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AN APPRAISAL OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN REBRANDING POWER HOLDING COMPANY: A STUDY OF RIVERS STATE OPERATION

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ABSTRACT
The study appraised corporate communication strategies in rebranding Power Holding Company: A study of Rivers State operation. This study was motivated by the various challenges and complains against Power Holding service delivery in Rivers State. Part of the objectives of the study are to; identify the corporate communication strategies used in rebranding Power Holding Company Rivers State operation, ascertain the extent to which Power Holding Company operation keeps its customers and consumers abreast of trends and development of its activities, find out the activities portrayed by Power Holding Company Rivers State operation that battered its image, examine the level of effectiveness of corporate communication strategies in rebranding Power Holding Company in Rivers State, etc. The study was anchored on the Stakeholder and Corporate Image theories. The study used the survey research design with the questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. A population of PHCN Rivers State operation stands at 4, 350. A sample size of 400 was drawn from the population using Taro Yamene's formula as a guide. The study employed quota sampling technique and the instrument was randomly administered to the respondents. Data were presented in tables and questions analyzed using four point likert scale criterion mean. The findings showed that PHCN employed press release, press conference, promotion and discount, media relating events sponsorship, stakeholders meeting, use of SMS, Email and social media as corporate communication strategies in rebranding its image. The finding further indicated that PHCN Rivers State operation always keep its esteemed customers and consumers abreast of its trends and development. The finding also showed that PHCN use of corporate communication strategies in rebranding its image was very high and effective which produces positive results. It was also revealed that the problems which PHCN Rivers State operation faced were political interference and polices, bureaucratic bottlenecks, corruption and under staff. The study concluded that both federal and state governments are expected to come up with reliable polices that will promote quality, stable and constant supply of electricity in Nigeria so as to boost the socio-economic lives of the people. The study recommends that government should fund and provide modern equipment, train, retrain and provide every manpower to boost the efficiency of PHCN service in Nigeria especially River State operation.

Key Words: Corporate communication, Appraisal, Strategies, Rebranding, Power Holding Company, Rivers State

INTRODUCTION
In recent years, the Nigerian power sector has faced significant challenges, marked by erratic power supply, infrastructural decay, and public dissatisfaction with electricity distribution services. Amongst the key players in this sector is the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), which has been tasked with providing reliable electricity to the populace. However, despite its crucial role, PHCN has grappled with issues that have undermined its reputation and operational efficacy, particularly in Rivers State. The need for effective corporate communication strategies has become paramount as the company embarks on a rebranding initiative aimed at restoring public confidence and enhancing service delivery.

Rivers State is a critical economic hub in Nigeria due to its vast oil and gas resources and has a growing demand for electricity driven by industrial activities, urbanization, and population growth. However, the state's power supply has often been inconsistent, leading to severe implications for businesses and residents alike. This inconsistency can be traced back to a myriad of challenges, including infrastructural deficits, management inefficiencies, and a lack of stakeholder engagement. As a result, the perception of PHCN has diminished, necessitating a strategic overhaul to not only address service delivery but also to improve the company's image and relationship with its customers.

Corporate communication is an essential component of any successful rebranding strategy. It encompasses the messages conveyed to stakeholders, including employees, customers, investors, and the community at large. Effective corporate communication can help organizations articulate their vision, values, and commitments, particularly during times of change. In the context of PHCN, clear and transparent communication can alleviate public concerns about service quality and reliability, fostering trust and engagement amongst consumers. A well-structured communication strategy can highlight improvements, showcase achievements, and invite feedback, thereby establishing a more positive image of the company.

The concept of rebranding has gained prominence as a tool for organizations seeking to improve public perception, especially within sectors like power supply, where reliability and customer satisfaction are critical. In Rivers State, the Power Holding Company (PHCN) has faced challenges impacting on its brand image, largely due to frequent power outages and customer complaints. Corporate communication, as the medium through which organizations convey their identity and values to stakeholders (Cornelissen, 2020), is integral in the rebranding process. The study investigates corporate communication strategies employed in rebranding PHCN and the effectiveness of these strategies in reshaping public perception.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, PHCN has a statutory responsibility of providing regular power supply and maintenance of their plants for quality service delivery. It has been observed that PHCN has been ineffective, inefficient and exploitative in their service delivery to the Nigerian consumers especially River State, the incessant power outage and breakdown of sub-standard transformers across the state has been a great concern to various stakeholders. If this trend is not adequately checked, it may cripple economic activities, discourage foreign investors from coming in to do business and may lead to upsurge in criminal activities such as kidnapping, ritual killing, armed robbery, stealing and other social vices that are inimical to the state socio-economic development. This unwholesomeness attitude of PHCN has caused the River State users to see them in the negative light thereby undermining their cooperate identity and image. However, communication remain a potent tool in changing this negative narrative of PHCN that has lingered for years to a more quality and regular supply of power to all businesses and households in the state. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to asses cooperate communication strategies in rebranding Power Holding Company with a focus on Rivers State Operations.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to appraise corporate communication strategies in rebranding Power Holding Company: A study of Rives State operation while the specific objectives are to;

i. identify the corporate communication strategies used in rebranding Power Holding Company Rivers State Operation.
ii. ascertain the extent to which Power Holding Company Rivers State operation keeps its customers and consumers abreast of trends and development of its activities.
iii. find out the activities portrayed by Power Holding Company Rivers State operation that battered its image.

iv. examine the level of effectiveness of the corporate communication strategies in rebranding Power Holding Company in Rivers State.
v. streamline the inherent problems facing Power Holding Company Rivers State operation in a bid to carrying out its statutory function to the public.

Research Questions

These pertinent questions were raised to guide the study;

i. What are the cooperate communication strategies employed in rebranding Power Holding Company in Rivers State Operation?
ii To what extend does Power Holding Company Rivers State Operation keep its customers and consumers abreast of trend and development of its activities?
iii. What are the activities portrayed by Power Holding Company Rivers State operation that jeopardize its image?
iv What is the level of effectiveness of corporate communication strategies in rebranding Power Holding Company Rivers State Operation ?
v. What are the inherent problems facing Power Holding Company Rivers State operation in a bid to carrying out its statutory function to the public?

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

- **Corporate Communication Strategies Employed in Rebranding Power Holding Company in Rivers State**

Corporate communication strategies are well defined plans, programmes, messages and techniques which organizations employed to keep abreast with trends, developments and inform relevant stakeholders both within and outside. Argenti (2009) sees corporate communication strategies as methods used by companies to interact and communicate their policies, messages and information to the public. While Cornellison (2011) corroborates the idea that corporate communication strategies are techniques used by organizations or institutions to keep their esteemed stakeholders informed about their activities, programmes and vital information. Furthermore, Banudele (2024) states categorically that power Holding Company in Rivers State disseminate relevant messages, information, update and policy statement to its customers and consumers through these means;

i) **Press Release:** Power Holding Company Communicates to the relevant stakeholders by writing press release, identifying its strengths and weaknesses and apologizing to the public for their short comings and promise to do better in the future.
ii) **Press Conference:** Power Holding Company calls for the relevant media houses and non-governmental organization and streamline their challenges and promise to improve in their service delivery in the future by redeeming their bad image before the public.
iii) **Promotions:** The Power Holding Company redeems its bad image by offering the public discounts in electricity tariff and promise constant power supply in the future.
iv) **Social Media:** The Power Holding Company engages Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp to address several issues about their inadequacies and proffer immediate panacea so as to redeem its bad image.
v) **Media Relations:** The Power Holding Company sponsors jingles and programmes via the media and promise to provide uninterrupted power supply to the public. While Osaro (2023) reiterates that power Holding Company engages in other communication strategies to win the good will, understanding and co-operation from the public especially in Rivers State to rebrand its battered image through E-mails, advertisements, reports, websites, publicity materials, memos, meetings, interviews, videos, photographs, branding materials, etc.

On the other hand, Bariledum (2021) corroborates that, these communication strategies are very effective tools employed by organizations especially Power Holding Company to reach its clients, employees, stakeholders, the media, the public and regulatory bodies to enable her rebrand its reputation.

- **Activities of Power Holding Company in Rivers State**

The Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) was initially responsible for electricity generation, transmission, and distribution across Nigeria, including Rivers State. Although PHCN was officially unbundled in 2013, its historical role and operations continue to influence the current electricity companies operating in Rivers State, such as the Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company (PHEDC). This section delves into the primary activities associated with PHCN and its successors in Rivers State.

1. Electricity Generation and Distribution

PHCN, and now PHEDC, has played a pivotal role in generating electricity to supply both residential and industrial consumers in Rivers State. Generation activities involve sourcing, producing, and managing energy from local and national power plants. Distribution operations are focused on supplying power through a network of substations, transformers, and distribution lines that reach various parts of the state. Due to increasing urbanization and industrial growth in Rivers State, these activities have expanded, requiring continuous investment in infrastructure and technology to improve efficiency (Nwankwo & Ifediora, 2022).

2. Infrastructure Maintenance and Upgrading

Regular maintenance and upgrading of infrastructure are essential activities undertaken by PHCN and its successors to ensure a steady supply of electricity. Maintenance involves routine inspections, repairs, and replacement of aging equipment in substations, transformers, and transmission lines. Upgrading activities, on the other hand, often include the installation of new technology to support increased power loads and address grid inefficiencies. This commitment to maintenance and upgrades is particularly critical in Rivers State, where high humidity and rainfall can accelerate infrastructure degradation (Ekwueme & Obi, 2021).

3. Customer Relations and Service Management

Customer relations form a core component of PHCN's activities in Rivers State, as the company strives to address consumer grievances related to billing, supply consistency, and connection issues. These customer-focused activities include responding to complaints, managing new service requests, handling disconnections and reconnections, and overseeing prepaid meter installations. Service management also involves outreach programmes to educate consumers on energy conservation and proper meter usage. In recent years, customer relations have become increasingly significant as PHCN's successors attempt to rebuild trust in the face of longstanding service-related issues (Okafor & Ede, 2020).

4. Revenue Collection and Billing

PHCN's financial sustainability relies heavily on its ability to accurately bill customers and collect payments. In Rivers State, this includes activities related to metering, billing, and collection from consumers in both residential and commercial sectors. Revenue collection challenges have been persistent due to issues like estimated billing, non-payment by some customers, and meter tampering. The implementation of prepaid metering systems and digital payment platforms has been a response to these issues, aiming to streamline billing and enhance collection efficiency (Adelabu & Etuk, 2019).

5. Community Engagement and Corporate Social Responsibility

Community engagement and corporate social responsibility (CSR) are important activities that help PHCN and its successors improve their image and foster goodwill within Rivers State. These activities typically include efforts to support local communities through initiatives like the provision of energy-efficient solutions, participation in community development projects, and educational programmes about energy conservation. CSR activities contribute positively to PHCN's rebranding efforts by portraying the company as socially responsible and invested in the welfare of the communities it serves (Odozi & Okezie, 2021).

6. Regulatory Compliance and Collaboration

Operating within a heavily regulated industry, PHCN's activities also include compliance with federal and state regulations. This involves regular reporting, adherence to safety standards, and collaboration with the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC). Compliance activities are crucial in ensuring that PHCN meets national benchmarks for safety and efficiency. Additionally, PHCN collaborates with local authorities and government bodies in Rivers State to address infrastructural challenges and expand grid access, particularly to underserved areas (Ajayi & Sule, 2019).

- **Challenges Facing Power Holding Company in Rivers State**

1. **Infrastructural Deficiencies and Aging Equipment**

One of the most significant challenges facing PHCN in Rivers State is inadequate infrastructure and outdated equipment. Due to years of underinvestment, many of PHCN's power distribution facilities, such as transformers, power lines, and substations suffer from wear and tear leading to frequent outages and service disruptions (Okoye & Madu, 2023). Aging equipment reduces the reliability of power supply and raises maintenance costs, creating a cycle of inefficiency. As Okafor (2021) points out, infrastructural investment is essential to meet the growing electricity demand in urban areas like Port Harcourt, where industrial and residential power needs continue to rise.

2. **Technical and Non-Technical Losses**

PHCN also struggles with both technical and non-technical losses. Technical losses are primarily due to inefficiencies in transmission and distribution systems, while non-technical losses arise from electricity theft, meter tampering, and illegal connections. These issues are widespread in Rivers State, where unauthorized connections and power theft lead to significant revenue loss (Eze & Bassey, 2022). A recent study highlights that up to 35% of electricity in some areas is lost due to non-technical issues, underscoring the need for stringent measures against theft and improved monitoring systems (Ogunsanya, 2022).

3. **Financial Constraints and Revenue Collection Challenges**

Financial instability is another major challenge for PHCN. The company faces difficulties in collecting revenue due to inconsistent billing systems, poor customer payment compliance, and issues with meter accuracy (Ogunleye & James, 2023). This financial strain limits PHCN's ability to reinvest in infrastructure upgrades and improve service quality. According to a study by Okorie and Obasi (2021), revenue losses have increased by 15% over the last five years, primarily due to billing inefficiencies and customer service dissatisfaction, which has contributed to a high rate of non-payment of bills amongst consumers.

4. **Limited Access to Modern Technology and Digital Infrastructure**

The transition to smart technology is essential for modern power distribution management, but PHCN has lagged in adopting these advancements due to limited funding and expertise. Modern solutions, such as smart grids and automated meter reading systems, which could help to reduce losses and improve efficiency, are not widely deployed in Rivers State (Adewale & Nnaji, 2023). This gap hampers PHCN's ability to monitor power usage accurately and detect issues in real-time, which affects the efficiency of power distribution and making it difficult to address consumer complaints promptly.

5. **Environmental and Operational Challenges**

Rivers State, with its high humidity and frequent rainfalls, poses additional operational challenges for PHCN. Environmental conditions accelerate the degradation of power infrastructure, especially in coastal and flood-prone areas, leading to service interruptions (Ibekwe, 2022). Additionally, the proximity of oil extraction activities introduces unique risks, such as interference with power lines and exposure to hazardous materials, which further complicate maintenance and operations.

6. **Consumer Distrust and Image Problems**

Due to years of unreliable service and frequent outages, consumer trust in PHCN remains low. This issue has been compounded by a lack of transparency in communication, particularly regarding reasons for service disruptions and billing issues (Bassey & Igwe, 2023). A recent survey by Eze and

Ugochukwu (2023) revealed that 60% of consumers in Rivers State hold negative perceptions of PHCN due to unresolved complaints and service inconsistencies. This distrust impacts PHCN's efforts to engage consumers, which is critical for rebranding efforts and fostering customer loyalty.

7. **Regulatory and Policy Challenges**

Regulatory policies can both enable and constrain PHCN's operations. The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) imposes various guidelines on tariffs, service quality, and operational transparency, which PHCN must adhere to (NERC, 2023). However, compliance with these standards often requires substantial investment, which is challenge given PHCN's financial limitations. Policy changes regarding electricity pricing and subsidy reductions have added further pressure, affecting PHCN's ability to maintain affordable rates while still covering operational costs (Ogunleye, 2022).

Conclusively, the challenges of PHCN in Rivers State are multifaceted. Financial constraints, poor infrastructure and operational inefficiencies are key issues limiting its service delivery (Ayodele et al., 2021). Additionally, PHCN struggles with public perception issues due to a history of unreliability. The company's limited adoption of advanced technology and ongoing issues with vandalism and theft further hinder service provision and impact customer trust. Consequently, these challenges underscore the need for effective rebranding and strategic corporate communication efforts to rebuild trust and enhance customer satisfaction.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on several theories relevant to corporate communication and rebranding:

Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder Theory was developed by R. Edward Freeman in 1984. Stakeholder Theory is a framework that emphasizes the importance of recognizing and addressing the interests and needs of all parties (stakeholders) affected by an organization's actions, rather than focusing solely on shareholders. Freeman's theory suggests that an organization's success relies not only on its financial performance but also on its relationships with diverse stakeholders, including employees, customers, suppliers, communities, and government entities (Freeman, 1984). This approach posits that organizations should create value for all stakeholders to ensure sustainable growth and mitigate potential conflicts or crises arising from neglecting stakeholder concerns. According to Freeman, stakeholders are those who can affect or be affected by an organization's objectives and actions. The theory asserts that by balancing the needs of these groups, organizations can achieve greater stability and long-term success, as they foster a supportive network that contributes to the company's overall health and public perception. Freeman's model challenges the traditional shareholder-centric view and proposes that stakeholder engagement is critical in developing ethical business practices and effective communication strategies.

In the context of rebranding the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) in Rivers State, Stakeholder Theory is particularly relevant. Given the challenges PHCN has faced—such as public distrust, unreliable service delivery, and financial constraints—addressing the needs and concerns of all stakeholders becomes crucial. Stakeholders in this context include not only customers but also employees, government regulators, local communities, and suppliers who interact with PHCN on various levels.

The application of Stakeholder theory to PHCN's rebranding efforts underscores the importance of corporate communication strategies that transparently convey the company's commitment to improving service and responding to public concerns. By engaging stakeholders through open and consistent communication, PHCN can begin to rebuild its reputation and create a more positive corporate image. For instance, engaging directly with customers about planned improvements or challenges the company faces can help rebuild trust and manage public expectations. Stakeholder theory in this study demonstrates that effective corporate communication must be multidirectional and inclusive, catering to the diverse interests of all stakeholders. In rebranding efforts, a stakeholder-centered approach can lead to improved stakeholder trust, better service satisfaction, and, ultimately, a strengthened corporate reputation for PHCN

Corporate Image Theory

The corporate image theory was notably advanced by Kenneth E. Dowling in his work in 1986. Corporate Image Theory emphasizes the significance of an organization's image - its public perception - as a critical asset that affects stakeholder attitudes, behaviours, and overall business success. According to Dowling, corporate image is formed by the beliefs, ideas, and impressions that stakeholders, including customers, employees, and the general public, hold about an organization. This image is shaped by factors such as company communications, branding, reputation, customer service, and even broader social or environmental actions (Dowling, 1986).

The theory posits that a favourable corporate image can enhance stakeholder loyalty, improve customer trust, and ultimately lead to higher profitability and competitiveness. Conversely, a poor image can damage stakeholder relationships and diminish organizational value. Corporate Image theory suggests that consistent, strategic communication and actions aligned with core values are essential for maintaining a positive image. This is especially important for organizations that have experienced public challenges, as rebuilding trust often requires focused image restoration efforts.

This theory is particularly relevant to the study on rebranding the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) in Rivers State, given the company's past challenges with reliability, public trust, and service quality. Historically, PHCN's image has suffered due to issues like frequent power outages, inconsistent billing, and customer service challenges. Applying Corporate Image theory provides a framework for understanding how PHCN can strategically rebrand itself to improve its image in the eyes of stakeholders.

For PHCN, rebranding involves more than changing logos or taglines; it requires reshaping public perceptions through consistent, positive experiences and transparent communication. By strategically aligning its communication efforts with tangible improvements in service, PHCN can create a positive shift in stakeholder perceptions, essential for sustaining loyalty and support from its customer base. The Corporate Image theory underlines the importance of each touch point with the public, including media communication, customer service interactions, managing crises, addressing customer complaints openly, and engaging in corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives that demonstrate commitment to the community and visible improvements in service delivery, as essential to a cohesive image-building strategy. The theory supports PHCN's efforts to regain public trust, improve its reputation, and foster stakeholder loyalty

Empirical Studies

Akhator, & Ede, (2018) carried out a research on "Rebranding Public Utilities through Effective Communication: A Study of the Nigerian Power Sector" This study aimed to explore how communication strategies can influence the rebranding efforts of public utility organizations in Nigeria, with a particular focus on PHCN and its successor companies. The researchers focused on how effective communication can help overcome trust issues, shape perceptions, and foster positive stakeholder relationships. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative interviews with PHCN management staff and quantitative surveys distributed amongst consumers in Rivers State. The population included PHCN employees, regulatory agency officials, and a sample of 500 consumers in Rivers State, with a sample size of 150 respondents selected through stratified random sampling. Using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis for qualitative data, the study assessed consumer sentiment and employee insights on communication gaps and strategies for improving public perceptions. The study found that effective two-way communication, proactive engagement, and transparent crisis management significantly impact consumers' trust and perception of a rebranded utility. Respondents emphasized the importance of consistently addressing customer complaints and delivering on service promises. This study provides insights into the communication gaps that PHCN needs to address in its rebranding process, particularly the

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value of transparency and proactive customer service strategies. The two studies are related because they focused on the rebranding of the power sector in Nigeria.

Ugwoke, & Olajide, (2020) carried out a study on the "Impact of Rebranding Strategies on Public Perception of Power Distribution Companies in Southern Nigeria". This research aimed to assess the effectiveness of rebranding strategies in shaping public perception of power distribution companies. Focusing on branding elements like logos, communication channels, and consumer outreach. The study investigated whether these strategies positively influenced consumer attitudes. A quantitative approach was utilized, with structured questionnaire administered amongst 400 consumers from Rivers, Bayelsa, and Akwa Ibom States. Statistical analysis was conducted to identify correlations between specific rebranding strategies and consumer perceptions. The study surveyed consumers across three Southern Nigerian states.

Data were analyzed using correlation and regression analyses to evaluate the impact of various branding elements on consumer trust and perception. The study concluded that while rebranding initiatives like new logos and updated corporate identities initially attracted attention, consistent customer engagement through direct communication channels had a more lasting impact on consumer trust. Moreover, consumers valued companies that openly communicated their challenges and progress in service delivery. The findings underscore the importance of two-way communication strategies and demonstrate that merely changing visual brand elements is insufficient. Effective rebranding requires genuine and continuous engagement with consumers, a crucial insight for PHCN's ongoing rebranding efforts. This study and the present study are related based on the fact that they researched on the branding strategies of power distribution compaies.

Olowe, & Amadi, (2021) carried out a research on "Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a Communication Strategy in Rebranding Power Distribution Companies" This study explored the role of CSR initiatives as part of rebranding strategies in enhancing the public image of power distribution companies in Nigeria. It examined how CSR projects impact consumer attitudes and loyalty towards power companies, particularly in underserved regions. The research used Rivers State as a focal point. In-depth interviews were conducted with PHCN representatives, community leaders, and focus groups of consumers to gather detailed insights into the impact of CSR initiatives. The population consisted of PHCN management, community leaders, and local consumers, with a sample of 100 participants. Purposive sampling was used to select respondents with direct exposure to PHCN's CSR activities. Thematic analysis was used to evaluate qualitative data focusing on perceptions of PHCN's social responsibility efforts and their effect on community relations. The findings of the study revealed that CSR activities focusing on local community development, such as providing solar-powered street lights and supporting local schools were positively received and improved PHCN's reputation. However, the study also highlighted that CSR alone was insufficient; consistent communication about ongoing challenges and improvements in service delivery was necessary to maintain a positive public image. This research suggests that CSR initiatives can serve as a complementary strategy in PHCN's rebranding, particularly when combined with transparent and consistent communication efforts. It provides insights into how community-centered activities can improve consumer loyalty and trust. The present study and previous study are related in the sense that they investigated communication strategies in rebranding power distribution companies in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The peculiarity of this study necessitated the use of survey research design. The population of the PHCN Rivers State operation stands at four hundred thousand three hundred and fifty (4,350). The data were obtained from the Human Resource Department of the PHC (2024). A sample size of 400 subjects were drawn from the population using Taro Yemene's fomula as a guide. While the quota sampling technique was used to reach the population of study and the questionnaire which served as the instrument for data collection and were purposively and randomly administered to the respondents in the Port Harcourt, Rivers State operation.

Also, data were presented and analyzed using weighted mean score and four point likert criterion mean presented as follows; Strongly agree = 4 points, Agree = 3 points, Disagree =2 points, Strongly Disagree -1 point. The benchmark for decision rule is 2.5. Any value equal to and above 2.5 is accepted and below 2.5 is rejected.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Out of the four hundred (400) copies of questionnaire administered, only three hundred (330) were retrieved and this figure was used for the analysis. The four point likert scale with 2.5 was used as the benchmark for acceptance and less than the value was rejected.

Research Question one: What are the cooperate communication strategies employed in rebranding Power Holding Company in Rives State operation?

Table 1: The cooperate communication strategies employed in rebranding Power Holding Company in Rivers State operation

S/no	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	E	WMS	Remark
1.	PHCN Rivers State uses press release to rebrand its image	200	100	20	10	330	1,150	3.5	Agreed
2.	PHCN Rivers State operatives employed press conference to rebrand its image	150	170	8	2	330	1,128	3.4	Agreed
3.	PHCN Rivers State operatives uses promotion and discounts to rebrand its image	250	70	7	3	330	1,227	3.7	Agreed
4.	PHCN Rivers State operatives uses media to rebrand its image	210	90	25	5	330	1,165	3.5	Agreed
5.	PHCN Rivers State uses event sponsorship to rebrand its image	200	100	10	20	330	1,140	3.5	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table 1 above shows that the corporate communication strategies employed in rebranding Power Holding Company in Rivers State operation include; press release, press conference, promotion and discounts, media relations, event sponsorship, etc.

Research Question two: To what extent does Power Holding Company Rivers State operation keeps its customers and consumers abreast of trends and development of its activities?

Table 2: The extent Power Holding Company Rivers State operation keep its customers and consumers abreast of trends and development of its activities

S/no	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	E	WMS	Remark
1.	PHCN Rivers State always keeps its customers and consumers abreast of trends and development	220	100	5	5	330	1195	3.6	Agreed
2.	PHCN Rivers State does not keep its customers and consumers abreast	50	70	100	110	330	720	2.2	Disagreed
3.	PHCN Rivers State occasionally keep its customer and consumer abreast	170	50	10	100	330	750	2.3	Disagreed

4.	PHCN Rivers State sucomly keep its customer and consumer abreast	60	50	120	100	330	730	2.2	Disagreed
5.	PHCN Rivers State rarely keep its customer and consumer abreast	50	40	140	100	330	700	2.1	disagreed

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table 2 above indicated strongly that the Power Holding Company Rivers State operation always keep its customers and consumer abreast of trends and development of its activities. This reveals that they are well informed about update pertaining to activities surrounding power Holding company Rivers State.

Research Question three: What are the activities portrayed by power Holding Company Rivers State operation that jeopardize its image?

Table 3: The activities portrayed by Power Holding Company Rivers State operation that jeopardize its image

S/no	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	E	WMS	Remark
1.	PHCN Rivers State deliberately supplies irregular electricity to the customer	220	100	7	3	330	1179	3.6	Agreed
2.	PHCN Rivers State arbitrarily increase bills to customer	200	100	20	10	330	1150	3.5	Agreed
3.	PHCN Rivers State increases its tariff	150	170	5	5	330	1125	3.4	Agreed
4.	PHCN Rivers State disconnects electricity	240	60	20	10	330	1190	3.6	Agreed
5.	PHCN Rivers State staff are unfriendly to customers	200	100	10	20	330	1140	3.5	Agreed
6.	PHCN Rivers State invades customers privacy	80	40	110	100	330	640	1.9	Disagreed
7.	PHCN Rivers State quarrels with its customers	50	70	100	110	330	720	2.2	Disagreed
8.	PHCN Rivers State responds late to customers problems	60	50	120	100	330	730	2.2	Disagreed

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table 3 above reveals that the activities portrayed by power Holding Company Rivers State operation that jeopardize its image were that it supplies electricity irregularly to its customers and consumer arbitrarily and are unfriendly while carrying out their legitimate operation.

Research Question four: What is the level of effectiveness of corporate communication strategies in rebranding power Holding Company in Rivers State operation?

Table 4: The level of effectiveness of corporate communication strategies in rebranding Power Holding Company in Rivers State operation

S/no	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	E	WMS	Remark
1.	The level of effectiveness of corporate communication is high	250	70	5	5	330	1225	3.7	Agreed

2.	The level of effectiveness of corporate communication strategies is low	60	50	120	100	330	730	2.2	Disagreed
3.	The level of effectiveness of corporate communication strategies is completely low	30	40	150	110	330	690	2.1	Disagreed
4.	The level of effectiveness of corporate strategies is poor	50	70	110	100	330	730	2.2	Disagreed

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table 4 above indicated that the level of effectiveness of corporate communication strategies employed by power Holding Company Rivers State operation is high and that helps to rebrand it battered image from the public.

Research Question five: What are the inherent quagmires facing Power Holding Company Rivers State operation?

Table 5: The inherent **quagmire** facing power Holding Company Rivers State operation

S/no	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	E	WMS	Remark
1.	Political interference polices affect PHCN	220	100	7	3	330	1197	3.7	Agreed
2.	Poor funding affect PHCN	200	100	10	20	330	1140	3.5	Agreed
3.	Bureaucratic bottleneck affect PHCN	150	170	5	5	330	1125	3.4	Agreed
4.	Corruption affects PHCN	240	60	20	10	330	1190	3.6	Agreed
5.	Under staffing affects PHCN	200	100	20	10	330	1150	3.5	Agreed
6.	Tribalism affects PHCN	50	70	100	110	330	720	2.2	Disagreed
7.	Personal interest affects PHCN	70	50	110	100	330	630	1.9	Disagreed
8.	Religious learnings affect PHCN	60	50	120	100	330	730	2.2	disagreed

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 5 above shows clearly that the inherent quagmires facing Power Holding Company Rivers State operation include; political inference and polices, bureaucratic bottlenecks, corruption and under staffing.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that the corporate communication strategies employed in rebranding Power Holding Company in Rivers State were press release, press conference, promotion and discounts, media relations, event sponsorship, stakeholders meeting and use of SM, Email and social media. This corroborates the idea of Corneliseen (2011) that organization use media relations, social media, press release, press conference, stakeholders meeting and other interpersonal communication channels to interact with its customer and the public thereby giving them important information.

Argenti (2009) reiterates that the corporate communication strategies companies employ to interact with their internal and external publics so as to maintain and sustain favourable and cordial relationship include meetings, notices, public announcement , press release, media relations and sponsorship special events in the communities.

Also, the findings indicated that the power Holding Company Rivers State operation always keep its customers and consumers abreast of trends and development of its activities. This agrees with the assertion of Gabriel (2023) that Power Holding Company from time to time keep the public well informed about its programmes update and operation.

The study showed that Power Holding Company Rivers State operation had bad reputation because of irregular electricity supply to consumers, arbitrarily increase of bills to consumers, disconnects electricity at will and were hostile and unfriendly while serving the public. This is in tandem with Kalio (2024) that most of the PHCN staff are unfriendly, unaccommodating and increases bill arbitrarily to customers and consumers which made them to see PHCN as wicked.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that the corporate communication strategies employed by PHCN Rivers State operation is very high and effective and that it yielded a positive result in rebranding its battered reputation. This justified the saying of Philp (2024) that communication remains a vital tool and PHCN has been able to use it very well in changing the negative narratives about them by providing constant power supply to the people.

The findings indicated that inherent quagmires facing Power Holding Company Rivers State operation were political interference and policies poor finding, bureaucratic bottleneck, corruption and understaffing. This is in tandem with Owo (2024) that PHCN in contemporary times is beset with the challenges of poor funding, government interference and polices, large-scale corruption and bureaucratic bottleneck which have made them not to be effective in providing regular power supply to the people in the state.

CONCLUSION

The challenges facing the Power Holding Company in Rivers State are multifaceted, encompassing infrastructural deficiencies, financial constraints, and a significant erosion of consumer trust. As this study has illustrated, the role of effective corporate communication is critical in addressing these challenges and facilitating a successful rebranding initiative. By prioritizing transparent, engaging in strategic communication with stakeholders, PHCN can begin to rebuild its reputation and foster a more positive public perception.

The findings of this research highlight the importance of understanding stakeholder perspectives and addressing their concerns directly. Effective communication can serve as a bridge between PHCN and its customers, facilitating dialogue, promoting understanding, and enhancing trust. By implementing comprehensive communication strategies that inform stakeholders of ongoing improvements, solicit feedback and engage the community in the rebranding process, PHCN can foster a sense of ownership and loyalty amongst its customers.

Moreover, the study underscores the necessity for PHCN to invest in modernizing its infrastructure and adopting new technologies that can enhance operational efficiency. Coupled with strong corporate communication, these investments can significantly improve service delivery and address the persistent issues of power supply instability in Rivers State.

For PHCN to successfully navigate its rebranding efforts, it must prioritize corporate communication as a core strategy. By addressing the challenges highlighted in this study and engaging stakeholders through effective communication, PHCN has the potential to transform its public image and improve its operational effectiveness. The path forward involves a commitment to transparency, responsiveness, and continuous improvement, ultimately leading to a more reliable power supply and enhanced customer satisfaction in Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for the Power Holding Company in Rivers State:

1. **Enhance Corporate Communication**: Develop a comprehensive communication strategy that includes regular updates on service improvements, infrastructure projects and customer service initiatives. Utilize multiple platforms, including social media, local community meetings, and traditional media, to reach a diverse audience.
2. **Engage Stakeholders**: Create forums for stakeholder engagement where consumers can voice their concerns and provide feedback. Establish a customer service hotline and online platforms for easier communication and reporting of issues.
3. **Invest in Infrastructure**: Allocate resources to upgrade aging infrastructure and implement modern technologies, such as smart meters and automated systems, to reduce losses and improve service reliability.
4. **Train Employees**: Provide training for employees in effective communication techniques and customer service best practices to ensure they represent the company positively and are equipped to address consumer concerns.
5. **Government Assistance**: Both state and federal governments should assist in the funding as we as the legislation of enabling laws that will improve power supply in Nigeria for faster economic development and improved standard of living of the people.

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