

**COMMUNICATION APPRAISAL OF CORPORATE ASSISTANCE  
CONSEQUENCE: A STUDY OF ADDAX PETROLEUM IN UGBELLE  
COMMUNITY, NIGERIA.**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Corporate assistance is expected to generate social harmony within communities. It becomes worrisome where discord is created in community relations, arising from an appraisal of such gestures. The Addax Petroleum experience in Ugbelle community in Imo State, Nigeria, provided a field-study experience on the communication appraisal of corporate assistance consequence in community relations. The interview method was used to obtain data from 12 interviewees, selected purposively from the parties involved in the communal crisis. Obtained data from the used opinionnaire were analysed, with the Likert scale to ascertain perceptions about corporate assistance. It was found that corporate assistance which fails to satisfy felt-need results in crisis in community relations. The system model technique in communication appraisal was also used in discussing the findings. The study recommends that frequent and regular community scanning is required to make corporate assistance match felt-need expectations, for social harmony to thrive in communities, globally.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Communication, appraisal, corporate assistance, consequence.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The erroneous impression that corporate assistance is a guaranteed panacea for a harmonious relationship within communities, questions how receivers value provided amenities. It shows that desires must be investigated and understood, so as to determine if provided assistance meets the expectations or felt-need of the receiver. It is when mutual appreciation of provisions meets felt-need requirements that the evolved cooperation among parties, leads to a harmonious relationship in the community. This is the essence of communication appraisal as community scanning within the context of community relations globally, involving a guest establishment and a host community in a relationship (Owuamalam, 2000: 12).

Sometimes, an establishment operating in a community decides to provide social services which it considers necessary in its performance environment. The officials exhibit what this author calls **urban arrogance**, by sitting in their urban head offices to decide what amenities a community should be provided with, in the locality. Such considerations may fail to address the felt-need of the communities. The result is the provision of facilities which serve the community but not a priority in mitigating the dire need of that community, (Owuamalam and Owuamalam, 2003:20). This is where communication plays a vital role in explaining situations to parties in a relationship, in order to advance reasons for justifying social activities within the community (Dube, 1959).

It becomes pertinent to understand why the business operation of a guest-establishment should be disrupted by the host community, inspite of the provision of essential assistance within the community. It is a knowledge of how assistance is evaluated that determines the effectiveness of corporate gestures, as a veritable strategy for the creation of harmony between a guest establishment and a host community. If their respective interest is mutually exclusive, then issues become contentious and could lead to confrontation, which may blossom into disruptions or crisis.

In 2000, the Ugbelle village in Izombe Community of Imo State, Nigeria, witnessed a crisis which disrupted crude oil flow and business operations of Addax Petroleum, an international oil company operating in the community. Addax Petroleum is the new company that emerged from Ashland Oil Company. The unresolved conflict between the community and the oil producing company brought to the fore that corporate social responsibility is not the only tonic for social harmony, in world communities. It became necessary to understand why inspite of tarred motorable roads, training of local artisans, provision of portable water and educational scholarship, as well as gainful employment to locals, the community still engaged the oil company in a costly conflict that disrupted business and peace within the community. This study, therefore, was designed to find out what went wrong between the parties in the relationship within the community and how such a lesson would benefit parties involved in community relations, globally.

### **Statement of Problem**

However, contentious issues lead to confrontation. Misunderstanding or lack of knowledge about the implication of corporate assistance is a problem to harmonious relationships between parties in community relations. It means that human needs must be investigated, analysed and understood, so that assistance could be adjusted to meet expectations.

It becomes necessary to find out if the assistance provides by Addax Petroleum in Ugbelle Community met the expectations of community members, so as to appreciate whether benevolence served as an avenue for social harmony. It is also important to understand if the conflict would have been averted, where effective communication channels were provided for interest articulation and assistance evaluation. It is when the communication linkages within the Addax-Ugbelle community relations experience are understood and appreciated that any observed source of misunderstanding or ignorance can be addressed.

### **Study Objective**

Two major objectives were set for this study. They were as follows:

1. To find out if provided assistance by Addax Petroleum in Ugbelle community met the expectations of community members; and
2. To determine why there was conflict between Addax Petroleum and Ugbelle community in 2000 that was not averted before it blossomed into crisis.

It was believed that the set objective would direct the focus of this study [Glass and Stanley, 1970], so as to obtain a solution to the stated problem of misunderstanding, which led to the experienced crisis within the community.

### **Research Question**

This study posed two questions to enable it obtain answers that would help in finding solution to the stated problem (Olitan and Nwoke, 1988). The questions asked were as follows:

1. Did the assistance provided by Addax Petroleum meet the expectations of Ugbelle community members?
2. Why was it not possible to avert conflict between Addax Petroleum Company and Ugbelle community that resulted in crisis in 2000?

### **1.4 Research Hypothesis**

Consequently, the following hypotheses were formulated for this study:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The assistance provided by Addax Petroleum met the expectations of Ugbelle community members.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** The provided assistance by Addax Petroleum did not meet the expectations of Ugbelle community members.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** The crisis of 2000 in Ugbelle community should have been averted.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** The crisis of 2000 in Ugbelle community should not have been averted.

## **LITERATURE/THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING**

The changing social and physical constitution of the communities account for the dynamic nature of community relations, as an aspect of public relation. This view explain why Peak, as cited by Ogbuagu [2000:6], defines community relations as “an institution’s planned, active and continuing participation, within a community, to maintain and enhance its environment, to the benefit of both the institution and the community.” The definition captures the essence of the intervening linkages in relationships within the community, as designs that enhance mutual benefits and social harmony, (Moore, 1981:326). It also re-inforces the essence of public relations as “facilitating adjustments and maintenance in the social systems that provide us with our physical and social need”, [Cutlip, Centre and Broom, 2000:25]. Also, it should be noted that desires change with situations. This is a veritable lesson to be learnt by parties in relationship within world communities.

According to Hendrix [2001:157], “one of the most important audiences an organisation has is its community, the home of its office and operation.” It means that an establishment is situated in an enclave where a choice of its neighbourhood has been made [Cutlip, Centre and Broom, 2000]. The import is that Ugbelle community was choosen by Addax Petroleum as its operating environment, through the establishment of its flow station and offices in that community, hence, generating an interaction between parties in the relationship.

Interaction is a form of communication gestalt. Fiske [2000:2] sees communication from a process school perspective, as how one party affects the behaviour or state of mind of another, through the “transmission of message.” The form of transmission could be verbal or attitudinal, like in corporate assistance and results in the “production of meaning”, in which case, how “the message interacts with people to produce meaning,” is the essence of this semiotic approach to

communication experience. The implication is to ensure that efficient and accurate information generates cordiality, which promotes social harmony in human relationships.

Corporate assistance is a form of non-verbal communication with goodwill implication in community relations. It is how the receiver perceives the gesture that accounts for either social harmony or discord, within the community. It is, therefore, the consequence of communication in corporate social responsibility that is responsible for either peace or crisis within human communities, like in the case of Addax Petroleum and members of Ugbelle community, in Imo State, Nigeria.

Corporate social responsibility, as a concept, defines what establishments do in order to be regarded as “a good neighbour or citizen”, within their areas of operation [Jefkins, 1992]. It explains how the institutions try to influence their acceptance within a community, through the provision of assistance to communities [Owuamalam, 1989].

The bottom-line is that corporate assistance shows how socially responsible an establishment can be, in meeting the needs of the environment where it operates. It is the perception of the value of such assistance that results in the manifested behaviour of parties in community relations. If the appraisal meets the desires of the parties as expectations, then such a felt-need satisfaction facilitates mutual cooperation that results in social harmony, within the communities. The contrast breeds discord that portends conflicts, confrontation and crisis in communities.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The social judgement theory propounded by Sherif and Hovland (1961), as a perceptual approach to felt-need evaluation, was considered apt for this study. It is the perception of corporate assistance, assessed on its value, in relation to the felt-need of the community that determines the attitudinal change manifesting in the observed behaviour within the community. The Ugbelle community members, therefore, had their felt-need as the anchor on which their latitude of acceptance of Addax Petroleum’s assistance or that of its rejection was referenced.

The provided assistance by Addax, formed the social stimuli designed to influence a positive image for the establishment. It became necessary to determine if the said assistance was within the latitude of acceptance of the Ugbelle community, so as to be positively appreciated as meeting their felt-need or not.

The findings from this study would, therefore be explained, using the principles of contrast and non-commitment, as components of the social judgement theory. It is the implication of ego involvement (Oskamp, 1977:210) in the evaluation of corporate assistance value that would show why conflict in perception, depicting a “curvilinear relationship” (Insko, 1967:68), generates discord in community relations, as a “boomerang effect”.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Library study confirms that community relations is a social phenomenon which cannot be subjected to a strict laboratory investigation. It means that the field method of social science research, as suggested by Cater [1977], became apt. This study, also used the descriptive analytical approach [Wimmer and Dominic, 2000] in discussing observations. The researcher believed that participatory observation [Goode and Hatt, 1964] would provide the data from

the field, which can help to explain the world view of community relations, as a concept and show how it works, so as to determine if lack of felt- need satisfaction could lead to crisis in communities.

The interview method was used to obtain data from parties in the studied human community. The interview is an oral extraction of information from a usually few persons who respond to structured or unstructured questions [Coward, 1981:15]. The method provided a personalised communication environment that generated openness in volunteered information from the interviewees. The result was expected to explain why conflicts lead to crisis within human communities, as an avenue for finding a solution to how corporate assistance can promote social harmony in communities.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

The interview method was, used to obtain the required data with a four-item interview schedule, presented to the selected interviewees, among the parties. The crisis experienced in the community and the visible presence of anti-riot police patrols, made it difficult to use the probability sampling technique in the selection of sample from the population of the community. The case scenario resulted in the use of purposive sampling technique for sample selection based on the observation and the convenience or available sampling method, for addressing persons in the community willing to participate in the study, during the crisis period.

Bias was eliminated since the interviewer was seen as an umpire by the parties. He served as a mediator in the crisis, as Commissioner for Information and Culture, then in the Imo State government in Nigeria. The position made him acceptable to the interviewees in the study. Efforts were, therefore, made to ensure that actors among the parties were interviewed, in order to obtain reliable data which would help to resolve the crisis within the community. Consequently, 12 persons were selected for the study as follows:

**Addax:** 2 junior staff; 2 supervisors and 2 administration staff.

**Ugbelle Community:** 2 town union members; 2 youths and 2 women.

The interviewees were selected to represent the population for this study through the screener process, using status and party categorization as indices. It was expected that the composition and characteristics of the respondents would generate the needed data that would help the study to address the stated crisis within the community. The obtained data were recorded in writing during the interview sessions. The data recording method was used because interviewees disagreed to be recorded on tape, since they seemed not convinced about the purpose of the private study, during the crisis period.

It is noteworthy to assert that all those interviewed felt the impact of both the provided assistance by Addax Petroleum and the protest by members of the Ugbelle community. The number of selected interviewees from each party in the relationship was not expected to influence the nature of responses, since individual differences and group interest synergize to form perceptions, attitudes or opinions.

### **Validity and Reliability of Measuring Instrument**

The pilot study approach was used to pre-test and post-test the opinionnaire as the measuring instrument, since its validity had earlier been established through the verification of questions in research questions and research hypothesis. The split system method was used to determine if the tool would be able to measure what it was designed to measure. A coefficient value of 0.62 justified its reliability.

### **Tool for Data Collection**

The questions asked to interviewees were presented as structured statements with answer options, to ensure high response rate within limited time, during the crisis period. The latitudes of acceptance or rejection were adequately structured, so as to accommodate each interviewee's opinion on a scale designed in a descending order of agreement for any positively presented statement and the reverse for any negatively presented one. The following interview schedule was used as an opinionnaire, which Best and Kahn [2002:329] explained as "an information form that attempts to measure the attitude or belief of an individual":

1. Addax has provided Ugbelle Community with social amenities and assistance.  
(a) Very true (b) True (c) Not sure (d) False (e) Very false
2. The assistance provided by Addax has met your expectation in the community.  
(a) Very true (b) True (c) Can't say (d) No (e) Not at all
3. You are satisfied with the provided assistance.  
(a) Very true (b) True (c) Not sure (d) No (e) Not at all
4. The current crisis is not necessary in the community.  
(a) Very true (b) True (c) Note sure (d) No (e) Not at all

The statements had structured answers as closed-ended in the opinionnaire but used the unstructured method, as follow-ups, to obtain clarification for any selected answer. The essence was to ensure that respondents were given the opportunity to express themselves as they wished. It was the "why" of their opinion that revealed predispositions as perceptions, which coloured action, and manifested in the observed behaviour within the community.

The Likert Scale was considered apt and used because it was perception as opinion on the corporate assistance provided within the Ugbelle community by Addax Petroleum that was measured, in order to determine why the crisis evolved and what should be done to resolve the issue. The Likert Scale, therefore, enabled the judgement of the respondents to be evaluated on an acceptance-rejection scale. The data obtained from the 12 interviewees as respondents, based on the four-item interview schedule, were thereafter documented, categorized and analysed.

### **Data presentation and Analysis**

The obtained data were therefore, coded as follows:

Very true (VT) = 5; True (T) = 4; Undecided (U) = 3; No (N) = 2 and Not at all (NA) = 1. The following formular was thereafter used in the determination of a decision point as the anchor (AP) on which acceptance or rejection was appraised:



$$AP = \frac{VT + T + U + N + NA}{RS} = \frac{5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1}{5} = \frac{15}{5} = 3$$

Where AP = Anchor point and RS = Response scale value

It means that 3 was used as the anchor for this study. Any value below the anchor point of 3 showed rejection while any above it showed acceptance. The data obtained from interviewees were evaluated, categorized and analysed as follows:

Item 1 in the opinionnaire was used to obtain data and analyse same as follows:

**Table 1:**

Item 1	Response						Total	Mean Value
Addax has provided Ugbelle community with social amenities and assistance.	Code	VT=5	T=4	U=3	N=2	NA=1	15	$\bar{X} = 3.00$
	Frequency	4	3	1	2	2	12	$\frac{47}{12}$
	Code value result	20	12	3	6	6	47	$\bar{X} = 3.92$
	Percentage	33.33	25.00	8.33	16.67	16.67	100.00	$\bar{X} = 3.92 > 3.00$

**Addax provision of assistance to Ugbelle community**

The result in table 1 above shows that the calculated mean value of responses at 3.92 was greater than the anchor point or mean value of 3.00. It means that  $X = 3.92 > 3.00$ . The result implication is that substantial number of those interviewed accepted that Addax Petroleum provided assistance to Ugbelle community. Also, the sum of values for those who accepted at (33.33 + 25.00%) or 58.33% was much more than those who rejected at (16.67 + 16.67%) or 33.34% by a difference of 24.99% or one quarter of the total number of respondents. It shows that majority of the interviewees believed that Addax provided assistance to the Ugbelle community, where it operates.

Item 2 in the opinionnaire was used to address expectations in the community as follows:

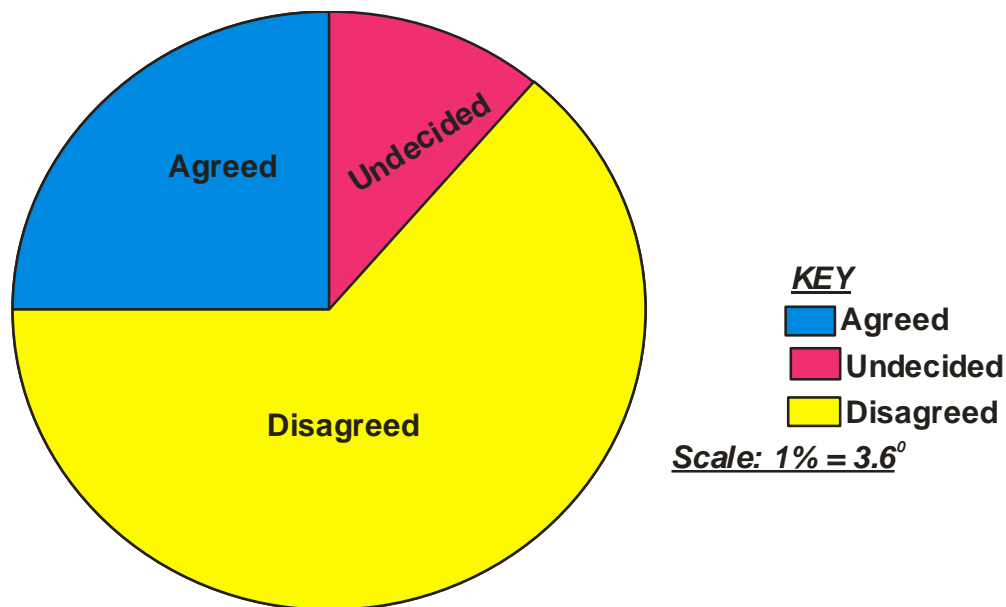
**Table 2:**

Item 2	Response						Total	Mean Value
The assistance provided by Addax has met your expectations in the community	Code	VT=5	T=4	U=3	N=2	NA=1	15	$\bar{X} = 3$
	Frequency	1	2	2	4	3	12	$\frac{30}{12}$
	Code value result	5	8	6	8	3	30	$\bar{X} = 2.5$
	Percentage	8.33	16.67	16.67	33.33	25.00	100.00	$\bar{X} = 2.5 < 3.0$

### Provided assistance Vs. Community expectation

The obtained result above shows that the calculated mean value of 2.5 was less than the anchor point or mean value of 3.0. It implies that  $X = 2.5 < 3.0$ . It means that majority of the interviewees, or 58.33% (33.33 + 25.00%) believed that the provided assistance by Addax did not meet the expectation of the community, while 25% claimed the assistance met their expectations and 16.67% was indifferent.

The result of the analysis was illustrated using the pie-chart at a scale of  $1\% = 3.6^\circ$ . The sectorial implication of the result was, therefore, presented as follows:



**Fig 1: Addax assistance Vs. Community expectations**

The sectors show that those who rejected the assistance provided by Addax Petroleum as not meeting the expectations of the Ugbelle community members were more than twice the number who accepted. The result shows why the views of the majority prevailed against that of the minority, resulting in the conflict that degenerated to crisis. Also, the result in Table 2 was used in answering research question one and testing research hypothesis one as follows:

#### Answering Research Question One

**R.Q1:** *Did the assistance provided by Addax Petroleum meet the expectations of Ugbelle community members?*

The result from the above pie-chart shows that more persons believed that the provided assistance by Addax Petroleum did not meet the expectations of the Ugbelle community members. Those who disagreed at 58.33% were more than those who agreed at 25% and others that were indifferent at 16.67% combined. It means that majority of the interviewees believed



that the assistance provided by Addax did not meet the expectations of the Ugbelle community members.

### Testing Research Hypothesis Two

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The assistance provided by Addax Petroleum met the expectations of Ugbelle community members.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** The assistance provided by Addax Petroleum did not meet the expectations of Ugbelle community members.

The obtained result in Table 2 shows that  $\bar{X} = 2.5 < 3.0$ . It means the rejection of the alternative hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>) and the acceptance of the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) above. It implies that the assistance provided by Addax Petroleum did not meet the expectations or felt-need of Ugbelle community members.

Item 3 in the opinionnaire was used to evaluate appreciation of the provided assistance as follows:

**Table 3:**

Item 3	Response						Total	Mean Value
Are you satisfied with the provided assistance by Addax	Code	VT=5	T=4	U=3	N=2	NA=1	15	$\bar{X} = 3.00$
	Frequency	2	3	1	3	3	12	$\frac{34}{12}$
	Code value result	10	12	3	6	3	34	= <b>2.83</b>
	Percentage	16.67	25.00	8.33	25.00	25.00	100.00	$\bar{X} = 2.83 < 3.00$

### Community appreciation of provided assistance by Addax

The result above shows that although Addax Petroleum provided assistance to Ugbelle community, the community members were not satisfied with the said assistance. For instance, whereas 41.67% (16.67 + 25.00) showed appreciation, 50% (25.00 + 25.00) were not satisfied with the assistance. It means that those who were not satisfied with the assistance were more at 50% than those who claimed satisfied at 41.67% by a difference of 8.33%. Those who held no specific opinion accounted for 8.33% of those interviewed.

Also, the obtained result shows that the calculated mean value of 2.83 was less than the anchor point at 3.00 by a marginal difference of 0.17. It means that  $X = 2.83 < 3.00$ . The result confirmed that more persons were not satisfied with the provided assistance by Addax in Ugbelle community.

Item 4 was used to find out if the experienced crisis within the community would not have been averted as follows:

**Table 4:**

Item 4	Response						Total	Mean Value
	Code	VT=	T=	U=	N=	NA=		
The current crisis is not necessary in the community		1	2	3	5	5	15	$\bar{X} = 3.00$
	Frequency	1	3	3	3	2	12	$\frac{38}{12} = 3.17$
	Code value result	1	6	9	12	10	38	$\bar{X} = 3.17 < 3.00$
	Percentage	8.33	25.0	25.0	25.0	16.67	100.0	

**Necessity of the 2000 crisis in the Ugbelle community**

In the table above, the code was valued in an ascending order from VT = 1; T = 2; U = 3; N = 4 and NA = 5, because the question, as a statement, was presented in a negative form (Olitan and Nwoke; 1986). The obtained result shows that the calculated mean value of 3.17 was greater than the decision point value of 3.0. It means that  $X = 3.17 > 3.00$ .

Item 4 above was used to answer research question two as well as test research hypothesis two. The details of findings were as follows:

**Answering Research Question Two**

Table 4 above shows that one third of the interviewees or 33.33% (8.33 + 25.0) believed that the crisis, witnessed then in Ugbelle community was not necessary, while one-quarter or 25% held no definite opinion. However, the other 41.67% (25.00 + 16.67) believed that the crisis was necessary. It means that more persons at a positive difference of 8.34% favoured the crises at the time of this study, in 2000.

**Testing Research Hypothesis Two**

The obtained result from Table 4 in the study shows that the calculated mean value of 3.17 was higher than that of the decision point value of 3.00 by a marginal difference of 0.17. It implies that the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted, since  $X = 3.17 > 3.00$ . It implied that the crisis of 2000 in Ugbelle community would not have been averted.

**4.0 Result/Findings**

- (1) Interviewees agreed that Addax provided assistance to Ugbelle community, since 58.33% were in agreement while 33.34% disagreed as shown at Table 1. The result was also confirmed by the Likert scale calculation, which showed that  $X = 3.92 > 3.00$ . It meant that perception was in the latitude of acceptance.
- (2) Most of those interviewed stated in Table 2 that the provided assistance by Addax did not meet the expectation of Ugbella community members. Majority at 58.33% in Table 2 said so, similar to the result of those who agreed that Addax provided assistance to Ugbelle community in Table 1. However, 25% or one-quarter agreed that it met the community's felt-need while 16.67% were indifferent. The Likert scale result showed perception favouring the latitude of rejection since  $X = 2.5 < 3.0$

- (3) The community acknowledged Addax assistance but did not appreciate it because majority of those interviewed or 50%, as shown at Table 3 were not satisfied, while 41.67% claimed satisfied. Also, the Likert scale result showed that  $X = 2.83 < 3.00$ , hence perception was at the latitude of rejection.
- (4) More persons or 41.67% at Table 4 believed that the crisis was necessary and could not have been averted, while 33.33% or one-third believed that it was not necessary. Also, the Likert scale calculation produced a result of  $X = 3.17 > 3.00$ , which confirmed that perception was on the latitude of acceptance.

The findings question why a community that acknowledged corporate assistance from a quest company engaged in conflict which resulted in the witnessed crisis. It means that something must have led to the confrontation that disrupted social harmony in the community.

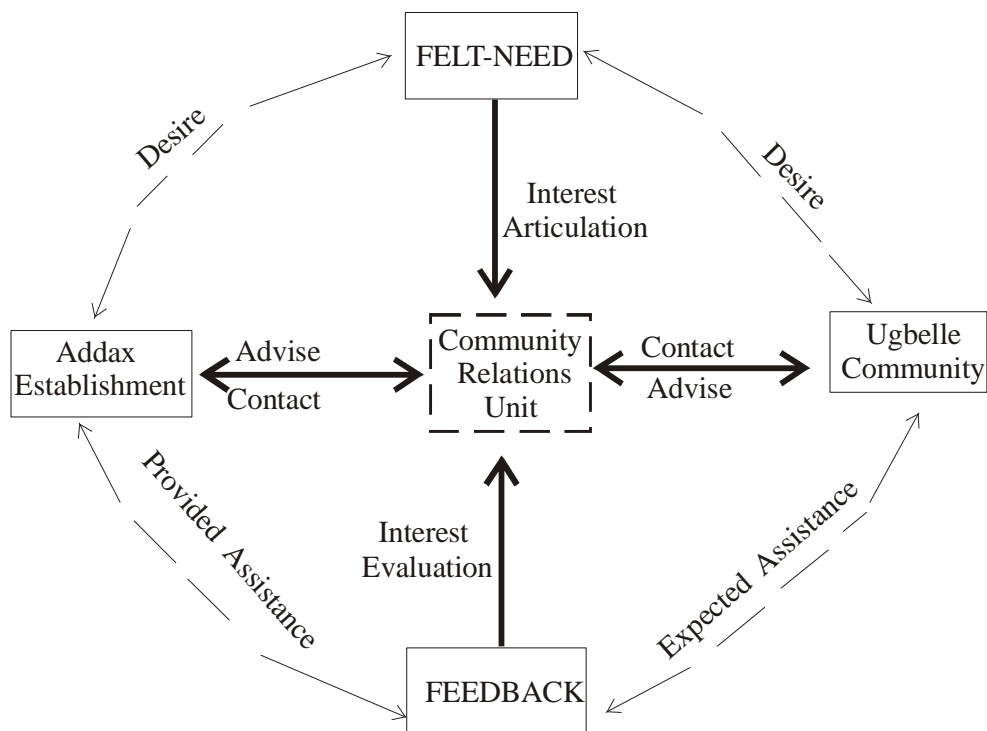
## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The above findings showed that Addax actually provided assistance and amenities to Ugbelle community. The provided assistance failed to meet the expectations of the community members, resulting in why fewer people in the community were satisfied with the said assistance at 41.67% as against the 50% that were not satisfied. It is the dissatisfaction that explained why more persons at 41.67% believed that the crisis would not have been averted as against the 33.33% that felt otherwise.

The researcher probed on the nature of assistance provided the Ugbelle community and was informed that Addax provided training to artisans, offered scholarships, provided pip-borne water at its own premises and employed locals as casual labourers. It also employed junior staff, like security men, drivers, messengers, cleaners and other menial job positions.

On the other hand, the interviewees revealed that Addax did not reticulate the provided pipe-borne water to the village; did not employ locals who were graduates to senior and management positions in the company which denied the community the opportunity of having a voice in their relationship and assistance to be provided. It was the stored grievance that the company's assistance was meant to benefit the establishment more than the community it claimed to assist that resulted in the crisis. It showed that the crisis would not have been averted.

However, this researcher used the system model appraisal technique in community relations to analyse obtained results and found that lack of efficient and constant communication between Addax Petroleum and the Ugbelle community was responsible for the lacuna that created a misunderstanding, which resulted in the crisis. The said model was applied to the community relations example for analysis as follows:



**Fig 2: System Model in Community relations.**

The system model in community relations, designed by this researcher in 2000, explains how communication linkages produce the effects witnessed in relationships among parties in a human community. It was the absence of a functional community relations unit within the community illustrated broken lines, that obliterated information flow from the company to the community. If the office had existed at the operational base of the company, then the desires of the community as felt-need would have been identified, obtained and articulated, as the interest to be satisfied.

Also, the absence of such a unit in the company denied Addax the opportunity of evaluating the provided assistance, in order to ascertain if the provided matched the expected, in order to achieve mutual acceptance, capable of generating goodwill, candour and cordiality. It is the absence of social harmony, arising from mutual appreciation among the parties that led to the discord, witnessed as crisis in 2000 at the Ugbelle community. The result, therefore, explains how communication appraisal of corporate assistance manifests in an adverse consequence, like the crisis in this study.

## **IMPLICATION TO RESEARCH AND PRACTICE**

The import of the scenario shows that Addax, as an establishment and Ugbelle, as the host community had various and different desires that was mutually exclusive to each other's. It

means that the linkages in the relationship, which explain how the respective felt-needs of the parties were interpreted and analysed, should be understood in the community relations experience. It also shows that an appreciation of the implications of feedbacks and evaluations in communication needs to be made so as to determine how felt-need is translated to need satisfaction, in the creation of harmony within human communities.

The study showed that provided corporate assistance must meet the expectation of the receiver for the gesture to be appreciated as satisfying felt-need in community relations. It means that the felt-need served as the anchor for evaluating the assistance received by the establishment. The latitude of acceptance would generate accord where provided assistance meets the expectation of the community.

Also, where such assistance fails to meet expectations, then appreciation would not emerge, since the evaluation is in the latitude of rejection, causing contrast. It is the inability of the establishment to determine the ego content of the community's interest that resulted in the contrast, which manifested as crisis in the community.

## **CONCLUSION**

The symbiotic nature of offer and acceptance explains that cordiality is expected in every mutually accepted agreement. If a disagreement ensues, conflict results which if not addressed and resolved amicably, could degenerate to contention that cause confrontation. It means that establishments should be able to understand its performance environment. It is the synergy of interest as a cost-benefit analysis that determines whether individuals in a community would co-operate or dislodge effective community relations.

The Addax experience in Ugbelle shows that corporate assistance must meet the community's expectation for it to be appreciated. It is a satisfied community that provides peace for harmonious community relations. Establishments desirous of creating an acceptable image within a community must realise that it is how the community feels about it that determines its corporate image.

It is when the underlying issues are determined and addressed that conflict in assistance appreciation can be amicably resolved, to promote cordiality between parties in community relations. This is an experience which the Addax Petroleum Company, operating in Ugbelle Community in Imo State of Nigeria, provided this study for investigation.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH**

A reliable and credible avenue of mutual understanding and cooperation is essential for cordiality to generate social harmony for effective community relation. It becomes pertinent to determine the desirability of a communication office within the operating environment of an establishment, since issues change rapidly between moments of contacts in community relation. Such a study should determine the competence of the communication office in addressing issues on behalf of the establishment as expediency dictates, so as to wad off conflict in community relations.

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