

**AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS ON
THE PERFORMANCE OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA
(A STUDY OF AUCHI POLYTECHNIC AND EDO STATE UNIVERSITY UZAIRUE)**

BY

**ADEKOYA OLUWATOSIN ABIDEMI
ICT/2132040634**

DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION, AUCHI POLYTECHNIC, AUCHI

NOVEMBER, 2022

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**BEING A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MASS
COMMUNICATION, SCHOOL OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION
TECHNOLOGY, AUCHI POLYTECHNIC, AUCHI
EDO STATE**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF
HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMA (HND) IN MASS COMMUNICATION**

**NOVEMBER, 2022
DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this project titled **“An Evaluative Study of the Effectiveness of Public Relations on the Performance of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria (A Study of Auchi Polytechnic and Edo State University Uzairue)”** was written by me and it is the

record of my research. To the best of my knowledge, it has not been presented in any previous application for an academic award. All sources of information have been acknowledged using references.

Adekoya Oluwatosin Abidemi

Date

CERTIFICATION

This project is approved based on the student's declaration and its compliance with the requirement of the Department of Mass Communication, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi; in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Higher National Diploma (HND) in Mass Communication.

Mr. Anthony Ofune Ubaka
(Project Supervisor)

Date

Mr. Joseph Ikerodah
(Ag. Head of Department)

Date

DEDICATION

To my parents, Mr and Mrs Adekoya; and to my husband,
Mr Afolayan Bamidele.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Almighty God for giving me the strength, knowledge and understanding to complete this project. His love has been more than sufficient to keep and sustain me.

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ABSTRACT

The success of any organization, especially the institutions of higher learning, depends on how information is handled in that organization. The efficiency and effectiveness with which information is managed determines to a large extent whether the institution will consistently be crisis ridden or not. This is why no institution of higher learning can survive without the activities of the public relations department. Yet, many institutions in Nigeria including universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education among others have failed to appreciate public relations and its potency for the sustenance and growth of their establishment. Sequel to the above it is pertinent to assess the effectiveness of public relations on the performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The result of the study revealed that public relations strategies have significant impact on the performance of institutions of higher learning. The finding further showed that public relations units of institution of higher learning play a little role in decision making.. The study concluded that public relations is indispensable in institutions of higher learning. To this end the study recommended that public relations personnel of every institutions of higher learning should involve in decision making and have free access to relevant information.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

The practice of public relations has become an essential part of modern management such that organisations that are worth their salt have got to make it a priority. The reason for this trend is straightforward: the public image of any organisation is most essential for its success and indeed survival. Public relations can be viewed as a professional area which is diverse and is practiced by trained and experienced professional who operate efficiently and competently in the various fields. It requires a great deal of competence, knowledge and integrity to function effectively in any given area of the profession. This fact is valid for public relations at national, regional and local levels.

The success of any organization, especially the institutions of higher learning, depends on how information is handled in that organization. The efficiency and effectiveness with which information is managed determines to a large extent whether the institution will consistently be crisis ridden or not. This is why no institution of higher learning can survive without the activities of the public relations department. Yet, many institutions in Nigeria including universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education among others have failed to appreciate public relations and its potency for the sustenance and growth of their establishment.

In the words of Enwonode (2004) “researches have shown all over the years that university administrations in Nigeria have not fully appreciated public relations potentials in tackling numerous crisis that have bedeviled academic excellence in our ivory tower”. The fact that some institutions of higher learning in Nigeria have crisis from time to time simply reveals the truth that they have either neglected this all important unit and have relegated to the background by not giving it a free hand to operate. Many do not even operate a public relation unit or department.

Some institutions of higher learning may be boasting of having a public relations department while all they have is an information office attached to the vice chancellors or rectors’ office or the office of the registrar, dishing out information handed down to them by the school authority. Such institutions do not give their public relations department a free hand to work. They do not even allow their public relations department to get involved in the processes leading to major decisions with serious public interest and implication. In some cases, public relations departments are only remembered when there is crisis in the school. This does not give public relations practitioner the opportunity to manage issues and crisis the

way they would yield positive result but instead give room to ‘fire brigade’ kind of public relations.

Public relations department should be part of school management board so that the public relations officers can take major decisions that may affect the publics of the institutions. In relation to this, Salau (2005) said that it is the responsibility of the public relations personnel to handle misconceptions and misinformation arising from such delicate and sensitive decisions like sudden closure of school, rustication/expulsion of students or even retrenchment or retirement of some staff. If the public relations executives of institutions of higher learning do not attend management meetings, there is no way they can effectively project the image of their institutions positively.

Public relations executives are not accorded their rightful positions in institutions of higher learning due to ignorance of the duties they are meant to perform. Public relations is a management function because it works with and through people to achieve organization’s goals/objectives. So unless public relations executives are placed where they should be in the school organizational chart, a lot of things will continue to go wrong in our institutions of higher learning.

Since the image of many institutions of higher learning in Nigeria have been seriously damaged by incessant strike of the academic and non-academic staff and cult activities of the various cult groups, it is imperative for all institutions of higher learning to maintain a viable public relations outfit that would generate and foster goodwill, support and cooperation of the employees, other internal publics and relevant others (external publics).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

On several occasions, tertiary institutions in Nigeria have been ridden with crises either caused by the protest of internal and external publics. Lecturers have often grumbled at one time or the other over bad condition of learning environment or condition of service. The facts remains that the public relations department exists in tertiary institutions to create harmonious environment for the good of all involved.

Issues and crises such as demonstrations, students unrest, strike, cult activities etc have reduced, our higher institutions to mere shadow of itself and battered the highly respected image of the “Ivory Tower” this apart, they have made other countries not to value our education. They look down on our certificates, and tag our graduates, “graduate of crisis”.

So all these problems have given impetus to the call for re-organization of the public relations departments of institutions of higher learning in order to restore their lost glory. Many institutions, both academic and business institutions, are now relying heavily on the public relations departments to bring about the much needed harmony and cordiality that should exist between the institutions and its publics. It is in the light of this that this study assessed the impact of public relations strategies on the performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

Given the statement of the problem above, this study aims to achieve the following objectives.

- i. To determine the impact of public relations strategies in the performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
- ii. To examine the role of public relation units of tertiary institutions in the decision making process of the schools.
- iii. To investigate how public relations officers apply public relations strategies in arresting strikes and cult activities in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
- iv. To establish how public relations officers use public relations strategies to manage the image of their schools.

1.4. Research Questions

Based on the objectives of this study, the following research questions were formulated to serve as a guide for this study;

- i. What is the impact of public relations strategies in the performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria?
- ii. What is the role of public relations units of tertiary institutions in the decision making process of the schools?
- iii. How do public relations officers apply public relations strategies in arresting strikes and cult activities in tertiary institutions in Nigeria?
- iv. How do public relations officers use public relations strategies to manage the image of their schools?

1.5. Scope/Limitations of the Study

This study assessed the impact of public relations strategies on the performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. A study of this nature ought to be carried out in all institutions

of higher learning in Nigeria. However, given the limitation experienced by researchers all over Nigeria as part of research experiences, which comes in form of inadequate fund to execute the study across all institutions of higher learning, the scope of the study is limited to two tertiary institutions: Auchi Polytechnic Auchi and Edo State University Uzairue.

As part of the research experience by researchers all over the globe, certain limitations hindered the effective and smooth collection of data for the work. These in specific terms include, inadequate working funds; lack of time and scarcity of materials.

One visible limitation of the study is that of gauging the ulterior feelings, behaviour and dispositions of the respondents. The data would rather be gotten through their manifest responses. Although it would have been better, if possible to study every public relations firm in Nigeria but, doing that would not only be too expensive, but would make the research to be complicated, because of the inability to measure the large number of people. This informs picking a sample of the population.

1.6. Significance of the Study

This research will be significant to institutions of higher learning in Nigeria because the findings will help to restructure their public relations department for more oriented result. The study will reveal the importance of public relations activities to institutions of higher learning as regard how to manage issues and crises as they come.

This study will explain the need to make the public relation executives part of institutions top management board and to be more effective in the discharge of their managerial role.

The study is significant in the sense that its findings will serve as a base and framework for future studies on the topic understudy.

1.7. Operational Definition of Terms

For a proper understanding of this work, the key terms used are defined based on their conceptual relevance to this study;

- ❖ **Public relations:** A management function, which tabulates public attitudes, defines the policies, procedures, and interests of an organization followed by executing a programme of action to earn public understanding and acceptance.
- ❖ **Tertiary Institutions:** As far as this research is concerned, tertiary institutions will include all institutions of higher learning or schools for furthering education which are

higher than secondary school. These include the Polytechnics, Schools of Nursing and Midwifery, Colleges of Education, Universities etc.

- ❖ **Image:** The image of any organization is the picture of that organization in the mind of the public's which makes people to choose to favour that organization and leave others. The above definition indicates that some institutions of higher learning have good image while some don't.
- ❖ **Publics:** Publics of institutions of higher learning are those whose activities affect the institutions and those who the activities of the institution affect in one way or the other.
- ❖ **Internal publics:** Internal publics are those publics within the organization whose activities affect the organization and are also affected by the organization's activities. In the case of institutions of higher learning, internal publics include employees (academic and non-academic staff) students etc.
- ❖ **External Public:** The external publics are those publics outside an organization whose activities affect the organization and who are equally affected by the organizations activities and programmes. The external publics of institutions of higher learning include their host community, other communities around it, parents and guardian of students, other institutions of higher learning around it and the mass media, as well as government and financial organisations.
- ❖ **Public Relations Strategy:** This is a distinctive management function which helps to establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its numerous strategies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Review of Relevant Literature

Quite importantly, every academic discourse requires an input from what is already in existence. This is usually in the form of citations, where particular emphasis has been on how relevant this is with what is currently being studied. Therefore, it becomes imperative to say that human knowledge is undoubtedly an elevation of the construction of previous findings in which case the later acts as a foundational framework of the former.

This study, therefore, beams its focus on available works with bearings on the following issues:

- ❖ Concept of Public Relations
- ❖ Areas of Work of Public Relations Practitioners
- ❖ Public Relations and Related Concepts
- ❖ Jobs in Public Relations
- ❖ Impact of Public Relations on the Society
- ❖ Public Relations Practice in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria
- ❖ The Need for Public Relations in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria
- ❖ Constraints of Public Relations Practice in Tertiary Institutions

2.1.1. Concept of Public Relations

Many scholars and practitioners have presented various definitions of public relations based on their knowledge, experiences and perspectives. These definitions would assist in the appreciation and evaluation of the definitions, roles and functions of public relations.

Public relations is the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends. The British Institute of Public Relations defined public relations as the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. This definition suggests that public relations are the creation or establishment of mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics. It also suggests that a public relations is not a haphazard process. It must be consciously designed. Planning calls for attention, deliberation, research, anticipation, analysis and consequences. Public relations efforts must ensure that not only does the organisation understand its publics, the public's must equally understand the organisation. It must understand its reasons for whatever actions it takes.

As a public relations officer or manager of your firm, for instance, it is your duty to ensure that mutual understanding is achieved between your firm and its several publics. More often than not, the publics are passive at performing this role. Therefore, your organisation must take proactive steps towards achieving it. 'Sustained effort' means that it is not enough to start the plan; it must be carried through to a logical end. This is not usually very easy in the face of a precarious economy, political instability and other factors.

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) says "public relations is concerned with or devoted to creating mutual understanding among groups and institutions." The PRSA recognizes the place of groups and institutions in the public relations process. It admits that these entities have interests that must be protected. It also presupposes a streamlining of these benefits for mutual good. The concept of mutuality in this definition makes you as a public relations man or woman an intermediary between your organisation and its publics. This implies that you should be able to align the interests of these two parties for their mutual advantage. You do this by convincing your organisation that public relations attempts to put the broad interest of the public first before the special interest of the organisation. By doing this, the organisation is indirectly serving its own interest; hence PR has what is called "enlightened self-interest".

Another definition is that given by Cutlip, Center and Broom (1982) in their book *Effective Public Relations* which is considered the bible of public relations in America. According to them, public relations is the "management function that identifies, establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and its publics upon whom its success depends." Now, take note of the last part of the definition, 'upon whom its success depends,' because this is one fact that very many organisations have not realized. A company's success or failure depends considerably on its relationship with its various publics.

Jefkins (1985) defined public relations as all forms of planned communication both inward and outward between an organization and its publics for the purpose of achieving objectives concerning mutual understanding. Meanwhile, Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) defined the practice as "the discipline which looks after reputation, with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing opinion and behaviour. It is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics."

In an article published in *Forbes*, Wynne (2013) stated that a public relations practitioner promote companies or individuals via editorial coverage as opposed to "paid

media” such as advertisements or announcement. The industry promotes clients and making them seem as successful, honest, important, exciting or relevant as possible. They are hired to protect, enhance or build their reputations through media, in which if there is a positive message, they will translate it into a positive media story or when the news is bad, they will formulate the best response and mitigate the damage.

According to Lee and Bernays (1992), public relations can be viewed as a management function, which tabulates public attitudes, defines the policies, procedures, and interests of an organization followed by executing a programme of action to earn public understanding and acceptance. The key objective of public relations is to achieve and sustain mutual understanding, mutual goodwill and mutual faith between an organisation and its publics.

However, at the first World Forum in Public Relations in Mexico, held in August 1978, representatives of more than 30 national public relations associations, in what was termed the “Mexican Statement” defined public relations as “the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organizational leaders, and implementing planned programs of action, which will serve both the organization and the public interest.” This Mexican Statement has been adjudged one of the best definitions of public relations and thus one of the most widely consulted.

2.1.2. Areas of Work of Public Relations Practitioners

The work of public relations may be divided into many areas or functions. Fundamentally, public relations practitioners perform the following functions:

- **Writing and editing:** Writing is a very vital skill in public relations. Therefore you must learn not only to appreciate good writing but must also be able to write well. The beauty about writing is that it is a skill that can be learned. Good writers are in high demand in most agencies.
- **Mass production:** Practitioners of public relations engage in the writing of various messages for the purpose of communicating with both internal and external publics. This is why the skill of writing is vital to public relations. Some of the messages that PR practitioners write are packaged as magazines and other forms of publications, which require editing and production.
- **Media relations:** The mass media in both print and electronic are the channels through which public relations practitioners communicate with the public. This is why

PR practitioners need to cultivate and maintain good relations with mass media organisations and other personnel, especially editors, reporters and columnists.

- **Research:** Public relations problems are not solved by guess work. PR practitioners carry out formal research to obtain information that is vital to planning.
- **Strategic planning:** Public relations practitioners who operate at the top level participate in the formulation of organisational missions, policies and goals. .
- **Management and administration:** Public relations practitioners engage in management work. Public relations is a distinct management function which helps to maintain mutual lines of communication between an organisation and its publics. PR practitioners manage people, businesses, and events.
- **Corporate counseling:** Public relations practitioners advise management on matters concerning their organisations' relationships with their various publics.
- **Organising special events:** The organisation of events, such as trade fairs, trade exhibitions, `press conferences, fashion shows, factory tours, special observances (e.g. mothers' day) AGMs, etc is part of work public relations practitioners do.
- **Speaking:** To represent their organisations, PR practitioners do engage in speaking assignments of different kinds for different publics. For example, your organisation may be invited by students who are studying a subject that underlies the work of your organisation to give a public lecture during their career day.
- **Coaching:** PR practitioners also engage in training and coaching top management staff on public speaking and press interviews.
- **Crisis Communication:** A very special type of work that PR practitioners do is helping their organisations to resolve crises whenever they occur. They do this essentially by managing the flow of information between the organisation and the public, via the mass media, and by advising management on what to do and how to do it, so that the crisis is not aggravated. To practice preventive public relations, it's necessary to plan extensively to avoid crisis, but since crisis must occur, it is your duty to counsel.

2.1.3. Public Relations and Related Concepts

So far, we have succeeded in defining public relations, but we must go a little further by explaining the relationships that subsist between public relations and similar or related concepts. The nature of public relations is quite broad and as such it includes a wide range of activities which are sometimes confused as public relations rather than elements of public relations. We shall take a look at some of these concepts and attempt an explanation of the differences and similarities between them and public relations.

- **Publicity:** This refers to any attempt designed to expose an organisation, its services or product to the public through any public media. It includes advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, etc. However in a technical sense, it is more limited and defined, so that it means free publicity which is provided essentially by the press. It is the practice of placing newsworthy and factual information written in a journalistic and editorial format published in the news media at no cost. An example of publicity is a situation where a company issues a news release about a new product or new functions of an existing product. Should Nigeria produce its first air plane for instance, it will be given wide, free publicity.
- **Press Agency:** Unlike a news agency, a press agency deals with staging newsworthy events that are designed to attract the attention of the public by publicizing them in the media. Such events include press conferences, trade exhibitions, fashion shows, etc. These must be distinguished from events that happen daily. They are rather pseudo-events because they are stage-managed for the purpose of being reported by the media.
- **Lobbying:** This is one of the most abused expressions in common usage. In a technical sense, lobbying is a professional attempt designed to influence the government or any authority to change a public programme or policy in favour of an organisation, a cause, a group, an event e.g. organizing a petition drive against a cause, e.g. open letters in daily newspapers or magazines. Dry cell manufacturers in Nigeria did this a few years ago to draw government attention to the unbridled importation of dry cell batteries. Lobbying is a legal thing when it has points, information and logical reasons.
- **Merchandising:** This deals with blending an acceptable appearance. It is part of promotion. You blend the product or person with the real it or him, so as to win acceptance and patronage from public for a group, a product, service, cause or an idea

e.g. the grooming of a positive image by a politician who acts, dresses and speaks like a real native even though he is from somewhere else, e.g. during political campaigns when politicians dress like the native people he is going to speak to. In commercial merchandising, most products are designed to convey messages by their packs. You know that normally people do not patronize badly packaged products.

- **Promotion:** This involves molding or mobilizing opinion favourably to an organization to get it to support a worthy cause, e.g. the mounting of events or fund raising programmes for motherless babies' homes.
- **Personal Selling:** This talks about a personal effort involving a person who is attempting to woo other people on behalf of a product, a group, an idea, etc, e.g. religious crusaders who go from door to door. There are two types of personal sellers namely: order-takers and order-getters.
- **Human Relations:** Human relations deals with an individual's ability to develop and maintain a personality type as well as image that is capable of successful and spontaneous interpersonal relationship with other people. Human relations is relating well with others. It talks about manners and character. Good human relations is the basis of good public relations.
- **Persuasion:** It is a fundamental assumption in public relations that effective public relations is persuasive, not intimidating or forcing. Persuasion is any mass communication effort designed to change public opinion, believe, attitudes as well as action.
- **Communication:** This is a process of sharing ideas with other people. In a professional sense, it is a means of sending information from one person to another. Public relations in all its forms embraces communication in one form or the other.

2.1.4. Jobs in Public Relations

If you have chosen to take public relations as a career, you probably know what I know: that it is a field with great job prospects, especially in the world of today. Today's corporate world has become very competitive in every sense. Every organisation goes the extra mile to keep its various publics by creating and maintaining mutually cordial relationships with them. Since public relations have equally become scientific and technology-based, it is hazardous for any firm not to hire appropriately qualified personnel to man its public relations office. Aside from working for a firm however, there are other

options of employment for a good public relations person. The Public Relations Society of America outlined the following as the activities an average public relations personnel does.

- **Information Service:** Part of building a company's reputation is the role of supplying information to a variety of publics. Companies send news releases to the media in order to inform the public about earnings, acquisitions, new products and the like (media relations). Companies must respond to inquiries from customers, distributors, government officials and community residents.
- **Product Publicity:** Introduction of new products, and campaigns to put fresh life into the sale of established products, are important functions in what is broadly called marketing communications. PR practitioners work closely with the marketing department to develop product publicity that reinforces advertising and promotion campaigns. Product recall is the negative side of product publicity.
- **Investor Relations:** Also referred to as stockholder communications, investor relations is a means for providing information to individuals who own stock or have a special interest in the corporation. Elaborate annual reports, quarterly reports mailed with dividend checks and other printed materials are sent to stockholders on a regular basis. Staff members may have to convince stockholders that an acquisition or merger is in their best interest.
- **Financial Relations:** A parallel function to investor relations is to provide extensive information to the financial community including security analysts at brokerage houses, large banks and similar institutions, and to weigh the information and make judgments on a company's financial strength and prospects. On the basis of their recommendations, institutional investors and brokerage firms buy or sell a company's stock. A thorough knowledge of finance, as well as Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) rules, is essential for a public relations person specializing in financial relations.
- **Community Relations:** A company is a vital part of a community and as such has obligations to that community through various kinds of support including encouraging employees to do volunteer work, providing a grant to the local orchestra or art museum, donating needed equipment to local schools or hospitals and so on. Good community relations include efforts to improve the quality of life in the community.

- **Employee Relations:** In any organisation, there must be a good communication "flow" between management and employees and employees and management. The public relations department often works closely with personnel or human resources to achieve good employee relations through publication of an employee newsletter, magazine, newspaper, or video news magazine, the writing of brochures to explain company policies and benefits, preparation of audio-visual materials for training and policy-transmission purposes, the scheduling of staff meetings and seminars, the training of speakers among managers and supervisors who serve as communicators to employees, and coordination of employee productivity or energy conservation campaigns.
- **Special Events Management:** Public relations personnel are responsible for the planning and implementation of special events including sponsorship of the games, of civic or cultural events and festivals.
- **Public Affairs:** The actions of government on the local, state, and national level have major effects on how companies conduct their affairs. Thus, a number of PR people work in an area often referred to as government relations. In this role, public affairs executives seek to influence legislation through contact with legislators and governmental regulatory agencies. A public affairs manager must be "concerned with the management function covering the relationship between the organisation and its external environment and involving key tasks of intelligence gathering and analysis, external action programmes directed at government, communities and the general public as well as strategic issue management and internal communications." A lobbyist has a narrower function "concerned with direct or indirect means of exercising influence on passage or defeat of legislative bills or regulatory actions, and to influence their outcomes."
- **Issues Management:** Issues management is the management process of determining how various public issues will affect a company. The manager must identify the issue, analyse it, ascertain options open to the company, initiate a plan of action and evaluate the results (e.g., How would a company handle investments in the Republic of South Africa? How would a company handle environmental legislation impacting specific manufacturing processes?).
- **Trade Association:** Trade associations are generally comprised of member companies that produce the same type of product or provide similar services. The

association works to promote or oppose legislation, informs the public about the industry, and undertakes statistical and other types of research for the benefit of its members. Examples include: Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, National Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria.

- **Labour Unions:** Labour unions must use public relations extensively to inform members about pension plans, insurance programs, and contract negotiations to name a few tasks. In addition, labour unions participate actively in politics from the federal to the local level by endorsing and financing candidates and taking positions on political issues.
- **Professional Societies:** Like the Nigerian Medical Association, the Nigerian Dental Association, the Nigerian Bar Association, public relation bodies work as professional societies to support legislative campaigns, advocate professional standards, and publish information at both the skilled professional and general readership levels, recruit membership, and generally work to strengthen the profession's stature in the public mind.
- **Government or Military Relations:** Government or military offices personnel work as public relations practitioners although they are most commonly referred to as public information officers (specialists) or public affairs officers (specialists).
- **Sports Information and Entertainment Publicists:** These work basically as press agents to promote the personalities and careers of movie stars, musicians, rock bands, athletes, politicians, authors and so on. Professional sports teams have a public relations specialist. Many university sports teams or athletic departments have public relations specialists in most developed countries. Generally, professionals in the sports industry are referred to as promotions directors or managers.
- **Educational Public Relations:** Public relations play a vital part in almost every educational institution. Fund raising is an important part of educational public relations. In urban areas, elementary and high school districts frequently employ public relations officers to assist the news media and to work with parents and school groups. Collegiate public relations practitioners may distribute news releases containing information about campus events and personalities, prepare periodicals, brochures and catalogues, maintain ties with alumni, maintain relations with local, state and federal government officials, recruit students, maintain internal relations with faculty, staff and students, solicit donations from foundations, alumni, federal

and state governments and special interest groups (a serious task in private institutions).

Generally, however there are four major areas where public relations experts usually work which are:

- i. Corporations
- ii. Governments- State, Federal, Local
- iii. Public Relations Agencies
- iv. Independent Consulting Firms

It is important to note that working in any of these public relations job areas entails same general skills but there are very wide differences in terms of job demands, challenges and complexities.

i. Corporations

Corporations refer to organizations that produce goods and services with a strong motive for profit. In today's world, corporations do not only offer most of the jobs in public relations, but they equally offer the greatest variety of jobs. Can you think of the reasons for this? Some common corporations in Nigeria include: Nigeria Bottling Company (NBL), Unilever Nigeria, NICON Insurance, First Bank, etc. In most corporations, public relations jobs focus on specific publics. Indeed, several big corporations create different sub departments for their various publics, thus you have employee relations, media relations, government relations, community relations, consumer relations, etc. If the corporation is a public limited liability company, it could have a financial relations department otherwise known as investor relations department. Each of these departments is usually headed by a public relations personnel who is an expert in a given sub-field. Their duties would include research as well as advising the organisation's management. They also plan, execute and evaluate communication programmes. It is important to look at specific job demands in each of these areas.

ii. Governments

Government Departments at Federal, state, and local levels also employ public relations personnel. If you get a job in any of these places, you would be called by such titles as press secretary, public information officer, public affairs officer, etc. Your job would involve writing news releases and position papers, speaking with reporters, speech writing

and press briefing. You may equally try your trade with political parties. Your duties will include all the above and voter relations and media relations.

iii. **Public Relations Agencies**

There are lots of challenges and opportunities for growth and development if you work in a public relations agency. The work is enormous because companies that have in-house public relations departments and those who do not would at one time or the other require the services of an independent public relations organisation. Thus, agencies handle public relations activities of other organisations, corporations, non-profit organisation, even individuals. For instance, some corporations may hire your agency to handle its annual report to stockbrokers or its overseas investors. You could be hired to partner with other agencies or bodies or even the public relations department of a corporation to do research, planning, communication and evaluation.

Just as it is in advertising agencies, staff of public relations agencies are often assigned to accounts. Usually, an account would include all the public relations activities planned for one particular client. Accounts are managed by account executives. It would be their job to research into the public relations problems, write messages, and decide on media and placement. They equally do evaluation of such campaigns. It is now very common to have public relations staff specializing in various areas of an accountancy. Some are experts in message designing, media planning and placement, while others focus on research. In some cases, a staff could take up more responsibilities than one. Public relations agencies vary in size. There are some that work as a small part of big advertising agencies while others are full-fledged, full blown agencies, yet others are one room agencies. Known public relations agencies in Nigeria are Progan Promotions, Lagos, Trucontact, Lagos.

iv. **Independent Public Relations Consultants**

You may equally wish to ply your trade as a one man public relations consultant. Successful public relations consultants are often persons with broad experience having worked in a few agencies and handled several successful accounts. They are a one-man agency. Very often they specialize in small areas of public relations like crisis communication, speech writing, international public relations, etc. In the words of Guth and Marsh (2000) 'The main appeal of independent consulting is also its biggest burden. The consultant alone bears the responsibility for success or failure.

2.1.5. Impact of Public Relations on the Society

The influence which public relations have had on society cuts both ways. It has added value and progress and has equally had a deleterious effect on society. This should be expected by the average watcher of the industry as nothing is absolutely good on its own without a flip side. According to Wilcox, Ault and Agee (2000) “the proponents of public relations can document many values of its work to society. The critics can cite with equal validity, many harmful effects.” They added that ultimately public relations must be judged on the basis of its use to society. According to them, the following are the basis for such judgment:

- The social utility of public relations rests in its promotion of free, ethical competition of ideas, individuals, and institutions in the market place of public opinion.
- Social utility is diminished to the extent that competition of ideas, individuals, and institutions is suppressed in campaigns.
- Social utility is served to the extent that the goals underlying influence attempts are revealed.
- Social utility is diminished to the extent that public opinion is not permitted to come to bear on issues once they are made public.
- Social utility is diminished when the origins of public relations are hidden or ascribed to other than their true sources.

To assert that public relations have benefited society would be an understatement. Truth is public relations have in the last three decades served as a great instrument of social cohesion. Public relations have helped governments, economies and corporations in keeping track of their relationship with their various publics. It has equally been used to avert crisis situations, provide profit for investors, jobs for employees and goods for the consumer. Public relations has also been useful in drawing the attention of governments, organisations and other stakeholders to society’s less privileged persons through non-profit organisations and societies. The following positive contributions can be credited to public relations.

- Public relations minimize friction and conflict in society thereby providing the conducive environment that engenders development.
- Public relations have created avenues by which the public conveys its desires and interests to otherwise unresponsive corporate organisations. It equally speaks for these organisations to the public.

- Public relations promote mutual adjustments between institutions and groups thus establishing smoother relationships that benefit society.
- Public relations is an essential element in communication system that enables individuals to be informed on many aspects of subjects that affect their lives.
- Even in everyday inter-human relationship, communication principles of public relations have in micro forms helped to achieve cohesion and understanding which have engendered social stability.
- Public relations enhance social change. Every society passes through challenging complexities which are not easy to adapt to.

Public relations provide the communication needed to lubricate the effects of these changes. Examples here are attitudinal changes like population control through child spacing and limited birth. Discourses on public relations and society are as old as the practice of PR itself. Concerns expressed by both practitioners and the society as well as governments have led to the adoption of various codes of ethics to guide public relations practice.

Wilcox, Ault and Agee (2000) outlined three positive impacts of public relations:

- By stressing the need for public approval, practitioners improve the conduct of organisations they serve.
- Practitioners serve the public interest by making all points of views articulate in public forums.
- Practitioners serve our segmented, scattered society. They conclude that ‘the potential good inherent in ethical effective public relations is limitless.’

Although, public relations practitioners have been severely criticized for the deleterious effects they have had on society. Wilcox, Ault and Agee (2000) identified two major ‘minuses’ of public relations in its relationship with society. They are:

- Public relations have cluttered our already shocked channels of communication with the debris of pseudo-events and phoney phrases that confuse rather than clarify.
- Public relations have corroded our channels of communication with cynicism and “credibility gaps”.

To buttress the above points, Heilbroner (2008) asserts that public relations have contributed to the debasement of our communication. In his words, “No one can quarrel with the essential function that public relations fill as a purveyor of genuine ideas and information. No one denies that many public relations men, working for corporations as well as for

colleges, honestly communicate things which are worth communication. Nor can anyone absolve public relations for loading the communication channels with noise. We read the news and suspect that behind lies the 'news release.' We encounter the reputation and ascribe it to publicity. Worst of all, we no longer credit good behaviour with good motives, but cheapen it to the level of 'good public relations.'

2.1.6. Public Relations Practice in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

The recognition of public relations as a management function in institutions of higher learning helps to manage issues and crises. Public Relation keeps them informed on public opinion and the best to create a harmonious environment for academic work in this changing world. Public relations activities is necessary in these institutions so that the future can be predicted.

The fact that every organisation needs to work hard to maintain the policies goodwill points to the need for institutions of higher learning to work much harder because of the declining image institutions of higher learning caused by problems ranging from the terror unleashed on innocent citizens by secret cults, to industrial action by the academic and non-academic staff. But instead of having a viable public relations outfit to achieve the above objective, what we have in our institutions in the place of PR department is confusion. Salau (2001) discovers that in some situations what is expected to be the public relations units are labelled information unit, some institutions call their PR department information and protocol unit while others label theirs PR unit. He also observed that in some institutions, the PR unit is located in the office of the Chief Executive of such institution who may be the vice chancellor, rector or provost, and in some other institutions, PR unit is attached to the Registrar who is the administrative head of that institution.

The consequences of the above arrangement is grave as the PR unit is not given a free hand to work since the PR executive might be expected to perform the duties of a publicity officer or worst still act as an errand boy under such an arrangement. Yet this is the arrangement we have in most of our institutions of higher learning.

When public relations started in institutions of higher learning, it was established to gain public favour from the tax payers who were used for the funding of public schools. Today, the aim of public relations has gone far beyond that. Onah (2001) observed that expansion and economic crunch combined to compel universities to seek to be heard and understood by their external environments. He further stated that with rigorous in-house

image audit, the university is able to work out what it wants through public relations and set up realistic objectives.

Public relations is needed in institutions of higher learning because it is a powerful tool for improving the relationship with the internal and external publics (who may be hostile or indifferent) or cordial. In agreement with this statement, Salau (2007) noted that in line with the professional objectives of public relations, personnel in public relations units of an institution are expected to ensure mutual understanding between these institutions and their various publics, so as to engender goodwill towards achieving the set objectives of these institutions.

Formally, institutions of higher learning used publicity in place of public relations but today, many of them have resorted to public relations to educate and inform their relevant publics about building good public image for their institutions. Despite these recognition public relations has received, PR experts believe that PR is not yet taken seriously in educational institutions. However, there would not have been any need for public relations in schools had it been that government monopoly of tertiary educational institutions is still as strong as it used to be in the past. But now, the growing competition between government and institutions of higher learning for autonomy has led to the demand for public relations in institutions of higher learning. Emeka (2009) questioned;

Has the university system remained what it was in the early stage - a close cloister with comfortable inmates - public relations practice would probably have remained a tool in the hands of profit-driven corporations.

What Emeka is saying is that changes that invaded the tranquility the institutions of higher learning used to enjoy led to establishment of sound responsive public relations department. Emeka and Salau are of the same view because Salau also said that before the explosion of tertiary institutions in the country and their mounting problems, universities did not have public relations departments. This means that in the past PR had not the recognition it has today. To Salau (2001) 'the awareness and more rapid flow of information across the country and outside has compelled managers of educational institutions to appreciate the importance of public relations'.

It was this recognition that made, the Nigerian Institute of public relations (NIPR) to start sponsoring the M.Sc. Degree programme in public relations in the University of Nigeria. Even with this recognition, some institutions of higher learning do not have a public relations department. The discovery of Fabukozor (2009) indicates that many institutions and

organizations in the country do not have public relations department as a regular part of their management structures and where they exist, the practitioners operate under severe bureaucratic bottlenecks that inhibit the successful Implementation of their duties.

Some institutions of higher learning who have PR departments only use them to produce calendars, journals and other gifts for the institution instead of allowing them to practice the real profession. This has made the impact of PR effort minimal in our institutions of higher learning.

2.1.7. The Need for Public Relations in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

There is no institution without basic needs. All institutions exist to run programmes and solve their needs to improve their services to the general public. Public relations departments are placed at advantage to solve many needs of institutions of higher learning in area such as.

- Autonomy
- Finance
- Employee relations
- Community relations and media relations
- Maintaining sound academic programmes through excellent performance
- **Autonomy**

Tertiary institutions are seriously agitating for freedom to manage their own affair. But because government is to grant this request, it raises dust from time to time in institutions of higher learning. For instance, making our universities autonomous was one of the reasons that made lecturers to go on strike in 2003. The strike lasted for six months-from January 2003-June 2003. It not only disrupted academic programme but made many universities to lose academic year.

However, if public relations department of tertiary institutions were working the way they should, they will be in a better position to counsel school authorities on how two-way symmetric communication can help them achieve mutual understanding with the government without using strike to achieve their purpose.

- **Financial Need**

There is no institution of higher learning that is self-sufficient. All of them depend on government and publics for fund. It has been pointed out in this work that the initial purpose of establishing public relations in institutions of higher learning was to generate public favour

from tax payers whose money is used for funding of schools. Today, that need still exists and with good public relations strategies such funds can easily be received.

- **Employee Relations**

Many tertiary institutions neglect their most important public and so the workers go on strike. At times, the institution is temporarily closed when the academic and non-academic staff go on strike. Sometimes academic programme is grounded when the students revolt. When a good working environment is created for employees, they work happily; efficiency and productivity are increased while aggression is reduced. Eluwa (1998) added that “the employees in an organ determines how the outside world sees the organization which goes a long way to make organization either succeed or fail”. This shows that the employees of tertiary institutions are the mirror through which the institutions are seen. Since they are very close to the publics and the various institutions work for, the publics tend to believe everything they are told by the employees about their institutions. That is why there is need to maintain cordial relationship with the employees so that they will be better representatives of their institutions.

Okeke (2001) sees communication as a necessary tool to achieve good employee relations: He noted that:

The hallmark of good organizational employee relations is primarily rooted in efficient management principles and practices, which helps an organization to conduct its business most profitably and thereafter commits the organization to provide the requisite enabling environment - good working conditions; recognition and respect for human dignity, personal values, rights and privileges, free and equal opportunity for advancement and reward for excellence (accomplishment); adequate latitude for self-discovery (potentials) and expression towards a more progressive and enlightened leadership; responsibility backed with the concomitant authority; proper supervision without being unnecessarily high-handed; payment of wages and benefits that are not only commensurate with productivity, but also in line with prevailing practice in other similar establishments and provision of other fair motivations accomplishment.

- **Community Relations/Media Relations**

Academic work will go on smoothly in institutions of higher learning if harmonious environment is created. Oyeneye (1999) corroborates thus:

The success of an organization, be it educational or business depends to a large extent on the degree of peace and tranquility it enjoys in the community it is located. In public relations, no public is neglected whether internal or external publics. If the Internal publics are made comfortable while the external publics are neglected, they will make life unbearable for the school.

The external publics to be remembered when planning public relations activities for institutions of higher learning include the government, the surrounding village, the mass media etc. Among these publics, the mass media need to be handled with care for the press men can make or mar an organization. Jefkins (1998) reminds us that the role of press relations is to achieve maximum publication or broadcasting for PR information in order to create knowledge and understanding but this can be used the negative if the relationship between the press and the Institution is not cordial.

To support this, Imahiyerebo (2003) said that media relations is the creation of relationship with journalist with the goal of persuading them to include the organizations message in their coverage. He concluded by saying, “obviously even the best and most successful PR campaigns are founded on good media relations”.

Crises arise in institutions of higher learning when the school authorities fail to balance the interest of various publics within and outside the institution. Salau (2001) noted that educational institutions and their host communities have had conflict over many issues ranging from admission and employment opportunities, litigation for appointment of indigenes to key positions in such institutions. There should be adequate information from the school authority to various publics concerning the policies of the institution. No policy or activity of the school should be at variance with that of the government. It is proper to maintain a closer and regular contact with both the internal and external publics. Again every information sent to the public must be true and should be given on time because public relations is based on truth and full information.

When a viable public relations unit is in an institution, it will evaluate its policies and the impact of such policies on the public. Modification of the policy becomes easy when there is regular evaluation of PR activities. It becomes a serious problem when public relations executives are seen as errand boys, under this arrangement, public relations professionals are relegated to the background where they take instructions from the chief executive. PR Professionals are also not made part of the decision making body. Most often their advice is not taken. This is the situation in many institutions of higher learning and that

is why crisis seems to be part of every institution of higher learning in Nigeria, including the Auchi Polytechnic.

- **Maintaining Sound Academic Programmes Through Excellent Performance.**

Due to many problems often faced by institutions of higher learning, their academic programmes are often disrupted. So many people whose children are studying abroad made such decision due to unpredictability of programmes of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Students are only sure of when they are admitted to study in the university, polytechnic, or college of education but are never certain when the programme will end.

Igben (2013) noted that many people have lost confidence in the educational programme of Nigeria tertiary institutions essentially because of their lack of commitment to define the length of academic programmes. In essence, not many institutions of higher learning can boast of not having lost an academic year due to one problem or the other? Not many can boast of following their academic calendar strictly. Workers go on strike, schools are shut-down and academic year roll by with students at home wasting away simply because institutions of higher learning neglect a very important component of modern day management. Public relations of institutions of higher learning accept the practice of public relations as critical to harmonious environment required for the achievement of their academic growth.

A lot of changes will be seen in our campuses, cult activities reduce, workers hardly go on strike and academic programmes not often disrupted, if public relations will impact positively in academic calendar of their institutions. Public relations departments of higher institutions must be accorded their rightful place in the organizational structure of institutions if our objective of getting the institutions of higher learning in this country back to their former glory must be attained.

2.1.8. Constraints of Public Relations Practice in Tertiary Institutions

Igben (2013) feels that public relations practice should be able to transform tertiary institutions in Nigeria into an enviable peaceful environment for learning to check what he called frustration by multi-faced” problems. Some of the problems he enumerated are:

- Under-utilization of public relations in the management process;
- Inability of public relations expert to secure the approval of school authority for meaningful public relations programme of action;

- Lack of professional revival retreat and re-engineering for public relations experts on campus;
- Wrong public relations structure representation of “Errand boyist” philosophy;
- Lack of operational budget or under funding of PR programmes;
- Under-utilization of public relations in the management process;
- Inability of public relations expert to secure the approval of school authority for meaningful public relations programme of action;
- Lack of operational budget or under funding of PR programmes;
- Under staffing of public relations units or department;
- Absence of public relations department,
- Wrong staffing or PR department with staff from extraneous background to public relations;
- Irregular communication with the grass roots publics;
- Dominance of reactive public relations practice-fire brigade approach;
- Delay with release of urgent information and Absence of basic modern operating facilities including telephone, computers, e-mails, Internet etc.

To avoid crises, institutions of higher learning must understand that public relations is a sustained and continuous efforts and not something you do when crisis has already erupted. That is why public relations is a process and a deliberate planned effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its numerous publics. Public relations, especially in institutions of higher learning should be pro-active not reactive.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the uses and gratification theory. The theory was propounded by Katz, Blumber, and Gurevitch in 1983. The theory holds that people are attracted to a particular media or technology based on the gratification they intend to derive from such programme or technology.

According to the uses and gratifications theory, audiences differ in the gratifications they seek from the mass media. These differences are related to certain social conditions and or personality dispositions. These differences result in many media use patterns and a variety of media effects (Palmgreen, Wenner and Rosengrenl, 1985). Hence, the basic assumption of the theory is that peoples’ choice of a particular medium is predicted on the type of gratification they obtain. This is interesting to media scholars and professionals because it

tells us the more people use media the more they enjoy it and the more they want to use it; particularly with media that are active like the Internet and other new media technology.

Katz, Blumber, and Gureviteh (1983) saw the media as a way for individuals to connect or disconnect with others. Obviously they were not thinking of the new media, but uses and gratifications theory had evolved at this point to include radio, newspapers, television and even the new media. They listed 35 needs and put them into five categories:

- i. Cognitive needs (acquiring information, knowledge, and understanding)
- ii. Affective needs (emotional, pleasurable, or aesthetic experience)
- iii. Personal integrative needs (strengthening credibility, confidence, stability, and status)
- iv. Social integrative needs (strengthening contacts with family and friends)
- v. Tension release needs (escape and diversion)

Larose and Eastin (2004) suggested that the uses and gratification theory can explain how public relations practitioners use but it can also be enhanced by the addition of some new variables such as expected activity outcomes and social outcomes just as explained in expectancy value theory. Expectancy activity outcomes concern what people think they will obtain from the medium.

The uses and gratification theory cannot be immediately consigned to the waste bin as the theory has some practical relevance in the way and manner people use the mass media where McQuail (2007) identified information and education, guidance and advice, diversion and relaxation social contact, value reinforcement, cultural satisfaction, emotional release, identity formation and confirmation, lifestyle expression, security, sexual arousal and filling time as some of the gratifications sought by users.

This theory is therefore relevant to this study because tertiary institutions make use of public relations based on the gratification (satisfaction) that they intend to derive. According to Olise (2019), for uses and gratification theory to manifest, the issue of 'uses' and 'gratification' as independent entities must be in action.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The researcher approached the study from audience analytical perspective using the survey research design. Nworgu (1991) posits that a survey research is one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. According to Okoro (2001) “survey research is the process of gathering data from a target population through the use of questionnaire or interviews and subjecting such data to statistical analysis for the purpose of reaching conclusion of subject matter of study and providing solutions to identified research problems.”

To further buttress this fact, Sobowale (1983) noted that survey involves drawing up a set of questions on various subjects or on various aspect of a subject to which a sample is requested to react to. Therefore, the survey design used in this study serves as a veritable tool for collecting empirical data through questionnaire from a sample of the population under study.

3.2. Population of the Study

The population of this study are staff of Public Delations Department of Auch Polytechnic, Auch and Edo State University, Uzairue. The numerical strength of this population is 36

3.3. Sample Size

Many a times, an entire population would not be studied due to time and resource constraints but based on the nature of this population, the researcher decided to use all of them as part of her sample size

3.4. Sampling Procedure

As a result of large population, the purposive sampling technique was employed to determine the sample size of the study. According to Ikeagwu (1998), “the basic assumption behind purposive sampling method is that, with good judgment and appropriate strategy, one can hand-pick the cases to be included in the sample and this develops sample that is satisfactory in relation to ones needs.”

3.5. Validity of the Instrument

Okoro (2001) posits that “validity refers to the accuracy of an instrument, i.e. how well it measures what it is supposed to measure.” In order to establish the validity of the instruments the researcher used the expertise of some mass communication and marketing professionals in Warri who reviewed and made very useful inputs that helped to achieve high validity for the questionnaire.

Also, questionnaire was chosen as a valid instrument for this study due to its ability to standardize the research questions to ensure uniformity of answers from respondents. The questions were brief and direct for easy responses allowing approximately 30 seconds for each question.

3.6. Reliability of the Instrument

Ogbazi and Okpala (1994) posit that, “reliability of an instrument or test is the degree to which an instrument is consistent in measuring whatever it purports to measure.” In establishing the reliability of the instrument, the researcher applied the test-retest technique. The test-retest technique is a process whereby the researcher administered the constructed questionnaire to the same sample group more than once with the view of discovering how consistent each element of the group is in the scoring of the instrument at such different times.

The researcher administered the questionnaire to twenty (20) elements of the sample group to ascertain the reliability of the instrument but was not used in the final analysis of the work.

3.7. Method of Data Collection

Questionnaires being the data collection instrument were personally administered and retrieved by the researcher on face-to-face interaction. The questionnaire was self-completed because the respondents were literate. This was to ensure high response rate.

3.8. Method of Data Analysis and Discussion

The data collected were analysed using the simple percentage analysis and were presented with the aid of tables. The simple percentage data analysis was adopted to enable the researcher fully explore and plain the data that were collected and collated from the questionnaire without the use of complex mathematical models which are generally not easy to grasp.

Below, is the formula used for calculating simple percentage which was used for this study:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{actual response}}{\text{total sample size}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

Where actual response = number of respondents.

Total sample size = total number of respondents.

The data were measured in terms of the frequency and percentage distribution of the different categories of variables that were displayed in the tables.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter is concerned with the presentation and analysis of data collected through the use of questionnaire.

During the course of this research, 36 copies of questionnaires were printed and distributed to the respondents. Out of the 36 copies of questionnaires that were administered to the respondents, six copies were wrongly filled and 30 copies were returned. Therefore, the data collected is shown in the tables below

4.1. Analysis of Respondents' Bio-Data

Table 1: Gender of the Respondents

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	23	77
Female	7	23
Total	30	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2021)

The data on Table 1 shows 23 respondents (77%) are male while only 7 respondents (23%) are female.

Table 2: Age Range

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
25-45	19	63
46 and above	11	37
Total	30	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2021)

The data on Table 2 shows that 19 respondents (63%) are between the ages of 25 and 45 while 11 respondents (37%) are between the ages of 46 and above.

Table 3: Marital Status

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Married	21	70
Single	9	30
Total	30	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2021)

The data on Table 3 shows that 21 respondents (70%) are married while 9 respondents (30%) are single.

Table 4: Educational Qualification

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
HND/BSC	8	27
Masters' Degree	16	53
Others	6	20
Total	30	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2021)

The data on Table 4 shows that 8 respondents (27%) possess HND/BSC while 16 respondents (53%) possess Masters' degree and 6 respondents (20%) possess other degree.

4.2. Presentation and Analysis of Psychographic Data Collected

Research Question 1: What is the impact of public relations strategies in the performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria? Item 5, 6, 7 and 8 were used to answer this research question.

Table 5: Do you have a public relations unit in your institution?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	30	100
No	0	0
Total	30	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2021)

The data on Table 5 shows that all the respondents answered in the affirmative that they have a public relations unit in their institution.

Table 6: Do you agree that public relations is a viable tool that can be used to enhance the performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	30	100
No	0	0
Total	30	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2021)

The data on Table 6 shows that all the respondents agreed that public relations is a viable tool that can be used to enhance the performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Table 7: Do you think your public relations strategies have been profitable to your institution?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	30	100
No	0	0
Total	30	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2021)

The data on Table 7 shows that all the respondents answered in the affirmative that their public relations strategies have been profitable to their institution.

Table 8: How would you rate the impact of public relations strategies in the performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Excellent	15	50
Good	11	37
Moderate	4	13
Poor	0	0
Very poor	0	0
Total	30	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2021)

The data on Table 8 reveals that 15 respondents (50%) rated the impact of public relations strategies in the performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria as excellent while 11 respondents (36%) rated it as good and 4 respondents (13%) rated it as moderate.

Research Question 2: What is the role of public relations units of tertiary institutions in the decision making process of the schools? Item 9, 10 and 11 were used to answer this research question.

Table 9: Do you agree that media relation of public relations unit boost performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	30	100
No	0	0
Total	30	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2021)

The data on Table 9 shows that all the respondents agrees that media relation of public relations unit boost performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Table 10: Do you think that public relations units have a place in the management board of tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	27	90
No	3	10
Total	30	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2021)

The data on Table 10 shows that 27 respondents (90%) think that public relations units have a place in the management board of tertiary institutions in Nigeria while only 3 respondents (10%) think otherwise.

Table 11: Do you agree that if public relations units are involve in decision making, the set goals and objectives of tertiary institutions will be achieved?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	22	73
No	8	27
Total	30	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2021)

The data on Table 11 shows that 22 respondents (73%) agree that if public relations units are involve in decision making, the set goals and objectives of tertiary institutions will be achieved while 8 respondents (27%) disagree.

Research Question 3: How do public relations officers apply public relations strategies in arresting strikes and cult activities in tertiary institutions in Nigeria? Item 12, 13 and 14 were used to answer this research question.

Table 12: Do you agree that if public relations units participate in decision making the issue of social unrest will be minimized.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	30	100
No	0	0
Total	30	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2021)

The data on Table 12 shows that all the respondents agree that if public relations units participate in decision making the issue of social unrest will be minimized.

Table 13: What are the public relations strategies the public relations department of your school employ in arresting strikes and cult-related activities?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Round table discussion	18	60
Dialogue and recommendation	8	27
Education and enlightenment campaign	4	13
Total	30	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2021)

The data on Table 13 shows that 18 respondents (60%) stated that the public relations strategy they use in their school to arrest strikes and cult-related activities is round table discussion while 8 respondents (27%) opted for dialogue and recommendation and 4 respondents (13%) opted for education and enlightenment campaign.

Table 14: Does your institution appreciate the potentials of public relation as an effective instrument for managing problems/crises?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	30	100
No	0	0
Total	30	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2021)

The data on Table 14 shows that all the respondents answered in the affirmative that their institutions appreciate the potentials of public relation as an effective instrument for managing problems/crises.

Research Question 4: How do public relations officers use public relations strategies to manage the image of their schools? Item 15 and 16 were used to answer this research question.

Table 15: Do you agree that public relations units are image makers/managers?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	30	100
No	0	0
Total	30	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2021)

The data on Table 15 shows that all the respondents agree that public relations units are image makers/managers.

Table 16: Do you agree that public relations unit manage and market the image your institution to the general public?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	30	100
No	0	0
Total	30	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2021)

Based on the data on Table 16, all the respondents agree that public relations unit manage and market the image your institution to the general public.

4.3. Discussion of Findings

All the data collected for the purpose of this study shall be discussed here and inferences will be made;

Research Question 1: What is the impact of public relations strategies in the performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

The objective of this research question is to determine the impact of public relations strategies in the performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The data on Table 5, 6, 7 and 8 were used to answer this research question. The data on Table 5 shows that all the respondents answered in the affirmative that they have a public relations unit in their institution. The data on Table 6 shows that all the respondents agreed that public relations is a viable tool that can be used to enhance the performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The data on Table 7 shows that all the respondents answered in the affirmative that their public relations strategies have been profitable to their institution. The data on Table 8 reveals that 15 respondents (50%) rated the impact of public relations strategies in the performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria as excellent while 11 respondents (36%) rated it as good and 4 respondents (13%) rated it as moderate.

Based on the above, the impact of public relations strategies in the performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria includes the fact that public relations is seen as a veritable tool for enhancing the performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This is due to the fact that the goal of public relations is to build and sustain goodwill and mutual relationship between an organization and its publics.

Research Question 2: What is the role of public relations units of tertiary institutions in the decision making process of the schools?

The objective of this research question is to examine the role of public relation units of tertiary institutions in the decision making process of the schools. The data on Table 9, 10 and 11 were used to answer this research question. The data on Table 9 shows that all the respondents agrees that media relation of public relations unit boost performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The data on Table 10 shows that 27 respondents (90%) think that public relations units have a place in the management board of tertiary institutions in Nigeria while only 3 respondents (10%) think otherwise. The data on Table 11 shows that 22 respondents (73%) agree that if public relations units are involve in decision making, the set

goals and objectives of tertiary institutions will be achieved while 8 respondents (27%) disagree.

Based on the fact that the goal of public relations is to build and maintain goodwill between an organization and its publics, public relations units play a vital role in the decision making process of tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Research Question 3: How do public relations officers apply public relations strategies in arresting strikes and cult activities in tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

The objective of this research question is to investigate how public relations officers apply public relations strategies in arresting strikes and cult activities in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The data on Table 12, 13 and 14 were used to answer this research question. The data on Table 12 shows that all the respondents agree that if public relations units participate in decision making the issue of social unrest will be minimized. The data on Table 13 shows that 18 respondents (60%) stated that the public relations strategy they use in their school to arrest strikes and cult-related activities is round table discussion while 8 respondents (27%) opted for dialogue and recommendation and 4 respondents (13%) opted for education and enlightenment campaign. The data on Table 14 shows that all the respondents answered in the affirmative that their institutions appreciate the potentials of public relation as an effective instrument for managing problems/crises.

Based on the above, the following are how public relations officers apply public relations strategies in arresting strikes and cult activities in tertiary institutions in Nigeria;

- Round table discussions
- Dialogue and recommendations
- Education and enlightenment campaign.

Research Question 4: How do public relations officers use public relations strategies to manage the image of their schools?

The objective of this research question is to establish how public relations officers use public relations strategies to manage the image of their schools. The data on Table 15 and 16 were used to answer this research question. The data on Table 15 shows that all the respondents agree that public relations units are image makers/managers. Based on the data on Table 16, all the respondents agree that public relations unit manage and market the image your institution to the general public.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Summary

For any organization to succeed, public relations is not just enough to achieve organizational goals but a good corporate image is required. Public relations activities can be used to achieve a sound corporate image. The core of public relations activities in building a virile corporate image is to evolve and execute planned programmes of actions aimed at mobilizing and turning the awareness or consciousness of people towards an organization in order to help in the attainment of organizational goals and objectives.

The result of this study revealed that public relations strategies have significant impact on the performance of institution of higher learning, which means that the application of public relation strategies will boost organization performance. It was observed from the result that some public relations unit of tertiary institutions in Nigeria play a little role in decision making, which is an indication that public relations officers are seen as rubber stamp.

The result further indicated that the application of public relations strategies help in arresting strikes and cult activities in institution of higher learning; which signified that with the help of public relation unit, crime will be reduce to minimum level at the institution of higher learning.

It was observed from the result that public relations strategies have been effectively used in managing the image of the schools to the general public's, which means that firms should uphold public relations strategies that promote their image.

5.2. Conclusion

Every research carried out in life has a purpose and that purpose, at the end helps in identifying and solving problems for humanity. This research set out to discover impact of Public relations strategies in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

In the course of this research, it was gathered that most tertiary institutions in Nigeria recognizes the importance of public relations in the institution, although a lot of facilities needed for the public relations unit to undertake its responsibilities are still lacking.

The researcher discovered that public relations is indispensable in institutions of higher learning. It is therefore essential for every institution of higher learning to have a viable public relations unit that is well equipped and headed by a professional public relations executive.

In this work, suggestions were made on how the public relations practice in institutions of higher learning can be improved. In Onyeneye's (1999) view, the methods that school authorities can use to build and sustain good image and reputation are good character, good deed, responsible performance and action backed by effective communication programme.

This boils down to the fact that public relations practice in institutions of higher learning are not what it should be because there are no funds and facilities to carry out these action packed activities mentioned above.

But there is hope if a little attention can be paid to this all important department by providing the public relations personnel all it takes to run the unit: and the necessary support required to carry out the public relations functions.

In institutions of higher learning, everybody should be public-relations conscious, from the highest placed staff to the lowest and even students because any action taken by anybody builds or tears down the goodwill and reputation of the institution.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

- There is need for training and retraining of the public relations executives through public relations workshops, conference and seminars, as a means of ensuring their currency while in practice. This will enable them perform their duties in a professional manner.
- The determinant of the effectiveness of a public relations unit in any organization or institution is its location in the organization's or institution's hierarchy. So, public relations units of institutions of higher learning should be positioned closer to the management so that their policies will always be implemented by the management.
- The public relations units of institutions of higher learning should be in touch with various publics of their institution to spread good news about their institutions and also garner feedback on public perceptions of their various institutions.
- Public relations units of institutions of higher learning should always survey the environment in order to be familiar with all that is happening on campuses. With this they will practice proactive public relations and not reactive public relations. Reactive public relations does not give room for effectiveness on the job.

- The public relations executives of institutions of higher learning should participate in the creation or formulation of policies that affect their publics and the institutions as well.
- The public relations of institutions of higher learning should contribute to the success of their institutions by motivating employees, educating the publics, creating understanding and favorable publicity for their institutions.
- The public relations unit of institutions of higher learning should evaluate their activities periodically to ensure that both internal and external publics know about their activities and are receiving appropriate messages when necessary.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Department of Mass Communication,
School of Information and Communication Technology,
Auchi Polytechnic,
PMB 13,
Auchi

Dear Respondent,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

I am a final year student of Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi and I am currently carrying out a research on **“An Evaluative Study of the Effectiveness of Public Relations on the Performance of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria (A Study of Auchi Polytechnic and Edo State University Uzairue)”**.

This study is in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Higher National Diploma in Mass Communication. Therefore, to accomplish this research work, you are expected to kindly help the researcher by responding to these questions. This is purely an academic exercise and the confidentiality of information you give is assured.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Yours Faithfully

Adekoya Oluwatosin Abidemi
(Researcher)

APPENDIX B

INSTRUCTION

Please tick appropriately in the space provided. The questionnaire is divided into two parts namely: Section A which consist of your personal data and Section B.

SECTION A: PERSONAL DATA

1. Gender of the Respondents

- a) Male ()
- b) Female ()

2. Age Range

- a) 25-45 ()
- b) 46 and above ()

3. Marital Status

- a) Married ()
- b) Single ()

4. Educational Qualification

- a) HND/BSC ()
- b) Masters' degree ()
- c) Others ()

SECTION B

5. Do you have a public relations unit in your institution?

- a) Yes ()
- b) No ()

6. Do you agree that public relations is a viable tool that can be used to enhance the performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

- a) Yes ()
- b) No ()

7. Do you think your public relations strategies have been profitable to your institution?

- a) Yes ()
- b) No ()

8. How would you rate the impact of public relations strategies in the performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

- a) Excellent ()
- b) Good ()
- c) Moderate ()
- d) Poor ()
- e) Very poor ()

9. Do you agree that media relation of public relations unit boost performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

- a) Yes ()
- b) No ()

10. Do you think that public relations units have a place in the management board of tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

- a) Yes ()
- b) No ()

11. Do you agree that if public relations units are involve in decision making, the set goals and objectives of tertiary institutions will be achieved?

- a) Yes ()
- b) No ()

12. Do you agree that if public relations units participate in decision making the issue of social unrest will be minimized?

- a) Yes ()
- b) No ()

13. What are the public relations strategies the public relations department of your school employ in arresting strikes and cult-related activities?

- a) Round table discussion ()
- b) Dialogue and recommendation ()
- c) Education and enlightenment campaign ()

14. Does your institution appreciate the potentials of public relation as an effective instrument for managing problems/crises?

- a) Yes ()
- b) No ()

15. Do you agree that public relations units are image makers/managers?

- a) Yes ()
- b) No ()

16. Do you agree that public relations unit manage and market the image your institution to the general public?

- a) Yes ()
- b) No ()