



Public Relations Strategies in the Management of Tertiary Institutions in Post COVID-19 Nigeria

Dominic Shimawua^a and Kusugh Ternenge^{b*}

^a *Department of Public Administration, Veritas University, Abuja, Nigeria.*

^b *Department of Mass Communication, Veritas University, Abuja, Nigeria.*

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/ARJASS/2022/v18i4407

Open Peer Review History:

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/92767>

Systematic Review Article

Received 09 August 2022
Accepted 18 October 2022
Published 18 November 2022

ABSTRACT

The eruption of a global pandemic in the end of 2019 known as the coronavirus or COVID-19 and its containment measures, including prolonged economic lockdown have affected all sectors of the economy around the world, including Nigeria. The education sector in particular was badly affected by the pandemic due to physical closure of schools even though online learning was adopted in some schools during the period. However, the reopening of the schools for academic activities has placed a heavy burden on school administrators in the management of the reopening process. Interestingly, Public Relations, which is part of organizational management is expected to play very crucial role in successful reopening and quick recovery of the sector from the pandemic; hence, this study became necessary to investigate the public relations strategies in the management of the tertiary institutions in the post period of this pandemic in Nigeria. Anchored on the Stakeholders and Excellence Theories of Public Relations practice, the researchers made use of secondary sources to obtain data for the study. Thematic qualitative method was used in analysis of the data that were obtained in the study. Through the data analysed, there was sufficient evidence on the way the coronavirus pandemic has affected the education sector the world over in general and Nigeria in particular. The study has also shown the public relations strategies relevant to engage stakeholders in 'safe schools' reopening plans; target resources to where they are most needed; get children back to school confidently; make school environments safe; and quick recovery of lost learning activities among others. While this study acknowledged through its conclusion, the indisputable

^o Associate Professor of Public Administration;

*Corresponding author: Email: kusughternenge@gmail.com, kusught@veritas.edu.ng;

centrality of public relations in effective management of schools' reopening and recovery process in the post Covid-19 period, it observed unfortunate challenges that are in the practice among schools which can disrupt the achievement of the desired success in the reopening and recovery process.

Keywords: Public relations strategies; management; Tertiary Institutions; post Covid-19.

1. INTRODUCTION

Public Relations is one of the areas that attracts tremendous attention from scholars across disciplines. This is due to its relevance in the coordination and management of modern organizations. It has really become important for almost every institution to keep a long term and trustworthy relations with the community or public groups in order to handle upcoming challenges and also to maintain its survival and success [1,2,3-6]. It was observed that public relations activities and practice are necessary in providing a coordinated effort that gears towards promotion of a positive image of the organisation [7]. Due to the relevance of public relations in profit and nonprofit organisations, it is believed that it can be useful also in the management of schools [8,9] Eniola, 2011; [10-12] Veena, Dayaneethie & Zukiswo, 2012). Also, there were indications that the establishment of public relations across the schools, particularly tertiary institutions to enhance effective communication and stakeholders' engagement has received a significant recognition, acceptability and boost over the years [13,10,11,14,15]. The essential role of public relations to manage crises and other related issues has already been acknowledged among scholars previous [16], Ojumo, Nikona & Kiroma, 2006) [17].

Consequently, the outbreak of the global coronavirus pandemic which started in the month of December 2019 in Wuhan City of China has tremendously affected the global economy and has challenged stakeholders in finding a lasting solution to the problem during the pandemic and speedy recovery after the pandemic respectively [18,19]. In particular, the pandemic has challenged school administrators to adopt effective recovery strategies after reopening of their institutions that were closed due to the Covid-19 containment measures. Public relations is expected to play a crucial role in the reopening and survival of the schools in post Covid-19 pandemic era and the kind of strategies used in achieving success in this regard remains very crucial [20-23]; hence, this paper is to examine such public relations strategies effective in the

management of tertiary institutions in the post Covid-19 era in Nigeria.

1.1 Objective of the Study

The major objective of this paper is to critically establish the appropriateness of public relations in the management of tertiary institutions in post COVID-19 in Nigeria.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a secondary research design to examine the public relations approach in the management of tertiary institutions in post COVID-19 in Nigeria. Consequently, sources from which data were harvested to address the concern of this study included Google search, Google Scholar, ResearchGate and journals, books, periodicals, etc. Materials selected and used in this work were those relevant to address the problem of this paper.

2.1 Public Relations

Different scholars have defined public relations in different ways (Broom, Casey & Ritchey, 2007) Grunig, [24]; (Ferguson, 2004; Jefkins, 2006). "Basically, public relations has to do with effort by the organisation which aims at establishing and maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship with the publics in order to achieve its set objectives. According to the British Institute of public relations, public relation is a deliberate, planned, and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics" [25]. Public relations, according to Broom & Trucker [26], "is the management process whose goal is to attain and maintain accord and positive behaviours among social groupings on which an organization depends to achieve its mission. Its fundamental responsibility is to build and maintain a hospitable environment for an organization". James [27] defines it as "the management of communication between an organization and its publics.

In the context of the educational process, public relations is defined as a planned and systematic management function to help improve the programmes and services of the educational system" [28]. In the same vein, Greg [29] described "school public relations as a management function that establishes and maintains two-way mutual relationships and communication between the school and the community. A careful look at the above definitions shows that school public relations relies on a comprehensive two-way communication process involving both internal publics (students and staff) and external public (parents, government and general public) with a common goal of stimulating a better understanding of the roles, objectives, accomplishments and needs of the school. The purpose of a school public relations programme according to Gorton as cited" by Ibeneme & Okwelle [30] includes: (a) Selling educational programmes to the community in order to support the schools; (b) Interpreting the educational programmes so that the people will have a better understanding; (c) Encourage the community interest and participation in the school programme.

From the definitions above, it can be deduced that public relations is the management practice that ensures that an organisation maintains a cordial relationship with its various publics in order to attract favourable image and outcome.

2.2 Coronavirus Pandemic

Coronavirus which started in December, 2019 in Wuhan in China is a disease which is infectious in nature and has spread across the world with over 629 Million confirmed cases with over 6.58 Million confirmed deaths, making it the one of the world's deadliest diseases in history [31-34]. "The disease is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2; otherwise known as SARS- CoV-2" [35,36,33,34,37]. "Its symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose, sneezing, among others" [36,33,34,38]. It is a highly communicable disease [35] and its mode of transmission is from person-to-person [34,38]. "Transmission occurs among close contacts mostly through respiratory droplets released when the infected person sneezes or coughs" [36,34]. "While measures such as lockdown, social distancing, self-isolation or self-quarantine and observation of simple hygiene habits such as regular washing of hands, wearing of face masks and covering the

mouth with a handkerchief when coughing or sneezing have been recommended to contain the spread of the disease among people" [33,34] "it is important to note that there is no any known cure or vaccine for the Covid-19 pandemic presently" [35,34].

2.3 Impacts of COVID-19 on Tertiary Education in Nigeria

"The impact of COVID-19 pandemic across sectors of the economy, including education is not in doubt. For instance, it has been reported that the Coronavirus deadly disease has resulted in the total shutting of schools in about 215 countries all over the world with 91.4% of the total number of enrolled learners in these countries temporarily mandatory out of school" [39]. "It is accounted that over 1.6 billion students across the world were obliged to stay out of schools as social distancing was enforced locally and regionally around the world in order to enclose the extent of coronavirus disease" [40].

"It can be noted that Africa was one of the continents whose educational systems have been typically affected by the deadly disease as more than 98% of teaching and learning cannot be performed suitable to country-wide lockdown in this continent. In the shutting of schools across Sub Saharan Africa, including Nigeria of which over 91 percent are primary and secondary school learners" [39].

"In a short time, COVID-19 has disrupted the landscape of learning in Sub Saharan Africa by limiting how students can access learning across the country. However, apart from the pharmaceutical interventions and other preventive measures like using of facemask, washing of hands, social distancing has been the most effective way of minimizing the spread of COVID-19. The effective implementation of social distancing demands that schools be closed for as long as each government from different countries are certain that the pandemic has been curtailed enough for the safety of learners and teachers before recommence back to the class" (HEDCOM, 2020; Kekić et al. 2016; [41,40,42].

Otache [34] studied "the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Nigeria's economy and possible coping strategies and found that jobs losses, a sharp drop in income of the informal workers and the poor, food insecurity, business and school closures, a steep decline in oil revenues and

economic uncertainties were some of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria. The eruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, as [40] observed, has affected every sphere of life and may forever change how we have always lived and conducted our businesses, and no one can resist the wind of change that is blowing. Of all the sectors of governance, the educational sector, particularly at the tertiary level, appears to have been most greatly affected and therefore requires a more pragmatic approach to resolution. The impact of the COVID-19, according to Nwafor", Omoevah & Umuze [21], has made all schools in Anambra State, both public and private, were asked to abandon the buildings, including tertiary institutions, since this was the only choice left to protect the lives of the state's future generation.

Similarly, the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic has had an impact on the global economy as well as the Nigerian school system. It caused significant gaps in the academic calendars of many academic institutions at all levels [20,22].

2.4 Public Relations in Tertiary Institutions

Educational institutions in the society are saddled with the task of introducing members of the society into the knowledge, skills and values of the society from one generation to another. This preposition, which enjoys scholarly confirmations by Schofield (1990) and Afangideh (2010), suggests that educational institutions are vehicles used by societies to keep its past and present alive while also ensuring that the future is positively predicted, through the works done today. They are therefore agents of socialization for individual and societal development [43]. This implies that educational institutions are an important segment of the society and are crucial in the growth and development of the society in general. It goes to mean therefore that concerted effort must be made at all times to ensure the effective development of the sector. Such efforts must also include the use of effective communication.

"It is of importance to note that tertiary institutions exist with a variety of publics, including: government which includes: federal. State and local government; The Governing Council; Employees including all categories of staff such as retired, current and potential staff; The students' population including former, current and potential students; Her host community;

Parents; Unions; National Commissions" [6]. "Public relations, therefore, has potential to build very healthy relationships with the various publics of the institutions with the consequent capacity for removal of unfavourable rumours and stories that could have negative implications for their growth and stability" [6].

Consequently, previous empirical and theoretical literature has shown a significant correlation between public relations practice and the performance of educational institutions in general and the tertiary institutions in particular. For instance, Wilson & Rahila [44] found in their study that as fracas between institutions of learning and their host communities has become a recurring trend in Nigeria, it is imperative to adopt community. The conclusion of their study was that if properly harnessed, community relations would certainly enhance the performance of institutions in Nigeria. Adelakun [45] concluded through a study that no school can exist in isolation of the community and its agencies. In fact the development of the school to a large extent is determined by the relationship that co-exists between the school and the host community. The study recommended for sensitization of the schools and communities on the benefits attached to allowing good relationships to coexist between the school and the community members. It also recommended school leaders to ensure that community leaders and relevant stakeholders are carried along in needed activities of the school to ensure smooth interaction".

In their study, Okohiand & Nath (2019) found that school-community relations management practices of educational administrators include efficient welfare services to keep school members motivated and the use of social networks for encouraging interpersonal relationships among various stakeholders to ensure environmental safety in schools. Similarly, public relations, as Musa [7] concluded in a study, has indeed improved relationships and has led to mutual collaboration among University Libraries and their various publics. Okafor & Nwatu [2] found that reputation management, customer relations, media relations, social media and corporate social responsibility on achieving educational institution objectives were positively significant respectively. Public Relations, according to Aikins & Adu-Oppong [8], is useful in educational institutions; it serves as a veritable tool for managing the flow of both internal and external communication.

According to Sietel (2009) "Public Relations Practice is based on two-way communications facilitated through a multimedia approach and is founded on research. The traditional role of the education public Relations specialist has been that of a scribe and paper mover, whose purpose typically was to inform but often to publicize. For the most part, the duties of the educational public relations specialist or practitioner was the recording and publishing of minutes of board meetings, the development of brochures for financial campaigns and even the supervision of the school newspaper when the positions was half rather than full time" [46,47]; (Ojomo et al, 2006); [48-50].

There is sufficient evidence to demonstrate an increasing interest in the practice of public relations among tertiary institutions across the globe, including Nigeria as they see the practice as useful in the operations and management of the institutions [51]; Pirozek & Heskova, 2003; [52,53,54]; Henderson, 2001, [55,56,57], Miroiu, 1998; Neculau, 1997; [58] Coman, 2003; Ugochukwu & Okpala, 2021). To that effect, there is a close link between good public relations practice and effective performance and growth among the organisations (such as schools) which engage in the practice. That is why there are calls from different stakeholders for organisations in general and schools in particular to engage in public relations practice if their performance and growth must be guaranteed in modern business [59-62], Antwi, [63]; Bernays, [64]; Ross & Lindenmann, 2002; [65]; Schoenfeld, Wiemer & Lang [66]; Simpson, 2002). Building a mutual formidable relationship with the internal and external publics; involving public relations in decision making at all levels of management decision and constantly scanning the environment for early detection and handling of crisis of any magnitude to avoid intensification and escalation of such crisis are some of the sure strategies of enhancing the practice of public relations for effective management of organisations.

2.5 Role of Public Relations in the Management of tertiary Institutions in the post COVID-19 Lockdown Era

The outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic has led to the closure of institutions, including schools around the world, including Nigeria. However, due to the reduction in the number of infection cases, measures adopted by

government and organisations to reduce the chances of contracting the virus, economic and social impacts of the long economic lockdown, among others, Nigeria is one among the countries that calls for reopening of the economic activities, including school. Now that the schools have reopened, a deliberate measure for quick recovery and revival remains very crucial and since public relations is part of the management in every organisation, its role in this regard is equally very crucial and should be acknowledged. Carvalho, Rossiter, Angrist, Hares & Silverman [67] acknowledged that "most governments around the world have temporarily closed schools in an attempt to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many have launched distance learning programs and are beginning to plan for recovery, a phase that involves much more than reopening the gates and readmitting students". Carvalho, Rossiter, Angrist, Hares & Silverman [67] added that "in this context, education policy making is particularly difficult but will be strongest when it is: (1) informed by existing rigorous evidence; (2) approached with a long-term perspective that prioritizes flexibility, communication, and trust; and (3) able to be adapted based on new data and information gained from community engagement and monitoring".

Since tertiary institutions deal with a lot of publics, it becomes imperative that to make the goal of school reopening, revival and recovery realizable, both segments of the publics must be carried along and the role of Public Relations in realization of the desired objectives remains very crucial. It is observed that no organisation is an Ireland but its survival and sustenance is largely dependent on other parts or components to make it complete. Therefore, in realizing that maintaining a harmonious relationship with different parts that make up the organisation is a difficult task it becomes imperative that public relations be employed to always ensure that such harmonious relationship exists between organisation and its various publics (Dozier & Grunig, 1992); [68,69]. According to Grunig, Grunig & Ehling, (1992, p. 71), public relations practice helps to "establish and maintain mutually dependent relationships between an organization and the publics with which it interacts."

Nwafor, Omoevah & Umuze [21] found in a study that the Anambra State Government, Nigeria used public relations strategies like press releases, press conferences, announcements,

town hall meetings with critical stakeholders like the market unions, transport unions, town unions etc. in disseminating appropriate information and behavior that helped in managing the various COVID-19 related crises in Anambra State. Effective use of communication as underscores by Umut, Anil & Ülfet [70], contributes to the sustainability of universities during the COVID-19 crisis.

In a paper presented, Musabayana [71] has noted “the use of diversified corporate social responsibility programmes that can engage communities on the new realities, and also contribute to societal well-being; and in the process, help retain confidence in their organisations, which in this case, schools as a sure public relations strategy in the survival of schools in post covid-19 era”. It can be noted that Covid-19 pandemic has introduced a new normal by placing ‘physical distance’ apart publics of organisations, including schools. Reuniting the publics separated by containment measures of the pandemic therefore requires strategic communication that sufficiently engages stakeholders in every stage of the reopening school process and that is where the imperativeness of public relations is in no doubt to successfully achieve the goal.

2.6 Challenges in Application of Public Relations in the Management of Tertiary Institutions in the Post COVID-19 Lockdown Era

The use of public relations in achieving success in organisations is without hitches. Certain challenges militate against successful application and use of public relations in achieving the organisations’ success. Previous empirical and theoretical studies have shown that there are challenges in the practice of public relations in tertiary institutions. For instance, Aikins & Adu-Oppong [8], “in their study found that the University’s public relations department is poorly resourced to perform its functions. Consequently, scarce telecommunication equipment, lack of official means of transportation and lack of trained personnel were found as challenges confronting public relations practice in tertiary institutions in Nigeria”. Ezebuenyi, Ugochukwu & Okpala [72] reported discrepancies in the practice of Public Relations among universities as they were reported to have engaged Public Relations Officers without recourse to

professional standards and career requirements. A study by Igben [10] similarly reported “some challenges in the use of public relations for the survival of higher institutions as some higher educational institutions use some of the public relations tools as a matter of custom without establishing whether such tools are relevant to addressing their corporate public relations needs. Others try to allow research to precede their selection of the public relations tools of the schools, while some yet do leave their public relations tools in reckless abandon”.

D’Almeida [73] found out that “the highest functions of Public Relations Officer among others are, receiving visitors and seeing to their wellbeing, seeing of people and welcoming them at the Airport and seeing to funeral matters. According to the study, the staff of UEW however did not know that the Public Relations Officer is the mouthpiece of the University. The researcher recommended that the Public Relations Officer should be involved more in decision making and he should occupy its proper position of a Deputy Registrar in the organizational structure and must report directly to the Vice Chancellor. Again, as part of decision making, the Public Relations Officer must have the capacity to interpret the University’s policies and programmes as well as coordinate students’ activities and be responsible for alumni matters among others”. According to Diabour (2000), “public relations executives above the position of head of department level had no problems getting access to management and also being consulted frequently by management on corporate policies. Only few public executives of the status of heads of department and below enjoy that privilege. This was a finding in a study on the attitude of management towards public relations practice in ten organisations in Accra”. Cutlip et al. [74] stresses “the great need for improving communication channels in the University”. Adam observed in Cutlip et al. [74] that “University administrators have been compelled no more from talking about the need for communication to actually communicate with their publics. Cutlip et al put more emphasis on the need for public relations to solve other equally important problems like those of freedom, funds and freshmen. They add that the university needs private support more than ever because there is an increased demand on government resources”.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Stakeholders Management Theory

“Stakeholders Management Theory is very relevant to this paper because the theory as a result of the power of communication in creating an atmosphere that fosters meaningful relationships that are mutually beneficial between organisations (which in this case schools) and their various publics or stakeholders” [75]. “Business, as the theory indicates, has become more accountable to society as many nations move to democratic models of government and conduct operations embedded in a macro-environment, which typically involves functioning in a pluralistic society that disperses power among many groups and people” (Carroll & Buchholtz, 2014). “This has led to the evolution of organizations (and government) being accountable to multiple publics, systems and stakeholders, as opposed to business seeing its primary concern as just looking after shareholders” (Carroll & Buchholtz, 2014; Dickie & Dickie, 2011). “Today’s businesses seek to obtain a social license to operate in their community, in contrast to the pre-classical management theories that focused on the business maximizing its output from within the environment it existed” (Dickie & Dickie, 2011), [76].

“Many theorists and writers suggest that stakeholder management is a strategic function of public relations” (Doorley & Garcia 2011; [77,78,79]. “But other theorists would also strongly argue that broad management responsibility plays a key role in ensuring stakeholders are engaged, informed and have a sense of importance to an organization” [80], (Carroll & Buchholtz, 2014; Dickie & Dickie, 2011), [76]. “On deeper investigation, both positions are based on the same objective relating to keeping stakeholders in a positive relationship with the organization in an effort to advance outcomes and achieve the organization’s goals” (Carroll & Buchholtz, 2014).

“Relationship management skills are an interdisciplinary function and form the basis for knowledge transfer between management and staff, with traditional communication responsibilities managed through public relations, either through consultancy or in-house capacity” [78,80,79]. “Many of these stakeholder management roles have evolved into sub-roles for public relations practitioners, and typically

include: employee engagement, community engagement, government relations, investor relations, and media relations” [78-79].

Application of the principles of this theory will help tertiary institutions to achieve the desired success in their implementation of the school reopening and recovery programme(s) using public relations.

3.2 Excellence Theory

“Excellence Theory of public relations is another theory that is relevant to this study because of its power to explain the value of public relations to organizations and society based on the social responsibility of managerial decisions and the quality of relationships with stakeholder publics. According to the theory, for an organization to be effective, according to the theory, it must behave in ways that solve the problems and satisfy the goals of stakeholders as well as of management (→ Stakeholder Theory). If it does not, stakeholders will either pressure the organization to change or oppose it in ways that add cost and risk to organizational policies and decisions. To behave in socially acceptable ways, organizations must scan their environment to identify publics who are affected by potential organizational decisions or who want organizations to make decisions to solve problems that are important to them. Then, organizations must communicate symmetrically with publics (taking the interests of both the organization and publics into account) to cultivate high-quality, long-term relationships with them” [69,41,81].

4. CONCLUSION

The prolonged lockdown occasioned by the outbreak of the COVID-Pandemic around the globe has caused unprecedented setbacks across sectors. In Nigeria, the impact of the lockdown across sectors is unimaginable or better still indescribable. In the educational sector in general and tertiary educational sector in particular, the lockdown has disrupted the teaching, learning and administrative activities, even though they were cases of online academic and administrative activities among tertiary institutions in the country, such cases were very few compared to those that were not privileged to join the online learning process. For instance, a report released by UNESCO indicates that as of 4 September 2020, approximately 1.277 billion learners were affected due to school closures in

response to the pandemic, impacting on about 72.9 percent of the world's student population.

Pragmatic steps are needed to be taken to revive the sector which is badly affected by the prolonged COVID-19 lockdown, of which public relations, which is an effective communication tool in organizations, comes in handy. Subsequently, public relations is used as part of the management to engaging communities in reopening plans; advise the management in targeting resources to where they are most needed; getting children back to school; making school environments safe; and recovering learning loss and building back better, which is a deliberate policy for school reopening and recovery from the COVID-19.

Furthermore, the application of public relations in the recovery process of tertiary institutions from the COVID-19 lockdown is very necessary. However, inadequate involvement of public relations unit in the decision-making process on school recovery, excessive management influence on the operations of the unit, lack of funds for the operations of the unit, lack of professionals to handle the unit among others can limit the success in the application of public relations in the recovery process among Nigerian tertiary institutions.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

REFERENCES

1. Dornyo P, Aduku EA. Public relations practice in tertiary institutions. *Int J ICT Manag*, 3(2). 2015;6839:2026.
2. Okafor OC, Nwatu CB. Public Relations as a tool for attaining educational institution objectives in Enugu State. *Int J Mark Manag Res*. 2018;9(3):1-22.
3. Grunig JE. Two-way symmetrical public relations. In R. Heath (Ed.), *Handbook on public relations* (pp.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 2001:11-30.
4. Grunig JE, Hon LC. *Guidelines for measuring relationships in public relations*. Gainesville, FL: The Institute for Public Relations; 1999.
5. Grunig JE, Hunt T. *Managing public relations*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston; 1984.
6. Grunig JE, Grunig LA. The relationship between public relations and marketing in excellent organizations: Evidence from the IABC study. *Journal of Marketing Communications*. 1998;4:141 – 161.
7. Musa AM 2016. Public relations strategies for information service provision in federal university libraries in north western states of Nigeria. A Thesis Submitted to the School of Postgraduate Studies. Ahmadu Bello University Zaria in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of masters of library science (MLS). Zaria: Department of Library and Information Science, Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University.
8. Aikins DE, Adu-Oppong AA. Using public relations as a management tool in tertiary institutions. *Afro Asian. J Soc Sci*. 2015;VI(2):1-15.
9. Bates D. Institute for public relations website <http://www.institutefor.org>; 2006. [retrieved Aug 28, 2008 from]. Available: <http://pr.org/researchsingles/mini-history>.
10. Igben HGO. Public relations tools for sustainable mutual understanding between higher educational institutions and their publics in Nigeria. *Br J Mark Stud*. 2022;10(4):1-16. DOI: 10.37745/bjms.2013/vol10n4116
11. Itodo GA. Public perception of the role of public relations in the implementation of N-Power in Benue State. A Research in the department of mass Communication, Igbinedion University, Okada. In: Partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of master of science degree in mass communication. Igbinedion University; 2021.
12. Sharpe ML, Pritchard BJ. The historical empowerment of public opinion and its relationship to the emergence of public relations as a profession. In: Tilson DJ, Alozie EC, editors. *Toward the Common good. Perspectives in International public relations*; 2003. p. 14-36. Boston, M.A: xilyn and Bacon.
13. Grillis T. Change agency and public relations officers in small colleges and universities. *Diss Admin Int*. 1997;58. No AAT: 9735944 [cited Aug 11, 2020]. Available: <http://www.lib.umi.com/dissertations/fullcit?129597>.
14. Kettman S, Robinson J. UC's good-neighbor policy soothing friction between town and gown. *Calif J*. 1991;22:141-7.

15. Mullins R. The university in the community: town and gown partnerships renewing America's neighborhoods [doctoral dissertation]. University of Louisville; 1996.
16. Hirsh WZ, Weber LE, editors. Challenges facing higher education at the millennium. Washington, DC: American Council on Education; 1999.
17. Spagnolia N. Universities and their communities: what fosters positive town gown relations? [doctoral dissertation]. Rowan University; 1998.
18. Anthony WL, Damiete OL. Impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on sustainability/survivability of micro/small sized businesses in Nigeria. *Int J Bus Manag.* 2021;16(9):1-14.
19. Bintube M. Covid-19: applied sociology of the pandemic and the dynamics beyond 'the new normal' in the context of the social pen theory of structural change. *Int J Sci Res Publ.* 2020;10(7):452-503.
20. Fadele AA, Abubakar SI, Olfat MA, Salamah SS. E-learning: A perfect solution during the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. *Int J Sustainability Manag Inf Technol.* 2022;8(1):12-8. DOI: 10.11648/j.ijssmit.20220801.12.
21. Nwafor UG, Omoevah AB, Umuze NA. Evaluating the Use of public relations strategies in managing COVID-19 pandemic-related crises by Anambra State Government. *Int J Gen Stud (IJGS).* 2022;2(1):106-24.
22. UNICEF. Primary and secondary impacts of the covid-19 pandemic on children in Ghana; 2021. Available: <http://www.unicef.org/publications>.
23. Yunusa AA, Sanusi IT, Oluwaseun AD, Oyelere SS, Agbo FJ, Obaido G et al. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education in Nigeria: university lecturers' perspectives. *Int J Educ Dev Using Inf Commun Technol (IJEDICT).* 2021;17(4):43-66.
24. Grunig JE. Global public relations. In: Grunig JE, Hunt T, editors *Managing public relations*; 2001.
25. Jethwaney JN, Sarkar NN. *Public relations*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers; 2000.
26. Broom GH, Trucker M. *Using research in public relations: application to program's management*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall; 2008.
27. James C. *Public relations theory*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates; 2006.
28. Okwelle PC. Strategies for improving enrolment into technical teacher education programmes through students' involvement in public relations activities. *Niger Delta J Educ.* 2010;2(1&2):57-63.
29. Greg NS. What is public relations?; 2012 [cited Aug 27, 2020]. Available: <http://www.prsa.org/resources/profession/index.asp>.
30. Ibeneme OT, Okwelle PC. Increasing tertiary institution students in school public relations for enhancing technical and vocational education (TVE) development in Nigeria. *Orient J Educ.* 2008;4(2):67-75.
31. Centres for disease control and prevention. Covid-19 and Your Health; 2022. Available: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19-pandemic>.
32. Moore N. Chloroquine for COVID -19 infection. *Drug Saf.* 2020;43(5):393-4. DOI: 10.1007/s40264-020-00933-4. PMID 32266694
33. Ohia C, Bakarey AS, Ahmad T. COVID-19 and Nigeria: putting the realities in context. *Int J Infect Dis.* 2020;95:279-81. DOI: 10.1016/j.ijid.2020.04.062, PMID 32353547
34. Otache I. The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on Nigeria's economy and possible coping strategies. *Asian J Soc Sci Manag Stud.* 2020;7(3):173-9. DOI:10.20448/journal.500.2020.73.173.179
35. Shereen MA, Khan S, Kazmi A, Bashir N, Siddique R. COVID-19 infection: origin, transmission, and characteristics of human coronaviruses. *J Adv Res.* 2020;24:91-8. DOI: 10.1016/j.jare.2020.03.005, PMID 32257431
36. Harapan H, Itoh N, Yufika A, Winardi W, Keam S, Te H et al. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): A literature review. *J Infect Public Health.* 2020;13(5):667-73. DOI: 10.1016/j.jiph.2020.03.019, PMID 32340833
37. Poudel PB, Poudel MR, Gautam A, Phuyal S, Tiwari CK. COVID-19 and its global impact on food and agriculture. *J Biol Today's World.* 2020;9(5):7-10.
38. Unhale SS, Ansar QB, Sanap S, Thakhre S, Wadatkar S. A review on corona virus COVID-19. *World J Pharm Life Sci.* 2020;6(4):109-15. DOI: 10.14744/ejmo.2020.51418
39. United Nations education scientific and cultural organization. COVID-19

- Educational Disruption and Response; 2020.
Available:<https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>.
40. Olaitan A, Abdullahi TA, Tolorunju IA, Akinjo IR, Ogunjemilua OD. Impact of COVID-19 on Education in Sub-Saharan Africa. DOI: 10.20944/preprints202007.0027.v1; 2020
 41. Maina N, Mberia H. Application of public relations theories in the practice of public relations in national government ministries. *International Journal of Education and Research*. 2201;4(4):341-354.
 42. Ngogi EM. The impact of Covid-19 pandemic on education: Navigating forward the pedagogy of blended learning. *University of Pretoria, South Africa*. 2020;5:4-9.
 43. Okohi PF, Nath MA. Staff personnel and school-community relations management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria. *Int J Sci Res Educ*. 2019;12(2):306-19.
 44. Wilson J, Rahila J. Community relations: an impetus for educational growth and development in Nigeria. *Res Humanit Soc Sci*. 2014;4(15):33-8.
 45. Adelakun IS. School-Community relationship and sustainable development in Nigeria: challenges and way forward. *J Contemp Issues Educ Plan Admin*. 2020;5(2):50-7.
 46. Donkor F, Nsoh SN, Mitchual SJ. Organisational issues and challenges of supervised industrial attachment of vocational and technical teacher education programme in Ghana. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education/* 2009b;10(1): 39-56.
 47. Dunford RW. *Organisational Behaviour*. Sydney: Addison-Wesley; 2001.
 48. Okwelle PC, Agwi VIA. Strategies for improving female students' enrolment in technical and vocational education programmes through public relations activities in Nigeria. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Research Arts, Humanities & Education*. 2018;4(1):1-13.
 49. Omolola O. An assessment of public relations as a tool for repositioning the image of the Nigerian Police Force: A Study of Lagos Command. *Research Journal of Mass Communication and Information Technology*. 2016;2(2):19-34.
 50. Pearson DJ, Garcia HF. *Reputation Management: The Key to Successful Public Relations and Corporate Communication*, 2nd Edition. New York: Routledge; 2011.
 51. Anatsui TC, Ojunita L. Public Relations proactive approach: Effective institutional conflict management. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management, United Kingdom*. 2015;3(7):797-810.
 52. Samsup L, Hon L, Brunner R. Organization-public relationships: measurement validation in a university setting. *J Commun Manag*. 2004;9:14-28.
 53. DeSanto BJ, Garner RB. Strength in diversity: the place of public relations in higher education institutions. In: Heath RL, editor, *Handbook of public relations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE; 2001:543-50.
 54. Grillis T. Change agency and public relations officers in small colleges and universities. *Diss Admin Int*. 1997;58. No AAT. p. 9735944 [cited Aug 11, 2020]. Available:<http://www.lib.umi.com/dissertations/fullcit?129597>.
 55. Hall M. Fundraising and public relations: A comparison of program concepts and characteristics. *Int J Nonprofit Volunt Sect Mark*. 2002;17:368-81.
 56. Hall MR, Baker GF. Public relations from the ivory tower: comparing research universities with corporate/business models. *Int J Educ Adv*. 2003;4(2):127-54. DOI: 10.1057/palgrave.cjjea.2140020
 57. Pabich I. Public Relations: an instrument of co-operation linking the private sector and higher education institutions. *Higher Educ Eur*. 2003;28(4):519-22. DOI: 10.1080/0379772032000170499
 58. Stanciulescu E. *Despretranzitiesiuniversitate [About transition and academe]*. Iasi: Polirom; 2002.
 59. Jarrell A. Keeping off thin ice: campus communicators play a key role in risk management. *Currents*. 2003;29: 14-9.
 60. Kaverina E. *The public relations strategy of Alexander Herzen State Pedagogical University in St. Petersburg: the Dialogue between the heritage and the Present of a university*. *Higher Educ Eur*. 2003; 28(4):455-9. DOI: 10.1080/0379772032000170426
 61. Ibrahim AM, Nguru MN. Public Relations and employee performance in Nigerian

- institutions of higher learning. *j.info*. 2018;48(2):267-79.
DOI: 10.21831/informasi.v48i2.21972
62. Pirozez P, Heskova M. Approaches to and instruments of public relations: higher education in the Czech Republic. *Higher Educ Eur*. 2003;4:487-94.
63. Antwi R. Flow of Information between central administration and the internal publics in the University of Cape Coast. An unpublished Graduate Diploma Project, University of Ghana, Legon; 2009.
64. Bernays EL. University of Oklahoma press, Norman, quoted by William Albicy, *Modern Public Opinion*, McGraw-Hill Company; 1992.
65. Ross J. Finders keepers, users' reapers: campus communicators can use external research as a context for institution messages. *Currents*. 2004;30:30-2.
66. Schoenfeld C, Weimer L, Lang J. *Reaching out: how academic leaders can communicate more effectively with their constituencies*. Madison, WI: Atwood Publishing; 1997.
67. Carvalho S, Rossiter J, Angrist N, Hares S, Silverman R. *Planning for School Reopening and Recovery After COVID-19*. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development; 2020.
Available: <http://www.cgdev.org>.
68. Grunig JE, Grunig LA. Models of public relations and communication. In: Grunig JE, editor, *Excellence in public relations and communication management*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 1992:285-326.
69. Grunig JE, editor. *Excellence in public relations and communication management*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum; 1992.
70. Umut A, Anil KK, Ülfet KK. The impact of digital communication and PR models on the sustainability of higher education during crises. *Sustainability*. 2020;12:1-38.
DOI: 10.3390/su12208295
71. Musabayana W. The Role of Public Relations in the COVID-19 Era. paper presented to the virtual Africa Public Relations Association Conference; 2021.
Available: <https://www.google.com/search?q=Public+relations>.
72. Ezebuenyi EE, Ugochukwu CC, Okpala EC. Critical assessment of Public Relations career and practice in select universities in Anambra State, Nigeria. *GVU J Commun Stud*. 2021; 3:105-13.
73. D'Almeida E. Staff perception of the public relations outfit of the University of Education, Winneba. A report on the seminar, a new dawn of public relations in Higher institutions in Ghana; 2003.
74. Cutlip S. *Effective public relations*. 6th ed. NJ: Prentice Hall; 2005.
75. Gill DR. Public Relations and the new stakeholder management environment. *Int J Acad Res Bus Soc Sci*. 2014;4(10): 100-7.
DOI: 10.6007/IJARBSS/v4-i10/1211
76. KPMG. *The community investment Dividend*; 2013.
Available: <http://www.kpmg.com/AU/en/IssuesAndInsights/ArticlesPublications/documents/community-investment-dividend-social-licence-resources-nov-2013.pdf>.
77. Harrison K. *Strategic Public Relations: A practical guide to success*. Melbourne: Palgrave Macmillan; 2011.
78. Johnston J, Sheehan M. *Theory and practice public relations*. 4th ed; 2014
Crows Nest NSW: Allen & Unwin.
79. L'Etang J. *Public relations concepts, practice and critique*. London: SAGE; 2008.
80. Audi R. *Business ethics and ethical business*. New York: Oxford University Press; 2009.
81. Schmitz KL. "NO ON 26" and @MS4HealthyFams: A Study of Excellence Theory Public Relations in the Magnolia State. Honors Theses. 2014;214.
Available: https://aquila.usm.edu/honors_theses/214.

© 2022 Shimawua and Ternenge; This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
<https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/92767>