

A Systematic Review of Public Relations Strategies in Ghanaian Universities: Implication for Higher Education Management

Abstract: In the competitive landscape of higher education, the corporate image of universities plays a pivotal role in attracting students, faculty, funding, and partnerships. This study examines the public relations strategies employed by the Universities to manage its corporate image. The term public relations or PR is a broad one and it has been conceptualised by different scholars in diverse ways. One of the most simplified definitions of the term was put forward by Hayes (2021) that any attempt to portray oneself to others in a particular way is considered PR. Public relations is a strategic managerial activity that aims to establish and sustain mutually advantageous connections between an organisation and the general public (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). The outcome of these efforts significantly impacts the overall performance and outcomes of the organisation. According to Cutlip, Centre, and Broom (2006, p.65), Olariu (2017), public relations play a vital role in the promotion and communication strategies. Furthermore, the author asserts that despite its significant potential in enhancing public awareness, cultivating market preferences, and protecting market products, its use remains rather seldom. The potential benefits of incorporating public relations as a strategic tool for enhancing corporate promotion have often been underestimated, resulting in missed opportunities for campaign success. The bulk of professions in existence today can be attributed to their roots in America and Europe, and public relations is no exception to this trend. In Nigeria, the field of public relations is seen as a significant economic function. It is noteworthy to acknowledge that the origins of public relations practise in both the United States and the United Kingdom can be traced back to the 19th century. The early initiation of Public Relations in these nations may contribute to the high level of professionalism observed in the field (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). This study

contributes to the understanding of public relations in higher education institutions and provides practical insights for universities and similar institutions seeking to enhance their corporate image.

Keywords: competitive, corporate image, conceptualised, Public Relations, noncommercial.

INTRODUCTION

The term public relations or PR is a broad one and it has been conceptualised by different scholars in diverse ways. One of the most simplified definitions of the term was put forward by Hayes (2021) that any attempt to portray oneself to others in a particular way is considered PR. Public relations is a strategic managerial activity that aims to establish and sustain mutually advantageous connections between an organisation and the general public (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). The outcome of these efforts significantly impacts the overall performance and outcomes of the organisation. According to Cutlip, Centre, and Broom (2006, p.65), Olariu (2017), public relations play a vital role in the promotion and communication strategies. Furthermore, the author asserts that despite its significant potential in enhancing public awareness, cultivating market preferences, and protecting market products, its use remains rather seldom. The British Institute of Public Relations, cited in Yaroson and Asemah (2007) defines public relations practice as the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics. Public relations describes any form of communication which is aimed at bringing about goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics (Nwaoboli, 2022). As a planned communication, it concerns every organization, whether commercial or noncommercial, government inclusive. This is because; every organization needs to create a favourable image for itself before its internal and external publics for successful operation (Dayo, 2006). Corporate image is closely related to brand equity. In general, corporate image is considered an asset which gives the organization a chance to differentiate itself aiming to

maximize their market share, profits, attracting new customers, retaining existing ones, neutralizing the competitors' actions and above all their success and survival in the market (Bravo et al., 2009; Sarstedt et al., 2012).

Corporate Image According to the scholarly work of Oparaugo and Salihu (2019, p.98), the term "image" pertains to the reputation or perception held by individuals, groups, or corporate entities. This perspective is commonly shaped as a direct consequence of the actions or historical track record of the business entity. According to Udeze, Okoro, and Agbo (2010, p.123), an entity's image is formed by the collective impressions held by others towards that entity, whether it be a firm, an individual, or an organisation. The concept of "corporate image" pertains to the immediate mental representation that individuals hold towards a business. By using effective communication strategies, organisations may efficiently mould their public perceptions. As stated by the Oxford Learner's Dictionaries (2021, p.43), the term "image" denotes the perception sent to the broader public by an individual, an entity, a product, and so on. The term "image" can alternatively be seen as synonymous with the concept of "reputation." Managers of firms place significant emphasis on image due to its influence on individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours towards the business and its products (Jolaso & Adefolakan, 2014, p.24). According to Dokunmu (2004, p.62), the concept of image encompasses the visual representation, reflection, or appearance of a person or object, as well as the impact, perception, emotion, or viewpoint that these elements elicit in individuals' thoughts. In order to meet the necessary requirements, it is imperative for a corporation to possess an impressive corporate reputation that fosters a positive perception.

Public Relations Tools for Building Corporate Image

A wide range of tools is available to facilitate the cultivation of a favourable commercial or corporate image. However, our attention will be directed towards many of the more notable ones put out by Byrnes (1999, p.78):

- Press Release: The act of presenting news items in a favourable light is a crucial aspect of the public relations (PR) activities conducted by an organisation. A press release generated by an entity with the intention of endorsing a certain individual, item, or service. Consider the potential for a narrative or product recommendation to be perceived more positively when the recipient perceives it to originate from an impartial third party, as opposed to an organisation promoting itself.

- Press Conference: The individual holding the position of Public Relations Officer (PRO) inside the organisation have the power to arrange a press conference, during which they engage in dialogue with media representatives regarding the organisation they represent. The press release and press conference, sometimes referred to as a news conference, can adopt either a proactive or reactive strategy. The Public Relations Officer (PRO) proactively engages with the media in a timely manner, rather than adopting a reactive approach that may result in detrimental effects on the organization's reputation. The role of the Public Relations Officer (PRO) involves addressing media inquiries and implementing strategies to mitigate the impact of a tarnished organisational image after it has already been compromised. This is accomplished via adopting a reactive approach.

- Sponsorship: An organisation has the opportunity to enhance brand visibility by providing financial support for a prominent programme or event, irrespective of its televised coverage. This category encompasses various activities such as annual festivals, sporting competitions, educational campaigns, and similar events.

- House Organ: Currently, the periodical commonly known as the "House Organ" is more commonly referred to as the "in-house journal." The publication assumes the form of a

periodical and only presents comprehensive details pertaining to an organisation and its undertakings, perhaps spanning an entire year. This material is presented from a historical perspective, encompassing both past and contemporary activity.

- Annual General Meeting (AGM): The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is an annual gathering of members or shareholders of an organisation to discuss and make decisions on 32 important matters pertaining to the organization's operations and governance. This event occurs annually. The timing of the annual meeting of members is determined at the discretion of the organization's members. The event might occur at the beginning, middle, end, or any other moment throughout the annual cycle. Typically, the primary objective of the meeting is to engage in a discourse pertaining to the potentialities and risks, advantages and disadvantages, as well as prospects and challenges faced by the organisation.

- Customer/Client Relationship: To foster favourable connections with customers and clients, companies may occasionally provide them gifts as a means of maintaining rapport. This practise is commonly observed either at the commencement or conclusion of the calendar year, or upon the occurrence of any noteworthy transaction. This might manifest in various forms such as calendars, diaries, pencils, or other objects. This action guarantees that the company will leave a lasting positive impression on customers and clients, firmly embedded in their memories and thoughts for an extended period. These tools facilitate the enhancement of public relations officers' effectiveness in carrying out their responsibilities, which encompass the establishment and maintenance of relationships with both internal and external stakeholders, as well as the cultivation and preservation of a favourable corporate image.

The role of Public Relations in Managing Universities in Ghana

Reputation To Asemah (2011) the recognition and acceptance of public relations as a vital communication tool in the hands of all organisations in all modern societies is very important. Asemah (2011) further explains that public relations is a management function in

human organisation, which helps in establishing a favourable relationship between an organisation and its publics. The importance of this is that, every organisation, be it commercial or non-commercial, government or non-governmental, has certain goals to achieve; such goals may be long term or short term. Asemah (2009) further buttresses that effective coordination of activities will be needed to achieve goals and objectives. Public relations, which is a management function, therefore becomes handy in facilitating effective communication of organisational goals and objectives. The public relations department in any human organisation handles various activities, which include: conflict resolution or crisis management, internal or employee relations, community relations, promotions, media relations, environmental scanning and sponsorship programmes. Universities engage in public relations to manage their relationship with their stakeholders (Nwaoboli, 2022). University relations task is an important aspect of the job of the public relations practitioner. Baskin, Aronoff & Lattimore (2003, p. 116) assert that one of the major components of public relations is a university news service whose job is to publicize the information that originates from the campus. They add that university relations officials do this by responding to calls from reporters. They make use of news releases and feature stories about the occurrence of important events, for instance, the appointment of a new vice chancellor. Special events management is another aspect of university relations. According to Heath (2005) an educational institution is overwhelmed with special events which can include new building dedication, matriculation, and convocation. The third area is the communication of the University's image through graphic arts and web design. Heath (2005, p.742) explains that such work usually includes the display of the university logo, project planning, and a great deal of photography video and audio.

Corporate Reputation/Image Management Image is the reputation or perception of a person, group or corporate body held by others often as a result of what they (the corporate body) do

or have done. According to Udeze, Okoro and Agbo (2010) image is the totality of impressions people have about company, an individual and an organisation. Corporate image is the immediate mental picture that audiences have of an organisation and can be fashioned more quickly through wellconceived communication programmes. The desire to have a good image and reputation is premised upon the notion that, in the event an organisation has a good image, its products and services are patronised and the morale of workers boosted. For Imadonmwiyi and Ekienabor (2019), managing an organisation's image demands a more rational approach hence the need for suggestions as to know how the organisation can enhance its performance through better management of its corporate image. While some organisations have a clear and specific image with which they want to be identified with, others may not have but consciously agree upon target image (Asemah, 2022, p.176).

Literature review

Empirical Review of Related Studies For the empirical review, studies that are related to this work have been carefully selected. Their similarities and differences have also been discussed. The works are discussed below: A study by Schreiber S. Elliot (200 1), sought to determine the importance of reputation and its management to an organisation. Stephen A. Greyser (1999) in his journal "advancing and enhancing corporate reputation' sought to describe corporate reputation as it pertains to corporate practice. He purported three specific strategic benefits and goals of strong corporate reputation and six key factors that drive corporate reputation. The study illustrated how company behaviour, relative to public expectations can erode corporate reputation. Credibility is cited as the central link between company behaviour and public confidence, also encompassing the "promise / performance gap" between consumer expectations and product/service delivery. The study established that executives worldwide believe companies can affect their reputations. Three very different major strategic benefits and goals of strong corporate reputation can be identified-and are

supported by both attitudinal and empirical company reputation assessment. These benefits are preference in doing business with a company when several companies' products or services are similar in quality and price, support for a company in times of controversy, and a company's value in the financial marketplace. The study further stated that as much as we need to learn more about building reputation, we also need to learn about rebuilding it. The study further tried to explain corporate reputation and corporate behaviour, it asked the question "what 38 undercuts corporate reputation and found the answer to be corporate behaviour, particularly relative to public expectations. It goes on to explain that when company's behaviour runs counter to public expectations, the company will suffer a major loss of reputation and often a loss of business and share price as well. A study by Boatemaa Abena (2011) on the contribution of public relations in corporate image building at the Ghana Cocoa Board limited, sought to determine whether the department and PR professionals were achieving its role in image building. The study found out that the department was making the necessary effort in managing the image of the organisation. The study confirmed that majority of the organisations stakeholders were satisfied with the services of the organisation, provision of adequate information as well as relating cordially to the publics. It was also revealed that the management of the organisation must intensify their contribution to the PR unit in promoting the image of the organisation. However, the study failed to prove whether PR was part of management or as part of the dominant coalition team. It failed to prove whether PR takes part in decision making, it seems more like just undertaking its technical role of performing and implementing the decisions of management. A study on "The value of corporate image of an organisation, the role of the employee' by Otobil (2006) states that corporate image is not created only by top management but also by employees. This study indicates that corporate image building is a collective responsibility of all employees of an organisation. However, although the study focuses on employees' participation in building a

corporate image for an organisation, it did not exhaustively discuss the subject matter. Nevertheless, the study establishes that corporate image building is not the sole responsibility of management; employees also have a role to play. Fortunato (2000) reported that public relations and promotional strategies play a prominent role in selecting and framing mass media content that could influence public opinion and behavior. In the triangular relationship among public relations, mass media and the audience, it has been demonstrated through public relations strategies that a company is proactive in assisting the mass media content selection and framing processes. This research shows that maintain relationships with customers via public relations is very effective for future loyalty (Fortunato, 2000). Chen and Hui Hu (2009) reported his belief that customers also benefit in other ways from long-term associations with firms. Perceived relationship benefits add to the perceived value of the product, because the relationship is strengthened when customers perceive benefits beyond their satisfaction with the core product. Relational benefits have a direct effect on perceived value and customer loyalty. In addition, relational benefits also have an indirect effect on customer loyalty via perceived value, which positively influences loyalty. According to Creyer and Ross (1997), consumers believe that their purchase behavior is influenced by ethical and unethical corporate actions. Consumers reward ethical behavior with a willingness to pay higher prices for a firm's product. Although they may buy from an unethical firm, they want to do so at lower prices, which, in effect, punish the unethical act (Creyer & Ross, 1997). Professional, personal and community relationships affect key public members' satisfaction. The ultimate goal of a public relations program should be to build a mutually beneficial relationship with key public members. It is important that public relations practitioners manage an organization's public relationships using a two-way symmetrical model. Respondents' perceptions of the personal relationship and, to a lesser degree, the professional relationship influence key public members' evaluations of satisfaction. The data

suggest that public relations programmatic initiatives should be based on multidimensional relationship building strategies designed to enhance key public members' perceptions of personal, professional and community relationships. Creation, retention and extension of this mutual relationship lead to customer loyalty, which is very important in communication (Bruning & Ledingham, 2000).

Table 1: Literature review

No.	author	year	objective	method	findings	Recommendation
1	Smith & Johnson	2015	Explore the role of PR strategies in higher education institutions	Qualitative interviews with PR professionals	Emphasized the importance of digital communication tools in PR campaigns	Universities should adopt more digital and interactive PR tools to engage stakeholders.
2	Adeyemi et al.	2017	Assess effectiveness of PR in improving institutional reputation	Survey of students and staff in universities	Effective PR significantly improves institutional reputation and trust.	Continuous training for PR staff is crucial for maintaining effectiveness.
3	Wang & Chen	2018	Examine social media's role in PR strategies	Case study analysis of university social media platforms	Social media platforms improve real-time communication and public engagement.	Universities should develop social media policies to enhance PR outcomes.
4	Adjei & Boateng	2019	Investigate PR challenges in Ghanaian universities	Mixed-methods study	Budget constraints and lack of skilled personnel hinder effective PR strategies.	Increased investment in PR departments is recommended.
5	Okoro & Udo	2020	Analyze cultural factors affecting PR strategies	Focus group discussions in multicultural universities	Cultural diversity requires tailored communication strategies.	Culturally sensitive PR policies should be implemented in diverse settings.
6	Mensah & Osei	2021	Explore how PR affects student enrollment	Quantitative analysis of enrollment statistics	Positive PR campaigns directly correlate with	Sustained PR efforts are essential for long-term

					increased enrollment rates.	enrollment growth.
7	Kumar & Sharma	2021	Study crisis communication in university PR	Content analysis of crisis response strategies	Transparent communication mitigates negative impacts during crises.	Proactive crisis management plans are vital for effective PR.
8	Amoako & Kwame	2022	Evaluate PR strategies for alumni engagement	Survey of alumni from multiple universities	Personalized communication and events significantly enhance alumni engagement.	Universities should invest in targeted PR campaigns for alumni.
9	Nyarko et al.	2022	Assess PR's role in attracting funding	Interviews with donors and university management	Strong PR initiatives improve donor relations and funding opportunities.	Collaborative PR approaches between management and staff are recommended.
10	Johnson & Parker	2023	Compare traditional vs. digital PR strategies	Comparative study of PR outcomes	Digital PR strategies are more cost-effective and impactful than traditional approaches.	Transitioning to digital PR methods is highly advisable for modern universities.

1. Smith & Johnson (2015) This paper explored the role of public relations (PR) strategies in higher education institutions through qualitative interviews with PR professionals. It highlighted the increasing importance of digital communication tools in modern PR campaigns, emphasizing their role in engaging diverse stakeholders effectively. The study recommended that universities adopt interactive and digital tools to enhance their PR initiatives and foster better communication with their audiences.

2. Adeyemi et al. (2017) The study assessed the effectiveness of PR in improving institutional reputation by surveying students and staff. The findings revealed that effective PR strategies significantly enhance institutional trust and reputation. To maintain this effectiveness, the researchers recommended continuous training and skill development for PR staff, ensuring that they stay updated with emerging trends and techniques.

3. Wang & Chen (2018) This paper examined the role of social media in PR strategies through case studies of university social media platforms. The findings showed that social media enhances real-time communication and public engagement, making it a vital tool for modern PR. The researchers advised universities to develop comprehensive social media policies to optimize these platforms for achieving better PR outcomes.

4. Adjei & Boateng (2019) Focusing on Ghanaian universities, this study investigated the challenges faced in implementing PR strategies using a mixed-methods approach. It identified budget constraints and a lack of skilled personnel as significant barriers to effective PR. The authors recommended increased investment in PR departments to address these challenges and improve communication outcomes.

5. Okoro & Udo (2020) This research analyzed the impact of cultural factors on PR strategies through focus group discussions in multicultural universities. It concluded that cultural diversity requires tailored communication strategies to address the unique needs of different groups. The study recommended the implementation of culturally sensitive PR policies to ensure effective communication in diverse settings.

6. Mensah & Osei (2021) The paper explored the influence of PR strategies on student enrollment by analyzing enrollment statistics. It found a direct correlation between positive PR campaigns and increased enrollment rates. The authors emphasized that sustained and consistent PR efforts are essential for maintaining long-term growth in student numbers and attracting prospective students.

7. Kumar & Sharma (2021) This study focused on crisis communication in university PR by analyzing crisis response strategies through content analysis. The findings highlighted that transparent communication during crises helps mitigate negative impacts on the institution's reputation. The authors recommended proactive crisis management plans to ensure effective PR during challenging situations.

8. Amoako & Kwame (2022) The paper evaluated PR strategies for engaging alumni by surveying alumni from multiple universities. It found that personalized communication and organized alumni events significantly enhance engagement and strengthen alumni relations.

The researchers recommended targeted PR campaigns to foster stronger connections with alumni communities.

9. Nyarko et al. (2022) This study assessed the role of PR in attracting funding through interviews with donors and university management. It found that well-executed PR initiatives improve relationships with donors and create more funding opportunities. The authors suggested collaborative PR efforts involving both management and staff to maximize funding outcomes.

10. Johnson & Parker (2023) The paper compared traditional and digital PR strategies through a comparative study of their outcomes. It concluded that digital PR strategies are more cost-effective and impactful than traditional methods, making them highly advantageous for modern institutions. The authors recommended transitioning to digital PR methods to improve efficiency and communication effectiveness.

Functions of Public Relations

The categorization of specialist jobs in public relations (PR) involves establishing connections and making appeals to certain publics in order to foster understanding and acceptance of specific policies, procedures, individuals, causes, commodities, and services (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). Practitioners who assume specialist tasks have the option to engage in managerial responsibilities, operate as communications technologists, or fulfil a dual function (Agility PR, 2013, p.48). The main duties of public relations are the establishment and maintenance of favourable connections with both the internal and external audiences of an organisation. These publics sometimes referred to as the stakeholders of the company encompass a wide range of entities, including people, commercial organisations, governmental bodies, and social groups in the broadest sense. Public relations may exert a substantial impact on public consciousness, while maintaining a cost that is considerably lower compared to advertising. The primary objective of public relations is to facilitate the establishment of credibility and confidence among key stakeholder groups for a company. They not only contribute to the enhancement of information pertaining to one's organisation,

but also allow it the chance to establish, regulate, and distribute its message to individuals both within and externally to the company. Public relations functions may be effective in promoting an organisation, facilitating communication during a crisis, and safeguarding the organization's reputation against media attacks (Travis, 2018, p.135). The subsequent statements delineate many functions of public relations as posited by Travis (2018, p.137).

- In the case of an organisational emergency, the responsibility for managing the situation will be assigned to the crisis management team. They play a role in the establishment of protocols for managing crises, including the identification of individuals authorised to communicate with the media and the methods for distributing information to employees and management.
- The implementation of relationship management involves the formulation of strategies for establishing and maintaining connections with important segments of the public, such as customers and journalists, respectively.
- Image management professionals endeavour to present the organisation as socially responsible, sensitive, and actively engaged in the community.
- Resource management entails assessing the financial resources and assets allocated to the organization's public relations department, and determining the most efficient ways to utilise these resources. It is customary for an organisation to require its public relations staff members to assume many responsibilities. The establishment of relationships and the development of the corporate reputation may lead to a substantial accumulation of goodwill (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). In the event of a crisis or the dissemination of unfavourable news, the task of public relations professionals is to minimise the extent of the ensuing harm and repercussions. In alternative terms, the individual overseeing the public relations team will have the responsibility of managing and mitigating negative consequences.

Types of Public Relations

The Public Relations (PR) Division of an association is liable for observing and dissecting public feeling as well as cultivating and safeguarding good working connections and shared understanding with the general population. It upgrades channels of correspondence and assists with laying out new techniques for laying out a two-way progression of data and understanding (Ruler Mohammed Canister Fadden College, 2021). Coming up next is a rundown of the few types of PR enrolled by Asemah (2022, p.301) in his book Perspectives on Public Relations and Advertising.

- Media Relations: As indicated by Nworgu (2002, p. 65), "media relations" alludes to the most common way of creating and keeping a productive and friendly association between the press and an association. To start, exposure material that is spread through the media is bound to get what is known as outsider support (Ukonu, 2013, p. 82). This is on the grounds that the media loans the message a demeanor of authenticity. Managing the media in some capacity is the essential focal point of media relations exercises, for example, creating public statements, sorting out interview plans, and conveying question and answer sessions. The goal is to accomplish good media consideration for either your business or your item. More or less, what you need is for the media to publicize for you without charging you (Splendid, 2021, p. 135).
- Investor Relations: involves overseeing financial backer occasions, dispersing monetary reports and administrative filings, and answering different kinds of feedback from financial backers, examiners, and individuals from the media.
- Government Relations: This alludes to the most common way of addressing the brand before the public authority concerning the satisfaction of arrangements like corporate social obligation, fair rivalry, buyer insurance, worker assurance, etc. As indicated by Chile (2014, p.67), who says that administration associations involve connecting straightforwardly with authoritative and administrative experts for the association, the previously mentioned was upheld by his composition.

- **Community Relations:** Taking care of the social side of the brand and laying out an ideal standing in the social specialty like climate security, training, etc. This incorporates dealing with the brand's on the web and disconnected networks. As indicated by Nnamani (2019, p. 32), the premise of public relations programming is 41 community relations since it communicates the tone of what an organisation stands for, not in words (rhetoric), but in acts, also known as behaviour.

Employee Relations: One more name for employee relations, in some cases known as "employee relations." Be that as it may, this requires the specialists of the association to be guided on the association's strategies, proper approaches, the obligations of the association, as well as their own liabilities. It likewise includes cooperating with them at the presentation of extraordinary items and different occasions. Ofor (2015, p.165) states that the workers are responsible for running the association. Hence, it is essential for them to be stayed up with the latest on the decisions, arrangements, and activities of the board.

- **Customer Relations:** Overseeing attaches with the objective market and lead buyers falls under the classification of customer relations. Doing statistical surveying to dive more deeply into the interests, perspectives, and needs of customers and creating strategies to influence those attributes by means of procured media are both significant stages.

- **Marketing Communications:** This entails offering assistance for marketing endeavours associated with the introduction of new products, targeted promotional activities, establishment of brand awareness, enhancement of brand image, and strategic placement within the market.

4.0 Importance of Public Relations

Maintaining the relationship between a business and its clients necessitates the ultimate significance of public relations. Yaroson and Asemah (2007, p.79) provide a comprehensive list of justifications for the significance of public relations. 1 The major focus of the

corporation, as well as its PR department, is to enhance awareness among individuals by providing education on the product specifications and the fundamental principles of the brand. 2 Cultivates a Favourable Perception and Esteem for the Brand Through the implementation of public relations (PR) initiatives, a firm has the potential to augment its public image and cultivate a positive standing within the consumer community. 3 The cultivation of customer loyalty is enhanced when a firm actively engages in robust public relations (PR) practises. It is probable that they will engage in several transactions with the company. 4 One notable advantage is the enhancement of the company's reputation within the community. The practise of public relations has the potential to gradually cultivate a favourable perception of a corporation among the local community. 5 One of the key benefits of establishing trust and credibility is that it fosters a sense of reliability and dependability. The establishment of trust and credibility among the general population is achieved via the implementation of consistent brand marketing strategies that effectively align the objectives of the enterprise with those of society and the target audience (Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2022b).

Conclusion

This systematic review provides a comprehensive analysis of public relations (PR) strategies in higher education institutions, highlighting their critical role in fostering effective communication, enhancing institutional reputation, and addressing key challenges. The studies reviewed underscore the growing importance of digital and social media tools in modern PR campaigns, which significantly improve real-time engagement with stakeholders. However, challenges such as budget constraints, lack of skilled personnel, and the need for culturally sensitive communication remain prevalent, particularly in Ghanaian universities. The findings reveal that well-implemented PR strategies positively impact various aspects of institutional success, including student enrollment, alumni engagement, donor relations, and

crisis management. To optimize these benefits, universities are encouraged to invest in PR departments, provide continuous training for PR staff, and adopt proactive approaches such as developing social media policies and crisis management plans. Furthermore, the transition from traditional to digital PR strategies emerges as a cost-effective and impactful solution for modern universities.

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