The Role of Public Relations in Enhancing Peace in Higher Institutions: A Study of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State

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Abstract

The study examined the role of public relations in enhancing peace in higher institutions: a study of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The major problem of this study was that the management does not recognize the potential of public relations operations in developing and enhancing a favorable image for the success of organization. It has also been observed that the management's attitude is tepid and non-challant toward public relations department and their efforts. Oftentimes, they don't want to invest money on its activities such as organizing seminars, workshops, symposiums e. t. c because of the erroneous and selfish perception that public relations efforts bring little benefits to the organization. Therefore, the study looked at the impact of public relations in enhancing peace in higher institutions of learning. Descriptive design was used with a sample size of 361 which were drawn from the population of the study using Taro Yamane formula. The study employed the probability sampling technique. This is because it gives all respondent equal chance of being selected. A structured questionnaire was the instrument used to gather data from the field for analysis. Findings from the study show that public relations in higher institutions have continued to impact positively in enhancing peace in every higher institution. Also, the study revealed that Public Relations has continued to play a significant role preventing crisis from occurring in an institution through its promotion of good image of an institution through their various strategies like effective communication, collaboration, partnerships with management and stakeholder's, transparency, and openness which in-turns contribute to peace building within the university environment. And recommends that every higher institution should cultivate the habit of taking public relation as a vital department in its organization and pay close attention to them also public relations should be recognized as part of management functions in higher institutions.

Keywords: public relations, enhancing, peace, higher institution

Introduction

Peace is an essential characteristic of every advanced civilization. Without peace, there can be no progress or advancement in any field. That is why every organization priority peacebuilding to move forward. One effective method to promote peace within an institution is to employ public relations to cultivate positive relationships among the public, especially in higher education institutions (Adigun,2015). Regardless of whether an organization is for-profit or non-profit, and regardless of whether

it is government-owned or privately owned, it requires the services of public relations in order to thrive and ultimately achieve its goals. It is not surprising that individuals are now enlisting the assistance of public relations professionals to construct, sustain, and enhance their image and reputation in the public domain. Among the persons mentioned are politicians, business tycoons, footballers, wrestlers, boxers, musicians, actors, and actresses. Public relations, unlike advertising and other elements of the marketing mix, focuses solely on cultivating a positive reputation, name, and public trust among the various stakeholders associated with the organization. Public relations, not only aims to enhance the image of the organization's products and services, but also strives to maintain a favorable perception of the employees and management (Adigun, 2015).

Due to various factors, public relations have become a matter of personal interpretation regarding its nature and function. Nevertheless, numerous scholars have made significant contributions to defining public relations. Some scholars view it as an action or representation of a group or organization. Public relations involve a purposeful, organized, and ongoing endeavor to build and uphold a shared understanding between an organization and its audience. British Institute of Public Relations (BPR). According to Roger Hayward as described by Adegoke (2000, p.1) public relations is the propagation of the personality of the organization. This emphasizes the significance of effective communication between the organization and its public. Roger Hayward's concept aligns with the IBPR definition as both emphasize the responsibility of public relations officers in promoting, projecting, and representing the organization, while also engaging with both internal and external stakeholders. Public relations also project the management personality of which the public relations department represents, through their operations with the use of their perspective tools (i.e print, electronic media and new media/social media.

The purpose is to create a friendly climate between an organization and its publics. Black (1962) states that public relations involve anything that is focused on increasing and enhancing the flow of information between an organization and its publics.

The major terms that can be derived out from Sam Black definition in the crucial role played by any public relations department through the methods of exploiting mass media. However, in this research work, an unbiased assessment was done on the significance of

public relations in the higher institutions as the major vital and prominent tool in the day running of academic activities notably in developing a peaceful environment for learning.

Efforts shall be extended to all media mostly employed by the public relations department which could fall under print and electronic media to carry out their activities such as Billboards, Calendar, Notebooks, Release, Bulleting Board, Opining Box or Suggestion Box, Magazine, Pamphlets, Radio, Television even the Recent Internet etc. The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) describes public relations as: "a distinctive management function which helps to establish and main mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and operation between an organization and its public. It is evident that the activity of public relations is needed in practically every community, organization, both the profit and non-profit organization, to include the higher institutions of learning (universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, and other colleges). In fact, individuals in society also need the service of public relations, especially those individuals that are professional or experts such as artists, athletes and politician. etc.

Therefore, public relations support the institution in so many ways and some of the ways is by writing and distributing press realizes, school newspapers, journals and many more. Public relations enhance and project public relations successful and dignity of the organization to the globe.

Public relations successfully add the following skills:

1. Ability to effect writing, fluent speaking and effective reading.
2. Ability to think clearly as part of management team at all levels.
3. Ability to prepare speeches for the top institution management such s chief executives.
4. Ability offers vital information to the institution and those outside.
5. Because Public relations is a backbone for every organization that is ready and eager to survive.to this end, this research aim to examine the impact of public relations in improving peace in higher institutions utilizing Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Statement of the Problem

It has been discovered that in so many organizations, management neither recognizes nor appreciate public relations efforts in Nigeria. The management does not recognize the potential of public relations operations in developing and enhancing a favorable image for

the success of the organization. It has been observed that the management's attitude is tepid and non-challant toward public relations department and their efforts. Besides, they don't want to invest money on its activities such as organizing seminars, workshops, symposiums e. t. c because of the erroneous and selfish perception that public relations efforts bring little benefits to the organization. Therefore, this study would look at the impact of public relations in enhancing peace in higher institutions of learning using Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.

Research Questions

1. How do Public Relations strategies contribute to peacebuilding in higher education in Nnamdi Azikiwe University?

2. What factors influence the success of Public Relations strategies in enhancing peace in Nnamdi Azikiwe University?

3. How effective are Public Relations strategies in managing conflict and promoting peace in Nnamdi Azikiwe University?

Literature Review

Clarification of Peace

The phrase peace is used in a wide sphere. It seems that peace has several connotations that are diverse in accordance with the context of usage. But at a first glance, Galtung (1967, p. 12) identifies it as a "umbrella concept". To him, it is a state of mind perceived because of the actualization of declared human objectives. That is, it is a sensation of internal serenity because of exterior stability. Galtung (1967) also describes peace as affecting the concept of law and order. That is, a projected social order feasible through the instrumentality of force and the threat of it. This notion, however, does not dismiss violence; rather it erects norms and prescribes consequences to establish and sustain a state of serenity. According to the American military history, the word peace fundamentally denotes the absence of war. Therefore, per militaries' views, they fight wars to win the peace, or they employ force to maintain peace. In military perspectives, peace is considered as an ultimate or ideal objective rather than a means to an end. Historically and politically contemplating in accordance with the American military history's point of view, it is known as to why peace is mainly described as an absence of conflict. This is because in the history of human society, battles of all kinds were waged. Whenever wars occur, people need peace and seek for

peace. Peace that people sought and prayed for is the state of the absence of battles, the state of having no fights. However, many peace specialists do not agree with giving a focus on peace in the sense of an absence of war exclusively. Peace, in their opinions, is something more meaningful, useful, and vital than that. According to the definitions or the explanations of Wikipedia encyclopedia, peace can be a condition of harmony or the absence of animosity. "Peace" can also be a non-violent way of life. "Peace" is used to indicate the cessation of violent conflict. Peace can indicate a state of quiet or tranquility an absence of disruption or agitation. Peace can also indicate a connection between any people marked by respect, justice and benevolence. Peace can describe peace, serenity and silence. This latter notion of peace can also refer to an individual's perception of himself or herself, as to be "at peace" with one's own mind. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines peace as follows:

1. No conflict: a condition in which there is no war or fighting.

2. No noise/interruptions: a highly peaceful and pleasant atmosphere in which you are not disturbed.

3. Peaceful/Not worried: a sensation of being peaceful, cheerful, and not bothered

Merriam-Webster dictionary presents the explanations of peace as follows:

1. a state of peace or quiet as:

A.an independence from civil disturbance

b. a state of security or order within a society provided for by law or custom.

2: freedom from unsettling or burdensome thoughts or emotions.

Roles of Public Relations in Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in Higher Institutions

Public Relations (PR) and peace are more often not intertwined and interrelated. While PR seeks to create a good image and rapport between individuals and organizations to maintain a harmonious relationship, peace seeks to achieve a state of tranquility and harmony in personal relations, with no violence or war. In essence PR and peace complement each other.

PR practitioners have a role to play in promoting peace in their various capacities and institutions. PR, just like most professions, is best practiced in a peaceful environment. For peace to be achieved there has to be public awareness and enlightenment in organizations and in the society through good communication. Therefore, Public relations play a significant role in conflict resolution and peace building. Public relations help parties in conflict to communicate effectively, listening to each other's perspectives and concerns. According to Adegoke, 2001, Public relation also helps in:

Brand Reputation: PR helps in shaping and maintaining the reputation of the institution among various stakeholders including students, parents, alumni, faculty, staff, and the community. A positive reputation attracts prospective students and faculty, while also fostering loyalty and engagement among current stakeholders.

Crisis Management: Higher education institutions face various crises, ranging from academic scandals to campus safety issues. PR professionals handle communication during such crises, helping to mitigate damage to the institution's reputation and maintain public trust.

Student Recruitment: Effective PR strategies can attract prospective students by highlighting the institution's strengths, academic programs, campus life, and success stories. Positive media coverage and strategic messaging can significantly impact enrollment numbers.

Fundraising and Development: Public relations efforts are crucial in fundraising campaigns and donor relations. PR professionals create compelling narratives to inspire philanthropic support and maintain relationships with donors, alumni, and other stakeholders.

Community Engagement: Higher education institutions are integral parts of their communities. PR initiatives facilitate engagement with local communities through events, partnerships, and outreach programs, fostering positive relationships and mutual support.

Thought Leadership: PR helps position the institution and its faculty as thought leaders in various fields through media placements, expert commentary, and academic publications. This enhances the institution's credibility and influence within the academic community and beyond.

Government Relations: PR professionals engage with government agencies, policymakers, and regulatory bodies to advocate for the institution's interests, secure funding, and shape public policies affecting higher education.

Public Relations as a Management Function

Public relation as management function goes beyond a management of organization establishing the in-house public relations department or seeking the services of public relation consulting firms outside their company. Rather, public relations have to do with everything regarded as management process of any certain organization. It all start from the stage of deciding on what kind of services or product involved in, then to the stage of identifying the would be consumer publics alongside their characteristics, also the stage of making choice on what channels of distribution to be used, taking decisions on packaging of the product or strategies employed in rendering services to the stage of pricing and so on. All these things one way or the other employs public relation before they can be effective. Identifying public relation as a management function, the International Public Relations Association (I.P.R.A) defines public relation as a "management function, of a continuing and planned character , through which organizations and institution seeks to win and retain the understanding, sympathy and support of those with whom they are or may be concerned by evaluating public opinion about themselves in order to correlate as far as possible their own policies and procedures to achieve by planed and widespread information in a more productive cooperation and more efficient fulfillment of their common interest. This plainly means that: anybody responsible for the work of public relation in an organization must be part of the senior management. According to the decision of management concept of public relation by late Professor Frank Ugboajah sited in Arowosegbe {2005}, it describes the management concept of public relation as a one intend to establish and disseminate by word, and action definite policies that give direction to management efforts in utilizing and energizing human resources, and to develop techniques which will provide balance sheet respectability to management efforts in achieving certain goals in utilizing human resources. The above position of Ugboajah on public relations as a management function recognizes the following facts:

• That public relation must expand to every component of all management efforts and decisions or that all the decisions and programmes chosen by management must have the

imports of its implied relations. It means that such management activities must be impacted by the concept coming from public relations. This is so because they must be drawn with enough recognition of the interests of the public of the organization.

• That Public relations should help management in achieving its primary goal of succeeding among competitors (utilizing and energizing human resources)

• That Public relations should not only help management in formulating policies that will best serve both its interest and those of its public, but that it should also be used to publicize such policies to everyone concerned.

• That Public relations should create means of monitoring adequately the implementation stage of such policies; this indicates that the organization will be portrayed as a one that is not only socially responsible but one that is also working or existing for and its public interest.

• That all Public relations operations must be planned and deployed to allow the management of an organization reach its ultimate aims through various programme that are specifically geared to achieve this aim.

• That public relations should also create strategies to ensure that efforts of management in this context do not crash, and if there is a noticeable inclination of this, there should be in built checks and balances to reposition things.

Organizational Factors for Excellent Public Relations

The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) study on Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management (Excellence Study) found three primary variables for predicting excellence: communicator knowledge, shared expectations about communication, and the character of organizations. However, there are other organizational elements that influence the role that public relation plays in an organization. First, management must respect the contributions that public relations can bring to a business; second, there must be a participative culture; and third, the organization must support diversity of people and ideas. There must be shared expectations between the communications function and senior management or dominant coalition.

Value of Public Relations

To obtain a strategic management role in the business, the public relations function must establish its value to management. Hambrick (1992) noted that managing with uncertainty

is the cornerstone for demonstrating value. Technology, process, and external surroundings all contribute to creating uncertainties and, consequently, strategic contingencies. Excellent public relations should help a firm manage with the uncertainty. This can be achieved only with facts and valuable information. Information theory asserts that data are only useful because they diminish uncertainty.

Organizational Culture

Organizations that scored high on the Excellence Study indicators had a culture that was participative rather than autocratic. An organization's formal structure can typically indicate how much participation occurs in making choices. Organizations that have very centralized and formal structures preserve the decision-making function in the hands of a few top management. To allow for participative cultures, businesses need to be relatively decentralized since organizational culture can actively affect an organization's management style and employees' day-today activities. For excellent public relations, the ideals that support participative decision making need to be present.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on three theoretical frameworks, the public Relations Transfer theory and Conflict Resolution theory.

The Public Transfer Theory

This theory was propounded by Frank Jefkins in 1988. According to Nweke (2001), the theory is an antidote against some negative developments in organizations. Jefkins (1988) states that when the negative situation is converted into posited achievements through knowledge. The result predictably is the primary objective of public relations, practice-understanding the theory was suitable for the study, because perfection is something humanity cannot attain but always Strive towards. Based on this premise, organizations are bound to experience hostility, apathy and prejudice from members of their publics, and once an organization experiences any of these, the transfer process theory comes in handy. As such the model is said to be relevant to this work.

Conflict Resolution Theory

Conflict resolution theory suggests that conflicts within higher institutions can be resolved through a combination of communication, understanding, and problem-solving. The theory suggests that conflicts can be resolved by:

1. Identifying the underlying causes of the conflict: Public relations can help to gather information and identify the underlying causes of conflicts within higher institutions.

2. Facilitating communication between different groups: Public relations can help to facilitate communication between different groups within the institution, such as faculty, students, and administrators, to encourage understanding and promote peaceful resolution of conflicts.

3. Encouraging empathy and understanding: Public relations can help to encourage empathy and understanding between different groups within the institution, which can help to reduce the likelihood of conflict.

4. Developing solutions to the conflict: Public relations can help to develop solutions to conflicts that are acceptable to all parties and that promote peaceful resolution of the conflict. Some examples of conflict resolution strategies that might be used within higher institutions include: - Mediation: A neutral party can help to facilitate communication and understanding between different groups within the institution. - Restorative Justice: This approach focuses on repairing the harm caused by conflict and restoring relationships between different groups within the institution. - Social media: social media can be used to promote empathy and understanding between different groups within the institution, and to promote peaceful resolution of conflicts. - Community Building: Community building activities, such as town halls or community events, can be used to promote understanding and connection between different groups within the institution. Conflict resolution theory guides the informal or formal process that two or more parties use to find a peaceful solution to their dispute. A number of common cognitive and emotional traps, many of them unconscious, can exacerbate conflict and contribute to the need to engage conflict resolution theory to come to an agreement. Both parties to a conflict typically think they're right (and the other side is wrong) because they quite literally can't get out of our own heads. Our sense of what would constitute a fair conflict resolution is biased by egocentrism, or the tendency to have difficulty seeing a situation from another person's perspective. One approach to solving such an impasse that comes from conflict resolution theory is to set a

productive tone by letting the party you've been arguing with speak first. When it's time to air your own perspective on the conflict, claim the same ability to express your perspective without interruption. Focus on explaining how you view the situation, presenting hard evidence if necessary. Another aspect of conflict resolution theory includes bringing in the outside assistance of a mediator. In mediation, disputants enlist a trained, neutral third party to help them come to a consensus. Rather than imposing a solution, a professional mediator encourages disputants to explore the interests underlying their positions. Working with parties both together and separately, mediators seek to help them discover a resolution that is sustainable, voluntary, and nonbinding.

Method

Ohaja (2003) defines research design as the structuring of investigation aimed at identifying variables and their relationship. This research design utilized for the purpose of this study was descriptive research design. The subject used for the study was administrative staff, and public relations staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra state.

The population of this study comprised of administrative staff and public relation staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The total population of the study was estimated at 3,714.

However, the sample sizes of 361 were drawn for the purpose of this study using Taro Yamane formula. The study employed the probability sampling technique. This is because it gives all respondent equal chance of being selected 10 respondents were selected randomly across various departments. The data collection instrument for this research work is questionnaire. This questionnaire was structured and designed in such a way that it will afford respondents to answer the research-based questions appropriately and with all sense of belong. Descriptive statistical tools were employed in the study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Demographic variable

Age and Gender of respondents.

 Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	30-40	20	5.5	5.5	5.5
	41-50	230	63.7	63.7	69.3
	51-60	100	27.7	27.7	97.0
	61 and above	11	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey 2024

The above table shows that (5.5%) respondents fall within the age 30-40 , (63.7%) respondents fall within the age of (41-50), (27.7%) respondents fall within the age of (51-60), and (11%) of respondents fall within the age 61 and above .

Sex

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	131	36.3	36.3	36.3
	Female	230	63.7	63.7	100.0
	Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey 2024

The table below shows that (36.3%) of respondents are male while (63.7%) of respondents are female.

Do you believe that effectiveness of PR strategies helps in fostering a culture of peace in Nnamdi Azikiwe University

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	230	63.7	63.7	63.7
	No	131	36.3	36.3	100.0
	Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey 2024

The above table shows that (63.7%) of respondents believe that effectiveness of public relations strategies helps in fostering a culture of peace in Nnamdi Azikiwe while (36.3%) do not believe that the effectiveness of public relations   strategies helps   in fostering a culture of peace in Nnamdi Azikiwe university.

How impactful do you believe PR are in promoting dialogue and understanding among groups in Nnamdi Azikiwe University

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Not impactful at all	55	15.2	15.2	15.2
	Slightly impactful	56	15.5	15.5	30.7
Valid	Moderately impactful	100	27.7	27.7	58.4
	Very impactful	150	41.6	41.6	100.0
	Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, 2024

The above table shows that (15.2.%) of respondents believe that PR are not impactful at all in promoting dialogue and understanding among diverse group in Nnamdi Azikiwe university while (15.5%) of respondents slightly believe that PR is impactful in promoting dialogue and understanding among groups in Nnamdi Azikiwe university, (27.7%) of respondents moderately believe that PR is impactful in promoting dialogue and understanding among diverse groups in Nnamdi Azikiwe university, and (41.6%) of respondents believe that PR are very impactful in promoting dialogue and understanding among groups in Nnamdi Azikiwe university.

To what extent do you perceive public relations initiatives as contributing to conflict resolution and mediation within Nnamdi Azikiwe University

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	To a small extent	57	15.8	15.8	15.8
	To a moderate	55	15.2	15.2	31.0
Valid	To a large extent	153	42.4	42.4	73.4
	To a very large extent	96	26.6	26.6	100.0
	Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey ,2024

The above table shows that (15.8%) of respondents perceive to a small extent that public relation initiatives contribute to conflict resolution and mediation within Nnamdi Azikiwe university, (15.2%) of respondents perceive to moderate extent that public relations initiatives contribute to conflict resolution and mediation within Nnamdi Azikiwe university,(42.4%)of respondents perceive to large extent that public relations initiatives contribute to conflict resolution and mediation within Nnamdi Azikiwe university while (26.6%) of respondents perceive to a very large extent that public relations initiatives contribute to conflict resolution and mediation within Nnamdi Azikiwe university.

Do you think PR strategies address societal issues and justice within

Nnamdi Azikiwe University

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	186	51.5	51.5	51.5
	No	175	48.5	48.5	100.0

	Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, 2024

The above table shows that (51.5%) of respondents believe that public relations strategies helps in addressing societal issues and justice within Nnamdi Azikiwe University fostering a culture of peace in Nnamdi Azikiwe while (48.5%) of respondents do not believe of public relations strategies address societal issues and justice within Nnamdi Azikiwe University.

Do you think Public relations are important in fostering a peaceful and inclusive environment within Nnamdi Azikiwe University?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	188	52.1	52.1	52.1
	No	173	47.9	47.9	100.0
	Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey 2024

The above table shows that (52.1%) of respondents believe that effectiveness of public relations is important in fostering a peaceful and inclusive environments within Nnamdi Azikiwe university while (47.9%) of respondents do not believe in the effectiveness of public relations is important in fostering a peaceful and inclusive environments within Nnamdi Azikiwe university.

How confident are you in the ability of public relations strategies to promote reconciliation and harmony among members of staff and students within Nnamdi Azikiwe University?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No confident at all	50	13.9	13.9	13.9

Slightly confident	56	15.5	15.5	29.4
Moderately confident	55	15.2	15.2	44.6
Very confident	100	27.7	27.7	72.3
Extremely confident	100	27.7	27.7	100.0
Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey 2024

The above table shows that (13.9%) of respondents have no confident at all in public relations strategies helps in promoting reconciliation and harmony among members of staff and students within Nnamdi Azikiwe University,(15.5%) of respondents slightly have confident that public relations strategies to promote reconciliation and harmony among members of staff and students within Nnamdi Azikiwe University, (15.2%) of respondents have moderate confident that public relations strategies to promote reconciliation and harmony among members of staff and students within Nnamdi Azikiwe University, (27.7%) of respondents are very confident that public relations strategies to promote reconciliation and harmony among members of staff and students within Nnamdi Azikiwe University while (27.7%) of respondents are extremely have confident that public relations strategies to promote reconciliation and harmony among members of staff and students within Nnamdi Azikiwe University.

To what degree do you believe public relations efforts contribute to the reputation of Nnamdi Azikiwe University as agents of peace-building?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not contributory	48	13.3	13.3	13.3
	Slightly contributory	57	15.8	15.8	29.1

Moderately contributory	56	15.5	15.5	44.6
Very contributory	100	27.7	27.7	72.3
Extremely contributory	100	27.7	27.7	100.0
Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey ,2024

The above table shows that (13.9%) of respondents believe that public relations efforts are not contributory to the reputation of Nnamdi Azikiwe University as agents of peace-building (15.5%) of respondents believe that public relations efforts slightly contribute to the reputation of Nnamdi Azikiwe University as agents of peace-building (15.2%) of respondents that public relations believe public relations efforts are moderately contribute to the reputation of Nnamdi Azikiwe University as agents of peace-building (27.7%) of respondents believe that public relations efforts contribute to the reputation of Nnamdi Azikiwe University as agents of peace-building are very contributory while (27.7%) of respondents public relations that believe public relations efforts contribute to the reputation of Nnamdi Azikiwe University as agents of peace-building are extremely contributory.

Do you believe effective communication plays a role in the success of public relations strategies in promoting peace within Nnamdi Azikiwe University?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	261	72.3	72.3	72.3
	No	100	27.7	27.7	100.0
	Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey,2024

The above table shows that (72.3%) of respondents believe that effective communication plays a role in the success of public relations strategies in promoting peace in Nnamdi Azikiwe university while (27.7%) of respondents do not believe that effective communication do not play a role in the success of public relation strategies in promoting peace in Nnamdi Azikiwe university.

How important do you think collaboration and partnerships with stakeholders are for the success of public relations strategies in fostering peace within Nnamdi Azikiwe University

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not important at all	1	.3	.3	.3
	Slightly important	40	11.1	11.1	11.4
	Moderately important	60	16.6	16.6	28.0
	Very important	250	69.3	69.3	97.2
	Extremely important	10	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, 2024

The above table shows that (3%) of respondents do not think that collaboration and partnerships with stakeholders is important at all for the success of public relations strategies in fostering peace within Nnamdi Azikiwe (11.1%) of respondents slightly think that collaboration and partnerships with stakeholders is important for the success of public relations strategies in fostering peace within Nnamdi Azikiwe(16.6%) of respondents moderately think that collaboration and partnerships with stakeholders is important for the success of public relations strategies in fostering peace within Nnamdi Azikiwe (69.3%) of respondents think that collaboration and partnerships with stakeholders is very important for the success of public relations strategies in fostering peace within Nnamdi Azikiwe

(2.8%) of respondents think collaboration and partnerships with stakeholders is extremely important for the success of public relations strategies in fostering peace within Nnamdi Azikiwe.

Do you think transparency and openness in communication is an influential factor in the success of public relations strategies for peacebuilding in Nnamdi Azikiwe University?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	189	52.4	52.4	52.4
	No	172	47.6	47.6	100.0
	Total	361	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows that (52.4%) of respondents think that transparency and openness in communication is an influential factor in the success of public relations strategies for peace-building in Nnamdi Azikiwe University while (47.6%) of respondents do not think transparency and openness in communication is an influential factor in the success of public relations strategies for peace-building in Nnamdi Azikiwe University.

Do you believe that a clear understanding of cultural diversity and sensitivity contributes to the success of public relations efforts in promoting peace within Nnamdi Azikiwe University?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	270	74.8	74.8	74.8
	No	91	25.2	25.2	100.0
	Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, 2024

The above table shows that (74.8%) of respondents believe that, a clear understanding of cultural diversity and sensitivity contributes to the success of public relations efforts in

promoting peace within Nnamdi Azikiwe University while (25.2%) respondents do not that a clear understanding of cultural diversity and sensitivity contributes to the success of public relations efforts in promoting peace within Nnamdi Azikiwe University.

Please rate the importance of proactive crisis management and conflict resolution strategies in the success of public relations initiatives aimed at enhancing peace in Nnamdi Azikiwe University

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not important at all	48	13.3	13.3	13.3
	Slightly important	57	15.8	15.8	29.1
	Moderately important	56	15.5	15.5	44.6
	Very important	100	27.7	27.7	72.3
	Extremely important	100	27.7	27.7	100.0
	Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, 2024

The above table shows that (13.3.%) of respondents rated the importance of proactive crisis management and conflict resolution strategies in the success of public relations initiatives aimed at enhancing peace in Nnamdi Azikiwe University as not important ,(15.8%)of respondents rated the importance of proactive crisis management and conflict resolution strategies in the success of public relations initiatives aimed at enhancing peace in Nnamdi Azikiwe University as slightly important,(15.5%) of respondents rated the importance of proactive crisis management and conflict resolution strategies in the success of public relations initiatives aimed at enhancing peace in Nnamdi Azikiwe University as moderately important (27.7%) of respondents rated the importance of proactive crisis management and conflict resolution strategies in the success of public relations initiatives aimed at enhancing peace in Nnamdi Azikiwe University as very important (27.7%) of respondents

rated the importance of proactive crisis management and conflict resolution strategies in the success of public relations initiatives aimed at enhancing peace in Nnamdi Azikiwe University as extremely important.

Do you think leadership commitment and support significantly influence the success of public relations strategies in promoting peace within Nnamdi Azikiwe University?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	271	75.1	75.1	75.1
Valid	No	90	24.9	24.9	100.0
	Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, 2024

The above table shows that (75.1%) of respondents think that leadership commitment and support significantly influence the success of public relations strategies in promoting peace within Nnamdi Azikiwe University while (24.9%) of respondents do not think leadership commitment and support significantly influence the success of public relations strategies in promoting peace within Nnamdi Azikiwe University.

Do you believe that continuous evaluation and adaptation of public relations approaches are essential for their success in enhancing peace within Nnamdi Azikiwe University?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	251	69.5	69.5	69.5
Valid	No	110	30.5	30.5	100.0
	Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, 2024

The above table shows that (69.5%) of respondents believe that continuous evaluation and adaptation of public relations approaches are essential for their success in enhancing peace within Nnamdi Azikiwe University while (30.5%) of respondents do not believe that continuous evaluation and adaptation of public relations approaches are essential for their success in enhancing peace within Nnamdi Azikiwe University.

What is the overall effectiveness of public relations strategies in managing

Conflict within Nnamdi Azikiwe University setting?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not effective at all	11	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Slightly effective	30	8.3	8.3	11.4
	Moderately effective	80	22.2	22.2	33.5
	Very effective	110	30.5	30.5	64.0
	Extremely effective	130	36.0	36.0	100.0
	Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, 2024

The above table shows that (3.0%) of respondents says that the overall effectiveness of public relations strategies in managing conflict within Nnamdi Azikiwe University setting is not effective , (8.3%) of respondents says the overall effectiveness of public relations strategies in managing conflict within Nnamdi Azikiwe University setting is slightly effective (22.2%) of respondents says that the overall effectiveness of public relations strategies in managing conflict within Nnamdi Azikiwe University setting moderately effective (30.5%) of respondents says that the overall effectiveness of public relations strategies in managing conflict within Nnamdi Azikiwe University setting is very effective (36.0%) of respondents

says that the overall effectiveness of public relations strategies in managing conflict within Nnamdi Azikiwe University setting is extremely effective .

Do you believe public relations strategies address and mitigate conflicts among Staff and students within Nnamdi Azikiwe University community?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	350	97.0	97.0	97.0
Valid	No	11	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, 2024

The above table shows that (97.0%) of respondents believe that believe public relations strategies address and mitigate conflicts among Staff and students within Nnamdi Azikiwe University community. While (3.0%) of respondents believe that public relations strategies address and mitigate conflicts among Staff and student within Nnamdi Azikiwe University community.

To what extent do you perceive public relations efforts as contributing to the resolution of conflicts and tensions within Nnamdi Azikiwe University environment?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Not at all	30	8.3	8.3	8.3
	To a small extent	11	3.0	3.0	11.4
Valid	To a moderate extent	80	22.2	22.2	33.5
	To a large extent	130	36.0	36.0	69.5

	To a very large extent	110	30.5	30.5	100.0
	Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, 2024

The above table shows that (8.3%) of respondents perceive public relations efforts as not contributing at all to the resolution of conflicts and tensions within Nnamdi Azikiwe University environment, (3.0%) of respondents perceive public relations efforts to a small extent as contributing to the resolution of conflicts and tensions within Nnamdi Azikiwe University environment, (22.2%) of respondents perceive public relations efforts to a moderate extent as contributing to the resolution of conflicts and tensions within Nnamdi Azikiwe University environment, (36.0%) of respondents perceive public relations efforts to a larger extent as contributing to the resolution of conflicts and tensions within Nnamdi Azikiwe University environment? (30.5%) respondents perceive public relations efforts to a very large extent as contributing to the resolution of conflicts and tensions within Nnamdi Azikiwe University environment.

How confident are you in the ability of public relations strategies to promote understanding and reconciliation among stakeholders during times of conflict in the university?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not confident at all	11	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Slightly confident	30	8.3	8.3	11.4
	Moderately confident	60	16.6	16.6	28.0
	Very confident	130	36.0	36.0	64.0
	Extremely confident	130	36.0	36.0	100.0
	Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, 2024

The above table shows that (3.0%) of respondents do not have confident at all in the ability of public relations strategies to promote understanding and reconciliation among stakeholders during times of conflict in the university, (8.3 %) of respondent slightly have confident in the ability of public relations strategies to promote understanding and reconciliation among stakeholders during times of conflict in the university (16.6%) of respondents moderately have confident you in the ability of public relations strategies to promote understanding and reconciliation among stakeholders during times of conflict in the university, (36 .0%) of respondents are very confident you in the ability of public relations strategies to promote understanding and reconciliation among stakeholders during times of conflict in the university while (36.0%) of respondents are extremely confident you in the ability of public relations strategies to promote understanding and reconciliation among stakeholders during times of conflict in the university.

Do you think public relations are important in fostering a peaceful and harmonious atmosphere within the university community?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	187	51.8	51.8	51.8
Valid	No	174	48.2	48.2	100.0
	Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, 2024

The above table shows that (51.8%) of respondents think public relations is important in fostering a peaceful and harmonious atmosphere within the university community while (48.2%) of respondents do not think public relations is important in fostering a peaceful and harmonious atmosphere within the university community.

How effective do you perceive public relations efforts to be in promoting dialogue and constructive communication during times of conflict in the university?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not effective	11	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Slightly effective	60	16.6	16.6	19.7
	Moderately effective	30	8.3	8.3	28.0
	Very effective	140	38.8	38.8	66.8
	Extremely effective	120	33.2	33.2	100.0
	Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, 2024

The above table shows that (3.0%) of respondents believe that public relations efforts is in promoting dialogue and constructive communication during effective of conflict in the university (16.6%) respondents slightly believe that public relations efforts to be in promoting dialogue and constructive communication during times of conflict in the university,(8.3%) of respondents believe that public relations efforts is moderately effective in promoting dialogue and constructive communication during times of conflict in the university, (38.8 %) of respondents believe public relations efforts is very effective in promoting dialogue and constructive communication during times of conflict in the university while (33.2%) of respondents believe is extremely effective.

To what extent do you believe public relations strategies contribute to the overall reputation of the university as a peaceful and inclusive institution?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not contributory	10	2.8	2.8	2.8
	Slightly contributory	61	16.9	16.9	19.7

Moderately contributory	30	8.3	8.3	28.0
Very contributory	150	41.6	41.6	69.5
Extremely contributory	110	30.5	30.5	100.0
Total	361	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, 2024

The above table shows that (2.8%) of respondents do not believe that public relations strategies contribute to the overall reputation of the university as a peaceful and inclusive institution, (16.9%) of respondents slightly believe that public relations strategies contribute to the overall reputation of the university as a peaceful and inclusive institution (8.3%) respondents moderately believe that public relations strategies contribute to the overall reputation of the university as a peaceful and inclusive institution (41.6%) of respondents believe that public relations strategies contribute very well to the overall reputation of the university as a peaceful and inclusive institution, while (30.5%) of respondents believe that public relations strategies contribute extremely contributive to the overall reputation of the university as a peaceful and inclusive institution.

Discussion

Opinion obtained from respondents through a structured questionnaire was analyzed to achieve the study objectives. A total of 361 questionnaires were administered online the result of the study as shown in the tables indicated public relations plays an important function in increasing peace in higher institution of learning. Firstly, the researcher analyzed the various gender, and age of the respondents.

Secondly, the researcher explored the relationship between public relations strategies and peacebuilding in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, findings revealed that to a greater extent, public relations strategies help in fostering a culture of peace and promoting dialogue, to a very large extent their initiatives contribute to conflict resolution and mediation within the university which in-turns address societal issues and justice within the university.

Similarly, the researcher assessed the various effective public relations strategies for enhancing peace and reducing conflict in Nnamdi Azikiwe University findings revealed that effective communication, collaboration, partnerships with management and stakeholder's, transparency and openness are very influential strategies that contribute to peace building within the university.

Moreover, To assess the effectiveness of public relations in managing conflict and promoting peace in Nnamdi Azikiwe University , opinion were sampled and analyzed and findings revealed that public relations are effective to some extent in managing conflict and promoting peace through openness in communication, leadership commitment, and continuous adaptation of public relations approaches, effective communication and when there is proactive management and conflict resolution strategies and clear understanding of cultural diversity and sensitivity.

Summary of Findings

In a nutshell this study treated the role of public relations in enhancing peace in higher institution: A study of Nnamdi Azikiwe University with the aim of assessing the of public relations in enhancing peace in higher institutions of learning using Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. Finding from the study shows that public relations in higher institutions has continued to impact positively in enhancing peace in every higher institution.

Also, the findings from the study revealed that public relation helps has continued to preventing crisis from occurring in an organization through its promotion of good image of such organization through their various strategies like effective communication, collaboration, partnerships with management and stakeholder's, transparency and openness which in-turns contribute to peace building within the university environment.

Conclusion

Public relations play vital roles in an institution of higher learning, it is a compulsory and inevitable tool for higher institutions of learning to engage in public relations activities. As this study clearly shows that public relations help an individual to learn about his environment, create mutual understanding and goodwill among its external and internal publics. Therefore, due to this great impact and usefulness, the study concludes that

institution and other organizations can not enjoy a long-time success without public relations, therefore, should not take public relations with levity hands.

Recommendations

The study recommends that:

1. Every higher institution of should cultivate the habit of taking public relations as a vital department in its organization and pay close attention to them.

2. Public relations should also be recognized as part of management functions in higher institutions.

3. Higher institutions of learning should encourage effective communication, collaboration, partnerships with management and stakeholder's, to enhance peace building within the university.

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