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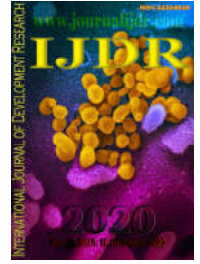
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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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CONVERGENCE OF COMMUNICATION MIX MODELS AND LAND EXPROPRIATION: LESSONS FROM NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

With the number of unrests, social disorder and litigations that follow land expropriation in the global south, the compendium of land administration, marketing and real estate fields lacks a vivid operationalization of the extent to which communication mix models are integrated in land expropriation practices globally. The study therefore analyzes the convergence of the variables from a Nigerian perspective with a view to extricate pertinent lessons on the communications mix-land expropriation nexus. This is based on a survey of expropriation officers in Ministries of Land across South East Nigeria. Due to the Covid-19-occasioned lockdowns, the study employed structured mailed-in questionnaire for the pilot survey and core investigation. Data was analyzed with Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient due to the nonparametric anatomy of the data. The use of correlation analysis was to determine the extent to which proxies of communication mix correlated with land expropriation exercises in South East Nigeria. The findings show that the extent to which public relations is utilized by land expropriation officers was low ($r=.197$; $p<.05$), and to a large extent, personal selling was utilized by land expropriation officers in Nigeria ($r=.877$; $p<.05$). The study concludes that land expropriation in Nigeria had a partial integration of communication mix models, with a dominant focus on personal selling. Effective integration of communication mix models in land expropriation processes will significantly mitigate risks of land conflict and injurious affection, and this is advocated by the study.

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INTRODUCTION

Land expropriation is the exercise of authority by government to acquire private land for public purposes, in exchange for compensation. However, evidence shows that in several parts of the world, erstwhile land owners are usually reluctant to relinquish their ownership rights. This is mostly pronounced in the global south where land is recognized as the social security of the last resort to the common man (Umeh, 1973). The result is that the social developmental aim of government is mostly frustrated, interrupted and sometimes annulled by the incongruities that follow such exercises. With empirical demonstrations of the protagonist tendencies of public relations in land administration (Ojobor & Ewurum, 2017), it becomes worrying that not much is known about the convergence of other communication mix models and land expropriation in the global south. We approach this problem from a Nigerian perspective. Communication mix is a set of integrated components that align organization's goal with

customer satisfaction. In the case of land expropriation, this infers the attainment of government's social purpose of compulsorily acquiring land, without injurious affection to the land owner. The whims and caprices of an individual whose land was expropriated may not be the dominant consideration of the acquiring authority. Yet, its significance cannot be overestimated, especially where such isolated cases become a norm, and culminating in a network of disgruntled clusters. Studies have alluded such disgruntlements to menaces of land conflicts and disputes, dampened land transactions, frustrated development schemes, discouraged real estate investments, litigations (Balah et al., 2020; Hughan, 2018; Yu, 2015). Obviously, with such occurrences, pathways to the accomplishment of the acquiring authority's goals and intentions would be subject to blockades, and thus reinforces the philosophy of getting the expropriation victim on board with the acquisition process. To achieve this, effective communication is key, going by Tandoh & Mensah's (2020) assertion that no organization can achieve its goal or survive

without adopting communication mix as a major operational activity. The implication of this assertion is that in public relations, communication mix does not constitute a mere consideration or strategy, instead it should be the bedrock of business; more so, in light of the critical fragility of land expropriation processes in the global south. To propagate this argument, an offering of the communication mix conceptuality is essential. Communication mix refers to the means by which organizations directly/indirectly inform, persuade and remind customers of its activities, which may be services, products or brand (Kotler & Keller, 2006). While this definition may be dismissed as a purely marketing affair with greater relevance to customer acquisition, its semblance to the land expropriation discourse cannot be overemphasized when certain constructs are put in place. This suggests an overview of communication mix as the means by which expropriation authority directly/indirectly inform, persuade and remind affected land owners of intentions and processes of compulsory acquisition for public welfare. The cruciality of information, persuasion and reminder cannot be overemphasized in the discourse of acquiring, difficult to relinquish, private land ownership rights. Kotler et al. (2006) further disaggregate this philosophy into diverse components of advertising, direct marketing, public relations, personal selling, and sales promotion. The issue at hand in the land expropriation discourse is about effectively communicating the land owner for a smoother process. Thus, advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing constructs do not effectively apply here. However, the characterizations of public relations as the application of planned programmes of action and two-way communication to create a harmonious relationship for goal attainment (Ojobor & Ewurum, 2017), and personal selling as a promotional method targeted at convincing the customer to buy into the firm's offerings (Todorova, 2015) seem more applicable and relevant to the discourse and hence employed as communication mix variables for the study.

Objectives of the Study

1. To what extent have public relations tools been employed in land expropriation processes?
2. To what extent have personal selling methods been utilized in land expropriation processes?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of related literature presented in this section is conceptual and empirical.

Communication Mix Concept: The communication mix concept relies on the premise of establishing and sustaining a link between the organization and its publics (Kotler & Keller, 2012). This is indicative of a process of gaining customer loyalty through notification, conviction, and reminder of the customer of the organization's offerings (Shimp, 2010), through advertising, personal selling, events, word-of-mouth, sales promotion, public relations, and direct marketing (Kotler et al., 2012). However, this study focuses on two of them, being public relations and personal selling.

Public Relations: Nwosu (2006) presents a well elucidated presentation of the public relations concept with the delineation that it is a management function that identifies the interests, needs, wants and expectations of the internal and external publics of an organization/institution and integrates it

in the planning and systematic programming of actions and communications, aimed at building mutual understanding, respect, recognition, peace and harmony between the organization/institution and its publics to ensure mutual satisfaction, greater productivity and improved work ethics (Nwosu, 2006). This is more succinctly put by Ojobor & Ewurum (2017) as the application of planning and two-way communication to create a harmonious relationship between the organization and its publics. Studies report that in the global south land expropriation processes are dominated by the linear communication model which suggests an approach of sender-to-receiver messaging (Ryal-Net et al., 2020; Moshood et al., 2020). This approach is anti-thetic to the public relations model of a two-way communications process which espouses the need for an exchange in information between the organization and the public. By this, the public understands more clearly the intentions of the organization, while the organization acquires intelligence which would aid an adaptation of processes for smoother, more sustainable outcome. This presents categorically that public relations and land expropriation are and should be accepted as two autonomous but complimentary processes that must work together to achieve organizational goals (Ojobor et al, 2017). For this to be attained, a number of strategies are employable.

Nwosu (2006), Ojobor et al. (2017) and Ewurum et al. (2019) present an argument on utilizing the following public relations constructs in business management, land administration and housing delivery. The specified constructs are advisory committee, media relations, stakeholder engagement, environmental scanning and crisis management. From these, we build upon this public relations checklist and adopt stakeholder management, environmental scanning, crisis management, and media relations as public relations constructs of land expropriation. Stakeholder management is the identification, engagement, conflict management of entities crucial to the attainment of organizational goals (Ewurum, 2019). A key and considerable entity in this regard is the land owner affected by land expropriation. On the other hand, environmental scanning involves the collection, collation, analysis and packaging of data on current economic, political social trends to guide decision-making (Nwosu, 2006). This also refers to market research by which the organization gains intelligence about the place, people and processes (Ewurum, 2020). This helps to assess the best approach to engaging the land owner in land expropriation processes. The study has earlier outlined the consequences of ineffective communication processes in land expropriation, and these can invariably be referred to as crises. In this stead, Nwosu (2006) opines that crisis management is the application of communication skills in transforming hostility to friendliness, and apathy to empathy. Ojobor et al (2017) argue that this calls for the utilization of public relations across all stages of engagement, from planning to implementation and management. From a public relations standpoint, media relations involves the development of mutual relationship between the organization and its public (Krishnan, 2007). This comprises the use of awareness creation, information management, mind management for the organization's gain. From a social media perspective, media relations utilizes online face-to-face interaction and group discussions to promote understanding and cordial relationship between the organization and its public (Onyiaji, 2013). This is deemed necessary due to the sensitive nature of land expropriation in developing countries.

Personal Selling: Personal selling is not just about selling products but also about communicating ideals in a convincing manner. It is a presentation of ideas to the public with a view to persuading and aiding the target to come to a decision favourable to the organization (Soderling, 2019). Todorova (2015) likens personal selling to public relations with the elucidation of the concept as a two-way communication process which leverages on established relationships between the organization and the public. This elucidation presents a thought-provoking approach to determining the nature of relationship established. For instance, if the relationship is negative, then personal selling may suffer due to trust deficiency. Smedescu et al. (2016) clarifies this observation with the delineation that personal selling modifies the message in a such a way as to exert influence on the customer's decision. Again, the issue here is what nature of influence is considered, and what checks are in place to ensure that it is not abused. Todorova (2015) avers that this calls for an analysis of the message content being passed, and the receiver's disposition. It is pertinent to add that disposition analysis of the receiver should encompass the receiver's general disposition and disposition to the message content. By this, the personal seller adapts and adjusts for efficiency. Therefore, the study will examine the extent to which land expropriation authorities in Nigeria utilize personal selling, and the extent of adaptation and dispositional analysis.

Land Expropriation: Simply put, land expropriation is to expropriate, take or confiscate landed property. Professionally though, the concept speaks to the right of the state to use, alienate or destroy any landed property under its jurisdiction for public purposes (Cai & Sun, 2018). Public purposes refer to landed property investments which cater for the community as a whole, as against private benefits. These may include road construction, construction of educational facilities, provision of potable water, electricity installations, large-scale agriculture and housing development schemes, and other infrastructural developments. In Nigeria, land expropriation by government is legitimized by Section 28, subsection 1 of the Nigerian Land Use Act (1978) which authorizes the Governor to revoke a right of occupancy for overriding public interest. The personal selling construct of communication mix comes to the fore in light of trust issues developed by reports of land expropriation by government representatives for private purposes (Odiase-Alegimenlen et al., 2015; Powers, 2002; Zhou, 2020). From a Nigerian perspective, considering expropriation abuse, we present the case of Francis Okafor & Ors. v. A. G. Anambra State & Anor. The intricacies of this case bothers on the integrity of the land expropriation process where it was argued that the government failed to prove the overriding public interest aspect of the revocation. Also, a prominent case highlighting the issue of land expropriation for private purpose is *Kelo v. New London*, where a drug company Pfizer built a new plant in New London, Connecticut, aiming to bring in more jobs and government revenues. The City of New London decided to purchase 115 additional houses in a nearby area to sell them to commercial developers, but 15 residents, including Kelo, resisted, so the city expropriated the land (545 U.S. 469, 2005). The public outrage from the Kelo case led many states to think about the lawful applicability and politically viable use of land expropriation. Thus, it is indeed imperative that the convergence between this communication mix construct and land expropriation is examined in the study area. However, Ojobor et al (2017) argues that where such private

development comes with the prospects of positive and developmental externalities in the area, then it assumes the state of public interest which entails any development that benefits the public whether by public or private entity. This also assures the role of effective communication processes that enhance the sustainability of the process.

Empirical Review

Public Relations and Land Expropriation: Zhao (2009) conducted a study on the analysis of reasons for land conflict escalation in rural China. While the study never mentioned public relations and land expropriation in verbatim, its findings evoke a nature of semblance to the discourse. The study found that vague definition of public interest, inadequate compensation, and ambiguous nature of collective land ownership were the most significant predictors of land conflict in rural China. The study also found that the "few existing rights of rural peasants under the present land regime were not adequately protected due to China's poor law enforcement". The study further concludes that "with no fundamental reform to China's party politics, there will be no effective measure to prevent further conflicts over land in the near future". Asiama et al. (2017) examined the potential of participatory land administration applied on customary lands in support of land consolidation. A brief overview of the evolution of crowdsourced, voluntary, and participatory approaches was provided alongside newly related insights into neogeography and neo-cadastre, and fit-for-purpose and pro-poor land administration. The concept of participatory land administration was then developed in this context, with emphasis on a local farming community in Northern Ghana. The study involved collecting land information relating to farms over a two-week period, using a mobile app and a satellite image, based on participatory land administration. The results show that Participatory Land Administration can potentially support land consolidation, though further investigation is needed on how it can be integrated into the formal land registration system, into an actual land consolidation project.

Personal Selling and Land Expropriation: A study by Lemmen et al. (2020) described ongoing developments and standardisation in land administration. The study focused on the nexus between standards like the ISO 19152 Land Administration Domain Model (LADM) and land administration. The study found that the LADM facilitated efficient set-up of land administration through flexible, widely applicable functions as a central source of state-of-the-art international knowledge on land administration. The study concluded that LADM led to the establishment of new initiatives which connected top-down and bottom-up projects together. Muramalla (2019) examined the language barriers of the sales force in personal selling, testing ten types of language barriers on a sample of conveniently chosen 180 salespeople in two southern States of India namely Andhra Pradesh and Telangana where majority people speak in the Telugu language. By snowball sampling method, conversational interviews were conducted with the sampled sales force and investigated the specific language barrier that highly troubled them during their conversations with the customers. From the total responses, ranks were given to each barrier. Study results revealed that in AP and Telangana, more salespeople experienced the barriers of literacy, jargon, dialects, unclear sound, and accent. Few troubled by-word

choice, pidgins, semantic gaps, slang, and linguistic ability. In urban markets, more salespeople averted by word choice and literacy, in rural areas more was hostile to semantic gaps and Jargon. The female sales force was more concerned with literacy, slang, and accent. More male sales representatives were apprehensive about dialects, unclear sound, and jargon.

Critique of Literature: One of the first observations during the review of related literature was the paucity of communication mix related studies in land administration. The few which touch on the subject did not address specifics of communication mix models and land expropriation, neither was a convergence of both variables studied. However, of greater relevance to the study is Zhao's (2009) study which examined the predictors of land conflict in rural China, and found vague definition of public interest as significant. The implication of this finding is that public relations tools are not effectively employed in the study area leading to a misinterpretation of the community's interest. While the study did not answer our research question on the public relations-land expropriation nexus in Nigeria, what it has done is to support our stance on the significance of investigating the relationship between public relations and land expropriation in Nigeria. The research by Asiama et al. (2017) touched upon a public relations construct of participatory land administration and found that it was not effectively applied in Northern Ghana. However, land administration is very broad and consists several issues as land consolidation, management and the like. Therefore, the study left a lot to be done with respect to understanding the extent to which public relations was applied in expropriation exercises, especially from a Nigerian context. Extending the narrative to personal selling, Lemmen et al. (2020) highlighted the need for a standardization of land administration but did not discuss the role of communication mix models such as personal selling in attaining global best standards for land administration. This lacuna is more pronounced in light of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals which advocate for inclusive development practices through participatory frameworks. It is already obvious from the primer section of this paper that participatory governance cannot be achieved without effective communication tools. Presenting a significant departure from the land expropriation narrative is the study by Muramalla (2019). It is pertinent to note that the study did justice to the personal selling discourse focusing on its barriers, but it is also obvious that the variable was not related to the land expropriation variable. Of course, it is pertinent that the barriers of personal selling in land expropriation is considered, but there is a more dire need for establishing the relationship between both variables in the first place as a foundation for such studies. Generally, extant literature have not matched the public relations and personal selling constructs of the communication mix variable against land expropriation practices. Secondly, the processes considered thus far in literature, even where they have semblances of the discourse, were not peculiar to the Nigerian context. These issues inform the aim of the study, which is to determine the relationship between communication mix models in land expropriation in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The study used descriptive research design to survey the integration of communication mix models in land expropriation exercises in Nigeria. The study used a structured

questionnaire to elicit data from the study population. The population of the study were staff of the Ministry of Lands, Survey and Town Planning, involved in land expropriation schemes, across the 5 States of South East Nigeria. Table 1 shows the distribution of the study population:

Table 1. Distribution of Study Population

S/N	Sample Frame	Population	State
1	Expropriation Officers	35	Abia
2	Expropriation Officers	36	Anambra
3	Expropriation Officers	19	Ebonyi
4	Expropriation Officers	45	Enugu
5	Expropriation Officers	43	Imo
	Total	178	

Source: Ministry of Lands, Survey and Town Planning of the 5 South East States in Nigeria (2020)

Table 1 shows the population of the study as 178 officers from the 5 states of South East Nigeria. It is pertinent to cite a limitation here in the form of inaccessibility of the official records stating the actual number of expropriation officers in the Ministries due to work restrictions imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the study made do with information obtained from employees.

Test of Validity and Reliability: To ascertain the validity of the instrument, the study adopted content validity to verify the instrument's inclusiveness and relevance to the communication mix and land expropriation discussion. By this, the questionnaire was vetted by three experts: one each from the Department of Marketing, University of Nigeria Nsukka; Department of Mass Communications, University of Nigeria Nsukka; and Department of Estate Management, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Their responses, comments and preliminary analyses were used to modify and fine tune the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was achieved through the test-retest method, where a total of 15 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the Ministries on a basis of 3 per State. The questionnaire had 16 issue-based questions bordering on communication mix and land expropriation proxies. The process was repeated after a fortnight to the same respondents, upon which the result was subjected to test by Cronbach's Alpha. The result showed an alpha coefficient of 0.973, as shown in Tables 2 and 3:

Table 2. Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Cases Valid	15	100.0
Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	15	100.0

a. List wise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 3. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No of Items
.973	.903	16

Following this pilot survey, the questionnaire was administered to the study population through online means of email and WhatsApp. Physical distribution of the instrument was hampered by Covid-19 restrictions and lockdowns. Data obtained from the respondents was subjected to analysis using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient, due to the

nonparametric anatomy of the data. The use of correlation analysis was to determine the extent to which proxies of communication mix correlated with land expropriation exercises in South East Nigeria.

ANALYSIS

Public Relations and Land Expropriation: Our goal is to determine the extent to which public relations tools have been employed in land expropriation in South East Nigeria. Data obtained from this enquiry was subjected to analysis using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. Tables 4 and 5 show results obtained from the correlation analysis:

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Public Relations	1.7745	1.09824	153
Land Expropriation	2.3550	1.14112	153

Table 4 displays the descriptive statistics of the convergence between public relations and land expropriation. Public relations had a mean score of 1.7745, standard deviation of 1.09824 and number of cases 153, while land expropriation had a mean score of 2.3550, standard deviation of 1.14112 and number of cases as 153.

Table 5. Correlation Measures

Correlations	Value	Asymp. Std. Error	Approx. Sig.
Contingency Coefficient	0.185	0.082	0.000
Pearson's R	0.197	0.078	0.000
Spearman Correlation	0.197	0.078	0.000
N of Valid Cases	153		

Table 5 is the Spearman Rank Order correlation matrix on the convergence between public relations and land expropriation showing the correlation coefficients, significant values and the number of cases. The correlation coefficient shows 0.197, thus indicating that correlation is weak at 0.00 level (2tailed), thus implying that extent to which public relations is utilized by land expropriation officers is low ($r = .197$).

Personal Selling and Land Expropriation: Our goal is to determine the extent to which personal selling methods have been employed in land expropriation in South East Nigeria. Data obtained from this enquiry was subjected to analysis using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. Tables 6 and 7 show results obtained from the correlation analysis:

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Personal Selling	8.7353	6.56720	153
Land Expropriation	11.7675	4.88451	153

Table 6 displays the descriptive statistics of the convergence between personal selling and land expropriation. Personal selling had a mean score of 8.7353, standard deviation of 6.56720 and number of cases 153, while land expropriation had a mean score of 11.7675, standard deviation of 4.88451 and number of cases as 153.

Table 7. Correlation Measures

Correlations	Value	Asymp. Std. Error	Approx. Sig.
Contingency Coefficient	0.256	0.113	0.000
Pearson's R	0.877	0.078	0.000
Spearman Correlation	0.877	0.078	0.000
N of Valid Cases	153		

Table 7 is the Spearman Rank Order correlation matrix on the convergence between personal selling and land expropriation showing the correlation coefficients, significant values and the number of cases. The correlation coefficient shows 0.877, thus indicating that correlation is significant at 0.00 level (2tailed). The implication is that to a large extent, personal selling is utilized by land expropriation officers in Nigeria ($r = .877$).

Findings

1. Extent to which public relations is utilized by land expropriation officers was low ($r=.197$; $p<.05$).
2. To a large extent, personal selling was utilized by land expropriation officers in Nigeria ($r=.877$; $p<.05$).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that land expropriation in Nigeria had a partial integration of communication mix models, with a dominant focus on personal selling. This partial integration calls for increased application of public relations tools with a view to reaching mutual understanding between acquiring authority and targeted land owners. Effective integration of communication mix models in land expropriation processes will significantly mitigate risks of land conflict and injurious affection, and this is advocated by the study.

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