Assessment of Orientation and Public Relations- Strategy on Crises Management: Evidence from Nigeria's South-South Region

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ABSTRACT

It is widely acknowledged that since the discovery of oil in the region, neither the government, multinational oil companies nor the host communities have had peace as there has been nonstop violent crisis ranging from militancy, to kidnapping, pipeline vandalism, oil theft to all sorts of youth restiveness and criminality. This study therefore examines the efficacy of marketing communication as potential tool for crisis management within South-south region of Niger Delta. A total of twelve local government areas where selected (two each) from the six states of the South-south from where units of analysis were drawn, and responses elicited from them with the aid of a structured questionnaire. Field data was analysed using multiple regression. Findings indicated that the two dimensions of marketing communication examined in this study are of significant positive relationship with the criterion variable (crises management). Hence study concludes that multinational oil companies operating in the region should invest more in their public relations and reorientation strategies to facilitate effective communication between operating multinational oil companies and their host communities so as to enjoy peaceful coexistence and tranquillity in the area.

Keywords: Crisis Management, Marketing Communication, Multinational oil companies, Public Relations, Reorientation.

INTRODUCTION

The oil crisis in the South-South area of the Niger Delta has caused a disturbance in oil exploration and a decrease in the nation's oil sales earnings. The crisis has also resulted in the proliferation of various criminal activities, which have positioned the region as a hazardous area on a Universal scale (Okogbule and Brown, 2024). The military and militants are presently profiting from the thriving illicit activities of illegal bunkering, pipeline vandalism, and diversion of refined petroleum products flowing via the pipelines from the refineries (Sam et al, 2024). The combined endeavours of the federal government and international oil firms have not produced an acceptable outcome over time, as the crisis continues to intensify, leading to an increasing level of insecurity in the region on a daily basis (Okpebenvo et al 2023).

Meanwhile, at the root of the oil crises lies strongly, the issue of underdevelopment of host communities stemming from perceived neglect by government and operating oil firms in the region (Elendu 2023). The oil crises in the South-South region is an outcome of induced frustration and hardship, occasioned by poverty

and under development in the region, which is manifesting by gamut of negative vices ravaging the region such as pipeline vandalism, kidnapping and hostage taking, agitation, youth restiveness, oil theft, terrorism, corruption, armed robbery etc with devastating effects on the ecosystem of the region, (Bamidele and Erameh 2023).

No doubt, in the last two decades, research focus on the Niger Delta has been on the increase. However, this effort is skewed in the direction of cause and effect with lesser attention devoted to eking out sustainable solution to the lingering crises in the region. For instance, Irabor et.al (2024) examined the role of federal government in the conflict where issues of corruption and poor infrastructural development were identified. Consequently, Olukaejire et.al., (2024) focussed on finding the effect of oil exploration on the livelihood of residence of the region just like Igbani et.al., (2024) investigated the ecological effect of oil pollution on the region.

Akaegbobi, et al, (2024) was concerned about the cost budgetary implication of the crises such as the huge government expenditures on the consequences of the crises such as repairs of vandalised pipelines, ransom for kidnapped expatriates, oil spill remediation just to mention but a few. Hence they profiled government expenses in this regard from the period of 2017 – 2021 where findings revealed that the crisis possess huge negative economic consequences on the overall economic stability of the country. More so, Siloko investigated the consequences of environmental degradation on livelihood of indigenes of the region. From insights gleaned from residents lived experiences, he concludes that having a nuanced understanding of the contextual reality in terms of how the oil spillage and insecurity affect the means of livelihood of the people could provide useful insight in getting at a more sustainable solution.

While we do not underplay the relevance of cause and effect on construction of sustainable and lasting solution to the lingering oil crisis in the region, we argue that the intractable nature of the crises despite increasing effort by policy makers and research focus entrenches the imperative of a continuous search for solution. Hence drawing on the findings by Alakwe (2024), who investigated the mystery underlining the proverbial maxim, 'paradox of poverty in midst of plenty', which has become the new nomenclature associated with the ordeal of the Niger Delta people, we find meaningful gap in communication architecture of the multinational oil companies on the one hand and cognitive ability or awareness on the part of host communities.

Alakwe (2024) expressed concerns over the growing poverty in the region despite the huge monetary investment in the region by both government and operating oill companies. Hence conducted an investigation with the primary aim of identifying key factors responsible for this contrarian manifestation of which findings revealed amongst others, mismanagement of funds and lack of effective engagement by the indigenous members of the host communities. This observation makes much sense considering the revelation in the book: Real Enemies of the Niger Delta by Engr. Dr Emmanuel Audu-Ohwavborua, where it was revealed that the amount of monetary investment in the region is ten times bigger than the amount it took to transform Dubai to what it is today.

Based on the forgoing, we argue that the indigenes docility and continuous restiveness in face of this reality begs the question of whether the host communities are properly oriented of the social entrepreneurial effort of these oil companies and their overall perception of these efforts. Hence this study examines the effectiveness of public relations and re-orientation as potential crisis management tools for sustainable peace building in the South-south region of the Niger Delta.

The geographical scope of the study is the six states of the south-south geopolitical zone based on order of importance in terms of oil deposit. However, due to the peculiar nature of the South – South which ranks in the top echelon of oil production in the Niger Delta Region, it automatically forms the focal point of this research. Using a systematic sampling procedure, 6 states were selected from the 9 states of the Niger delta on the bases of their oil and pipeline bearing statuses, two local government areas were selected per state and

four communities per local government area from where unit of analyses or respondents (comprising community youths, leaders, elders, ex militants and their relatives) for the research were drawn.

To this end, the study aims at examining the relationship between marketing communication and crises management with view to proffering sustainable solution to the lingering oil crises in the South-South. This study is novel as no empirical evidence exists that has addressed the oil crises using marketing communication strategy as a crises management tool.

Objective

The general objective of the study is to examine the potential of marketing communication to act as effective crisis management tool for sustainable resolution of the oil crises in South-south region of Niger Delta. This aim will be expressed through the following objectives:

1. To identify the extent to which public relations as a marketing tool could be used to achieve sustainable peace in the South-South region.
2. To examine the effect ofre-orientation as a marketing communication tool in the resolution of the lingering oil crisis in the South-South region of Niger Delta.

Hypotheses

H01: Effective Host community re-orientation does not have significant influence on management of the oil crises in the South-South region.

H02 : Effective Community Public Relations by multinational oil companies does not have positive significant effect on management of the oil crises in the South-South region.

Research Question

1. Does effective public relations strategies of multinational oil firms within host communities contribute meaningfully to management of the crises in the South-South region?
2. To what extent does effective host community reorientation by multinational oil companies contribute to successful management of the oil crises in the South-South region?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Crises Management

Business all over the world requires a peaceful environment to record success in terms of returns on investment and meeting corporate responsibility to stakeholders. It is in this light that Shukor et al (2023) opined that crisis is an event that threatens successful operation of organizations and disrupts the peace of stakeholders. Shaw (2023) acknowledges that crisis is an unplanned phenomenon but can be forestalled through proactiveness of leadership. The lingering crisis in the region has been attributable to negligence and lack of sensitivity to the plight of host communities by operating oil companies in the region (Alakwe 2024). Central to the agitation by the Niger Delta people, is the issue of environmental degradation and disruption of their traditional means of livelihood, (Numbere et al 2023).

As observed by Numbere at al (2023) he crisis situation in the region has lingered, differing all solution approaches, due to poor crisis management strategies on the part of policy makers. The concept of crisis management has been given divers interpretation and explanations across contextual diversity, (Shukor et al 2023). For instance, in Cutlip et al. (2006, p. 326) high level strategic management skills was recommended for management of difficult organisation crises situation. In an attempt to define term 'crisis', Paraskevas (2006) identified its etymology as being derived from the Greek wird, 'Krisis' which is translated in English to mean 'choice and decision'. as a mentions the word "crisis" derives from the Greek word "krisis",

whichits English translation would be "choice" or "decision'. Therefore, consistent with the etymology above, crisis could be defined as a difficult situation requiring an important and prompt decision or choice. In the light of the foregoing, Crisis management is being seen as organising important resources (both material and humans) to produce an informed and effective decision aimed at mitigating a challenging and difficult situation affecting overall organisation or individual objectives, Martinez et al (2023).

Meanwhile, (Martinez et al 2023) found that crisis could either be productively or positively managed, in which case it produces desired outcome or poorly managed with severe consequences and repercussions. With the growing rate of crisis in organisations, emphasis has began to shift as thinking round the phenomenon has ignited a quest for sustainable peace building strategy, especially between host communities and companies operating in their contexts, thereby echoing the relevance of social marketing. (Uy et al 2023 ; Szczepanska et al (2023)).

Boin and Rhinard (2022) who conducted a study into the efficacy of crisis management of the European Union using Covid 19 as a case study, they posited that crisis is a result of cumulative feelings of dissatisfaction or negative occurrences which are unnoticed by leadership or policy makers. They therefore argue that policy makers must demonstrate proactiveness in terms of sensitivity to signals or signs of brewing grievances or occurrences that may snowball into crisis situation. However, they acknowledged that such timeliness and sensitivity requires strategies to systematically nip such factors in the bud in their embryonic level. In this regard, crisis management becomes a tool for actualising such objectives (Boin and Rhinard 2022; Imeroz et al 2023). Crisis management in the context of this study entails a gamut of process involving strategic monitoring and evaluation to systematically track potential circumstances or factors that could culminate in crisis situation and proactively put up strategies to forestall same. It involves effective communication and understanding between community stakeholders (host communities) and operating oil companies in the context.

Szczepanska et al (2023) emphasised the relevance of peace building and promotion via retailing of the concept as it is the only way to actualise and sustain peaceful coexistence and tranquility between host communities and multinational oil companies operating in the region. In this regards, Alakwe (2024) posits that if policy makers are sensitive to the plight of host communities by way of adequate infrastructural development and social protection, there would be less of strive and agitation from host communities. In view of the forgoing conceptualization of crisis management, and the positions of scholars on the key facets of crisis management, this study views crisis management through the lenses of crisis prevention and crisis mitigation.

Importance of crises management

Crisis has become a common phenomenon which has characterised everyday organisational life. Therefore, management expert have increasingly emphasised the importance of giving priority to it as it has the potential to disrupt organisational activities and cut short the life span of the organisation, (Boin and Rhinard 2022). It has also been observed that the variable that constitute crisis is difficult to decipher, (Eliasson and Kreuter 2,000) experts have suggested that organisations put in place, effective internal and external communication strategies aimed at building effective collaboration and understanding amongst relevant stakeholders. This entails a great deal of future projections, effective communication flow and public relations strategy. Hence, in Gundel (2005) as cited in Harake (2024) , captains of industries and management were advised to give priority attention to possible factors or situations that are capable of escalating to crisis. Moore et al, (2006) has also emphasised the need for vigilance, sensitivity and pro-activeness to intentions, activities, actions and reactions that are crisis prone. organisations which may have been undermined, directly or indirectly by organisational management managers. The relevance of crisis management cannot be over emphasised. With the growing rate of crisis ravaging various sectors of society today, instituting crisis management as an important department of organisational set up has become a desideratum (Boin and Rhinard 2022). Gundel (2005) categorised crisis management into four including, "conventional crises, unexpected crises, intractable crises and fundamental crises".

Wells (1978) believes sufficient communications is key to an effective crisis management. However, Ashcroft (1997) opined in his study that effective information management between stakeholders (both internal and external) is crucial in crises management. This is due to flow of essential information to be communicated to relevant stakeholders in crises situations.

Furthermore, Mitroff and Alpaslan (2003) classified crises into two categories of "normal crisis" and "abnormal crisis". They elaborated on them and drew a distinctive line between them.

Public relations and Crises Management in the Niger Delta region

During times of crises, the ties between organisations and the public are strained. The topic of building or managing connections during crises has been the subject of intense debates among experts in the fields of public relations and business communication over the past several decades. This research contextualises public relations as effective promotional strategies utilised by oil companies to improve relations with host communities. Public relations are crucial in crisis response since they assist in crafting the messages, whether explicit or implicit, that are sent to different audiences. In the current era, characterised by the spread of false information, terrorist attacks, viral outbreaks, and marketing failures, crisis communication is becoming increasingly significant in the field of public relations. During times of crisis, organisations must determine how to manage their interactions with both internal and external stakeholders (Massey, 2001). Publics must reassess their relationships and may develop distrust or dissatisfaction if their needs are not consistently met by organisations (Kang et al., 2018; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002). Consequently, the resilience of organization-public relationships (OPRs) might be undermined under crisis scenarios if the demands of stakeholders are not sufficiently met. Considering the potential weakness in operational strength in crisis management, it is possible that stakeholder relationships may be negatively impacted following a crisis incident. The importance of an organization's capacity to effectively handle its connections with stakeholders during times of crisis is increasingly significant (Smith et al., 2021). Many researchers have conducted extensive study in the past two decades to explore how organisations may (re)establish their ties with the public during and after crises. Several research have specifically examined the favourable aspects of relationships, such as trust and commitment (e.g., Turcanu et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2008; Xu, 2019). For example, Wilson et al. (2008) created a conceptual model that builds upon excellence theory (Grunig, 1992), the relationship management paradigm (Ledingham, 2003), and issue management (Heath, 2006). This model aims to analyse the impact of transgressions on the relationship between sponsors and sports organisations in Australia. Their research indicated that establishing longer and continuous interactions might strengthen public trust and mitigate potential risks in the case of violations (Wilson et al., 2008). Effective relationship management is an essential aspect of the field of public relations. Broom and Sha (2013) contend that public relations is the managerial activity that builds and sustains mutually advantageous connections between an organisation and the public.

Prioritizing organizational relationship management is not a new phenomenon in public relations literature. Beginning in 1984, Dr. Ferguson argued for a shift in the general function of public relations practice towards a management approach. Ferguson's (1984) idea that the relationship, not the process of communication itself, should be the main aspect of study in the public relations field provided the starting point for a major change in the way public relations as a study was conceptualized. Moving forward from that point, Grunig et al. (2002) re-conceptualized public relations not just as acommunicative function, but as a management function as well. This reconceptualization of the function of public relations brought to light the need for public relations management teams to be highly skilled in areas such as crisis planning, reasoning and crisis planimplementation (Ledingham, 2003). Re-conceptualizing public relations as a management function led to the development of analysing the outcomes of those management 20relationships (Hon &Grunig, 1999). These outcomes not only help to determine the value of the public relations management, but they also serve as a way to measure the viability of the long-term relationships that these organizations have with their stakeholders (Hon &Grunig, 1999; Kang & Yang, 2010). With this reconceptualization of public relations in literature arose a need for a new definition of public relations in

which the concept of relationships is located at the core. In crisis communication literature, relationships between organizations and their stakeholders have attracted continuous attention. Particularly with relevance to pre-crisis relationship history, scholars (Coombs, 2000) have supported the benefits of relationship management. For instance, Coombs and Holladay (2001) found that if stakeholders' prior reputation is positive, organizations might be able to prevent potential reputational damage resulting from crises. In addition, Brown and White (2011) determined that in a university crisis setting, positive relationships could prevent students from attributing responsibility towards the university. The relational approach, thus, is crucial for organizations to establish a positive post-crisis outcome. At the heart of the oil crises in the South-south region lies a fundamental issue of trust burn out of misunderstanding between management of multinational oil companies operating in the area and their host communities. Whereas these companies feel they are performing their obligations by way of commitment to social responsibilities, their modus operandi appears still alien to their host communities who continue to see them as enemies who are on a mission to rip them off their common patrimony and inflict untold hardship on them. Effective public relations from empirical evidence breaches communication gap between organisational stake holders and the external environment (host communities) and has the potency to prevent or manage crises situation.

More so, there is also a great deal of perception issues both on the part of host communities and multinational oil companies operating in the area. Scholarly evidence abounds in this regard. In a critical study by Tarilate, (2022) on host communities perception of oil firms CSR programs, 21 it was discovered that the perceptions of host community members are more negative than positive, as they perceive oil production has brought more harm to them than a blessing as a result of its attendant negative externalities. The study further revealed that members of the host communities have argued that with the volume of oil revenue generated from their land by oil companies and the Nigerian government, compared with the level of community development, they have incurred more costs of oil production, without so much to proof of being host communities where the resources is gleaned. Obviously, the perception gap that exist here can best be reconciled through effective public relations strategies.

Reorientation and crises management

Orientation has to do with someone or a group of persons knowing where they are or the direction they tend to go (Barry 2016). However, in the context of this study, reorientation encapsulates a gamut of action taken to create a positive paradigm or behavioural change in a community or society (Uwheru 2020). Previous research has shown that effective reorientation programs by oil firms via the media, frequent engagement in heart to heart interactive sessions and town hall meetings between oil firms and host communities has a way of mentally and attitudinally reengineering indigenes of host communities towards a better neighbourliness and reduced agitation and conflict tendencies (Oyefusi, 2019). Ross Howard (2015), in her study on conflict sensitive journalism posits thus, 'Conflict resolution requires changing disputants' perceptions of each other'. The mainstream media exerts significant effect on knowledge, attitudes, and perhaps conduct. Conflict Sensitive Journalism (CSJ) is a media development effort that aims to enhance traditional news media practices in conflict-affected areas, making them more pertinent to conflict resolution. CSJ has gained significant popularity and is now widely implemented. CSJ enhances fundamental aspects of traditional Western journalism and teaches basic conflict analysis abilities, enabling journalists to recognise their inherent and unintentional capacity to promote conflict resolution while upholding the principles of media professionalism.

Crises management in the troubled south-south region

In this study, crises are defined according to Rhuks et al (2019) as instances of restiveness and violent attacks that involve the destruction of oil facilities, oil theft, kidnapping, and hostage taking. These acts are primarily directed towards oil companies operating in the region and the government. They arise from a sense of deprivation, injustice, and exploitation. The significant level of unrest and destruction of oil infrastructure in the Niger Delta area is undeniably linked to the frustrations caused by the actions of these oil corporations, which have rendered life challenging and intolerable for the local population. According to

Chen et al (2019), firms should demonstrate social responsibility towards their host communities by appropriate remuneration, infrastructure development, and investment in human capacity. The persistence of the oil crises in the south-south region can be attributed to the failure of both the government and multinational oil companies to efficiently handle the situation. This conclusion is supported by empirical evidence from various sources (Osemene, 2015; Ogbonne, 2020; Ogbeifon, 2014; Nwobueze and Inokoba, 2017).

Conceptual clarification on the oil crises in the Niger Delta

The Niger Delta issue, which encompasses militancy, internal struggle, and insurrection in the South South area, may be examined from three primary angles. As mentioned before in the research, the Niger Delta region is home to a wide range of 45 distinct ethnic groups. While these ethnic groups have a mutual interest in the progress of the Niger Delta, they also exhibit preferences for their individual ancestral issues. The Ijaw-Itsekiri conflict, which is marked by acts of violence, should not be only attributed to environmental degradation or oil production in the region. Therefore, it is crucial to classify the specific issues involved in the disagreement. The main emphasis is on the Ijaw national movement for self-determination. The campaign was spearheaded in the 1960s by the late Ijaw nationalist, Isaac Adaka Boro. This continuing initiative is dedicated to building a strong and self-governing Ijaw nation. The Kaiama declaration, the formation of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) as the armed division of the Ijaw national congress (INC), and the cooperation among various militant factions predominantly consisting of individuals from the Ijaw ethnicity, all represent the same fundamental principle.

The second dimension refers to the many factions of criminal cult organisations that are established, backed, and funded by important political people. These gangs primarily engage in actions like as crude oil theft, ransom kidnappings, political assassinations, robberies, and piracy in coastal areas and territorial waterways. In addition, they maintain and support their political connections at all levels of government and the military. During a legislative retreat on constitution revision in 2008, Rotimi Amaechi, the Governor of Rivers State, voiced his apprehension over the actions of militants. He asserted that the insurgents' endeavours to seize control of the Niger Delta Struggle were adversely affecting the region's collective interests. Their indiscriminate acts of homicide, abductions, and assaults on oil and other commercial installations have rendered the whole region inhospitable for lawful business endeavours. Although the movement to remedy the injustice against the Niger Delta people is widely supported, any illegal activity perpetrated by militants would undercut the noble objective. In August 2008, a communiqué was published by the participants of a South-South legislative retreat on constitution reform, which included of all 46 Governors of the Niger Delta. The statement addressed the demand for fairness and equality in the Niger Delta region and strongly condemned the corruption of legitimate demands by criminal individuals. The listed criminal behaviours, including abduction, hostage taking, and armed robbery, have been recognised as actions that harm the region's economy and undercut the ambitions of its people. The illicit activities serve as a distraction from the genuine struggle for enhanced accessibility to the region's resources. Uninformed individuals are leveraging the authentic fight in the Niger Delta to deliberately create disorder, so undermining the cause. These delinquents are not the exclusive forces aligning themselves with the authentic struggle for advancement in the Niger Delta. The many militant organisations focused on the Ijaw ethnicity are doing comparable actions in order to accomplish their political goals. The third aspect of the conflict involves those who are really dedicated to attaining a well-developed Niger Delta area, free from poverty, degradation, unemployment, environmental pollution, economic and socio-political marginalisation, illness, and uncleanliness. These men are clearly not militants or insurgents. The individuals primarily include the intellectual, political, and economic elites, as well as enlightened traditional institutions. Specifically, it is the knowledgeable middle-class citizens living in the Niger Delta region.

As a result, there is no party or divide within the genuine Niger Delta Struggle that supports the use of armed or military operations. During our discussions in Abuja, Governor Uduaghan of Delta State often emphasised the need of considering ethnic nationality while making decisions, as it is not appropriate for anybody to

claim to represent the Ijaw people. The Isoko, Urhobo, Itsekiri, Efik, and Ibibio ethnic groups do not provide any other ethnic group the power to represent or speak on their behalf (The Nation, 2008). Without a question, every ethnic group in the region has an equitable stake in the intricate circumstances unfolding in the Niger Delta. Nevertheless, there is presently no consolidated militant organisation comprised of individuals from various ethnicities functioning as a coherent entity. Furthermore, the current militant organisations lack diversity, as the bulk of these groups are mostly composed of Ijaws. Thus, under this particular framework, these groups lack the authority to assert or engage in combat on behalf of any entity other than their own. The Niger Delta peoples' genuine and legitimate quest for economic and socio-political emancipation has not yet embraced a violent approach.

The Niger Delta Crisis: The Issues:

Environmental Degradation and Poverty Escalation

Before the commencement of commercial oil production in the Niger Delta about half a century ago, the region was mostly an unspoiled environment that offered substantial resources for the primarily established people. The resources included a wide range of products, including medicinal herbs and barks, fish and prawns, crabs and clams, wood for fuel and building, as well as fertile soil for agriculture and a habitat for uncommon animals. Present at the location were the Delta elephant, white crested monkey, river hippopotamus, as well as a diverse range of colourful exotic birds, crocodiles, turtles, and alligators. The region also comprised a substantial component of Nigeria's commercial fishing industry. Oil exploration activities, however, are associated with the destruction of plant life, agricultural regions, and human villages in order to provide routes for seismic cutting. The technique is associated with substantial environmental hazards, including as the destruction of fish and other forms of aquatic life, in both marine and freshwater ecosystems near the areas where exploration is taking place. Seismographic blasting generates both auditory and vibrational disturbances that have the potential to affect structures such as buildings, fence walls, timber bridges, and access roads, hence contributing to noise pollution. In the Niger Delta, there is a tendency to neglect the necessary actions to mitigate the negative consequences on the environment, health, and social well-being of both the people and the ecosystem. The study conducted by Eyinla and Ukpo in 2006 does not consider any form of compensation. Oil drilling activities worsen the pollution of underground water supplies. Unscrupulous drilling methods lead to the devastation of aquatic life and animals, as well as the contamination of agricultural and fishing areas with toxic waste materials.

During the manufacturing process, several forms of waste, including waste-water, sludge, oil debris, gaseous pollutants, and sanitary wastes, are discharged from the primary production terminals. During the oil refining process, more amounts of hazardous waste are released into the already heavily polluted environment. This process entails the release of several chemicals and contaminants, such as hydrogen sulphide, oil and grease, ammonia, and hazardous heavy metals. The distribution of petroleum resources entails activities such as excavating the seabed for pipeline construction and the occurrence of flow stations and other oil infrastructure failures. Furthermore, sedimentation occurs in pipeline channels, in addition to pollution resulting from tank cleaning, deck drainage, and loading activities.

The recurrent occurrence of systematically devastating environmentally vulnerable places, such as lowlands, marshes, fish ponds, and farmlands, is a persistent issue. Moreover, this problem also includes the general degradation of land quality and the decrease in soil production. Moreover, there are supplementary concerns associated with oil spills that arise from blow-outs, corrosion, equipment failure, operator error, and pipeline sabotage. Insufficient legislative monitoring and enforcement, along with unethical behaviour by oil companies marked by a lack of transparency, are further factors that contribute to oil leakage. Oil leakage, both offshore and onshore, is the most major environmental hazard associated with Nigeria's petroleum business today, as stated by Eyinla and Ukpo (2006). Over a period of over 40 years of oil exploration and production in Nigeria, it has been estimated that there have been more than 60,000 documented cases of spills. Furthermore, from 1976 to 1996, an estimated 2,000,000 barrels of oil were released into the nearby ecology only as a result of oil spills. In 1997 and 1998, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) had

a leakage of 106,000 units, namely from its facilities located at Jones Creek. In January 1998, Mobil encountered its biggest significant oil spill at the Idoho offshore site, which rapidly spread from Akwa-Ibom to Lagos in just one month. Nigeria recorded a total of 418 instances of oil spills during the first few months of 2008. According to the Minister of Environment, Mrs. Halima Alao, this presents a substantial peril to our country, namely to the environment and the social and economic well of our population (Vanguard, 2008).

Nevertheless, this claim fails to fully acknowledge the substantial ramifications of oil leaks on the region. Eyinla and Ukpo (2006) discovered several specific outcomes of oil spills that are directly associated with the destruction of wetlands. The consequences include the reduction of fish, crustaceans, and other aquatic resources, the loss of livelihood due to the disappearance of fishing areas and equipment, the disturbance of wildlife migration, the destruction of farmland, decreased agricultural productivity and yield, the displacement of residents, and the increase in waterborne epidemics, among other effects. The combination of these causes leads to acute malnutrition, abject destitution, and pervasive illness in regions that lack adequate healthcare infrastructure and potent indigenous remedies, which have been rendered ineffectual as a consequence of oil production. In addition, the many gas flares dispersed throughout the waterways of the Niger Delta region continuously radiate heat and light, being active throughout the day and night. Under these circumstances, both fish and fauna are unable to engage in reproduction and are forced to travel to more suitable seas along the West African coast. Gas flaring is associated with the discharge of pollutants into the atmosphere, along with the release of heat and the depletion of plant life and wildlife. Eyinla and Ukpo (2006) have identified many environmental problems associated with gas flaring. These factors encompass structural damage, the formation of acid rain, decreased frequency of plant blooming, human discomfort, and the potential for a large epidemic of respiratory illnesses. The soil, rivers, and creeks of the Niger Delta, which were previously identified as having alkaline qualities 17-40 years ago, have lately seen a substantial transition towards highly toxic acidity.

Primary Causes of the crises:

Failed expectations

In oil-rich towns, especially in more developed cultures, the population have always seen the discovery and production of oil as a beneficial development, in line with the socio-economic norms. The confidence and initial excitement in the Niger Delta over their claim to advantages as oil-producing communities was actually well-founded. The discovery of oil has generated anticipation for the establishment of sophisticated infrastructure, such as electricity, piped water, elementary and secondary educational institutions, well-equipped medical facilities, and modern technology for the utilisation of the area's aquatic and terrestrial resources. Ultimately, there will be thoroughfares that establish connections and integrate the communities with the remainder of the nation. Moreover, it was expected that the commencement of oil companies' activities and the implementation of their corporate social responsibility principles would result in increased employment opportunities for a greater number of citizens.

Nevertheless, despite continuous refutations and grievances, it seems that both the oil companies and the government have not comprehended and resolved these prevalent social expectations in their entirety. One of the most debilitating disappointments occurred in the realm of human capital development. In order to get a basic education, young persons need to leave their homes in the low-lying areas and go to highland towns, where they often experience being treated as inferiors or even as individuals who plead for help. Upon achieving higher education, most persons find themselves unable to return to their home country, except as discontented and angry inhabitants. Throughout this process, they closely witnessed the exploitation and transportation of the resources from their ancestral lands to foster the development of other communities inside the country. Meanwhile, the citizens endured the repercussions of this authorised act of stealing, which resulted in the deterioration of the environment, loss of political rights, disruption of social structures, and economic devastation. The local residents are witnessing how oil companies provide advanced facilities to its staff, most of whom are foreigners, without adequately considering the needs of the local people, even if it is quite affordable and feasible to do so. Their willingness to develop roads is contingent upon the

potential profitability of accessing oil resources. They possess the capacity to generate electricity for their different sites within the communities, independent of the requirement to link their local hosts to the same power grid, even if it would be economically advantageous to do so. Confronted with the stark reality of unemployment in their home nations, even after obtaining education abroad, these individuals seem to have little choice but to get and sell the accessible resources, even if it entails taking them directly from the pipes.

Hence, the prevalence of pipeline vandalisation and illegal bunkering, together with their accompanying activities of gun smuggling, cult-gang formation, and militancy as defensive strategies, is evident. Eyinla and Ukpo (2006) accurately noted that a well-known comedian playfully emphasised the dissatisfaction of young individuals towards the government and global oil companies. This dissatisfaction stems from their weariness of receiving repeated promises of favourable results in the future. In lieu of persistently awaiting the fulfilment of such commitments, the youth are presently assuming the responsibility to forcefully access oil pipelines with the intention of acquiring the benefits that were promised to them.

Political domination and internal colonisation

The oil wealth in Nigeria serves as a major political motivator, offering huge advantages and possibilities to those in positions of political authority. Nevertheless, it also fosters an antagonistic atmosphere for those who are marginalised from this authority, resulting in their systematic marginalisation and denial of fundamental human rights. Frequent disputes and controversies are unavoidable due to the state authorities' sole control and manipulation of oil policy and revenue, notably at the cost of oil-bearing areas. The companies are deliberately and surreptitiously worsening the severe human rights crisis in the Niger Delta by deceiving the government into thinking that they are the ones suffering from lawlessness, despite being the ones who instigate the disputes. The authors contend that when logistical and infrastructural support is given to the coercive branches of government, it becomes apparent that in the oil area, the infrastructure of oil and repression are intricately linked. Power and repression are exercised concurrently through the use of force and the management of crude oil resources (Eyinla and Ukpo, 2006). The privatisation of the state is a distinct illustration of the socio-political domination of the Niger Delta communities. This trend is seen in the substantial deployment of military and paramilitary troops tasked with safeguarding oil sites. In addition, oil firms possess the power to mobilise the military and law enforcement to quell any disturbances within communities, thereby converting their working areas into strongly guarded zones. Oil companies exacerbate coercion and encourage violent subjugation by placing disproportionate emphasis on security. The local residents voice their discontent with the government's policy of treating the region as a colonial outpost, where they exploit its riches without any repercussions. The allocation of oil profits by the political elites to develop some regions of the country, while entirely disregarding the lands inhabited by the ethnic minority that produces the oil, is subject to intense criticism. The folks view this form of internal colonialism as intolerable and undesirable.

Theoretical framework:

Social Conflict Theory

There are numerous theories which relate to the oil crises in the South-South of Nigeria such as social contract, frustration aggression, marginalisation, social conflict theories and many more. This theory posits that people and groups in a society own distinct valued resources, resulting in the exploitation of one party (the subject class) by another (the ruling class). The dominant elite exploits and subjugates the subordinate class, resulting in a fundamental clash of interests between the two groups.

Social conflict, also known as group conflict, arises when two or more individuals or groups engage in opposition during social interactions, with the aim of obtaining limited or incompatible objectives, therefore hindering the opponent from achieving them. Marxist ideas claim that these inequitable economic relationships will result in social strife, and as long as the proletariat is oppressed, it is probable that the struggle will endure. The conflict situation in the Niger Delta is closely intertwined with the connection

between SPDC (Shell Petroleum Development Company) and the local communities. This relationship is characterised by power dynamics and exploitation.

Given the significant depletion of their natural resources and the economic importance of these resources, along with other difficulties, the only viable course of action in this situation is to engage in war. Karl Marx's concept is around social conflict, which refers to the competition between different parts of society for valuable resources and the exploitation of one group by another. The reference is from the article "Akpan et al. / OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development 05: 05 (2012) 113."

It is evident that human people possess diverse origins, interests, and perspectives while considering this issue. Divergent viewpoints can lead to conflicts of interest. Disagreements in viewpoints have the potential to escalate into hostility and physical harm. Conflicts possess both advantageous and disadvantageous aspects and may be constructive when effectively managed to prevent them from escalating into disastrous situations. Conflicts arise when individuals or groups think that their needs, interests, or worries are at risk due to a dispute. Conflict is a common occurrence in organisations and may actually be beneficial for growth by promoting better knowledge and insight. However, there is a tendency to see conflict as a bad experience resulting from unusually challenging situations. Disputants often have a tendency to view their alternatives and available resources as restricted and limiting while seeking answers, rather than considering the numerous possibilities that may exist beyond the conventional methods of problem-solving.

Conflict may be defined as the disagreement that occurs when the objectives, interests, or values of various individuals or organisations are not in agreement, and these individuals or groups hinder or obstruct one other's efforts to attain their goals. (Gareth and Jones, 2006). Rahim (2002) defines conflict as the situation where a party is compelled to participate in an activity that goes against their needs or interests, or when a party desires a resource that is scarce, resulting in the inability to completely satisfy the wants of all parties concerned. This suggests that one party has behavioural preferences that are not consistent with another person's application of their own preferences. This aligns with the crisis in Niger Delta, which stems from the perceived marginalisation experienced by the local population. They are now demanding fair distribution and ownership of resources, as well as justice, and environmental sustainability.

The extraction of natural resources also generates complaints due to the environmental harm it causes. Onduku (2001) argues that the environment is currently one of the most dynamic and relevant topics. The environment is currently facing a global crisis, and the situation in the Niger Delta is particularly severe because to the extensive damage caused to the area and the intricate nature of the catastrophe. While environmental disputes mostly arise at the local level, they often have connections and implications at regional, national, and even worldwide scales. Environmental conflicts arise in several forms, such as political, social, economic, religious, territorial, or resource-related conflicts, and can also involve disputes over national interests or any other sort of conflict. These disputes are of a traditional nature and are caused by environmental deterioration.

However, in the context of this study, conflict is viewed through the prism of social problems arising from existentialism, deprivation, marginalization, environmental degradation (Nkamnebe, 2021) just to mention but a few stemming from the operational procedures of prospecting oil firms in the region which has culminated in broken trust birthing various degrees of conflicts in the region.

Empirical Review

This session examines empirical research that support the importance of marketing communication tactics in crisis management. Multiple studies have examined the ongoing oil issues in the Niger Delta area and have proposed potential remedies from different perspectives. This text presents a concise overview of the research conducted in the specified field. In their study, Rhuks, Obokoh, and Okomah (2019) investigated the process of establishing harmonious relationships between oil companies and host communities in Nigeria's Delta region. The study specifically focused on the perspective of stakeholders and emphasised the

role of corporate social responsibility. The study aimed to determine the level of corporate social responsibility (CSR) expected from oil multinational companies by the communities in Nigeria's oil-rich Delta region. It also suggests strategies to mitigate the opposition from the local population towards the oil exploration activities carried out by oil companies. The methodology utilised involved a thorough analysis of current literature and deductive reasoning to offer significant insights for resolving conflicts that arise from the violation of rights, particularly in relation to corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the viewpoints of stakeholders. The essay also emphasised the need of effective public relations and global orientation by oil companies. The success of most organisations globally is primarily influenced by their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) towards the host-community, stakeholders, and society as a whole. Therefore, it is recommended that the oil firms operating in the Niger Delta region assess their corporate social responsibility (CSR) objectives to improve their efficiency in reaching the intended beneficiaries. Additionally, they should actively strive to improve their tactics for managing relationships. If this is not done, there will be a persistent occurrence of violent confrontations in the region, which will adversely affect the reputation of the firms, decrease their revenues, and raise their expenses due to disruptions in production.

Rhuks (2018) presented perspectives on redefining corporate social responsibility in Nigeria's oil industry after the amnesty. The primary objective was to address and resolve crisis situations that occur as a result of the violation of rights, employing the viewpoints of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and stakeholders. The study sought to highlight the opportunities that emerge from the tranquil setting in the Niger Delta, as a consequence of the amnesty agreement. More precisely, the focus was on the chance for oil-multinationals in the area to reevaluate their approach to corporate social responsibility (CSR) in order to sustain amicable relations with the local population and optimise their commercial opportunities. The approach just involves scrutinising preexisting material and constructing rational arguments. The paper suggests that the oil-multinationals operating in the Niger Delta region should take advantage of the current period of relative peace, which has been achieved through the amnesty initiative, to redefine their relationship with the communities where they operate. This can be achieved by implementing effective public relations and community orientation strategies. Thus, it was recommended that oil multinational corporations should utilise the peaceful working circumstances that arise from the amnesty deal to engage with their host communities in a fairer and unbiased manner. Without a doubt, this will cultivate a harmonic rapport between both parties and facilitate enduring tranquilly, which is crucial for the sustained exploitation of oil reserves in the area, as well as the sustainable development of the resource, region, and nation.

A research titled "Conflict and Development of Oil Producing States: Empirical Reflections on the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria" was undertaken by Akpan, Offiong, and Orogbu in 2000. The study utilises a quantitative Equation model to illustrate a substantial association between violence and economic development in the Niger Delta area. The study specifically investigates the effects of war on several aspects of the economy, including manufacturing, industrial output, work stoppages, man-hours lost, poverty, unemployment, and the accessibility of educational and health services. The association is crucial as it enhances our understanding of the extent of exploitation experienced by the host communities in the Niger Delta. It is imperative and urgent to ensure the provision of necessary facilities in the Niger Delta region and adequately compensate for the damage caused to the area. Given the prevalence of poverty and underdevelopment in the regions, despite the abundant availability of natural resources and assets, it is clear that... The report suggests implementing strategies to facilitate peace education and cultivate a harmonious connection between the SPDC and the host communities of the Niger Delta. The 67 study also suggests that oil multinationals operating in the Niger Delta region should offer equitable compensation to the host communities as a strategy to alleviate conflict in the area. This study asserts that neglecting these concerns might lead to the prolonged and intensified conflict in the Niger Delta region, further deteriorating the already dire conditions.

In her 2020 study, Ijeoma Pauline Ogbonne investigated the use of decapitation as a treatment for headaches, focussing on the economic impact of Niger Delta insurgency in the affected regions. The research aimed to evaluate the economic ramifications of militancy in the Niger Delta region on nearby towns. The study also

looked at the government's duty to the people who live in the Niger Delta area from the point of view of those who live there. The research used a descriptive poll method and had 384 people from Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers States fill out the question. Simple percentages and multiple regressions were used to look at the data that was gathered for the study. The questionnaire was the main tool used to collect data. Militancy in the Niger Delta area has hurt economic activity by putting people at risk of taking part in economic activities, discouraging people from doing so, causing people to lose their jobs, lowering income, not paying workers enough, and even deporting investors. There are five main areas where the Nigerian government is supposed to help: making sure the safety and well-being of its citizens, protecting the environment, promoting economic security, giving people more power, and fighting corruption in government. In order to deal with new problems that could lead to unrest, the study says that both the federal government and oil companies that work in the oil-rich Niger Delta area should be proactive instead of reactive. Extremist groups' activities in the area are causing big economic loses that must be stopped to little cost. Given that the problem in the Niger Delta has an effect on the economy, more research needs to be done to find possible answers.

In 2012, Ojo looked into how people in the community felt about the corporate social responsibility efforts of oil companies in the Niger Delta. This study focused on the corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts of oil companies as a way to reduce tensions and encourage growth, paying special attention to the views of people who live in the Niger Delta area. A opinion poll and a qualitative research method were used in the study. The study found a big difference between the native people who live in host towns and the elected leaders who work with oil companies. Furthermore, it seems that the claimed involvement of oil companies in community development projects is merely recorded, as there is no physical proof to back up this claim. In the end, the study found that the money meant for community development is being used for other things thanks to dishonest people working for oil companies and involvement of community partners. So, the study suggests that CSR is only a lucky thing when it comes to community growth. It is recommended that CSR should go from being optional to being required. This would make it clearer when social spending is different from operational costs.

Chen, Liu, and Chuang (2018) did a study on strategy planning to help keep disagreements to a minimum as Taiwan's offshore wind projects were being built. The study looked at the subject from the point of view of social marketing. The project's main goal is to improve the The study found that there was a big problem with communication between the people who have a stake in planning and building offshore wind farms (OWFs). This gap makes it harder for people in the business to talk to each other effectively and efficiently. Another thing the study found was that communication problems between companies and other people involved in oil and gas operations are a big cause of conflict. Also, it has been shown that stakeholders don't trust corporate management because they think that their actions are motivated by secret goals that hurt their interests. According to the results, marketing methods are needed to change the way people feel about building offshore wind farms (OWFs). The segmentation data are also used to find target groups so that communication plans can be made that will help keep disagreements between people working on the growth of offshore wind farms to a minimum. The results also showed that early on in the process of building offshore wind farms (OWFs), getting parties involved and making rules clear can help people see the benefits, which can help keep problems with locals and people who use the ocean to a minimum.

This year, Ugoh looked at how oil politics and the development problem in the Niger Delta are connected in his work. The study's goal was to find out if there was a link between the rate of growth in the oil-producing Niger Delta area and the amount of damage that oil drilling did to the environment. The study also looked at the ways that oil makes the power struggles within the ruling class even worse as they try to get control of the oil supply. It also looked at what the government does in response to these claims and counterclaims. The piece also talks about how the oil business has changed the politics and economy of the Niger Delta. The qualitative research method used in the study showed that the Niger Delta's oil riches are very important to both the national government and the state governments. Because of this high level of dependence, a lot of resources leave the area, leaving the people who live there in extreme poverty, anger, and a deep crisis. So,

people who have no other choice are up against both the federal government and the big multinational companies, which makes the country even less stable right now. The study shows that the current situation is widespread because people in the Niger Delta area are feeling very bad about it. The present government sees them as a minority, even though they are very important to the economy. The study says that the best way to reach the growth goals of the people is for the state's guardians, civil society, and regular citizens to work together to make big changes to the Nigerian government. Although, this goal will not be reached unless the right steps are taken to reduce, if not completely get rid of, our over-reliance on oil.

Udofia and Joel (2019) did research on pipeline vandalism in Nigeria and came up with good ideas for how to fix the problem. The study's goals were to look into how pipeline theft hurts the Nigerian economy and come up with long-term ways to fix the problem. The study found that pipeline vandalism has big economic effects, such as huge losses from pipes and plants having to be shut down, pollution in the environment, and fires that often kill people. People have found that pipeline theft is a reason why there aren't enough oil goods and electricity, which causes a lot of social and economic problems. There is a huge network of pipes in Nigeria that connects remote and populated areas and brings oil and its products to different parts of the country. The study also found that pipes weren't properly secured, which meant that thieves could easily break into them. So, the government and oil companies should work with local militia groups from the host towns to set up a stronger security system. This is because these groups know the area better than anyone else. A suggestion was made that the government and oil companies doing exploration should pay more attention to and act on the worries of the areas where they work.

Using confirmatory factor analysis, Othman and Wang (2017) looked into what led to and affected the damage to crude oil pipelines in the Niger delta region of Nigeria. Structural equation modelling (SEM) is used in this study to look into the things that lead to people damaging crude oil pipes. The results show that poor management, bad government, a weak legal system, and environmental damage are some of the main reasons why crude oil pipelines are vandalised in the Niger delta area. The study says that to stop people from damaging crude oil pipelines, governments should be more proactive in providing infrastructure and taking care of the environment. The goal of this project is to make the lives of oil-producing villages in the Niger Delta better in terms of both money and health, and to protect the area's environment for the long run.

In 2018, Ajibo did research on kidnapping and hostage-taking in the Niger Delta area. Specifically, he looked at what it means for social workers to help the victims. This study looks into where kidnapping and holding people hostage came from and what that means for social workers working in the Niger Delta. A descriptive research method was used in this study, and a thorough review of available material was carried out. Secondary data sources, such as media, journal pieces, and magazines, were used in the study. As a basis for the study, social learning theory and task-centered treatment were used. According to the study, people who are kidnapped or held hostage go through a lot of mental pain. The study pushed for cooperation and multi-agency social work practice as a way to make things better for people who have been abducted. As part of social work, the study also said that abduction victims with PTSD need to be actively treated in treatment and helped to rejoin their families and community as a whole.

Ojeifo did research on the Niger Delta Crisis and what it meant for the country's safety in 2020. The goal of this study is to look into the Niger Delta problem and how it affects Nigeria's security. The study showed that the Niger Delta area is a major source of wealth for the country, providing more than 70% of government income, 95% of export earnings, and 90% of foreign exchange gains. It also said that the ongoing chaos in the country's oil-producing areas is a threat to the security of the Nigerian state, in addition to the dangers to human safety in that area. People are constantly being killed and the land and environment are getting worse because of mining and exploring. This is a big threat to human security in the area and to the Nigerian government. Because of this, the study suggests that in order to fix the problem, government policies on oil should be broader and more inclusive. It is important to give careful thought to the unique problems and needs of oil-producing areas. When dealing with the very complicated problem in the Niger Delta, the government should be open and honest about its plans. It should also avoid taking opposing views on the

issue. The government should deal with the real issue of meeting basic needs in the area, like making sure the roads are well-kept, people can get clean water and energy, and there are good schools and hospitals.

Oil and Security in Nigeria was the subject of a study by Owolabi and Okwechime in 2007. They focused on the Niger Delta Crisis. Their study looks into the link between oil and security in Nigeria, focussing on the Niger Delta area, which is currently in a crisis. This piece says that the current crisis in Nigeria's oil-producing region is a major threat to human security in that area, in addition to the known threats to the security of the Nigerian state. Since poverty, the environment, and food security are all important parts of national security, the Niger Delta's merciless destruction and exploitation of the natural environment, which is essential for the people who live there to make a living, poses major threats to human security in the area and, by extension, to the Nigerian state. The study said that to fix the problem, the government's oil policy should cover more ground. It should take into account the specific problems and needs of oil-producing areas, as well as those of the Nigerian government and the oil industry. Ikelegbe studied the effects of oil problems on the economy of Nigeria's resource-rich Niger Delta region in 2021. A qualitative study method was used to find the economic links and exchanges between the Nigerian government, global oil companies, the rest of the world, and youth militias. The study showed that the economy has been badly managed because of strife, with insufficient, slow, and useless leadership.

Also, the heavy use of force and control is making things worse and leading to more bloodshed. People in the area have cut ties with and stopped identifying with the Nigerian government because they don't like how resources and benefits from the oil economy are shared. Based on how things stand right now, it seems possible that the illegal oil economy will last for a long time, albeit with smaller and less powerful capabilities. Notably, the research showed that multinational companies (MNCs) have contributed to an economy of conflict by creating conditions where advantages gained through force are the only way to get any benefits and make sure good corporate management. Because of the conflict and resistance that has arisen, the management of multinational corporations (MNCs) has led to more violence and illegal gains of benefits. It was suggested that both the government and foreign oil companies put the health and happiness of the people in the area first by working on fair growth and including everyone. As part of the government's plan for oil and gas development in the Niger Delta, the host towns that are affected by oil production and pipeline operations should be actively fought against unfair foreign interference and abuse.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted using survey research design. This research method places heavy emphasis on using formalized questions and predetermined response options in questionnaire administered to many respondents (Hair, Bush and Ortnau, 2006). Survey research design is used when some degree of statistical reliability is required. This research adopted it because of the need to quantify information in other to be able to reject or accept hypotheses with relative level of confidence. Notwithstanding the aforementioned, survey research design has been used in social marketing related studies, Lauren, Lynes and Wolfe (2019), George et al (2019), Truong, Garry and Hall (2014),Schmidt et al (2015), Clendennen et al (2021), Golden and Johnson (1991), Truong (2016).Therefore taking into account the above, survey research design was considered suitable for this study (see appendix for survey instrument) as it offers higher generalisability and external reliability; permit the assessment of a huge set of variables; helpful; quick; and cost effective in getting reactions from sampled respondents (Nikbin et al 2014). The Area of study covered four communities each drawn from two selected local government areas per state of the six south-south geo political zone states of Niger Delta region which includes: Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Cross Rivers respectively (*see Appendix 1 for questionnaire distribution table*). The choice of community youth leaders, ex militants and their relatives as units of analysis aligns with previous empirical studies such as Uduji, Okolo-Obasi and Asongu (2021), Nwobueze, and Inokoba, (2017), Bodo and Gimah (2020), Akpana, Offiong and Orogbu (2020) who are leading proponents of knowledge in areas of conflict and crises in the Niger Delta region. Drawing inferences from the foregoing, other reasons that informed the choice of this group is because they are most suitable and are in better position (being the ones directly affected) to volunteer necessary information required to achieve the goals of this study.

A sample size of 400 was derived using Taro Yamen formula which was computed as shown below and field results were analysed using multiple regression (*see result in appendix 2*)

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$Where:$$

$$n = SampleSize$$

$$N = PopulationSize$$

$$e = error$$

$$Therefore, \quad if:$$

$$N = 1{,}965{,}818 \; and \, error = 0.05$$

$$Then:$$

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$= \frac{1965818}{1 + 1965818(0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{1965818}{1 + 1965818(0.0025)}$$

$$= \frac{1965818}{1 + 4914.545}$$

$$= \frac{1965818}{4915.545}$$

$$= 399.92$$

$$\cong 400$$

Table 4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

		FREQUENCY	VALID PERCENT	CUMMULATIVE PERCENT
Sex	Male	300	78.9%	78.9
	Female	80	21.1%	100
Total		380	100%	
Marital Status	Single	160	42.1%	42.1
	Married	189	49.7%	91.8
	Seperated	20	5.3%	97.1
	Widow	11	2.9%	100
Total		380	100%	

Age	18 – 24	107	28.2	28.2
	25 – 44	187	49.2	77.4
	45 – 60	72	18.9	96.3
	Above 60	14	3.7	100
Total		380	100%	
Education	Primary	24	6.3	6.3
	SSCE	129	33.9	40.2
	OND	92	24.2	64.4
	HND	61	16.1	80.5
	BSc	70	18.4	98.9
	Others	4	1.1	100
Total		380	100	

Validity and dependability of the instrument

Researchers utilised exploratory factor analysis with the main component extraction method to find out how valid the tool was statistically. Thereafter, KMO and Bartlett tests were used to see if the sample size was right (see results in Appendices 3 and 4).

The study's data was analysed using Cronbach's alpha (±) to see if the factors were consistent with each other. Cronbach alpha is a popular way to find out how reliable a set of two or more constructs is. The values of the alpha coefficient run from 0 to 1, and a higher value means that the indicators are more reliable (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black, 1992). Because of this, the largest number that can be reached is 1. The choice rule in this study is based on Nunnally's (1978) idea of a minimum accepted number, which is 0.70. (look at the answer in Appendix 5)

RESULTS

Hypotheses Testing

*H*01: Host community reorientation does not have any significant relationship with management of the oil crises in the South-South region.

In contrast to the null hypothesis above, the regression results in Appendix 2 show that the Host community reorientation feature of social marketing strategies is significantly linked to better managing the ongoing oil problems in the South-South region. We can see from the regression table in Appendix 2 that the p-values for host community reorientation are less than 0.05. This means that we can reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative, which says that there is a strong positive link between host community reorientation and crisis management in the South-South region.

*H*02: Effective Community Public Relations does not have positive relationship with management of the oil crises in the South-South region.

The regression results in Appendix 1 show that the effective community public relations aspect of social marketing strategies has a significant positive effect on managing oil crises in the South-South region (Coef = 0.2647, p = 0.000). The p-values for effective community public relations are less than 0.05, so we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative, which says that there is a significant positive relationship between effective community public relations and managing the ongoing oil crises in the South-South region. Finally, Appendix 2 shows that the models' Adj. R-Squared value is 0.5892, which means that the

independent variable (social marketing strategies) causes a 58.92% change in the dependent variable (oil crisis management in the South-South region).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Community re-orientation and Crises Management

The regression result output in *appendix 2* shows that Host community reorientation dimension of social marketing strategies have a significant positive effect on crises management in the South-South region *(Coef = 0.6285, p = 0.000)*, the p-values for host community reorientation is less than 0.05, hence, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate, which state that there is significant positive relationship between host community reorientation and crises management in the South-South region. This observation makes so much sense when considered against the backdrop of the argument by Ojo (2012) where he opined that at the root of the imbroglio between the multinational oil companies and the host communities in the Niger Delta is perception problem. The researcher argued that there are lots of misconceptions in the minds of host communities regarding the intention and activities of the MOC's which can only be resolved through effective reorientation programs. He further opined that some of the oil companies have recorded some achievements in areas of community and human capital development which should give them some credence but are interpreted and perceived by host communities from a negative point of view as there obviously appear to be a disconnect on perception from both ends. Furthermore, he opined that this negative perception is due to the fact that the host communities have not been actively involved in the planning of such initiatives which to them would have been an avenue to listen, understand and implement those projects that would be directly beneficial to the 147 communities. To this end, the host communities most times feel the underlining reason for such initiatives is profit maximization for the MOCs. Moreso, Evuleocha (2005) aligning with the thought of Olarewanju (2014), supports the importance of reorientation as a veritable tool in enhancing peaceful coexistence and tranquillity between operating oil companies in the south-south region and their host communities. Hence, recommends amongst others that oil companies should give priority attention to effective awareness campaigns targeted at breaching the perception gap that exists in the minds of host communities. Michael et al (2015) also acknowledges that perception reconciliation between MOCs and their host communities is key element in crises management which in their opinion, the oil companies are yet to effectively resolve by their public relations strategies.

Public relations and crises management

The regression results in Table (Appendix 2) show that the effective community public relations dimension of social marketing has a significant positive effect on crises management in the South-South region (Coef=0.2647, p = 0.000). The p-values for effective community public relations are less than 0.05, so we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative, which says that there is a significant positive relationship between effective community public relations and crises management in the South-South region. It can be seen in Appendix 2 that the models' Adj. R-Squared value is 0.5892, which means that the independent variable (social marketing strategies) causes a 58.92% change in the dependent variable (crises management in the South-South region). According to Enuoh and Iyang (2014), one of the main reasons for the crises in the Niger Delta's oil and pipeline-bearing areas is that oil companies don't care about the host communities' problems and are hostile to them. In the same way, Abubakri and Adedowole (2014) said that some oil companies have made a real difference in the communities where they operate, but there seems to be an impression gap because oil companies' public relations efforts aren't working very well. Since the local communities are the ones who benefit from the CSR efforts of global oil companies, they thought it was only fair that they should all be able to give useful feedback on what really meets their needs. And that not asking for their opinion could put oil exploration and exploitation activities in this area at risk, which could lead to tense relationships between the host communities and the oil companies (Ojo, 2012).

The researcher argued that there are lots of misconceptions in the minds of host communities regarding the intention and activities of the MOC's which can only be resolved through effective reorientation programs.

He further opined that some of the oil companies have recorded some achievements in areas of community and human capital development which should give them some credence but are interpreted and perceived by host communities from a negative point of view. Furthermore, he opined that this negative perception is because the host communities have not been actively involved in the planning of such initiatives which to them would have been an avenue to listen, understand and implement those projects that would be directly beneficial to the 150 communities. To this end, the host communities most times feel the underline reason for such initiatives is profit maximization for the MOCs. Evuleocha (2005) aligning with the thought of Olarewanju (2014), supports the importance of reorientation as a veritable tool in enhancing peaceful coexistence and tranquillity between operating oil companies in the south-south region and their host communities. Hence, recommends amongst others that oil companies should give priority attention to effective awareness campaigns targeted at breaching the perception gap that exists in the minds of host communities. Michael et al (2015) also acknowledges that perception reconciliation between MOCs and their host communities is key element in crises management which in their opinion, the oil companies are yet to effectively resolve by their public relations strategies. From the regression result above, effective public relations strategies which targets healthy relationship or host communities oil firms' identification would bring about the much-desired peaceful coexistence and tranquillity in the area.

CONCLUSION

The study's goal was to investigate how social marketing can utilised to mitigate crises between host communities and operating multinational oil companies in the region. Therefore, the study has demonstrated, given the evidence from the regression table above, that effective re-orientation and public relations strategy could stimulate healthy interaction between host communities and multinational companies operating in the region. Research has shown that there is a strong link between how well global oil companies handle public relations and reorientation issues and how well they handle oil crises in the area. This link is important because it helps build trust and togetherness, which represent two significant factors that are needed for peace, and it also makes it easier for the host communities and the oil company to understand each other.

RECOMMENDATION

The study recommends that oil firms must always ensure, the communication gap between them and their host communities is effectively breached. From the field survey reactions, most host communities complained of not being carried along by the oil firms. Parts of what culminate in crises in the region are issues borne out of misconceptions between the oil firms and host communities.

Finally, the research also recommends that oil firms should strengthen their public relations strategies in such a manner that ensure they always carry host communities along in their decisions. They should also ensure a periodic performance audit of their public relations department to ensure efficiency in their operations. Part of the findings by this research is that the oil firms' representatives, most times due to corruption, do not present true situation report of their activities cum obligations to their companies.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Sample size determination

STATE	LGA	COMMUNITY	POPULATION	SAMPLE
AKWA IBOM	Eastern Obolo	Atabrikang	34482	7
		Ayama	22183	5
		Okoromobolo	16281	3
		Otuwene	27392	6
	Abak	Abak Ikot	29341	6
		Ibagwa	28453	6
		Ikwek	22934	5
		Abiakpo	26921	5
BAYELSA	Brass	Sangana	23257	5
		Okpoama	22870	5
		Odioma	21733	4
		Ewoama	22943	5
	Nembe	Okoroma	18255	4

		Ogbolomabiri	16292	3
		Bassambiri	21340	4
		Ikensi	15563	3
CROSS RIVERS	Akamkpa	Uyanga	15634	3
		Ikpi	13945	3
		Awi	15233	3
		Mbarakom	16218	3
	Ikom	Nta/Nselle	14384	3
		Nde	14237	3
		Abijinkpor	13215	3
		Akparabong	13265	3
DELTA	Warri North	Koko	98239	20
		Benin-River	26231	5
		Ogheye	24691	5
		Egbema	32610	7
	Isoko South	Oleh	151631	31
		Emede	92121	19
		Olomoro	96112	20
		Igbide	55915	11
EDO	IkpobaOkha	Ologbo	134216	27
		Ajoki	52108	11
		Obayantor	125102	25
		Ikara	31514	6
	Ovia North East	Gelegele	68291	14
		Ikoro	19367	4
		Ughoton	28862	6
		Ogheke	21504	4
RIVERS	Ndoni/Ogba/Egbema	Omoku	13528	3
		Ebochia	56819	12
		Obrikom	102214	21
		Obite	66210	13
	Gokana	Bodo	56220	11
		Kpor	36506	7
		Bomu	43218	9
		Kogbari-Dere	46218	9
TOTAL			1,965,818	400

Appendix 2: Multiple Regression Analysis Result

```
  Source |       SS        df       MS                 Number of obs =      380
---------+------------------------------              F( 2,   377) =  272.81
   Model | 167.609277      2  83.8046386              Prob > F      =  0.0000
Residual | 115.811775    377  .307193038              R-squared     =  0.5914
---------+------------------------------              Adj R-squared =  0.5892
   Total | 283.421053    379  .747812804              Root MSE      =  .55425


    crmgt |      Coef.   Std. Err.       t    P>|t|     [95% Conf. Interval]
---------+----------------------------------------------------------------
    reotn |   .6285202   .0408166     15.40   0.000     .5482634    .708777
    pubrn |   .2646875   .0345053      7.67   0.000     .1968405   .3325345
    _cons |   .5921846   .1541747      3.84   0.000     .2890346   .8953346
---------+----------------------------------------------------------------
```

Appendix 3: KMO Result

```
----------------------------
  Variable |      kmo
-----------+----------------
     reotn |    0.8566
     pubrn |    0.7915
     crmgt |    0.8232
-----------+----------------
   Overall |    0.8238
----------------------------
```

Appendix 4: Bartlett's Result

```
                      Analysis of Variance
    Source            SS        df      MS           F      Prob > F
----------------------------------------------------------------------
Between groups    165.935028     3   55.3116761    177.02    0.0000
 Within groups    117.486024   376   .312462831
----------------------------------------------------------------------
    Total         283.421053   379   .747812804

Bartlett's test for equal variances:  chi2(3) =  46.1661  Prob>chi2 = 0.000

                      Analysis of Variance
    Source            SS        df      MS           F      Prob > F
----------------------------------------------------------------------
Between groups     98.6076183    4   24.6519046     50.02    0.0000
 Within groups    184.813434   375   .492835825
----------------------------------------------------------------------
    Total         283.421053   379   .747812804

Bartlett's test for equal variances:  chi2(4) =  39.9227  Prob>chi2 = 0.000
```

Appendix 5: Cronbach's Alpha Test

Model	(α) Result	Decision
Host community reorientation	.769	Reliable
Community Public Relations	.892	Reliable