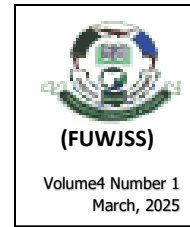


EVALUATION OF PUBLIC RELATION STRATEGIES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF TERTIARY EDUCATION TRUST FUND (TETFUND) INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIA



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Abstract

The study examines the public relations strategies adopted in the management of TETFund intervention programmes in Nigeria's public tertiary institutions. The theories used for the study were Stakeholder Theory and Relationship Management Theory. The research design adopted for the study was the descriptive cross-sectional design where 353 respondents were selected from a population of 3000 staff of TETFund. The study's results indicate that press statement, press conferences, media relations, and stakeholder engagements were the main public relations (PR) strategies used by TETFund in the management of intervention programmes in Nigeria's public tertiary institutions. Likewise, the use of stakeholder engagements by TETFund has led to the carrying of all the stakeholders along, thereby fostering loyalty, trust, and transparency. The study concludes that the deployment of effective PR strategies by TETFund contributes significantly to positive reputation and goodwill among its publics. The study recommends that it is imperative for TETFund to prioritise stakeholder engagement and that there is the need for TETFund to incorporate digital technologies like the social media into its PR strategies.

Keywords: Evaluation, public relations, TETFund, intervention programmes, public universities

Introduction

In times past, Public Relations (PR) was perceived mainly as the deliberate and conscious steps taken by an organisation to maintain a favourable reputation between an organisation and its publics; but today government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) are embracing PR because it has become a tactical tool for enhancing maximum media coverage because of the proliferation of the channels of media and communication, the consciousness of multiple stakeholders and the demand for more transparency among government corporations. All of these among other factors have placed PR at the heart of the strategic management of government MDAs (Petrovici, 2024). Over the years corporate organisations including government-owned have adopted different PR strategies to help achieve their aims which involve promoting their reputation and perception in the eyes of the publics. Ogbu (2019) states that PR is the art and social science of analysing changes, predicting their

outcomes, counselling the leaders of groups and ensuring planned programmes of action which will serve both the group and public interest. Ofuani, Sulaimon and Adebisi (2018) contend that in educational institutions for instance, PR is defined as a planned and systematic management function aimed at improving the programmes and services of an education system. According to the authors, PR relies on a comprehensive two-way communication process which involves both internal and external publics with the objective of arousing enhanced grasp of the tasks, goals, accomplishments and needs of an institution. Okenwa (2017), equally supports the above by arguing that PR is the process of managing and disseminating information from an individual, entity or organisation to the different publics in order to influence their perception. It is imperative to note according to Dozier & Broom (2024) that there are two dominant roles of PR in organisations.

These are the communication manager role and the communication technician role. In the communication manager role, they argue that PR practitioners plan and manage PR programmes, advise management, make strategic communication policy decisions and oversee their implementation. In the communication technician role, they argue that PR practitioners are not usually involved in the decision-making process of the organisation, but implement decision-making programmes such as writing press releases, producing Web content, and organising events, and so on. Dozier & Broom (2024) further elaborates that inherent in the communication manager role are three different subtypes:

The expert prescriber, who researches and defines public relations problems, develops programmes to tackle these problems and then implements them, sometimes with the assistance of others... The communication facilitator, who acts as communication broker, maintaining two-way communication between an organisation and its publics, liaising, interpreting and mediating... The problem-solving process facilitator, who helps others solve their communication problems, acts as a counsellor/adviser on the planning and implementation of programmes. This role can be fulfilled by specialist consultancies as well as the in-house person.

However, it is worthy to note that there are two other PR roles which are between the communication manager role and that of the communication technician role. These roles are the media relations role and the communication and liaison role. Again, Dozier & Broom (2024), note that the media relations role is a highly-skilled job which requires deep knowledge and understanding of the media, especially in this era of the multiplicity of media; and that this is not just about dissemination of messages, but an important function where the characteristics and needs of the categories of the media are understood and met substantially. They conclude that this role is usually handled properly by an experienced journalist who has crossed over from journalism to PR practice. For the communication and liaison role, the authors argue that this involves the individuals who represent the organisation at events and meetings and creates opportunities for management to communicate with internal and external publics. There is gainsaying the fact that in contemporary times, with the society changing at such a fast pace, the tasks facing corporate PR are also becoming enormous. According to Van-Riel (2022), the tasks of

corporate PR are not only strategic, but can be divided into three: (1) Management Communication (2) Marketing Communication, and (3) Organisational Communication. Management Communication according to Van-Riel is the kind of communication by management which is aimed at developing a shared vision, establishing and maintaining trust in the organisation's leadership, managing change, as well empowering and motivating employees. This particular task is usually seen as the sole responsibility of all managers, and the organisation may hire communication experts to develop strategic communication objectives. For Marketing Communication, Van-Riel argues this task is aimed at supporting the sale of goods and/or services; and this includes advertising, sales promotion, direct mail, personal selling, and publicity, among others. This may also involve media relations and events planning/management. For Organisational Communication, Van-Riel notes that this involves a series of coordinated communication activities, usually at a corporate level. This may include public affairs, environmental communication, investor relations, labour relations, and internal communication, among others.

To this end, PR has become an important tool in the management of such government-owned organisations like the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) because a defective PR strategy may not yield the desired result in this government agency if not well-handled. For an organisation like TETFund that has critical and highly-educated publics such as the tertiary institutions in Nigeria, the deployment of strategic PR among both its internal and external publics is paramount. As PR has the potentials to keep stakeholders inform on the activities of the organization (Inobehem, Garba, Udeh, and Santas, 2023).

Sulaimon and Adebisi (2018), underscore the above by noting that the PR strategy is a guideline or framework whereby a company and PR professionals design methods that will help them generate more press, and create a better brand identity. Rodman (2006) cited in Rabi (2013) says PR professionals use different strategies including news management, community relations, crisis management and lobbying, among others.

Public Relations have multifaceted role ranging from supervision and assessment of public attitudes to maintaining mutual relations and understanding between an organisation and its public. Ogbiten (2014) reveals that the British Institute of Public Relations defines "Public relations as a deliberate, planned and sustained efforts to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics". PR in Nigeria through their strategies or activities foster mutually beneficial understanding between an organisation and its internal and external publics. However, certain factors tend to impede the smooth implementation and operation of PR strategies in TETFund in Nigeria. According to Ajihson (2017), cited in Faten and Muhammad (2018) the factors which tend to impede effective deployment of PR strategies in TETFund include financial constraints, low understanding of PR, poor manpower, lack of ethics, lack of technological know-how, and language barrier among others. These factors have also hampered the effectiveness of Public Affairs Department in TETFund. Similarly, Michnik (2015), argues that TETFund in Nigeria is faced with performance challenges due to administrative and bureaucratic bottlenecks. So following the above, what are the public relations strategies deployed by TETFund in the management of intervention programmes in Nigeria's

public tertiary institutions? How does TETFund deploy public relations strategies in the management of intervention programmes in Nigeria's public tertiary institutions? What are the effects of the public relations strategies deployed by TETFund on the management of Nigeria's public tertiary institutions? And what are the challenges of the public relations strategies by TETFund in the management of Nigeria's public tertiary institutions?

Overview of Tertiary Education Trust Fund

From the 1980s and beyond, the decay of all tiers of education was monumental. Facilities had almost collapsed, teachers and lecturers morale was at its lowest. Enabling environment for conducive teaching and learning was absent. The administration of President, Ibrahim Babangida mindful of the reality of the situation took measures to arrest the rot. In December 1990 the Federal Government constituted the Commission on the Review of Higher Education in Nigeria (the Gray Longe Commission) to review the post-independence Nigerian Higher Education after Lord Ashby's Commission of 1959. The Longe Commission recommended among others the funding of higher education through earmarked tax to be borne by companies operating in Nigeria. An implementation committee under the chairmanship of Professor Olu O. Akinkugbe was constituted to implement Gray Longe's Commission report recommendations also an Agreement was signed between the Federal Government and ASUU on the 3rd September 1992 on funding of universities. In January 1993, the Education Tax Act No7 of 1993 was promulgated alongside other education- related Decrees. The Decree imposed a 2% tax on the assessable profits of all companies in Nigeria (Oyeike & Iseyin, 2014).

This was a homegrown solution to address issues of funding to rehabilitate decaying infrastructure, restore the lost glory of education and confidence in the system as well as consolidate the gains thereto; build the capacity of teachers and lecturers; teacher development; development of prototype designs; etc. The Education Tax Act of No7 of 1993 mandated the Fund to operate as an Intervention Fund to all levels of public education (Federal, State and Local). This mandate was faithfully discharged between 1999 to May 2011 when the ET Act was repealed and replaced by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund Act, due to lapses and challenges in operating the Education Trust Fund. These lapses and challenges included the fact that the ETF was overburdened and overstretched and could only render palliative support to all levels of public educational institutions in Nigeria. Duplication of functions and mandate of other Agencies set up after the ETF, such as Universal Basic Education (UBE) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); The decay, rot and dilapidation of facilities issues in the tertiary education continued to be irritating as Funds are only thinly spread.

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund was originally established as Education Trust Fund (ETF) by Act No 7 of 1993 as amended by Act No 40 of 1998 (now repealed and replaced with Tertiary Education Trust Fund Act 2011). It is an intervention agency set up to provide supplementary support to all levels of public tertiary institutions with the main objective of using funding alongside project management for the rehabilitation, restoration and consolidation of Tertiary Education in Nigeria. The main

source of income available to the Fund is the two per cent education tax paid from the assessable profit of companies registered in Nigeria. The Federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS) assesses collects the tax on behalf of the Fund.

Public Relations Strategies in Management of Tertiary Education

According to Grunig and Grunig (2009), PR strategy is a guideline, or framework whereby a company and PR professionals design methods that will help them generate more press, and create a better brand identity. This implies that PR strategies are employed by organisation in order to project their image and to foster goodwill. Chukwu (2015) states further that the task of building good PR can only be achieved with the use of publicity, media relations, advertising and special events, among others. Grunig (2015), asserts that PR strategies are those symmetrical and asymmetrical techniques and programmes adopted by PR departments in order to achieve its objectives. Grunig (earlier cited) further asserts that PR strategies are those communication activities that have an incremental effects on the quality of relationship between an organization and its various public.

Chikwado and Tochukwu (2018) define PR strategies as the group of techniques an organisation uses to help it move from its current situation to its end goal, which may include gaining publicity, growing its customer base or improving its reputation. This implies that Public Relations strategies can assist an agency such as TETFUND in organising its PR efforts to attract its target audience and identify ways to reach its goals during the planning stage. All the above definitions of PR strategies have shown how important they are to mutual understanding between an organisation and the members of the public. Some key examples for PR strategies include: social media management and posting, customer survey and forums, using digital tools to integrate with other platforms and online content, influencer marketing, free press options and customer testimonials, among others.

Asemah (2011) states that management is a term that is used to describe the organisation and coordination of both human and material resources of an organisation so as to achieve set aims and objectives. Further, Asemah (2011) sees management as the process of gathering and using human and non- human resources in order to attain objectives. While the non-human resources pose challenges, the ability to work with people and to accomplish jobs through others is an essential part of management. Also, Asemah (2009) state that management's task is integrating and coordinating organisational resources (men, material, money and time, and so on) towards the accomplishment of objectives as effectively and as efficiently as possible. Similarly, a PR manager is someone who organises money and materials in order to utilise result-oriented PR strategies that will help promote and project the reputation of TETFund. Gidding, Grant & Kelly (2009) maintain that some management factors need to be put in place in order to achieve effective PR strategies in an organisation. According to the authors, there has to be proper planning, organising, controlling, communicating, directing, staffing, innovating and marketing in order to produce the desired results. So, to manage in a nutshell, is to forecast, plan, organise, command, coordinate and control.

Deployment of Public Relation Strategies in Government Institutions

All over the world, a good number of empirical studies have been done in diverse areas in PR. However, empirical studies in the deployment of PR strategies in government have been relatively-few. To this end, Ejiogu, Clinton-Ogu, & Uwalaka (2024), carried out a research entitled: "Influence of Public Relations Strategies on Public Acceptance of Imo State Government Projects". Using survey research design, findings from the research indicated that the knowledge of the respondents concerning Imo State's PR strategies were as follows: "high" (25.3%), "moderate" (47.2%), "low" (6.3%), and "can't say" (21.1%). Concerning if the PR strategies have made some moderates to believe in the sincerity of Imo State Government's projects, 23.7% said "Strongly Agree", 27.4% said "Agree", 25.8% said "Disagree", while 23% said "Strongly Disagree". Further, when the respondents were asked if the PR strategies of the Imo State Government in the area of projects had changed the negative perception of the government, 27.4% said "Strongly Agree", 31.7% said "Agree", 25.6% said "Disagree", while 15.3% said "Strongly Disagree". The researchers concluded that the PR strategies of the Hope Uzodinma-led Administration in Imo State concerning projects were not effective in making the people to have a positive perception about his government. The researchers recommended among others that, the projects of the Imo state government should be broadcast and made public through the use of all the media outlets in and around Imo state, because this can create a better reputation for the government, which would then over time make the people to start liking the government; and that the Imo State government should come up with a more compelling public relations strategy that will make the people accept its administration without wholeheartedly.

Olariu (2017) conducted a study titled: "The Use of Public Relations in Projecting an Organisations Positive Image" which was a critical approach on the importance of using public relations in helping an organisation to project a positive image. The study of the impact information has on the image of organisations seems to be an interesting research topic. Practice has proved that the image of institutions has a patrimonial value and it is sometimes essential in raising their credibility. It can be said that an image is defined as the representation of certain attitudes, opinions or prejudices concerning a person, a group of persons or the public opinion concerning an institution. In other words, an image is the opinion of a person, of a group of persons or of the public opinion regarding that institution. All specialists agree that a negative image affects, sometimes to an incredible extent, the success of an institution. In the contemporary age, we cannot speak about public opinion without taking into consideration the mass media as a main agent in transmitting the information to the public, with unlimited possibilities of influencing or forming it. The plan for the PR department starts with its own declaration of principles, which describes its roles and contribution to the organisation.

In a same vein, Henry, Ndolo & Igbara (2021), conducted a study entitled: "The Role of Public Relation in Building Corporate Image: A Study of First Bank of Nigeria Plc, Calabar" which focused on the impact of PR in building corporate image in First Bank of Nigeria Plc Calabar. This research identified how public relations can help in maintaining high acceptable corporate identify, corporate image and corporate

communication. The survey research design was used in this study as the population was picked amongst the internal and external publics of First Bank of Nigeria Plc Calabar. Copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents to elicit information that helped in the organisation of data and presentation. The research showed that PR could help in uplifting the reputation of First Bank of Nigeria Plc Calabar. The researchers recommended among other things that PR efforts must ensure that they equally protect and build the image of the firm, and that this would help to create an enabling ground for effective and mutual relationship between the staff, costumer and the general public.

Also, Onowa (2023), carried out a research entitled: “The Role of Public Relations in Building a Sustainable Corporate Image: A Study of Benue state Internal Revenue Service (BIRS)”. The study was aimed at investigating how PR could be used to build and sustain the corporate reputation of a government-owned agency. Consequently, the researcher employed survey research design to investigate. Findings revealed that PR could build and sustain the bureau’s corporate reputation, even when BIRS has not recognised other PR strategies apart from customer relations services. The study also showed that, the bureau had not really been involved in community relations services. As a result, the community members did not appreciate the kind of relationship that existed between the agency and its host community. Based on these findings, the researchers concluded that for PR to be very effective in building and sustaining the bureau’s corporate reputation, the bureau should embark on different programmes, knowing that reputation building and management are not a product of just one good action but a totality of good practices put forth by an organisation over time. The researcher recommended among others that the agency should accord great recognition to PR by establishing an in-house department with quality professional staff who would ensure efficiency in initiating and executing tactical and strategic PR programmes that would make the bureau to have goodwill and a favourable reputation. Also the researchers recommended that opinion research should be constantly carried out to understand the publics’ perception of the bureau and to evaluate the efficacy of the existing programmes which would help the bureau or to either maintain or change its programmes. From the literature reviewed so far, especially empirical, some of them focused on non-profit organisations, some others focused on the private sector, while a few focused on government tertiary institutions in Nigeria. There was no study that focused on a federal government-owned intervention agency like the TETFund in Nigeria. Moreover, virtually all the studies were silent about specific PR strategies and how they have contributed to the effective management and achievement of organisational goals. This research will make a significant contribution to knowledge-building in this regard, apart from other identified gaps.

Theoretical Framework

This research is anchored on the Stakeholder Theory and the Relationship Management Theory. The Stakeholder Theory was developed by Edward R. Freeman in the 1980s (Kyalo, 2024). This theory posits that organisations should consider the interests and needs of all the stakeholders, and not just the shareholders (that is if is a profit-making organisation), in

their decision-making processes. The theory also argues that stakeholders, including employees, suppliers, the communities, customers, and the society, have vested interests in the actions, inactions, and outcomes of an organisation. So concerning TETFund, which is an establishment owned by the Federal Government of Nigeria, dealing with all the public tertiary institutions in the country, this theory is quite relevant as it underscores the place of building and sustaining positive relationship with the diverse stakeholders through efficacious and transparent communication and engagement. So by deploying stakeholder-centric approach to PR, TETFund can cultivate loyalty, trust, goodwill, and support among their diverse stakeholders, which can conduce to the ultimate enhancement of their capacity to achievement of their mission and vision.

The Relationship Management Theory on the other hand, was propounded by Stephen Elton in the 1980s, who by combining exchange theory and dialectical perspectives, came up with the postulation that a relationship is an ongoing process and the health and development of organisation can be affected by previous relationships (Awosemusi & Awofadeju, 2023). This theory believes that organisation's relationship and involvement with its publics begins when that organisation becomes conscious of its interdependence with other units in the society, and also appreciate the role that all stakeholders play in the effective and smooth running of that organisation. It follows therefore that the type of relationship that an organisation wishes to develop with its diverse publics, will depend firstly on the importance attached to PR and how this organisation deploys its PR strategies. The relevance of this theory to this research is that the deployment of effective PR strategies by TETFund can lead to beneficial and harmonious mutual relationship between it and its publics. This theory believes further all the stakeholders in an organisation must ensure the presence of effective and mutual relationship in order to enhance positive performance in TETFund. That is why it is often asserted that PR is a management function; because it is only when it is seen as such the management can be advised on PR strategies that will contribute to the attainment of the goals of TETFund.

Research Methodology

The research designs used for the study was the cross-sectional survey. Survey, is a kind of research design used to collect information from a sample of a population that is too large. According to Wimmer & Dominick (2015), the sample of this population must be representative enough to be generalisable. In-depth interview on the other hand, is a kind of qualitative research design used for the collection of detailed information from an individual about his/her thoughts, beliefs or perception about an issue (Babbie, 2020). The population of the study is 3000. This is based on data from the Human Resources Department of TETFund. This comprised the entire staff of the establishment. The sampling technique used was simple random sampling technique. In this case, based on the list which comprised all the departments in TETFund, the researcher decided to use the odd number approach; so every 5th element on the list was used for the research. The sample size for the study was 353. This was based on Singh & Masuku (2014) Sample Size Determination Table, which states that at + or – (plus or minus) 5% Precision Level, where Confidence Level is 95% and $P=0.5$,

and the population of the study is 3000, then the sample size should be 353. The research instrument used for the study was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was used for the selected staff of TETFund who constituted the sample size. For the in-depth interview, the face-to-face or oral format was used; and the interviewee was the Public Affairs Manager of TETFund. The study used simple percentages, frequency tables, charts, and Likert Scale to analyse the data.

Results and Discussions

Out of the 353 copies of questionnaire distributed, all the copies, representing 100% were returned and found useful. This was made possible because of the easy-to-understand nature of the questionnaire as well as its personal administration and follow-up by the researcher. To this end, below is the presentation of the demographic data of the respondents:

Table 1: Respondents' Demographic Data

Items	Respondents	Percentage
Gender		
Male	209	59.2%
Female	144	47.8%
Total	353	100%
Age-range		
23-35	120	33.99%
36-45	88	24.9%
46-55	92	26.1%
56 & above	53	15.01%
Total	353	100%
Marital Status		
Single	111	31.4%
Married	239	67.7%
Divorced	0	0%
Widow/Widower	3	0.9%
Total	353	100%
Education		
BA/B.Sc.	230	65.2%
MA/M.Sc.	89	25.2%
PhD	34	9.6%
Total	353	100%
Designation		
Senior Staff	122	34.6%
Junior Staff	211	59.8%
Others	20	5.7%
Total	353	100%

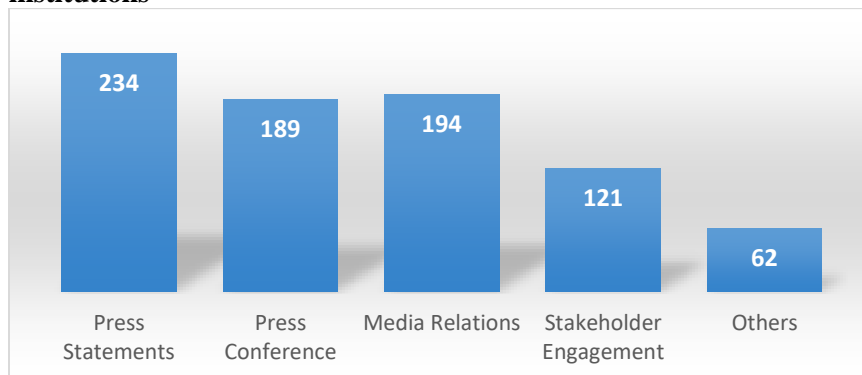
From Table 1 above, the number of male respondents being more than the female reinforces the paternalistic nature of the Nigerian society, even in government establishments. For the age-range of the respondents, the preponderant number of the respondents showed that younger Nigerians were now taking up employment in government establishments in the country. For the marital status of the respondents, majority of them were married, underscoring the fact that the job had conferred responsibility on

them. Concerning the educational qualification of the respondents, majority of them were first degree holders, which is one of the basic qualifications required for graduates seeking employment in the civil service in the country. Lastly, for the designation of the respondents, majority of them were junior staff; usually, they constitute the bulk of employees in the Nigerian civil service, since the top is always skewed.

Public Relations strategies deployed by TETFund in the management of intervention programmes in Nigeria's public tertiary institutions

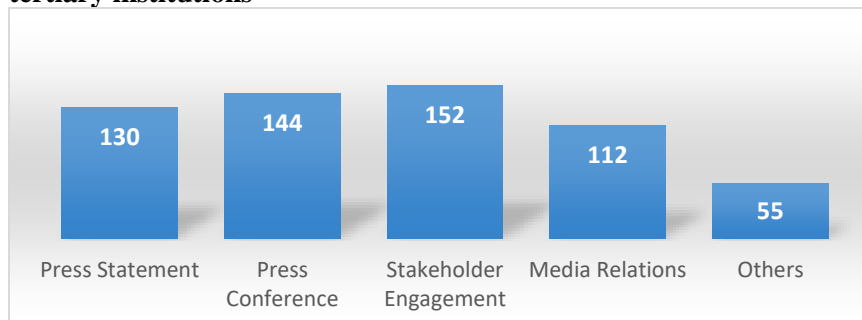
The above research question was meant to determine the PR strategies deployed by TETFund in the management of intervention programmes in the public tertiary institutions in Nigeria. However, the respondents were enjoined to choose more than one option where applicable. Below is the presentation of the data:

Chart 1: Public Relations Strategies Used by TETFund in the Management of Intervention Programmes Nigeria's public tertiary institutions



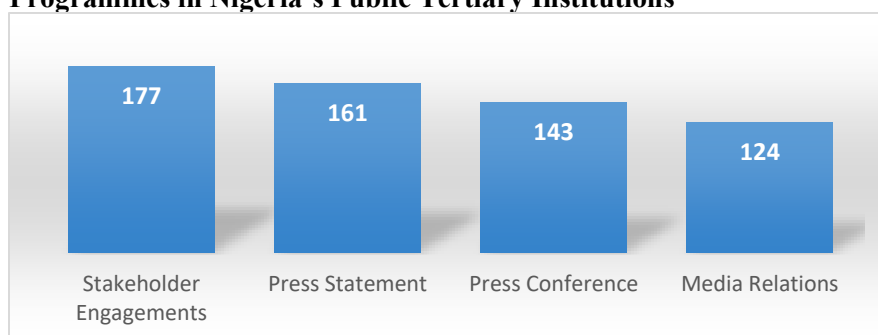
From Chart 1 above, it is clear that TETFund used diverse PR strategies; however, press statements appeared to be the most used. This could be attributed to the fact that it could be less expensive, and does not require much organisation. By using a combination of these PR strategies, the capacity of TETFund to cultivate goodwill, trust, and positive reputation is high. The respondents were also asked the frequency of TETFund's use of the PR strategies. They were asked to choose more than option where applicable. Below is the presentation of the data:

Chart 2: Frequency of Public Relations Strategies Used by TETFund in the Management of Intervention Programmes Nigeria's public tertiary institutions



From Chart 2 above, it is glaring that because of the unique nature of TETFund's stakeholders, being mainly public tertiary institutions, a lot of engagements are carried out to carry them along in the management of the Fund's intervention programmes. This is because a major segment of the establishment's external publics are public tertiary institutions, whose pivotal workforce are academics and intellectuals. So stakeholder engagement holds the ace here. Still on the above research question, another follow-up question was on which of the PR strategies the respondents suggest should be used often by TETFund. The respondents were also asked to choose more than one option if applicable. Below is the presentation of the data:

Chart 3: Respondents' Suggested Public Relations Strategies TETFund Should Used Often in the Management of Intervention Programmes in Nigeria's Public Tertiary Institutions



In a seeming endorsement of the findings in Chart 2, Chart 3 above buttresses the fact that stakeholder engagements should be used regularly by TETFund as a key PR strategy in the management of intervention programmes in Nigeria's public tertiary institutions revealing the fact that the respondents considered it to be a pivotal PR strategy. This tends to justify the findings of Kaleli, Otsulah & Mutisya (2021) on the imperative of stakeholder engagement as a key PR strategy.

TETFund's deployment of Public Relations strategies in the management of intervention programmes in Nigeria's public tertiary institutions

This research was quite important to the research, and the Likert Scale used to provide answers to it. Concerning the Likert Scales below, the mean for each statement on the Scale was determined by multiplying the frequency of each statement by the grade point of the level of agreement of disagreement, and then adding all together, then dividing by the total number of questionnaire. For example:

$$75 \times 5 + 60 \times 4 + 50 \times 3 + 40 \times 2 + 30 \times 1$$

$$353$$

$$= \frac{375 + 240 + 150 + 80 + 30}{353}$$

$$= \frac{875}{353}$$

Mean = 2.48

Table 2: Respondents' Views on How TETFund Deploys Public Relations Strategies in the Management of Intervention Programmes in Nigeria's Public Tertiary Institutions

S/N	Statement	SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1	Mean
9	TETFund uses press conferences to inform the public about new interventions in Nigeria's public tertiary institutions.	222	131	-	-	-	4.6
10	TETFund uses press statements to make news about activities within the establishment and also with its stakeholders.	222	131	-	-	-	4.6
11	TETFund uses media relations to generate maximum publication and broadcast of positive news about its activities.	245	108	-	-	-	4.7
12	TETFund uses stakeholder engagements to get feedback from its stakeholders (both internal and external) and also to build and sustain beneficial and mutual relationships.	277	76	-	-	-	4.8
13	TETFund uses other supplementary Public Relations strategies to support other strategies.	255	83	15	-	-	4.6

Key: if mean \leq 1.49= Neutral; 1.5-2.49=Strongly Disagree; 2.5-3.49=Disagree; 3.5-4.49= Agree; while 4.5-5=Strongly Agree

From Table 2 above, it is clear that TETFund deployed different PR strategies to manage the intervention programmes in Nigeria's public tertiary institutions in diverse ways. Specifically, the respondents noted that press conferences, press statements, media relations, and stakeholder engagements, among others, were used in diverse ways.

Effects of the Public Relations strategies deployed by TETFund on the management of Nigeria's public tertiary institutions

This research question was quite central to the research. Below is the presentation of the data:

Table 3: Respondents' Views on Effects of Public Relations Strategies on the Management of Intervention Programmes in Nigeria's Public Tertiary Institutions

S/N		SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
	Statement	5	4	3	2	1	
14	The use of press conferences by TETFund has led to optimum awareness of its intervention programmes in Nigeria's public tertiary institution by all the stakeholders.	198	133	22	-	-	4.5
15	The use of press statements by TETFund has led to maximum dissemination of information of its intervention programmes in Nigeria's public tertiary institutions by the Nigerian media.	192	128	33	-	-	4.5
16	The use of media relations by TETFund has led to favourable and positive relationship between it and the Nigerian media.	155	172	26	-	-	4.4
17	The use of stakeholder engagements by TETFund has led to the carrying of all the stakeholders along thereby fostering loyalty, trust, and transparency.	158	163	32	-	-	4.4
18	The use of other supplementary Public Relations strategies by TETFund has led to its goodwill and good reputation.	152	141	60	-	-	4.3

Key: if mean ≤ 1.49 = Neutral; 1.5-2.49=Strongly Disagree; 2.5-3.49=Disagree; 3.5-4.49= Agree; while 4.5-5=Strongly Agree

From Table 3 above, the PR strategies deployed by TETFund have created profound positive effects not only on the different stakeholders, but also on the reputation of the establishment as well. So the effects of the PR strategies have contributed to positive reputational perception not only by the different stakeholders, but also by the media. In this era in Nigeria, where public institutions are being assessed by the government, and the public are also expected to assess government institutions, it is in the interest of these establishments to proactively cultivate goodwill and support from the media and the public, as Olariu (2017) argues, good reputation has an intrinsic value it adds to an organisation.

Challenges of the Public Relations strategies deployed by TETFund in the management of Nigeria's public tertiary institutions

This research was concerned with the challenges of the PR strategies used by TETFund. Below is the presentation of the data:

Table 4: Respondents' Views on the Challenges of Public Relations Strategies by TETFund in the Management of Intervention Programmes in Nigeria's Public Tertiary Institutions

S/N	Statement	SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1	Mean
19	The use of press statements sometimes does not capture all the intervention programmes of TETFund in Nigeria's public tertiary institutions.	208	117	28	-	-	4.5
20	The time limit of press conferences sometimes does not allow for full disclosure of the intervention programmes of TETFund in Nigeria's public tertiary institutions.	-	-	71	202	80	2.0
21	The poor funding of the Public Affairs Department is not always enough for effective media relations.	222	122	9	-	-	4.6
22	The vested interests of all the stakeholders have not always been met by TETFund in the management of intervention programmes in Nigeria's public tertiary institutions.	222	78	53	-	-	4.5
23	Some Desk Officers of TETFund in Nigeria's public tertiary institutions have little knowledge of Public Relations strategies.	250	103	-	-	-	4.7
24	The social media are not adequately deployed by TETFund as part of its Public Relations strategies in the management of intervention programmes in Nigeria's tertiary institutions.	215	105	33	-	-	4.5

Key: if mean ≤ 1.49 = Neutral; 1.5-2.49=Strongly Disagree; 2.5-3.49=Disagree;

3.5-4.49= Agree; while 4.5-5=Strongly Agree

From Table 4 above, just like other government establishments in the country, TETFund also has its fair share of some challenges, which are not insurmountable anyway. But the challenge that is an eye-opener is the inadequate deployment of social media platforms as part of its PR strategies. In this era of the pervasive influence of digital technologies, this should be taken seriously. Although these challenges are not insurmountable, some of them are exogenous to the government

establishment. In addition, some of findings from the in-depth interview tend to corroborate the above; however, the difference could be seen in the challenges pointed out by the interviewee, which had to do more with political interference, government policy, and inadequate manpower, among others. Lastly, the two theories used- Stakeholder Theory and Relationship Management Theory were upheld, based on the findings.

Public relations strategies adopted in the management of TETFund intervention programmes in Nigeria universities

The interviewee's answer to the above question provided a number of strategies. The interviewee's responses aided the development of the theme; "effective PR strategies". The interviewee was quoted as saying 'We as the image-maker of the agency adopts strategies such as news management, corporate relations and proper management of crisis.

The respondent revealed that strategies are very pivotal in the management of TETFund intervention programmes in Nigeria universities and that without an effective or result achieving PR strategies, the management of TETFund will not be able to achieve its objectives and aim in TETFund. Without mincing words, the respondent unravelled that some of the PR strategies adopted in TETFund which have proven effective are: news management, community relations, crisis management and lobbying.

Challenges of adopting Public Relations strategies in the management of TETFUND intervention programmes

The interviewee delved into a number of challenges bedeviling the TETFund. As revealed by the interviewee and as quoted 'some of our challenges include shortage of funding, low level of cooperation between our agency and benefiting institutions, unnecessary political interference, shortage of manpower and government policies.

The respondent responded in the affirmative that PR unit in TETFund has some challenges ranging from poor funding, government policy, poor level of co-operation and overloading of responsibilities. When asked a follow-up question as regards how to overcome the challenges, the interviewee suggested that favourable government policy, employment of experienced staff and adequate funding are some of the keys to overcoming the challenges.

The interviewee delved into a number of ways of managing the challenges confronting the adoption of PR strategies in TETFUND. As revealed by the interviewee and as quoted 'some of our challenges include shortage of funding, low level of cooperation between our agency and benefiting institutions, unnecessary political interference, shortage of manpower and government policies.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The deployment of PR strategies to cultivate favourable reputation in the eyes of the publics was usually associated with the private sector, which are mainly profit-making. Government-owned organisations never took PR seriously, let alone having a full-fledged PR Department. But today, this has changed because of globalisation, reforms in the government, and also the awareness of the contributions of PR to the government. It is in the light of this that such a critical agency of the Federal Government of Nigeria like

TETFund has found in PR a potent tool to cultivate favourable reputation, trust, and goodwill from its different publics. By deploying different PR strategies, TETFund has shown capacity and has also shown that it is mindful of public opinion in Nigeria. There is no disputing the fact that in Nigeria at the moment, the people's perception of government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) is largely negative. So when a government establishment like TETFund has a full-fledged Public Affairs Department, with four main divisions- Corporate Affairs Division, Public Relations Division, Protocol Division, and Publications Division, it only underscores the importance attached to reputation management and organisational performance by the agency.

Further, the way TETFund deploys the various PR strategies also showed some level of professionalism among the staff; and it is this strategic deployment that has made the agency to be unencumbered by crises as it is known with some federal government-owned agencies in the country. As for challenges, in as much as the Federal Government of Nigeria has a role to play like in the area of adequate funding, some of these challenges are not insurmountable; they are just a manifestation of a phase in the life of a developing country like Nigeria. Be that as it may, the bottom-line here is that creative, innovative, and professional deployment of PR strategies by a government agency in Nigeria can contribute a lot to service delivery and organisational performance. Based on the above, below are the recommendations of this study: 1. it is imperative for TETFund to put in place mandatory training for its Desk Officers; 2. there is the need for periodic Town-hall meetings between TETFund and its various publics; and 3. TETFund should incorporate digital technologies into its PR strategies.

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