

***Stereotyping and Conflict within the Context of Power Relations in a Multicultural Society: The Communication Imperative**

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ABSTRACT:Power relations are natural and exist in societies around the globe but the difference lies in the level of operation. The concept of power relations in the political realm is very complex especially in the 21st century when individuals, communities, groups and nations are trying to dominate one another. Wars and conflicts going on in many places are nothing but struggle for supremacy to control the polity and national resources. Cases of ethnic, regional, religious and communal conflicts abound. Each struggles for power to exert maximum control over others especially in a multicultural society like Nigeria where our cultural diversity is supposed to be our strongest unifying force. Some of these conflicts are as a result of stereotypes. It is a well-known fact that stereotypes constitute a lot of problems in the society. To resolve the conflicts, effective communication is imperative as most conflicts are caused by miscommunication often via the media. It needs the media to eliminate the stereotypes that cause conflicts. The paper therefore conceptually argues that various communication media and strategies can be effectively used to resolve conflicts emanating from stereotypes. The study is anchored on Social Responsibility Theory (SRT) and Salad Bowl Model (SBM).

KEYWORDS: *Communication Imperative, Conflict, Multicultural society, Power Relations, Stereotypes,*

I. INTRODUCTION

Power relations are common phenomena around the globe. They are almost in every human interaction be it at interpersonal level, group, community, state, national and international levels. Staff Writer (2020) [1] affirms that power relations take place in interpersonal relationships, among family members of a community and on larger scales and that power is one of the most contested concepts in social and political theory. Power relations exist due to human natural inclination to exert control over others which seems to justify the saying that man is a political animal. Man likes to be associated with politics whenever and wherever possible. Politics is all about power to control others as power is synonymous with authority.

The concept of power relations in the political realm is a very complex one especially in the 21st century when individuals, communities, groups and nations are trying to dominate one another. Wars and conflicts going on in many places are nothing but struggle for supremacy to control the polity and national resources. Cases of political party, ethnic, regional, religious and communal conflicts abound. Each struggles for power to exert maximum control over others especially in a multicultural society like Nigeria resulting in loss of lives and properties.

It is a well-established fact that multicultural societies are conflict-ridden when their diversities are supposed to be their greatest unifying force. In Nigeria multicultural society, the story is not different. The reasons for these conflicts are not farfetched. It is most often as a result of power tussle to be at the helm of affairs. The power tussle is often instigated by unwelcome stereotypes which are often not true.

The various groups in the country want to control the polity justly or otherwise and therefore label one another anyhow just to have their way. The most unfortunate thing is that various media of communication are used to propagate these stereotypes. The various groups come up with stereotypes in churches, mosques, schools, village squares, meetings, markets places ('oramedia'), and on social media just to put others down. This breeds conflicts which need to be resolved for peaceful co-existence. Stereotypes hurt people so stereotyped and can naturally lead to aggression because it creates a misconception of who they are and how they live in other cultures, religions, or countries (Robles, 2013) [2].

To checkmate stereotypes, effective communication using all available, accessible and preferred media is imperative. The media should take the lead in communicating a stop to stereotypes since most conflicts are a result of miscommunication (Robles, 2013). Gyamfi, (2009) [3] confirms that a lot of conflicts in our lives come from how we communicate with others. Media are also known for brokering peace. Effective communication through the various media remains the most important yet underused or ignored strategy in Nigeria for resolving conflicts. The study sought to advocate for and fill this gap in knowledge.

1. Statement of Problem

Different types of conflict are prevalent in Nigeria multicultural society today. These conflicts range from ethnic, religious, communal to political party conflicts. Their effects are quite devastating. Properties are destroyed, people are marginalized, maimed, kidnapped, pay heavy ransoms, and killed for unjustifiable reasons. There is high rate of insecurity and the polity is heavily heated. Different groups now agitate for self-determination or eternal domination over others. It is a well-known fact that no meaningful development can take place in an atmosphere of conflicts.

One of the unjustifiable reasons for these conflicts is stereotype because stereotype labels people based on assumptions (Buckley, 2022) [4]. Research shows that stereotypes are big problem in the society because they involve creating a concept about others due to what is seen and not who the people really are (Robles, 2013). They can be problematic even when they are positive as noted by Buckley (2022) and how much more when they are negative. However, most stereotypes are on the negative and they threaten harmonious co-existence of people.

The questions are: can't Nigerians put an end to stereotyped causing conflicts? Must Nigerians continue to allow stereotypes have its tolls on the country when there is a way out? Can't Nigerians co-exist harmoniously irrespective of the observed differences when it is said that there is strength in diversity? Of course Nigerians can with honest effort and sincere commitment.

The most effective if not the only way to end stereotypes remains the power of effective communication (Army & Army Academy, n. d. [5], Bista, 2016 [6] and Gyamfi, 2009) using various communication tools and strategies. These tools and strategies are acknowledged to have worked in many conflict resolutions but have not been used to aggressively combat stereotyped causing conflicts in Nigeria. It is here that the gap lies. Stereotypes are yet to be seriously managed in Nigeria because politicians in power obviously pay hoodlums to cause stereotyped conflicts and hence, its persistency. The worst form of conflict is a fake war against conflict.

The power of effective communication to melt people's heart and induce correct attitudinal and behavioural changes can never be underestimated. It is imperative to curtail if not eradicating conflicts of all types. The paper therefore conceptually argued that various communication media and strategies can be effectively used to resolve conflicts emanating from stereotyping others who live together in a multicultural society. It seeks to argue that effective communication using various tools and strategies can go a long way in inducing correct attitudinal and behavioural changes needed to make Nigerians realize that stereotypes are bad and often not true and thus, promote peaceful coexistence in Nigeria.

II. CONCEPTUALIZING STEREOTYPE, CONFLICT, POWER RELATION, AND MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Stereotype, conflict, power relations, and multicultural society can be said to be inter-related. They have a kind of symbiotic relationship. Stereotypes if not well managed especially within the context of power relations can lead to devastating conflict particularly in a multicultural society. This is why stereotypes are bad. They are more than given one or a group a bad label. They are false labels which are based on assumptions which everyone does not fit into even though few might. For instance, that Nigerians are stereotyped as scammers, loud, corrupt, uneducated, arrogant and violent Olofinuade (2017) [7] does not mean that every Nigerian has the characteristics. We have such people too among non-Nigerians but not all are as stereotyped. Stereotypes are natural phenomena and part of our existence as human beings stereotype themselves even unknowingly (Buckley, 2022). Those who stereotype others do not consider the fact that every individual is unique but over generalize people based on what is seen and felt. Nature creates people differently to think and act in different ways.

Stereotypes are taught even from childhood. Children are taught to disregard others based on their gender, colour, ethnicity, language, religion and culture when sex, ethnicity, language and culture of people can only be determined by nature. Whichever religious denomination, ethnicity, language, and culture people belong to, is as a result of births though one may choose otherwise when of age. People are unnecessarily egocentric and will not accept or condone such labels. People stereotype themselves just to intimidate or prove to others that they are lesser beings.

Stereotypes are nothing but oversimplified ideas about certain groups of people which often tend to be negative and very offensive (Buckley, 2022). Conflicts can actually be positive or negative. For example, the Nigerian

EndSARS of 2020 protest helped to curtail police brutality and led to increment in police salary even though many people lost their lives in the struggle. It is the derogatory stereotypes that often lead to conflicts because people seem to believe stereotypes and act as stereotyped. Negative perceptions usually overshadow the good ones (Vanguard Newspaper, 2017) [8] inferring that negative stereotypes are more pronounced than the positive and that people believe them more.

This is why a town may be stereotyped as wicked even when there are good people in the town too and people refuse to go to such towns to contract marriages. Female gender in this part of the world is generally believed to be gossips, less trustworthy and over materialistic and are treated so even when there are male gender that have same characteristics and are condoned. There is no standard measure to prove which gender has more of the characteristics. They are all unverifiable assumptions especially in a patriarchy and causing harm to those so stereotyped and resulting in conflicts.

In their submission, Agbakwuru and Opara (2013) [9] are of the opinion that stereotypes are very resistant to change. This is possible because they are taught quite early in life. They got registered in the subconscious mind and are perpetuated often years go by. The situation seems worse among illiterates who seem to remain eternally daft to positive changes that would end stereotypes. They are often the people that are paid and used to cause conflicts within the context of power relations in Nigeria.

Conflict simply means clash, crisis or fight between and among persons or groups. It is disagreement or contention that arises between interested parties because of an issue or activity (Marigat, Nzomo, Kagwanja & Kiamba, 2017) [10]. The issue or activity in the political realm is nothing but political domination over others. Power is often central to any type of politics and conflict.

Conflicts especially within the context of power relations are bad and can lead to wars and rifts among countries leading to major unrest and disharmony if not controlled (Junega, 2022) [11]. It is an unavoidable human phenomenon which becomes a problem when poorly managed (Army & Army, n. d.). Making the same point, Chiweta-Oduahin Okunna ed, (2020) [12] asserts that crises are inescapable occurrences in life which if not properly handled, can cause losses and threaten an organization's and this time, Nigeria's viability. Conflict as normal part of life implies that human beings are bound to misunderstand themselves due to differences in nature, opinions, needs, interests, attitudes and behaviours which lead to heated arguments and consequently to conflicts.

Nobody wins in a conflict (Junega, 2022 & Gyamfi, 2009) and nothing productive comes out of it. The negative results of conflict may be more on one group but the truth is that the other group also suffers some losses. The ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine and various ethnic, religious, communal and political party conflicts in Nigeria are but few examples. Each group in the conflict records losses only that one may record more losses than the other.

The concept of power relations in the political realm is a very complex one especially in the 21st century when individuals, communities, groups and nations are trying to overthrow or dominate one another. We cannot talk about power relations without first knowing what power is. Power simply means control over others. It is the ability of a person or a group of people to carry out their will despite resistance from others (Staff Writer, 2020).

It is natural that some people have more power than others. Power is not continuous with a particular person or group. The power that a Governor, President, political party, group or a king has while in power ceases once his tenure ends. Power relations refer to social interactions among people. They can be said to be how power is distributed in the society and is hardly distributed evenly. Those with greater power naturally exert more control over others. The powerless ones are vulnerable to intimidation and supremacy of those who have power.

A multicultural society is one that is made up of people from diverse cultures, languages, and religions living in the same community. Multiculturalism describes the manner in which a given society deals with cultural diversity both at the national and at the community levels (Longley, 2020) [13]. Nigeria is a typical multicultural nation that is made up of over 250 ethnic groups, multiple cultures, multi-languages, and many religious groups and denominations. There is unequal treatment of people in Nigeria due to our diversities when we can co-exist peacefully and make good advantage of our diversities but for stereotypes which breed conflicts. Longley (2020) affirms that people retain, pass down, celebrate, and share their unique cultural way of life, languages, arts, traditions and behaviours in multicultural societies.

III. STEREOTYPING AND POWER RELATIONS IN NIGERIA

Stereotyping is not limited to Nigeria. It is a global phenomenon which every country battles because they rob people of their individuality, oftentimes reducing their humanity (Olofintuade, 2017). This is why racism is common in the western world. Racism is a brain-child of stereotypes. The whites keep labeling the blacks using such derogatory words as less humans, ugly, uneducated etc. leading to discrimination and conflict.

Ethnic prejudice is entrenched in Nigeria as each ethnic group has some negative stereotypes it cherishes about others (Agbakwuru & Opara 2013). These range from being illiterate, dirty, love money, scammers,

promiscuous, loud, rude to being lazy etc. They cause conflicts within the context of power relations because most of stereotypes are false, offensive and over generalized. Stereotypes are not also religion, gender or political party specific. They are mainly based on ethnicity and religion which influence political party membership.

Stereotypes are major impediments to peace. They threaten the much expected harmonious co-existence in Nigeria leading to underdevelopment and poor image of Nigerians abroad. Ethnic stereotypes are passed from one generation to the other through indoctrination and socialization. Indoctrination is bad especially when taught early in life and are hard to detach from. Children grow up believing the stereotypes and can hardly relate well with people from other ethnic or religious groups and cause conflict when opportunities present themselves.

The group or groups so stereotyped become frustrated and resentful and live in fear of those who stereotype them while those who stereotype them feel protected and superior. The situation creates an unhealthy social interaction and relationship especially among the youth and is heightened by high rate of illiteracy in the country (Agbakwuru & Opara, 2013). Stereotypes not only limit people perception of the world to their own ethnic group but also do not allow people to see the good in others.

They negatively affect the nature of power relations among the various ethnic groups. They escalate inter-ethnic and religious groups' conflicts as common in Nigeria today leading to agitation for secession or self-determination by some groups which feel that they are marginalized in a society they should be proud to call their own. Agitation for secession is increasing everyday by both major and minor ethnic groups because of deliberate marginalization in the sharing of our national cake. Unreasonable laws and policies are made often to make sure that the stereotyped groups remain marginalized and the polity keeps heated.

The war against stereotyped conflict should be a win war which must be fought to liberate people from its bondage and thus restore peace in the country. To win this war, effective communication is imperative as no study has looked into how communication tools and strategies would be used to curb stereotyping and conflict within the context of power relations in Nigeria. The study stands to fill this knowledge gap.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many literatures abound which prove that effective communication has been judged rightly to help in preventing, combating conflicts and entrenching peace. Effective communication is not merely an act of entering into dialogue and relaying views and perceptions to conflicting parties but also securing their trust and confidence in order to arrive at a mutually agreeable agreement for securing peace (Bista, 2016). It significantly reduces conflicts if not completely ends them. It is not that curbing or not having conflict at all in diverse multicultural society is impossible (Handerson, 2016) [14]. It is possible or doable even though difficult in a cross-cultural environment where mutual understanding and trust are lacking. Continuing, Handerson asserts that Christians and Moslems in remote Heiban region's hills were acknowledged to have co-existed peacefully despite the debilitating effects of Africa's longest civil wars because they were proud of their religious freedom and cultural traditions.

A research report reveals that repeated and intensive mediated conversations were used effectively to repair years of misunderstanding and trustful open relationship created among university, town and a county (Levy, 2020) [15]. Mediated conversation is a verbal and interpersonal communication which is noted to have brokered peace among the contending parties.

Aggarwal, Verma & Aggarwal's (2020) [16] study reveals that effective communication styles are indispensable in settling organizational conflicts. It sought to establish that communication is considered indispensable in managing relationships. The paper was aimed at establishing the impact of effective communication styles in managing and resolving organizational conflicts. Similar research observed that poor communication always results in misunderstanding and eventually conflicts in organization while recommending that an integrative and strategic communication is essential in managing organizations successfully (Ngige, Badekale & Hammanjoda, 2016) [17]. If effective communication styles are seen as very indispensable for settling organizational conflicts, they can as well settle conflicts emanating from stereotypes since they are reckoned to be the only tool for resolving conflict of any nature.

A research conducted in Ejura-Sekeydumase in the Ashanti region of Ghana to examine the role of communication in conflict management and how the use of words could catalyze the escalation of conflict into large scale disorder revealed that effective communication strategies used helped to bring good rapport among the feuding parties (Gyamfi, 2009). Similarly, a study that assessed the role of effective communication in conflict resolution process in Kebri Dehar municipality in Ethiopia reveals that inaccurate communication can lead to conflict and thus extolling the effectiveness of correct communication.

A study which attempted to examine and analyze the relevant role played by the media in resolving the lingering crises in Jos North LGA of Plateau State found out that the media have a crucial role to play in conflict resolution. It also found out that the media did not give objective reports of the Jos crises which escalated the crises (Mangud, 2018) [18].

Further study opines that effective communication has been proven by research and experience to be at the heart or center of effective crisis management (Touitou, 2020) [19]. The study concluded that the best antidote in crisis management techniques is consistent and persistent communication. Similar study determined the impact of interpersonal communication in conflict and community development in Ivo LGA (iProject Masters, 2022) [20]. Discovery showed that interpersonal communication played a vital role towards conflict resolution and community development.

V. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AS SOLUTION TO CURBING STEREOTYPING AND CONFLICT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF POWER RELATIONS IN NIGERIA

Nigeria seems to be the most controversial and pluralized multicultural society in the world today judging from our present predicament caused by bad political leadership and resulting in ethnic and religious upheavals. There are multiple internal crises bedeviling the country from every quarter. Past political elections in Nigeria were based on religion and ethnic appendages of party flag bearers except the 2023 Presidential election. In affirmation, Ezeonwuka (2019) [21] opines that Nigeria as a democratic nation is simply bereft of equitable leadership; the political platform is serviced by ethnic cleavages and chauvinism; the citizenry wallowing in suspicion-culture bound discrimination, disunity and disorganization. Ezeonwuka submits that political ideologies with regards to political parties in Nigeria have continued to be sacrificed on the altar of ethnocentrism. The center seems to no longer hold and Nigeria can simply best be described as 'There was a Country' written by Chinua Achebe.

As earlier stated, most of the conflicts are caused by perpetual stereotyping among the various contending groups. This raises a fundamental question of what can be done to change the narrative; what can be done to change the perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of Nigerians to say no to stereotypes and embrace peace. Effective communication evidenced from research is the only option as every other option is embedded in communication. Henderson (2020) concurs that the only tool we have for resolving conflict is our ability to talk things through and Zemke (2020) [22] avows that communication is foundational to crisis management. Resolving conflicts may not be easy at first and can be achieved by the following means:

➤ Use of honest repeated and intensive mediated communication – With this, peace could be achieved as was the case among university, town and a county (Levy, 2020).

The emphasis on honesty is a necessity because some dishonest media men exist who are ready to go against the ethics of the profession to favour one contending party against the others especially for selfish interests by publishing and airing false contents which would create tension and incite hatred. The media can choose to inflame passion through sensational reports informed by commercial interests, be used as propaganda tool through publication or broadcast of falsehood and undermine efforts to resolve conflicts (Otufodunrin, 2013) [23].

➤ Separate face-to-face town hall meetings with various groups in conflict (interpersonal communication) can be held on the need to stop stereotypes and people are sure to have a positive change of heart. Recall that most conflicts are as a result of miscommunication and it needs honest effective communication to resolve them.

➤ Mediation teams comprising of opinion leaders such as the town chiefs, President Generals, ward counselors, heads of age grades, church association leaders, priests, youth leaders, and women leaders could be created in various communities for campaigning against stereotypes and resolving conflicts that arise from them. These leaders should be invited to meetings where issues of stereotypes and importance of peace would be repeatedly communicated. The meeting would repeatedly discuss the importance of upholding our norms and values as understanding our cultural norms while avoiding stereotyping (Levy (2020), is a key negotiation skill needed by all contending parties in dispute.

➤ The National Orientation Agency (NOA), Ministry of Information and other related agencies can be of help in aggressively campaigning, sensitizing and educating people on bad sides of stereotypes and the importance of living harmoniously together irrespective of our diversities. The agencies can use fliers, below-the-line media (caps, key holders, pens, bracelets, T-shirts etc.), sign posts, billboards, role plays, radio, television, print media, and the social media to campaign against stereotypes. The campaign, sensitization and education are all communication activities which are sure to induce correct attitude and behavioural changes needed to end stereotypes and conflict within the power of public relations.

➤ Use of school curriculum. Primary and secondary school curriculum in particular should include information on the harmful effects of stereotypes and ways of preventing them. It should include the advantages of conflict prevention and management. These should be communicated to children by teachers in order to catch

them young to get them hate ethno-religious stereotypes and conflicts. Ethno-religious divide is noted to remain the identified issue fanned by indoctrinated stereotype and primordialism (Ezeonwuka, 2019).

➤ Sharing correct information messages which assures a long term success as effective communication serves as a tool for building trust by (Zemke, 2020). The emphasis is on sharing correct information and not stereotyped or prejudiced one. Sharing correct information would start from homes and extend to schools, churches and mosques by parents, teachers and religious leaders.

Apart from interpersonally engaging different stakeholders in conflicts, stereotyping issues in dispute in Nigeria can also be discussed over the social media and successes are sure to be recorded. Various kinds of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) or devices are available now and can be used to create awareness and sensitize the public that stereotyping is bad as it is one of the major reasons why we destroy properties, marginalize, maim and kill ourselves. This will definitely make remarkable positive impacts. Potentials of the ICTs in conflict resolution are being increasingly recognized in promoting peace and preventing conflict (Bista, 2016).

The internet in particular could be used widely for reaching greater number of people to shun stereotypes. Renowned celebrities, artists, bloggers, and YouTube content creators can be engaged to help in the awareness and sensitization exercise just was done during canvassing and campaigning for Nigerians to get their Permanent Voters Card (PVC) and vote wisely during 2023 national election. The result was overwhelming. Same media can be deployed to strongly canvass and campaign for Nigerians to shun stereotypes and conflicts if we really mean business.

➤ With rural and community radios in place, those in the rural areas and various communities could be reached and sensitized on the need to eschew stereotypes that do not do us any good. Studies have found that radio is the most popular broadcast medium used for teaching in times of crisis all over the world due to the fact that it is relatively cheap and easily accessible (Okeke, Nwosu & Ono, 2020) [24]. These radio stations have the advantage of using the vernacular, to broadcast and discuss issues more than the urban or city radio stations. The feuding parties could be invited on live radio programme to discuss the need to end stereotypes and the resultant conflicts.

➤ Similarly, aggressive television campaign against stereotypes and live programme could go a long way into combating the menace.

➤ Print media especially newspaper is a good medium for writing against stereotyping and conflicts. Such could be written as editorials, feature stories and even special pages can be dedicated to it to show its importance. Cartoonists could be useful too.

➤ Musicians could come up with songs communicating and condemning stereotypes and conflicts as another means of combating the menace.

Summarily, with deployment of right technology and good communication skills, conflicts could be resolved and peace established. Discussion is always a better and wiser way to adopt rather than conflicts. Ineffective communication creates conflict even in situations where there is no real 'conflict issue' or disagreement about a substantive issue (Gyamfi, 2009). Incorrect interpretation of information may breed conflicts between and among people.

VI. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

This discourse which borders on how effective communication can be used to end stereotypes and its resultant conflicts within the context of power relations in Nigerian multicultural society is anchored on Social Responsibility Theory (SRT) and Salad Bowl Model (SBM). Starting with the SRT, the theory was propounded in 1956 by F. S. Siebert, T. B. Paterson and W. Schramm (Inej, Nkanu & Okoi, n. d., p.243) [25]. It is one of the Normative Theories of the Press which describes the way media systems should operate for the realization of some values and principles (Mercywrites, 2019) [26]. Its major premise is that the press which enjoys a privileged position under the government is under obligation to be responsible to society for carrying out certain essential functions of mass communication or to act for the benefit of the society at large (Inej, Nkanu & Okoi, n. d. & Mercywrites, 2019).

Relatively, the press or media in Nigeria have essential functions to play in realization of Nigeria's values and principles. The public rely on the media to be informed, educated and influenced to take positive actions. The media should therefore create awareness, sensitize and mobilize Nigerians on the need to end stereotypes especially within the context of power relations irrespective of our differences and thereby helping the society to realize some values and principles and in this case, love and peaceful coexistence. The press could play this role using different communication tools and strategies. The press exists in the society and therefore is expected to carry out functions for societal benefit since literature has proved that communication is a vital if not the only tool that can be used to resolve conflicts.

Salad Bowl Model (SBM) is a metaphor using a salad bowl. It deals with the way a multicultural society can integrate different cultures while maintaining their separate identities (Thornton, 2012) [27]. It was propounded in 1960s by an American pluralist. SBM proposes that cultures of different shapes and sizes can

coexist without hurting one another just as different salad vegetables put in a bowl coexist without hurting themselves even though some vegetables are more equal than others (Vidal, 2018) [28]. Each culture keeps its own distinct or unique qualities while not forming together into a single homogeneous culture.

Different Nigerian ethnic groups can live together and each maintaining its separate cultures, languages and religions without hurting themselves or engaging in serious conflicts. Nigerians are like salad in a bowl. We are people from diverse cultures, languages and religions and can coexist peacefully while retaining at least some of our distinct characteristics without coalescing into a single homogeneous culture. The Theory maintains that it is not necessary for people to give up their cultural heritage in order to be considered members of the dominant society (European Center for Populism Studies, n. d.) [29].

Rather than assimilating, different ethnic groups would coexist in their separate identities like the ingredients in a salad, bound together only by law (Admin,2022) [30]. The theory believes in the ideology of multiculturalism where ethnic differences are recognized rather than degraded.

VII. CONCLUSION

Stereotyping has been discussed as causing conflicts within the context of power relations globally and particularly in Nigeria multicultural society. Multicultural society is one with diverse characteristics which Nigeria should see as greatest unifying force but is not. The study is limited to stereotypes as one of the major causes of conflicts in Nigeria multicultural society where there is high prevalence of ethnocentrism and religious bigotry fueled by stereotypes and leading to multiple conflicts. The paper therefore discussed effective communication as the possible way out of stereotyped causing conflicts.

Different communication media and strategies are discussed as very effective in bridging the tide. The onus lies on related ministries, agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders in Nigeria to effectively use the discussed communication tools and strategies to combat stereotypes for harmonious co-existence. This recommendation will help law and policy makers to come up with laws and policies to ban negative stereotypes that breach peaceful co-existence. Peaceful co-existence when achieved will lead to appreciation of our diversities. Different ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria will then feel safer to mingle or relate among themselves. Unnecessary marginalization, conflicts, wars and self-determination will cease when stereotypes are banned and offenders severely punished. The communication should start from those in political authority to get them work towards banning stereotypes with backing laws and ensure its implementation. The study is sure to serve as a reference points for other scholars in various fields of study.

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