

**KWARA STATE POLYTECHNIC, ILOIRN**  
**PERCEPTION OF PR DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES AMONG STUDENTS OF KWARA STATE**  
**POLYTECHNIC, ILORIN**

**BY**

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**CERTIFICATION**

This is certify that this project was carried out by **ADISA TIMILEYIN SEGUN**  
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## **DEDICATION**

The project is dedicated to Almighty God the giver of life, knowledge, wisdom, and understanding to succeed in our field of study and also to our beloved parents who have made the journey so easy and successful one, who continually provide their moral, spiritual, emotional and financial support.

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I also appreciate the contribution, 'financial support' provided by our family for their specific contribution, 'thoughtful discussions

Lastly, we would like to thank my family and friends for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout this journey. Their love and understanding were my pillars of strength."

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

The communication function conducted by universities has no difference which with other institution both government and private institutions. That distinguishing the communication function undertaken by these institutions is public communication component. The public then expanded his understanding become stakeholders who are individuals and groups within or outside the college institution that has a role in determining success of the company. College is interesting to be examined from the side of communication conducted by public relations because there are specific challenges. According to cutlip (1985) colleges face four problems in communication are: inadequate funding support for institutional roles public in the wide community; competition to get qualified students needs passion and expensive; constraints and regulations make the college administration difficult and costs; academics and ownership freedom is a challenge for internal stakeholders or external.

The issue of accountability is a matter that must be maintained by the university. One indicator of accountability is good communication. Other than that universities have a significant role in educational development community. Not just as an educational provider but a college is expected to contribute academically and practically in development. Accountability becomes a more crucial issue in state universities because of the cost the education used for the authors, published by EDP sciences. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the raising one of them is obtained from taxes paid by the people. Form of social responsibility of state universities become heavier than related to finance is also related to that output resulting from graduates.

Public relations (PR) is a strategic communication discipline that focuses on building and maintaining positive relationships between organizations and their target audiences. It encompasses a range of activities including messaging, media relations, event management, reputation management, and crisis communication. PR professionals play a vital role in shaping public perception, managing communication channels, and fostering mutually beneficial relationships. In today's fast-paced and interconnected world, PR has become increasingly important across various sectors, including businesses, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions. Effective PR strategies help organizations convey their messages, engage with stakeholders, and navigate the complexities of the modern media landscape. In this context, the perception of PR department activities among polytechnic students holds significant relevance. Polytechnic students are a dynamic and diverse group, and their perception of the PR department's initiatives can shape their overall experience within the institution. Positive perceptions can foster a sense of trust, engagement, and support, while negative perceptions may lead to disengagement and dissatisfaction.

By making public relations (PR) the main channel of communication is a big challenge as it relates to media perceptions of relationship work society. Parents of students and prospective students are also the ones who it is important to manage the communication for the benefit of the college. Another interesting aspect is the independence of public relations as a tool management, status and position determine the performance of public relations as a tool communication. Position of public relations in a company can be a tool identification of work objectives and may also reflect a communication policy outlined by management. Civilized and developing societies need universities because they provide the necessary skills for economic development.

Today, the increasing number of private universities in Ghana is seen by many Ghanaians as a blessings for helping the nation to train qualified students who could not gain admission to the state universities. Furthermore, private universities foster equity and through the dissemination of knowledge and ideas by way of inadequate infrastructure such as residential and academic facilities. This has helped to reduce pressure on the state owned universities and made it possible to expand educational opportunities to many Ghanaians. View metadata, citation and similar papers at [core.ac.uk](http://core.ac.uk) brought to you, private universities have made it possible for more public resources to be targeted at the disadvantaged, the poor and the needy in the society (education reforms in Ghana, 2002). This has helped to produce manpower to spearhead the nation's socio-economic and technological development. Formally, few people gained admission to public universities resulting in fewer graduate populations in the country, but the establishment of private universities in the country has helped in improving the situation by increasing the graduate population for industry and government. Moreover, private universities are economically and socially contributing to their community, its economy and their own prosperity and quality of life. The activities touch virtually every aspect of lives and the prosperity of the communities they live in.

Despite the fact that private universities in Ghana have been mandated by the National Accreditation Board to provide tertiary education and skills raining to qualified candidates desiring to avail themselves of tertiary education for skills acquisition and training I overall personal development (Education Reforms in Ghana, 2002), sections of the public seem not to have misunderstood the role and mission of the private universities and for that matter keep seeing private universities as an avenue for money making. The perception is extended to include the quality of students they hire and also the quality of academic and administrative staff they employ. In view of this, the private universities are being perceived negatively and this perception has affected their image in Ghana. However, it is a well-known fact that private universities have been rendering important services to the nation. It is estimated that out of the several thousands of candidates who qualify each year for admission into the existing Ghanaian public universities, only between 25%-30% of the total number gain admission.

The practice of public relations in building good corporate image in the corporate world has been well documented in literature (Nakra, 2000).According to Grunig and Grunig (2006) the practice of public relations should help an organization interact with the social and political components of its environment, which consists of publics that affect the ability of the organization to accomplish its goals. Therefore, effective public relations practices will help position and affect the image and operational activities of the private universities and build relationships with the various stakeholders of private universities. Our search through the literature indicates that the role of public relations in private tertiary educational institutions has been under researched.

Nowadays, the development of technology makes the competition on each organization or institution becomes tight. This situation makes every organization or institution working hards, and they should be more creative and innovative. The most important thing that must be done by the organization or institution is to create a good image in order to develop its company. To create a good image, the organization or institution needs communication expert to build good relationship make a both a good internal relationship (company itself) and external (others companies). An organization or institution basically needs one division called Public Relations. Public Relations has a duty to handle all of the problems which are related to internal and external public. Internal public is the public inside the organization or institution, such as: shareholder, management, executive, employee and employee's family. External public is the people outside the organization or institution, such as: customers, society, government, press ,bank and other organization or institution. All the activities of public relations have a purpose to create "good image" in the society. The image of Public Relations created to affect people's perception toward an organization or institution and can strongly influence public behaviour in an honourable way. The responds from the public linked will be in the form of respect, good impression and favours toward an organization or institution that is represented by public relations. A good image is very important to promote and maintain customer's loyalty. It can make good effects on obtaining customers credibility. The old public relations was based on intuition and instinct; the new public relations is based

on the achievement of business results. Today's resolute public relations practitioners must not only know how to measure results, they must know what to measure, what not to measure, why and how we measure up as a business, too! (Alfred Geduldig, cited in Raupp, 2008:179). The discussion on the need for accountability in the field of public relations (PR) using research has been a major issue since the 1990s. The body of knowledge on this subject has increased ever since Jim Grunig made his famous *cri de coeur* (cry from the heart) about the lack of evaluation of PR -in 1983 (Starčić & Jakopović. 2016: Watson & Noble, 2007). Grunig in commenting on the lack of research, made the following statement: Lately, I have begun to feel more and more like the fundamentalist minister railing against sin; the difference being that I have railed for evaluation in public relations practice. Just as everyone is against sin, so most public relations people I talk to are for evaluation. People keep on sinning, however, and PR people continue not to do evaluation research (Grunig, 1992:336). Indeed, a 2008 Delphi study of academics, practitioners and leaders of professional associations identified key issues in relation to PR practice: namely, measurement, expression of value and the contribution of PR to the organization. The findings, as reflected below, show the essence of research, measurement and evaluation for the PR process and for demonstrating accountability: public relations' role in contributing to strategic decision-making, strategy development and realization and organizational functioning the value that PR creates for organizations by building social capital, managing key relationships and realizing organizational advantage, and the measurement and evaluation of PR both offline and online (Likely & Watson, 2013). The body of knowledge on the use of research by practitioners has therefore been on the increase since the 20th century when PR began to take shape (Watson, 2012:2). However, most of the studies on public relations practice, including how practitioners use research, has mainly been from western perspectives. Thus, models, recommendations and frameworks developed have naturally been conceptualised to suit western perspectives (Van Ruler & Vercic, 2002; Mersham, Skinner, & Rensburg, 2011: Rensburg & Van Heerden, 2005; Vercic et al., 2001). Literature on PR practice in developing countries, including Ghana, is either non-existent or scant. In an effort to codify a global body of knowledge on PR practice, it is important that Africa be strongly represented. Moreover, the discussion on research and evaluation would not be complete without input from other countries, since PR is now a global phenomenon. Van Heerden (2004), however, notes that the participation of Africa will only be possible when the continent is able to contribute significantly to the practice of PR according to global terms. This means that if the body Anani-Bossman & Tella: The use of research by public relations practitioners: A study of selected organisations in Ghana 57 of knowledge on research and evaluation is to be enriched, then it is important to determine how practitioners in Africa use research (if any) in the performance of their activities. The PR industry, as stated earlier, has experienced phenomenal growth since the turn of the 21 st century. This has been aided in part by political stability. rapid socioeconomic development and, most importantly, the advent of globalization (Heath & Coombs, 2006; Skinner, 2013: Sriramesh & Vercic 2009; Sriramesh & Vercic, 2007). Butterick (2011), for instance, notes that PR has

now become a global phenomenon permeating through cultures. The growth in the world economy that has resulted from globalization has implications for Africa and African PR practice in particular. Ghana is part of the global system with many multinational organizations such as AngloGold, Tullow, Unilever, Nestlé and MTN among others opening subsidiaries in the country. The entry of these organisations has greatly influenced the way businesses are run in the country. Consequently, practitioners are now required to do more than ever to show how their activities contribute to the bottom line and are now judged on the basis of their level of contribution to organisational goals. Despite the phenomenal growth of the industry in Ghana, there is a lack of evidence on how practitioners use research in the country. This study therefore attempts to investigate the way PR practitioners in Ghana use research for strategic planning and evaluating success. The article will first discuss the problem statement and this will be followed by a review of the literature on the topic. The methodology will then be discussed after which an analysis of the findings and their implications for the body of knowledge will be discussed.

## **1.2 STATEMENTS OF THE PROBLEM**

The aim is to explore how students perceive the role and significance of PR departments within organizations, their understanding of PR activities, and the factors that influence their perceptions. By identifying and analyzing these perceptions, it will be possible to gain insights into the effectiveness of PR department activities in engaging and educating polytechnic students, and potentially identify areas for improvement in order to better align their perceptions with the reality of PR practices. The problem to be addressed is the need to examine the perceptions of public relations (PR) department activities among polytechnic students. This study aims to investigate how students perceive the role, relevance, and effectiveness of PR departments within organizations. It seeks to understand their level of awareness and understanding of PR activities, their views on the importance of PR in organizational success, and the factors that shape their perceptions. By delving into these perceptions, the study aims to uncover potential gaps or misalignments between the PR efforts of departments and the perceptions of students. The findings will provide valuable insights for PR practitioners and educational institutions in enhancing their strategies to effectively communicate the value and impact of PR to polytechnic students, ultimately bridging the gap between perception and reality.

## **1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To assess the level of awareness and understanding of public relations (PR) department activities among polytechnic students.
2. To examine the perceptions of polytechnic students regarding the role, relevance, and effectiveness of PR departments within organizations.
3. To identify the factors that influence the perceptions of polytechnic students towards PR department activities.
4. To explore the views of polytechnic students on the importance of

PR in organizational Success.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What are the level of awareness and understanding of public relations (PR) department activities among polytechnic students?
2. What are the perceptions of polytechnic students regarding the role, relevance, and effectiveness of PR departments within organizations?
3. What are the factors that influence the perceptions of polytechnic students towards PR department activities?
4. What are the views of polytechnic students on the importance of PR in organizational success?

#### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY?**

The activities of PR can explore the bridge and gap between the actual practices of PR departments; it can provide insights into potential misalignments or areas for improvement in PR strategies and communication efforts. The findings can inform PR educators and curriculum developers about the students' awareness and understanding of PR activities. This can help in designing effective educational programs that address the gaps and equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills for successful careers in PR. It also contribute to the PR industry by shedding light on how future professionals perceive the field. It can help practitioners gain insights into the factors that shape the perceptions of polytechnic students, enabling them to better engage and communicate with this demographic.

PR departments and organizations in attracting and recruiting talented polytechnic students by understanding their perceptions and tailoring recruitment strategies accordingly. It can also provide career guidance by showcasing the importance and potential of PR as a profession. It enhancing stakeholder engagement strategies for PR departments by understanding how students perceive PR activities, departments can identify the most effective channels and messages to engage with this specific audience.

#### **1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The scope and limitation is to explore the perceptions of PR departments activities among students of Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin. The study will focus on students from various disciplines and programs. While the specific higher institution or organization and regions may vary, the aim is to include a diverse range of students to capture a broad spectrum of perceptions.

The study will examine the perceptions of students regarding PR department activities within organizations. This includes activities such as media relations, event planning, crisis management, reputation building, and other core functions of PR. The research will explore the factors that shape students' perceptions of PR department activities. This may include their prior knowledge and exposure to PR, educational experiences, personal experiences with PR campaigns or organizations, and other relevant influences.

The limitation of this study is to explore the availability of research material. The research material available to the researcher is insufficient, thereby limiting the study. The time frame

allocated to the study does not enhance wider coverage as the researcher has to combine other academic activities and examinations with the study. The finance available for the research work does not allow for wider coverage as resources are very limited as the researcher has other academic bills to cover.

## **1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**Public Relations (PR):** can be defined as the strategic management of communication and relationships between an organization and its various stakeholders, including the public, media, employees, customers, investors, and the community at large. It involves the planned and trained efforts to build and maintain a positive image, reputation, and mutual understanding between the organization and its stakeholders.

**PR Department:** also known as a public relations department, is a dedicated organizational unit responsible for managing and implementing public relations activities within an organization. The department serves as a central hub for strategizing, planning, and executing communication and relationship-building initiatives to promote the organization's image, reputation, and objectives.

**Students:** are individuals who are engaged in the process of learning, typically within an educational institution such as a school, college, or university. They are enrolled in academic programs or courses and actively participate in educational activities to acquire knowledge, skills, and qualifications.

**Activities:** Activities refer to actions, tasks, or undertakings performed by individuals or groups to achieve a specific purpose or goal. They can encompass a wide range of actions, from simple everyday tasks to complex projects or events.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

##### **2.1.1 Concept of PR Department Activities**

A review of modern public relations history gives a number of definitions. Cutlip, Center and Broom (2000) define public relations as a management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the public's on whom its success or failure depends. Moore and Kalupa (2007) indicated that public relations as practiced today is a twentieth century American phenomenon and its fundamental elements of informing people, persuading people and integrating people were basic to earliest society just as they are today. The authors further emphasize that the effective tool to monitor and manage opinion of the general public is through extensive use of public relations practices. Wells et al (2005) opine that public relations is a management function practiced by a wide range of organizations, companies, governments, non-profit organizations, the educational system, labor unions, politicians, organized sports, and the media.

A PR (Public Relations) department is a dedicated unit or team within an organization that is



responsible for managing and executing the organization's public relations activities. The PR department plays a crucial role in shaping and maintaining the organization's public image, managing relationships with stakeholders, and communicating key messages to the target audience.

### **Functions and Responsibilities Associated with PR department**

- **Strategic Planning:** The PR department develops strategic PR plans aligned with the organization's overall goals and objectives. This includes identifying target audiences, defining key messages, and determining appropriate communication channels and tactics.
- **Media Relations:** Building and maintaining relationships with journalists, editors, and media outlets is a core responsibility of the PR department. They interact with the media to secure media coverage, arrange interviews, issue press releases, and respond to media inquiries.
- **Content Creation:** The PR department creates compelling and informative content such as press releases, articles, blog posts, whitepapers, videos, and infographics to effectively communicate key messages to the target audience.
- **Crisis Management:** In times of crisis or challenging situations, the PR department develops crisis communication plans and protocols to manage and mitigate reputational damage. They handle communications, issue statements, and coordinate media briefings to ensure timely and accurate information is disseminated.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** The PR department builds and nurtures relationships with key stakeholders, including customers, employees, investors, community members, and industry influencers. They develop communication strategies and campaigns to engage and inform these stakeholders.
- **Event Management:** Planning and executing events such as press conferences, product launches, corporate sponsorships, or community outreach programs are often handled by the PR department. They coordinate logistics, invite media and stakeholders, and ensure smooth execution.
- **Social Media Management:** The PR department manages the organization's presence on social media platforms. They develop social media strategies, create and publish content, engage with followers, and monitor online conversations and sentiment.
- **Reputation Management:** Monitoring and managing the organization's reputation is a critical responsibility of the PR department. They monitor media coverage, online mentions, and public sentiment, and take proactive measures to protect and enhance the organization's reputation. **Measurement and Evaluation:** The PR department measures and evaluates the impact of PR activities using metrics such as media coverage, social media engagement, website traffic, and stakeholder feedback. This helps them assess the effectiveness of their efforts and make data-driven improvements.

#### **2.1.2 Role/Practice of Public Relations**

Kotler and Mindak (2000) argued that public relations plays a greater role in academia, but a relatively reduced role in commercial organizations. Newson and Carrell (2001) also asserted that public relations director should serve as a spokesperson for the organization and overseer of the entire public relations program. According to National School Public Relations

Association (2010) educational public relations function or practice helps improve the programs and services of an educational organization. Educational public relations programs therefore assist in interpreting public attitudes, identify and help shape policies and procedures in the public interest, and carry on involvement and information activities which earn public understanding and support (National School Public Relations Association, 2010). National School Public Relations Association (2010) further mentioned the following as the functions or practices of educational public relations: counseling, media's liaison, communications planning, publicizing students and staff achievements, community relations liaisons and information station. According to Jobber (2001) one of the functions of public relations is to manage misconception so that unfounded opinions do not tarnish the image or operations of the organization. Well et al., (2005) also asserted that public relations functions are designed by planners to make changes in the public's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours related to a company, brand or organization.

Peyronel and Lawniczak (2000) also state that literature in higher education public relations affirms that senior public relations administrators should be involved in institutional decision making at colleges and universities and observe that reserving a seat at the corporate boardroom tables for public relations executives and involving them in strategy development, would be a logical first step for corporate reputation building (Nakra, 2000). This indicates that public relations is a basic function of a modern university's management. Pirozek and Heskova (2003) examined public relations practice of a university in the Czech Republic and found that two-way symmetrical tactics of research and feedback systems helped the university gain a better understanding of the attitudes of its key pullics. Tengilimoglu et al., (2008) believe that public. Relations activities for all organizations can have an important effect on consumer decision making when buying goods or services. The role of' public relations (PR) is to manage and enhance the reputation and image of an organization or individual through strategic communication and relationship-building with key stakeholders. PR professionals work to create a positive perception and understanding of tie organization among its target audience:

- **Reputation Management:** PR professionals play a crucial role in managing and maintaining the reputation of an organization or individual. They develop strategies to build a positive image, handle crises, and address reputation challenges effectively.
- **Media Relations:** PR professionals establish and maintain relationships with the media. They provide journalists with relevant and newsworthy information, pitch stories, arrange interviews, and respond to media inquiries. Building positive relationships with the media helps to secure media coverage and effectively convey key messages.
- **Strategic Communication:** PR professionals develop and implement communication strategies aligned with the organization's goals and objectives. They craft key messages, create compelling content, and utilize various communication channels to reach and engage target audiences.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** PR professionals engage with key stakeholders such as customers, employees, investors, community members, and industry

influencers. They develop communication strategies to inform, involve, and build positive relationships with these stakeholders.

- **Crisis Communication:** In times of crisis or challenging situations, PR professionals play a critical role in managing communication effectively. They develop crisis communication plans, provide accurate and timely information, address concerns, and protect the organization's reputation.
- **Content Creation:** PR professionals create content such as press releases, articles, blog posts, social media posts, and multimedia materials to communicate key messages and stories. They ensure the content is tailored to the target audience and aligned with the organization's brand and objectives.
- **Event Management:** PR professionals plan and execute events such as press conferences, product launches, sponsorships, and community initiatives. These events help create positive publicity, engage stakeholders, and build relationships.
- **Social Media Management:** PR professionals manage the organization's presence on Social media platforms. They develop social media strategies, create and publish content, engage with followers, and monitor online conversations to maintain a positive online presence.
- **Measurement and Evaluation:** PR professionals measure and evaluate the impact of PR activities using various metrics such as media coverage, social media engagement, website traffic, and stakeholder feedback. This helps assess the effectiveness of PR efforts and make data-driven improvements.

### 2.1.3 Tools of Public Relations

Palmer (2005) emphasized that a wide range of public relations tools are available and suitability of each tool depends on the promotional objective. Belch and Belch (2001) echoed that public relations uses a variety of tools including special publications, participation in community activities, fund-raising, and sponsorships of special events, advertising and public affairs activities to enhance an organizational image. Well et al., (2005) also described categories of public relations tools and stressed that the tools are best suited to create awareness of an organization and its services depending on the amount of control the company has in its communication. The tools are described as controlled (e.g. House ads, Public service ads, Publications, Photographs, Displays, exhibits), uncontrolled (e.g. News release, Press conferences, Talk and interview shows, Public service announcements) and semi-controlled (e.g. Electronic communication (web sites, chat rooms), Special events and sponsorship, Word of mouth). Lancaster (2005) states that companies that use television as a medium of communication stand the chance of achieving a high level of impact on their customers or public due to its visual nature. The author observed that during a television program, individual's explanation regarding issues relating to their companies could be supported with either products or footage of the company's participation in a sponsored event.

This, the author argued, has the ability to erase any erroneous impressions about such companies. Lancaster (2005) further maintains exhibition as one of the potential tools for creating the opportunity for public relations officers as well as marketing communicators to come into face-to-face contact with desired targeted audience or visitors. The author

claimed that since visitors treat exhibitions as a show window and an opportunity to gather technical information, the public relations officer would have the opportunity to explain and provide all the necessary information that can inspire confidence and trust in an organization by the customer or the targeted public and build relationship.

- **Media Monitoring and Analysis:** Tools like Meltwater, Cision, and Mention track media coverage, monitor brand mentions, and provide analytics and insights to evaluate the impact of PR campaigns.
- **Social Media Management:** Platforms such as Hootsuite, Sprout Social, and Buffer enable PR professionals to schedule and publish social media content, engage with followers, and analyze social media metrics.
- **Press Release Distribution:** Services like PR Newswire, Business Wire, and PR Web help distribute press releases to media outlets, journalists, and online platforms, increasing the chances of media coverage.
- **Media Database:** Tools such as Cision, Muck Rack, and Agility PR Solutions provide access to extensive databases of media contacts, allowing PR professionals to find relevant journalists and outlets for their pitches and press releases.
- **Content Creation and Editing:** Tools like Grammarly, Hemingway Editor, and Canva aid creating grammatically correct, well-written content, and visually appealing graphics.
- **Email Marketing:** Email marketing platforms such as Mailchimp, Constant Contact, and Sendinblue assist in designing and sending targeted email campaigns to reach specific audiences.
- **Online Newsrooms:** PR teams utilize online newsroom platforms like Press Page and Prezly to create and manage centralized repositories for press releases, multimedia assets, and company information.
- **Analytics and Reporting:** Tools like Google Analytics, social media analytics platforms, and media monitoring services provide detail and insights on website traffic, social media engagement, and media coverage metrics.
- **Project Management and Collaboration:** Collaboration tools like Trello, Asana, and Slack facilitate project management, task assignment, and team communication, improving workflow efficiency.
- **Survey and Feedback:** Survey tools such as Survey Monkey and Google Forms help PR professionals gather feedback, conduct surveys, and collect valuable insights from stakeholders.

#### 2.1.4 Challenges of Public Relations

Like all forms of marketing communication, public relations also comes with its special challenges. An investigation into the literature reveals that the major problems faced by the public relations unit of many organizations are lack of qualified personnel, operational space, recognition and budget (Bruning and Ralston, 2001; Jobber, 2001; Kotler, Wong, Saunders and Armstrong, 2005; ). Jelkins (2000) argued that the ideal structure of the public relations department should be independent and directly responsible to the chief executive officer (CEO). Grunig et al., (2006) also asserted that integration of the public relations functions into other areas means that the functions cannot be managed strategically. Thus, if the public relations officer is placed in any other department its functions will be strictly limited.

Therefore, the public relations officers in an institution, if accorded the needed recognition they deserve by management, a seat will be reserved at corporate boardroom tables for their involvement in strategy development (Nakra, 2000). In the words of Kotler et al., (2005) public relations still captures only a small portion of the overall marketing budgets of most firms, though public relations is considered as an important brand building tool. Bruning and Ralston (2001) also wrote that the practice of public relations at most universities has been relegated to a single office concerned primarily with managing institutional reputation. By this assertion, one could say that public relations functions or practices will be limited in accomplishing its objectives especially in private universities which rely solely on internally generated funds to run the affairs of the institutions. Similarly, Heskov and Piro ek (2003), on the other hand, postulate that higher educational institutions need to develop public relations capacities to build proactive public relations departments. This will require recruiting qualified staff and training them to perform their tasks in order to improve the image of the institutions. Cutlip et al., (2006) further remarked that the function or role of public relations will be useful only if management wants it, but if management perceives this function as not something crucial for the company, then this function will not have a strategic position in the company and its contribution will be limited. Therefore, it could be deduced from the above that lack of recognition of the public relations unit may manifest itself in lack of resources to keep the unit operational and functional to communicate timely information to the public of the university.

#### 2.1.5 PR Activities

Public relations (PR) activities encompass a wide range of strategies and tactics aimed at managing and improving the reputation and image of an organization or individual. These activities are designed to effectively communicate key messages, engage with stakeholders, and build positive relationships.

- **Media Relations:** Building relationships with journalists, editors, and media outlets is a fundamental PR activity. This involves issuing press releases, pitching story ideas, arranging interviews, and responding to media inquiries. The goal is to secure positive media coverage and establish the organization as a reliable source of information.
- **Content Creation:** PR professionals create various types of content to communicate key messages. This includes writing press releases, articles, blog posts, and social media content. They also develop multimedia materials such as videos, infographics, and presentations to engage audiences and convey information in a visually appealing manner.
- **Thought Leadership:** Establishing individuals within an organization as thought leaders in their industry is an important PR activity. This involves positioning key personnel as experts through activities such as writing articles, speaking at conferences, participating in panel discussions, and contributing insights to relevant publications.
- **Social Media Management:** PR professionals utilize social media platforms to connect with target audiences, share news and updates, and engage in

conversations. They develop social media strategies, create and schedule content, respond to comments and messages, and analyze social media metrics to measure engagement and effectiveness.

- **Community Relations:** Engaging with local communities and relevant stakeholders is crucial for many organizations. Practices in this area may involve sponsoring community events, organizing volunteer programs, supporting local causes, and establishing partnerships with community organizations.

### 2.1.6 Perceptions of PR Department

PR department, where strategic communication and reputation management come together to shape and enhance the image of our organization. As a team of skilled professionals, we are dedicated to effectively communicating key messages, building relationships with stakeholders, and protecting and promoting our organization's reputation. Our PR department serves -as the driving force behind developing and implementing comprehensive communication strategies that align with our organization's goals and objectives. We are passionate about crafting compelling narratives, engaging with the media, and leveraging various communication channels to reach and connect with our target audiences.

At the core of our work is the commitment to building and maintaining positive relationships with stakeholders, including customers, employees, investors, and the community. We understand the importance of effective stakeholder engagement in fostering trust, driving brand loyalty, and achieving mutual understanding.

In times of challenge or crisis, our PR department steps up as crisis handlers, ensuring swift and transparent communication to address concerns, protect our reputation, and maintain public trust. We are experienced in navigating complex situations and providing timely and accurate information to stakeholders. As brand ambassadors, we are dedicated to promoting and enhancing our organization's brand image. By carefully crafting and disseminating key messages, we strive to create meaningful connections and emotional resonance with our audiences.

- **Strategic Communication Experts:** PR departments are often seen as skilled professionals who excel in strategic communication. They are perceived as experts in crafting key messages, managing media relations, and developing communication strategies that align with the organization's goals.
- **Reputation Managers:** PR departments are responsible for managing and protecting the organization's reputation. They are perceived as guardians of the organization's image, working proactively to build a positive reputation and handling crises or reputation challenges effectively.
- **Spin Doctors:** In some cases, PR departments are seen as manipulators of information, engaging in spin and selective messaging to shape public opinion. This perception may arise from instances where PR professionals are perceived to prioritize the organization's interests over transparency and full disclosure.
- **Crisis Handlers:** PR departments are often associated with crisis management. They are seen as the go-to experts in handling and mitigating crises, providing timely and effective communication to address issues and maintain public trust.
- **Bridge Builders:** PR departments are perceived as facilitators of relationships

between organizations and their stakeholders. They are seen as working to build and strengthen connections with the media, customers, employees, investors, and communities, fostering positive engagement and mutual understanding.

### 2.1.7 Influence of PR Activities and Academic Activities

- **Reputation Building:** Both PR activities and academic activities can contribute to reputation building for an organization or an educational institution. PR activities focus on managing and enhancing the reputation through strategic communication, stakeholder engagement, and brand promotion. On the other hand, academic activities such as research, publications, and educational programs contribute to the reputation of an academic institution. Positive academic achievements can be highlighted through PR efforts to build a strong reputation both within the academic community and among the general public.
- **Thought Leadership:** Academic activities often involve research, innovation, and the development of new knowledge. When academics share their expertise through PR activities, such as writing articles, giving interviews, or speaking at conferences, they can establish themselves as thought leaders in their respective fields. This enhances the reputation of the academic institution and can attract students, researchers, and collaborations.
- **Media Coverage:** Both PR activities and academic activities can generate media coverage. PR professionals work to secure positive media coverage for an organization or individual by pitching stories, issuing press releases, and arranging interviews. Similarly, academic achievements, breakthrough research, and educational initiatives can attract media attention. The media coverage resulting from both PR and academic activities can help raise awareness, build credibility, and reach a broader audience.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** PR activities and academic activities involve engaging with stakeholders. PR professionals engage with various stakeholders such as customers, employees, investors, and the community to build relationships, address concerns, and promote understanding. Similarly, academic activities involve engaging with students, faculty, industry partners, alumni, and the wider academic community. Effective stakeholder engagement in both spheres can lead to support, collaboration, and positive perception.
- **Crisis Management:** PR activities play a crucial role in managing and mitigating crises for organizations, while academic institutions may also face crises related to academic misconduct, controversies, or institutional challenges. Both PR departments and academic institutions need to have crisis management plans in place to handle such situations effectively. Collaboration between PR professionals and academic institutions is essential to ensure transparent and timely communication during critical times.

## 2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.2.1 Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory proposes that individuals engage in relationships and interactions based on a cost-benefit analysis. It suggests that people seek to maximize rewards and minimize costs in their social interactions. This theory can be applied to understand various social phenomena, such as relationship dynamics, organizational behavior, and economic

decision-making. Social exchange theory is a prominent sociological and psychological framework that seeks to explain human behavior in social relationships. At its core, Social exchange theory posits that individuals engage in social interactions with the expectation of maximizing rewards and minimizing costs. It views social relationships as a series of exchanges, where individuals weigh the benefits and drawbacks of their interactions to determine their level of satisfaction and commitment. The theory suggests that humans are rational actors who engage in a calculation process when entering into social exchanges. They evaluate the potential rewards they can gain, such as companionship, emotional support, resources, or status, and compare them to the perceived costs, which may include time, effort, emotional investment, or sacrificing personal interests. Based on this cost-benefit analysis, individuals make decisions on whether to initiate, maintain, or terminate relationships.

According to social exchange theory, individuals strive for a state of equilibrium or fairness in their relationships. This is achieved through a process of reciprocal exchange, where individuals aim to receive benefits that are roughly equal to what they contribute. When a relationship becomes imbalanced, such as when one person consistently receives more than they give, it can lead to dissatisfaction and relational strain. Furthermore, Social Exchange Theory recognizes the importance of social norms, expectations, and alternatives in shaping social exchanges. Norms and expectations provide guidelines for appropriate levels of give-and-take in relationships, while alternatives refer to the perceived availability of alternative relationships or opportunities outside the current exchange. The existence of attractive alternatives may influence an individual's willingness to continue or terminate a relationship. This theory has been applied to various domains of study, including interpersonal relationships, family dynamics, organizational behavior, and economic decision-making. It offers valuable insights into understanding why individuals choose certain relationships, how they negotiate and maintain them, and the consequences of imbalances or inequities within social exchanges. While social exchange theory provides a valuable framework for understanding social behavior, it is not without its limitations. Critics argue that it tends to oversimplify human interactions by reducing them to economic transactions and overlooking the complexities of emotions, social norms, and cultural factors that influence social exchanges.

### **2.3 EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

Credibility is the cornerstone attribute that public relations practitioners must possess if they have any hopes of influencing an audience's perceptions or attitudes (Budd, 2000; Judd, 1989). From Hovland and Weiss' (195) work during the middle of the last century to Priester and Petty's (1995) research as the millennium ended, scholars have established credibility and its counterpart, trustworthiness, as the key source and message attributes necessary in communicating persuasive messages. Without credibility, the annals of research would suggest that any hopes of effectively garnering support for an espoused position are slight if present at all (O'Keefe, 2002; Perloff, 1993).

The volumes of research labeling the importance of credibility has not been disregarded by



the public relations industry especially considering the evidence that exists demonstrating the public's lack of faith in practitioners being fully forthright ("PR Deserves Its Low Credibility Marks," 1999). Perhaps the most revealing of the studies damning the industry is one conducted by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) itself. In September 1998 PRSA, with the help from the Rockefeller Foundation, sponsored a telephone survey in which 1,000 respondents were asked to rate the credibility of sources of information in general on a 4-point scale anchored by 1 (very credible) and 4 (not at all credible); The National Credibility Index, 1999). Of the 44 information providers rated by each respondent, public relations specialist finished third from the bottom, just above famous entertainer and TV or radio talk show host but behind famous athlete, pollster, and student activist among others. Incidentally, Supreme Court justice and teacher finished first and second, respectively. Research published 2 years later echoed the findings concerning negative public perception of practitioners.

In this study, experimental methods were employed using teachers, whose demographics closely match those of the average newspaper reader, as research participants. These participants read one of two news stories with information presented attributed to either a public relations practitioner or a company spokesperson whose job title was not revealed (Callison, 2001). With all text in the articles held constant across message condition other than identification of the information source as either public relations specialist or a more nondescript company spokesperson, analyses revealed that participants were much more critical of the public relations source and the organization employing the source than his or her unlabeled counterpart and accompanying organization.

More precisely, the public relations source was perceived as less likely to be telling the truth, more dishonest, and less trustworthy. The author ultimately suggested that the negative perception of public relations practitioners was due, in part, to a perceived reporting bias (see Eagly, Wood, & Chaiken, 1978), in which audiences see information sources as limited by situational constraints (i.e., organization affiliation) from taking an unbiased stance on an issue. No doubt, the public and public relations practitioners themselves understand that company spokesperson are, to some extent, paid advocates for an organization and as such are mandated to possess a reporting bias to some extent (Murphy, 2001). It would seem that none fault public relations practitioners for taking their employing organization's side in a discussion, but it should come as no surprise that spokespersons who are paid to present their employers in the best possible light are not always seen as stalwarts of honesty, which often leads to motives being questioned.

In fact, Sallot (2002), using a mixed participant pool of students and mall shoppers, found that perceptions of motives were the key indicator of how people evaluate public relations and its practitioners. Through experimental manipulations, four brief news articles were created detailing a press conference held by a fictitious manufacturer of laser printers that had launched a recycling program. Manipulations centered on the motives of the organization involved with one manipulation employing a selfish backgrounder that explained the organization planned a recycling subsidiary and the program would ensure raw materials.

Another backgrounder, labeled by the researchers as altruistic, stated that company executives personally supported conservation and that the company's sole objective with the program was to make a positive contribution to society.

A mixed backgrounder explained that good corporate citizenship results in favorable publicity and profits while serving social interests. A final control backgrounder detailed no motive. The result is suggested that motives were questioned and participants were critical of information and its source when a personal benefit to the organization seemed to be behind an activity and its accompanying communications. The author concluded, as could be expected, that to enhance credibility and trustworthiness, purely altruistic motives should be announced, and other motives, if present, concealed. If audiences distrust public relations practitioners and their employers when possible company benefits are assumed to result from their communications (Durham 1997; Sallot, 2002), it would seem that the very nature of the public relations industry, which involves guarding organization reputation, is at the root of its credibility problems. How can a practitioner, whose job it is to position his or her company in the best possible light, do so when the very public he or she is trying to influence doubts his or her honesty any time that he or she speaks well of his or her employer? One remedy that has been suggested is filtering organizational positive information through third-party sources (Callison, 2001; Lamons, 2002; Murphy, 2001) eliminating any easy attribution of bias. Research investigating the effects of organizational affiliation on public perception of spokespersons has indeed revealed that when it comes to communicating company positive news, any source is a good source as long as it is not viewed as working solely on behalf of the benefiting organization. In fact, experimental research employing sources of various organizational affiliation refuting negative claims has shown that sources identified as a company spokesperson are viewed, by a student subject pool, as less credible than unaffiliated sources providing the same reputational information (Callison & Zilmann, 2002).

Equally interesting, sources labeled as outside experts hired by the organization to investigate company-negative claims were viewed as equally credible as governmental agency experts investigating negative claims independently. I would seem that affiliation must be clear and company ties must be absolute in order for the perceptions of bias to come into play and taint attitudes toward communications and communicators. Again, this points to public relations practitioners working in a no-win situation. Any organization-positive communication stemming from an organization itself, and especially from a public relations practitioner employed by the organization, would seem to be unquestionably perceived as lacking credibility. As it stands, public opinion polls have shown that the public rates practitioners poorly in credibility indexes, and experimental research has suggested that the use of the term public relations harms an information source. Experimental research also has suggested that espousing positive news calls motives into question, especially when the source is seen as employed by the organization that stands to gain the most from communicative efforts. Limitations in these studies, however, have to be taken into account before drawing conclusions about public relations. The PRSA's National Credibility Index

used a single-item measure to gauge credibility, a construct that research has shown is multidimensional (Berlo, Lemert, & Mertz, 1970; McCroskey, 1966), and the measure was taken free from any communicative context. No scenario WIs provided to allow respondents the opportunity to rate information sources in a real-life situation. The Callison (2001) study employed only two possible sources, a public relations specialist and a generic company spokesperson. If as stated previously company affiliation influences perceptions, no manipulation was made to test internal sources against external, presumably less biased, sources. The Sallot (2002) research varied potential motives behind an announcement, but the company spokesperson was always labeled as a public relations practitioner. With no variation in source occupation and affiliation performed, any conclusion about the effectiveness of public relations practitioners as opposed to other spokespersons is ungrounded. Finally, the Callison and Zillmann (2002) study manipulated the affiliation of the information sources employed, but it did not clearly label the internal source as a public relations practitioner. The public relations position of the company spokespersons used in the article may have been assumed, but, without direct testing of internal spokesperson titles, no data can be presented to bolster any claim that certain company sources are more credible than others (Durham, 1997). This study attempts to address these limitations by employing a hybrid of both methodologies used in the previous research and by gathering data using a real-world context within which various sources company affiliated and not, public relations labeled and not--communicate. In addition, this study employs a multidimensional scale to record perceptions of public relations practitioners. Last, it should be noted that this study gauges perceptions held by a sample drawn from the overall general public and does not rely on subgroups to represent the typical information consumer.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

Research methodology is described as the overall research design and strategy (Johnson & Christensen, 2012) that a researcher uses to execute research. Research methodology is a discipline specific approach and process of research (Kinash, 2006). Creswell (2009) explained that research method involves the technique of data collection, analysis and interpretation that researchers propose for their studies. Based on these definitions, research can be understood to be a systematic way of finding answers to questions, and the scientific way of attaining the accuracy of a given situation.

This chapter contains the general procedure for the conduct of the study. It therefore gives detail information on the following: research design, population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, instrumentation, psychometric properties of the instrument, validity of research instrument, reliability of research instrument, procedure for administration of the instrument, procedure for scoring and method of data analysis.

#### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Research design is the logical sequence that connects empirical data to the research questions and research conclusions. Research design is an approach to thinking about doing

research, which is the summary of the procedure for conducting a study that includes when, from whom, and under what conditions the research data was obtained, as well as, how a study was conducted. It is the theoretical aspect of the study that specifies how a study was carried out and the manner in which it answers the research questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Ikoja Odongo, 2000).

The research design that was adopted for the study is the descriptive survey method. Descriptive survey method is considered appropriate for this study because it arrives at dependable solution to problem through systematic analysis and interpretation of data collected from the respondents on the subject matter, thereby making it possible for generalization (Neuman, 2011).

### **3.2 POPULATION OF THE STUDY**

Best and Kahn (2006) defined population as any group of individuals that has one or more characteristics in common distinguishing the group from other individuals. The research population is described as the entire group of people on whom the results of a study are intended to be applied (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Nkoo, 2009; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000).

The study is being undertaken to examine perceptions of PR Departments Activities among Students of Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin. Therefore, the population for this study comprises of student in Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin. According to the data collected from the directorate of academic planning in the institution, the population of students is presented accurate.

### **3.3 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

The sample size is defined as the number of observations used for determining the estimations of a given population. The size of the sample has been drawn from the population. Sampling techniques is the process of selection of a subset of individuals from the population to estimate the characteristics of the whole population.

The sample size therefore, is 100, the sample consists of both male and female in order to get appropriate results, the respondents were selected on the basis of their department. The researcher through simple random sampling chooses representative from the population and making the whole sample size.

### **3.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

A Research Instrument can be defined as a tool used to collect, measure, and analyse data related to your research interests. According to Okuma (2020) questionnaire refers to as a device for security answer to using a form which the respondent fills personally. The research instrument used in collecting this data is purely questionnaire and will be distributed as state above.

### **3.5 VALIDITY AND RESEARCH OF THE INSTRUMENT**

Validity and research of the instrument often defined as the extent to which an instrument measures what it asserts to ensure Blumberg et al., 2005. Validity and research instrument assesses the extent to which the instrument measures what it is designed to measure (Robson, 2011). It is the degree to which the results are truthful. The research technique was

adopted in ascertaining validity and reliability of the research questionnaire. This research work was checked, validated and reliable from the supervisor. Therefore, the reason for the method chosen was to allow the participants to be able to express themselves. Also, a comparison was being made between the findings generated from the quantitative and qualitative study.

**3.6 DATA COLLECTION METHOD**

Data collection methods can be defined as the techniques and procedures used to gather information for research purposes. These methods can range from simple self-reported surveys to more complex experiments and can involve either quantitative or qualitative approaches to data gathering.

The aim of data collection method is to assist the researcher with solutions on problems earlier identified. The specification or classification of data used for information collection for this study is primary source of data only based on research issues-at hand. Primary data has been used in conducting this research. The respondents supply supplementary data, the interview granted the respondents was basically on the subject of study and direct assessment were made by the researcher to present the data in appropriate form.

**3.7 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS**

Method of data analysis can be defined as the process of systematically applying statistical and/or logical techniques to describe and illustrate, condense and recap, and evaluate data. This area covers diagnostic test, conceptual model and analytical model. Tables were used to present data. The researcher used the following diagnostic test as a statistical measure to test data accuracy.

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

**4.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter focuses on data presentation observed from the disturbed questionnaire. The institutional characteristics and background of respondent to the questionnaire would be considered. However, explanation of the event under consideration is grouped on the basis of gender range marital status education level and occupation. The analysis is based on the response of the respondents which contain reliable information on perceptions of PR department's activities among students of Kwara State polytechnic, Ilorin.

**4.1 DATA PRESENTATION**

According to Okoro and Nwafor (2013) data presentation is the process of organizing, summarizing and usually representing data in a way that is easily understandable and meaningful to the audience. It also refers to the organization and presentation of data into table graph, chart etc. In this research project, the instrument for the study was administered to random selected respondents among the youths and to distribute questionnaire to 100 numbers of youth. The questionnaire consists of two sections which are relevant to this study.

**TABLE 1: SEX DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENT**

| GENDER | NUMBER OF RESPONDENT | PERCENTAGE |
|--------|----------------------|------------|
| Male   | 53                   | 53%        |
| Female | 57                   | 57%        |
| Total  | 100                  | 100%       |

Source: Research survey 2025

Table 1 show that 53 respondents representing 53% are male while 57 respondent representing 57% were female. This table shows that majority of the respondents are female.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

| AGE         | NUMBER OF RESPONDENT | PERCENTAGE |
|-------------|----------------------|------------|
| 18-25 years | 36                   | 36%        |
| 26-35 years | 64                   | 64%        |
| 36-45 years | 0                    | 0          |
| Total       | 100                  | 100%       |

Table 2 shows that 36 respondent representing 36% fall within 18-25 years, 64 respondents representing 64% fall within 26-35 years.

Table 3: occupation of the Respondents

| OCCUPATION    | NUMBER OF RESPONDENT | PERCENTAGE |
|---------------|----------------------|------------|
| Student       | 49                   | 49%        |
| Civil Servant | 28                   | 28%        |
| Self Employed | 23                   | 23%        |
| Total         | 100                  | 100%       |

Source: Research Survey, 2025

Table 3 shows that 49 respondents representing 49% are student, 28 respondents representing 28% are civil servant while 23 respondents representing 23% were self-employed. This table shows that majority of the respondents are students.

Table 4: Marital status of the Respondents

| MARITAL STATUS | NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE |
|----------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Single         | 43                    | 43%        |
| Married        | 57                    | 57%        |
| Divorced       | 0                     | 0          |
| Total          | 100                   | 100%       |

Source: Research Survey, 2025

Table 4 shows that 43 respondents representing 43% are single, 57 respondents representing 57% are married. This shows that majority of the respondents were married.

Table 5: Educational Qualifications of the Respondents

| EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF THE RESPONDENTS | NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| SSCE/WAEC                                     | 48                    | 48%        |
| NCE/OND                                       | 50                    | 50%        |
| BSC/HND                                       | 2                     | 2%         |
| Total                                         | 100                   | 100%       |

source: Research survey 2025

Table 5 shows that 48 respondent representing 48% are SSCE/WAE, 50 respondents representing 50% are NCE OND while 2 respondents representing 2% are BSC/HND. This table shows that the majority of the respondents are NCE/HND holder.

Table 6: religion of the respondent

| RELIGION  | NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------|-----------------------|------------|
| Islam     | 59                    | 59%        |
| Christian | 41                    | 41%        |
| Other     | 0                     | 0%         |

|              |            |             |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| <b>Total</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100%</b> |
|--------------|------------|-------------|

Source: Research survey 2025

Table 6 shows that 59 respondent representing are 59% Islam while 41 respondents representing 41% are Christian. This table shows that the majority of the respondents are Islam holder.

**SECTION B: RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Table 7: How formula are you with the role and functions of a PR department in an institution?

| <b>RESPONSES</b> | <b>FREQUENCY</b> | <b>PERCENT</b> |
|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Very fomular     | 51               | 51%            |
| Somewhat fomular | 36               | 36%            |
| Not fomular      | 33               | 33%            |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>100</b>       | <b>100%</b>    |

Source: Research survey 2025

Table 7: shows that 51 respondents representing 51% are very fomular 36 respondent s representing 36% are somewhat fomular 33 respondents representing 33% not fomular at all. This table shows that majorities of the respondents are familiar.

Table 8 do you believe PR departments are transparent in their activities and communication?

| <b>RESPONSES</b> | <b>FREQUENCY</b> | <b>PERCENTAGE</b> |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes              | 28               | 28%               |
| No               | 41               | 41%               |
| Not sure         | 31               | 31%               |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>100</b>       | <b>100%</b>       |

Source: Research survey 2025

Table 8: shows that 28 respondents representing 28% choose41 respondents representing 41% choose no, 31 respondents representing 31% not sure. This table shows that majority of the respondents say No.

Table 9: How would you describe the overall reputation of the PR department in your



institution?

| RESPONSES | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Excellent | 33        | 33%        |
| Good      | 30        | 30%        |
| Average   | 37        | 37%        |
| Total     | 100       | 100%       |

Source: Research survey 2025

Table 9 shows that 33 respondents representing 33% choose excellent 30, respondent representing 30% choose good 37 respondents representing 37% choose average.

Table 10: Have you ever attended any events or activities organized by the PR department?

| RESPONSES        | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|------------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes frequency    | 77        | 77%        |
| Yes occasionally | 25        | 25%        |
| Not, not all     | 8         | 8%         |
| Total            | 100       | 100%       |

Source: Research survey 2025

Table 10 shows that 77 respondents representing 77% choose yes, 25 respondents representing 25% choose no, 8 respondents representing 8% are not sure. This table shows that majority of the respondents say yes.

| RESPONSES        | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|------------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes frequency    | 42        | 42%        |
| Yes occasionally | 41        | 41%        |
| Not, not all     | 17        | 17%        |
| Total            | 100       | 100%       |

Source: Research survey 2025

Table 11 shows that 42 respondents representing 42% say yes frequency 41 respondent's representing 41% yes occasionally 17 respondents representing 17% say Not, not all. The table shows that the majority of the respondents choose yes frequently.

Table 12: students may view PR department as avege focused on man pupating public rather than providing objective information.

| RESPONSES          | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly agreed    | 49        | 49%        |
| Agreed             | 22        | 22%        |
| Neutral            | 13        | 13%        |
| Disagreed          | 9         | 9%         |
| Strongly disagreed | 17        | 17%        |
| Total              | 100       | 100%       |

Table 12 shows 49 respondent representing 49% strongly agreed 22 respondents representing 22% agree 9 respondents representing 9% disagreed 17 respondents representing 17% strongly disagreed. This means that majority of the respondents agreed

that students may view PR departments as being focus providing objective information.

Table 13: students may perceive PR departments as being responsible the reputation and brand image of their institution.

| RESPONSES          | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly agreed    | 50        | 50%        |
| Agreed             | 12        | 12%        |
| Neutral            | 14        | 14%        |
| Disagreed          | 12        | 12%        |
| Strongly disagreed | 12        | 12%        |
| Total              | 100       | 100%       |

Table 13 shows 50 respondents representing 50% strongly agreed 12 respondents representing 12% agreed 14 respondents representing 14% are neutral 12 respondents representing 12% disagreed and 12 respondents representing 12% strongly disagreed. The table shows that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that students may perceive PR departments as being responsible for enhancing the reputation and brand image of their institution.

Table 14: PR departments often organize events such as seminars workshops and campus activities

| RESPONSES          | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly agreed    | 24        | 24%        |
| Agreed             | 16        | 16%        |
| Neutral            | 39        | 39%        |
| Disagreed          | 11        | 11%        |
| Strongly disagreed | 10        | 10%        |
| Total              | 100       | 100%       |

Table 14: shows that 24 respondents representing 24% agreed 16 respondents representing 16% agreed 39 respondents representing 39% are neutral 11 respondents representing 11% disagreed 10 respondents representing 10% strongly disagreed. This means that majority of the respondents are neutral that PR department often organize events such as seminars workshops and campus activities.

Table 15: depending on the level of students involvement some students may feel that PR departments do not adequately represent their interest.

| RESPONSES          | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly agreed    | 20        | 20%        |
| Agreed             | 19        | 19%        |
| Neutral            | 20        | 20%        |
| Disagreed          | 24        | 24%        |
| Strongly disagreed | 17        | 17%        |
| Total              | 100       | 100%       |

Table 15 shows that 20 respondents representing 20% strongly agreed 19 respondents representing agreed 22 respondents representing 20 are neutral 22 respondents representing 24% disagreed 17 respondents representing 17% strongly disagreed. This means majority of the respondents are disagreed that depending on the level of student involvement some students may feel that PR departments do not adequately represent their interests.

Table 16: PR department are adequately represents the interests and concerns of students in higher institution

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
|-----------|-----------|------------|

|                           |            |             |
|---------------------------|------------|-------------|
| <b>Strongly agreed</b>    | <b>16</b>  | <b>16%</b>  |
| <b>Agreed</b>             | <b>13</b>  | <b>13%</b>  |
| <b>Neutral</b>            | <b>17</b>  | <b>17%</b>  |
| <b>Disagreed</b>          | <b>23</b>  | <b>23%</b>  |
| <b>Strongly disagreed</b> | <b>31</b>  | <b>31%</b>  |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>100</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Source: research survey, 2025

Table 16 shows that 16 respondents representing 16% strongly agreed, 13 respondents representing 13% agreed, 17 respondents representing 17% are neutral 2 respondents representing 23% disagreed 31 respondents representing strongly disagreed. The means majority of the respondents are disagreed that depending on the level of the students involvement some students may feel that PR departments do not adequately represent their interests and concerns of students in higher institution.

Table 17: Many students may appreciate the PR department's effects in effectively communicating information and managing the institution image.

| <b>Responses</b>          | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Strongly agreed</b>    | <b>27</b>        | <b>27%</b>        |
| <b>Agreed</b>             | <b>15</b>        | <b>15%</b>        |
| <b>Neutral</b>            | <b>26</b>        | <b>26%</b>        |
| <b>Disagreed</b>          | <b>18</b>        | <b>18%</b>        |
| <b>Strongly disagreed</b> | <b>14</b>        | <b>14%</b>        |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>100</b>       | <b>100%</b>       |

Source: research survey, 2025

Table 17 shows that 27 respondents representing 27% strongly agreed 15 respondents representing 15% agreed 26 respondents representing 26% are neutral 18 respondents representing 18% disagreed 14 respondents representing 14% strongly disagreed. The majority of the respondents strongly agreed that many students may appreciate the PR

department’s efforts in effectively communicating information and managing the institution image.

Table 18 students often encounter PR department through events and campaigns organized by institution.

| Responses          | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly agreed    | 21        | 21%        |
| Agreed             | 25        | 25%        |
| Neutral            | 34        | 34%        |
| Disagreed          | 14        | 14%        |
| Strongly disagreed | 6         | 6%         |
| Total              | 100       | 100%       |

Research: survey, 2025

Table 18 shows that 21 respondents representing 21% strongly agreed 25 agreed respondents representing 25% agreed 34 respondents representing 34% neutral 14 respondent Representing 14% disagreed 6 respondents representing 6% strongly disagreed. The majority of the respondents agreed that students often encounter PR departments through events and campaigns organized by the institution.

Table 19: The effectiveness of communication channel used by PR departments can influence student’s perceptions.

| Responses          | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly agreed    | 7         | 7%         |
| Agreed             | 32        | 32%        |
| Neutral            | 26        | 26%        |
| Disagreed          | 26        | 26%        |
| Strongly disagreed | 9         | 9%         |
| Total              | 100       | 100%       |

Source: research survey, 2025

Table 19 shows that 7 respondents representing 7% strongly agreed 32 respondents representing 32% agreed 26 respondents representing 26% neutral 26 respondents representing disagreed 9 respondents representing 9% strongly disagreed. The majority of the respondents agreed that the effectiveness of communication channels by PR departments can influence students perception.

Table 20: PR departments are actively engaged with students and address their concerns more likely to be viewed positively.

| Responses          | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly agreed    | 32        | 32%        |
| Agreed             | 15        | 15%        |
| Neutral            | 12        | 12%        |
| Disagreed          | 17        | 17%        |
| Strongly disagreed | 24        | 24%        |
| Total              | 100       | 100%       |

Source: research survey, 2025

Table 20 shows that 32 respondents representing 32% strongly agreed 15 respondents representing 15% agreed 12 respondents representing 12% are neutral 17 respondents representing 17% disagreed 24 respondents representing 24% strongly disagreed. The majority of the respondents strongly disagreed that PR departments are actively engaged with students and address their concerns more likely to be viewed positively.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Those are the analysis of research questions used in the research work that produces the expected outcome of the work done.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS ONE

What are the level of awareness and understanding of public relations (PR) department’s activities among polytechnic students? In relation to table 18 it shows that 21respondents representing 21% strongly disagreed 25 respondents representing 25% agreed 34 respondents representing 34% neutral 14 respondents representing 14% disagreed and 6 respondents representing 6% strongly disagreed the majority of the respondents agreed students often encounter PR departments through events and campaigns organized by the institution.

## RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

What are the perception of polytechnic students regarding the role, eleven and effectiveness of PR departments within organizations? In relation to 13 it shows that 57 respondents representing 57% strongly agreed 12 respondents representing 12% strongly agreed 17 respondents representing 17% neutral 12 respondents representing 12% strongly disagreed and 12 respondents representing 12% strongly disagreed. The table shows that majority of the respondents strongly that students may perceive PR departments as being responsible for enhancing the reputation and brand image of their institution.

## RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

What are the perception of polytechnic students regarding the role, eleven and effectiveness of PR departments within organizations? In relation to 12 it shows that 49 respondents representing 49% strongly agreed 22 respondents representing 22% strongly agreed 13 respondents representing 17% neutral 12 respondents representing 12% strongly disagreed 13% respondents representing 9% disagreed and 17 respondents representing 17% strongly disagreed. The table shows that majority of the respondents that depending on the level of Student's involvement some students may feel that PR department do not adequately represent their interests.

## 4.3 DISCUSSION OF FUNDING

The purpose of this study is to examine perception of PR department's activities among students of Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin. The result obtained in the statistical analysis was used to provide an answer to this research study to provide an answer to this study. Definite question were asked in the questionnaire passed in this study. Hundred (100) and stationaries were administered to the respondents and all the copies of the questionnaire were returned.

The first question shows in table 18 explain that what level of awareness and understanding of public relation (PR) departments activities among polytechnic students? 21 respondents representing 21% strongly agreed 25 respondents representing (25%) 34 respondents representing (34%) are neutral 14 respondents representing (14%) disagreed and 6 respondents representing (6%) strongly disagreed the majority of the respondents are neutral

that students often encounter PR departments through events and campaigns organized by the institution.

Research question two show in table confine that what are the perceptions of polytechnic student regarding the role relevance and effective of PR departments within organization 50 respondents representing (50%) strongly agreed 12 respondents representing (12%)0 agreed14 respondents representing (14%) neutral 12 respondents representing (12%) disagreed and 12 respondents representing (12%) strongly disagreed. This means that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that students may perceive PR departments as being responsible for enhancing the reputation and brand image of their institution.



The third research question show in table 12 explain that what are the factors that influence the perceptions of polytechnic students towards PR departments activities? 49 respondents representing (49%) strongly agreed 22 respondents representing (22%) agreed 13 respondents representing (13%) neutral 9 respondents representing (9%) disagreed 17 respondents representing (17%) strongly disagreed. This means that majority respondents strongly agreed that student may view PR department as being focused on manipulating public opinion rather than providing objective information

The fourth research questions show in table 15 what are the views of polytechnic students on the importance of PR organizational success? 20 respondents representing (20%) strongly agreed 19 respondents representing (19%) agreed 20 respondents representing (20%) neutral 24 respondents representing (24%) disagreed and 17 respondents representing (17%) strongly disagreed. The majority of the respondents disagreed that depending on the level of student's involvement some students may feel that PR department do not adequately represent their interests.

The findings suggest that the perception of PR (public relation) department activities among students offer valuable insights into how the younger generation views and understands the role of PR in organizations. By examining these perceptions, we can gain a better understanding of the expectations, concerns, and attributes students hold towards PR departments. This discussion of funding's will relieve into common perceptions that's students have regarding PR departments activities. These findings are based on the general observations

and experiences students and provides a snapshot of their understanding of PR's role in strategic communication, reputations management, media relation, event planning, social media management, advocacy, and corporate social responsibility.

By analyzing those perceptions identifies the areas where students demonstrate and understand PR activities, as well as any skepticism or concerns they may have. This discussion aims to shed light on the evolving perceptions PR among students and their potential

Implications for the field. Through an exploration of the findings, we can again valuable in slights, into how PR departments can better align their practices with the perceptions and needs of students faster positive relationships with stakeholders, and contribute to the development of a more transparent and ethical communication environment.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 SUMMARY**

This research study is based on Perceptions of PR departments activities among students of Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin", as it is aimed to investigate how PR department activities utilized among the students. To assess the level of awareness and understanding of public

relations (PR) department activities among polytechnic students. To examine the perceptions of polytechnic students regarding the role, relevance, and effectiveness of PR departments within organizations. To identify the factors that influences the perceptions of polytechnic students towards PR department activities. To explore the views of polytechnic students on the importance of PR in organizational success.

The research is divided into five chapters, which the chapters revealed the steps approached for easy presentation of the research content. Chapter one focused on the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, and research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study and definition of the key terms. Chapter two of this research work explained the conceptual framework with the theoretical framework of Social Exchange Theory. It also explained the empirical review as it unveils different researchers' work that are related to the studies.

Chapter three of this research work contains the research methodology adopted in the study, population of the study (Kwara State Polytechnic Students), sample size which is one hundred respondents. The instruments for the data collection is the use of questionnaire and procedures for data collection, the techniques of data analysis, reliability and validity of the instrument are all contained in this chapter. The Chapter four entails data presentation and analysis which comprises analysis of available data gathered from the respondents, that it will be organized and resented with charts, tables, graphs, and percentages figures.

Finally, the chapter five of the research work discusses the summary, recommendations and the likely conclusion of tie study. Chapter five gives a brief detail about the research work with recommendations to concern individuals to address such situation and give a conclusion which indicate how the research work should be concluded.

## **5.2 CONCLUSION**

The perceptions of PR departments activities among students provide valuable insights into their understanding and expectations of the field. Through the findings discussed, it is evident that students recognize the importance of strategic communication, reputation management, media relations, event planning, social media management, and advocacy in the realm of PR. The findings also highlight the evolving nature of PR, with students acknowledging the integration of social media and the emphasis on corporate social responsibility. However, there is also a perception of skepticism and potential manipulation associated with PR activities.

While students appreciate the positive aspects of PR, there is also a perception of skepticism and potential manipulation. This highlights the importance of PR departments prioritizing transparency, ethical practices, and building trust with their target audience. To address these perceptions and align with the expectations of students, PR departments should focus on enhancing transparency in their communication practices, fostering strong media relationships, embracing digital platforms for effective engagement, incorporating ethics and corporate social responsibility initiatives, and actively educating students about the realities of PR. Additionally, PR departments should bridge the gap between perceptions and reality by showcasing their successes, demonstrating the value they bring to organizations and

society, and effectively communicating their strategic communication efforts.

### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, the researcher recommends the following:

- PR departments should prioritize transparency in their communication practices to address the perception of manipulation.
- A Foster media relationships should be given the recognition of PR departments involvement in media relations, it is important for PR professionals to cultivate strong relationships with journalists and media outlets.
- Students should value PR efforts that align with their personal values and emphasize corporate social responsibility.
- PR education programs should adapt to the changing perceptions and expectations of students. By incorporating real-world case studies, interactive experiences, and industry partnerships, educators can provide students with a comprehensive understanding of PR practices and foster their engagement in the field.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE**

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Dear Respondent,

We are student of the above named department conducting research work on the topic **PERCEPTION OF PR DEPARTMENTS ACTIVITIES AMONG STUDENT OF KWARA STATE POLYTECHNIC ILORIN'**. This research project would be relevant for academic purpose. Research work required three questions to attempt; we hope you all will respond to those questions giving to you.  
Thanks.

**SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

Please tick ( ) the appropriate box that indicates your answer to the question.

- 1. **Gender**  
a. Male ( ) b. Female ( )
- 2. **Age**  
a. 18 – 25years ( ) b. 26 – 35years ( ) c. 36 – 45years
- 3. **Occupation**  
a. student ( ) b. Civil Servant ( ) c. Self Employed ( )
- 4. **Marital Status**  
a. Single ( ) b. Married ( ) c. Divorced ( )
- 6. **Educational Qualification**  
a. SSCE/WAEC ( ) b. NCE/OND ( ) c. B.sc/HND

**SECTION B: QUESTIONS**

- 7. **How familiar are you with the role and functions of a PR department in an institution**  
a. Very familiar ( ) b. somewhat familiar ( ) c. Not familiar at all ( )
- 8. **Do you believe PR departments are transparent in the activities and communication?**  
a. Yes ( ) b. No ( ) c. Not Sure ( )
- 9. **How would you describe the overall reputation of the PR department in your institution?**  
a. excellent ( ) b. Good ( ) c. average ( )
- 10. **In your opinion, what is the primary goal of the PR department?**  
a. Enhancing the institution's image and reputation ( ) b. managing crises and handling negative publicity ( ) c. Promoting positive stories and achievements ( )

Have you ever attended any events or activities organized by the PR department?

a. Yes b. No c. not sure

11. **Do you believe PR department in your institution engage in spin or manipulation of information**

a. Yes frequently ( ) b. Yes occasionally ( ) c. No not at all ( )

**SECTION C: THIS REQUIRE RESEARCH STATEMENTS**

Please ( ) Tick the appropriate option; strongly Agreed, Neutral, strongly disagreed, disagreed.

| S/N | STATE<br>MENT<br>S                                                                                                       | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---|---|---|----|
| 12. | Stu-<br>dent<br>may<br>view<br>PR<br>de-<br>part-<br>ment<br>as<br>being<br>fo-<br>cused<br>on<br>ma-<br>nipu-<br>lating |    |   |   |   |    |



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|            | public<br>opin-<br>ion<br>rather<br>than<br>providi<br>ng<br>ob-<br>jective<br>in-<br>forma-<br>tion            |  |
| <b>13.</b> | Stu-<br>dents<br>may<br>per-<br>ceive<br>PR<br>de-<br>part-<br>ments<br>as<br>being<br>re-<br>sponsi<br>ble for |  |

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|     | en-<br>han-<br>cing<br>the<br>repu-<br>tation<br>and<br>brand<br>image<br>of<br>their<br>insti-<br>tution       |  |
| 14. | PR<br>de-<br>part-<br>ment<br>often<br>organ-<br>ize<br>events<br>such<br>as<br>sem-<br>inars<br>work-<br>shops |  |

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|     | snops,<br>and<br>cam-<br>pus<br>their<br>in-<br>terests<br>.                                                                                       |  |
| 15. | De-<br>pendin<br>g on<br>the<br>level<br>of<br>stu-<br>dent<br>in-<br>volve-<br>ment,<br>some<br>stu-<br>dents<br>may<br>feel<br>that<br>PR<br>do- |  |

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|     | ue-<br>part-<br>ments<br>do not<br>ad-<br>equately<br>represent<br>their<br>in-<br>terests                   |  |
| 16. | PR<br>de-<br>part-<br>ment<br>are<br>ad-<br>equately<br>rep-<br>re-<br>sents<br>the<br>in-<br>terests<br>and |  |

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|     | and<br>con-<br>cerns<br>of<br>stu-<br>dents<br>higher<br>insti-<br>tution                                                                                |  |
| 17. | Many<br>stu-<br>dents<br>may<br>appre-<br>ciate<br>the PR<br>de-<br>part-<br>ment's<br>efforts<br>in<br>effect-<br>ively<br>com-<br>mu-<br>nicat-<br>ing |  |

|     |                                                                               |  |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|     | in-formation managing the institution image                                   |  |
| 18. | Students often encounter PR department through events and campaigns organized |  |

|            |                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|            | by the<br>insti-<br>tution.                                                                                                                                                               |  |
| <b>19.</b> | The<br>effect-<br>ive-<br>ness<br>of<br>com-<br>mu-<br>nica-<br>tion<br>chan-<br>nels<br>used<br>by PR<br>de-<br>part-<br>ment<br>can<br>influ-<br>ence<br>stu-<br>dents'<br>per-<br>cep- |  |

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|     | tion                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |
| 20. | <p>PR</p> <p>de-<br/>part-<br/>ment<br/>are<br/>act-<br/>ively<br/>en-<br/>gaged<br/>with<br/>stu-<br/>dents<br/>and<br/>ad-<br/>dress<br/>their<br/>con-<br/>cerns<br/>more<br/>likely<br/>to be<br/>viewe<br/>d<br/>posit-</p> |  |



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