Bridging the Trust Deficit between African Nations and European Nations, the Role of Ethical Public Relations and Public Diplomacy Strategies: Evidence from Nigeria and Cameroon

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ABSTRACT

This study examines trust deficit between African nations and European nations and role of ethical public relations and public diplomacy strategies, with France as leading example of pan-European sanctuary and its impact on perception of democracy and good governance through comparative analysis of Nigeria and Cameroon. Despite institutional frameworks including Joint Africa-EU Strategy 2007, Cotonou Agreement, and EU Global Gateway 150 billion Euros, empirical evidence indicates deepening trust deficit where African nations trust EU less than China. Afrobarometer surveys show China retains over 60 percent favourability while EU ranks third, and 71 percent of Africans demand greater influence in international bodies. Literature documents credibility crisis where EU narratives of balanced partnership mask deep mutual mistrust, vaccine hoarding, and exclusion of civil society from 2022 EU-AU Summit.This study argues traditional European public diplomacy relies on Grunig and Hunt's public information model one-way dissemination rather than two-way symmetrical ethical model. Most critically, it argues Françafrique has evolved into pan-European sanctuary Eurafrique where France has become pan-African medical-diplomatic hub hosting both Francophone and Anglophone leaders who rule from Europe. Cameroon former French and British colony President Paul Biya 92 years , 42 years in power since 1982 spends extended periods in Geneva and France reported by Jeune Afrique and Le Monde. Nigeria former British colony independence 1960 not French colony suffers same faith. President Bola Tinubu frequent medical trips to Paris France reported by Premium Times and Reuters, and former President Buhari eight months in London. This creates governance vacuum, double standard condemning military coups in Sahel as unconstitutional but protecting constitutional coups removing term limits, and hypocrisy perceived by youth who constitute 60 percent of population. Mixed-methods design used survey of 1000 respondents 500 Nigerians 500 Cameroonians, content analysis of 1600 articles from European BBC, Deutsche Welle, France24, African Channels , Premium Times , CRTV, 20 interviews, and policy document analysis. New Pan-European Sanctuary Perception Scale 12 items alpha 0.87 developed. Analysis via SPSS and SmartPLS SEM. Findings, Pan-European sanctuary items mean above 4.0 strong agreement, double standard military vs constitutional coups mean 4.61 highest, public funds for suites Europe while local hospitals lack equipment mean 4.55. Current EU communication perceived as public information model mean 4.28 dominant,two-way symmetrical mean 1.89 absent. European media 62 percent crisis framing Africa, African media 58 percent exploitation hypocrisy framing Europe. Trust means below 3.0 low: trust to support democracy including term limits 2.08, trust not to enable absentee leadership 1.92, trust EU more than China 2.15. Pearson correlation sanctuary perception negatively correlated with trust r=-0.65 p.0.01, costly signalling positively r=0.72. Multiple regression R Square 0.68. All hypotheses accepted.

H1 Françafrique negative trust Beta -0.45 p.0.001, H2 sanctuary predicts distrust democracy Beta 0.58 p.0.001, H3 costly signals more trustworthy Beta 0.62 p.0.001, H4 two-way symmetrical predicts restoration Beta 0.55 p.0.001, H5 authenticity mediates indirect 0.41 p.0.001. Study proposes ethical international public relations trust bridge model with three tests. Costly signalling test building verifiable hospitals in Yaoundé and Abuja so leaders do not need Paris, Consistency test same standard for constitutional and military coups, two-way accountability test disclosing sanctuary duration and including youth in summits. Contribution includes theoretical extension of Grunig Heath stakeholder exchange framing signalling to intercontinental level,

conceptual introduction of pan-European sanctuary Eurafrique and new scale, empirical comparative proof Nigeria British vs Cameroon French showing France as pan-African hub, methodological three tests model, and Afrocentric 920 voices.Conclusion, trust deficit is real and deepening, Françafrique to Eurafrique proven, double standard strongest predictor, current one-way model fails authenticity test, ethical public relations can restore trust if passes authenticity mediation otherwise China remains higher rated.

Keywords: Trust Deficit, Africa-Europe, Ethical Public Relations, Public Diplomacy, Françafrique, Pan-European Sanctuary, Eurafrique, Absentee Leadership, Costly Signalling, Authenticity, France, Nigeria, Cameroon, Biya, Tinubu

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Ethical public relations (PR) is the answer to the trust deficit because most nations, international organizations and institutions do not have an information problem, rather they have a credibility problem. The trust deficit is the gap between what they say and what they practice and it is growing for so many reasons.The relationship between African nations and European nations represents one of the most enduring and contested intercontinental relationships in international relations. Shaped by centuries of contact including colonial conquest, decolonization, Cold War alignment, and contemporary globalization, the relationship has transitioned from direct colonial administration to neo-colonial influence and currently to formal partnership rhetoric (Verschave, 1998; Smith, 2003). Despite institutional frameworks such as the Cotonou Agreement 2000-2020, the Joint Africa-EU Strategy adopted in 2007, the European Union Global Gateway Initiative launched in 2021 promising 150 billion euros for Africa, and regular EU-Africa Summits, empirical evidence indicates a deepening trust deficit that African nations have towards European nations. Recent public opinion data provides evidence of this deficit. Afrobarometer surveys across 30 African countries indicate that 71 percent of African citizens believe Africa should have greater influence in decision-making of international bodies such as the United Nations, and perceptions of former colonial powers remain ambivalent (Afrobarometer, 2025).

Furthermore, comparative studies of development partner perception show that while views of the European Union are positive in most cases, there is no evidence that the EU is seen as a better development partner than China. Overall, with China retaining more positive influence ratings exceeding 60 percent in several countries (Keuleers, 2015, Afrobarometer, 2024). The Edelman trust barometer 2025 also indicates growing insularity and concentration of trust in familiar circles, with government trust remaining low across Africa. The European Union's own percentage of global GDP is projected to fall to less than 10 percent by 2050, while Africa will be home to almost 40 percent of world population, fundamentally altering power dynamics (Global Policy Journal, 2024). Scholarly literature documents a credibility crisis in EU-Africa relations. Analyses note that underneath narrative of balanced partnership, real dynamics continue to be marked by deep mutual mistrust, with European donors slashing aid budgets while external actions increasingly serve short-term political, economic, and security interests (Global Policy Journal, 2024). The 2022 EU-AU Summit in Brussels was criticized for excluding civil society and presenting investment packages brushed off as already pledged, while European Union was simultaneously hoarding COVID-19 vaccines and opposing TRIPS Waiver that could enable manufacturing in Global South (Global Policy Journal, 2024). Research on moral economy approach to Africa-EU ties through European investment bank argues that European trade and development partnership has long been characterized by liberal institutionalist accounts of interdependence and critical assessments of neo-colonialism, with European Union using legitimating ethical discourse while embedding poverty through normative development agenda (Cambridge Core, 2023).

This trust deficit is fundamentally a communication and public diplomacy failure. Traditional European public diplomacy towards Africa has relied on what Grunig and Hunt (1984) described as press agentry and public information models of public relations. These are one-way asymmetrical models that focus on disseminating

information about Europe to Africa through aid reports, summit communiqués, and press releases, without corresponding listening, mutual accountability, and verifiable proof at community level (Grunig & Hunt, 1984. Grunig, 1992) and Heath (2006) argues that fully functioning society requires organizations to engage in mutual problem-solving and co-creation of meaning, not one-way persuasion. When applied to international level, Heath's fully functioning society theory suggests that EU-Africa cannot become fully functioning as a global society through only one-way informational diplomacy .

A major driver of Africa's trust deficit towards Europe, particularly France, is perception of Françafrique neo-colonial public diplomacy where European nations provide medical sanctuary, financial safe haven, and diplomatic legitimacy to old, sick, and long-serving African leaders including President Paul Biya of Cameroon in power since 1982 and President Bola Tinubu of Nigeria whose frequent medical stays in France are publicly documented, while simultaneously preaching democracy, good governance, and human rights. This inconsistency between European rhetoric on democracy and practice of harbouring leaders who subvert democratic transition through absentee rule from France has eroded African citizens' trust in European democracy, diplomacy, and governance models. France is not the sole culprit as a leading example of broader European pattern, even England is included this mess for sanctuary.The trust deficit is pan-European, as one wonders how has Françafrique evolved into pan-European sanctuary practice affecting both Francophone Cameroon and Anglophone Nigeria?. How does European provision of medical sanctuary to old and sick African leaders who rule from Europe affect African trust in European democracy? Why does France serve as sanctuary even for non-French colonies like Nigeria, and what does this reveal about contemporary Europe-Africa public diplomacy?However, other ontemporary causes of trust deficit include media framing asymmetry, policy inconsistency, and pan-European sanctuary of absentee African leadership. Entman's framing theory argues that media selection and salience of aspects of reality promotes particular interpretations. European media including British Broadcasting Corporation, Deutsche Welle, and France 24 disproportionately frame Africa through crisis lens of poverty, conflict, disease, and irregular migration, while African media including Channels Television Nigeria and Nation Media Kenya often frame Europe through exploitation and conditionality lens. Policy inconsistency between rhetoric and practice further erodes credibility. European Union communicates equal partnership and Global Gateway, yet African stakeholders experience stringent visa regimes, common agricultural policy subsidies undermining African agriculture, carbon border adjustment mechanisms perceived as green protectionism, and selective application of democratic standards (Chick & Farag, 2026). A particularly damaging cause, which this study examines in depth, is the evolution of Françafrique into pan-European sanctuary practice. Françafrique, originally coined by Félix Houphouët-Boigny and critically examined by Verschave (1998), describes dense network of personal, financial, military, and political ties where France provides political legitimacy, medical sanctuary, financial safe haven, and diplomatic protection to African leaders in exchange for European strategic access.

While Cameroon under President Paul Biya, 92 years old and 42 years in power since 1982, represents classic Françafrique case with publicly documented extended stays in Geneva and Paris reported by Jeune Afrique and Le Monde, Nigeria represents evolution beyond Francophone sphere. Nigeria is a former British colony, not a French colony, and gained independence in 1960,yet it suffers same faith of absentee leadership sanctuary in Europe. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, 73 years old, has undertaken frequent medical trips to Paris, France, as reported by Premium Times and Reuters, despite Nigeria's Anglophone heritage. Previous President Muhammadu Buhari spent eight months in London during his presidency for medical treatment. This demonstrates shift from Françafrique to Eurafrique, where France has become pan-African medical-diplomatic hub for both Francophone and Anglophone leaders, joined by United Kingdom and Switzerland. When European nations including France, United Kingdom, and Switzerland provide medical sanctuary and prolonged residence to old, sick, and long-serving leaders who rule from Europe while citizens face poor hospitals at home, and when France hosts Africa-France Summit preaching democracy while hosting leaders who have removed term limits, African youth who constitute over 60 percent of population perceive double standards and hypocrisy. Europe condemns military coups in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger as unconstitutional but protects constitutional coups where old presidents remove term limits to stay over 40 years in office.This inconsistency undermines trust in European democracy, diplomacy, and good governance (Global Policy Journal, 2024).

Ethical public relations and public diplomacy offer alternative framework. Ethical public relations, anchored in Grunig and Hunt's two-way symmetrical model, Heath's fully functioning society theory, Freeman's stakeholder theory which positions African nations as legitimate stakeholders rather than aid recipients, and Homans (1958) and Blau's social exchange theory which argues trust is built through repeated positive exchange, proposes that trust is restored through costly signalling, consistency, and two-way accountability. Costly signalling theory suggests signals that require significant investment are more credible than cheap signals because they are difficult to fake. Consistency theory suggests predictable positive exchange builds loyalty. Two-way accountability suggests institutions that subject themselves to external scrutiny are more trustworthy.

Applied to Africa-Europe relations, this means moving from cheap signals such as aid reports and summit photos with absentee leaders to costly signals such as verifiable factories in Nigeria, technology transfer in Kenya, and hospitals in Cameroon and Nigeria that would remove need for presidents to seek treatment in France. It means moving from inconsistency between partnership rhetoric and visa restrictions to full consistency between rhetoric and policy. It means moving from one-way diplomacy where Europe tells Africa about Europe to two-way diplomacy where Europe listens to African media framing, allows African civil society scrutiny of EU policies, and subjects EU-Africa policies to joint review.This study therefore examines trust deficit that African nations have towards European nations and proposes ethical public relations and public diplomacy strategies for bridging gap, using France as leading example of pan-European sanctuary while tracking broader European pattern through comparative analysis of Nigeria, former British colony, and Cameroon, former French and British colony.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite formal partnership frameworks and billions in aid, trust that African nations have towards European nations is declining rather than increasing. Youth perception data shows young Africans increasingly prefer China, Turkey, and United Arab Emirates as consistent partners compared to Europe. European public diplomacy continues to emphasize aid narratives and summitry while African stakeholders at community level do not see verifiable industrialization, technology transfer, or visa reciprocity. Media framing on both sides reinforces mistrust without correction mechanism. Policy inconsistency between partnership rhetoric and restrictive migration, agricultural subsidies, and selective democratic standards erodes credibility. Most critically, evolution of Françafrique into pan-European sanctuary practice where European nations provide medical sanctuary and prolonged residence to old, sick, and long-serving leaders who rule from Europe, including President Paul Biya of Cameroon in power since 1982 with extended stays in Geneva and Paris and President Bola Tinubu of Nigeria with frequent medical trips to Paris despite Nigeria being former British colony, creates perception of European complicity in bad governance and absentee rule. This is perceived as double standard where Europe condemns military coups but protects constitutional coups and enables governance vacuum through delayed decisions and public funds used for presidential suites abroad while local hospitals lack equipment.

Previous studies have examined Africa-Europe relations from international relations, economics, and history perspectives, including capability-expectations gap in Europe's international role, EU trust fund for Africa implications, moral economy approach to EU ties, and public opinion of EU versus China as development partner. Studies on public relations ethics have examined ethical codes of Nigerian institute of public relations and chartered institute of public relations, and business journalism ethics in Kenya, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. However, no empirical study has examined Africa-Europe trust deficit through ethical international public relations framework including costly signalling, consistency, authenticity mediation, and two-way symmetrical public diplomacy, and none has proposed framework that distinguishes ethical public diplomacy from reputation management at intercontinental level using Nigeria and Cameroon as comparative cases of Anglophone and Francophone experience of European sanctuary. Therefore, this study addresses gap by examining whether ethical public relations and public diplomacy strategies can bridge trust deficit that African nations have towards European nations.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

Aim: To critically examine trust deficit that African nations have towards European nations and to propose ethical public relations and public diplomacy strategies for bridging gap, using France as leading example of pan-European sanctuary and its impact on perception of democracy and good governance through comparative analysis of Nigeria and Cameroon states.

Specific Objectives

1. To examine historical and contemporary causes of trust deficit that African nations have towards European nations, including colonial legacy, Françafrique evolution to pan-European sanctuary, media framing asymmetry, policy inconsistency, and aid paternalism.

2. To analyse how European institutions currently communicate their engagement with Africa in areas of aid, trade, migration, climate, and media, and to classify communication according to Grunig and Hunt's four models.

3. To examine how perception of France and other European nations providing medical sanctuary and prolonged residence to old and sick African leaders who rule from Europe contributes to trust deficit in European democracy, diplomacy, and good governance among stakeholders in Nigeria and Cameroon.

4. To assess African stakeholders' perception of European credibility, sincerity, consistency, and accountability in Nigeria and Cameroon, including youth perception.

5. To determine relationship between ethical public diplomacy strategies including costly signalling, consistency, and two-way accountability and stakeholder trust restoration.

6. To propose ethical international public relations framework for restoring trust and building sustainable Africa-Europe partnership.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are historical and contemporary causes of trust deficit that African nations have towards European nations?

2. How do European institutions currently communicate their engagement with Africa?

3. How does European provision of medical sanctuary and prolonged residence to old and sick African leaders who rule from Europe, with France as leading example including both former French colony Cameroon and former British colony Nigeria, affect African trust in European democracy, diplomacy, and good governance?

4. How do African stakeholders in Nigeria and Cameroon perceive European credibility and accountability?

5. What is the relationship between ethical public diplomacy strategies and trust restoration?

6. What ethical international public relations framework can bridge Africa-Europe trust deficit?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

H1: There is significant negative relationship between perceived colonial and neo-colonial Françafrique narrative and trust in European institutions among African stakeholders in Nigeria and Cameroon.

H2: There is significant positive relationship between perceived pan-European sanctuary of absentee leaders including France hosting both Francophone Cameroon and Anglophone Nigeria leaders who rule from Europe and distrust in European democracy and good governance among African stakeholders.

H3: European institutions perceived to use costly signalling such as verifiable infrastructure investment, technology transfer, and fair trade terms are perceived as more trustworthy than those using cheap signals such as aid reports and summit photos with long-serving leaders.

H4: Two-way symmetrical public diplomacy including mutual listening, visa reciprocity, and joint policy review significantly predicts trust restoration compared to one-way informational diplomacy.

H5: Perceived authenticity, defined as consistency between European rhetoric on democracy and European practice regarding constitutional coups and absentee leadership sanctuary in France and other European nations, mediates relationship between public diplomacy strategies and stakeholder trust.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Theoretical significance: This study extends Grunig and Hunt's Four Models from organizational level to intercontinental public diplomacy level, extends Heath's fully functioning society theory from local community to global society level, integrates stakeholder theory by positioning African nations as legitimate stakeholders rather than aid recipients, and integrates social exchange theory and Framing theory into Africa-Europe relations. It fills gap in international public relations literature dominated by United States-China studies with limited empirical studies on Africa-Europe from African perspective and no studies applying costly signalling to pan-European sanctuary phenomenon.

Practical significance: For European institutions including European external action service, EU delegations in Nigeria and Cameroon, and ministries of foreign affairs in Germany, France, and United Kingdom, study provides three empirical tests to distinguish ethical public diplomacy from reputation management: costly signalling test, consistency test, and two-way accountability test. Specifically, it provides evidence on how medical sanctuary practice undermines public diplomacy.

Policy significance: Study is highly relevant to current policy debates including EU global gateway versus China's belt and road initiative, EU critical raw materials Act, EU migration deals, EU green deal and carbon border adjustment mechanism, AU-EU partnership negotiations, and French Africa policy reform under President Macron.

Social significance: By amplifying African voices, particularly youth voices in Nigeria and Cameroon who suffer faith of absentee leadership, study contributes to more balanced global discourse, reduction of stereotypes, and building sustainable partnership based on mutual respect rather than paternalism and clientelism.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study is limited to trust deficit that African nations have towards European nations, not reverse, though reverse perceptions are acknowledged. Geographically, for depth, study focuses on two African nations Nigeria former British colony and Cameroon former French and British colony to illustrate evolution from Françafrique to pan-European sanctuary, and three European nations Germany, France, and United Kingdom where France is leading example of sanctuary but UK and Switzerland are tracked as part of broader European pattern. Thematically, study focuses on five engagement areas, aid and development, trade and investment, migration and mobility, climate and energy, and media representation plus medical sanctuary and absentee governance. Temporally, the study focuses on contemporary period 2020 to 2025 covering COVID-19, EU-AU summits 2022, global gateway launch, and current policy frameworks, with historical context from colonial period to present, including Biya tenure since 1982 and Buhari and Tinubu medical trips.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Africa consists of 54 nations and Europe over 40 nations, limiting to Nigeria and Cameroon cannot represent entire continents, but two countries provide comparative insight into Anglophone and Francophone experience and illustrate pan-European pattern. Reliance on perception data may be influenced by current events such as

visa denials or media reports, but triangulation through questionnaire, content analysis, interviews, and policy document analysis mitigates bias. Access to diplomats may be constrained, but official policy documents and public statements are available. Concept of medical sanctuary is sensitive and study relies on publicly reported information from Jeune Afrique, Le Monde, Premium Times, and Reuters and measures perception rather than making legal accusation.

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms as Relate to this Study Only

Trust Deficit: Gap between expected trust based on partnership rhetoric and actual trust based on stakeholder experience, measured through credibility, reliability, sincerity, and accountability.

Ethical Public Relations: Public relations practice that is truthful, transparent, consistent, and mutually accountable, based on two-way symmetrical model, as opposed to press agentry or spin.

Public Diplomacy: Communication by state and non-state actors aimed at influencing foreign publics and building relationships beyond traditional government-to-government diplomacy.

Françafrique: Dense network of personal, financial, military, and political ties between France and former African colonies, characterized by provision of legitimacy and sanctuary to African leaders in exchange for strategic access.

Pan-European Sanctuary: Evolution of Françafrique practice beyond French sphere to include other European nations including United Kingdom and Switzerland providing medical sanctuary and prolonged residence to African leaders from both Francophone and Anglophone countries including Nigeria and Cameroon.

Absentee Leadership: Governance practice where president rules from Europe during extended medical stays or residence abroad, causing governance vacuum at home, as president Tinubu´s surpporters and carbnet argues that he can rule from anywhere, even from France.

Costly Signalling: Signals requiring significant investment difficult to fake, such as verifiable factories, technology transfer, fair trade terms, and hospitals built in Africa, compared to cheap signals such as press releases and summit photos.

Consistency: Alignment between institutional rhetoric on democracy, good governance, and partnership and institutional policy and behaviour regarding term limits, constitutional coups, and medical sanctuary.

Two-Way Accountability: Willingness of institutions to subject themselves to external scrutiny and joint review by stakeholders including civil society and youth.

Authenticity: Perceived sincerity and congruence between stated values and actual behaviour, mediating relationship between public diplomacy and trust.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews extant literature relevant to trust deficit between African nations and European nations and the role of ethical public relations and public diplomacy strategies. The chapter is organized into conceptual review, theoretical framework, and empirical review. Conceptual review clarifies trust deficit, ethical public relations, public diplomacy, Françafrique, and pan-European sanctuary. Theoretical framework examines Grunig and Hunt's four models of public relations, Heath's fully functioning society theory, Freeman's stakeholder theory, Homans and Blau's social exchange theory, Entman's framing theory, and

Costly signalling theory. Empirical review synthesizes studies on Africa-EU relations, Afrobarometer perception data, media framing asymmetry, and pan-European sanctuary of absentee leadership with France as leading example including Nigeria and Cameroon. The chapter concludes with gap identification and conceptual framework.

2.2 Conceptual Review

2.2.1 Trust Deficit Between African and European Nations

Trust in international relations is defined as confidence that other party will act in ways that are honest, reliable, and consistent with shared expectations (Rousseau et al., 1998). Trust deficit refers to gap between expected trust based on partnership rhetoric and actual trust based on experience, measured through credibility, reliability, sincerity, and accountability (Mayer et al., 1995). In Africa-EU context, trust deficit manifests as declining African stakeholder confidence in European institutions despite formal partnership frameworks. Recent analyses document credibility crisis. Global Policy Journal (2024) notes that underneath narrative of balanced partnership, real dynamics continue to be marked by deep mutual mistrust, with European donors slashing aid budgets at historical pace while external actions increasingly serve short-term political, economic, and security interests. Similarly, 2022 EU-AU Summit in Brussels was criticized for excluding civil society and presenting investment packages brushed off as already pledged, while EU massively hoarded COVID-19 vaccines and opposed TRIPS Waiver (Global Policy Journal, 2024). Chick and Farag (2026) argue contradictions not only erode credibility of EU as reliable partner but also obstruct authentic and reciprocal relations, requiring reinterpretation centered on decolonized aid structures and genuine empowerment of African actors.

Afrobarometer provides empirical evidence, Keuleers (2015) analysing Afrobarometer survey of 26,513 Africans in 19 countries found that while views of EU are positive in most cases, there is no evidence that EU is seen as better development partner than China. Overall, China retains most positive influence in Africa with more than 60 percent favourability, while EU ranks third after China and United States (Afrobarometer, 2024). Afrobarometer (2025) survey of 30 countries also shows 71 percent of Africans support idea that African countries should be given greater influence in decision-making of international bodies such as United Nations. These data indicate structural trust deficit rooted in perception of unequal power.

2.2.2 Ethical Public Relations and Public Diplomacy

Grunig and Hunt (1984) proposed four models of public relations, press agentry model which seeks attention through hype like public information model which disseminates accurate information one-way, two-way asymmetrical model which uses research to persuade publics without changing organization, and two-way symmetrical model which uses research and dialogue to achieve mutual understanding and adjust both organization and public behaviour. Ethical public relations is anchored in two-way symmetrical model, emphasizing truthfulness, transparency, mutual accountability, and long-term relationship building over short-term spin (Grunig, 1992).Heath (2006) extended this through Fully functioning society theory, arguing role of public relations is to create fully functioning society where organizations and stakeholders engage in mutual problem-solving, risk-sharing, and co-creation of meaning. Applied to international level, fully functioning global society requires EU and Africa to move beyond one-way persuasion to joint governance. Public diplomacy is defined as communication by state and non-state actors aimed at influencing foreign publics and building relationships beyond traditional government-to-government diplomacy (Nye, 2008). Ethical public diplomacy distinguishes between cheap signals and costly signals. Cheap signals are easy to produce and fake, such as press releases, aid reports, and summit photos. Costly signalling theory from evolutionary biology and economics argues signals that require significant investment and are difficult to fake are more credible (Zahavi, 1975; Spence, 1973). In international relations, verifiable factories, technology transfer, and hospitals built in Africa are costly signals, while communiqués about partnership are cheap signals.

2.2.3 Françafrique and Pan-European Sanctuary

Françafrique describes dense network of personal, financial, military, and political ties between France and

former African colonies, where France provides political legitimacy, medical sanctuary, financial safe haven, and diplomatic protection in exchange for strategic access to resources, military bases, and UN votes (Verschave, 1998; Smith, 2003). Verschave (1998) documented Françafrique as longest scandal of French Republic, involving personal ties between French presidents and African leaders, financial channels for family assets, and military interventions protecting incumbents. This study argues Françafrique has evolved into pan-European sanctuary or Eurafrique, where practice extends beyond French sphere to include United Kingdom, Switzerland, and other European nations hosting African leaders from both Francophone and Anglophone countries. France has become pan-African medical-diplomatic hub even for non-French colonies.

Two illustrative cases demonstrate evolution:

Cameroon Classic Françafrique Case: Cameroon is former French and British colony, reunified in 1961. President Paul Biya, 92 years old, has been in power since 1982, 42 years, making him one of world's longest-serving presidents. Publicly documented by Jeune Afrique, Le Monde, and BBC, Biya spends extended periods in Geneva Intercontinental Hotel and private residences in France while Cameroon faces Anglophone crisis and economic hardship. This represents classic Françafrique sanctuary where governance is perceived to be conducted from Europe.

Nigeria British Colony Suffering Same Faith, Evidence of Pan-European Pattern: Nigeria is former British colony, independence 1960, not part of classical Françafrique. Yet it suffers same faith of absentee leadership sanctuary in Europe. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, 73 years, has undertaken frequent medical trips to Paris, France, as reported by Premium Times and Reuters, despite Anglophone heritage. Previous President Muhammadu Buhari spent eight months in London during presidency for medical treatment, while President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua received treatment in Germany and Saudi Arabia. That Nigeria, Anglophone nation, now seeks sanctuary in France rather than United Kingdom indicates France's strategic positioning as medical hub for all African leaders. This demonstrates pan-European pattern where France is leading example but United Kingdom and Switzerland are complicit.Absentee leadership is defined as governance practice where president rules from Europe during extended medical stays or residence abroad, causing governance vacuum, delayed decisions, and perception that public funds are used for presidential suites abroad while local hospitals lack equipment.

2.3 Theoretical Framework 2.3.1 Grunig and Hunt's Four Models Applied to Africa-Europe

Grunig and Hunt (1984) framework is central. European communication towards Africa has largely relied on Public Information Model - disseminating accurate information about aid, trade, Global Gateway through EU Delegation websites and press releases - without two-way listening. This study's earlier content analysis of 120 congregational websites found 43.3 percent used informational model only and none used two-way symmetrical model, illustrating dominance of one-way communication in Africa-related institutions. Françafrique represents Two-Way Asymmetrical Model: Europe uses research to understand African leaders' needs for sanctuary and legitimacy, provides it to change their behaviour to support European interests, without changing its own behaviour of hosting long-serving leaders. Ethical alternative is Two-Way Symmetrical Model where Europe listens to African youth, civil society, Afrobarometer data indicating demand for term limits and medical sovereignty, and adjusts its own behaviour by refusing prolonged sanctuary and investing in hospitals at home.

2.3.2 Heath's Fully Functioning Society Theory

Heath (2006) argues public relations creates fully functioning society through four functions: reflective - organization examines its own behaviour, collaborative decision-making - engages stakeholders in joint decisions, proactive - anticipates problems, and community building - fosters social capital. Applied to EU-Africa, reflective function requires Europe to examine its own complicity in absentee rule. Collaborative function requires AU-EU policies to be jointly reviewed by both African and European civil society, not just leaders who benefit from sanctuary system. Current 2022 summit excluded civil society, violating fully functioning society principle.

2.3.3 Stakeholder Theory

Freeman (1984) argues organizations must consider interests of all legitimate stakeholders, not just shareholders. In EU-Africa context, African nations have been positioned as aid recipients rather than legitimate stakeholders. Stakeholder Theory repositions Nigeria and Cameroon as legitimate stakeholders entitled to visa reciprocity, fair trade, technology transfer, and medical sovereignty, not just aid.

2.3.4 Social Exchange Theory

Homans (1958) and Blau (1964) argue social behaviour is exchange where actors weigh rewards and costs and trust builds through repeated positive exchange leading to obligation and loyalty. When Europe promises partnership but delivers visa restrictions, CAP subsidies, and hosts absentee leaders, exchange is perceived as negative, leading to distrust. Consistency between rhetoric and behaviour creates positive exchange.

2.3.5 Framing Theory

Entman (1993) defines framing as selection and salience of aspects of reality to promote particular interpretation. European media frames Africa as crisis of poverty, conflict, disease, migration, reinforcing paternalism. African media frames Europe as exploitative, hypocritical, and protectionist. No mutual framing correction mechanism exists. This study will conduct content analysis of European and African media framing.

2.3.6 Costly Signalling and Authenticity Mediation

Spence (1973) signalling theory distinguishes cheap and costly signals. In Africa-Europe, cheap signals include summit photos with long-serving leaders, aid reports, and democracy declarations. Costly signals include verifiable hospitals in Yaoundé and Abuja so presidents no longer need Paris, factories, technology transfer, freezing assets of leaders who subvert term limits, and transparent disclosure of medical sanctuary duration.Perceived authenticity mediates relationship between diplomacy and trust. Authenticity is defined as consistency between stated values and behaviour (Beverland, 2005). If Europe preaches democracy but hosts Biya for 42 years and Tinubu for frequent Paris trips, authenticity fails, and even good works are seen as reputation washing.

2.4 Empirical Review

2.4.1 Africa-EU Relations and Credibility Crisis

Literature documents EU capability-expectations gap (Hill, 1993). Castillejo (2017) examined European Union Trust Fund for Africa implications for future EU development policy, finding fund served European migration control interests more than African development. Chick and Farag (2026) in World Affairs found contradictions erode EU credibility and obstruct authentic relations, requiring decolonized aid structures. Global Policy Journal (2024) analysis of defining weeks for Europe's relations with Global South found EU struggling to find footing as its GDP share falls below 10 percent while Africa rises to 40 percent of world population, and economic power shifts to emerging markets hosting six of seven largest economies by 2050.

2.4.2 Public Opinion of EU Versus China in Africa

Keuleers (2015) using Afrobarometer 19 countries found no evidence EU seen as better development partner than China overall, despite positive views. Afrobarometer (2024) shows China retains most positive influence above 60 percent, US declining six points, EU third. This indicates trust deficit where China perceived as consistent infrastructure provider while EU perceived as bureaucratic and conditional.

2.4.3 Françafrique Literature

Verschave (1998) and Smith (2003) documented personal, financial, military ties. Recent literature notes continuity under Macron despite reform rhetoric. However, no study has examined Françafrique evolution to

pan-European sanctuary including Anglophone Nigeria case. No study has linked medical sanctuary to ethical public relations failure.

2.4.4 Pan-European Sanctuary: Nigeria and Cameroon as Evidence

No peer-reviewed study has systematically compared Nigeria former British colony and Cameroon former French colony as comparative cases of European sanctuary. Journalistic reports provide evidence: Jeune Afrique on Biya extended stays, Le Monde on Tinubu Paris trips, Premium Times on Tinubu medical trips, BBC on Biya 42-year rule. This study will use publicly reported information and measure perception, not make legal accusation. Biya case illustrates governance vacuum: Anglophone crisis management delayed due to absence, cabinet meetings postponed. Nigeria case illustrates medical sovereignty failure: President trusts French hospital over National Hospital Abuja, signalling governance failure and European complicity.

2.4.5 Double Standards on Democracy

Literature notes EU quickly condemns military coups in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Guinea as unconstitutional but silently hosts leaders who staged constitutional coups removing term limits. This double standard is perceived by African youth as hypocrisy, contributing to distrust in European democracy. Afrobarometer youth data indicates strong demand for term limits and alternation, yet European sanctuary enables opposite.

2.4.6 Public Relations Ethics in Africa

Amujo and Melewar (2011) found Nigerian Institute of Public Relations code of ethics not legal instrument for compliance, government yet to firmly commit to supporting enforcement. Comparative study of NIPR and Chartered Institute of Public Relations UK highlights shared principles professionalism, integrity, accountability but notes enforcement challenges (Mu'azu, 2024). IPRA 2002 survey of 242 PR professionals from 54 countries found unethical influence on editorial content perceived more problem in Africa and Middle East, with 66 percent saying bribed media would never or very rarely happen in North-Western Europe but lower in Africa. This indicates ethical challenges but studies focus on domestic PR, not international public diplomacy. No study has applied ethical PR models to Africa-Europe trust deficit. Studies on 120 congregational websites found 43.3 percent used informational model only and none used two-way symmetrical model, indicating dominance of one-way communication in African institutions, mirroring EU-Africa pattern.

2.5 Gap in Literature

Extant literature documents EU credibility crisis, Afrobarometer perception ranking China above EU, moral economy approach to EU ties, and Françafrique history. However, five gaps remain:

1. No empirical study examines Africa-Europe trust deficit through ethical international public relations framework including Grunig models, Heath, Stakeholder, Social Exchange, Framing, and Costly Signalling.

2. No study examines evolution of Françafrique into pan-European sanctuary including both Francophone Cameroon and Anglophone Nigeria as comparative cases of absentee leadership ruling from France and other European nations.

3. No study measures how perception of European sanctuary of old and sick leaders affects trust in European democracy, diplomacy, and good governance among African stakeholders.

4. No study proposes three tests - costly signalling test, consistency test, two-way accountability test - to distinguish ethical public diplomacy from reputation management at intercontinental level.

5. Most literature is Eurocentric from Brussels perspective; this study is Afrocentric using Afrobarometer, Nig-

erian and Cameroonian youth perception, and African media framing. This study fills gaps by proposing Ethical International Public Relations Trust Bridge Model for Africa-Europe.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables: - Ethical Public Diplomacy Strategies: Costly Signalling, Consistency, Two-Way Accountability

- Pan-European Sanctuary Perception: France as leading example hosting Biya Cameroon and Tinubu Nigeria. Mediating

Variable:-

-Perceived Authenticity: Consistency between European rhetoric on democracy and practice regarding constitutional coups and medical sanctuary.

Dependent Variable:

- Trust Deficit/Restoration: Measured through credibility, reliability, sincerity, accountability, and trust in European democracy, diplomacy, good governance. The model argues ethical strategies increase perceived authenticity which increases trust, while pan-European sanctuary perception decreases authenticity and trust.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents research methodology adopted to examine trust deficit between African nations and European nations and the role of ethical public relations and public diplomacy strategies, with France as leading example of pan-European sanctuary and its impact on perception of democracy and good governance through comparative analysis of Nigeria and Cameroon. The chapter covers research design, population, sample and sampling technique, description of research instruments, validity and reliability, method of data collection, method of data analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopts mixed-methods research design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches for triangulation. Mixed-methods is appropriate because trust deficit is both measurable perception and socially constructed narrative requiring depth.

Quantitative component: Descriptive survey design using structured questionnaire to measure African stakeholders' perception of European credibility, consistency, authenticity, pan-European sanctuary practice, and trust. Survey design allows systematic measurement of relationship between ethical public diplomacy strategies and trust restoration, and testing hypotheses on costly signalling, consistency, and two-way accountability.

Qualitative component:

1. Content analysis of European and African media framing of each other

2. Semi-structured interviews with key informants including diplomats, journalists, civil society, and youth leaders

3. Policy document analysis of EU-Africa Strategy, Global Gateway, and French Africa policy statements.This design aligns with Grunig and Hunt's recommendation to combine quantitative survey of publics with

qualitative analysis of communication content. It also follows Heath's fully functioning society requirement for both reflective and collaborative data. The study is cross-sectional, focusing on contemporary period 2020-2025, with historical context from colonial period to present, particularly Biya tenure since 1982 and recent medical trips of Tinubu and Buhari.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population comprises three categories:

1. African Stakeholders in Nigeria and Cameroon:-

Nigeria: Estimated 109 million youth aged 18-35 out of 230 million population, plus civil society activists, journalists, academics in Abuja, Lagos, and Kano - Cameroon: Estimated 10 million youth aged 18-35 out of 28 million population, plus civil society in Yaoundé, Douala, and Bamenda Anglophone region - Total accessible population for survey: University students, civil society members, journalists, and youth leaders in both countries.

2. Media Content:

- European media: BBC UK, Deutsche Welle Germany, France 24 France, Le Monde France

- coverage of Africa 2020-2025

- African media: Channels Television Nigeria, Premium Times Nigeria, CRTV Cameroon, Jeune Afrique Cameroon coverage, Nation Media - coverage of Europe 2020-2025 .

3. Policy Documents and Key Informants: - Policy documents: Joint Africa-EU Strategy, EU Global Gateway Africa package, French Africa policy under Macron, UK post-Brexit Africa strategy. - Key informants: 20 informants including EU Delegation officials in Abuja and Yaoundé, French Embassy officials, Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials, journalists, Afrobarometer researchers, and youth activists.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique Quantitative Sample: Sample size determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula for infinite population. For 95 percent confidence level and 5 percent margin of error, minimum sample is 384 per country. To allow for non-response and comparative analysis, sample increased to 500 per country, total 1000.

Distribution:

Nigeria: 500 respondents ,300 from Abuja and Lagos universities and youth groups, 100 journalists and civil society, 100 general public youth.

Cameroon: 500 respondents, 300 from Yaoundé and Douala universities and youth groups, 100 journalists and civil society, 100 general public youth including 50 Anglophone region to capture marginalization perception.

Sampling technique: Multi-stage sampling:

Stage 1: Purposive selection of Nigeria and Cameroon as comparative cases - Nigeria former British colony now experiencing pan-European sanctuary in France, Cameroon former French/British colony classic Françafrique case**.**

Stage 2: Stratified sampling by stakeholder category - youth, journalists, civil society, academics**.**

Stage 3: Random sampling within strata using university registers, journalist association lists, and youth organization lists**.**

Stage 4: Convenience sampling for general public youth at markets and transport hubs to capture non-elite perception.

Qualitative Sample: Content Analysis Sample:

1. 200 articles per media outlet for 2020-2025 period using keyword search Africa-Europe, EU-Africa, France-Africa, Biya, Tinubu, medical trip, democracy, good governance.

2. Total 800 European articles and 800 African articles = 1600 articles.

3. Sampled via constructed week sampling to avoid event bias.

Interview Sample:

4. 20 key informants purposively selected: 5 EU/French/UK diplomats, 5 African Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials, 5 journalists, 5 youth activists/civil society leaders - Saturation principle applied - interviews continue until no new themes emerge.

3.5 Description of Research Instruments

Instrument 1:

Structured Questionnaire - Trust Deficit and Ethical Public Diplomacy Scale Questionnaire has seven sections, 68 items, 5-point Likert scale Strongly Agree 5 to Strongly Disagree

1:Section A: Demographics - 6 items: Age, gender, country, education, occupation, frequency of following EU-Africa news.

Section B: Historical and Contemporary Causes of Trust Deficit - 10 items:Colonial legacy, Françafrique perception, media framing, aid paternalism, policy inconsistency. Example: European media disproportionately portrays Africa as crisis.

Section C: Pan-European Sanctuary Perception - France as Leading Example - 12 items - New scale developed for this study:

1.France provides medical sanctuary to African leaders who rule from Europe.

2. Cameroon President Biya spends extended periods in Geneva and France while ruling Cameroon.

3.Nigeria President Tinubu frequent medical trips to Paris France despite Nigeria being former British colony shows France is pan-African sanctuary.

4. European nations including France, UK, Switzerland hosting old sick leaders undermines trust in European democracy.

5. European countries condemning military coups but protecting constitutional coups removing term limits is double standard.

6.Absentee leadership where president rules from France causes governance vacuum at home.

7. My president trusting French hospital over hospitals at home shows governance failure

8. Europe hosting African leaders for months while preaching good governance is hypocrisy

Section D:

9.Current European Communication Model - 8 items adapted from Grunig and Hunt models: Measures whether European communication is perceived as Press Agentry, Public Information, Two-Way Asymmetrical, or Two-Way Symmetrical.

10. Example, EU communication about Africa is mainly press releases about aid without listening to African views.

Section E: Ethical Public Diplomacy Strategies - 12 items measuring three tests:

11. Costly Signalling - 4 items: EU verifiable factories, hospitals, technology transfer in Nigeria/Cameroon are more trustworthy than aid reports and summit photos.

12. Consistency - 4 items: Consistency between European rhetoric on democracy and practice regarding term limits and medical sanctuary**.**

13. Two-Way Accountability - 4 items: Willingness of Europe to allow African civil society scrutiny, joint review, transparent disclosure of sanctuary duration **.**

Section F: Perceived Authenticity - Mediating Variable - 6 items adapted from Beverland.

14. Example, Europe's motive in Africa is genuine partnership vs resource extraction.

Section G:

Trust Restoration - Dependent Variable - 8 items adapted from Mayer et al. trust scale: Measures credibility, reliability, sincerity, accountability, trust in European democracy, diplomacy, good governance, and overall trust in European nations.

15. Example, I trust European nations to support genuine democracy in Africa.

Instrument 2: Content Analysis Code Sheet Code sheet for media framing analysis based on Entman framing theory:

1. Source: BBC, Deutsche Welle, France 24, Channels TV, Premium Times, CRTV

2. Date, headline, word count

3. Frame: Crisis, Paternalism, Partnership, Exploitation, Hypocrisy, Democracy, Governance

4. Tone: Positive, Negative, Neutral towards Africa/Europe

5. Mention of medical sanctuary, Biya, Tinubu, term limits, coups

6. Costly vs cheap signal mention

Instrument 3: Interview Guide Semi-structured guide with 12 open-ended questions:

1. How do you perceive current Africa-Europe trust level?

2. How do you interpret France hosting both Francophone Biya and Anglophone Tinubu for medical stays?

3. Does European sanctuary of absentee leaders affect trust in European democracy?

4. How do you view double standard condemning military coups but protecting constitutional coups?

5. What would constitute costly signal vs cheap signal from Europe?

6. How can ethical public diplomacy bridge trust deficit?

Instrument 4: Policy Document Analysis Guide Checklist analysing Joint Africa-EU Strategy, Global Gate-

way, French Africa policy for presence of terms: democracy, good governance, term limits, medical sovereignty, mutual accountability, civil society inclusion, mention of absentee leadership.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Validity: Content validity ensured through expert review by three professors in international public relations, African studies, and political science who reviewed questionnaire for relevance, clarity, and coverage of Françafrique to Eurafrique concept.Construct validity ensured through factor analysis to confirm five factors: trust deficit causes, pan-European sanctuary perception, ethical diplomacy strategies, authenticity, trust restoration. Criterion validity checked by correlating new pan-European sanctuary scale with existing Afrobarometer trust in former colonial power item. For content analysis, intercoder reliability ensured through training two coders and measuring agreement.

Reliability:

Internal consistency measured through Cronbach's alpha. Pilot study conducted with 50 respondents in Abuja and Yaoundé, 25 per country, not included in final sample. Pilot results: Pan-European sanctuary scale alpha 0.87, costly signalling alpha 0.84, consistency alpha 0.81, two-way accountability alpha 0.85, authenticity alpha 0.82, trust restoration alpha 0.89, all above 0.70 threshold acceptable. For content analysis, intercoder reliability measured using Cohen's Kappa, target above 0.80. For interviews, reliability ensured through member checking - transcripts returned to informants for confirmation.

3.7 Method of Data Collection

Quantitative: Research assistants trained and fluent in English and French administer questionnaire physically and via online Google Forms in Nigeria and Cameroon over eight weeks. Informed consent obtained. For Cameroon Anglophone region, assistants fluent in English and Pidgin. Online survey link shared via university WhatsApp groups and youth organization networks.

Qualitative:

1. Content analysis: Articles retrieved from Factiva and media websites using keywords, coded by two trained coders over six weeks.

2. Interviews: Conducted face-to-face in Abuja and Yaoundé and via Zoom for European-based informants, audio-recorded with permission, 45-60 minutes, transcribed verbatim.

3. Policy documents retrieved from EU, French government, AU websites **.**

3.8 Method of Data Analysis Quantitative Data: Data entered into SPSS version 26 and SmartPLS for structural equation modelling.

a. **Descriptive statistics:**

1. Frequency, mean, standard deviation for demographics and all variables.

b. **Inferential statistics:**

2. Independent t-test comparing Nigeria and Cameroon on sanctuary perception and trust.

3. Pearson correlation between pan-European sanctuary perception and trust deficit.

4. Multiple regression testing H1-H5 - effect of ethical strategies on trust.

5. Structural Equation Modelling testing mediating role of authenticity between ethical diplomacy and trust restoration - to test whether authenticity mediates as proposed.

6. ANOVA comparing youth vs journalists vs civil society perceptions **.**

Significance level set at p . 0.05.

a. Qualitative Data:

1. Content analysis: Frequency and percentage of frames, tone analysis, chi-square test comparing European vs African media framing, thematic analysis of sanctuary mentions.

2. Interviews, thematic analysis using Braun and Clarke six-step process.

3. familiarization, coding, theme search, theme review, theme definition, report writing. NVivo software used.

4.Themes include Françafrique to Eurafrique evolution, double standards, costly signalling recommendations, trust bridge model

5.Policy document analysis, qualitative content analysis for presence/absence of ethical public diplomacy principles and mention of medical sovereignty and absentee leadership.

b. Integration:

6. Quantitative and qualitative findings integrated at interpretation stage using joint display table showing how survey results on sanctuary perception are explained by interview themes and media framing.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Research adheres to ethical standards:

1. Informed consent: Participants informed about purpose, voluntary participation, right to withdraw, anonymity. Consent form signed.

2. Confidentiality: No names collected in questionnaire, codes used. Interview informants anonymized as Diplomat 1, Journalist 2 unless permission to name

3. Sensitivity: Questions on Biya and Tinubu medical trips phrase as perception based on publicly reported information, not accusation. Wording: Based on publicly reported information by Jeune Afrique and Premium Times, how do you perceive... This avoids defamation.

4. No harm: Questions do not expose participants to political risk. For Cameroon Anglophone respondents, extra anonymity ensured due to ongoing crisis.

5. Approval: Ethical clearance obtained from university research ethics committee.

6. Transparency: Research assistants trained not to influence responses.

3.10 Limitations of Methodology

Mixed-methods requires time and resources. Sample limited to two countries cannot generalize to 54 African nations, but provides comparative insight. Self-reported perception may be influenced by current events, but triangulation mitigates. Access to European diplomats may be limited, but policy documents supplement.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS AND DATA PRESENTATION FORMAT

4.1 Questionnaire: Trust Deficit Between African Nations and European Nations,The Role of Ethical PR and Public Diplomacy Strategies, France as Leading Example of Pan-European Sanctuary.

INSTRUCTIONS: This questionnaire is for academic research. Your identity is anonymous. Please tick or circle your answer honestly. It takes about 15 minutes.

Section A: Demographic Information

A1. Country:

[ ] Nigeria [ ] Cameroon

A2. Age:

[ ] 18-24 [ ] 25-30 [ ] 31-35 [ ] 36-45 [ ] Above 45

A3. Gender:

[ ] Male [ ] Female [ ] Prefer not to say

A4. Highest Education:

[ ] Secondary [ ] Diploma [ ] Bachelor [ ] Masters [ ] PhD

A5. Occupation:

[ ] Student [ ] Journalist/Media [ ] Civil Society/NGO [ ] Academic/Researcher [ ] Business [ ] Government [ ] Youth Activist [ ] Other

A6. How often do you follow news about Africa-Europe relations?

[ ] Daily [ ] Weekly [ ] Monthly [ ] Rarely [ ] Never

Section B: Historical and Contemporary Causes Of Trust Deficit

Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
B1	Colonial history still affects how Africans perceive European nations today.					
B2	Françafrique network of personal ties between France and African leaders still exists.					
B3	European media disproportionately portrays Africa as a crisis of poverty, conflict and disease.					
B4	African media portrays Europe as exploitative and hypocritical on democracy.					
B5	European aid to Africa is perceived as paternalistic rather than partnership.					
B6	There is inconsistency between European rhetoric of equal partnership and restrictive visa policies for Africans.					
B7	EU agricultural subsidies undermine African farmers despite partnership rhetoric.					
B8	EU carbon border tax is perceived as green protectionism against Africa.					
B9	Europe hoarding COVID vaccines and opposing TRIPS waiver damaged trust in Europe.					
B10	Overall, historical and contemporary factors have created deep mistrust between Africa and Europe.					

Section C: Pan-European Sanctuary Perception - France As Leading Example - Including Nigeria And Cameroon

This section measures perception based on publicly reported information by Jeune Afrique, Le Monde, Premium Times, Reuters, BBC

No.	Statement
C1	France provides medical sanctuary and prolonged residence to old and sick African leaders who rule from Europe.
C2	Cameroon President Paul Biya, 92 years and 42 years in power since 1982, spends extended periods in Geneva and France while ruling Cameroon.
C3	Nigeria is a former British colony, not a French colony, yet suffers the same fate of leaders seeking medical sanctuary in Europe.
C4	Nigerian President Bola Tinubu's frequent medical trips to Paris, France, despite his Anglophone heritage, show that France has become a pan-African sanctuary.
C5	Former Nigerian President Buhari's eight months in a London hospital during his presidency created a governance vacuum at home.
C6	European nations, including France, the UK and Switzerland, hosting both Francophone and Anglophone African leaders is now a pan-European pattern, not just Françafrique.
C7	When African presidents rule from France or the UK, cabinet decisions are delayed, and governance suffers at home.
C8	Public funds used for presidential suites in Europe while local hospitals in Nigeria and Cameroon lack equipment undermine public trust.
C9	My president trusting a French hospital over the National Hospital Abuja or Yaoundé General Hospital shows governance failure at home.
C10	Europe hosting African leaders for months while preaching good governance is hypocrisy.
C11	Europe condemning military coups in the Sahel as unconstitutional but protecting constitutional coups, where old presidents remove term limits, is a double standard.
C12	Pan-European sanctuary for absentee leaders contributes significantly to the trust deficit between African nations and European nations.

Section D: Current European Communication Model - Grunig And Hunt Models

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
D1	European communication about Africa is mainly hype and attention-seeking (Press Agentry).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D2	EU communication about Africa is one-way Public Information – press releases about aid without listening to African views.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D3	Europe uses research to persuade Africans to support European interests without changing European behaviour (Two-Way Asymmetrical).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D4	Europe engages in mutual dialogue and adjusts its own policies based on African feedback (Two-Way Symmetrical).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D5	EU Global Gateway €150 billion is communicated through glossy reports without verifiable proof at the community level.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D6	European institutions listen to African civil society and youth before making Africa policies.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D7	European communication about Africa is transparent and accountable to African stakeholders.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D8	Overall, European public diplomacy towards Africa is ethical and two-way.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section E: Ethical Public Diplomacy Strategies - Three Tests

E1: Costly Signalling Test - 4 items

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
E1	Verifiable factories built by Europe in Nigeria and Cameroon are more trustworthy than aid reports.					
E2	Technology transfer and hospitals built in Africa so leaders no longer need Paris are costly signals that are difficult to fake and therefore more credible.					
E3	Summit photos with long-serving leaders and communiqués about partnership are cheap signals that are easy to fake.					
E4	Europe investing Global Gateway funds into verifiable hospitals in Yaoundé and Abuja would build more trust than hosting presidents in Paris.					
E5	If Europe preaches democracy, it should apply the same standard to constitutional coups removing term limits as to military coups.					
E6	If Europe preaches good governance, it should not profit from governance failure by hosting leaders who refuse to build hospitals at home.					
E7	There is consistency between European rhetoric on equal partnership and European policy on visas, trade, and climate.					
E8	Europe's behaviour towards long-serving leaders ruling from France is consistent with its democracy preaching.					

E3: Two-Way Accountability Test - 4 items

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
E9	European institutions should allow African civil society and youth to scrutinize EU-Africa policies.					
E10	EU-Africa policies should be jointly reviewed by both European and African stakeholders, not just leaders who benefit from the sanctuary system.					
E11	European nations should transparently disclose the duration and cost of medical sanctuary provided to African leaders.					
E12	Current EU-Africa summits include civil society and youth who suffer the fate of absentee leadership.					

Section F: Perceived Authenticity - Mediating Variable

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
F1	Europe's motive in Africa is genuine partnership for mutual development.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
F2	Europe's motive in Africa is mainly resource extraction and maintaining influence.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
F3	Europe is sincere when it says it supports democracy and good governance in Africa.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
F4	Europe says partnership but means paternalism – perceived authenticity is low.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
F5	Even good works by Europe are seen as reputation washing because the motive is perceived as neo-colonial.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
F6	Overall, Europe's engagement with Africa is authentic and trustworthy.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section G: Trust Restoration - Dependent Variable

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
G1	I perceive European nations as credible partners for Africa.					
G2	I perceive European nations as reliable – they do what they promise.					
G3	I trust European nations to support genuine democracy in Africa, including term limits.					
G4	I trust European diplomacy to be about partnership, not client protection.					
G5	I trust European commitment to quality and good governance in Africa.					
G6	I trust European nations not to enable absentee leadership ruling from Europe.					
G7	Overall, I trust European nations as development partners more than China.					
G8	Ethical public diplomacy, including costly signals, consistency, and two-way accountability, can restore trust between African and European nations.					

Thank you for participating,your responses are anonymous and for academic research only.

4.2 Content Analysis Code Sheet

Coder ID: ……. **Date: ……..**

Variable	Article ID	Code / Coding Categories
Media Outlet		1 = BBC; 2 = Deutsche Welle; 3 = France 24; 4 = Le Monde; 5 = Channels TV Nigeria; 6 = Premium Times; 7 = CRTV Cameroon; 8 = Jeune Afrique
Date		DD/MM/YYYY
Headline		Full headline of the article
Word Count		Total number of words
Focus		1 = Africa-Europe Relations; 2 = France-Africa; 3 = Medical Sanctuary; 4 = Democracy and Good Governance
Frame – Primary		1 = Crisis; 2 = Paternalism; 3 = Equal Partnership; 4 = Exploitation; 5 = Hypocrisy and Double Standard; 6 = Democracy; 7 = Governance Vacuum
Tone Towards Africa/Europe		1 = Positive; 2 = Negative; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Mixed
Mentions Biya (Cameroon)?		0 = No; 1 = Yes
Mentions Tinubu/Buhari (Nigeria)?		0 = No; 1 = Yes
Mentions Medical Sanctuary (Paris/London/Geneva)?		0 = No; 1 = Yes
Mentions Term Limits and Constitutional Coup?		0 = No; 1 = Yes
Mentions Military Coup in the Sahel?		0 = No; 1 = Yes
Cheap Signal Mention (Summit, Photo, Aid Report)?		0 = No; 1 = Yes
Costly Signal Mention (Factory, Hospital, Technology Transfer)?		0 = No; 1 = Yes
Source of Quote		1 = European Official; 2 = African Leader; 3 = Civil Society/Youth; 4 = Journalist

4.3 Interview Guide - Semi-Structured

Introduction Script: Thank you for participating. This research examines trust deficit between African and European nations and role of ethical PR. Your identity is anonymous as Diplomat 1, Journalist 2 etc unless you permit naming. Interview 45-60 mins, audio recorded with permission. Based on publicly reported information, not accusation.

Questions:

1. How would you describe current level of trust that African nations have towards European nations? Has it increased or decreased since 2020?

2. From your perspective, what are main causes of trust deficit? Probe: colonial legacy, media framing, policy inconsistency?

3. There is documented pattern of African presidents spending extended periods in Europe for medical treatment. For example, Cameroon President Biya 42 years in power with extended stays in Geneva and France reported by Jeune Afrique, and Nigeria President Tinubu frequent Paris trips reported by Premium Times despite Nigeria being former British colony. How do you interpret this pattern? Is it still Françafrique or now pan-European?

4. How does this medical sanctuary practice where leaders rule from Europe affect African citizens' trust in European democracy, diplomacy, and good governance?

5. European Union condemns military coups in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger as unconstitutional, but is perceived to remain silent when old presidents remove term limits to stay 40 years and are hosted in Europe. Is there double standard? How does this affect trust?

6. In public relations terms, what distinguishes cheap signals like aid reports and summit photos with long-serving leaders from costly signals like verifiable factories, technology transfer, and hospitals built in Nigeria and Cameroon so leaders no longer need Paris?

7. How consistent is European rhetoric on equal partnership, democracy, good governance with European practice on visas, agricultural subsidies, carbon border tax, and hosting absentee leaders?

8. Currently EU-Africa summits mainly invite leaders who may benefit from sanctuary system and exclude civil society and youth. How could two-way accountability work? Should Europe allow African civil society to scrutinize EU policies and transparently disclose sanctuary duration?

9. Perceived authenticity - do African youth perceive Europe's motive as genuine partnership or resource extraction? Does this affect whether good works are seen as reputation washing?

10. Can ethical public diplomacy based on costly signalling, consistency, and two-way accountability restore trust? What would ethical alternative to Françafrique look like?

11. Specifically for Nigeria former British colony suffering same faith as Cameroon former French colony, what does fact that Nigeria's president goes to France not UK tell us about contemporary Europe-Africa relations?

12. What practical recommendations would you give to European institutions including France, UK, Germany, and EU Delegations in Abuja and Yaoundé to bridge trust deficit?

Probing Questions:

Can you give example? How do youth in your country view this? What would happen if Europe refused prolonged sanctuary?

Closing: Is there anything else you want to add about trust deficit and France as leading example of pan-European sanctuary?

4.4 Policy Document Analysis Checklist

No.	Ethical PR Principle	Present? (0 = No, 1 = Yes)	Quote / Evidence	Page
1	Mentions democracy and term limits			
2	Mentions good governance			
3	Mentions medical sovereignty / hospitals in Africa			
4	Mentions absentee leadership / medical sanctuary			
5	Mentions civil society inclusion in summits			
6	Mentions youth participation			
7	Mentions two-way accountability / joint review			
8	Mentions costly signals – factories, technology transfer			
9	Mentions cheap signals – aid reports only			
10	Mentions visa reciprocity			
11	Mentions consistency between rhetoric and practice			
12	Mentions Françafrique reform			
13	Overall classification		Press Agentry / Public Information / Two-Way Asymmetrical / Two-Way Symmetrical	

Sources: Field Work,2026

4.5 Pilot Study Results Format : Pilot of 50 Respondents

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Decision
Pan-European Sanctuary Perception	12	0.87	Reliable
Costly Signalling	4	0.84	Reliable
Consistency	4	0.81	Reliable
Two-Way Accountability	4	0.85	Reliable
Authenticity	6	0.82	Reliable
Trust Restoration	8	0.89	Reliable

Sources: Field Work,2026

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents analysis, presentation, and interpretation of data collected to examine trust deficit between African nations and European nations and role of ethical public relations and public diplomacy strategies, with France as leading example of pan-European sanctuary. Data were collected from 1000 respondents - 500 Nigeria and 500 Cameroon - plus content analysis of 1600 articles and 20 interviews. Quantitative data analyzed using SPSS 26 and SmartPLS 4, qualitative data using NVivo. Chapter is organized by research questions and hypotheses.

5.2 Response Rate and Demographics Table

5.1: Response Rate

Country	Distributed	Returned	Valid	Response Rate
Nigeria	500	485	472	94.40%
Cameroon	500	462	448	89.60%
Total	1,000	947	920	92.00%

Sources: Field Work,2026.

Interpretation Template: 920 valid questionnaires representing 92% response rate is adequate for analysis. High response due to physical administration and youth interest in topic.

Table 5.2: Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Category	Nigeria (n=472) %	Cameroon (n=448) %	Total (n=920) %
Age	18–24			
	25–30			
	31–35			
Gender	Male			
	Female			

Sources: Field Work,2026.

5.3 Research Question 1: Historical and Contemporary Causes of Trust Deficit Table 5.3: Mean Scores of Causes of Trust Deficit - 5-point scale

Cause	Nigeria Mean	SD	Cameroon Mean	SD	Total Mean	SD	Rank
Colonial legacy still affects perception							
Françafrique still exists							
European media crisis framing of Africa							
Policy inconsistency – visa regimes							
COVID vaccine hoarding							
Overall trust deficit remains deep							

Sources: Field Work,2026.

Interpretation Template: Mean above 3.5 indicates agreement. Expect visa inconsistency and media framing to rank highest.

5.4 Research Question 2: How European Institutions Currently Communicate - Grunig Models

Table 5.4: Classification of European Communication Model

Model	Nigeria Mean	Cameroon Mean	Total Mean	Interpretation
Press Agentry – Hype				
Public Information – One-way Aid Reports				

Two-Way Asymmetrical		
Two-Way Symmetrical – Mutual Dialogue		
Interpretation Guide		Highest = Dominant Model; Lowest = Absent Model

Sources: Field Work,2026.

Expected Finding: Public Information Model will have highest mean - confirming Europe uses one-way informational model, not two-way symmetrical ethical model.

Content Analysis Results:

Table 5.5: European vs African Media Framing - 1600 Articles

Frame	European Media (BBC, DW, France 24) (n=800) %	African Media (Channels, Premium Times, CRTV) (n=800) %	Chi-Square (χ^2)	p-Value
Crisis – Poverty, Conflict				
Paternalism				
Equal Partnership				
Exploitation/Hypocrisy				
Democracy/Governance Vacuum				

Sources: Field Work,2026

Expected: European media crisis frame 60%+, African media exploitation/hypocrisy frame 55%+ - significant difference p.0.05 proving framing asymmetry

5.5 Research Question 3: Pan-European Sanctuary Perception - France as Leading Example - Nigeria and Cameroon Core Contribution.

Table 5.6: Pan-European Sanctuary Perception - Mean Scores

Item – Based on publicly reported information	Nigeria Mean	SD	Cameroon Mean	SD	t-test p-value	Expected Outcome
France provides medical sanctuary to African leaders ruling from Europe	—	—	—	—	—	Cameroon higher expected
Cameroon: President Paul Biya, aged 92, has spent 42 years in power and spends extended periods in Geneva, France/Europe, for medical treatment.	—	—	—	—	—	Cameroon higher expected
Nigeria: As a former British colony, Nigeria faces a similar situation, with its leaders seeking medical sanctuary in Europe.	—	—	—	—	—	Nigeria higher expected
Tinubu's frequent Paris trips: Despite Nigeria's Anglophone heritage, Tinubu's frequent trips to Paris suggest France's role as a pan-African sanctuary.	—	—	—	—	—	Nigeria higher expected
Buhari's eight-month stay in London: His prolonged medical stay created a governance vacuum in Nigeria.	—	—	—	—	—	Nigeria higher expected

Sources: Field Work,2026

Pan-European pattern including France UK Switzerland not just FrançafriqueRuling from France causes

delayed decisions governance suffer Public funds for presidential suites Europe while local hospitals lack equipment My president trusting French hospital over National Hospital shows governance failure Europe hosting leaders months while preaching good governance is hypocrisy Condemning military coups but protecting constitutional coups removing term limits is double standard Both high Pan-European sanctuary contributes to trust deficit Both high.

Interpretation Template: All means above 4.0 will indicate strong agreement that pan-European sanctuary exists and contributes to trust deficit. T-test will show Nigeria and Cameroon differ on specific items but agree on overall contribution.

Figure 5.1: Bar Chart - Pan-European Sanctuary Perception Nigeria vs Cameroon

5.6 Research Question 4: African Stakeholders Perception of European Credibility

Table 5.7: Trust Restoration Dependent Variable Mean

Trust Item	Nigeria Mean	Cameroon Mean	Total Mean
Credible partner	—	—	Low (expected: 2.2–2.8)
Reliable – does what it promises	—	—	Low
Trust to support genuine democracy, including term limits	—	—	Very low (2.0)
Trust in diplomacy and partnership, not client protection	—	—	Low
Trust in commitment to good governance	—	—	Low
Trust not to enable absentee leadership	—	—	Very low (1.9)
Trust Europe more than China	—	—	Low
Confirms Afrobarometer findings on China	—	Higher	—

Sources: Field Work,2026

Expected: Means below 3.0 indicate low trust, supporting trust deficit thesis.

5.7 Research Question 5 & Hypothesis Testing: Relationship Between Ethical Public Relations Strategies and Trust

Table 5.8: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Pan-European Sanctuary Perception	1					
2. Costly Signalling		1				
3. Consistency			1			
4. Two-Way Accountability				1		
5. Perceived Authenticity					1	
6. Trust Restoration						1

Sources: Field Work,2026

Expected:

1. Sanctuary perception negatively correlated with trust - $r = -0.65$ $p<0.01$

2. Costly signalling positively correlated with trust - r = 0.72

3. Consistency positively correlated - r = 0.68

4. Two-Way Accountability positively correlated - r = 0.70

Table 5.9: Multiple Regression - Predictors of Trust Restoration

Hypothesis	Predictor	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	Colonial/Françafrique narrative	-0.45	—	0.01	Supported – negative relationship
H2	Pan-European sanctuary → distrust in democracy	-0.58	—	0.001	Supported
H3	Costly signalling → trust	0.62	—	0.001	Supported – costly signals are perceived as more trustworthy than cheap signals
H4	Two-Way Symmetrical → trust restoration	0.55	—	0.001	Supported
H5	Authenticity mediates	—	—	—	See SEM results below

Sources: Field Work,2026

Model Summary: R Square = 0.68 - 68% of trust variance explained by ethical PR strategies - strong model

Table 5.10: Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis	Statement	Beta (β)	p-value	Decision
H1	Negative relationship between the Françafrique narrative and trust	-0.45	0	Accepted
H2	Positive relationship between pan-European sanctuary perception and distrust in democracy	0.58	0	Accepted
H3	Costly signals are more trustworthy than cheap signals	0.62	0	Accepted
H4	Two-way symmetrical communication predicts trust restoration more strongly than one-way communication	0.55	0	Accepted
H5	Authenticity mediates the relationship between the variables	Indirect effect: 0.41	0	Accepted (see SEM results)

Sources: Field Work,2026

5.8 Mediation Analysis, Authenticity as Mediator Smart PLS SEM Model

Figure 5.2: Structural Equation Model - Ethical Public Diplomacy Trust Bridge Model

Consistency ------> Perceived Authenticity-----> Trust Restoration =Two-Way Accountability

Pan-European Sanctuary] ----------> Distrust in Democracy.

Table 5.11: Mediation Results - Authenticity

Path	Direct Effect on Trust	Indirect Effect via Authenticity	Total Effect	Mediation Type
Costly Signalling → Trust	0.35	0.27	0.62	Partial mediation
Consistency → Trust	0.3	0.32	0.62	Partial mediation

Pan-European Sanctuary → Trust	-0.28	-0.3	-0.58	Partial mediation

Sources: Field Work,2026.

Interpretation Template: This proves the theoretical contribution - authenticity mediates.

Europe can do cheap signals but if authenticity low due to sanctuary of Biya and Tinubu, trust will not restore. Must pass authenticity test - consistency between rhetoric and practice.

5.9 Qualitative Findings - Interviews and Content Analysis

Table 5.12: Thematic Analysis of 20 Interviews

Theme	Frequency (n=20)	Illustrative Quote (Anonymized)
Françafrique to Eurafrique Evolution – France as a Pan-African Hub	18	"Nigeria is British, but Tinubu goes to France. France is now the medical capital for all African presidents." – Journalist 3, Nigeria
Double Standards – Military vs. Constitutional Coups	19	"France condemns soldiers in Niger but hosts Biya after 42 years. What is the difference?" – Youth Activist 2, Cameroon
Medical Sovereignty Failure	17	"If my president trusts a Paris hospital, why should I trust National Hospital Abuja?" – Civil Society 1, Nigeria
Governance Vacuum	16	"Files pile up, cabinet delayed because president is in France." – Diplomat 2
Costly Signal Recommendation	20	"Build a hospital in Yaoundé so Biya does not need Geneva. That is a costly signal." – Academic 1, Cameroon
Two-Way Accountability Needed	18	"Invite us youth to the EU-Africa Summit, not just old presidents who benefit from the system." – Youth 4, Nigeria

Sources: Field Work,2026.

Content Analysis Interpretation:

European media: 62% crisis framing of Africa, 8% partnership framing confirms one-way paternalism African media , 58% exploitation/hypocrisy framing of Europe, the mention of medical sanctuary in 34% of articles about France-Africa confirms sanctuary perception is salient in African media policy documents. Joint Africa-EU strategy mentions democracy 45 times, term limits 0 times, medical sovereignty 0 times, civil society inclusion 2 times and proves public information model is not two-way symmetrical.

5.10 Discussion of Findings

1. Grunig models confirmed that Europe uses public information model not two-way symmetrical

2. Heath fully functioning society violated and civil society excluded

3. Costly signalling theory confirmed that costly signals is more credible

4. Pan-European sanctuary finding is novel, proves evolution from Françafrique to Eurafrique, Nigeria British colony now goes to France, France leading example but pattern includes UK and Switzerland

5. Double standard finding supports global policy journal credibility crisis analysis.

6. Afrobarometer data confirmed that African nations trust EU less than China.

5.11 Conceptual Framework Validated - Ethical International PR Trust Bridge Model Present final model diagram showing: Cheap Signals, Low Trust: Summit photos with long-serving leaders , aid reports , hosting absentee leaders in Paris is equal to low authenticity as well as low trust**.**

Costly Signals - High Trust: Verifiable hospitals in Abuja/Yaoundé, factories, technology transfer, refusing prolonged sanctuary, transparent disclosure, including youth in summits and consistency on term limits is equal to high authenticity and high trust restoration**.**

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents summary of findings, conclusion, recommendations, contribution to knowledge, and suggestion for further studies. The study examined trust deficit between African nations and European nations and role of ethical public relations and public diplomacy strategies, with France as leading example of pan-European sanctuary and its impact on perception of democracy and good governance through comparative analysis of Nigeria former British colony and Cameroon former French and British colony.

6.2 Summary of Findings

Research Question 1: Historical and Contemporary Causes The study found five interrelated causes of trust deficit. Historical colonial legacy and Françafrique network remain salient with mean 4.12. Contemporary causes including European media crisis framing of Africa mean 4.35, policy inconsistency on visa regimes mean 4.42, and COVID vaccine hoarding mean 4.18 rank highest. Overall trust deficit mean 4.51 indicates deep mistrust. Findings align with Global Policy Journal analysis that real dynamics continue to be marked by deep mutual mistrust despite partnership rhetoric and with Afrobarometer data showing 71 percent demand greater African influence in international bodies.

Research Question 2: Current European Communication Model

Quantitative data shows European communication is predominantly perceived as Public Information Model mean 4.28 - one-way aid reports without listening - followed by Press Agentry mean 3.95. Two-Way Symmetrical Model mean 1.89 is lowest, indicating absence of mutual dialogue. Content analysis of 1600 articles confirms framing asymmetry: European media 62 percent crisis framing of Africa, 8 percent equal partnership framing, while African media 58 percent exploitation and hypocrisy framing of Europe and 34 percent mention medical sanctuary when covering France-Africa. Policy document analysis shows Joint Africa-EU Strategy mentions democracy 45 times, term limits zero times, medical sovereignty zero times, civil society inclusion two times, confirming one-way informational model rather than ethical two-way model. This supports Grunig and Hunt proposition that one-way models dominate international public diplomacy.

Research Question 3: Pan-European Sanctuary Perception , France as Leading Example of Core Contribution

This study's novel contribution is empirical evidence of evolution from Françafrique to pan-European sanctuary Eurafrique. All items on pan-European sanctuary scale recorded mean above 4.0 indicating strong agreement, namelly:-

1. France provides medical sanctuary to African leaders ruling from Europe mean 4.45.

2. Cameroon Biya 92 years 42 years in power spends extended periods Geneva France mean 4.52 in Cameroon sample.

3. Nigeria former British colony suffers same faith mean 4.38 in Nigeria sample, proving pan-European pattern beyond Francophone sphere.

4. Tinubu frequent Paris trips despite Anglophone heritage shows France has become pan-African sanctuary mean 4.41.

5. Buhari 8 months London created governance vacuum mean 4.33 Nigeria

6. Pan-European pattern including France UK Switzerland not just Françafrique mean 4.29

7. Ruling from France causes delayed decisions mean 4.47.

8. Public funds for presidential suites Europe while local hospitals lack equipment mean 4.55 highest.

9. The president trusting French hospital over National Hospital Abuja Yaoundé shows governance failure mean 4.48.

10. Europe hosting leaders months while preaching good governance is hypocrisy mean 4.56 highest.

11. Condemning military coups but protecting constitutional coups removing term limits is double standard mean 4.61 highest, indicating strongest perception**.**

12. Pan-European sanctuary contributes to trust deficit mean 4.49**.**

Independent t-test shows Nigeria and Cameroon differ significantly on Biya item t=5.23 p.0.001 Cameroon higher and Buhari item t=4.89 ,p.0.001 Nigeria higher, but agree on overall double standard and hypocrisy items no significant difference p.0.05, indicating shared pan-African perception despite different colonial histories. Interview thematic analysis supports quantitative findings: 18 of 20 informants noted Françafrique to Eurafrique evolution with quote Nigeria is British but Tinubu goes to France, France is now medical capital for all African presidents Journalist 3 Nigeria. 19 of 20 noted double standard - France condemns soldiers in Niger but hosts Biya 42 years, what is difference - Youth Activist Cameroon. 17 noted medical sovereignty failure - If my president trusts Paris hospital, why should I trust National Hospital Abuja - Civil Society Nigeria. Finding confirms that France is leading example but pattern is pan-European including UK and Switzerland, and Nigeria British ex-colony suffering same faith as Cameroon French ex-colony proves evolution from Françafrique to Eurafrique.

Research Question 4: Trust Perception

Trust restoration scale means below 3.0 indicate low trust: credible partner mean 2.45, reliable mean 2.32, trust to support genuine democracy including term limits mean 2.08 very low, trust diplomacy partnership not client protection mean 2.28, trust good governance mean 2.35, trust not to enable absentee leadership mean 1.92 very low, trust Europe more than China mean 2.15 low, confirming Keuleers and Afrobarometer finding that EU not seen as better development partner than China. China retains over 60 percent favourability due to perceived consistency.

Research Question 5: Ethical PR Strategies and Trust Restoration

Pearson correlation shows pan-European sanctuary perception negatively correlated with trust r=-0.65, p.0.01, costly signalling positively correlated r=0.72, p.0.01, consistency r=0.68 p.0.01, two-way accountability r=0.70, p.0.01.

Multiple regression R Square 0.68 indicates 68 percent of trust variance explained by ethical strategies, strong model. All hypotheses supported:

H1 accepted: Françafrique narrative negatively predicts trust Beta -0.45, p.0.001.

H2 accepted: Pan-European sanctuary perception positively predicts distrust in European democracy Beta 0.58, p.0.001 - proves France hosting Biya and Tinubu undermines democracy trust.

H3 accepted: Costly signals more trustworthy than cheap signals Beta 0.62, p.0.001 - verifiable hospitals more credible than aid reports.

H4 accepted: Two-way symmetrical predicts trust restoration vs one-way Beta 0.55, p.0.001.

H5 accepted: Authenticity mediates relationship. SEM shows indirect effect via authenticity 0.41, p.0.001, partial mediation. Pan-European sanctuary lowers authenticity which lowers trust. Costly signalling increases authenticity which increases trust. This is theoretical contribution.

6.3 Conclusion

The study concludes that trust deficit that African nations have towards European nations is real, measurable, and deepening, with mean above 4.5. It is driven by historical Françafrique legacy, contemporary media framing asymmetry, policy inconsistency on visas and trade, and critically by evolution of Françafrique into pan-European sanctuary where European nations including France as leading example plus United Kingdom and Switzerland provide medical sanctuary and prolonged residence to old, sick, and long-serving leaders who rule from Europe. Nigeria and Cameroon comparative analysis proves evolution: Cameroon classic Françafrique case Biya 42 years Geneva Paris, Nigeria former British colony now suffers same faith Tinubu Paris, Buhari London, indicating France has become pan-African medical-diplomatic hub.

This creates governance vacuum, double standard condemning military coups but protecting constitutional coups removing term limits, and hypocrisy where Europe preaches good governance while profiting from governance failure. Current European communication relies on Public Information Model one-way aid reports not Two-Way Symmetrical ethical model, with 62 percent crisis framing and policy documents mentioning democracy 45 times but term limits zero times. This cheap signalling fails authenticity test. Ethical public relations and public diplomacy strategies based on costly signalling, consistency, and two-way accountability can restore trust, explaining 68 percent of variance, but only if they pass authenticity mediation. Costly signals such as verifiable hospitals in Yaoundé and Abuja so presidents no longer need Paris, factories, technology transfer, are more credible than cheap signals such as summit photos with long-serving leaders. Consistency requires same standard for constitutional coups as military coups. Two-way accountability requires transparent disclosure of sanctuary duration and inclusion of civil society and youth who suffer faith of absentee leadership in EU-Africa summits. If Europe continues cheap signals and pan-European sanctuary, trust will continue declining and China will remain rated higher than EU as predicted by Afrobarometer.

6.4 Contribution to Knowledge Originality

This study makes five original contributions such as the followings:

1. Theoretical Contribution: First study to apply Grunig and Hunt Four Models, Heath Fully Functioning Society Theory, Stakeholder Theory, Social Exchange Theory, Framing Theory, and Costly Signalling Theory to Africa-Europe trust deficit. Extends Grunig from organizational to intercontinental level and Heath from local community to global society level. Proposes authenticity mediation model where perceived authenticity mediates between diplomacy strategies and trust, tested via SEM.

2. Conceptual Contribution: Introduces concept of Pan-European Sanctuary Eurafrique as evolution from Françafrique. While Verschave and Smith documented Françafrique as French sphere, this study empirically demonstrates pan-European pattern including UK and Switzerland hosting both Francophone Cameroon and Anglophone Nigeria leaders. Provides new scale Pan-European Sanctuary Perception Scale 12 items alpha 0.87, first of its kind.

3.Empirical Contribution: Comparative analysis of Nigeria former British colony and Cameroon former French and British colony as cases of same faith demonstrates France as leading example but broader

European pattern. Provides quantitative evidence that double standard condemning military coups but protecting constitutional coups is strongest predictor of distrust mean 4.61. Provides content analysis of 1600 articles proving framing asymmetry.

4.Methodological Contribution: Develops and validates Ethical International Public Relations Trust Bridge Model with three tests - Costly Signalling Test, Consistency Test, Two-Way Accountability Test - to distinguish ethical public diplomacy from reputation management at intercontinental level. Previous studies lacked empirical tests.

5. Afrocentric Contribution: Most EU-Africa literature is Eurocentric from Brussels perspective. This study is Afrocentric using Afrobarometer data, Nigerian and Cameroonian youth perception, African media framing, and interviews with African civil society. Amplifies voices of those who suffer faith of absentee leadership.

6.5 Recommendations Ethical Public Diplomacy Trust Bridge Model. Based on Findings, This Study Proposes Ethical International Public Relations Trust Bridge Model with Practical Recommendations for European and African Stakeholders.

MODEL:

FROM: Unethical Asymmetrical Model - Low Trust

Cheap Signals: Summit photos with long-serving leaders + aid reports + Global Gateway glossy reports + hosting Biya Tinubu in Paris London Geneva + condemning military coups only + excluding civil society from summits = Low Authenticity due to inconsistency and double standard = Low Trust, China rated higher, governance vacuum.

TO: Ethical Symmetrical Model - High Trust **.**Costly Signals + Consistency + Two-Way Accountability = High Authenticity = High Trust Restoration.

Practical Recommendations: For France - Leading Example - Must Reform First:

1. Medical Sovereignty as Costly Signal: France should redirect part of Global Gateway 150 billion euros from reports to verifiable hospitals in Yaoundé and Abuja with transparent commissioning by external auditors. Condition: French hospitals should publish annual report of duration and cost of medical stays of African leaders and require they return to govern within 14 days except genuine emergency, limiting prolonged residence that creates governance vacuum. This is costly signal that France prefers African medical sovereignty over sanctuary profit.

2. Consistency on Democracy: If France condemns military coups in Sahel as unconstitutional, it must also condemn constitutional coups where presidents remove term limits to stay 40 years. France should publicly support term limits and refuse Elysée photo opportunities with leaders who have removed term limits and ruled over 30 years, including Biya. This passes consistency test.

3. Financial Transparency: France should enforce existing laws on illicit enrichment and require transparent declaration of family assets of long-serving African leaders residing in France, freezing assets where term limits subverted. This is costly signal difficult to fake.

4. Two-Way Accountability: France-Africa Summit should include 50 percent civil society and youth who suffer faith of absentee leadership, not just leaders who benefit from sanctuary system. Allow Afrobarometer youth to testify on sanctuary perception before summit.

For United Kingdom and Switzerland - Part of Pan-European Pattern:

5. UK should publish similar transparency on medical stays of Nigerian and other African leaders in London hospitals and limit prolonged absentee governance. UK hosted Buhari 8 months while Nigeria had governance vacuum - ethical policy would require vice president to act fully.

6. Switzerland Geneva Intercontinental Hotel extended stays of Biya should be subject to transparent disclosure and Swiss government should support medical sovereignty in Cameroon.

For European Union Institutions - EU Delegations in Abuja and Yaoundé:

7. Costly Signalling Implementation: EU should shift from cheap signals aid reports to costly signals - build one verifiable factory and one hospital per Global Gateway project with plaque commissioned by EU and AU jointly, with independent verification that African leaders no longer need Paris for treatment. Publish GPS coordinates and allow African journalists to verify.

8. Consistency Test Implementation: EU should apply same democratic standards to all coups military and constitutional. EU should create public scorecard ranking African leaders on term limits adherence and medical sovereignty - leaders building hospitals at home score higher.

9. Two-Way Accountability Implementation: EU-Africa Strategy should be jointly reviewed annually by both European Parliament and African civil society including Nigerian and Cameroonian youth. EU Delegations should hold quarterly town halls in Abuja and Yaoundé where youth can question EU policies on visas, trade, sanctuary.

10. Media Framing Correction: EU should fund joint EU-Africa media exchange where European journalists report positive industrialization in Nigeria and Cameroon and African journalists report positive European partnership beyond aid, to correct 62 percent crisis framing and 58 percent exploitation framing.

For African Nations - Nigeria and Cameroon:

11. Medical Sovereignty Legislation: Nigeria and Cameroon parliaments should pass law requiring president to seek treatment in National Hospital Abuja Yaoundé unless certified by medical board that treatment unavailable, and limiting foreign medical trips to 21 days except emergency, with vice president assuming powers automatically after 21 days to prevent governance vacuum.

12. Term Limits Enforcement: African Union should enforce term limits protocol and condemn constitutional coups same as military coups.

13. Stakeholder Positioning: African nations should position themselves as legitimate stakeholders demanding visa reciprocity, technology transfer, and medical sovereignty, not aid recipients.

For Media:

14. European media BBC, Deutsche Welle, France 24 should reduce crisis framing from 62 percent to balanced framing including industrialization and youth innovation in Nigeria and Cameroon. African media should reduce exploitation framing and include verification of costly signals.

6.6 Suggestion for Further Studies

1. Expand comparative analysis to other African nations Ghana, Kenya, South Africa and other European nations Germany, Belgium to test pan-European sanctuary generalizability.

2. Longitudinal study tracking trust before and after implementation of costly signals such as hospitals built.

3. Experimental study testing effect of exposing African youth to costly signal information versus cheap signal information on trust restoration.

4. Study on European public perception of Africa hosting European leaders - reverse trust deficit.5. Study on China versus EU costly signalling - why China perceived as more consistent despite similar sanctuary not provided.6. Digital public diplomacy study on how social media amplifies perception of absentee leadership sanctuary.

6.7 Limitations of the Study

Study limited to Nigeria and Cameroon cannot generalize to 54 African nations, but provides comparative insight. Self-reported perception may be influenced by current events, but triangulation mitigates, access to diplomats limited, but policy documents supplement. Concept of medical sanctuary very sensitive study measures perception based on publicly reported information not legal accusation.

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