



Research Paper

Crisis Reflection: Appraising the Effects of Nigeria's Undemocratic Leadership Character on Her International Image

Vincent Emeka Ezeanya

ev.ezeanya@unizik.edu.ng

Dada Isaac Owoeye

isaacowoeye20@gmail.com

Department of Political Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State-Nigeria

Abstract: Attempts to address Nigeria's image crisis over the decades have encountered serious challenges. Not even the pronounced Late Prof. Dora Akunyili's image rebranding policy of 'Great Nation, Great People' could redirect the international perception of the country for better. Thus, the paper investigated how the manifestation of undemocratic leadership character in Nigeria contributed to this endemic quagmire. The paper is descriptive in typology and hinged on qualitative orientation. It employed Leadership Trait approach cum theory in explicating the relationship between the two major variables. Evidently showed from findings, the paper established that Nigeria's undemocratic leadership character over decades was partly responsible for Nigeria's Image crisis among the comity of Nations. Among others, the paper recommended a rebranding of Nigeria's leadership character from undemocratic to democratic. Nigeria's nationals; home and abroad should step up their international campaigns against illiberal governance and civilian-dictatorial rule in Nigeria, this will enable the Nigerian ruling elite to hinge strictly on democratic principles when they start suffering rejections both home and abroad. More so, there is need for a just Civil-Military relation in Nigeria. Thus, these will go a long way in regaining Nigeria's good image within the International Community cum managing her internal crisis.

Keywords: Crisis Reflection; Leadership Character; Nigerian Leadership; International Image; Image Crisis

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I. INTRODUCTION

For a country to operate well within the International Community, such country must come out with a good image. Thus, to manage national image has become a great problem to some countries in the international system. This problem has been confronting Nigeria for some decades, even after many countries have passed through the era of transitions from colonialism to independence. However, the dilemma of Nigeria's image crisis may not be as much as depressing as portrayed in the international system. However, it is indisputable that the country had had some difficult moments during her last sixty-one (61) years of independence. But what has not been much considered by literature over the years is looking at the issue of Nigeria's image crisis from the angle of her undemocratic leadership character. Nevertheless, it is evident that is one of the major problems influencing some States within the International Community, particularly, most African countries have undemocratic leadership character. Nigeria's Image crisis, whether national or international; can be traced to the inception of Federalism and complex nature of Nigeria's plural society comprising of different ethnic groups but the fact remains that Nigerian leadership character remains a constant and distressing issue over the years. Thus, it will be more appreciative to embark on historical view on the nature of Nigerian leadership character in line with Nigeria's international image since her independence.

Having taken a critical look at different literature on Nigeria's image crisis, it is evident that Nigeria's international image crisis can be explained in line in Nigeria is rooted in the nature of her violent electoral politics as experienced in her First Republic which resulted to the first military coup in January 5, 1966. The first military rule was followed by counter coup on July 29, 1966 leading to sequence of political tragedy that ultimately led to the civil war of 1967. Subsequent to the end of civil war in 1970; attempts have been made to

redeem Nigeria's battered image in the global system. Nigerian government came up with a tactical plan of 3Rs agenda (that is; Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation) in order to redeem her image and as well, manage the post-civil war image to appease the affected parties; Biafra (Fayomi 2016: P. 15). In spite of this effort cum policy, Nigeria did not succeed in redressing the basic issue that instigated the war as the Biafrans cum IPOB or the Igbo are still agitating for self-determination and secession up till today; October 2021 due to the nature of Nigerian undemocratic leadership character.

Consequently, shortly before Nigeria's Second Republic, National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme was established during General Yakubu Gowon's administration to enhance national integration, the scheme became one of Nigeria's most international image redeemers, among other strategic plans like Oil Politics, Revolutionary Military Administration, Pan-Africanism among similar other mechanisms. However, in the contemporary NYSC scheme, its direction of fostering national integration had been questioned as manifested in the frequent redeployment by the members of the scheme back to their geo-political zones cum exemption of service due to insecurity threats. More so, the failure of 1979 electoral process led to the emergence of the Second Republic, the Shehu Shagari's regime overturned the good impacts made in Nigeria's foreign policy over decades while Buhari/Idiagbon's regime impacted negatively on Nigeria's international image as it was purely dictatorial cum undemocratic characterized by arbitrary use of force, lack of recognition for human rights, highhandedness which led to the collapse of the Second Republic (Akinboye cited in Fayomi, 2016: P. 17).

The Second Republic produced serious image disrepute to Nigeria. The country experienced a serious image crisis due to her undemocratic leadership character, particularly; in her relations with the International Community. The General Ibrahim Babangida and General Sani Abacha regimes were regarded as the most unfair and oppressive regimes in the annals of Nigerian history. The administrations were also characterized by immense mishandlings of World Bank Structural Adjustment programme debates cum inability to defend Nigeria against the allegations of corruption and the recurrent transitions which led to the June 12, 1993 general elections. Although, the few positive impacts of General Sani Abacha's Regime in monitoring the extinction of termination of racism in South Africa in 1994 cannot be jettisoned, however, the terror by his administration on Nigerian States as manifested in numerous instances of assassination of some civil/human rights leaders which included Chief Alfred Rewanne, Mrs. Kudirat Abiola and Ken-Saro Wiwa, his brother in 1995 that led to the suspension of Nigeria from the Commonwealth of Nation, altogether with annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential election created the most embarrassing sanctions and image disrepute that any country has ever earned at the period. Consequently, this did not earned Nigeria, a pariah status but a total disrepute within the International Community as observed in Saliu (2006: P.355). The foregoing anomalies resulted to the collapse of the Third Republic and consequently, General Sani Abacha's regime is presumed to be the era that Nigeria experienced the most international image crisis due to his complete nature of undemocratic leadership character.

In order to regain the lost image of Nigeria and as well, resolve her image crisis, General Abdulsalami Abubakar took over in May 29, 1999 and this earned Nigeria; the greatest political and democratic events of democracy day and the beginning of Fourth Republic. Abdulsalami Abubakar's effort to correct all the anomalies and bad situation of things by embarking on transition programmes; positively reshaped cum redeemed Nigeria's international image to an extent (Dokubo, 2010: P. 256). However, this regime equally contributed to Nigeria's image crisis due to the death of MKO Abiola which generated a lot of controversies and international condemnations, thereby constituting another indicator of Nigeria's image crisis. In order to regain Nigeria's image crisis, President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration tried to redeem the image of the country from pariah status earned during Abacha's administration. Thus, the major objectives of President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration as observed in Zabadi (2004: P. 348) were; 'peace, security and prosperity through friendship'. Although, it is evident that Obasanjo's administration struggled a lot to rebrand cum reshape Nigeria's image, however, in spite of his immense contributions, Obasanjo's regime possessed some lapses which were attributed debt crisis of about 30 billion US Dollars, attempts to bend Nigeria's constitution in April 2006 to elongate his tenure, dispute agreement over Bakassi Peninsular territory among other factors of undemocratic leadership behaviours in his administration contributed to Nigeria's image crisis cum disrepute.

President Musa Yar'Adua came into power after Obasanjo, he introduced the idea of 'citizen diplomacy' as a mechanism of intensifying and redeeming Nigeria's image. The health issue which made him absent from the office for about 100 days created a negative and image to Nigeria globally. This was considered by Fayomi et al (2016: P.20) as "the most damaging to the country's international image in recent time". The demise of President Musa Yar'Adua led to the administration of Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. In order to actualize the goals of his former boss (Yar'Adua), Jonathan's administration continued with the idea of citizen diplomacy. However, the regime encountered a serious image crisis resulting from security threats, particularly, Boko Haram menace and the inability of Jonathan's administration to overcome the security threats presumably led to decline in Nigeria's relations with the International Community, particularly in the area of tourism cum foreign Investment into Nigeria and consequently led the failure of his re-election in 2015.

The 2015 General election brought President Muhammadu Buhari into power. The administration is characterized by undemocratic leadership character which has manifested in violations of rule of law, disobedience to court orders, dictatorial leadership style, undue attack on political opponents, killings and prosecution of peaceful protesters cum freedom fighters among others. All these anomalies bothered the mind of researchers as to whether the President is operating as a military dictator or maybe he has forgotten that Nigeria in a democratic system cum civilian government. Consequently, the image crisis of Nigeria has fully degenerated to become a matter of international concern in recent years presumably as a result of exhibition of dictatorial cum undemocratic leadership character. The present administration seems to have jeopardized Nigeria's image and limited the efforts made in previous administrations towards redeeming Nigeria's image. Thus, despite all the efforts made in different regimes altogether, in transforming the image of the country in the international system; Nigeria's image crisis rather than decreasing, seems to be on the increase.

The foregoing provided the historical view of the nature of Nigeria's undemocratic leadership character in different regimes via her image crisis. It is against this background that the study tends to ascertain how the undemocratic leadership characters exhibited in Nigeria; particularly, since 2015 has presumably triggered issues such as terrorism, agitation for secession, violations of United Nations Human Rights Law, assassination of various forms, intolerance of political opponents, religious bias, deceptive propaganda, killings cum shooting of peaceful protesters, electoral corruption, deaf ear to public outcry, religious cum ethnic bias among other manifestations of undemocratic leadership character which have presumably contributed to the country's image crisis.

II. Methodology

The paper is descriptive in typology and qualitative in nature. It employed secondary sources of data which include media publications, journal articles, and textbooks among other documented evidence. Data gathered were presented using textual and pictorial tools and thematically cum contently analyzed through logical reasoning. Robert House's Path-goal theory was employed as the theoretical guide in explaining the relationship between undemocratic leadership character and Nigeria's image crisis. Central to the analysis of roles and behaviours of leaders; is the development of the theory in 1971. The theory is found strongly relevant in management and social sciences. The basic tenet of the theory is; for a leader to be successful (democratic), he/she must possess and exhibit the manners that compliment the society and the followers (the citizens) towards accomplishing the set goals and as well, create the right path to follow.

The theory clearly categorized four distinct behaviours cum characters that every leader should maintain in order to realize their goals; these include achievement oriented, directive, participative and supportive (House and Mitchell, 1974). The fitness of the theory to this paper is justified in its enriched capabilities to explain how undemocratic leadership behaviour cum character has influenced her Nigeria's image over the years. In line with Path-goal theory, a country will operate well cum possesses a good image both at national and international levels when the leaders employ appropriate and good leadership behaviours based on the above. Thus, the current dilemma of Nigeria's image crisis is due to the inability of Nigerian leaders to hinge on aforementioned leadership characters. In line with Path-goal, the dictatorial policy of Nigerian government in the past and present administration (Buhari's administration) is against the notion of participative leadership; thus, for a leader to maintain a good image of his country in the international system, he must take into cognizance the citizen's opinion and roles of the followers in the process of governance to ensure wider participation. Good welfare packages, salary increment, modern public utilities and good living standards will in turn reduce criminal activities, poverty and corruptions, and as well reduce Nigeria's image crisis. Thus, the long deliberation and dissatisfaction with minimum wage of workers cum high cost of living in Nigeria does not encourage supportive leadership as posited by Path-goal theorist. More so, for Nigerian leaders to achieve Nigeria's national interests and domestic goals, they must be achievement oriented. They must be able to come out with good policies in terms of eradicating terrorism, internal conflicts among others and come up with good domestic policies, because foreign policy goals cum national interests are reflections of domestic policies. Also, Nigerian leaders must be directive and ensure that proper steps are taken in the process of administration.

Leadership

Leadership as a concept is traced to the inception of having a civilized world. Thus, leadership had been studied for centuries and the major focus as observed in different literature is on leadership style, leadership environment and leaders themselves. There have been a lot of scholarly views of leadership but the most common element in their definitions is that leadership is about influence and having the ability to make compliance. The concept of leadership as a multi-disciplinary term is socially constructed as broadly used in social and management sciences. However, scholars through different theoretical perspective have made efforts to explain the concept. Be that as it may, while conceptualizing leadership, it is pertinent to have a hint of who a leader is. It is widely known that a leader is someone who holds the key, most important or dominant decision

within his/her field or particular segment of a society. Thus, we have political, religious, business, academic leaders among others, but for the purpose of this paper, our focus is on leadership from political perspective cum angle.

In the view of Uhl-Bien (2006: P.668), "leadership as a social influence process through which emergent coordination (evolving social order) and change (new values, attitudes, approaches, behaviours, ideologies, among others) are constructed and produced" Similarly, Gronn (2000: P. 324) described it as a group quality, a set of functions which must be carried out by the group. In the assertion of this scholar, leadership formulates out the role of an expansive collection of actors; appropriate and collective factors in its practice. In the same line of thought, Ogbeidi (2012: P. 4) described leadership as a process of social influence by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Taking a critical look at this definition, a leader is expected to demonstrate good character because people basically attribute leading to those who they feel are competent and having the spirit of achieving their preset goals and objectives both in aspect of domestic and national interests.

Based on different theoretical formulations, the concept of leadership has become complex. Theoretically, as in practice; leadership is behavioural concept. Thus, explaining concept of leadership demands behavioural characteristics. It is in this ground that Leftwich and Wheeler (2011: P. 9) described leadership as "a social process involving the skills of mobilizing people and resources in pursuit of a set of shared and negotiated goals". Thus, political leadership among other varieties of leadership is a unique one because rather than being on a segment, it is exercised over a broad collection of subject matters. Thus, it encompasses political and economic policies, culture, defense, social well-being of the citizens and importantly foreign affairs cum external relations. An exponent of political behaviour explains the motivation for leaders to engage in political behaviour and their ability to productively engage in such behaviours (Ammeter, 2002: P. 755). From this assertion, it is evident that behaviours, character or personalities of a leader must be taken into consideration because they form input of country's image. In essence, the personalities and characters of a leader tend to determine the nature of the country's image in the international system.

Leadership Character

Leadership character rests on two major aspects; which are seen as either good or bad. Thus words like competent, trustworthy, positive, caring, legitimate, good spirit, being informed among similar others are usually attributed to good leadership. On the other hand, the characters of bad leaders are direct opposite of the aforementioned. Be that as it may, for both good and bad leaders, people are always conscious of the behaviours cum personalities which they exhibit in governance. Thus, the pattern of leadership behaviour determines how people perceive their leaders.

Since leadership character cum behaviour has become a global phenomenon, some western scholars have noted that leadership character is a reflection of individual's attributes and personalities. In view of Emmerik et al (2008: P. 299), leadership was described as "the abilities of an individual to influence, motivate and enable others towards the effectiveness and success of organizations of which they are members" From this assertion, a good leadership demands citizens' participations in governance. On a separate ground, a good leadership character can be seen in two dimensions which are; 'consideration and initiating structure'. Consideration as posited by Yammarino et al (2005), referred to the behaviours that leaders use to create a supportive environment of warmth, friendliness and helpfulness (that is, being approachable, care about the welfare of the citizens, carrying others along among others) while initiating structure is considered as task-oriented and directive behaviour. From this assertion on dimensions of leadership; leadership deals with assigning duties, specify the procedures to follow, clarifying expectations of subordinate among others. In essence, an understanding of these two dimensions of leadership behaviour will enrich our knowledge of why leaders behave in certain ways.

Leadership character and county's performance are inseparable based on their relationship; therefore, leadership character becomes vital area to discuss. Sarros and Cooper (2006: P. 2) posited that "in leadership, character counts. Leadership provides a compass and, over the long, both personal development and the common good are best served by a moral compass that reads true". Similarly, Hesselbein (2004: P. 2) asserted that leadership is about "how to be, not how to do". This simply means that leadership is much more of character. Thus, in the process of governance, leadership character plays important roles, in the view of Gergen (2001).

Nigerian leadership

This segment is basically on Nigerian leadership with the use of relevant literature, positions of scholars and practitioners in leadership behaviour. Nevertheless, Nigerian leadership as a concept in this paper will be in line with the various theoretical formulations on leadership using leadership style approach that focuses on characters, traits, personalities and practices of leadership.

For instance, essentialist theorists take a large objectivist standpoint on leadership whereby it is presented in quite a smooth way as somewhat done by leaders to followers. Otieno et al (2016: P.1216), asserted that the approach identifies with up to the 1970s thinking, according to him, the school of thinkers attributes good leadership as either residing in personal qualities of leaders, the behaviour they enact and the functions they perform. In this view, leadership is seen as situational contingency based. In a similar view, Bass 1985 cited in Otieno (2016), conceived leadership as transformational. This scholar according to his position looks at individual as a rational being from whom leadership character flows. Therefore, let down of such value when people become so proactive to their needs then leadership may be on cat-chase rat circumstances and thus, losing out it thrust.

There is no much doubt that true leadership is expected to understand what governance entails and the need for the sense of humour to understand the needs of his people. In spite of unending efforts of leaders of the countries of the world to sustain a good leadership positions, Nigerian leaders' despite globalisation are yet to understand what leadership is in real life or world. In Nigeria, like some other African countries, there are too many leaders without leadership traits. Therefore, the categories of leaders in Nigerian society are those that value political power rather than leadership roles, whose major interest is majorly to occupy the political offices, their primordial interest is usually of ethnic peace, religion and geo-political zone rather than the interests of the entire citizenry, the current administration in Nigeria is a fit example of this description.

In the view of Folarin cited Otieno (2016: P.1217), "leadership is a qualitative governance as against mere quantitative governance". In this view, leadership is expected to be a concern of realistic human quality in undertaking task on behalf of others. However, there are limitations to every leadership position, but the characters, God-fearing behaviour enables leadership to meet its targets goals both within and outside domain. Similarly, Nigerian bad leadership character draws out from arrogance of Nigerian leaders, civilian dictatorship, Father Christmas foreign relations, feeding-bottle policies, political gangsterism, militarization of Nigerian democratic institutions, victimization of political opponents, ethnic primordial loyalties among others. Therefore, all these fees are the true description of the nature of Nigeria leadership; it simply means that Nigerian leaders are operating on what Machiavelli regarded as 'arrogance of power and civilian dictatorship'.(Gyimah-Boadi 2004)

The major reason for Machiavelli to have looked at leadership in terms of "power arrogance" is to appease two leaders whose selfish interest is beyond these targets of leadership roles. In practice, this fits the current nature of Nigerian leadership that is fond of dictatorial characters, unnecessary politicization of issues, and victimization of political opponents by the repressive state apparatus. In essence, these aforementioned characters are injury on Nigeria's image; because democracy as practiced all over the world does not give room for dictatorship. Nevertheless, war against corruption which is the major target of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration, rather than decreasing had been on the increase and it has become a daily routine in Nigeria. This has manifested in personal benefit approach of appointment and award of contracts. Consequently, appointment into every key position in the country rather than being merited has over the year being transactional and use to achieve personal goals.

Based on the foregoing, it is evidently shown that Nigerian leadership is not unique in practice. The sad story of Nigeria's leadership is that they are kind of leadership weakens rather than strengthening typically, it failed democracy and the shapes it's country's image within the International Community.

Nigeria's International Image

National image of countries in contemporary politics has become one of the strategic elements in the systems of international relations. With the aid of globalisation that fosters effective and efficient communications, the image of one country is no longer limited to domestic political support for rebranding as it also gives room to create changes in mutual relations or influence reasonable and practical decisions in the international systems. In this context, Azerbaijan (2015: P.1) posited that "states' participation when international decisions are taken, support by International Community, unsuccessful bilateral relations with other countries depend on the created image". In view of this scholar, good or positive Image is a precondition for a country to achieve her national interest in the global politics.

Since the concept of national image has become more of reality, every country's image is perceived as the result of the actions and inactions of her leadership. Thus, Nigeria's image cannot be rebranded unless we exhibit good leadership behaviour. Great and developed Nations of the world have maintained a good leadership character. In essence, the dilemma of Nigeria's image crisis has over the years become a very difficult task to address. As part of the efforts of former minister of information; Late Prof. Dora Akunyili under late Musa Yar'Adua's administration to rebrand the Nigeria's image in the global system, she brought the idea of 'Great Nation, Great People', although, this was considered a very good image rebranding but it did not redeem the image of Nigeria due to a persistent nature of leadership.

In his own position, Bernstein cited in Ogbe (2015), argued that "an image built, rebranded and restored is powerful, it helps to determine the 'how' of behaviour and perception; weak or strong, open or devious, friendly or unfriendly; with influence public disposition, readiness to invest and give its credence". Similarly, IDR reports in 2003 give a true picture of Nigeria's image as corruption was considered the major factor. In view of the report, corruption is seen as one of the causes of image crisis in Nigeria and this is more of reality than undisclosed. In essence, corruption is a great typical and destructive cankerworm which has damaged and still damaging every sector of the country. The foregoing literature positions of scholars contribute a lot to the conceptual view of Nigeria's image. Even so, be there various opinions has it may, the fact remains that Nigerian leadership character is a precondition towards rebranding Nigeria's image whether locally or globally. In essence, attempts to change, rebrand or reconstruct Nigeria's image has not manifested over the years, this is because country's image is more or less a public perception, what people's experience may be-bad or good, beliefs and feelings, political attitudes (positive or negative), security, living standards among others are expected to be a sense of direction when discussing national image of a country.

Nigeria's International Image Crisis

The incapability of any nation to handle the issues confronting her political system effectively sometimes lead to bad image and this generates a lot of crisis for her in the global system. Therefore, the concept of international image crisis is a controversial issue. Perception of the country by other countries of the world is what determines how a country maintains friendly relations within the International Community and the behaviours exhibited by the leader and citizens tend to determine the image of the country. Therefore, a country's image is the totality of perception of her citizens and other countries about her. Image crisis is generated when negative issues that are tied to economic, political, social and cultural aspects begin to occur. Therefore, international system in which different countries operate is liable to change frequently and somewhat fast. The fact remains that, this crisis invoke some harmful cost for countries; in this view, there is a tendency that these crises bring inauspicious conditions social, socio-political problems, economic, problems of relating with other countries among others. If all these problems are not handled, the country tends to suffer image crisis both within and at international level. In essence, what is necessary for a leader is to be proactive.

Despite the unlimited efforts made by some countries towards maintaining their image in the international arena, particularly African countries; they are yet to know the real nature of image crisis and this leads to circumstances in which they are the very weak at proactive, preventing managing their national image crisis. In the view of Ogwu (2005: P. 335), "image-building forms an essential element in the strategy for foreign policy formulation and implementation, in any country, when well focused, foreign policy initiatives help to create and reinforce favourable images of a country to the external world". In the view of this scholar, image of a country generates and venture through its foreign policy, must match to its national interest the expectation of other members of the international system. In essence, foreign Relations and leadership character tend to shape country's image.

Fayomi et al (2016) argued that "the perception of the nation's international relations is the perception of its people, and the perception of its people is also partly, the function of the political leaders' actions and character" By implication, Nigeria's foreign policy over decades has been abhorrently disrupted and weakened by image crisis ranging from bad leadership character, to poor political and democratic credentials affecting international reputation of the country thereby causing image crisis.

Historically, Nigeria's international image crisis is traced to the history of federal character; it's ethnic and plural background. In this context Onuoha cited in Fayomi (2016: P. 15) argued;

...the national question involves not only the territorial integrity of Nigeria, power sharing and management of Nigeria's resources in terms of access, control and distribution but also the issues of minority interests, ethnicity, citizenship, revenue allocation, the creation of states and local governments and as well, religious, linguistic, cultural and educational policies. It is about resolving the antagonistic contradictions between the majority and minority ethnic groups, combating tribalism, racialism and any form of ethnic chauvinism..... The Central question is; to what extent does the issues of national question influence external relations between one country and another? (Fayomi, 2016).

The initial transformation project by Late Professor Dora Akunyili was an intervention on branding Nigeria's image. The rebranding project was to investigate why the initial interventions to rebrand Nigeria's image. In view of Aboluwodi (2014: P. 530), some of the past interventions include Ethical Revolution, Mass Mobilization for Self-reliance, Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), War Against Indiscipline (WAI) and the most recently, Heart of Africa". In essence, all these efforts were to resolve Nigeria's image crisis but unfortunately, Nigeria's international image has not been redeemed due to her undemocratic leadership character.

Dictatorship and Nigeria's Image Crisis

Dictatorial character exhibited in Nigeria over the years has become a major factor to be considered in examining the impact of Nigerian leadership character on her national image. Since independence, Nigerians have experienced both the military and civilian regimes; it is of no gainsaying that Nigerians can hardly differentiate the military regime from civilian regime as both are somewhat similar in practice as a result of little or no regard to the constitution and the rule of law. As observed in Oviasogie and Shodipo (2013: P. 199), the Ibrahim Babangida General Sani Abacha's regime created the major among the national image crisis in Nigeria; their regimes were dictatorial, brutal, fond of violations of Human Rights, political assassinations among others. By implementation, this generated a lot of image crisis as Nigeria was sanctioned cum suspended from the Commonwealth of Nations and was declared a pariah state.

Nwakaeti (2017) reported that "the federal government has set the country backward by decades as long as democratic norms are concerned". He also maintained that the rule of law and all known tenets of democracy have been abused under the reign of Buhari. Moreso, due to the prevailing and democratic leadership character exhibited president under President Buhari's administration, the scholar also asserted that the current Government in Nigeria is a collection of charlatan, alleging that the government has not been sincere to Nigerians. This is also confirmed in the statement made by ex-military dictator, General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, signed by his Media spokesperson (Kassim Afegbua) to the presidents in February 2008; ".... there comes a Time in the real life of a nation (Nigeria) when personal ambition should not override national interests". Having observed the nature of Nigerian government and anti-grafts war, he maintained that "modern leadership is not just about fighting corruption, it is about plugging the leakages and building system that will militate against corruption". More so, a report by Sahara Reporters claimed that Buhari has been ruling as an authoritarian, the president has been handling national issues like the Herdsmen and farmers clash like a dictator.

According to the report, there has been so much blood letting under the administration (Sahara Reporter, 2018). In essence, many Nigerians are wondering if the president is still ruling the country from the past; being a military dictator or forgot we are in a democratic government. In a statement released by Mbazuike Amaechi in 2018, the first republic minister of Aviation describe the Nigerian leadership as dictatorial; that by calling Nigerians home and abroad to end dictatorship in 2019. In his view, there was no difference between Buhari as military Head of State and Buhari as a democratic President; this is confirmed in the statement; He is still a dictator. I have been saying it. He may have come in through a democratic regime there is no difference between Buhari the dictator and Buhari the President. Whether he is wearing Khaki or Agbada, he is the same. Nigerians must fight to regain the country (Today Nigerian, 2018).

Figure 1: Attack on Peter Ayodele Fayose, former Governor of Ekiti State, Nigeria



Source: Olusola and Ogundele (2018).

The figure 1 demonstrated an attack on a member of opposition party, (PDP) and a former Governor of Ekiti state by the Nigerian security operative ahead gubernatorial election in Ekiti State. As reported by Fabiyi and Ogundele (2018) on Punch News, the former Governor was brutalized by Nigerian Security Forces (Police men) who stormed the main entrance to the Ekiti State Government House to stop a political rally by the members of opposition party (PDP). This attempt was described as a bid to stop and disperse supporters of PDP governorship candidate (Prof. Kolapo Eleka) who gathered at the Fajuyi area of Ado-Ekiti for a rally. In attempt to interrogate the riot-police men who fired tear gas at him, the Governor was hit with butt of a gun by one of the Police officers. In response to these reprisal attacks on political opponents in Nigeria, the former Governor of Ekiti State (Peter Ayodele Fayose) called on the International Community to intervene and save Ekiti state from the siege (Fabiyi and Ogundele, 2018). By, implication, the undemocratic nature of Nigerian leadership made the International Community respond to the crisis in Nigeria by sending International observers to monitor the election. The foregoing are assertions of scholars an elder statesman show that Nigeria is in a serious civilian dictatorial battle. So many attacks have been made to tackle political opponents in a bid to make them join the ruling party at the federal level. By implication, basic tenets of democracy which stipulates healthy rivalry, checks and balances, tolerance of opposition are totally disregarded thereby contributing to Nigeria's image crisis as it is manifested in the protest by Nigerians both and abroad by contributing to the country's crisis.

Undue arrests, Unlawful detentions and killings of peaceful Protesters cum freedom fighters

Figure 2: Arrests of Sunday Igboho's Aides cum destruction of his Properties by Nigerian Security Operatives



Source: Olaniyi (2021).

The Figure 2 demonstrated the attack by gunmen, claimed to be Nigerian security forces on popular Yoruba Nation agitator, Chief Sunday Adeyemo's (a.k.a Sunday Igboho) residence on June 30, 2021; this was about 72 hours before proposed Lagos rally by the group. From the caption, properties were vandalized including cars and furniture while 2 people were instantly killed by the security forces and about 12 others were arrested and detained by the Federal Government.

Figure 3: killings of ENDSARS Protesters: Lekki Massacre (Lagos) and Soldiers' brutalities of peaceful Protesters in Abuja



Source: Jannamike (2020); BBC News (2020, October)

The figure 3 captioned the killings cum massacre of peaceful protesters at Lekki, Toll Gate, Lagos-Nigeria and Abuja respectively in October 2020. More so, a report by Jannamike (2020) on Vanguard News claimed that hundreds of protesters, majorly youths were attacked by military personnel in Abuja. The incident happened at the 'Three Arm Zone' junction which links the State House Aso villa, the National Assembly and the Supreme Court with the Federal Secretariat Complex. The soldiers were claimed to have been deployed from the Presidential Guard Brigade to attack the protesters. The violation of Human rights exhibited by Nigerian leadership has attracted the attentions of the International Community. In response to the violation of human rights via brutalization of peaceful protesters in Lekki Toll Gate, Amnesty International warned Nigerian government not to cover up shooting (BBC News, 2020)

Electoral Corruption cum Fraud and Nigeria's Image crisis

The issue of electoral corruption in Nigeria constitutes another factor affecting her international image in the global system. Since the inception of Buhari's administration in 2015, Nigeria has witnessed various issues of electoral corruption. Based on this, Nigerians have received International observers in monitoring the electoral activities in Nigeria. Evidently, Ekiti State and Osun state opposition party members were assaulted by the security agencies and Armed forces from Abuja in order to make sure that the flag bearer of All Progressives Congress wins the election. More so, the gubernatorial election in Osun state was declared inconclusive and later declared to favour the ruling party (APC). Consequently, in a bid to redeem Nigeria's international image crisis from her undemocratic leadership character, the International Community started sending International election observers. In essence, a gubernatorial election in Nigeria became a global issue to the International Community.

More so, the national chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (Uche Second) condemned INEC's decision on the use of Smartphone during gubernatorial election in Osun state as a bid to prevent means of gathering evidence against the rigging arrangements of the ruling party (APC) which was claimed to be initially tested and perfected in Ekiti State (Fabiya, 2018). Similarly, the National Publicity Secretary of the PDP, Kola Ologbondiyan accused INEC of manipulating July 14, 2018 Ekiti State governorship election result from its official website. This is evident in his statement; "after a thorough examination of all hard facts, the NWC reconfirms that the Independent National Electoral Commission doctored the results of the election to favour the All Progressive Congress". (Fabiya, 2018).

The foregoing among others; are evidence of electoral corruption in Nigeria as manifested through undemocratic leadership character thereby constituting to Nigeria's Intercontinental image crisis.

Government Disobedience to Court Orders and Nigeria's Image Crisis

One of the policy statements of President Muhammadu Buhari before he came into office was to ensure compliance to principles of democracy. Also in his address delivered to the Commonwealth meeting May 2016, the caller stated that he is committed to follow the rule of law and respect human rights. However, evidence has showed that the opposite is the rule rather than the exception. The President disobeyed court order on the issue of Sambo Dansuki; the former National Security Adviser on which the president refused to comply with Court orders given by the court to release him over allegation of diverting 2.1 billion US Dollars and illegal possession of firearms (Okakwu, 2017). Consequently, the refusal of undemocratic leadership to obey Court orders, the accused later appealed at Economic Community of West African States' court to seek international mediation on the case. As observed in Premium Times News; the ECOWAS Court granted him bail but the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice (Abubakar Malami), released a statement that government was not mandated to respect the court order". In essence, despite all the court orders made to release Dasuki, he was being detained in Kuje maximum prison.

Consequently, the undemocratic leadership character in disobeying Court orders attracted international attentions. The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) reportedly called on the United Nations to interfere in the President Muhammadu administration's on disobedience to court orders. More so, various petitions were written to the United Nations on the Federal Government habits of picking and choosing which court judgments or decisions to obey. In essence, disobedience to court order is inimical so democratic sustenance and this has evidently contributed two Nigeria's image crisis over the years.

Deaf ear to Public Outcry and Nigeria's Image Crisis

Different behaviours and attitudes on Mass killing of members of some communities have become rampant in President Buhari's administration. Killings by suspected Fulani herdsmen, Boko Haram terrorist group, Unknown gunmen, and Bandit among others are on the increase. As observed by Alagbe (2018), Plateau state reported the killings of over 100 people by the Fulani Herdsmen in Gashish of Barkin Ladi local government. Similarly, the Fulani Herdsmen massacre that took place on January 1, 2018 resulted in the killings of 73 residents in the Guma and Logo local government area of Benue State. It is believed that the attack was the result of anti-open grazing laws by some states in the country. Despite all these killings, the Federal Government hardly responds to the attacks.

More so, Kingsley (2018) asserted that despite the coalitions of civil society organisations as a result of over 5,000 people being killed in 2018, the Federal Government did not make any attempt in addressing the issue. The coalitions include Global Human Rights, Enough is Enough in Nigeria, Bring Back Our Girls (BBOG), Center for Democracy and Development among others protested against mass killings in Nigeria and why situations have not been addressed by the Government. Some of these coalitions, particularly Bring Back Our Girls generated a lot of disrepute all Nigeria's image both locally and internationally.

Consequently, the United States Congress condemned the various killings in Nigeria, particularly, by the Fulani Herdsmen; accused Nigerian presidents of being inactive and indifferent towards addressing the issue (Odunsi, 2018). Accordingly, Chris Smith (Chair of the House-subcommittee on Global Human Rights in the United States) commented that "the house watching dissertation in Nigeria growing concern, as the Nigerian Government there appears to often be indifferent to attacks by Fulani herdsmen on predominantly Christian farmers" (Odunsi, 2018). All the aforementioned incidents revealed the high rate of public outcry to the Nigerian Government to respond to the attacks by Fulani Herdsmen, Boko Haram among other security threats in the country. However, the president has not come out with a realistic solution or way to end the menace, particularly the killings of farmers across the federation. Boko Haram attacks thereby constituting another headline of Nigeria's image crisis to discuss in the Global community.

Deceptive Propaganda cum Vindictiveness and Nigeria's Image Crisis

The history of Nigerian political system is characterized by taking revenge on opponents cum propaganda. Recently, the issues became more prevalent as evidently exhibited under Buhari's administration. The Federal government has stepped on so many toes, particularly from the opposition parties. Among them are; Former Governor of Adamawa State (James Bala Ngilari), Sule Lamido, Gabriel Suswan (former Governor of Benue State), Babangida Aliyu (former Governor of Niger State), Sambo Dasuki (Former National Security Adviser, NSA), Alex Badeh (Former Chief of Defense), Mazi Nnamdi Kanu (the acclaimed leader of IPOB), Omoyele Sowore (Presidential aspirant in 2019 election), Peter Ayodele Fayose (Former Governor of Ekiti State, PDP), Sunday Igboho (the acclaimed leader of Oduduwa Movement), Dino Melaye (Former Senator), Bukola Saraki (Former Senate President) among many others. As observed in Guardian News (2018), The Ijaw

Youth Council (IYC) described the action of the Presidency as vindictive and unacceptable in a democratic system of government following the undue arrest and detention of Mrs. Geslia Khan, the Resident Electoral Commissioner for Cross Rivers state, thereby demanded her immediate release. In essence this has continued to batter the image of Nigeria globally because the happenings in Nigeria are open to the International Community.

Recently, the Federal Government has exhibited a number of characters that is deceptive in nature, particularly, on the political oppositions and thereby making one to wonder if Nigeria is a battle ground between the opposition parties and the President thereby constituting another threat to democracy and Nigeria's image. Over the years, propaganda, rather than being an instrument in correcting the wrong doers, has become an instrument of intimidating political opponents. The president's inaugural speech on the swear-in ceremony in 2015 of 'I belong to everybody and yet to nobody' convinced so many Nigerians who thought that they have got a good leader to serve the interest of all. As observed in Daily Trust (2018), the issue of misleading propaganda has become a major tactic by the Presidency in dealing with oppositions. The major goal of this deceptive propaganda was to intimidate the opponent and force them to join the ruling political caucus. This is evident in a statement by the National Assembly in joint session in June, 2018;

...the systematic harassment and humiliation by the Executive of perceived political opponents, people with contrary opinions including Legislators and Judiciary officials by the Police and other security agencies must stop..the government should show sincerity in the fight against corruption by not being selective; should also prosecute current appointees that have cases pending against them.

The foregoing analysis of misleading political propaganda and vindictiveness has constituted one of the major factors to Nigeria's international image crisis, thus, making her to lose her respects by other democratic states globally.

III. Conclusion

The major thrust of this paper was to appraise the effects of undemocratic leadership character on Nigeria's international image. As evidently shown in the foregoing analysis, it was established that Nigeria's image has suffered disrepute from the crisis arising from her undemocratic leadership character, particularly since 2015. The crisis arising from Nigeria's undemocratic leadership behaviour has not only earned her Pariah status cum suspension from the International Community (Commonwealth of Nations) in the past but recently, led to interference in the political affairs of Nigeria by the International Community such as monitoring of elections in Nigeria, Amnesty International warning to Nigeria on Lekki Massacre and other forms of Police brutalities. Thus, there is urgent need for Nigerians to step their campaigns against undemocratic leadership internationally, since local protesters have evidently become victims of Police brutalities. This will go a long way in ending undemocratic leadership character when such leadership suffers rejection both home and abroad.

Based on this, a realistic and urgent solution is needed. Undemocratic leadership character is thus, a big threat to Nigeria's international image.

IV. Recommendations

- ❖ There is urgent need for Nigeria nationals; home and abroad to step up their international campaigns cum protests against illiberal governance and civilian-dictatorial rule in Nigeria, this will enable the Nigerian ruling elite to hinge strictly on democratic principles when they start suffering rejections both home and abroad.
- ❖ The principle of checks and balances should be strictly adhered to; without any compromise. If the President (the Chief Executive) uses its power arbitrarily, the National Assembly should as a matter of fact be active to probe and as well, impeach him.
- ❖ There is need for more enlightenment and training of the security personnel on their constitutional duties; that they are meant to protect and not necessarily to kill. More so, the appointment into Nigerian security agencies should be strictly based high intelligence quotient (I.Q).
- ❖ There is urgent need for a just Civil-Military relation in Nigeria. The military personnel should be sensitized that they are meant to protect the civilians at all levels rather than running errands for those in government against the citizens.

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