

Social Conflicts and Public Private Partnership (PPP) Inertia In Nigeria: X-Ray Of Social Marketing And Conflict Resolutions' Antidote

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ABSTRACT

The rate of ethnic, religions, communal, social and political conflicts in Nigeria is unarguably very inimical not only to the unity of the Nigeria nation, but also to its socio-economic and political development. Thus, arguments are rife that this trend is adversely affecting the upward drive of public private partnership initiatives in the country, notwithstanding that in its economic policy thrust, the Nigerian government has made public private partnership (PPP) a cardinal base for the achievement of the much needed economic upstart for the nation. But observers are critical that if nothing is done to checkmate the spates of bombings by the Boko Haram sect and other intractable conflicts and crises across the country, that might turn out another pipe dream. This paper examined the correlation between the social conflicts and PPP growth rate in the country, and the efficacy of social marketing and conflict resolution tools as antidote. Survey design was used and area of study was three commercial nerve centres in Nigeria: Lagos, Aba and PortHarcourt.

Keywords: Social conflicts, public private partnership (PPP), public relations, social marketing, conflict resolution.

1. Background to the Study

Over the years, ethnic, religions, communal, social and political conflicts have been threatening the fragile unity of the Nigeria nation. This problem was heightened after the 2011 general elections with what came to be known as Boko Haram bombings and killings of hundreds of innocent citizens here and there, especially the North-East and North-West parts of the country (Amadi, 2011; Njoku, 2011; Osai, 2011). Recent in the history of such attacks include the killing of at least 59 children at a boarding school, Federal Government College, Buni Yadi in Yobe. The students were targeted as they slept in a dormitory, according to reports (ABCnews, 2014; Theguardian, 2014; Channelnews, 2014, Globalpost, 2014; BBCnews, 2014). All these according to some social commentators could be having negative effects on rate of foreign direct investment into the country (Ugwuanyi and Odigbo, 2012) and also pose great hindrances to a successful public private partnership (PPP) in Nigeria. Is it not when brothers agree that they can partner, and is it not when brothers partner among themselves that outsiders (foreign investors) would want to partner with them, they asked?

Since after the 2011 general election, arson, wanton destruction of lives and property have been unleashed sporadically on the police, public, churches, innocent people and even the international community which the United Nation's building bombing in Abuja on Friday, 26 August 2011 in which at least 21 were killed and many wounded typifies (Plaut, 2011; New York Times, 2011; Reutersnews, 2011; CBSnews, 2011). Boko Haram a group alleged to be fighting for the imposition of Sharia law on the Nigerian federation claimed responsibility (Kakah, 2011; Mark, 2011).

Apart from Boko Haram, the Niger Delta crisis is yet another social conflict that has adversely affected the nation's economy that depends largely on oil revenues over the past twenty years. It has also stultified both foreign investments (Etemike, 2012; Ugwuanyi and Odigbo, 2012), and public private partnership. Okonta and Douglas (2001:2) observed that it started due to tensions between the foreign oil corporations and some Niger-Delta minority ethnic groups who felt they were being unjustly exploited, because despite the vast wealth from petroleum, the benefits have been slow to trickle down to the majority of the population. The people also claim that their agricultural lands and aquatic culture have been taken away from them and largely destroyed by oil

spillages and environmental pollutions, which adversely affect their health and even their buildings (Darah, 2004; Eborge, 2004; Enahoro and Ehi-Ebewele, 2008).

However, Emeagwali (2000:16) says the roots of the present crisis stems in a lack of understanding of the Nigerian constitution and the peoples' poor appreciation of nationhood enshrined in the constitution. Hence, ethnic cleavages take precedence over the spirit of nationhood. Angaye (2003:1) also pointed out that it is the divisive interplay of politics, ethnicity and religion in Nigeria that has led to the recent spates of micro-nationalism, and militancy of the various ethnic movements (MEND, MOSOP, MASSOB, OPC, Boko-Haram, etc), all seeking self-determination, local autonomy, separate identity, resource control and true federalism. All these are given vent through accusations and allegations of neglect, oppression, domination, exploitation, victimization, discrimination, marginalization and rotation of major political offices. Meanwhile, Kukah (2007:5) blames greed, unbridled quest for power and a culture of materialism for the crisis.

These authors, however, believe that no excuse can attenuate the mindless killing of innocent souls including children, under whatever cover. It is an act detestable in all civilized cultures. The agencies of politics and religion must therefore work in close and harmonious concert for the good of all citizens of a country. Thus, the spates of killings and destructions in Nigeria have been a cause of worry to well-meaning Nigerians and the international community and friends of the country. Many solutions have been adduced by concerned social commentators for the nurturing and maintenance lasting peace in Nigeria's fragile social and political life. These include the deployment of public relations conflict resolutions and social marketing strategies (Abati, 2008:45; Abratt et al, 1989; Andreasen, 1996:47; Barone, et al, 2000; Bennett et al, 2000:255).

Social marketing on the other hand is the planning and implementation of programs designed to bring about social change using concepts from commercial marketing, (Moore, 1993:145; Grunert, 1992; Kotler, 1994). It is the systematic application of marketing, along with other concepts and techniques, to achieve specific desired behavioral goals for a social good. Social marketing can be applied to promote good courses in society or to make a society avoid anti-social actions and thus to promote society's well-being as a whole (Dholakia, 1985:112; Reidenbach and Oliva, 2003:65). For example, this may include asking people not to engage in violence as a way of seeking redress, not to smoke in public areas, to use seat belts, to obey traffic rules and others (Mercer, 1992:47; Kangun, 1994:63; Erickson, 2009:3).

On the other hand, conflict arises whenever people disagree over issues, interests, values, motivations, perceptions, feelings or desires. In personal relationships, a lack of understanding about differing needs could result in distance, arguments and break-ups (Gross et al., 2011, Doucey, 2013). According to NATO (2013), crises could be political, military or humanitarian and can be caused by political or armed conflicts, technological incidence or natural disasters. Crises management entails the different means of dealing with these forms of crises. A poorly handled conflict or crisis could become violent or destructive which could hinder national peace and security (Alabi, 2010). Countries and people with sound cultures respect each other's rights and do not allow such differences to tamper with societal peace. However, ascertaining the correlation between these social conflicts and the growth of public private partnership in Nigeria, and the use of public relations conflict management and social marketing strategies as effective tools for the redress is the major focus of this study.

2. Statement of the Study

Nigeria's march into the league of developed nations in the foreseeable future is becoming a mirage, due to intractable conflicts and crises that are threatening the nation. Some foreign investors are withdrawing and relocating to other countries and this is having negative effect on foreign direct investment inflow to the country (Ugwuanyi and Odigbo, 2012). There is also this claim making rounds now that even Nigerians and other indigenous enterprises wishing to go into public private partnership arrangements with governmental agencies and corporations in vital areas like education, electricity, infrastructure development, oil exploration, mining and refining, and many more, are developing cold feet from doing so. To what extent does this claim hold true, and could conflict management and social marketing strategies be used to reverse the trend? This study tried to provide the answers.

3. Research Objectives

The broad objective of the study was to determine the relationship between the plaguing social conflicts and the growth of public private partnership in Nigeria, and the efficacy of public relations conflict management and social marketing strategies as antidote for the problem. The specific objectives include to:

- i. Ascertain the correlation between Boko Haram crises and public private partnership (PPP) inertia in Nigeria.
- ii. Determine the influence of the Niger Delta crisis on public private partnership (PPP) growth in Nigeria.
- iii. Examine the efficacy of public relations and social marketing conflict resolutions tools as antidote for the problem.

4 Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in the study:

- i. There is no significant correlation between the Boko Haram crisis and low participation of Nigerians in public private partnership (PPP) in the country.
- ii. The influence of the Niger Delta crisis on public private partnership (PPP) growth in Nigeria is not significant.
- iii. Public relations and social marketing conflict resolutions tools are not significantly potent as antidote to the social conflicts and crises in Nigeria.

5. Area of Study

One State each from the Northern and Southern parts of the country, that have the sociocultural, economic and political characteristic of the entire nation were chosen as our representative area of study. They are Kano State in the North and Lagos State in the South. These two States also harbour a large population of Nigerians from the diverse ethnic groups in the country, living and working or doing business there, hence their qualification as the area of study.

6. Scope of the Study

The scope of the study encompassed:

- Corporate organisations' owners, directors and managers in Nigeria.
- Members of Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN).
- Members of Nigerian Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA).
- Staff of the Federal Ministry of Trade and Industries.
- Public Relations and Marketing communications practitioners in the country.

7. Review of Related Literature

7.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical underpinning of this study is anchored on public relations excellence model, holds that by helping organizations build healthy relationships with their publics and by resolving conflicts between the organization and its strategic publics, public relations departments contribute to organizational effectiveness. The model stresses that there are 10 basic principles upon which excellent public relations rest as observed by (Rhee, 2004):

1. Involvement of public relations in strategic management.
2. Empowerment of public relations in the organisation for a direct reporting relationship to senior management.
3. Integration of all public relations functions in an organisation into a single department and setting up a mechanism for it to coordinate other departments in adopting public relations culture.
4. Making public relations a management function separate from other functions. Many organizations submerge the public relations function into other departments such as marketing, human resources, law, or finance.
5. The heading of the public relations unit by a manager rather than a technician.
6. The running of the public relations programmes of the organisation based on two-way symmetrical model of public relations, which is entrenched on research and uses communication to manage conflict and improve understanding with strategic publics.
7. Excellent public relations departments are also run on symmetrical system of participative, internal communication, by decentralizing management structures and giving powers to employees and allowing them to participate in decision making.
8. Excellent public relations departments are staffed by professionals—people who are educated in the body of knowledge and who are active in professional associations and read professional literature.

9. Excellent public relations departments include both men and women in all roles, as well as practitioners of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

10. Excellent public relations departments are nourished by participative rather than authoritarian cultures, activist pressure from the environment, and organic rather than mechanical management structures (Rhee, 2004).

As it is with an organisation, so it is with a nation too. The above-stated provisions of public relations excellence model if applied in the nation will give the same positive result, especially within the federal government agencies that are vested with the duties of managing the nation's public relations programme, national image, conflicts and crises in the country, in order to engender the much-needed climate of peace that is a prerequisite for national development.

7.2 Public Private Partnership (PPP)

Public-Private Partnerships could be defined as the means by which large-scale investment and service provision of infrastructure development are locked into a single long-term contract. A cluster of private investor's raises capital to finance, invest, maintains and manages the construction of the project, and also operates the facilities for a long period of typically 25 to 30 years and, at the end of the arranged contract date, transfers the assets to the government or any other nominated by them as it stipulates in the contract agreement. Thus, for the duration of the operation of the project, the private partner receives a flow of payments as reimbursement. These payments cover both the initial investment- Capital expenses (capex) and operation and maintenance expenses known as (opex). All of these depends on the form of development projects and type of infrastructure development. In a lot of countries, it is the paucity and inadequate of available resources from the public purse for infrastructural projects that led governments to request the private sector to go into long-term contractual agreements for the investing and maintenance of some required capital intensive development projects (Ikechukwu and Xiaolin, 2012). PPP can also be defined as a form of agreement where public sector agencies enter into short-term or long-term contractual agreements with a private sector organisation(s) for the construction or management of public sector infrastructure facilities by that private sector organisation, or the provision of services by the private sector entity to the public on behalf of a public sector entity, like in the maintenance and management of highways (Engel et al., 1997b; Yescombe, 2007; Tirole, Martimort and Pouyet, 2008; Engel et al., 2008).

Meanwhile, Busch and Givens (2013) observed that PPP is not meant only for projects, but could also be applied in the areas of large-scale disaster management. For instance, on May 22, 2011, one of the most powerful tornadoes in American history ripped through Joplin, Missouri. With winds in excess of 200 miles per hour, the tornado destroyed everything in its path, tragically killing 158, wounding over 1,000, and damaging up to 30 percent of the city – some 8,000 buildings in total. Emergency response efforts began immediately, and with each passing hour, the scale of the disaster became increasingly clear. Many firms volunteered to assist the government in mitigating the cost of the disaster. These included the Empire District Electric Company, which teamed up with neighboring power companies to restore electricity and natural gas service to Joplin residents and the mobile phone company, Sprint, which provided cell phones and satellite phones to local emergency officials. This way, public-private partnerships (PPPs) help communities become more resilient in the face of natural and man-made disasters (Busch and Givens, 2013; Esposito et al., 2011; Murphy, 2008; Garvin, 2008; Sadka, 2007).

7.3 Conflict and Conflict Management

Conflict Management: This refers to the long-term management of intractable conflicts in society, organization, institution, community or family. The form of conflict management option or strategy to be adopted is determined by the social structure or social geometry of the case (Berlin, 2013). But the functional-conflict school of thought believes that when conflict is handled in a respectful and positive way, it provides an opportunity for growth, ultimately strengthening the bond between people (Nwosu, 1996:11; Nkamnebe, 2001). Dysfunctional conflicts, like the ones in Nigeria today, are destructive and cause loss of lives, property, man-hours, investment opportunities, hunger and starvation, open violence, wars and other forms of social disruptions (Doucey, 2013; Quinn, 2013).

8. Methodology

Primary data were used in the study. The research instrument was structured hard-copy and electronic questionnaire (E-questionnaire). With a population of 231,000 a sample size of 399 was

statistically determined through Taro Yamane’s formula. Proportionate sampling technique was used to allocate it to the two selected States in the country. The data sourced were statistically analyzed with Likert’s 5-points scale, Chi-square (X^2) and Spearman’s Correlation Coefficient. 371 of the respondents representing about 93% filled and returned their questionnaire. This was subsequently used for the analysis.

9. Data Presentation and Analysis

9.1: Respondents’ Demographic

Data displayed on table 1 above indicate that 35% of the respondents were in the age bracket of 31 to 40 years, 23.45% in the age range of 41 to 50 years; 25.07% in the age bracket of 51 to 60 years, while 16.44% were 61 years or above. 56.87% of the respondents were male, while 43.13% were female. 46.36% were residents of Kano State, while 53.63% were residents of Lagos State. 10.51% were corporate organisation owners, 21.02% were members of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, 22.91% were Nigerian Chamber of Commerce members, 22.37% were public relations practitioners, while 23.18% were civil servants working in the relevant Ministry of Trade and Industries.

Fig. 1.2: The respondents’ occupational distribution.

Table 2: Respondents’ views on whether there is significant correlation between the Boko Haram crisis and low participation of Nigerians in public private partnership (PPP) in the country.

Options	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	97	26.15%
Agree	137	36.93%
Undecided	37	9.97%
Disagree	51	13.75%
Strongly Disagree	49	13.21%
Total	371	100%

Source: Field survey, 2014.

Data on table 2 above show that 26.15% of the respondents strongly agreed that there is **significant correlation between** the Boko Haram crisis and low public private partnership (PPP) participation in Nigeria. 36.93% of the respondents equally agreed with that; 9.97% were not quite sure; 13.75% were undecided, while 13.21% totally disagreed. See figure 1.2 below for a graphic picture of this result.

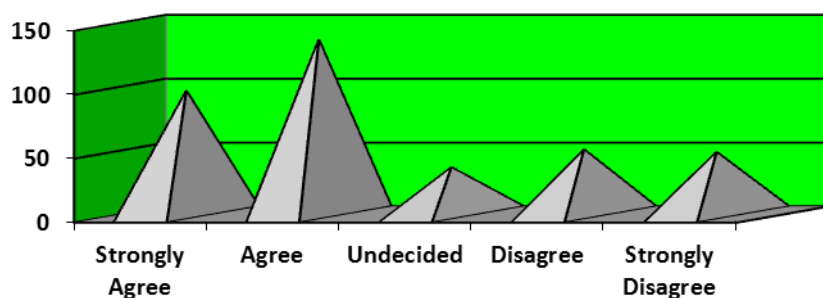


Fig. 1.2: A test of the correlation between the Boko Haram crisis and low participation of Nigerians in public private partnership (PPP) in the country. Source: Field survey, 2014.

Table 3: Respondents’ views on whether the influence of the Niger Delta crisis has significant adverse effect on public private partnership (PPP) growth in Nigeria.

Options	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	85	22.91%
Agree	129	34.77%
Undecided	47	12.67%
Disagree	57	15.36%
Strongly Disagree	53	14.29%
Total	371	100%

Source: Field survey, 2014.

Data on table 3 show that 22.91% of the respondents strongly agreed that the influence of the Niger Delta crisis has significant adverse effect on public private partnership (PPP) growth in Nigeria. 34.77% of the respondents equally agreed with that; 12.67% were undecided; 15.36% disagreed, while the remaining 14.29% strongly disagreed. See figure 1.3 for a graphic picture of this result.

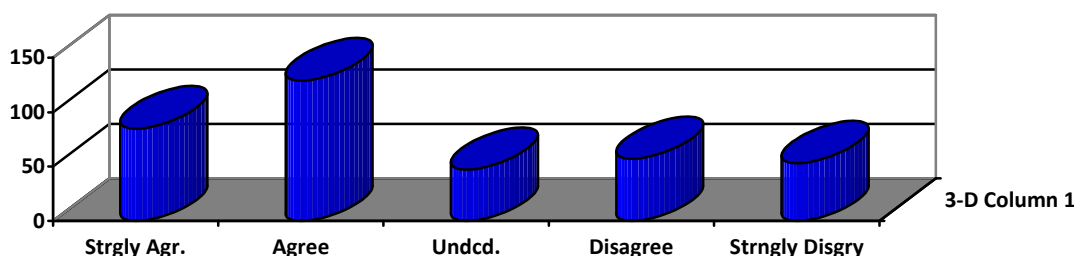


Fig. 1.3: A test of the influence of the Niger Delta crisis on public private partnership (PPP) growth in Nigeria. Source: Field survey, 2014.

Table 4: Respondents’ views on the efficacy of public relations and social marketing conflict resolutions tools as antidote for the crises.

Options	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	155	41.78%
Agree	161	43.39%
Undecided	21	5.66%
Disagree	17	4.58%
Strongly Disagree	17	4.58%
Total	371	100%

Source: Field survey, 2014.

Data on table 4 show that 41.78% of the respondents strongly believed that public relations and social marketing conflict resolutions tools would serve as effective antidote for the social crises in Nigeria. 43.39% of the respondents equally agreed with that; 5.66% were undecided; 4.58% disagreed, while another 4.58% strongly disagreed with that. See figure 1.4 for a pictorial view of this result.

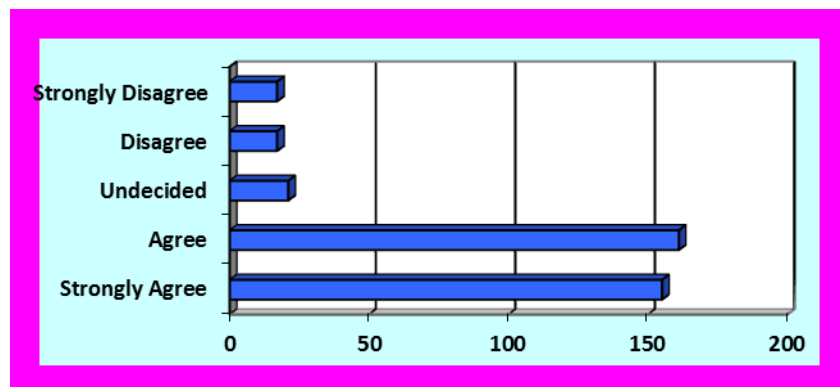


Fig. 1.4: A test of the efficacy of public relations and social marketing tools as antidote for the crises. Source: Field survey, 2014.

Test of Hypothesis One:

Ho: There is no significant correlation between the Boko Haram crisis and low participation of Nigerians in public private partnership (PPP) in the country.

Hi: There is significant correlation between the Boko Haram crisis and low participation of Nigerians in public private partnership (PPP) in the country.

Test Statistics = Measure of Central Tendency (Mean)

DECISION RULE:

If Mean < 2.5, the Respondents Disagree

If 3.5 < Mean ≤ 2.5, the Respondents are Undecided

If Mean ≥ 3.5, the Respondents Agree

S/N	Questions	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	There is significant correlation between the Boko Haram crisis and low participation of Nigerians in public private partnership	97 (485)	137 (548)	37 (111)	51 (102)	49 (49)	3.50	Agreed
Total							3.50	Agreed

Source: Field survey, 2014.

Result Interpretation

With a Mean score of 3.50, the result indicates that the respondents agreed that there is significant correlation between the Boko Haram crisis and low participation of Nigerians in public private partnership initiatives in the country. Hence, we accept the alternative hypothesis.

Test of Hypothesis Two

Ho: The influence of the Niger Delta crisis has no significant adverse effect on public private partnership (PPP) growth in Nigeria.

Hi: The influence of the Niger Delta crisis has significant adverse effect on public private partnership (PPP) growth in Nigeria.

Test Statistics = Chi-Square (X²)

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{O - E}{E}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Expected Frequency} &= \frac{\sum \text{Observed Frequency}}{\text{Number of Observations}} \\ &= \frac{85 + 129 + 47 + 57 + 53}{5} = 74.2 = 74 \text{ approx.} \end{aligned}$$

Degree of Freedom = 4. Hence, Critical Chi-Square at 5% Margin of Error = 9.49

$$\frac{85 + 129 + 47 + 57 + 53}{5}$$

$$X^2 = \frac{(85-74)^2}{74} + \frac{(129-74)^2}{74} + \frac{(47-74)^2}{74} + \frac{(57-74)^2}{74} + \frac{(53-74)^2}{74} = 1.64 + 40.88 + 9.85 + 3.90 + 5.96 = 62.23$$

Decision

Since the calculated chi-square ($X^2_{\text{calculated}} = 62.23$, $p < 0.05$) is greater than the critical chi-square (9.49), we hereby reject the H_0 and accept the H_1 which says that “the influence of the Niger Delta crisis has significant adverse effect on public private partnership (PPP) growth in Nigeria.”

Test of Hypothesis One:

H_0 : Public relations and social marketing conflict resolutions tools are not significantly potent as antidote to the social conflicts and crises in Nigeria.

H_1 : Public relations and social marketing conflict resolutions tools are significantly potent as antidote to the social conflicts and crises in Nigeria.

Test Statistics = Spearman Correlation Coefficient (r_s)

Test Table

Options	Data 1	Data 2	Rank 1	Rank 2	D	d ²
Strongly Agree	155	85	4	4	0	0
Agree	161	129	5	5	0	0
Undecided	21	47	3	1	2	4
Disagree	17	57	1.5	3	1.5	2.25
Strongly Disagree	17	53	1.5	2	-0.5	0.25

Adapted from tables 3 and 5. Source: Field Survey, 2013.

$$\sum d^2 = 0 + 0 + 4 + 2.25 + 0.50 = 6.50$$

$$\text{So } r_s = 1 - \frac{2 \times \sum d^2}{n(n^2-1)}$$

$$r_s = 1 - \frac{(2 \times 6.50)}{n(n^2-1)}$$

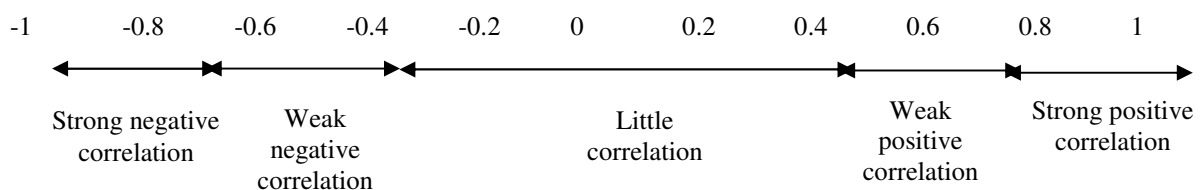
$$r_s = 1 - \frac{2 \times 6.50}{5(5^2 - 1)}$$

$$r_s = 1 - \frac{13}{120}$$

$$r_s = 1 - 0.108$$

$$r_s = 0.892$$

Fig. 1.5: Interpretation of the Result of the Spearman Correlation Coefficient:



Decision

Since the result of the Spearman Correlation Coefficient ($r_s = 0.892$) shows a strong positive correlation, we hereby reject the H_0 and accept the H_1 which says that “public relations and social marketing conflict resolutions tools are significantly potent as antidote to the social conflicts and crises in Nigeria.”

10. Summary of Results and their Implications

- i. There is significant correlation between the Boko Haram crisis and low participation of Nigerians in public private partnership initiatives in the country.
- ii. The influence of the Niger Delta crisis has significant adverse effect on public private partnership (PPP) growth in Nigeria.
- iii. Public relations and social marketing conflict resolutions tools are significantly potent as antidote to the social conflicts and crises in Nigeria.

The implication of the above-stated results is that violence and social crises do anyone no good. Their adverse effects on the social, economic and political development of any nation cannot be quantified in monetary terms. The brutal killing of innocent souls is heart-rending, and leaves indelible grief and sorrows in the minds of well-meaning citizens of the world. Worse still, both foreign and local investors shy away from investing in places ridden with social conflicts. This accounts for the low participation of even Nigerians in public private partnership initiatives in their country. However, it is strongly believed that the public relations and social marketing conflict resolutions programmes of the present government would undoubtedly go a long way in dousing these tensions in Nigeria, and restore local and international investors' confidence to go into public private partnership (PPP) initiatives with the three tiers of government and their various Ministries, agencies and parastatals.

11. Conclusion and Recommendations

Mindful of the country's enormous human and material potentials and its unassailable natural resources base, Nigeria's economic growth would definitely leapfrog to the sky, under a climate of peace. It is only when that happens that citizens of the country would be able to cooperate with each other and the government in both private and public business partnerships. No one gains from crises that take the lives of innocent souls. No one can ever adequately pay for such lives lost, nor compensate for the loss of jobs accruing from the attendant economic downturns accruing from it to any nation. Based on these gory facts, therefore, we recommend as follows:

- i. The Nigerian government should set up a social public relations body charged with researching into social conflicts in the country and coming up with valuable ideas on how to resolve them.
- ii. Public relations research and issues management strategies should be used in proactively nipping simmering conflicts in their buds before they balloon into crises.
- iii. Social media strategies should be deployed in relaying to those brutally snuffing out the lives of their fellow citizens that no religion ever endorsed such acts, and that it would be severely punished here and hereafter.
- iv. Social public relations media should also be deployed in letting politicians sponsoring social violence in Nigeria that there is an indelible eternal law that “whatsoever any man sows, that he must reap.” So, they and their generations yet unborn will pay dearly for the lives of all innocent people slain in their murderous quest for power.
- v. The government should initiate a holistic stake-holders' forum from time to time at both national, states, local governments and community levels to track the feelings and opinions of the populace, and then factor such into government policies for peace and national growth.
- vi. The government should also address the problem of unemployment and inequalities in the distribution of wealth in the country, as major source of conflicts in the land.
- vii. There must be a zero-tolerance to corruption at all tiers of governance in Nigeria (federal, states and local governments) so as to win and sustain the confidence of the public for support of government policies/programmes and full participation in public private partnership (PPP) initiatives.

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