

**Marketing, Advertising and Public  
Relations in the Digital Age  
in Nigeria**

**Festschrift in Honor of Professor  
Idorenyin Udoesen Akpan**

**EDITED BY**

**PETER ESUH**

**JOSEPH S. RISHANTE**

**RITCHARD T. M'BAYO**

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# Marketing, Advertising and Public Relations in the Digital Age in Nigeria

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*Professor Idorenyin Udoesen Akpan*

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

*Acknowledgements* ix

*Foreword* xi

*Notes on the Editors* xv

*The Contributors* xxi

*Verbal Portrait* xxv

## 1 MARKETING, ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE IN NIGERIA: AN INTRODUCTORY PERSPECTIVE 1

### PART ONE MARKETING AND ADVERTISING IN THE DIGITAL AGE 15

## 2 NEW MEDIA ADVERTISING AS THE FUTURE OF SMALL- SCALE BUSINESSES IN PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE 17

## 3 COVID-19 PANDEMIC, ADVERTISING REVENUE SHORTFALL AND NIGERIA'S ASPHYXIATING MEDIA ECOSYSTEM 31

## 4 NETVERTISING 59

## 5 PAY-ON-DELIVERY AS A PAYMENT OPTION IN E-ADVERTISING: A THIRD WORLD PERSPECTIVE 77

## 6 THE LANGUAGE OF SCAM: ANALYZING RHETORICAL APPEAL TECHNIQUES IN FRAUDULENT SOCIAL MEDIA INVESTMENT PROMOS 99

### PART TWO PERSPECTIVES ON PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES IN THE DIGITAL AGE 113



VIII . TABLE OF CONTENTS

7	IMPERATIVES OF RESEARCH, MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION IN NIGERIA'S REPUTATIONAL VALUE CHAIN MANAGEMENT	115
8	IMPERATIVES OF IMAGE MANAGEMENT IN EFFECTIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE	139
9	POLITICAL PUBLIC RELATIONS IN NIGERIA'S SOCIAL MEDIA ERA: A DISCOURSE FROM MELVIN SHARPES' MODEL OF PUBLIC RELATIONS	157
10	PERSPECTIVES ON DIGITAL MEDIA, PROPAGANDA AND POLITICAL PUBLIC RELATIONS	173
11	LANDMINES IN DIGITAL PUBLIC RELATIONS	195
12	APPLICATION OF PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA FOR THE CONTAINMENT OF CORONA VIRUS	207
13	UTILIZATION OF ICT BY PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONERS IN JALINGO METROPOLIS, TARABA STATE	223
	EDITORIAL TRIBUTE TO LATE PROFESSOR RITCHARD T. M'BAYO	237

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Editors appreciate in a special way, the various contributors to this book project aimed at immortalizing our beloved colleague in the academic fashion. Without your contributions, this dream would never have come to fruition, lofty as it was. We thank you specially.

We are grateful to all who offered editorial and financial assistance towards the success of this project. The peer-reviewers did a wonderful job to ensure that the various submissions were upgraded to a more appreciable standard. Thank you all for this sacrifice.

We equally extend our deepest appreciations to the family of late Professor Akpan for their cooperation towards the success of this project. Mrs. Emilienne Idorenyin Akpan was always forthcoming to our numerous enquiries. She also suggested a good number of friends of Professor Akpan who offered valuable assistance towards the success of this project. We greatly appreciate this support.

Finally, we wish to pay special tribute to late Professor Ritchard T. M'Bayo who was part of this project from the beginning before his eventual transition to glory. May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in perfect peace. Amen.

Thank you all for your support to this project.



## FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to identify with this noble project which the Nigerian communication family has undertaken to immortalize one of our beloved deceased colleagues, Professor Idorenyin Udoesen Akpan. Akpan's rising academic career was cut short by his sudden death that remains a rude shock to all of us who related with him professionally and knew too well that he had a lot to offer to the growth of communication education in Nigeria. Over eight years after his death, Professor Akpan's memories are still fresh on our minds. Obviously, this is the reason why his colleagues and students have come together to write this book in his honor. This effort is, indeed, laudable as the book will not just immortalize him in the academic fashion, but will also extend further, discussions within the fields of marketing, advertising and public relations in this digital age. The choice of these areas as the thematic focus of the book is particularly strategic because these were the core areas around which Akpan carved his research niche, and researched vigorously until his death.

Written at a time when the digital revolution is fast transforming the old order of humanity in almost all fields of human endeavor, it is worthy to note that this book is, indeed, a timely effort. It is commendable that the editors considered it expedient to render an intellectual perspective to the issues that remain germane to this digital revolution, especially within the fields of marketing, advertising and public relations. Trends in these areas have changed profoundly recently, courtesy of the digital revolution. Traditional practices are significantly modified, and so are the theoretical perspectives that are in place to guide understanding of these trends. As these trends are changing, new sets of opportunities and challenges that are uniquely peculiar to the digital age are emerging on a daily basis, heightening the need for

research and documentations to enable humanity make the best sense out of the digital revolution.

This book has filled a big gap. Reading through the various chapters, one sees the authors putting into perspective these various concerns that preoccupy intellectual discourse on the digital revolution, especially in the business and corporate worlds. Technology has truly liberalized the business terrain. The ease with which businesses are conducted today, and the rate at which individuals and firms engage and interact across the globe is unprecedented courtesy of this digitization. Business firms that were collapsing under the weight of advertising levies have migrated to e-advertising and e-marketing, saving cost in millions of dollars. At the same time, small and medium scale ventures that cannot afford to expend huge chunks of their revenues on advertising take solace on the internet and promote their stock online at relatively cheaper rates, but at the same time reaching millions of online audience members. Today, business transactions are initiated and executed entirely online without real-life contact of individuals. Through artificial intelligence, online surveys and other flexible avenues, business firms and advertising agencies engage periodic information mining in the form of research to adjust to consumers' tastes and satisfy them optimally. Public relations activities have also migrated substantially online, reaching out to millions of publics and building impressions about clients and firms via the various platforms. The social media phenomenon which is entirely a product of the digital revolution benefits the corporate world tremendously, as its various platforms gather onto their folds a large pool of the online audience and deliver same to business firms.

Along with these opportunities are new of threats that have emerged which are unique to the digital age. Online fraudsters and scammers are at their best, defrauding unsuspecting victims in millions of dollars. Identity thieves and imposters are restless, defrauding victims and tarnishing the image and reputation of firms. Moreover, as firms integrate at the global level, smaller firms are being submerged by mega multinational firms. Electronic colonialism has become a more glaring reality as the digital revolution consolidates its firm grip on humanity. How can society effectively minimize these treats and make the best out of this digital revolution, specifically in the areas of marketing, advertising and public relations? These are the various concerns that preoccupy the various chapters of this book.

The authors of the various chapters offer theoretical, empirical and pragmatic insights into how best the business world can maximize the opportunities

that come with this digital revolution and downplay the threats that abound in the terrain. The approaches adopted in doing this are commendable, as the authors attempt as much as possible to relate the discussions to real life situations. The book, thus come highly recommended to academics within the fields of marketing, advertising and public relations. It is also recommended for marketers, advertisers and public relations consultants as well as students taking courses within the areas of the book's thematic focus.

Kudos to the editors and authors of the various chapters for this laudable effort!

Professor J. A. Sambe  
Department of Mass Communication  
Veritas University Abuja



## NOTES ON THE EDITORS

**Peter Esuh, Ph.D.** is a Professor of Corporate & Marketing Communications and Applied Rhetoric, University of Uyo. He is the Pioneer Dean, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, University of Uyo which he midwived as the last Head of the Department of Communication Arts. Esuh is a spirited university administrator and prolific academic whose articles feature in reputable peer reviewed journals and thematic books across the globe. His meritorious service to the university system spans about three decades across several universities in Nigeria, Tanzania and Kenya where he served in various capacities. Apart from this meritorious service to the university system, Professor Esuh is equally productive in his community service. Among several other political and community engagements, he is currently the Chairman, Akwaibom State Land Use and Allocation Committee, and has also been engaged in consultancy services over the past three decades to several agencies and organizations. These have earned him several awards and recognitions such as his being cited repeatedly in the *“Achievers Who is Who in Nigeria”* among other recognitions. Esuh is a member of the Nigerian Academy of Letters, Fellow of the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE); and member, Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) and the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) among several other professional bodies across the globe.

**Joseph S. Rishante, Ph.D.** (B.Sc. ABU, M.Sc. Manchester Polytechnic U.K. & Ph.D. Syracuse University, USA) is a Professor of Multimedia and Visual Communication at the American University of Nigeria. He is a former Commissioner of Education in Taraba State, and former Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration), Taraba State University where he held several other administrative positions such as the Pioneer Dean, Faculty of Arts and



Social Sciences. Rishante is a seasoned academic and university administrator whose teaching and administrative experience spans about four decades now. This experience traverses several universities in Nigeria such as the University of Jos, Ahmadu Bello University, Kogi State University, Taraba State University, Kwara University and the American University of Nigeria. His research interests focus on the areas of visual communication, multimedia design and diffusion of innovations where he has authored many journal articles and books. He has played key roles in major international research projects funded by reputable agencies such as the World Health Organization and Helen Keller International; the Canadian International Development Agency; John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation etc. Rishante is a Licentiate Member of the International Congress of Graphic Design Associations, as well as affiliated with several professional bodies in Nigeria.

**Ritchard T. M'Bayo, Ph.D.** (of blessed memory) was a Professor of Communications & Multimedia Studies at the American University of Nigeria where he served meritoriously until his death in 2020 at the age of seventy. Previously, he taught at several universities in the United States and Africa such as the Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, Bowie State University and Fulbright Scholar at the University of Lagos among others. He also served as a United Nations consultant in Mass Communications to the government of Sierra Leone, where his comprehensive review in 2015 resulted in new degree programs for Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Journalism, Public Relations and Advertising, Master of Arts (MA) in Mass Communication, and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Communication and Media Studies. Prof. M'Bayo's career as an academic and communications consultant was in its prime before his eventual transition to the next phase of life. He is greatly missed by the Nigerian communications family.

## THE CONTRIBUTORS

**Aisha Imam Omoloso, Ph.D.** is a lecturer at the department of Mass Communication, University of Ilorin, Nigeria. Her research interests include health communication, audience research and media impact. She has authored and co-authored research articles in local and international journals. She also has journalism and broadcast production experience as reporter, newscaster, producer and programme anchor with the Kwara Television Service and Taraba Television both in Nigeria.

**Ashu Agya** is an Assistant Chief Executive Officer in the Information and Protocol Unit of the Federal University Wukari. She holds a B.Sc. in Mass Communication from the Taraba State University, Jalingo. Previously, she worked as a senior reporter with the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Jalingo.

**Babatunde Stephen Maku** holds M.Sc. in Mass Communication and is currently pursuing a doctorate degree in Development Communication at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria. He is a lecturer in the department of General Studies, Federal College of Agriculture, Ishiagu, Ebonyi State. He has to his credit among others, a recently published book: *“Fundamentals of Development Communication and National Development.”*

**Dauda Ishaya Suntai, Ph.D.** is a Professor of Applied Linguistics and Communication Studies. He is the Director, Institute of Peace and Conflict Management, and the immediate past Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Taraba State University, Jalingo. Suntai is one of the founding Fathers of the Department of Mass Communication in Taraba State University where he has served as

Head of Department for two different tenures. His research interests include discourse analysis, rhetoric, public speaking and applied linguistics.

**Emmanuel Thelma Nessi** is currently pursuing his Master's degree in Mass Communication (with specialization in Business and Organizational Communication) in the department of Communication Arts, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, University of Uyo, Nigeria where he bagged his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Mass Communication. Nessi's research interests revolve around the intersection between the new media and organizational communication, trends in new media studies, public relations and advertising.

**Eme Iniobong Ukpabio** is a communication scholar with keen interests in Business and Organizational Communication. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honors) degree in Communication Arts, Masters of Arts degree in Communication Arts and is currently pursuing a doctorate degree in Mass Communication (Business and Organizational Communication), all in the department of Communication Arts, University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. Ukpabio is a member of the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE).

**Emilienne Idorenyin Akpan** has a BA in Bilingual Letters (English/French) and a PGD and MA in Mass Communication (Public Relations & Advertising). She is the director of the Writing Center and a full-time faculty of freshman composition and modern languages at the American University of Nigeria (AUN). Before joining AUN, she worked as a Head of School and taught French and Language Arts. Akpan enjoys poetry and engaging in topical issues related to semiotics, multiliteracies in higher education, academic integrity, trauma-based instruction for learners of the English language, oral histories of displaced populations, and the effects of gender-based stereotypes on the youth. She is a gender-based violence specialist, a member of different professional associations, and the founder of the Idorenyin Akpan Foundation.

**Ibanga Isine** is one of Africa's best investigative journalists and has won the CNN MultiChoice African Journalist Award, the Wole Soyinka Nigeria Investigative Journalist Award (twice) and the Rotary International Humanitarian Reporting Award. A visiting journalism lecturer with the American University of Nigeria, Yola, he holds Master of Arts degree in

Mass Communication and Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication Arts; he obtained certificates from the Pan African University, Lagos, (Business and Economic Reporting) and Thompson Foundation, United Kingdom (Advanced Reporting). He has published in local and international journals and currently runs Journalism Retool House, a hands-on job center for investigative journalists in Nigeria. Mr. Isine is currently the Managing Editor of NEXT EDITION newspaper, Lagos, Nigeria.

**Ibituru Iwowari Pepple, Ph.D.** is a Lecturer in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Calabar, Cross River State. A fellow of the Chartered Institute of Administration and member, African Council for Communication Education amongst others, he practiced journalism for two and half decades. He is the Coordinator of the International Institute of Journalism, Abuja, and has published widely in international journals and other institutional journals. His bias is in broadcasting and ethno-communicology.

**Idi Shadrach** lectures in the department of Mass Communication, Taraba State University, Jalingo. He holds a Master of Science Degree in Mass Communication with specializations in Public Relations and Advertising from the Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, where he is currently pursuing a doctorate degree. His research interests include public relations, advertising, behavior change communication, new media and political communication. He has published several articles within these areas in both local and international journals.

**Ijeoma Jaquelyn Acholonu, Ph.D.** is currently a resource person at the International Institute of Journalism Abuja, Port Harcourt service center and a practicing broadcast Journalist with the Rivers State Broadcasting Corporation. Acholonu is a member of the Nigeria Union of Journalists NUJ and NAWOJ, and the African Council for communication Education ACCE. She has published several academic articles in referred journals.

**Itieke-Idamieba Harry, Ph.D.** is Senior Lecturer and Pioneer Head, Department of Public Relations and Advertising, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. He holds a Ph.D., MA, BSc and ND in Mass Communication respectively from the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Port Harcourt, University of Nigeria Nsukka, Rivers State University and the Institute of Management and Technology (IMT) Enugu. Harry is also a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, braced with LLM and LLB Degrees

and a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) of the University of Port Harcourt. His academic and professional career is strongly laced with several distinctions, awards and grants. For instance, he won the only academic prize in his Department- the Eze-Ogba, Oba of Igbaland Prize for the best graduating student in mass communication (2004) for which he was offered automatic employment as a result of academic excellence by the Rivers State University. He is also an O.B. Lulu Briggs Legal Scholar having won the prestigious grant at the Nigerian Law School, etc. Harry is widely published and is a member of several professional associations/institutions reflecting his intellectual, professional and academic curiosity. They include the International Communication Association (ICA) Washington DC, African Council for Communication Education (ACCE), Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), Association of Mass Communication Researchers of Nigeria (AMCRON) and the Institute of Corporate Administration of Nigeria (ICAD).

**John Moses Maikomo, Ph.D.** teaches in the department of Political Science and International Relations, Taraba State University, Jalingo, Nigeria. He holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from Xiamen University, China, MA Public Relations from the University of Bedfordshire, U.K. and B.Sc. Political Science at the University of Maiduguri, Nigeria. His research experience covers traditional and non-traditional security approaches, peace studies and conflict resolution strategies, theories of International Relations, development communications, crisis management and political public relations. He is a member of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE), the Association of Communication Scholars and Professionals of Nigeria (ACSPN) and the International Society for Development & Sustainability (ISDS).

**Johnson Chinasa Alegu** teaches in the Department of General Studies, Federal College of Agriculture Ishiagu, Ebonyi State, Nigeria. He holds a Master of Science Degree in Mass Communication with specialization in Public Relations and Advertising at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. He has published a number of scholarly articles in both local and international journals. He has also contributed book chapters and a book on Development Communication. His research interests include journalism,

public relations, new media, propaganda and development communication.

**Kaior S. Akpede, Ph.D.** is Associate Professor in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Social Sciences, Nasarawa State University, Keffi. Akpede is also an active member of the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE).

**Manasseh Joseph Umoette** is the Public Relations Officer and Head of Protocol, Federal Polytechnic, Ukana, Akwa Ibom State. He holds a BA in Communication Arts from the University of Uyo, a M.Sc. in Mass Communication from the Benue State University, Makurdi and is currently pursuing a doctorate degree in Mass Communication (with specialization in Public Relations and Marketing Communication) at the University of Uyo. Umoette is a journalist and public relations professional with vast professional experience. Before joining the services of the Federal Polytechnic Ukana, he was the Editor of the Gazette Newspaper, Uyo, and also worked as reporter with the Nigerian Newsday Newspaper, Lafia and The Sensor Newspaper, Uyo among other news platforms. A member of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) and the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Umoette is a recipient of several awards and honours including State Merit Award (NYSC) Nasarawa State and a Chieftaincy title/Award of Excellence in Community Service by the Traditional Rulers Council, Ikot Ekpene where he is a member of the Paramount Ruler's Advisory Committee. Umoette is a Christian with an abiding faith in God and elder of The Apostolic Church Nigeria. He is happily married and is blessed with lovely kids.

**Maryam Lasisi Mustapha** teaches in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Ilorin. She holds a Master's degree in Mass Communication at the University of Lagos. Her current research interest focuses on new and social media, media effects and corporate communications.

**Nsikak Idiong, Ph.D.** is the Pioneer Head, Department of Journalism and Media Studies, University of Uyo. He holds a Ph.D., M.Sc. and BA in Mass Communication all from the defunct department of Communication Arts, University of Uyo. A spirited writer and rhetorician, Idiong's research interests focus on political communication, digital journalism and the new media. He is a committed member of the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE).

**Olugbenga O. Akanmu, *arpa*** is a lecturer in the Department of Mass Communication, Lagos State Polytechnic, Ikorodu. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the University of Ibadan, a Postgraduate Diploma and Master's degree in Mass Communication from the University of Lagos. He has worked in different areas of the media especially advertising, reporting and editing with the Vanguard newspaper for a decade. His research interests include scientific communication, speech and public speaking, advertising and the new media. He has published widely in academic journals and attended several academic conferences in Nigeria.

**Olayinka Idowu** is a Lecturer in the Department of Mass Communication, School of Communication and Liberal Studies, Lagos State Polytechnic, Ikorodu. She holds a Master of Science degree in Mass Communication from the University of Lagos. Her research interests include speech communication and broadcast journalism. Olayinka Idowu is the current Head of Department, Mass Communication at the Lagos State Polytechnic. She has published books and research works to her credit.

**Patrick Udende, Ph.D.** teaches in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Ilorin. He holds a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Master of Science (M.Sc.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), all in Mass Communication at the Benue State University, Makurdi, Nigeria. His research interests include social media studies, public relations and advertising, and political communication. He is a member of the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE), Nigeria Chapter, Association of Media and Communication Researchers of Nigeria (AMCRON) and Association of Communication Scholars and Professionals of Nigeria (ACSPN). Dr. Udende has attended national and international academic conferences, published research articles in both national and international journals and thematic book chapters.

**Ramson Acheme** is a doctoral student in the department of Theatre Arts and Mass Communication, University of Benin where he barged an M.Sc. in Mass Communication. He holds a Professional Diploma in Public Relations from the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations. He is currently a News Editor at the *Oriwu Sun*, a notable community newspaper in Western Nigeria. Ramson has presented papers at academic conferences both within Nigeria and abroad, and is a full-time member of the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE).

**Rasaq Mohammed Adisa Ph.D.** is a Senior Lecturer in the department of Mass Communication, University of Ilorin, Nigeria. He holds a Ph.D. in Communications at the University of Malacca, MSc. in Mass Communication at the University of Lagos, and B.A. Mass Communication at the Bayero University, Kano. He is a resource person with the International Institute of Journalism, Abuja, a Qualitative Research Trainer for Norwegian Research Institute, Nairobi Kenya, and a member of professional bodies such as the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), African Council for Communication Education (ACCE), and Association of Communication Scholars and Professionals of Nigeria (ACSPN). His research interest covers news framing, conflict and peace journalism. He has published books on journalism and mass communication as well as numerous journal articles in high-indexed journals.

**Reginald Koko** is Doctoral student of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education and member African Council for Communication Education.

**Rotimi Williams Olatunji, PhD**, is a Professor of Public Relations and Advertising, and the immediate past Dean of the School of Communication, Lagos State University, Lagos, Nigeria. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Archaeology from the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife; MA and Ph.D. in Communication & Language Arts from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. His areas of research include advertising, public relations, health communication, political communication and communication research. He is widely published in these areas with several edited books, edited books, journal articles and thematic book chapters to his credit. Professor Olatunji has vast conference participations within and outside Nigeria. He is a Fellow, American Academy of Marketing Science, Member, Nigerian Institute of Public Relations, Associate Registered Practitioner in Advertising, Member, Association of Communication Scholars and Professionals of Nigeria and Member, African Council for Communication Education.

**Sabiu Idris** holds a bachelor's degree in Mass Communication from the Taraba State University, Jalingo. His research interest focuses on online journalism, social media and civic engagement, public relations and digital advertising.

**Sampson Ibunemi Fiberesima** is currently the General Manager of the Rivers State Broadcasting Corporation and a Doctoral student of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.



**Steven Anu' Adesemoye** is an experienced Communication Technician. He is a Principal Consultant at PR Plus Consultants, Rebut Consultancy, Watchwhite Consultants and erstwhile Ag. PRO, Lagos State Polytechnic. Steven is a fellow of Knight Centre for International Media Workshop, University of Miami, School of Communication, Florida, and also a fellow of Business Journalism Professors, Donald W. Reynolds National Centre for Business Journalism at Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Arizona State University, USA. He directs the Distance Learning Dramas of Nigeria Urban Health Reproductive Initiative (NUHRI) - a John Hopkins Centre for Communication Programme. Steven is a Senior Lecturer and public commentator with many published research works and books to his credit.

**Tordue Simon Targema** is a Commonwealth Ph.D. Scholar at the University of Glasgow, United Kingdom, a Ph.D. Program he is running jointly between the University of Uyo, Nigeria and University of Glasgow, United Kingdom. He teaches in the department of Journalism and Media Studies, Taraba State University Jalingo where he badged a Bachelor's Degree (with First Class Honors). A co-author of several articles in peer reviewed journals and thematic books across the globe; Targema has also presented papers at several academic conferences in Nigeria. He is a member of the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE) and the Association of Communication Scholars and Professionals of Nigeria (ACSPN). His research interests centers on digital media and civic engagement, media and conflict discourse/management, and film studies.

# VERBAL PORTRAIT

## Professor Idorenyin Udoesen Akpan: Sunset at Noon

Compiled by Tordue Simon Targema

Fading away like the stars of the morning  
Losing their light in the glorious sun  
Thus would we pass from the earth and its toiling  
Only remembered by what we have done

Only remembered, only remembered  
Only remembered by what we have done  
Thus would we pass from the earth and its toiling  
Only remembered by what we have done

*Horatius Bonar*

### Birth and Early Childhood

The story of Professor Idorenyin Akpan began at the tiny village of Obotme in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The third son of Elder (Chief) Udoesen Akpan and Elder Mrs. Eunice Udoesen Akpan, he was born on 21 December 1968. Idy, as he was fondly called by his many friends and admirers was a special child. He developed an early interest in letters and art. As a kid, he was extraordinarily humorous and would not miss an opportunity to offer his opinion on anything. His parents were quick to notice his intellectual abilities and didn't hesitate to send him to school at a very tender age. Akpan commenced his academic journey at Iwerre Central School Obotme in 1973 and completed in 1979, obtaining his First School Leaving Certificate that qualified him to secondary school. Thereafter, he was enrolled in one of the most prestigious public secondary schools in Nigeria – the famous Hope Waddell Training Institute in Calabar, Cross River State.

At Hope Waddell, an all-boys school, Idy excelled in the arts and social sciences and immediately stood out among his peers. As it was the custom of most boys' schools at that time, bullying was part of the school tradition. Indeed, a special all-bullying-day was set aside – 11th November of every year. But young Idy refused to be bullied. He learned at an early age to stand up for himself – using his greatest asset to complement his weakness. He was not as big as the other boys, but he had a special gift of the gab. He would talk his way out of every trouble. It was at Hope Waddell that he discovered the essence of communication and adopted a slogan that he was later associated with – Communicate or Perish. Akpan completed his secondary education in 1984, leading to the award of a General Certificate in Education.

### **Higher Education**

At Hope Waddell, he was adequately groomed for university education and without delay, enrolled for his BA in Communication Arts at the then University of Cross River. At the tender age of 16, Akpan was, no doubt, one of the youngest students in his class. This, notwithstanding, he was able to wriggle through the rigours of university education, and graduate on top of his class, emerging victoriously with a Second Class (Upper Division) bachelor's degree that enhanced his chances of getting retained at his Alma Mata after the compulsory one year programme which he diligently underwent in Makurdi, Benue State between 1989 and 1990.

As an academic staff, a bachelor's degree is, at its best, a starting point- if at all one desires to build a carrier in the academia. Propelled by this and his natural craving for knowledge, Akpan enrolled for a Master of Arts degree in his department. It must be noted here that by 1991 following the creation of Akwaibom State, the federal government had taken over the University from Cross River State and renamed it University of Uyo. Accordingly, he rounded up the Master's degree in 1995 under the supervision of Professor Emmanuel David Akpan (who, incidentally, was his undergraduate supervisor as well), specializing in Public Relations and Advertising. In order to reach the zenith of his career, Professor Akpan immediately enrolled for his doctorate degree in the same department- time had never being his friend, so he never joked with it!

With God helping him, Akpan pulled through gallantly, rounding up his doctorate degree in 2001 under the supervision of the living ancestor in ethno-communicology, the veteran Professor Desmond Wilson. Akpan's doctoral

thesis assessed corporate vision and corporate advertising in select corporate institutions in Nigeria. Is it surprising then that he took image, impression and whatever they represent with utmost seriousness? His favorite saying in this regard was: *never joke with first impression; you may never have a second chance!* Obviously, the doctorate degree launched Akpan to an exploratory mission in his chosen field, a mission he executed vigorously and aggressively, rising steadily through the ranks until death struck just as he reached the peak of his career in 2014.

Aside, these qualifications, Akpan had a plethora of other qualifications earned from short-term courses in the course of his career progression. Although space could not accommodate these here, it is instructive to note that these also helped substantially towards enhancing his career progression and performance in the course of his profession.

### **Career History**

Professor Akpan had a steady career progression within the academia. Speedily, he climbed the ladder of the Nigerian academic system from the base rung of Graduate Assistantship in 1991 at the University of Uyo- without skipping a stage- to a Professorial Chair which he was awarded posthumously, having satisfied all the conditions before his sudden demise in 2014 at the AUN. From 1991 to 2005, Akpan rose through the ranks to the position of a Senior Lecturer at the University of Uyo before leaving for AUN in 2009 where he landed as an Associate Professor. Before his demise in 2014, he was already being assessed for the coveted Professorial Chair, the assessment that returned positive- but unfortunately late- after his demise.

Apart from the University of Uyo and AUN, Akpan has taught in other universities in the country in various capacities, few of these include: Visiting Lecturer, Institute of Distance Education, Abia State University, Uturu-Abia State (1992-2007); Visiting Lecturer, Federal University of Technology Owerri, Uyo Outreach Centre (2002-2004); Adjunct Senior Lecturer, Department of Mass Communication, Abia State University, Uturu (2007-2009); Adjunct Senior Lecturer, Department of Mass Communication, Cross River State University of Technology, Calabar; Facilitator, National Open University, Uyo Centre; and Instructor, International Institute for Journalism, Uyo Centre among others.

Akpan also had field experience of journalism practice at several points in the course of his career. For instance, during the days of his National Youth Service

Corp (NYSC), he served as the editor of Bencops Magazine, a publication of NYSC members serving in the state. He also served as a reporter and producer with radio, TV and magazine houses in Makurdi, Benue State during this period. Similarly, he has served in various capacities as anchor and guest discussant at radio and TV stations in Uyo and Yola in the course of his career. Indeed, Professor Akpan was not known to be idle, as he would always have one thing or the other that would keep him engaged. Collectively, these have enabled him to engrave his bold impacts on humanity on the basis of which he is being remembered daily in the lives of the various peoples he touched.

### **Engagements within the Academic Community**

By all standards, Idorenyin Akpan's engagements within the academia were extensive. Yes, I say this with the least intension of sounding hyperbolic. Upon assumption of duty as a Graduate Assistant, Akpan was ever conscious of the popular academic axiom- *publish or perish!* With this on mind, he developed- as a matter of expedience- the culture of constantly researching and publishing the outcomes at relevant academic forums. Over the course of time, he emerged a firebrand academic and a fierce writer in the fields of Public Relations, Advertising and Marketing Communication. To his credit is a litany of journal articles, thematic book chapters, conference presentations and seminar presentations. At the last count, Akpan had a total of thirty-three (33) journal articles, seven (7) thematic book chapters and a textbook within his areas of research. Added to these, he had presented twenty-two (22) papers at academic conferences within and outside the country. At the time death struck, Akpan had two upcoming book projects which he was working on but could not complete.

To his credit too, Akpan had successfully supervised ten (10) Masters and three (3) Post Graduate Diploma candidates. Needless to mention that he thought a wide range of courses both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, cutting across his core areas of advertising, public relations and marketing to general courses in mass communication and multimedia technologies. In addition to these, he served on the editorial advisory/consultancy boards of several academic journals within and outside the country until his death; and, as part of his community service, he presented talks at seminars and workshops, and made several appearances on the broadcast media to discuss topical issues towards advancing the course of humanity. These serve as proofs