

CHANGE MANAGEMENT AND REPORTAGE OF GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES IN NIGERIA: THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

The study is on change management and reportage of government activities in Nigeria: the role of the media. The study aim to find out the role of the media in change management, and how the reportage of government activities can bring about transparency and accountability in government. The study find out that majority 67 (46.2%) of the respondents agree that the change agenda of government in Nigeria is effective. Minority 1(.7%) of the respondents said change agenda of government in Nigeria is very ineffective Majority 78(53.8%) of the respondents disagree that the reportage of government activities has not help in the management of the change agenda of government in Nigeria. Minority 1(.7%) of the respondents strongly disagree that the reportage of government activities has not help in the management of the change agenda in Nigeria. Majority 71(49.0%) of the respondents said that government is effective in managing the change agenda. Minority 16(11.0%) of the respondents said that the government is very effective in managing the change agenda. Majority 80(55.2%) of the respondents said government usage of the media in the management of the change agenda is effective. Minority 18(12.4%) of the respondents said government usage of the media in the management of the change agenda is ineffective. The study concluded that no meaningful change can take place without a visionary leader who knows the importance of the media and its role in informing, educating and mobilizing the people for the common good of the nation.

Keywords: Change management, Corruption, Government activities, Media and Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

On the 1st, April, 2015, Major General Muhammadu Buhari a candidate of the Alliance For Progress Congress (APC) party was declared a winner in a Presidential election held in Nigeria on the 28 and 29th March, 2015. The manifesto of the Alliance For Progressive Congress was “change”. We can therefore say, President Muhammadu Buhari led Alliance For Progress Congress party won on the platform of change. According to the Cambridge English Dictionary(2016), change is defined as an act of becoming different, or the result of something becomes different, or to do things in a very different way. The present administration under President Muhammadu Buhari has shown from his actions and deeds that he is different from his predecessor Dr. Goodluck Jonathan of the People’s Democratic Power (PDP), right from the inception of his administration. He has initiated war against corruption in government, war against insurgency in the North East of Nigeria and diversification of the economy from petroleum to solid minerals and agriculture. His change policies in the areas of corruption and the war against the insurgency Boko Haram are yielding results. For the government to sustain the changes, a deliberate effort must be made by government to manage these changes. Change management is the process managing organizational change effectively through the collaboration of the chief executives, managers and frontline employers to successfully implement the needed technological and organizational changes (Korir & et al, 2012). Change is necessary in a nation that depends oil as the main revenue earner and has not diversified her economy. Change is necessary in a

nation where her leaders embrace corruption and are not accountable to the people that elected them into office. For these reasons and many more, change and managing the change becomes inevitable if the nation is to overcome many of the social and economic challenges currently facing her. According to Cabrey, Haughey & Cooke-Davies (2014) "Change is inevitable and organizations that manage it effectively will pull ahead of their competitors." Managing change in a country requires strong leadership, track record of accomplishment and courage to lead in the change. Ajmal, & et al (2015) noted that "managing change in an effective manner requires change leaders that can lead a team and have courage to drive change properly in an existing system". In managing change, leadership must know that there are people that resist change and those that welcome it. This is where the leadership must live by example and must show the people the necessity for change and the benefit it will bring in the future. Change management also involves the leadership addressing their pain and focusing on doing what is needful and focusing on those things that will move the country forward.

One of the tools that a leader will need in managing change is the media. The media's role is to communicate the change to the people, through audio and visual means, the need for change, the benefit the people will derive from the change and also portraying the leadership as living an exemplary life. Okunna (2002) and quoted by Mathew (2012: p.1) point out the function of the media in the following ways, "the information function of the media is all encompassing and essential for the existence of members of the society. Through their various contents, the mass media collect, store, process and disseminate news, data, pictures, facts, messages opinions and comments which members of the public need in order to react knowledgeable to personal, environmental, natural and international conditions as well as to be in a position to take appropriate decisions. The media is a powerful tool to which people can experience change. According to Frazer & Villet (1994) the media gives people powerful tools both to experience change and actually to guide it. An intensified exchange of ideas among all sectors of society can lead to the greater involvement of people in a common cause. This is a fundamental requirement for appropriate and sustainable development.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Change is painful, yet unavoidable. However change is necessary for the country to move on. The fall in the price of oil in the international market resulting in the fall the naira value, insurgency in the North East of the country caused by Boko Haram, corruption by government officials, all these scenario created the need for change. According to Mulins(2009) and quoted by Thomas (2014:p1) that factors such as uncertain economic and political conditions, changes in social attitudes, fierce competition, take over, acquisitions, technological developments and government intervention create increasingly volatile environment ...they can only perform effectively through flexibility and responsiveness to change.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Change and Change Culture

Hart (1996) writes that of great importance during change, is confusion and uncertainty about what lies ahead for the workers, in the absence of any information regarding the changes that have taken place are rumours and speculations regarding the negative consequences that are likely to develop in the future. This will lead to confusion as people that are affected are concern about their future. Resistance to change will set in and a solution has to be found.

The only solution to this kind of challenge would be to increase communication and to learn more about change. He said further that as knowledge about the necessity of change increases, so also will confusion decrease and this will lead to the reduction in resistance to change. “High level of confusion is often associated with high level of anxiety, but as confusion decreases confidence increases resulting in the reduction of anxiety”. Nickels, McHugh & McHugh (2008) were of the view that change in an organization is bound to cause stress and resistance among members, but organisations can adapt to change when they go through cultural orientation. Plante (2012) says survival is the reason why organizations go through change and also to grow in a competitive world; hence managing change is of great priority for all managers. According to Plante, “key to survival by businesses is adaptability, or the ability to effectively and efficiently change business models, business processes, and technologies to response to disruptive innovations and competitive threats in a rapidly evolving environment”. Onyango (2014) observed that the presence of a visionary leader in an organization plays an important role in the change process as they provide direction and stabilised the change process. Duncan (2002) writes that a “corporate culture reflects the personality of an organization; it is sometimes described as the way we do things, it is the pattern of shared values that structure the way an organisation’s employees work and interact with each other and with stakeholders. For years, IBM’s culture, for example, was professional, services, and rigid. It was characterized by white and dark blue suits”. Sathe and Davidson (2000) suggest that culture change involves changing people's minds as well as their behavior. The way and manner in which the culture change for each individual in the organisation is evoked also has a great effect on the result and the consequences for each employee in the organisation. Hatch's (2000) suggests that organizational culture change stressed the roles of both leaders and followers in creating and changing organizational culture. Rajan (2000) was of the view that culture change programmes organized for employees during change are meant to change their hearts, minds and souls in a way to redirect their actions to bring back the organisation to profitability.

Change Management and Leadership

Connor & Stackman (2003) and Jonston (2006) see change management as a normal phenomenon in any successful organisations, it is considered to be necessary for the organisational viability in the current market. Thomas (2001) said change management is important because organizations depend on it to survive and it requires necessary managerial skills and strategy. For any company to survive and succeed and remain competitive in today’s world where businesses are experiencing volatile, change becomes a necessity and must be managed successfully. Stewart & Brown (2014) said competence in managing change help the organization to grow and adapt to new challenges. Change managers must be creative and must encourage creativity in their employees. The change manager must have necessary skills that can identify and solving problems before they get out of control. Samuel (2013) said change is a constant phenomenon which must be managed properly for an organization to survive. Having knowledge about the change an organization wants and having the awareness about many of the critical issues involved in management of such change is important. Change management is linked with organizational competitiveness and response to changes in the environment. Kalyam & Sahoo(2011) said the future and success of every organization depends on how well managers handle change. Both profitability and growth serve as the means for managing change. Kaminski, (2000) observed that change management is a process that involve different abilities, such as leadership development ability, marketing and sales ability (ability to create awareness about the consequences of change) and communication skill (ability to continue to communicate to employees and

customers after the change). Sidra & et al (2015) were of the view that “Lack of any of these skills may have serious impact on the effectiveness of change management process in an organization”. Shan. and Shaheen, (2013) write that managing the change includes the detection of the need for change, plan towards change, communicate the needed change by defining new values, behavior skills required to bring change, agreement of all stakeholders to avoid resistance to change, implementing and controlling of process. Kotter (1996) from Harvard University developed a more detailed approach for managing change. Kotter started by listing common errors that leadership make when attempting to initiate a change in an organisation. These included the inability to create a sense of urgency about the need for change, failure to create a coalition for managing the change process, the absence of a vision for change, failure to effectively communicate that vision, failure to remove obstacles that could impede the achievement of the vision, failure to provide short-term achievable goals, the tendency to declare victory too soon, and failure to anchor the changes into the organization’s culture. Seif & et al. (2013) observed that “effective change management will lead organization to the path of success, leader in the industry and gaining competitive advantage. Managers will need to devote considerable time and resources in helping employees deal with uncertainty of change”. Bass (1985) suggests that leaders must promote change by creating vision. Kouzes and Posner (1987, p. 30) suggest that, “when facing significant change, 'Leadership is the art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations'. Leaders therefore must be skilled in change management processes if they are to act successfully as agents of change and motivate others to follow.” Amabile (1998) has suggested that, by influencing the nature of the work environment and organizational culture, leadership in an organisation can affect employees' attitude to work related change and motivation. According to Trinkka, 2004 and cited in Thach & Thompson, 2007 said leadership is expected to exhibit the following abilities to effectively manage change in an organisation. These include the ability of having the vision and setting goals, interpersonal skills, self-knowledge and technical knowhow regarding the details of the business of the organisation in which the leader works. In addition that leadership must possess such competencies as: integrity/honesty, communication, technical competence, diversity consciousness, developing others, results-orientation, change management, interpersonal skills, problem-solving, decision making, political savvy, strategic/visionary thinking, customer focus, business skills, team leadership, influence skills, conflict management skills, also he/she must not be lacking in emotional intelligence, social and environmental responsibility, depending on the organizational culture, even humor and innovation must not be left out.

Change Management and Communication

The World Bank (2016) quoting Lewis, Schmisser, and Weir (2006) highlighted five strategies to consider for communication during change initiatives, these are; input from participants, use of informal networks involving stakeholders, dissemination of information about the changes that have taken place, create and communicate vision to stakeholders. Malek & Yazdanifard (2012) said change management is a significant component of any organizations and one of the crucial components of change management is communication. Communication is regarded as a key issue in the successful implementation of change because it is used as a tool for announcing, explaining or preparing people for change. Chew; Cheng and Petrovic- Lazarevic (2006) in an interview conducted by them discovered that Communication was important amongst managers to employees, and also in employee to employee relationships. According to Chew, Cheng and Petrovic-Lazarevic listening skills is part of effective communication, any manager who wants to succeed must possess at all times. Before, during and after the change has been implemented and in the management of

the change, listening to employees' views, opinions and understand their perspective and feelings on the imposed changes by the manager is important in managing the change. According to Francis (1989) organisational communication commonly has two goals. The first goal of any organisational communication should be to inform the employees about their duties and about the policy and other issues of the organisation. The second goal is communication with a mean to create a community within the organisation. Francis said further that a distinction can be made between organizational communication as a mean to provide information and organizational communication as a mean to create a community spirit. De Ridder, 2003) said "in line with these goals, within organisational change we can distinct between the information given about the change, and the sense of a community within the organisation before, during and after the change. The information given by the organisation about the change should address the reasons to change, and the worries employees initially will have". Goodman and Dean(1982) & Tannenbaum (1971) noted that the information given by the organisation usually comes from the management as the sender, the purpose of communication during organisational change would be to prevent resistance to change, or to reduce the resistance to change. Elving (2005) writes that "when resistance to change levels are low within an organisation, one could argue that the effectiveness of the change-effort will be higher. Since an organisation's functioning depends on the actions of its members, the organisation can change only when members' behavior changes". Lewis (1999) is of the view that "poorly managed change communication results in rumors and resistance to change, exaggerating the negative aspects of the change. The empirical picture that is slowly emerging indicates that communication process and organisational change implementation are inextricably linked processes". According to Hirschfield (1999) "Communications should be forthright, easily understood, and not patronizing. Every manager should take extra steps to ensure that every communication piece has a clear purpose and a target audience." World Health Organisation (2015) said "a formal communication plan which identifies the rationale for change and key activities and also defines responsibilities is an essential element of effective communication. The plan must focus on marketing the change by building and maintaining understanding of, and commitment to, the change". According to Caldwell (1993) communication within the context of change has been seen as a way to inform, involve and even motivate collaborators to participate in the change process without reservation. Such approach reveals communication as a technique and a tool.

AIMS/ OBJECTIVES

- To find out the effects of change agenda of government on Nigerians
- To find out whether the reportage of government activities help in the management of the change in Nigeria
- To find the effectiveness of government in managing the change agenda
- To find out the effectiveness of the use of media in the management of the change agenda

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the effects of change agenda of government in Nigeria?
- How does the reportage of government activities help in the management of change in Nigeria?
- How effective is the government in managing the change agenda
- How effective is the use of the media in the management of the change agenda

METHODOLOGY

Survey research method was used for this study, with questionnaire as instrument for collecting the data. According to Neuman (2007) Survey research method is appropriate for this study because they are quicker and easier to answer by respondents, not only this it is appropriate for research questions about self-reported beliefs or behaviour. Simple random sampling was adopted for this study. 150 questionnaires were randomly distributed among the people in Maiduguri metropolis, with the help of five assistance. . Busha and Harter (1980) stated that the population can be very large or very small depending on the size of the group of persons or subjects about whom the researcher plans to make inference. It is on this basis that 150 people were used for this study. The choice of Maiduguri metropolis is because it is a cosmopolitan city, where almost every tribe in Nigeria can be found 145 questionnaires were completed and returned. This represents 96.67% % of the respondents. The questionnaire were then analysed using SPSS.

DATA ANALYSIS

Research Question 1: What are the effects of change agenda of government in Nigeria?

Table 1a: The effectiveness of the change agenda of government in Nigeria

N	Valid	145
	Missing	0
Mean		2.4345
Std. Deviation		2.50226
Sum		353.00

Table 1b: The effectiveness of the change agenda of government in Nigeria

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very effective	35	24.1	24.1	24.1
effective	67	46.2	46.2	70.3
Undecided	25	17.2	17.2	87.6
Valid ineffective	15	10.3	10.3	97.9
very ineffective	1	.7	.7	98.6
22.00	2	1.4	1.4	100.0
Total	145	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

Table 1, above shows that majority 67(46.2%) of the respondents agree that the change agenda of government in Nigeria is effective. Next to this is 35(24.1%) of the respondents who said the change agenda of government in Nigeria is very effective. 25(17.2%) of the respondents were undecided on whether the change agenda is effective or not. However,

15(10.3%) of the respondents said the change agenda of government in Nigeria is ineffective. Minority 1(.7%) of the respondents said change agenda of government in Nigeria is very ineffective.

Research Question 2: How does the reportage of government activities help in the management of change in Nigeria?

Table 2a: The reportage of government activities has not help in the management of the change agenda in Nigeria

N	Valid	145
	Missing	0
Mean		3.0483
Std. Deviation		1.16864
Sum		442.00

Table 2b: The reportage of government activities has not help in the management of the change agenda in Nigeria

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	21	14.5	14.5
	Agree	31	21.4	35.9
	Undecided	14	9.7	45.5
	Disagree	78	53.8	99.3
	Strongly disagree	1	.7	100.0
	Total	145	100.0	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

The table above shows that majority 78(53.8%) of the respondents disagree that the reportage of government activities has not help in the management of the change agenda of government in Nigeria. 31(21.4%) of the respondents said they agree that reportage of government activities has not help in the management of the change agenda in Nigeria. Another 21(14.5%) of the respondents strongly agree that the reportage of government activities has not help in the management of the change agenda in Nigeria. 14(9.7%) of the respondents said they were undecided whether the reportage of government activities has not help in the management of the change agenda in Nigeria. Minority 1(.7%) of the respondents strongly disagree that the reportage of government activities has not help in the management of the change agenda in Nigeria.

Research Question 3: How effective is the government in managing the change agenda

Table 3a:How effective is government in managing the change agenda

N	Valid	145
	Missing	0
Mean		2.5103
Std. Deviation		.95828
Sum		364.00

Table 3b:How effective is government in managing the change agenda

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Effective	16	11.0	11.0
	Effective	71	49.0	60.0
	Undecided	26	17.9	77.9
	Ineffective	32	22.1	100.0
	Total	145	100.0	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

The above table shows that majority 71(49.0%) of the respondents said that government is effective in managing the change agenda. However, 32(22.1%) of the respondents said the government were ineffective in managing the change agenda. Also 26(17.9%) of the respondents said they were undecided on whether the government is effective or not in managing the change agenda. Minority 16(11.0%) of the respondents said that the government is very effective in managing the change agenda.

Research Question 4: How effective is the use of the media in the management of the change agenda

Table 4a:How effective is the government usage of the media in the management of the change agenda

N	Valid	145
	Missing	0
Mean		2.2552
Std. Deviation		.87225
Sum		327.00

Table4b: How effective is the government usage of the media in the management of the change agenda

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very Effective	23	15.9	15.9	15.9
Effective	80	55.2	55.2	71.0
Undecided	24	16.6	16.6	87.6
Ineffective	18	12.4	12.4	100.0
Total	145	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

Table 4 shows that majority 80(55.2%) of the respondents government usage of the media in the management the change agenda is effective. Another 24(16.6%) of the respondents said they were undecided on whether the government usage of the media in the management of the change agenda was effective or not. 23(15.9%) of the respondents said government usage of the media in the management of the change agenda is very effective. Minority 18(12.4%) of the respondents said government usage of the media in the management of the change agenda is ineffective.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Majority 67(46.2%) of the respondents agree that the change agenda of government in Nigeria is effective. Minority 1(.7%) of the respondents said change agenda of government in Nigeria is very ineffective. This findings supported the position of Plante (2012)& Onyango (2014) who said the only reason an organization undergoes change is to enable it survive and grow, and having a visionary leader plays a pivotal role in the change process as they provide direction and stamina to make change effective. President Buhari is visionary leader who has provided direction for the change agenda of his government to be effective.

Majority 78(53.8%) of the respondents disagree that the reportage of government activities has not help in the management of the change agenda of government in Nigeria. Minority 1(.7%) of the respondents strongly disagree that the reportage of government activities has not help in the management of the change agenda in Nigeria. The World Bank (2016) & Malek & Yazdanifard (2012) that Communication is a key ingredient in the successful implementation of any change in an organisation, it is used as a tool for announcing, explaining or preparing people for change. Majority 71(49.0%) of the respondents said that government is effective in managing the change agenda.. Minority 16(11.0%) of the respondents said that the government is very effective in managing the change agenda. The government has been able recovery huge sum of money running into billions of dollars from corrupt individuals and has successfully degraded the insurgents in the North East of Nigeria, to the extent that people who were displaced as a result of the insurgency have started returning to towns and villages. Majority 80(55.2%) of the respondents said government usage of the media in the management the change agenda is effective. Minority 18(12.4%) of the respondents said government usage of the media in the management of the change agenda is ineffective. Change in any organisation or society cannot not be said to be successful without the involvement of the media. The role of the media therefore is crucial to the successful implementation of any change and in managing the change. According to Mathew (2015) “the media has a greater role to play in making government work for the people by

providing information, encouraging debates, giving the people a voice and making government accountable”.

CONCLUSION

Many Nigerians want the change agenda of the present administration to succeed despite the hardship being experienced by the people. The government on her part has not disappointed the people who gave them the mandate. The change agenda of government has been effective in fighting Boko Haram in the North East of Nigeria and in fighting corruption in the country. Information released by government on its activities through the monthly presidential chats with the media and through the Minister of Information on a regular basis has helped the government in managing the change agenda. The degrading of the insurgents and the recovery of stolen money from individuals show that the government is effective in the management of the change agenda. One of the tools the government has used effectively in managing the change agenda is the media. The role of the media in managing change agenda cannot be over stressed. Inclusion, no change can be successful without a visionary leader who knows the importance of the media and its role in informing, educating and mobilizing the people for the common good of the nation.

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