to, originating from) from Africa by Africans to the west and the rest of the world. This will bring about a global communication balance or parity. Furthermore, this is what communicating development in Africa means. Through such means, Africans weakness will also be criticized for possible improvement. Such weak points as high rate illiteracy, corruption, lack of good governance, sit tight leadership and other undemocratic tendencies will be criticized by Africans through African media to the herring and accessing of the entire world. The recent signing of communication agreement between the United Nations and Nigerians channel Television is both welcome and exciting as it leaves no one in doubt of the possibility of the present postulation.

Conclusion
The Dangote's should not only invert tangible assets but intangible assets or services such as the communicating Africa to the world project. The agenda setting theory of communication recognizes the central role of communication practitioners to the development of the various societies where they are found. Communication practitioners and technologies are therefore essential in the development of Africa using all the indices of development,

However, with an imbalance in the global communication flows and one-sided projection of the Western sociopolitical and cultural agenda, Africa's development is being undermined. A conscious awakening, orientation and re-orientation of the African leadership and citizenry and mobilization, of her human and material resources to create a platform for communicating Africa from Africa by Africans to the west and the world will suffice. This will not only translate to community for development in Afria but also through unbiased, self interest-free criticism of her weak points of corruption, lack of good governance etc the quality of life of the people will be improved upon. Our recommendation is what Africa's development can neither be achieved through the ideas of non-citizen of Africa nor exoglossic individuals in Africa. It will be Africans and or endoglossic individuals in Africa.

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