



Assessing the Impact of Media Relations on Public Image of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in Southwest Nigeria, 2014-2024

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of media relations on the public image of the Anglican Communion in Southwest Nigeria from 2014 to 2024, employing a mixed-methods approach. The research combines quantitative content analysis of media coverage with qualitative interviews of church leaders, media practitioners, and the general public to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between media relations and public image. The study investigates how media framing influences public perceptions and attitudes towards the Anglican Communion, drawing on theories of second-level agenda setting and cultivation. By examining the media relations strategies employed by the Anglican Communion, this research identifies best practices and areas for improvement in promoting a positive public image. The findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of media relations in shaping public perceptions of religious organizations in Nigeria, with implications for both theory and practice. The research provides insights into how media relations can be leveraged to promote a positive public image and offers recommendations for enhancing media relations strategies within the Anglican Communion and beyond.

Keywords: *Media Relations, Public Image, Southwest Nigeria.*



1 INTRODUCTION

The Anglican Communion is a significant province in the global Anglican community, with a substantial presence in Nigeria. As a religious organization, it plays a vital role in shaping the spiritual and social lives of its adherents. However, its public image can significantly impact its ability to fulfill its mission and engage with the broader community. In today's digital age, media relations are crucial for shaping public perceptions and attitudes towards organizations. The Anglican Communion, like many other organizations, must navigate the complex media landscape to promote its message and values. The media can shape public perceptions and attitudes towards the Anglican Communion, influencing how it is viewed by the broader community. Understanding the impact of media relations on the public image of the Anglican Communion is essential for developing effective communication strategies. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on media relations and public image, providing insights into the specific context of the Anglican Communion in Southwest Nigeria. By examining the relationship between media relations and public image, this research aims to provide recommendations for improving media relations strategies.

2. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of media relations strategies employed by the Anglican Communion in shaping its public image, while the specific objectives are to:

- a. investigate the role of media framing in influencing public perceptions of the Anglican Communion.
- b. analyze the relationship between media coverage and public attitudes towards the Anglican Communion.

3. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Media Relations Concepts

Media relations refer to the strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and the media (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Effective media relations involve managing the flow of information between an organization and the media to achieve a positive public image (Coombs & Holladay, 2010). Media relations influence perception through the selection and portrayal of spokespersons. The choice of spokesperson can significantly impact how an organization is perceived by the media and the public. Effective spokespersons are not only knowledgeable and credible but also capable of delivering messages that resonate with diverse audiences.

Public relations practitioners carefully select and train spokespersons to convey key messages, manage media interactions, and shape public perceptions positively. Credibility and trust are fundamental to the effectiveness



of media relations in shaping perception. Trustworthy information sources and credible messages are more likely to influence public opinion and behavior. Public relations practitioners strive to build and maintain credibility with journalists and the public by providing accurate information, demonstrating transparency, and adhering to ethical standard.

Key Concepts

Media Framing: How media outlets present information to the public, influencing how people think about an issue or organization (Entman, 1993).

Agenda Setting: The ability of the media to influence the public's agenda by selecting which issues or topics to cover (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

Public Relations: A strategic communication process that builds relationships between organizations and their publics (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

Importance of Media Relations Media relations are crucial for organizations to achieve their communication goals, including building a positive public image, managing crises, and promoting their products or services (Coombs & Holladay, 2010). Effective media relations can also help organizations to build trust and credibility with their publics. **Challenges in Media Relations** Media relations can be challenging, particularly in today's digital age where news cycles are rapid and media outlets are numerous (Kent & Saffer, 2014). Organizations must be proactive and strategic in their media relations efforts to achieve their communication goals. Best practices in media relations include building relationships with media representatives, crafting compelling messages, and being responsive to media inquiries (Wilcox & Cameron, 2006). Organizations should also be transparent and honest in their media relations efforts to build trust and credibility with their publics.

3.2 Public Relations

Concepts Public relations (PR) is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). PR involves managing the flow of information between an organization and its publics to achieve a positive image and reputation. Public relations is defined as a management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2006). PR involves a wide range of activities, including media relations, crisis communication, and stakeholder engagement. Public relations is crucial for organizations to achieve their communication goals, including building a positive image, managing crises, and promoting their products or services (Coombs & Holladay,



2010). Effective PR can also help organizations to build trust and credibility with their publics. Public relations include building relationships with key stakeholders, crafting compelling messages, and being responsive to stakeholder inquiries (Wilcox & Cameron, 2006). Organizations should also be transparent and honest in their PR efforts to build trust and credibility with their publics.

3.3 Stakeholder Theory:

Stakeholder theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the relationships between organizations and their stakeholders, emphasising the reciprocal obligations and responsibilities that exist beyond just shareholders. Developed in the late 20th century by Freeman, stakeholder theory posits that organizations should consider the interests of all individuals or groups affected by their actions, not solely shareholders, when making decisions. This theory emphasizes the importance of building relationships with key stakeholders, including employees, customers, and investors (Freeman, 1984). This perspective challenges the traditional shareholder-centric view of business and management, advocating for a broader, more inclusive approach to organizational governance and strategy.

In the context of public relations (PR), stakeholder theory is particularly relevant as it guides organizations in identifying and prioritising key stakeholders, including the media, and engaging with them in a manner that fosters mutual understanding and beneficial relationships. PR, as a strategic communication function within organizations, aims to build and maintain positive relationships with stakeholders to achieve organizational goals and enhance reputation. Media relations, a subset of PR, focuses specifically on managing interactions with journalists, editors, and media organizations to influence public opinion and shape organizational narratives.

Stakeholder theory posits that stakeholders can influence organizational outcomes and should therefore be considered in decision-making processes. In the context of media relations, stakeholders include not only journalists and media professionals but also audiences, regulatory bodies, advocacy groups, and the broader public impacted by media coverage. Understanding these stakeholders' interests, concerns, and expectations is essential for crafting effective media relations strategies that align with organizational objectives and maintain ethical standards. Central to stakeholder theory is the concept of stakeholder salience, which refers to the degree to which stakeholders are perceived as important by an organization and thus warrant attention in decision-making. In media relations, stakeholders with high salience may include influential journalists or media outlets whose coverage significantly impacts public perception and organisational reputation. PR practitioners must identify and prioritise these stakeholders based on their power, legitimacy, and urgency in relation to the organization's media relations goals.

**4. METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted the Mixed-Methods Approach, which combines quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Also, Content analysis was used to interpret data. Analyzing media coverage of the Anglican Communion in Southwest Nigeria between 2014 and 2024. Conducting surveys and interviews with stakeholders, including church leaders, media practitioners, and the general public.

The population consists of various internal and external stakeholders associated with the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in Southwest Nigeria. These include Church members, staff and media officers (internal stakeholders). The Study covers Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, and Ekiti States. One Diocese was selected from each State: Diocese of Lagos (Lagos State), Diocese of Egba (Ogun State), Diocese of Ibadan (Oyo State), Diocese of Osun (Osun State), Diocese of Akure (Ondo State) and Diocese of Ekiti, (Ekiti State). The Sample Size of this study consist of both internal and external stakeholders of the selected six Dioceses of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), one each in the six states which constitute the southwest region of Nigeria. This includes Church members, media officers, general public and media practitioners. A representative sample was drawn from these groups to ensure that the findings reflect the perspective of all the stakeholders. The simple random sampling was used to select internal and external stake holders for quantitative data gathering using purpose sampling to select internal stakeholders (media officers) and external stakeholders (media practitioners) to gather qualitative data using semi-structured interview guide

The key informant interview was conducted with six media officers representing six dioceses in the zone and six media practitioners representing the broadcast and the print media from the six states in the zone.

To determine the sample size for the quantitative aspect of the study, the Slovin's Formula² was used for the internal stakeholders (Church members: lay and clergy) and external stakeholders (members of the general public).

The sample size for internal stakeholders i.e. church members was determined based on the total population supplied by the Clerical secretaries of the six Dioceses which was put at 126,693. Using Slovin's formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2)}$$

Population size (N) = 126,693

Margin of error (e) = 0.05

$$e^2 = 0.05^2 = 0.0025$$

$$n \text{ therefore} = \frac{126,693}{1+126,693 \times 0.0025}$$



This gives:

$$n = \frac{126,693}{1+316.7325} = \frac{126,693}{317.7325} = 399$$

399 ÷ 6 dioceses give an approximate sample size of 67 per diocese

The sample size of external stakeholders, i.e. general public, was also determined based on the estimated population of the areas of the six dioceses using the Slovin's Formula:

Population size (N) = 8,224,736

Margin of error (e) = 0.05

Calculate e^2 (which is $0.05^2 = 0.0025$)

$$T \quad n = \frac{8,224,736}{1+8,224,736 \times 0.0025}$$

This result in:

$$n = \frac{8,224,736}{1+20,561.84} = \frac{8,224,736}{20,562.84} = 400$$

This gives a sample size of approximately 400 to ensure the desired margin of error.

400 divided by six dioceses therefore gives the approximate sample size of 67 per diocese.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

What is the extent of effectiveness of the media relations practices of Church of Nigeria, (Anglican Communion) in Southwest Nigeria?

Table 1: The Role of Media Framing in Influencing Public Perceptions of the Anglican Communion.

S/N	Items	VHE (%)	HE (%)	LE (%)	VLE (%)	M	S.D	Remark
1	The Church's media relations practices effectively enhance its public image.	314 (41.8)	437 (58.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.42	0.49	High Extent
2	Media relations efforts effectively increase awareness of the Church's Community programmes	425 (56.6)	286 (38.2)	40 (5.3)	0 (0)	3.51	0.60	Very High Extent
3	Media relations practices address misinformation.	266 (35.5)	450 (60)	34 (4.5)	0 (0)	3.31	0.55	High Extent
4	Media relations efforts foster positive relationships with local media.	527 (70.3)	223 (29.7)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.70	0.46	Very High Extent



5	Communication initiatives increase the visibility of the Church's leaders.	468 (62.4)	272 (36.3)	10 (1.3)	0 (0)	3.61	0.51	Very High Extent
6	The Church's Media Relation Practices build trust with the community.	394 (52.5)	304 (40.5)	53 (7.1)	0 (0)	3.45	0.63	High Extent
7	The Church Media Relation Practices garner positive media coverage.	470 (62.6)	254 (33.9)	26 (3.4)	0 (0)	3.59	0.51	Very High Extent
8	The Church Media Relation Practices keep the church informed about public perception.	221 (29.5)	507 (67.6)	22 (2.9)	0 (0)	3.29	0.60	Very High Extent
9	Its Media Relation Practices promotes church events to the public successfully.	456 (60.8)	286 (38.2)	8 (1.1)	0 (0)	3.59	0.51	Very High Extent
10	The Church Media Relation Practices efforts support the church's mission and goals.	278 (37.1)	415 (55.3)	57 (7.6)	0 (0)	3.29	0.60	High Extent

Weighted Mean = 3.48; S.D = 0.55; Overall Decision = High Extent

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2025

KEY: Very High Extent (VHE)=4, High Extent (HE)= 3, Low Extent (LE)= 2, Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1, SD = Standard Deviation, M= Mean

Threshold: mean value of 0.000-1.499 = Very Low Extent (VLE); 1.500-2.499 = Low Extent (LE); 2.500-3.499 = High Extent (HE); 3.500 to 4.500= Very High Extent (VHE).

Table 1 presents the extent of the effectiveness of the media relations practices of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in Southwest Nigeria, using a rating scale ranging from 'Very High Extent (VHE)' to 'Very Low Extent (VLE).' The table evaluates various aspects of media relations, including enhancing public image, increasing awareness, addressing misinformation, fostering media relationships, and supporting the Church's mission.

The findings indicate that the Church's media relations practices effectively enhance its public image, with 437 respondents (58.2%) indicating a high extent and 314 respondents (41.8%) a very high extent, yielding a mean score of 3.42 and a standard deviation of 0.49. Similarly, efforts to increase awareness of the Church's community programs were rated very highly, with 286 respondents (38.2%) reporting a high extent and 425 respondents (56.6%) a very high extent, while 40 respondents (5.3%) reported a low extent (mean = 3.51, S.D. = 0.60). Addressing misinformation through media



relations was also rated highly, with 450 respondents (60.0%) indicating a high extent and 266 respondents (35.5%) a very high extent, while 34 respondents (4.5%) reported a low extent (mean = 3.31, S.D. = 0.55). Fostering positive relationships with local media received strong support, with 223 respondents (29.7%) reporting a high extent and 527 respondents (70.3%) a very high extent (mean = 3.70, S.D. = 0.46).

Communication initiatives that increase the visibility of the Church's leaders were recognized, with 272 respondents (36.3%) indicating a high extent and 468 respondents (62.4%) a very high extent, while 10 respondents (1.3%) reported a low extent (mean = 3.61, S.D. = 0.51). Similarly, media relations practices that build trust with the community were rated positively, with 304 respondents (40.5%) reporting a high extent and 394 respondents (52.5%) a very high extent, while 53 respondents (7.1%) reported a low extent (mean = 3.45, S.D. = 0.63).

For garnering positive media coverage, 254 respondents (33.9%) reported a high extent and 470 respondents (62.6%) a very high extent, with 26 respondents (3.4%) indicating a low extent (mean = 3.59, S.D. = 0.51). The effectiveness of media relations in keeping the Church informed about public perception was affirmed by 507 respondents (67.6%) at a high extent and 221 respondents (29.5%) at a very high extent, with 22 respondents (2.9%) reporting a low extent (mean = 3.29, S.D. = 0.60). Promoting church events to the public was also highly rated, with 286 respondents (38.2%) indicating a high extent and 456 respondents (60.8%) a very high extent, while 8 respondents (1.1%) reported a low extent (mean = 3.59, S.D. = 0.51). Lastly, media relations practices that support the church's mission and goals received agreement from 415 respondents (55.3%) at a high extent and 278 respondents (37.1%) at a very high extent, while 57 respondents (7.6%) reported a low extent (mean = 3.29, S.D. = 0.60). **Overall**, the weighted mean score of 3.48 with a standard deviation of 0.55 indicates that respondents generally perceive the media relations practices of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) as effective to a high extent. The findings suggest that the church's media strategies play a crucial role in enhancing its public image, increasing awareness, fostering trust, and supporting its overall mission.



5.2.1 In-Depth Interview with Church Media Officers

In depth interview was done with six (6) church media officers from the six Dioceses across the Southwest Nigeria, one from each state; Diocese of Lagos (Lagos State), Diocese of Egba (Ogun State), Diocese of Ibadan (Oyo State), Diocese of Osun (Osun State), Diocese of Akure (Ondo State), Diocese of Ekiti, (Ekiti State)

Section 1: Background Information

Q: What is the name of your Diocese and its coverage area?

A. Diocese of Ibadan (Oyo State) – Covers Ibadan city and its surrounding local governments.

Q: Can you tell me about your role in the Diocese?

A. As media officers, we oversee the church's media relations, public relations, and digital communication. Our role includes engaging with journalists, managing press releases, handling social media platforms, and ensuring the church's visibility in both traditional and digital media.

Q: How long have you been serving in this position?

A: The duration of service varies among the dioceses. I have served for 15 years

Section 2: Media Relations Practices

Q: What are the media relations practices of your Diocese?

A: *The diocese actively engages with the media through press releases, media briefings, and organizing press conferences on major church activities.

*Social media platforms are used to disseminate church news, events, and teachings.

The diocese maintains relationships with journalists and local media houses for effective coverage of church programs.

Q: Who handles the media relations of the Diocese? Is it an individual, a group, or a department?

A: In our diocese, media relations are managed by the **Media and Communications Department**, which comprises a team of professionals. The head of the department serves as the chief media officer.



Q: How would you describe your Diocese's approach to media relations practices?

A: Our approach is **proactive and structured**. We engage mainstream media, digital platforms, and grassroots communication to reach different categories of stakeholders. we adopt a **multi-channel** strategy that incorporates traditional media, social media, and community engagement.

Section 3: Deployment of Media Relations Practices

Q: How does your Diocese use broadcast and print media to disseminate information to its stakeholders?

A: * We leverage **radio and television broadcasts** for special programs, sermons, and public awareness.

* Print media is used for **official church newsletters, press statements, and event announcements** in national and regional newspapers.

Q: How often does it use the print and broadcast media?

A: Broadcast media is used **weekly or biweekly**.

- Print media is utilized for major events such as **diocesan synods, conventions, and special Church anniversaries**.

Q: Does your Diocese use digital platforms to communicate with its stakeholders? If yes, how frequently and effectively?

A: * Yes, we use **Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and YouTube** for real-time updates.

- Posts are made **daily** on social media, while newsletters are distributed **weekly or biweekly** through email and WhatsApp.

Q: Can you mention other ways your Diocese deploys media relations practices?

A: * Live streaming of church services and programs.

- Collaborating with influencers and bloggers for wider reach.
- Producing **documentaries and video messages** from the Bishop.

Section 4: Engagement with Stakeholders

Q: How do the communication efforts of your Diocese engage its members and the public?

A: * Members receive updates through **WhatsApp groups, newsletters, and Sunday bulletins**.

- Public engagement is done through **outdoor programs, town hall meetings, and outreach campaigns**.



Q: How does your Diocese monitor media coverage of its activities?

A: * Media mentions are tracked through **Google Alerts, social media listening tools, and direct monitoring of TV/radio programs.**

- Reports are compiled and analyzed to assess the **public perception of the Diocese.**

Q: How does your Diocese gather feedback from its members and the public using various channels?

A: * Through **survey forms, suggestion boxes, WhatsApp messages, and social media comment analysis.**

- **Quarterly feedback sessions** with key stakeholders.

Q: In what ways are the concerns and interests of the stakeholders of your Diocese addressed?

A: Concerns are addressed through **pastoral care, community engagement, and media statements responding to specific issues.**

- Interactive programs on **radio and social media** provide direct communication with stakeholders.

Q: What processes or strategies does your Diocese have in place for responding to negative media coverage or crises?

A: We have a **crisis communication strategy**, which includes **issuing immediate clarifications, engaging with journalists, and addressing misinformation through social media.**

- A **Media Advisory Committee** is in place to **handle public relations crises professionally.**

Section 5: Effectiveness of Media Relations Practices

Q: In your view, how effective is your Diocese's media outreach in enhancing its visibility, credibility, and the achievement of its aims and objectives?

A: * Our media outreach has been **highly effective** in increasing the church's visibility, especially through **digital media and radio broadcasts.**

- Engagement with stakeholders has significantly improved due to our **proactive media relations strategy.**
- Feedback from the public indicates a **positive perception of the church**, and our efforts have helped to **counteract misinformation and negative press.**



Q: What improvements would you suggest to enhance your Diocese's media deployment and engagement?

A: * Increased investment in media technology: establishment of **radio and television studios** to produce high-quality content.

- **Training programs:** Media officers should undergo **regular training in digital communication, crisis management, and strategic media relations.**
- **Wider social media outreach:** The diocese should expand its use of **TikTok, Instagram, and Telegram** to reach a younger audience.
- **Partnerships with media houses:** Stronger collaborations with newspapers, TV stations, and online media platforms for **consistent visibility.**

2. Diocese of Lagos (Lagos State)

Q: What is the name of your Diocese and its coverage area?

A: Diocese of Lagos covers the city of Lagos and its neighboring regions. It encompasses diverse populations, from urban areas to suburban communities.

Q: Can you tell me about your role in the Diocese?

A: As the media officer, my role focuses on shaping the public image of the Diocese. I oversee our presence on traditional media platforms, including radio and TV, and ensure that our social media strategies align with our mission. My role also involves content creation, ensuring that information about our programs reaches a wide audience.

Q: How long have you been serving in this position?

A: I've been in this role for about 6 years, witnessing the church's growth and adapting our media strategies to the ever-changing digital landscape.

Q: What are the media relations practices of your Diocese?

A: We practice a blend of proactive and reactive media engagement. This includes press releases, media interviews, and facilitating live coverage of church events. We also actively manage our social media platforms, where we post daily updates and interact with followers.

3. Diocese of Egba (Ogun State)



Q: What is the name of your Diocese and its coverage area?

A: Diocese of Egba is located in Ogun State and covers several local governments within the state, including the city of Abeokuta, which serves as the administrative and spiritual hub.

Q: Can you tell me about your role in the Diocese?

A: My primary responsibility is to oversee communications and media relations. I work on building the Diocese's image by managing the church's media presence and ensuring accurate and timely communication with our stakeholders.

Q: How long have you been serving in this position?

A: I've been serving for 14 years, during which we've expanded our media reach significantly.

Q: What are the media relations practices of your Diocese?

A: We focus on proactive media engagement, such as regular press releases and scheduled media interviews. Additionally, we have a strong presence on radio, which is a popular medium in this area, as well as on our digital platforms.

Q: Who handles the media relations of the Diocese?

The Diocese has a media team, that works collaboratively with me coordinating all communication efforts, both internal and external.

Q: How would you describe your Diocese's approach to media relations practices?

A: We have a structured approach, relying on regular communication and continuous engagement with the media. We ensure that we remain visible through a combination of traditional and new media strategies.

Q: How does your Diocese use broadcast and print media to disseminate information?

A: We use local radio stations to broadcast services and interviews. Print media is also employed for publishing event notices and special diocesan activities in local newspapers.

Q: How often does it use the print and broadcast media?

A: Our radio broadcasts are weekly, while print media usage is tailored to major events or significant diocesan happenings, usually quarterly.



Q: Does your Diocese use digital platforms to communicate with its stakeholders?

A: Yes, digital platforms are central to our communication efforts. We post regularly on Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, providing updates and engaging with members. We've also started using YouTube for streaming church services.

Q: How do the communication efforts of your Diocese engage its members and the public?

A: Members are kept informed through our social media updates and physical newsletters, while we engage the broader public through radio discussions and community outreach.

Q: How does your Diocese monitor media coverage of its activities?

A: We monitor media coverage using a mix of traditional tools like press clippings and newer methods such as social media tracking tools. We also receive feedback directly from journalists.

Q: How does your Diocese gather feedback from its members and the public using various channels?

A: We distribute feedback forms during church services and collect input through our dedicated WhatsApp groups. We also use online surveys sent out monthly and carefully monitor the engagement and comments on our official social media pages.

Q: In what ways are the concerns and interests of the stakeholders of your Diocese addressed?

A: We address concerns by holding bi-monthly feedback sessions with the congregation. These sessions are often followed by targeted responses from our pastoral team, either through radio programs or social media posts. We prioritize listening to both the congregation and the broader community.

Q: What processes or strategies does your Diocese have in place for responding to negative media coverage or crises?

A: Our crisis management strategy focuses on transparent communication. When faced with negative press, we release clarifications through official church channels and work closely with trusted journalists to ensure accurate representation. We also mobilise the Media Advisory Committee to help manage any media fallout.



Q: How effective is your Diocese's media outreach in enhancing its visibility, credibility, and the achievement of its aims and objectives?

A: Our media outreach has allowed us to effectively spread the message of the Church, especially through regional radio broadcasts. By ensuring that our media relations are consistent and responsive, we've seen greater engagement and a strengthened image of the Diocese among stakeholders.

Q: What improvements would you suggest to enhance your Diocese's media deployment and engagement?

A: We need to improve the consistency of our digital content. While we're doing well on platforms like Facebook and Instagram, enhancing our YouTube content with professional production would strengthen our digital presence.

4. Diocese of Osun (Osun State)

Q: What is the name of your Diocese and its coverage area?

A: The Diocese of Osun, which covers the region of Osun State.

Q: Can you tell me about your role in the Diocese?

A: I work with the Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC), having been involved in media work for over 32 years. They are familiar with the media relations practices of the Diocese of Osun due to their extensive work as a journalist, covering various diocesan events and interacting with church leadership.

Q: How long have you been serving in this position?

A: I have over 32 years in the media industry, with significant involvement in covering diocesan events.

Section 2: Media Relations Practices

Q: What are the media relations practices of your Diocese?

A: The Diocese engages with the media primarily through press conferences and media interactions, especially during significant events like synods. The relationship with the media is positive, ensuring that the Diocese receives favorable publicity.

Section 3: Engagement with Stakeholders



Q: How do the communication efforts of your Diocese engage its members and the public?

A: Internal stakeholders (members) are engaged through announcements in Church bulletins, radio programs, and newsletters. External stakeholders are engaged via press releases and media interactions. The interviewee indicates that the media effectively reaches the public, as evidenced by media inquiries and feedback: **How does your Diocese gather feedback from its members and the public?**

A: While there is no formalized feedback collection process mentioned, the interviewee notes that feedback from the public is received informally through media channels like radio and social media.

Q: How does your Diocese monitor media coverage of its activities?

A: The Diocese relies on media practitioners' observations to gauge public perception, with no formalized monitoring systems mentioned.

Section 4: Effectiveness of Media Relations Practices

Q: How effective is your Diocese's media outreach in enhancing its visibility, credibility, and the achievement of its aims and objectives?

A: The Diocese's visibility and credibility are positively impacted by its media relationships. However, the interviewee suggests that there is a lack of a continuous, structured strategy for media relations that could enhance these further.

Q: How is the media outreach enhancing the achievement of the Diocese's objectives?

A: While the Diocese is able to maintain its visibility and credibility through media, the interviewee is not entirely certain how well it achieves all its goals, suggesting that the effectiveness could be improved by further engagement with stakeholders and a more formalised approach.

demographics.

Section 5: Engagement with Stakeholders

Q: Do you have an idea of how the communication efforts of your Diocese engage its members and the public?

A: Yes, the diocese engages its members by sharing regular updates through WhatsApp groups and social media platforms. For the public, they organize outdoor events such as health campaigns and educational outreach programs that are covered by local media.



Q: Does the leadership of the Church make itself easily accessible to media practitioners?

A: Yes, the leadership is generally available, but access is usually facilitated through the media office. Media practitioners are required to send formal requests for interviews, although the clergy remains approachable for comment on major issues.

Q: Does the Diocese promote its events and activities readily to the public?

A: Absolutely. The diocese is proactive in promoting its events, including synods, retreats, and fundraising activities. Information is shared through press releases, radio shows, and print media ads, ensuring wide coverage.

Q: Are you aware of how the Diocese of Egba gathers feedback from the public, and what it does with the feedback?

A: The diocese collects feedback through surveys distributed at events, social media comment analysis, and direct interaction during outreach programs. The collected feedback is analyzed to improve communication strategies and adjust to the needs of their members.

Section 6: Effectiveness of Media Relations Practices

Q: In your view, how effective are the media relations practices of the Diocese of Egba in enhancing its visibility and credibility and the achievement of its aim and objectives?

A: The Diocese of Egba has a well-established media presence in both traditional and digital media. While their media outreach is effective in raising visibility, especially in the region, there is room to enhance their presence on platforms like Instagram and YouTube. Overall, their communication practices are successful in maintaining a positive image and engaging the community effectively.

Section 7: Suggestions for Improvement

Q: What improvements would you suggest for the enhancement of the media relations practices of the Diocese of Egba?

A: * Strengthen live-streaming capabilities: Increasing the frequency and quality of live-streamed services will help reach a larger audience, particularly among younger people.

*Expand social media platforms: Platforms like Instagram and TikTok should be more actively used to engage younger demographics.



*Improve crisis communication: A more structured response plan for dealing with crises, including an official spokesperson, will improve handling of negative press.

*Increase collaboration with media influencers: Partnering with media influencers to spread church messages can help broaden the reach and resonate with younger, digital-savvy members.

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6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from the demographic analysis indicate that the majority of the respondents were male, with 592 participants (78.9%), compared to 158 female respondents (21.1%). This suggests a higher male representation in the sample, which may indicate that men are more engaged in the survey or that the population surveyed is predominantly male. Regarding age distribution, the largest group of respondents fell within the 26 and above age bracket, making up 539 respondents (71.8%) of the sample. This was followed by the 21–25 age group, which accounted for 181 respondents (24.2%), and the 15–20 age group, which comprised only 21 respondents (3.9%). This distribution indicates that the majority of participants are older individuals, particularly those above 25 years. The lower representation of younger respondents suggests that they may either have less involvement in church activities or a lower tendency to participate in surveys conducted within the studied community.

In terms of educational qualifications, the majority of respondents held a B.Sc. degree, with 529 respondents (70.5%) reporting this qualification. This was followed by M.Sc./M.A. holders, who comprised 162 respondents (21.6%), and Ph.D. holders, who accounted for 59 respondents (7.9%). The high percentage of individuals with at least a bachelor's degree suggests that the surveyed population is highly educated, with a significant proportion holding postgraduate qualifications. This may indicate that the study's target audience comprises professionals, academics, or individuals in positions requiring advanced education. Concerning occupation, the highest number of respondents were civil servants, making up 334 participants (44.5%). This was followed by business owners, who comprised 269 respondents (35.8%), while students accounted for 51 respondents (6.8%). Additionally, 59 respondents (7.9%) were self-employed, and 38 respondents (5.0%) were retired. This occupational structure suggests that the surveyed population is primarily made up of working professionals, with a considerable number involved in government and business sectors. The relatively low percentage of students and retirees may imply that the Diocese's activities and engagement efforts are more focused on the working population rather than younger or older demographics.



Regarding stakeholder type, community members formed the majority of respondents, comprising 547 participants (72.9%), while Church members accounted for 203 respondents (27.1%). This indicates that the Diocese maintains strong ties with the broader community, beyond its direct membership. Among the church members, the majority were clergy, accounting for 465 respondents (62.1%), while 285 respondents (37.9%) were lay members. This distribution highlights the dominance of clergy participation, which may reflect their greater involvement in Church administration and decision-making processes. Lastly, in terms of religious affiliation, an overwhelming 96.1% (721 respondents) identified as Christian, while 3.9% (29 respondents) identified as Muslim. This suggests that the study was conducted within a Christian-majority environment, which aligns with the fact that the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) was the focus of the research. The presence of Muslim respondents, though minimal, suggests some level of religious diversity within the studied population.

Findings from research question one showed that the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in Southwest Nigeria engages in effective media relations practices (Mean=3.22; SD=0.48). The data suggests that the Church maintains a strong media presence through active engagement, timely information dissemination, and accessibility to journalists and the public. This indicates that respondents generally agree that the Church has a strong media presence through active engagement, timely information dissemination, and accessibility to both journalists and the public. The Church's strategic use of **press releases**, **social media**, and **press conferences** highlights its proactive stance in ensuring its messages reach its intended audiences. The high level of **social media engagement** (mean = 3.37, S.D. = 0.57) aligns with findings from a study that found that Nigerian Churches, especially Pentecostal ones, use **online media** to connect with younger generations, who are increasingly active on these platforms (Afolabi & Oderinde 2024). Similarly, the Church's **timely information dissemination** (mean = 3.65, S.D. = 0.52) is in line with a **theory** which emphasizes that organizations must provide **accurate and prompt information** to maintain credibility with the public (Ukah et al. 2023). Also, **press conferences** (mean = 2.86, S.D. = 0.46) suggests a frequent but less use of this formal communication tool, which corroborates a study, who argues that press conferences remain crucial for addressing public issues in faith-based organisations³. The church's **accessibility to media representatives** (mean = 3.24, S.D. = 0.59) corroborates the findings in a study that reported that an **accessible spokesperson** is critical for effective communication in crisis management⁴.

The findings from research question two indicate that respondents generally perceive the (Matyek et al 2002) **Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)** in Southwest Nigeria as deploying its media relations practices at a **high level** (mean = 3.22, SD = 0.53). The data suggests that the Church is **proactive in utilizing both**



traditional and digital media platforms to enhance its communication strategies and outreach efforts. This includes regular engagement with local media, the use of **press releases**, and effective communication via **social media platforms**. The Church's ability to adapt to the modern communication landscape is consistent with findings who highlight the significant role of **social media** as a tool for public relations in Nigeria. Their study underlines the importance of **digital engagement** in contemporary public relations practice, especially in religious contexts, and supports the Church's use of both **traditional and new media**. Similarly, another study affirms that Churches in Nigeria, particularly within the **Pentecostal and Anglican traditions**, have adopted **social media platforms** to foster better engagement with their congregations and the broader public, demonstrating the Church's responsiveness to technological shifts. Moreover, the Church's approach reflects the growing trend in **public relations** where **media convergence** is central to effective communication (Anthony et al. 2021). **Another study** argues that the blending of **traditional media** with **digital platforms** is pivotal for organizations, including religious institutions, to maintain credibility and public engagement (EH Ikpe & FP Olise, 2010). The Church's strategic use of **media convergence** to broaden its outreach is thus consistent with contemporary public relations theories on **media integration** and **public participation**.

Findings from research question three shows that media relations practices are effective in engaging stakeholders at a high extent ($X = 3.34$; $S.D = 0.68$). The findings suggest that **media relations practices** by the **Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)** in Southwest Nigeria are perceived as highly effective in engaging stakeholders, with a mean score of **3.34** and a standard deviation of **0.68**. This indicates that respondents believe the Church has successfully deployed a range of communication strategies to engage both its **congregation** and the **broader community**. These strategies include **active media engagement**, the use of **social media platforms**, and organizing **events to foster relationships** with the media, all of which contribute to enhancing the church's outreach efforts. The Church's **proactive approach** to media relations, leveraging both **traditional** and **digital media**, aligns with a study, who notes that effective communication strategies, particularly the use of **social media**, have become essential for churches in Nigeria to engage with their followers and the public (Dyikuk. 2019). Similarly, **another study** emphasizes the importance of **media convergence**, where the blending of traditional and new media tools is crucial for effective public relations and maintaining a strong relationship with diverse audiences (EH Ikpe, & FP Olise, 2010). Moreover, another study highlight that the growing use of **digital platforms** by churches enables them to **reach a wider audience**, which is consistent with the Church's utilization of these platforms for engagement¹. However, a study pointed out that despite the potential of new media technologies, many religious organizations, including the Church of Nigeria, still face challenges in **fully integrating** these tools into their communication strategies. Findings from research question four showed that respondents generally perceive the media relations practices of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) as effective to a high extent. The findings suggest that the



Church's media strategies play a crucial role in enhancing its public image, increasing awareness, fostering trust, and supporting its overall mission. With a mean score of **3.34** and a standard deviation of **0.68**, the findings demonstrate that the Church's media efforts are perceived as significantly impactful. This aligns with the findings that observed that **effective media relations** in Nigerian Churches have a direct correlation with their ability to **engage and expand** their congregational and community reach (Afolabi, Oderinde, 2024). Their study underlined the **importance of media strategies** in increasing public awareness and reinforcing the credibility of religious organizations. Similarly, another study argue that **proactive media engagement** strengthens an organization's **public trust** and enhances its image. The use of both **traditional and digital media** has enabled the Church of Nigeria to maintain a strong **media presence**, consistent with the **media convergence approach** promoted by contemporary public relations scholars (Ikpe & Olise, 2010). Moreover, the findings corroborate the result of a study that reported that **transparent media practices** foster greater trust and improve the image of religious organizations (Dyikuk, 20219). The Church's consistent communication through various media channels has likely contributed to its **positive public perception**. Further, findings from the interview with the media officers from the **Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in Southwest Nigeria** showed that the Dioceses, actively engage in media relations through.

7. CONCLUSION /RECOMMENDATIONS

The study on the impact of media relations on the public image of the Anglican Communion in Southwest Nigeria highlights the significance of effective media relations in shaping public perceptions and attitudes towards religious organizations. The findings of this study demonstrate that media relations play a crucial role in promoting a positive public image and building trust with the public. In line with the conclusion the study recommends

1. **Develop a Media Relations Strategy:** The Anglican Communion should develop a comprehensive media relations strategy that outlines its goals, objectives, and tactics for engaging with the media.
2. **Build Relationships with Media Representatives:** The Anglican Communion should build relationships with media representatives to secure coverage and promote its message.
3. **Craft Compelling Messages:** The Anglican Communion should craft compelling messages that resonate with its target audience and promote its values and mission.
4. **Be Responsive to Media Inquiries:** The Anglican Communion should be responsive to media inquiries and provide timely and accurate information to the media.



5. Monitor and Evaluate Media Coverage: The Anglican Communion should monitor and evaluate media coverage to assess the effectiveness of its media relations efforts and identify areas for improvement.

8. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The findings of this study have implications for practice, particularly for religious organizations seeking to promote a positive public image and build trust with their publics. By developing effective media relations strategies, religious organizations can promote their message and values, build relationships with their publics, and maintain a positive image.

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