

**ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES AMONG PENTECOSTAL
FELLOWSHIPS IN UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, NIGERIA.**

BY

FUTUGHE FAVOUR TORITSEJU

MATRICULATION NUMBER:

ART2100937

**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
BENIN CITY.**

OCTOBER, 2025

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENTS OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A HONS)
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COMMUNICATION, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY,
EDO STATE, NIGERIA.**

OCTOBER, 2025

DECLARATION

This project is based on a study undertaken by me Futughe Favour Toritseju, in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts under the supervision of Mr. Sunday Ekerikevwe (FRHD).

All ideas and results of this study, were based on my personal research, where the views of others were used; they were duly acknowledged.

FUTUGHE FAVOUR TORITSEJU

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work **ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES AMONG PENTECOSTAL FELLOWSHIPS IN UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, NIGERIA** was written and submitted by Futughe Favour Toritseju, Matriculation Number ART2100937, to the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.

Mr. Sunday Ekerikevwe FRHD

DATE

Supervisor

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DATE

Head of Department

STUDENT'S THESIS
AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Almighty God for his love, grace, provisions, protection and wisdom that has taken me through these years of academic journey on campus. Also, to my Mum for her emotional and financial support, love and consistent prayers.

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My ultimate gratitude goes to God who is the giver and sustainer of life; He who carried me with so much affection from the very day I started this academic journey up until now and bestowed me with all that is needed to successfully pursue my career in this great institution of learning.

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ABSTRACT

This study titled “Assessment of Public Relations Strategies among Pentecostal Fellowships in the University of Benin (UNIBEN)” examined how campus based Pentecostal fellowships apply public relations to build image, attract members, retain members and manage relationships. The main objective was to identify the Public relations strategies used, assess their effectiveness, and examine their impact on fellowship growth and communication. The study was guided by Two way symmetrical communication theory and relationship management theory which emphasize two-way communication and relationship building. Using the survey method, data were collected through questionnaires and the findings showed that fellowships rely on strategies such as social media, posters, organized events, and word-of-mouth publicity. While these methods increased visibility and membership, most communication was one-way, with limited opportunities for dialogue and feedback. The study concludes that fellowships focus more on promotion than relationship-building and recommends adopting more interactive platforms, training leaders in public relations skills, and encouraging feedback mechanisms to improve trust, credibility, and sustainable growth.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Public relations is as dynamic as the environment which it is practiced. Though often misunderstood, this profession has firmly established itself as a crucial strategic management function across all areas of human activity. Public relations can be traced as early as the days of creation in Genesis 1:26, where God spoke and said "let us make man in our own image and after our likeness". In this context, God wanted man to replicate his own "image" to the world and he also spoke in collaboration with his "publics". According to Pahwa (2023) as cited in Asemah, Nkwam- Uwaoma & Sabo (2023, p. 50), "Public relations is a strategised process of managing the release and spread of organisation-related information to the public to maintain a favourable reputation of the organisation and its brands". The term "reputation", refers to the overall perception of someone or something presented to the publics. Therefore, it is reasonable to state that public relations are centered on reputation building and management. Public relations as defined by the British Institute of Public Relations (BIPR) is the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. As the most popular and accepted definition, it clearly states that Public relations is an intentional (deliberate), proactive (planned) and continuous (sustained) effort taken by an organization to obtain and maintain mutual understanding with its publics. Public relations is therefore an essential tool for an organization to thrive and remain in operation.

The importance of Public relations in organizational effectiveness as captured by McQueerey (2017), cited in Asemah and Nwammuo (2018) includes Increase in Business sales and profit, economic impact and recognition, positive perception, raises awareness, builds credibility, tailors information, crisis management, promotes value, strengthens community relations and knowing their competitors as well as keeping up. Jefkins (1978) as cited in Asemah (2022, p. 47) says "Public relations consists of all forms of planned communication which includes outwards and inwards between an organisation and it's publics for the purpose of achieving specific objectives concerning mutual understanding". Public relations simply mean how an organisation (in this case, a fellowship) manages how people see and relate with them. It's how they share information, promote their activities, and handle feedback, challenges, or even rumours. In today's world, things have changed a lot. People don't just join fellowships because they were invited. Many students now look for groups that are well-organized, friendly, active, and meaningful. If a fellowship is not visible, welcoming, or consistent, students may lose interest or go elsewhere. This is where public relations become important. More so, students in the university are smart, exposed and curious. They don't follow blindly. Hence they ask the following questions: Is the fellowship welcoming? Are the leaders friendly and responsible? Do they feel seen and supported? Are the activities interesting or boring? Does the fellowship care about real-life student issues (like stress, exams, career, love, etc.)? Public relations strategies are used to answer these questions and earn their trust. Good Public relations is simply communicating better, listening to feedback, making people feel valued, representing the fellowship well and being organised and caring. Some fellowships use social media (Instagram,

WhatsApp, YouTube) to promote their events. These also count as public relations strategies because they help fellowships stay attractive, organized and trustworthy.

On the other hand, Pentecostal fellowships are associations of like-minded believers who come together for worship, spiritual growth and mutual support. They are religious bodies that emphasize on beliefs such as the Baptism of the Holy spirit, speaking in tongues, divine healing and evangelism. Pentecostal fellowships form an essential part of campus life, and their influence extends beyond Sunday worship or weekly meetings. For many students, it's more than just attending fellowships but a community. These Pentecostal fellowships also use the digital media which is more used to reach their audience. Afolabi and Oderinde (2024, p. 87) explain that "Pentecostal churches in Nigeria use online media as a form of e-evangelism or e-evangelism for the youth". These fellowships also help shape students' values, guide their decisions, and sometimes even help them discover their purpose. They also help maintain doctrinal unity, provide spiritual and moral training as well as promote collaboration among Pentecostal movements.

In summary, public relations is not just for companies or celebrities. It is a useful tool for religious groups, especially Pentecostal fellowships on campus. This study is focused on understanding how these fellowships in UNIBEN use Public Relations to grow, connect, and stay relevant among students. As students continue to look for places that feel real, supportive, and organised, fellowships must rise to the occasion. With the right strategies, they can build stronger communities, reach more lives, and continue to shine their light both in word and in practice. Pentecostal fellowships engage with both internal publics which includes Pastors, leaders, workers, members, partners, etc and external publics who are the community, media, government, potential members and other fellowships fostering and maintaining mutual relationships with them. The practice of public relations helps crisis communication, membership growth and engagement, media and digital presence to mention a few.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

Religious fellowships, particularly Pentecostal fellowships in universities, thrive on their ability to connect with students, spread their message, and maintain a positive public image. At the University of Benin, numerous Pentecostal fellowships exist, each striving to attract new members, retain existing ones, and create a strong sense of community. However, in an era where communication channels are rapidly evolving, the question arises: Are these fellowships effectively using public relations strategies to achieve their goals? Some fellowships may face negative public perceptions due to issues such as exclusivity, doctrinal misunderstandings, or leadership controversies. Without proper public relations strategies in place, these fellowships may struggle to address misconceptions, manage crises, or communicate their values effectively. Traditionally, many fellowships rely on word-of-mouth, personal invitations, and physical publicity (such as flyers and posters) to engage students. While these methods have been effective to some extent, modern PR involves much more. It includes digital engagement, crisis management, reputation building, and strategic communication. The university environment is

dynamic, and students are increasingly influenced by social media, online content, and branding. If fellowships do not adapt to these changing trends, they risk losing relevance and engagement. Another critical issue of Pentecostal fellowships is retention. Attracting students through publicity and advertising is not enough. Keeping them actively engaged will require follow up strategies, clear messaging and prompt and accurate communication which they lack.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study will achieve the following Objectives:

1. Ascertain the various Public relations strategies employed among Pentecostal fellowships in the University of Benin
2. Determine how effective these public relations strategies are to the Pentecostal fellowships in the university of Benin
3. Examine the challenges facing Pentecostal fellowships in implementing effective public relations strategies in the University of Benin
4. Suggest recommendations for improving public relations approaches to enhance outreach, engagement and sustainability of the Pentecostal fellowships in UNIBEN.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions will guide the study:

1. What are the various Public relations strategies employed among Pentecostal fellowships in the University of Benin?
2. How effective are public relations strategies to the Pentecostal fellowships in the university of Benin?
3. What are the challenges facing Pentecostal fellowships in implementing effective public relations strategies in the University of Benin?
4. What are the possible recommendations for improving public relations approaches to enhance outreach, engagement and sustainability of the Pentecostal fellowships in UNIBEN?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study serves as a reference material for students of the mass communication field and potential members to provide them with a better understanding of fellowship identity, inclusivity and accessibility through public relations strategies. It also provides clarity on how public relations strategies shape public perception of religious groups on campus. It reveals the various public relations strategies used in fellowships, its effect as well as the challenges and preferable

strategies to adopt too. More so, This study provides Pentecostal fellowship leaders in the University of Benin, insights on how to better attract and retain members through effective communication and engagement. It helps them manage crises and controversies effectively and preventing reputational damage. It also encourages the adoption of modern public relations practices, including social media, storytelling, and digital outreach. Again, this study contributes to academic discussions on the role of public relations in religious organizations and student communities. It serves as a reference for future studies on religious public relations strategies in university settings. It also highlights the impact of social and digital media on faith-based engagement. Furthermore, this study provides insights to the university administration on best practices for regulating and supporting religious organizations on campus. It also contributes to knowledge by providing academia and researchers who intend to work on a similar area a reference material for further studies. The overall significance of the study is to provide practical recommendations for improving communication, strengthening engagement and fostering a positive public image helping Pentecostal fellowships in the University of Benin grow while maintaining relevance in an evolving digital landscape.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study focuses on how Pentecostal fellowships use public relations strategies to harness growth, resolve crisis, trigger proactivity and obtain a favourable image amongst it's publics. The geographic boundary is limited to the Pentecostal fellowships in the university of Benin. This study focuses on public relations strategies within the current academic session and the target population cuts across the university of Benin students, Pentecostal fellowships members, Pentecostal fellowships leaders and the university staffs and administration.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher was faced with several challenges in the course of this research work. Among such was access to Pentecostal fellowships and their leaders, limited works/ references on Pentecostal churches and their public relations strategies, limited scope of the study and finances too.

1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS

To enhance clarity and ensure a proper understanding of this research work, it is essential to define the frequently used terms to prevent any misconceptions.

1. **ASSESSMENT:** This is the process of evaluating, measuring or analysing something to determine its quality, effectiveness or performance.

2. FELLOWSHIP: This refers to a company of people that share the same interest or aim. In Christianity, it is a community of believers who worships, supports and encourage one another in their faith.

3. PUBLIC RELATIONS: The British institute of Public relations (BIPR) defines public relations as the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. Grunig and Hunt (1984 p.4.) " Public relations are the management of communication between an organization and its publics". It is simply the strategies of communication that builds a mutually beneficial relationship between an organization and its publics.

4. PENTECOSTAL: This refers to a Christian movement that emphasizes the work of the Holy spirit, spiritual gifts and a personal experience of faith.

5. STRATEGY: A plan of action intended to achieve a specific goal

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Concept of Public Relations

The concept of public relations has been explained through multiple definitions. However, they have a lot in common and major point of reference is that Public relations involves creating mutual understanding between organizations and their publics. Black (1996) as cited in Asemah 2022 defines Public relations as the art and science of achieving harmony with the environment through mutual understanding based on truth and full information. Public relations as an art is the process of crafting positive stories and building positive relationships. As a science, it is based on factual data and strategic planning. Ogbemi (2014) opined that the concept of public relations is often confused with marketing, advertising, publicity, product promotion and propaganda. While all these are connected or parts of public relations, it is very essential to properly differentiate them from public relations to avoid misconceptions. The word "advertise" originates from the Latin 'advertere' which means to turn towards or take note of (Online encyclopedia cited in Asemah 2022).

Asemah (2022) defined advertising as a "non personal communication about an organisation and its products that is transmitted to a target audience through a mass medium; it is a kind of promotional activity". He expatiated further by opining that advertising is a small world but a whole world in itself. This is because advertising is paid and a mediated presentation of information about services, products or ideas with the specific goal of informing, persuading and reminding the target market about the company's offerings. Marketing on the other hand as noted by Philip Kotler (2012), cited in The Business Libre Texts article is the science and art of exploring, creating and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. Marketing is all about identifying market needs and desires, creating and distributing the desired product or services as well as making profit. Publicity is the public visibility and awareness of a person, product, service or organization often gained through media coverage or other forms of communication. Product promotion is the process of increasing consumer awareness and interest in a product or service to encourage purchase and loyalty. Propaganda as noted in Ogbemi 2014 lacks the respect for logic, truth and sound reasoning. It is a systematic attempt to manipulate or influence public opinion by using symbols, words and other forms of communication to shape beliefs, attitudes or actions (Asemah 2011). The aforementioned above could be part of Public relations but are not what Public relations is all about. "Public relations is a profession that embraces the principles of psychology, sociology, human resources, public information, issues and crisis management, organisational counselling, marketing and promotion, branding, digital communication, advertising as well as events management"(Oso, Pate, & Olatunji, 2023, p. 3). Edward .L. Bernays (the father of modern public relations) puts this concisely when he opined

that Public relations is "art applied to science" given its roots in humanity and social science. Frank Jefkins (1978) says "Public relations consists of all forms of planned communication both inward and outward between an organization and its publics for the purpose of achieving objectives concerning mutual understanding".

This implies that Public relations applies to the internal and external publics of an organization with the utmost aim of building and maintaining a positive image and perception of the organization. As an activity, it is complex indeed and has many components and structures which are Corporate social responsibility, press releases, internal relations, media relations, government relations, community relations and crisis communication to mention a few. It is therefore represented as a profession that uses communication to create and sustain favourable image and reputation among its strategic stakeholders called the publics (Asemah, 2012). Public Relations is beyond managing an organization's image. It cuts across how relationships are built, maintained and nurtured through communication. It is a management function that focuses on two-way communication and relationship that will benefit the organization and its publics. Whether in a Religious organization, Business, Political settings and whatever kind of association, Public Relations serves as a bridge between an organization and its audience ensuring that messages are clear, engagement is meaningful and trust is established. Without Public Relations, Chaos is bound to occur. This is because Public relations facilitates communication which helps clear up misunderstanding and promote healthy relationships and rapport. Public Relations is also about earning trust. Messages are crafted and delivered in a way that shapes public perception and earns their trust while fostering mutual understanding. According to Phawa (2023) as cited in Asemah et al. 2023, "Public relations is a strategised process of managing the release and spread of organisation-related information to the public to maintain a favourable reputation of the organisation and its brands". Significantly, Public relations is the act of building connections and creating lasting impression, not just in the media but also in the minds of people. This goes beyond publicity and attention but continuous and intentional loyalty and sustainability of the organisation. This plays a key role in building and maintaining an organisation's credibility. Public relations is also managing an organisation's information to avoid misinterpretation of its intentions, perceiving public opinions, positively influencing such opinions, promoting good rapport and goodwill between individuals, organisations, and other stakeholders. It also involves communicating through mass communication tools such as press releases, newsletters, personal phone calls, letters, and interpretative news materials about the organisation.

Through research, public relations officers also assess public to issues affecting an organisation with a view to changing a negative impression to a positive one through effective two-way persuasive communication. Grunig and Hunt (1984) believe that public relations specialists play "boundary roles," functioning at the edge of an organisation and liaising between the organisation and its internal and external publics. In this context, crisis management can be resolved through prompt and strategic media engagement. This is where the importance of media relations becomes evident. Media relations involves working with varying media for the purpose of informing the publics of an organisation's mission, policies and practices in a positive, consistent and credible manner. (Asemah, Ekeharefo, Edegoh & Ogwo, 2013, p. 91). This

implies that organisations have to establish, build and sustain a favourable relationship with the media in order to disseminate information to their publics in a reasonable and satisfactory manner especially during moments of crisis. Proper community relations and engagement can also soften or resolve crisis. The liaison between an organization and its host community is of a great significance not just for the sustainability of the organisation but to alleviate crisis too.

Asemah et al (2013, p. 7) opines that "Community relations refers to the various methods companies use to establish and maintain a mutually beneficial relationship with the communities in which they operate". Broom & Sha (2013), as cited in (Oso et al., 2023, p. 8), explains extensively that public relations conducts planned and sustained programs as part of an organisation's management; manages the relationship between an entity and its stakeholders; monitors awareness, opinion, attitudes, and behaviour inside and outside the entity; analyses the impact of policies, procedures, and actions on stakeholders; identifies policies, procedures and actions that conflict with the public interest and organisational survival and counsels management on establishing new policies, procedures; actions beneficial to the organisation and its publics and establishes and maintains two-way communication between the organisation and its publics. Public relations is a profession that uses communication to create and sustain favourable image and reputation among its strategic stakeholders called the publics. In other words, it establishes cordial and fruitful relationship between an organisation and its publics, including directors, customers, suppliers, bankers, creditors, shareholders, community leaders, media, top management officials and agencies. (Asemah, Asake & Nkwam- Uwaoma 2023, p.2). In essence, public relations encompass all these branches and strategies that an organization utility to be sustained in business. Public relations is the strategic management of communication between an organization and its various publics aimed and shaping perception, building trust and fostering lasting relationships (Grunig and Hunt 1984).

Public relations in Nigeria is regulated by the Nigerian institute of Public relations (NIPR) which ensures professionalism and ethical practices in the industry. Public relations help Nigeria as a country to manage its various sectors and cultural sensitivity.

2.1.2 Factors that aided the development of Public relations

The rise of newspapers, radio and eventually television provided new ways to reach large audiences. Asemah (2022, p 185) propounds that the advent of media like radio, television, newspapers, magazines and internet, has helped us to disseminate public relations messages to domestic and international audiences. This made it necessary for organisations to actively shape their public image and maintain good communication with the public, giving public relations a stronger role in the society. "The expansion of newspapers, radio, and television opened vast new channels to the public, making it essential for organizations to manage their image and influence opinion through strategic communication." Cutlip, 1994. Industrial revolution is another determinant that led to the development of public relations in Nigeria. The rise of big businesses and industries, there was a great need for companies to maintain their public image especially in response to criticisms and crisis. "The emergence of public relations coincided with the

Industrial Revolution, which created a significant economic divide between the wealthy and the working class. In its formative years, public relations was often a reactionary measure aimed at countering negative publicity and enhancing the image of businesses and prominent figures". EBSCO, n.d. Essentially public relations became a tool for managing negative publicity and promoting a more positive perception of businesses and influential individuals. As literacy and education became more widespread and improved, the general public became more informed. Organisations became more deliberate on how to communicate. Asemah (2022, p. 185) asserts that the need to bridge the communication gap between organisations and their numerous publics was one of the initial factors that brought about the development of public relations practice. Public relations emerged as a way to guide public opinion and ensure accurate and persuasive communication to their audiences. "Public opinion is the aggregate of individual opinions on an issue affecting those individuals. It is the lifeblood of democracy and the essence of public relations." (Cutlip and Centre 2006). Also, the realisation of how serious problems can affect or tarnish the image of an organisation brought about long term planning and crisis management strategies. "For individuals and organizations alike, a reputation is far easier to destroy than it is to build" (Griffin, 2014). This means it takes a long time and lot of effort to build a good reputation but one crisis can ruin it very quickly hence the importance of Public relations.

More so, Public relations was developed as democratic systems developed and citizens gained more influence in decision making. The government officials and public figures realised the importance in gaining public trust and support. "The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society" (Bernays, 1928, p. 37). Furthermore, Political figures and social activists sought public support and opinions, they applied public relations strategies such as messaging, audience engagement etc which led to the development of Public relations as a field. "Politics did make use of publicity agents in political movements, campaigns, lobbying, and in local government." (Myers 2014). Conclusively, the use of propaganda and organised communication for support and morale during global conflicts led to the development of modern public relations.

2.1.3 Concept of Public relations strategies

Public relations is the strategic management of relationships between an organisation and its diverse publics through the use of communication, to achieve mutual understanding, realise organizational goals and serve the public interest (Flynn, Gregory & Valin 2008, cited in Ezekiel Asemah, 2022). Public relations is inseparable from management because it performs management functions. Odoh (2007) as cited in Asemah 2022 sees management as the direction of the enterprise through planning, organising, coordinating and controlling of its human and material resources towards the achievement of the predetermined objectives. Management is done to properly utilize an organization's resources so as to achieve the aims and objectives that have been set. There are various strategies of public relations that are aimed at managing an organization resources (internal and external). Internal relations refer to the management and maintenance of relationships within an organization. It involves the strategies and process used to create a positive work environment, strengthen employees' engagement and align internal

stakeholders with the organisation goals and values. Internal relations is very essential in every organization as they control and determine the the output of the organization to it's external publics. An organization cannot be sustained without a strong internal foundation. An organization divided against itself cannot stand as emphasised in the holy book, Matthew 12:25 which states "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand ". Internal relations is not just about communicating internally but about building trust, loyalty and alignment within an organization.

An organization internal publics is made of it's employees, top management, lower level managers, board of directors and shareholders. There have to be a mutual understanding between the management of an organization and it's employees, knowing their hierarchy and importance as well as performing their various roles for an organization to thrive. Employee relations as defined by Asemah (2022) refers to a planned and continuous communication activity of an organisation with the aim of ensuring lasting peace and harmony between the employer and employees. It is all activities done to place the employees in a favourable relationship with the organisation's managers. Black (1989) observes that employee relations embrace almost everything other than pay which encourages employees to make maximum contribution to the attainment of the organization's goal. Financial relations is another strategy of public relations. Every organization needs adequate finances to be in operation and function effectively. Organizations get their finances through different ways which includes loans from banks, stock exchange and other financial institutions. Organizations ought to have a good and continuous relationship with financial institutions not just when there is the need of money but also to have a good rapport with the financial publics. It also creates an understanding of a company's operations, problems and prospects as a means of arousing shareholder's and investors interest. Oyeneye (1997) as cited in Asemah 2022 explains financial relations as "the strategic, planned and continuous communication with all the financial publics that are important to the financial success of an organization". Another essential tool for public relations is media relations. Media are vehicles used in conveying messages from a source to a large destination and every organization must get in touch with its relevant publics hence the need for Media relations. Public relations officers should always be in contact with media practitioners so that it can be of ease to disseminate information to their target audience especially its external publics. Tyav (2008, p.19) as cited in Asemah 2022 posits that the public relations practitioner using media relations as a tool ensures that the individual media practitioner and the media organization he or she represents is positively disposed to his or her organization so that they would represent it to the audience within the context of their understanding of the said organization". In Media relations, efforts are made to reach out and establish a special and profitable relationship with journalists, reporters, editors, publishers, writers, etc. This will make the two parties communicate and support each other. Babaleye (2013) compares building and managing media relations to a young man courting a lady, where constant communication, complementary messages and giving of material gifts is needed to fuel the relationship. Community relations as a tool for public relations refers to the various methods companies use to establish and maintain a mutually beneficial relationship with the communities in which they operate (Asemah, Ekeharefo & Ogwo 2013).

A company is a vital part of a community and as such, it has obligations to the community as to earn their trust, cooperation and loyalty. Good community relations include good efforts to improve the quality of life in the community (Asemah 2022). Njoku (2000, p. 27) as cited in Asemah et al (2013) sees community relations as “the sphere of public relations that covers enlisting the corporation and support of civic authorities and local citizens of the area in which the organisation is located. Organizations need to constantly interact with its host community and this interaction has to do with provision of social amenities as well as solving some basic needs that are according to the organization's budget or the memorandum of understanding (MOU) and communicating with them on a regular basis so as to promote the goodwill of the organization. Asemah et al (2013) opines that a key priority for a socially responsible business is to develop and maintain strong and mutually beneficial relationships with its community. Government relations is also another strategy for public relations. This specifically focuses on how an organization interacts with the government and its various branches and officials (Asemah 2022). Study.com (2016) as cited in Asemah 2022, p.240 clearly states that "Government Relations relies heavily on communicating about regulatory issues, one on one conversations with government representatives and lobbying efforts on behalf of a group or organization. Government relations is very essential because the company takes its license to operate from the government as well as they make laws that organizations must abide with. Another prominent strategy of Public relations is customer relations. Customers are the receiving end of an organization's product, services and overall value proposition. They are the backbone of an organization therefore all measures must be in place to ensure that these customers are treated well and adequately satisfied. Asemah (2022) p. 238 opines that the objective of customer relations amongst others are "to retain old customers, attract new customers, take care of customer's complaints and problems within a reasonable time and satisfactorily, to educate customers on the use of organization's products and services, to keep customers informed of new developments such as new products and services, price reviews, product modifications and improvements, to create favourable attitude and opinions about an organization in the minds of customers and to conduct customers relations research or audit on order to determine customers attitudes and opinions about an organization and its products or services". Crisis is not a matter of if, but when. No organization is immune to crises but preparedness can ease its effect. Although crisis are inevitable, some crisis could be prevented by being proactive and not reactive (Ogbemi 2014).

A very important attribute of a public relations practitioner is proactivity. This is the act of strategizing in advance against an expected change or difficulty. A proactive public relation will help sustain an organisation. Ajala (2001) as cited in Asemah 2022, p. 227 states that "Crisis are either violent or non-violent in each category; a crisis can be an act of nature, an intentional event or an unintentional accident. Crisis ought to be planned for and managed because it embarrasses an organization, frightens the public and puts organization's credibility and decency under intense scrutiny. Okoye (2013 p.5) as cited in Ogbemi (2014 p. 69) sees "crisis management as one of the new frontiers of modern management which one must explore and master for the reason that crisis exists even when they have not manifested". Ogbemi 2014 further described crisis management as dealing with threats before, during and after they have occurred. It includes crisis prevention, crisis assessment, crisis handling and crisis termination.

Asemah et al (2021) simply puts crisis management as the public relations you need when disaster strikes. Igben (1997, p. 10) as cited in Asemah 2022 says that international public relations mean the various public efforts of an organization to establish and maintain a positive image in the international community; these efforts refer to policies and activities that are put together in order to project a reputation that embodies honesty, reliability, care, public interest, confidence and understanding". International public relations is an essential part of public relations that helps organizations or public relations practitioners understand the global political, cultural and economic environment in which they operate. Keghku (2005) explains international public relations as a deliberately planned, systematic and research based activities of an industry, marketer, organization, state of a nation, which are aimed at maintaining sound productive and mutual relations with international policies such as customers, government agents, business organizations, non-governmental organizations and many others. These are the major strategies of Public relations that helps an organization to establish, build and maintain a mutual relationship between itself and the various publics.

2.1.4 Concept of Pentecostal fellowships

The word "Pentecostal" is derived from a Greek word " Pentekoste" which means "fiftieth". It refers to the fiftieth day after Passover in Jewish tradition and later became significant in Christianity as the day the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus disciples (Acts 2). It is referred to as the "Birthday of the church" as it was from that moment that the disciples were empowered to spread the Gospel. Macchia (2006, p. 6) says, "It was the day in which the Holy Spirit made a unique visit to the earth to empower his apostles". Pentecostalism emerged through a series of worldwide revivals that spread globally through missionary networks and local Indigenous ministries (Anderson 2013). It refers to a renewal movement within Christianity which places emphasis on a direct personal experience with God through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Livingstone (1980, p.391) conceptualises Pentecostalism as "a moderate religious movement (within Christianity) whose adherents share a common belief in the possibility of receiving the same experience as the first Christians did".

Pentecostal fellowships therefore, refer to all the fellowships that uphold the belief that all Christians should seek a post conversion experience called baptism of the Holy Ghost which is believed to be accompanied by a sign which is the gift of tongues or speaking in tongues traditionally seen as a baptism of holiness through sanctification given to those who already received a baptism of regeneration. This act of speaking in tongues among other things marks Pentecostal fellowships out among other sects in the Christian fold. According to Clifton 2007 as cited in Vodney 2023, some Pentecostal groups, seeking an experience of the Spirit subsequent to conversion, manifesting charismatic empowerment, and speaking with tongues have become detached from a larger theological narrative and other spiritual realities and ritual practices. This implies that some Pentecostals are so focused on dramatic spiritual experiences that may lose sight of the bigger fuller spiritual life and theological meaning that should surround and support these experiences. Pentecostal fellowships are dynamic, spontaneous and energetic in their worship. Pentecostal fellowships believe that faith should be felt and experienced. They believe

in a personal fellowship with God through the Holy spirit and emphasises on encounters which births testimonies and are about faith in action and believing that God is real, present and working. Rather than knowing God, they believe in experiencing God personally. The Pentecostal movement is theologically and historically close to the Charismatic Movement as it significantly influenced the Movement, and sometimes the terms Pentecostal and Charismatic are used interchangeably (Blumhofer, 1998). In a general sense the emphasis of scholars that explored the concept of Pentecostalism centred on the direct personal experience of God through the Holy Spirit.

Thus, the Holy Spirit is essentially the main figure of Pentecostalism. Pentecostalism is derived from some presumed born again Christians (Pentecostals) into active pastoral ministry as ministers with the assumption that the Holy empowers and secondly, calls them into such ministries (Iheanacho & Ughaerumba, 2016). Although, they stand apart from many traditional churches by emphasizing on spirit led living, evangelism and miracles, they share common foundation in Jesus Christ, The Bible and the mission to spread the Gospel. They are also the fastest growing movement and rapidly gaining influence in the Global South: Africa, Latin America and Asia with an estimation of 600 million Pentecostals worldwide.

2.1.5 Concept of Public relations and Pentecostal fellowships

Public Relations (PR) within Pentecostal fellowships, especially in university settings, plays a crucial role in shaping how the group is perceived both by its internal publics (members, pastors, leaders, administrators etc) and external publics (university community). It involves the strategic management of communication to maintain a positive image, promote activities, encourage participation, and ensure harmony within the fellowship. Just like every other organisation, Pentecostal fellowships need to involve in a two-way communication to reach and engage it's audience. This is clearly stated by Offonry (1985) as cited in Asemah (2022, p. 176) "Public relations is a continuous and constructive inter change between those who are affected by or interested in that business". Pentecostal fellowships, focused on evangelism, spiritual development, and community building, have come to value the importance of intentional and strategic communication. Within the diverse and ever changing environment of a university campus, public relations plays a key role in connecting the fellowship with both its members and the broader academic audience. It helps deliver clear and consistent messaging, uphold a positive public image, and ensure that the fellowship's initiatives are well-received and understood by its publics. Effective public relations is intended to Strengthening Internal Communication. This means maintaining consistent communication with members to keep them informed, inspired, and involved. Goldhaber (1992, p. 5) as cited in Asemah et al 2013, p. 27 avers that communication is the lifeblood of an organisation; it is the glue that binds the organisation; the oil that smoothens the organisation's functions; the thread that ties the system together; the force that pervades the organisation and the binding agent that cement all relationships. This includes the use of bulletin boards, group messaging platforms (like WhatsApp or Telegram), weekly

updates, and fellowship announcements. Also, public relations aims at promoting the Fellowship's Image. This is seen as creating and maintaining a strong public identity that reflects the fellowship's values, mission, and culture. Asemah (2011) asserts that publics make their judgements about their organisations based on the information available to them. This is essential in gaining trust, attracting new members, and building credibility within the university.

More so, Public relations supports evangelism and outreaches. It makes evangelistic efforts more impactful by packaging messages in a way that resonates with diverse audiences on campus. Effective public relations attract and retain members. Through strategic outreach and publicity efforts, public relations support the growth of the fellowship by drawing in new members, retaining old ones and encouraging consistent participation. Furthermore, public relations manage conflict and reserves unity. Many misconceptions can arise from a Pentecostal fellowships such as 'being too dramatic' , 'pressure from leaders ' 'being isolated ' 'over emphasis on prosperity ' etc. which can result to a crisis. Venette (2003) as cited in Ogbemi 2014, p. 69 asserts that crisis is a process of transformation where the old system can no longer be maintained. Public relations resolves crisis by managing it with proper information and strategies. This makes the fellowship gain its relevance and trust from its publics. Effective communication strategies help address misunderstandings, resolve internal issues, and maintain peace and unity among members. External stakeholders like the university authorities, other campus groups and potential members can be effectively managed through public relations.

There are various public relations strategies employed by Pentecostal fellowships which gives it an advantage and makes its operation smooth. Pentecostal fellowships use the digital and social media presence to reach out to it's audience. These platforms are used to post announcements, promote events, share inspirational content, and engage followers with interactive media like videos, reels, and live streams. 'The new media has broken the barriers of communication, allowing for the free flow of information, making it more accessible, interactive and participatory" (Asemah 2023). Organizing campus wide programs such as worship concerts, Bible study seminars, drama nights, and charity outreaches. These events create campus audience engagement, create awareness, demonstrate the fellowship's impact, and attract both spiritual seekers and potential members. Also the use of colour schemes, logos, slogans, themes helps to develop a unique and consistent visual identity. This helps to make the fellowship easily recognizable and reinforces its values in the minds of the audience. The identity of a fellowship embodies it uniqueness and attracts members with its qualities. This could be seen as the unique selling point of the fellowship. Asemah (2022) proposes that the unique selling point shows how your own product is different from the others. The identity and branding of a fellowship determines to a large extent how much members it's can attract and retain.

Fellowships have programs and events they organize that aligns with the spiritual and social goals of the fellowship. Strategic planning of these events reaches a wide audience, impacts the lives of members and achieve the overall objective of the program. Okoro udeze & Agho, 1999, p. 45 as cited in Ogbemi 2014 states that the failure or success of occasions largely depends on the planning and development. Social media platforms, printed flyers, branded materials, public service announcements, and online campaigns are variety of the communication

tools used by Pentecostal fellowships. Through consistent messaging and creative content such as countdowns, hashtags, and teaser videos these fellowships generate excitement and encourage public participation. This promotional effort is important in reinforcing the fellowship's presence in the public sphere. The planning process typically includes setting clear objectives, selecting appropriate themes that resonate with the target audience, choosing suitable venues and dates, and engaging respected speakers or gospel ministers to attract attention and participation. Planning is very essential because failure to plan is planning to fail which will automatically lead to crisis. On the other hand, well-executed events offer opportunities for partnerships, attract positive media coverage, and strengthen the organization's credibility. Another strategy of public relations utilized by Pentecostal fellowships is audience feedback and engagement. Communication requires interaction from both parties and this is not excluded in Pentecostal fellowships. Creating avenues for members and attendees to give feedback through suggestion boxes, informal surveys, or focus groups helps the leadership understand what works, what doesn't, and how to improve future programs and communication. Asemah (2023) states that communication is often a complex two-way process with people sending and receiving messages simultaneously. Pentecostal fellowships operating in a campus environment also collaborate with campus media and stakeholders. They build relationships with the students unions, campus media, staff and university authorities as well as other external publics to gain more exposure and support for major events and initiatives. By working in collaboration with campus media and stakeholders,

Pentecostal fellowships position themselves not just as spiritual havens, but as active and positive contributors to the university community. Crisis management is a huge public relations strategy employed by Pentecostal fellowships. It involves implementing godly communication practices that help address concerns, settle misunderstandings, and strengthen relationships among members. Pentecostal fellowship leaders should model Christ-like transparency in their communication, ensuring that decisions and ministry directions are shared openly with the congregation. This reduces the chances of confusion, misconceptions or misinterpretation, and builds trust within the body of Christ. When handled prayerfully and with wisdom, these practices promote lasting unity, deepen spiritual bonds, and allow the fellowship to reflect the love and harmony of Christ more fully. Public relations in this context goes beyond just publicity, it is an intentional effort to reflect the values of the fellowship through effective communication, outreach, and reputation management.

2.1.6 Challenges of Public relations in Pentecostal fellowships

Public relations play a vital role to how Pentecostal fellowships are perceived both within and outside the Christian community. However, there are unique challenges they face when it comes to maintaining a consistent and positive public image. Pentecostal fellowships often face negative stereotypes, misconceptions and misunderstandings from the wider public and other

denominations, sometimes being labelled as heretical or overly emotional (Anderson 2014). Overcoming these perceptions requires careful, consistent public relations to communicate their beliefs and values authentically. This inevitably exposes Pentecostals to 'heretical teachings as well as abuse by emotionally unstable persons' (Nel 2017:290), who always go beyond and above the Scripture." This quote by Nel simply points out one of the key vulnerabilities within some Pentecostal fellowships. He explained further that because Pentecostalism places a strong emphasis on personal spiritual experiences, such as prophecy, speaking in tongues or healing, there is a risk that some people may misuse this freedom. Certain individuals can claim to be called by God and bring in distorted and extreme teachings manipulated with the Holy Book which can damage the credibility of the fellowship and lead to public misunderstanding. Outsiders can generalise the entire Pentecostal fellowship movement as false or doctrinally unsound, based on the actions of a few. This is a public perception problem and it triggers concerns amongst Pentecostal fellowships leaders. Also, With the emergence of digital and social media, Pentecostal fellowships must balance the need for broad outreach with maintaining doctrinal purity. The risk of misinformation, online controversies, and the dilution of biblical teachings is heightened in the digital age, making it challenging to control the narrative and ensure consistent messaging. "In the digital era, Pentecostal fellowships are tasked with the dual challenge of expanding their outreach through social media while safeguarding the integrity of their doctrinal teachings. The rapid dissemination of information online increases the risk of spreading misinformation and engaging in controversies that can dilute core biblical messages.

This environment complicates efforts to maintain a consistent and authentic representation of their faith across digital platforms" (Eke & Ndubuisi, 2025). Pentecostal fellowships struggle navigating doctrinal integrity and media engagement. Eke & Ndubuisi explains further that the consistency and the accuracy of the church's message can get lost in the flood of online voices and controversies arise when the content is misunderstood or taken out of context. Hence, Pentecostal fellowships must be intentional and discerning in their online communication, making sure that their teachings align with the Scriptures and represent their core values faithfully. Pentecostal fellowships also face challenges in building relationships with other Christian groups. Collaborating with other Christian denominations can be difficult for Pentecostal fellowships due to differences in beliefs. While there is a desire to build unity and cooperate with other churches, Pentecostals also want to stay true to their unique identity and spiritual practices. This need to balance openness with maintaining their distinct values can make it challenging to manage public relationships and collaborations. As a result, efforts to engage with the wider Christian community must be handled carefully and respectfully to avoid misunderstandings and preserve the fellowship's core message. "Pentecostalism has often been ambivalent about ecumenism, simultaneously expressing a desire for Christian unity and a concern for preserving its distinctive identity" (Vondey 2014, p. 273). Pentecostal fellowships often walk on delicate line wanting to promote unity in the broader Christian community and also maintaining its uniqueness and doctrines. It requires wisdom, mutual respect and clear communication to build partnership without losing doctrinal clarity. Again, the prominence of prosperity teachings in some Pentecostal fellowships attracts public scrutiny and criticism, especially regarding financial transparency and ethical concerns. "The prosperity gospel canters on the belief that God desires all believers to be rich, healthy, and successful, a promise often

enacted through the giving of 'seeds' with the expectation of a greater 'harvest' in return" (Haynes, 2013). She points out that when Pentecostal fellowships focus heavily on wealth and material blessings, it can raise ethical questions and attract public criticism especially when there's a lack of financial openness or when people feel taken advantage of. This challenge can be solved through financial transparency, emphasising on biblical teachings over material gain and ensuring accountability in leadership. Furthermore, Pentecostal fellowships need to constantly adjust their public relations strategies to keep up with fast social and technological changes. Staying updated with new media, handling crises quickly, and connecting with younger people all require flexibility and creativity. This can mean using social media to share faith messages in ways that people can easily connect with, holding online events, or giving young people a chance to talk about their spiritual experiences. Being flexible, creative, and knowing how to use technology well is important for these fellowships to grow and stay important in a rapidly evolving world. In essence, the need for constant adaptation is not just about keeping up with trends but also staying relevant, valuable and impactful according to the core values of faith in a digital era.

2.2 History of Public relations

Public relations is as old as creation. God created the world to reveal his nature and communicate a message about who he is, the kind of world he desires and to establish his reputation as a creator (Gen 1:1- 27). Also, the serpent in the Garden of Eden used strategic communication to influence Eve's perception of God's command (Gen 3:1). He spread a propaganda against God's word to create a favourable image and relationship between himself and Eve. "Public relations is about reputation management" (Asemah, Kente and Nkwam-Uwaoma 2021, p. 3). In the Old testament, it was clearly seen how God communicated his intentions through dreams, signs and prophets. In the new testament, Jesus used parables, miracles and public speaking to influence his audience. In today's world, the methods have changed but the impulse to shape messages, influence thoughts and control narratives has been in place since the onset of time. As defined by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics. Public relations were also practiced before civilization as early as the 1800 BC where Egyptian rulers and societies, used symbolism, carved images and storytelling to influence and control how they were perceived. Another instance is the transatlantic slave trade during the 18th century. The slave traders used Public relations tactics (publishing pamphlets and speeches, portraying slave owners and benevolent caretakers) to justify slave trade and on the other hand the British abolished this same activity through Public relations strategies (moral framing, public outreach etc). Public relations activities also existed in the Ancient Greece where scholars like Aristotle developed the art of persuasion. Their teachings were on ethos (credibility), pathos(emotions) and logos(logics) which laid the foundation for persuasive communication.

In 1900, the first Public relations firm, The Publicity Bureau was established in the United Kingdom. It helped businesses respond to crisis and also change the perception of the audience. It marked the shift from informal Publicity practices to structured strategic communication field clients. Although, The Publicity Bureau did not last long in its original form, it laid the foundations for modern public relations emphasising on public perception being a full time and strategic business. Edward Bernays who is referred to as the modern father of public relations was instrumental in developing public relations into a professional field. He applied psychological principles and social science research to shape public opinions since the 1920s till 1940s. The institute of Public relations (IPR) was founded in 1948 in the United Kingdom and they have played a great role in the growth and development of Public relations profession. They have helped to transform Public relations from an informal practice to a profession with recognized standards, ethics and impacts. The rise of traditional media also helped in the influence of Public relations. In 1980s companies began to imbibe the culture of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and recognized that public trust is critical to their success. During this period, Public relations expanded beyond promotional work to include ethical responsibilities and global communication with a focus on maintaining a positive public perception in an increasingly growing The advent of social media and the Internet changed the landscape of Public relations, giving individuals direct access to their audiences, bypassing traditional media. User generated content and the use of influencers played a role in shaping Public relations making it interactive and engaging. Data analysis was used to track and manage brand's digital presence too. This era shifted communication from one way to a two-way communication system where brands must listen and satisfy their audience to be sustained in business. The future of Public relations will likely be shaped by artificial intelligence (AI) and further integration of digital technologies. These tools will be used to analyse issue, predict trends and also give a more relevant and direct communication experience for their audiences.

2.2.1 History of Public relations in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the history of Public relations spans the pre independence, post-independence and the current era of democratization. It grew from an informal communication strategy to an established profession influencing business, government and society. During the pre-independence era, Public relations was used as a government tool for information control and propaganda by the traditional rulers influenced by the British to get to the Nigerian citizens. The town criers, palace spokesperson and village elders played key roles in managing information, conflicts and maintaining public images for the Kings, Chiefs and community leaders. During the colonial rule, the British Government solely used information to serve it's own interest.

During the period of World war II (1939-1945), the British became more conscious of their enemy propaganda and established a Public relations office in Lagos to counter information from the Germans(Nazi).

The colonial administration in 1944 set up a public relations department in Lagos with units in the Northern, Eastern and Western provinces for effective coverage of the entire country. Back then, the department was to tell the people what government is doing and what it (the public) is supposed to do; publicise Nigeria to Nigerians and the world; and provide the people with cultural values and education, "especially in the field which the ordinary newspapers have not the facilities."(Oso, Pate & Olatunji, p.568). The colonial public relations was concerned about promoting the interest of the British. The emergence of the Nationalists (1940s -1950s) brought about privately owned media outlets to counter the British Government thereby fighting for Independence. They used the media to mobilize public opinion, gain support for independence and challenge colonial policies. The independence era in Nigeria marked a major growth in public relations where the strategies swerved from colonial propaganda tools to a structured and well strategic communication aimed at nation building and public engagement. The Nigerian institute of Public relations (NIPR) was birthed in 1963 as a result of lack of standardization, ethical guidelines and proper training for Public relations practitioners in Nigeria. Multi-national companies like Shell, Chevron etc adopted this strategy to keep their consumers and sustainability in business. The NIPR grew under the military regime where it was used for political image management and not transparent engagement. With democracy return in 1999, Public relations expanded across business, media and even technology. Till date, it remains a key function in Nigeria's public and private sectors.

2.2.2 History of Pentecostal fellowships

Pentecostal fellowships have a long and rich history, spanning more than a hundred years. Their development is closely connected to movements that emphasize the power of the Holy Spirit, personal spiritual experiences, and active communication with God. The spread of Pentecostalism globally has been remarkable and its growth in Nigeria, particularly, has led to both spiritual renewal and social change. The roots of Pentecostalism date back to the early 1900s, with the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles in 1906 often cited as the beginning of the modern Pentecostal movement. Under the leadership of William J. Seymour, this revival was characterized by vibrant, spontaneous worship, speaking in tongues, healing, and prophecies. The powerful experiences that took place there set off a wave of Pentecostalism that spread across the globe, profoundly impacting Christian communities worldwide, including in Africa. Synan (1997) proposes that the Azusa street revival is commonly regarded as the beginning of the modern Pentecostal movement. Many were influenced by this experience directly and

indirectly. As Pentecostalism expanded, various communities established their own fellowships and churches, including groups like the Assemblies of God and the Church of God in Christ. These organizations often reflected common beliefs and cultural identities among their members. Over time, the influence of Pentecostal practices began to spread into other Christian denominations, giving rise to what became known as the Charismatic movement.

According to Anderson (2013 p. 4), "Pentecostalism's incredible diversity due to its deep local roots" played a major role in its ability to grow and influence other Christian traditions, eventually contributing to the rise of the Charismatic movement. Anderson implies that Pentecostalism became so widespread and successful because it adapted to specific cultures and needs of the local communities. It was flexible and appealing to people across different parts of the world. The Pentecostal message was attractive because it emphasized a personal encounter with the Holy Spirit. While traditional Christian denominations focused largely on doctrine, Pentecostalism focused on a living, transformative experience with God, where individuals could feel the power of the Holy Spirit through speaking in tongues and miraculous healings. This movement wasn't only focused on being saved it was more about feeling God's power in everyday situations. Nguyen, (2020) avers that Pentecostalism highlighted that through faith, individuals could bring about concrete changes in their health, financial status, and general well-being. This resonated deeply in Africa where it blended naturally with existing beliefs and life experiences. "Pentecostalism's emphasis on spiritual power and healing resonated with African traditional religious expectations, contributing to its rapid growth across the continent" (Anderson, 2013). Pentecostalism in Africa served as an alternative to the Westernized Christianity introduced during colonial times. It promoted self-empowerment, teaching that through strong faith, individuals could achieve visible improvements in their health, wealth, and overall well-being (Adams, 2022).

2.2.3 History of Pentecostal fellowships in Nigeria

"Pentecostalism, a neo-fundamentalist movement, has quickly grown to become the largest Christian group in Nigeria" (Apata, 2016, p. 1). Pentecostalism was introduced into Nigeria in the 1930s primarily through missionaries and small prayer groups emphasising personal experiences with the Holy Spirit such as speaking in tongues, prophecy and divine healing. One of the key early figures was Rev. S. G. Elton, a British missionary who settled in Nigeria in 1937. He didn't just preach about Pentecostal beliefs, he also nurtured a generation of Nigerian leaders who will later help in the spreading of the movement across the country. In 1950s to 1960s Pentecostalism began to gain stronger grounds in Nigeria. Churches like Faith tabernacle (Living Faith church) and Christ apostolic church (CAC) played a foundation role in shaping Pentecostalism in Nigeria.

They began to spread the doctrine and belief of Pentecostalism as well as making disciples too. In the 1960s, Nigeria was experiencing a huge wave of spiritual hunger, a new breed of Christians began seeking deeper encounters with God marked by speaking in tongues,

prophecy, healing and Holy Spirit baptism, though mainline churches were already well established. This sparked what became known as the Charismatic Renewal which is a movement that even found its way into traditional churches like the Anglican and Methodist denominations, where believers began experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit in fresh and dynamic ways. At the same time, early Pentecostal fellowships like Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) and The Apostolic Church were already creating space for vibrant worship and Spirit-filled evangelism, setting the stage for what was to come. “The emergence of the Charismatic Renewal within the Methodist Church in Nigeria was not a sudden phenomenon; rather, it evolved through various stages, reflecting the spiritual hunger and quest for deeper experiences of God among the laity and clergy alike” (Ekebuisi, 2018, p. 2). The 1980s marked a turning point for Pentecostalism in Nigeria. It was no longer just about foreign missionaries or imported doctrines, this was a home-grown revival, driven by passionate Nigerian leaders who spoke directly to the hearts of their people. Churches like Deeper Life Bible Church, founded by Pastor W.F. Kumuyi, emphasized holiness and personal revival, drawing thousands. At the same time, the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), under Pastor E.A. Adeboye’s leadership, began transforming into a global movement. These churches crept and took root in universities like the University of Nigeria (UNN) and the University of Benin (UNIBEN) and started to flourish as campus fellowships. Led by students, these fellowships were known for their energetic worship, deep Bible study, and a strong drive to share the gospel. More than just spiritual hubs, they became training grounds for the next generation of Pentecostal leaders in Nigeria. Pentecostal fellowships also began forming formal networks and national associations, like the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), to foster unity, accountability, and shared mission till date.

2.3 Opinion review

In recent years, there have been growing interest in how religious groups especially Pentecostal fellowships in universities, use public relations strategies to stay connected and relevant. As I engaged with the topic “The Impact of Public Relations Strategies on Pentecostal Fellowships in the University of Benin,” I found it both intriguing and relevant. This project offered an opportunity to examine how fellowships go beyond spiritual practices and embrace communication tools to reach and retain students.

Personally, I found the intersection of PR and faith-based communities intellectually stimulating and socially significant. At the University of Benin, these fellowships play a big role in students’ life, and their approach to communication is worth assessing and analysing.

This review takes a closer look at the public relations tactics they use, the impact of the efforts on students’ engagement, their connection with the larger campus community, and their relationship at large with the university as an institution. It also elucidates on what they’re doing well and where they might face some challenges in effectively reaching their audience. Public relations in religious organizations, particularly Pentecostal fellowships, involves diverse operations designed to improve relationships with both internal and external publics. These

publics include students, staff, faculty, parents, and the wider university community. The ultimate goal of a public relations strategy is to manage the image of the fellowship and facilitate open communication channels that reflect the core values of the fellowship. Ogbemi (2014, p. 13) asserts that "The ultimate goal of public relations is to improve the image of an organization". For Pentecostal fellowships at the University of Benin, Public relations strategies typically focus on building a compelling identity, maintaining open communication, and conducting impactful outreach efforts. These strategies help the fellowships maintain a steady influx of new members, retain old members, inspire community action and promote their faith based work publicly.

2.3.1 Public relations strategies and their impact in Pentecostal fellowships in Uniben

Fellowships now realize that spiritual messages need support from strategies to truly thrive. They employ these strategies to stay relevant and sustained.

- **Social Media Engagement**

Most active fellowships now have Instagram, WhatsApp groups, TikTok clips, and even X (formerly Twitter) pages where they share flyers, devotionals, member testimonies, and clips from past programs. These platforms have become their digital pulpit. The evolution of the world digitally has pushed these fellowships to stay in touch and relevant to their members via social media platforms and other digital engaging applications. It helps them reach both current and prospective members instantly. For many students, it's the first impression they get of a fellowship even before attending a physical meeting. It also allows them to stay in touch throughout the week, not just on Sundays. More so, services can be streamed online as well as getting the sermon's excerpts too. Storage and accessibility of messages or information online has helped fellowships to operate better as well as reach a wide and vast audience.

- **Event Branding and Publicity**

Events like praise nights, themed services, or special programs are now marketed with well-designed flyers, catchy slogans, and clear communication. Some fellowships even have full "media teams" handling this. A well-branded event creates curiosity. Students are more likely to attend a program that feels organised, current, and appealing. It gives the impression that the fellowship values excellence and not just spiritually, but in how it presents itself. Well branded programs helps establish a position in the minds of the audience. This plays the role of advertising. Asemah (2010) asserts that Advertising is used to rent a space in the minds of the consumer or prospect. Branding Pentecostal programs helps create excitement and makes people more aware and interested in attending.

- **Member Testimonies and Storytelling**

Fellowships increasingly use personal stories from members about how God helped them academically, emotionally, or spiritually as part of their outreach and content. This ensures relatability and proofs of the move of God in a particular program. Stories connect emotionally. When students hear someone they can relate to sharing real struggles and victories, it makes the fellowship feel authentic and human. It builds trust and shows that the fellowship is more than a place of worship but also a community. Storytelling taps into the audience's emotions and often motivates them to relate personally or even try to replicate the experiences shared.

- Community Outreach and Campus Visibility

Fellowships organise humanitarian efforts, clean-up campaigns, food drives, or “random acts of kindness” around the campus. These can also be seen as corporate social responsibility which is simply giving back to the host community. These actions speak louder than words. They create a positive image for the fellowship among students who may not even attend their services. Igben, in Asemah (2013, p. 8) states that organizations are obliged to protect and improve the realities of their operational areas. It shows that the fellowship is active and cares about the campus beyond preaching.

- Crisis Management and Conflict Resolution

Occasionally, misunderstandings happen whether with university authorities, other fellowships, or among members. Vanette (2003) in Ogbemi (2014) argues that “Crisis is a process of transformation where the old system can no longer be maintained”. Effective fellowships use internal communication channels and trained spokespersons to handle such issues with care. This is because how a fellowship handles problems affects its reputation. Those with good crisis communication avoid unnecessary drama and maintain trust. Students are more likely to stay with a group that's honest and transparent when things go wrong.

- Use of Visuals and Multimedia

Fellowships now incorporate video recaps, live streaming, photography, and graphics to capture the energy of their events. These visuals become memory makers. They help with documentation, give returning members something to look back on, and attract new students who prefer a digital-first experience. It also reflects the creative talent within the fellowship. This reflects the evolution of Pentecostal fellowships digitally too.

- Two-way communication system

Communication is a very essential tool in humanity and it's not achieved until feedback is gotten. Ella and Onwochei (2005) as stated in Asemah (2011), " Communication is the act or process of exchanging or sharing information, ideas or feelings between persons using appropriate means.

Pentecostal fellowships In Uniben as an organization have utilized feedback and surveys to play a vital role in members retention. This ensures improved members experience and stronger relationship bonds. These feedbacks and surveys cover a range of important questions which are more than administrative tools. They are public relations instruments that promotes openness, trust and improvement. This make a members feel valued, heard, seen and acknowledged which in turn increases loyalty and attendance. This also helps leaders to plan and organize programs better promoting stronger internal communication. These feedbacks and surveys an be carried out using suggestions boxes and digitally via Google forms and WhatsApp polls.

2.3.2 Strengths of public relations strategies among Pentecostal fellowships in UNIBEN

A key strength of the public relations strategies used by Pentecostal fellowships at the University of Benin is their emphasis on social media engagement. Recognizing the widespread use of technology among students, these fellowships have successfully leveraged platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to share updates on services, events, and prayer meetings. Asemah et al (2013, p. 39) sees digital media as channels of communication that join the logic of multimedia formats with the electronic system compatibilities and controls of modern technologies, television and computer technologies. This digital approach has expanded their reach, enabling them to connect with students who may not be able to attend physical gatherings. Another strength lies in the use of vibrant and engaging digital content, such as inspirational posts, videos, and testimonies from fellowship members. This approach fosters a sense of community online. These digital public relations tools make the fellowship more accessible and relevance to a younger, tech savvy audience aligning effectively with the university environment where students are accustomed to online interactions. More so, the fellowships are involved in various community outreach programs. They regularly hold charity events, run empowerment projects, and take part in activities that show care for the wider university community. These efforts display their dedication not only to spiritual growth but also to the physical and social wellbeing of others at large. By actively contributing to societal development, the fellowships build a positive image and earn the trust of students and the surrounding community. Additionally, several fellowships create a strong and consistent identity through the use of logos, colour schemes, taglines, and slogans, making it easier for students to recognize and connect with their presence physically and digitally. Moreover, fellowships frequently request for and gather feedback from students through polls, comments, or suggestion boxes (digital or physical), allowing them to adjust their messages and activities to better serve students' needs and interest.

2.3.3 Challenges of Public relations strategies among Pentecostal fellowships in UNIBEN

Although, the public relations strategies among Pentecostal fellowships at the University of Benin have notable strengths, there are also several challenges they have that limits the realisation of their full potential. Firstly, the social media can become overwhelming when it

comes to information consumption. University students frequently receive a wide range of notifications from different student organizations, including fellowships. As a result of this, it can be difficult for any single fellowship to grab attention or keep it over time with its audience. In this context, public relations strategies need to be constantly updated to stay interesting and relevant to their audience. Another challenge is the lack of professional public relations expertise in many fellowships. While many fellowships are led by passionate and committed students, they may not always have the training or knowledge to effectively manage public relations strategies. Public relations field attracts many inexperienced practitioners who tend to create false image of the activity and frustrates the honest efforts of great majority of competent public relations people (Asemah 2022). This gap in expertise can lead to poorly executed campaigns, missed opportunities for positive media attention and inconsistent communication strategies. Moreover, many public relations efforts may be driven by short term goals rather than building a long lasting relationship and presence with the students and the university body as a whole. This counters the main aim of public relations which is establishing and maintaining a favourable relationship between an organisation and its publics as defined by the British institute of public relations (BIPR). Furthermore, many fellowships lack the essential resources to reach a wider audience and implement public relations strategies. Beautiful and well-coordinated initiatives need to be properly funded (Asemah 2022).

2.3.4 Recommendations for Improving Public Relations Strategies in UNIBEN

Several improvements can be made by Pentecostal fellowships at the University of Benin to boost the impact of their public relations efforts. Firstly, equipping members with training in Media relations, effective communication and content creation can greatly enhance the quality of their outreach, allowing public relations campaigns to be more impactful and professionally executed. Professionalism in public relations field is very crucial. Also, strengthening ties with university administration and academic staff could lead to more collaborative and mutual beneficial relationship. By partnering on programs that support both academic excellence and spiritual development, it enhances the institution's overall reputation while also advancing the fellowship's mission. The importance of public relations is, therefore, evident with the recognition by institutions and organisations of their social responsibilities to render public services to the people and communities (Asemah 2022). More so, to connect to a wider range of students, it is important that fellowships emphasise on values that resonates across different backgrounds such as community service, personal development and inclusivity. By addressing shared concerns like mental well-being and peer support, they can craft a more relatable and welcoming public relations approach that speaks to the vast experiences within the student community. In addition, while digital platforms remain vital for outreach, fellowships can enhance their impact by broadening the scope of their content beyond solely religious messages. They can incorporate students' experiences, showcasing their contributions to campus life and engage in broader discussions on issues affecting the student body, such as mental health, academic pressure and social justice. This can help foster deeper connections and demonstrate their relevance within the wider university community.

2.4. Empirical Review

For the Empirical Review, studies that are related to the work have been carefully selected. The works are discussed below:

1. Ojo (2007) and later expanded by Mathew and Ogedebe (2012), the researchers looked at how churches in Nigeria especially Pentecostal ones use public relations to manage how they are seen by the public. They found that many churches have moved beyond just preaching; they now also focus on building a good image through things like community service, social media, and being transparent with their activities. For example, when churches carry out medical outreaches, donate to the needy, or organize community events, it helps people trust them more. These are corporate social activities that builds loyalty and goodwill between the fellowships and their stakeholders. Likewise, churches that actively use the traditional media like radio, TV, or digital media like Instagram to share their messages tend to grow their audience and gain respect. Most importantly, churches that are open about how they handle finances and respond well to criticism are often more trusted. This study is highly relevant to this project because students are more likely to engage with fellowships that feel relevant, transparent, and socially responsible. A fellowship that communicates well, serves others on campus, and handles internal matters with integrity is more likely to have a lasting, positive influence among students.

2. Princewell (2017) conducted a study that focused on the internal and external challenges Pentecostal churches face when using public relations (PR) to communicate with their members and the public. The study explored how these churches balance their spiritual mission with the need to maintain a positive public image. In his findings he noted that many Pentecostal churches struggle to define the boundaries between evangelism and PR. While trying to spread the gospel, they also want to appear modern, organized, and socially relevant. This can sometimes make them appear more like corporate organizations than spiritual communities. For example, churches often use branding, promotional materials, and even celebrity-style advertising for their pastors or events. While these approaches may help them attract attention, they can also raise questions about their true intentions. Another challenge identified in the study is the lack of trained PR personnel within church settings. In many cases, pastors or church administrators take on PR roles without having formal training, which can lead to communication mistakes, poor crisis handling, or unintentional negative publicity. The study also pointed out that churches often react defensively to criticism instead of engaging in open dialogue, which can harm their credibility. More so, the study encourages religious bodies including student fellowships to see PR not as a flashy marketing tool but as a way to build genuine relationships and maintain public trust. This insight is important to this study because a campus filled with educated, socially

aware students, fellowships that rely too heavily on hype or fail to handle criticism transparently may lose trust. However, those that communicate sincerely, respond to concerns openly, and focus on service rather than self-promotion are more likely to thrive.

3. Olayinka and Ayodele (2015): These researchers examined how branding and public image affect how young people especially students connect with Pentecostal churches in urban Nigeria. Their research looked at how churches use visual identity, media presence, and event planning to attract and retain members, particularly among youth populations. The study found that many Pentecostal churches now treat their outreach and engagement with the public much like organizations in the corporate world. This includes designing professional logos, using branded t-shirts, banners, media kits, and investing heavily in social media. These strategies were not just about looking modern, they helped churches become more relatable and appealing, especially to younger audiences who are drawn to creativity and excellence. However, the research also raised some important concerns. While branding can attract attention, it does not always guarantee spiritual depth or meaningful connection. Some churches, according to the study, placed too much emphasis on appearances sometimes creating “celebrity pastors” or over-promoted events without adequately focusing on spiritual growth, discipleship, or community service. As a result, some young people who were initially drawn by the image eventually lost interest when they perceived a lack of authenticity or purpose. Conclusively, the study recommends a balanced approach where fellowships maintain a strong, organized image but also prioritize depth, mentorship, and transparent leadership. This balance fosters both initial attraction and long-term retention.

This finding is important to this project as it emphasizes on having a well-organized image such as well-designed posters, social media presence, and coordinated fellowship events which makes a fellowship more attractive and professional. However, if the spiritual and relational aspects are missing, students may become disengaged over time.

4. Uche and Ojebuyi (2016) conducted a study focused on how Pentecostal churches in Nigeria are using social media as a tool for public relations and community engagement. Their research explored platforms like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram, analysing how churches use these tools to interact with members, spread their messages, and manage their public image. The study revealed that social media has become one of the most powerful public relations tools for Pentecostal churches, particularly among youth. Unlike traditional forms of PR (e.g., print media or public announcements), social media allows for immediate interaction, real-time feedback, and wider reach especially to younger, tech-savvy audiences like university students. Churches that actively maintained engaging content such as inspirational quotes, sermon clips, live services, event updates, and behind-the-scenes footage were found to have higher levels of member loyalty and public engagement. According to the study, this content not only informed but also humanized the church, making it more approachable and relatable. However, the study also warned that social media can amplify both positive and negative messages. Churches without a clear PR strategy often failed to handle negative comments or online crises properly.

Some also struggled with consistency, posting only during events but remaining silent the rest of the time, which weakened their influence online.

In relation to this project, this study displays how most students are active on social media and fellowships that use these platforms creatively and consistently can strengthen their visibility and connection with both members and non-members. However, feedbacks must be responded to carefully and maturely to ensure alignment with their values and also avoid conflicts.

5. Okoro and Nwafor (2013) carried out an insightful study on how public relations strategies are used to manage conflicts within churches, especially Pentecostal churches in Nigeria. Their research focused on internal disagreements, leadership tussles, and doctrinal misunderstandings that sometimes lead to division or public scandals. The study revealed that one of the major challenges churches face is internal conflict escalation often due to poor communication and a lack of structured conflict resolution mechanisms. In many cases, issues that could have been resolved quietly become public controversies simply because the church failed to engage in proper communication early enough.

According to the researchers, effective public relations can serve as a bridge between conflicting parties, helping leadership address sensitive issues diplomatically while maintaining the church's image and member trust. Strategies such as transparent dialogue, apology statements (when necessary), regular leadership communication, and use of neutral mediators were seen as effective in calming tensions and preserving unity. Importantly, the study also highlighted that proactive PR is more effective than reactive PR. In other words, churches that already have good communication structures in place such as media units, feedback systems, and leadership transparency are better able to prevent conflicts from escalating.

This is highly relevant to Pentecostal fellowships in institutions like UNIBEN, where conflicts may arise from leadership elections, financial management, or interpersonal issues among members. Fellowships that rely only on silence or secrecy during such moments often lose credibility. However, those that use proper PR strategies tend to resolve issues faster and retain trust.

6. Asemah and Edegoh (2013) investigated how strategic communication especially through public relations contributes to the growth and stability of Pentecostal churches in Nigeria. The study focused on how intentional, well-planned communication efforts can influence not just membership size, but also public trust, loyalty, and long-term sustainability. The researchers argued that many churches that experienced significant growth did not rely on chance or charisma alone. Instead, they embraced structured communication strategies using announcements, newsletters, social media campaigns, community outreach programs, and media appearances to connect with both internal and external audiences. These forms of public relations were not just for show but were aligned with the church's vision and message. One of the standout points in the study was that churches that communicated clearly, consistently, and transparently were more likely to attract and retain members, especially the youth. Strategic communication helped these churches address rumors quickly, clarify controversial issues, and

project a coherent identity to the public. However, the study also warned that when churches fail to plan their communication, their message becomes inconsistent, and confusion can arise both inside and outside the church. Poor or reactive PR could lead to declining attendance, loss of credibility, or even crisis if a scandal occurs.

For Pentecostal student fellowships in universities like UNIBEN, this study reinforces on the importance of using clear strategies like posters, social media, text messages, and face-to-face engagement to intentionally communicate their vision and activities. This shows that when public relations is done strategically it becomes a powerful tool for building, sustaining, and growing a faith-based organization.

7. Nwosu (2011) conducted a study to examine how public relations efforts by churches influence audience trust, that is, how much people believe in and feel connected to religious organizations based on how they communicate. The research particularly focused on how trust is built through transparency, consistency, and responsiveness. The study showed that many Pentecostal churches in Nigeria have come to realize that public trust is no longer automatic. In today's digital and information-driven world, people especially youth question what they see, hear, and follow. To remain relevant and respected, churches must engage their audiences with clear, honest, and consistent communication. According to Nwosu, churches that invest in open communication are more likely to gain the loyalty and respect of their members and the public. Public relations strategies such as regular updates, feedback systems, media briefings, and social media engagement play a critical role in building this trust. On the other hand, churches that communicate poorly, hide information, or only address the public when there's a crisis tend to lose credibility over time. The study stressed that public relations is not just about "promoting" the church, but about building a relationship with the audience.

This finding is pertinent to this study because it explains how students are more likely to join and stay in a fellowship where they feel heard, informed, and respected. Ultimately, Nwosu's study emphasises that public relations is relationship building and when that relationship is rooted in trust, growth and influence will follow.

8. Eze (2014) explored how public relations strategies help Pentecostal churches retain their members. The study found that when churches engage members through personal communication, appreciation, transparency, and regular follow-ups, people feel valued and are more likely to stay. Simple gestures like birthday wishes, pastoral messages, and consistent updates create a sense of belonging. On the other hand, churches that focus only on attracting new members without maintaining communication often struggle with members' retention and dropout.

For Pentecostal fellowships in UNIBEN, this means that strong internal Public relations is caring for members beyond services which is essential for building loyalty and long-term engagement.

9. Obiorah and Chinedu (2015) conducted a study on how effective public relations (PR) strategies strengthen the relationship between Pentecostal churches and the communities they serve. Their research highlighted that churches are not just spiritual institutions, they are also social actors that influence, and are influenced by the communities around them. The study

found that churches that regularly engage in community-based outreach such as free medical programs, educational support, sanitation efforts, or youth empowerment initiatives are often seen more positively by the public. These public relations driven efforts go beyond preaching. They show that the church cares about people's daily lives. The study concludes that positive church community relations are not automatic but they must be built intentionally through strategic and compassionate public relations efforts.

This is especially relevant for Pentecostal fellowships in UNIBEN, which operate within a diverse university community. Fellowships that build a positive image through acts of service, environmental care, or by participating in campus related events are more likely to attract respect and collaboration. Public relations, in this sense, becomes a bridge between the fellowship and the wider student body.

10. Alozie and Chukwu (2016) conducted a study on how public relations (PR) strategies contribute to reputation management in Pentecostal churches in Nigeria. Their work explored how churches maintain a positive public image in a society where religious institutions are constantly under public scrutiny due to scandals, misinformation, or leadership controversies. The researchers found that churches with a solid public relations framework were more likely to handle crises effectively and bounce back from negative publicity. They did this by having trained spokespersons, media teams, and clear communication policies in place. These churches proactively shared their achievements, community activities, and teachings through social and traditional media, which helped reinforce their credibility and influence. On the flip side, churches that lacked public relations systems often struggled when faced with allegations or internal conflicts. The absence of timely, clear communication allowed rumors to spread and damaged public trust. Alozie and Chukwu's study reinforces the idea that public relations is not just about visibility, it's about accountability, transparency, and protecting the integrity of the ministry.

For Pentecostal fellowships in Uniben, this study is prominent because fellowships are not immune to criticisms. A fellowship that communicates proactively and handles issues openly is more likely to maintain a positive image on campus.

11. Onah and Okonkwo (2018) studied how Pentecostal churches in Nigeria use digital platforms like social media to improve communication and keep members engaged. They found that churches using tools like WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook maintained stronger connections with their members especially the youth. Digital public relations allow real-time updates, online devotionals, and virtual interactions, making the church more accessible. However, the study also warned that unprofessional or poorly managed posts could damage credibility.

In relation to this study, this means that a smart, responsible online presence can deepen member engagement and attract others, while careless digital public relations can backfire.

12. Ijeoma and Eze (2017) examined how Pentecostal churches in Nigeria handle crises through public relations. They found that churches with clear, honest, and timely communication during scandals or conflicts were better at maintaining public trust. They noted that quick responses,

transparency, and calm messaging helps prevent misinformation and reassured members. In contrast, silence or emotional reactions often worsened the situation.

This study is applicable to this study because it vividly shows that having a prepared crisis communication plan even for minor issues can help protect their image and keep members united during challenges.

2.5 Theoretical Review

A number of theories provide valuable insights to this research topic. These include:

1. Two-way symmetrical communication theory
2. Relationship management theory
3. Situational theory of publics
4. Agenda setting theory
5. Framing theory

1. Two-way symmetrical theory

The Two-Way Symmetrical Theory, is one of the most relevant models in public relations, especially in settings where relationship building is key. Unlike traditional models that focus only on pushing out information, this theory is based on dialogue. It encourages organisations to not just speak, but to also listen, understand, and sometimes even adjust based on what their audience is saying. In simple terms, it's about creating communication that goes both ways, not just telling people what to do but giving them space to respond, and actually considering what they have to say. Communication isn't complete until feedback is gotten. Asemah (2011) asserts that communication elicits response. It is a process through which individuals or groups of individual's exchange ideas, information, messages and feelings to influence each other.

When applied to Pentecostal fellowships in UNIBEN, this theory helps us understand how effective communication can make a real difference in student engagement and fellowship growth. In many fellowships, leaders often focus on preaching, programs planning, or outreach which are all good but what makes a stronger impact is when the members themselves feel involved in what is going on. It is a relationship management strategy. At its crux, this theory suggests that effective public relations is not about controlling a message, but about creating a space where both the organisation and its audience can grow and adjust together. It's about building a partnership where communication is used to maintain balance, rather than power. This also shows that the leadership values their voices. This two-way communication builds trust. It helps students feel like they are not just attendees, but actual stakeholders in the fellowship's growth. It also helps the leadership make better decisions because those decisions are based on real concerns, needs, and suggestions from members. Over time, this kind of inclusive and

responsive communication helps the fellowship retain its members who can take up leadership roles over time, attract new ones and stay relevant to the student body. More importantly, this theory aligns with Christian values like humility, service, and love. When fellowship leaders are willing to not only speak but also listen to truly hear the concerns of their members and respond with care, it reflects a Christ-like model of leadership. Over time, this helps the fellowship not only grow in numbers but also become a spiritually safe and emotionally healthy environment.

Conclusively, this theory suggests that effective public relations is based on mutual understanding and dialogue between an organization and its public. It encourages feedback, transparency, and ethical communication. This theory reframes public relations as a long-term investment in people, rather than a short-term strategy for attention. It was proposed by James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt (1984).

2. Relationship management theory

The Relationship Management Theory is another prominent people centered approach in public relations. It was propounded by scholars like Ledingham and Bruning (1998), who believed that the real strength of any organisation lies not just in how well it communicates, but in how well it builds and maintains genuine relationships with the people it serves. This correlates with the definition of public relations by the British institute of public relations (BIPR) which states that public relations is the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. Instead of seeing PR as just a tool for promotion or image control, this theory sees it as a way to build trust, care, and connection that lasts over time. In other words, the theory reminds us that organisations grow stronger when they are intentional about how they treat people and not only when they need something from them. It's not about having the loudest announcements or the most attractive and engaging posters or advertisements, it's about creating meaningful interactions that make people feel seen, heard, and valued.

The components of this theory are trust, commitment, communal relationship, transparency and control mutuality. These components can only be displayed by relationship building at every level.

In relation to the world of Pentecostal fellowships at the University of Benin, the relationship management theory is very relevant. UNIBEN students are not retained in fellowships because of guest ministers or well-decorated halls they stay because of the relationships they build within that space. In a fellowship where members are constantly followed up on, where their birthdays are remembered, where students are checked up on during exams, offered support during difficult moments, asked for honest feedback after a program or service, their absence is noticed, and where their voices matter is more than public relations but a place where a strong emotional connection forms. That connection is what keeps people coming back. This is called building long-term relationship in the field of public relations. Relationship Management Theory emphasises that members are not just numbers to be counted, but souls to be nurtured. So public relations strategies like program invitations, feedback collection, mentorship structures, and

social media engagement only work when they're part of a bigger commitment to caring for people. This theory sees relationships as something that must be tended to constantly.

3. Situational Theory of Publics

The Situational Theory of Publics, developed by James Grunig (1966) helps us understand that not everyone in an audience behaves the same way. The concept of "Publics" in public relations as defined by Nolte (1974) cited in Ogbemi 2014 is everyone interested in, or affected by an organization or whose opinions can affect the organization. Igben (1997) also defined publics as a group of people who share common interests. Despite the connection to a particular interest, people respond differently to messages based on how much they know, how much they care, and whether they feel they can do something about it. In simpler terms, the theory says people act when they feel concerned, informed, and able to make a difference.

This theory is relevant to this project because it helps organisations like Pentecostal fellowships in UNIBEN to know how to talk to different kinds of people. It shows that not all students on campus are the same when it comes to spiritual matters or fellowship involvement. Some are very active and aware, while others may not even know the fellowship exists, or may feel it doesn't concern them.

The theory also groups people into four main types, based on how aware and involved they are:

1. Non-publics: These are students who don't even know the fellowship exists or don't see it as relevant to their lives.
2. Latent publics: These are students who are affected by what the fellowship does but they're not aware of it as an organisation yet.
3. Aware publics: These ones know about the fellowship and its activities, but they haven't done anything to engage with it.
4. Active publics – These are the students who participate, ask questions, give feedback, and even bring friends along. They are fully involved.

For Pentecostal fellowships in UNIBEN, this theory helps leaders understand that one message won't work for everyone. For example, using social media posters may work well for active members, but might not reach non-publics or latent publics at all. Instead, the fellowship may need to use other strategies like word-of-mouth, personal invitations, class outreach, or campus evangelism to get the attention of those who don't know or don't care yet. This theory also helps the leaders know the importance of knowing their audience so as to carefully study them and use strategies or messages suitable for them. Ogbemi (2014 p.44) asserts that "A public relations practitioner that does not have knowledge of the publics of his organisation is not worth his salt". In summary, the Situational Theory of Publics shows that for Pentecostal fellowships in UNIBEN to truly grow and connect with students, their public relations strategies must be intentional, personalised, and flexible. Different students need different approaches, depending on how much they know and care. When Pentecostal fellowships take time to understand this and act accordingly, they create deeper connections and stronger impact.

4. Agenda Setting Theory

An agenda is a list of issues to be discussed or an outline of things to be considered or done. Asemah (2011 p. 176) asserts that "Agenda setting on the other hand is the process of reflecting the events in our society". The Agenda setting theory was propounded by McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972. This theory states that the media do not tell us what to think but what to think about. This theory argues that the media controls our perspective of the world and how we view its activities. It can also be seen as dancing to the tunes of the beat played by the media. The major assumption of this theory like the name connotes is that the media sets agenda for the public to follow Asemah (2014). In other words, the media were responsible for the mental pictures in the minds of the audience. However, the agenda of the media changes with time as new things happen every day in the society so it is pertinent to note that the agenda of the media is as dynamic as the society. Asemah, Nwammuo and Nkwam-Uwaoma (2017) asserts that the media make us to think about certain issues, they make us to think or feel that certain issues are more important than others in our society. This means that if the media choose to give more time and space to 2027 political election, it becomes prominent to its audience too. Wimmer & Dominick (2000) as stated in Asemah et al (2017) observe that the theory on agenda setting by the media proposes that the public agenda or what kinds of things people discuss, think and worry about is powerfully shaped and directed by what the media choose to publicise. As suggested by this theory, the mass media whether print or electronic tend to influence the audience thoughts with what they display rather than what bothers them the most. This affirms the power of the press to influence its audience and their attitudes. It is also important to note that the public sets agenda for the agenda setters (media). This is because the media get their news from the society and the audience makes up the society. The members of the public carry out certain activities that draws the attention of the media who in turn sets it as an agenda for the people. However, it is important for balance and fairness to be on the part of the media. Since it is through the media that we get to know what is happening in the society, attention should be paid to all salient issues as they happen in our society (Asemah 2011). For Pentecostal fellowships on campus, the Agenda Setting Theory is especially useful when planning public relations strategies. With so many events, clubs, and distractions pulling students' attention, fellowships need to be intentional about what they want students to notice and how often they put it out there. Constant posting and reminding of programs and services through social media, in-person reminders, announcements and other formats begin to shape what students pay attention to. This doesn't mean Pentecostal fellowships are forcing people to attend but they are setting the agenda by deciding what message keeps showing up. The message may be focused on love, spiritual growth, academic excellence etc, the more it is consistently shared, the more students start seeing it as a priority. Agenda setting theory can be illustrated as planting seeds. It doesn't force people but makes them open to the idea, makes the message familiar and creates interest over time. This theory in relation to Pentecostal fellowship emphasises on consistency with their messaging. In other words, it is not enough to just have good programs but people must know about them and know them early. Public relations strategies like countdowns, themed weeks, media testimonies, and even funny skits can help fellowships bring attention to what matters most to them. Whether intentionally or not, every public post or announcement is setting an agenda, that is, shaping what people think a fellowship stands for. By being deliberate,

creative and consistent with communication, fellowships can guide attention, highlight what they stand for, and make sure their presence stays strong in the minds of students. This theory explains why it's important to keep putting the right messages in front of students. Messages that align with the fellowship's vision and values should be prioritised and displayed. By setting the agenda through consistent, intentional public relations strategies, fellowships can grow their influence, attract attention, and create lasting impact in the minds and hearts of students.

5. Framing Theory

This theory was propounded by Erving Goffman in 1974. It explains how information is presented and packaged in communication influencing how audiences interpret and respond to it. As the name connotes, some part of the messages are selected and emphasised on making it a priority in the mind of the audience. Through framing, the media highlights specific problems, suggest causes, make moral judgments, and propose solutions. This makes framing a powerful tool in shaping not only what people think about but how they think about it. According to Entman (1993) as cited in Asemah 2016, "to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text".

The way information is presented affects how people understand, feel about and respond to that information and this is the core aim of framing. Framing theory is simply how an audience perceive a message. This theory also proposes that communication is not what is said but how well a message is said. In the context of this project, public relations strategies often rely on framing techniques to present their messages in ways that resonates with their audiences, primarily the students. For example, a Pentecostal fellowship with low attendance may frame their program as "Spiritual revival" or "Intimacy that births Success". This can trigger students to attend the program with the expectations that being intimate with God can affect other areas of their lives including academics positively. If Pentecostal fellowships also want to address the youths or make their program lively and interactive, they can frame up the theme to be "Praise night with Jesus", "Joyful Presence" or "love and lust" designed with fun designs, catchy phrases or slangs and Joyful testimonies in order to attract members and make them perceive and expect fun in the midst of worship. This theory simply explains how public relations strategies can be used to frame how an audience feels or perceives a message which can strengthen engagement, influence perception and foster development.

2.6. Theoretical Framework

Two-way Symmetrical Communication Theory

This study adopts the Two-Way Symmetrical Communication Theory by Grunig and Hunt (1984) as its theoretical framework. Communication is an essential component of life; without communication the society will not exist. The word communication has its root in the Latin word 'commune' which means to make known. Idowu (2008, p.769) as cited in Asemah (2010, p. 280) says "Communication is the process of transmitting mutually understandable and meaningful messages, that is, information between two or more interacting parties". Without communication,

there will be no interaction, there will be no understanding and there will be no existence. According to Hybels and Weaver (1992) as cited in Asemah 2011, "communication is seen as any process in which people share information, ideas and feelings; it involves spoken words and written words, body language, personal mannerisms and styles and the surroundings". The oldest meaning of communication is simply the passing of information from one person to another. Communication is a process and as a process it entails actions, reactions and interactions. It involves sharing information (action), receiving information (reaction) which is an interaction. Humans must interact and this is initiated and promoted through communication. For communication to be effective, understandable messages through previously agreed codes, signs, and symbols must be adhered to. Asemah (2011 p. 2) notes that "communication is the process through which individuals or groups of individuals exchange ideas, information, messages, feelings and notions through previously agreed symbols in order to influence each other". Communication can either be one-way or two-way. In one-way communication, a response is barely or not expected. This can be seen in radio, television or announcements programs while a two-way communication requires or expects a response from the receiver. A two-way communication is considered the best because both parties get to be heard and valued, it builds trust and prevents misunderstanding too and it encourages growth and interaction. Two-way Symmetrical Communication Theory is a balanced communication pattern that implies both parties actively share information, listen to each other and adjust actions based on that mutual understanding. This theory was developed by James Grunig and Todd Hunt (1984). They described this theory as a communication based on feedback, balance of power, making changes and building trust. This theory is one of the most ethical and effective approaches in public relations theory propounded to guide public relations strategies in organizations. According to Nwosu (1996, p. 10) as cited in Asemah (2010, p. 342) "The two-way symmetrical communication theory places emphasis on using public relations to bring an organization and its primary, secondary and tertiary groups together, either in the overall public relations programme or in specific public relations projects, through mutually two-way beneficial communication and ensures mutual understanding and respect".

When Pentecostal fellowships on Uniben campus adopt this theory, it enables them build deeper spiritual and social connections, enables them know what members want by listening and involving them in decision making, they gain true loyalty, trust and genuine growth too. Unlike one-way communication, it allows both leaders and followers to be open, honest and have respectful communication rather than having leaders who impose their messages or programs without feedback. "Through effective communication, an organization will understand the publics and the publics will also understand the organization" (Asemah 2010). For example, when attendance or participation drops, a fellowship operating under this model will not simply increase publicity or intensify preaching. Instead, the public relations team or leadership may conduct surveys, hold forums, polls or have informal discussions with members to understand the root issues. Whether the problem is related to timing, message relevance, or worship style, the fellowship can use this feedback to make informed changes. Thus dialogue instead of monologue is the main focus of this theory. This approach helps build stronger relationships, increase member satisfaction, and foster a sense of belonging and engagement. It also helps Pentecostal fellowships leaders to be proactive and reactive too in times of crisis. Being

proactive by listening to their members' complaints, adapting to their needs and solving minor misunderstandings or arguments before they arise. They constantly engage, receive feedbacks and predict and make adjustments ahead of time. Being reactive, this theory suggests acknowledging issues publicly, listening and apologizing where necessary, corrects mistakes, regain members trust and strengthen relationship bonds. This theory also aligns with the core principles of Christianity which is love, empathy, humility, and service. It also transforms public relations from being a tool of persuasion to one of partnership and spiritual growth. It reinforces the idea that effective communication is not just about speaking but about listening and responding.

In essence, Two-Way Symmetrical Communication supports the view that when members feel heard, they are more likely to stay committed, participate actively, and become ambassadors of the fellowship. Therefore, it plays a vital role in shaping the impact of public relations strategies on Pentecostal fellowships within the University of Benin.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

A research design is a structured plan that outlines how a research study will be conducted. It helps the researcher decide what data to collect, how to collect it and how to make sense of it to draw meaningful conclusions. In this study, the researcher employed the use of the survey research design. According to Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekharefo and Okoanachi (2017, p.98), the term survey means looking at something in its entirety. Survey is often used to understand People's opinions, experiences, behaviours and characteristics. The study "Assessment of public relations strategies among Pentecostal fellowships in the university of Benin" will employ a survey research design to determine the opinion, experiences and behaviours of the students in the university of Benin who attend Pentecostal fellowships or not. This is because surveys help gather direct opinions and experiences from a large number of fellowship members quickly and efficiently. A questionnaire will serve as a data collection tool for survey in this study. As highlighted by Asemah et al (2017), a highly structured and often very detailed questionnaire is used in order to obtain information from a large number of respondents, presumed to be representative of a specific population.

3.2 Population Of Study

According to Asemah et al. (2017), a population is described as all the members of any well-defined class of people, events, or subjects. For this research, the population comprises students who attend Pentecostal fellowships within the University of Benin. According to the Head of the Pentecostal Fellowships, there are 41 Pentecostal fellowships in the University of Benin. However, for the purpose of this study, six (6) Pentecostal fellowships were purposively selected based on their large membership, activity level, and popularity. These include:

Living Faith Church Fellowship (Winners' Campus Fellowship) – 300 members (80 from Ekehuan campus and 220 from Ugbowo campus). Redeemed Christian Fellowship (RCF) – 330 members (80 from Ekehuan campus and 250 from Ugbowo campus). Mountain of Fire and Miracles Campus Fellowship (MFMCF) – 530 members (40 from Ekehuan campus and 490 from Ugbowo campus). Deeper Life Campus Fellowship (DLCF) – 180 members (60 from Ekehuan campus and 120 from Ugbowo campus). Believers' Love world Fellowship (Christ Embassy) – 400 members (70 from Ekehuan campus and 330 from Ugbowo campus). Christ Apostolic Church Youth Fellowship (CACYOF) – 260 members (60 from Ekehuan campus and 200 from Ugbowo campus). Therefore, the total population for this study is 2,000 students drawn from the six selected Pentecostal fellowships.

3.3. Sample Size

According to Ndagi (1984, p. 75), as cited in Asemah et al. (2017, p. 134), a sample is a limited number of elements selected from a population, which is representative of that population. A

sample, therefore, is a subset of a population that allows the researcher to draw general conclusions without studying the entire group.

To facilitate the research, given the relatively large population involved in this study, a sample size will be determined to make data collection more practical. The sample size will be calculated using the Taro Yamane formula, which is stated as: $N = N/[1+N(e)^2]$

Where n = sample size, N = population size, e = sampling error (usually; 10, 05 and 01 acceptable error) $^{\wedge}$ = raised to the power of

$$n = N/[1+N(e)^2]$$

$$n = 2000/ [1+ 2000(0.05)^2]$$

$$n = 2000/ [1+ 2000 (0.0025)]$$

$$n = 2000/ [1+ 5]$$

$$n = 2000/ 6$$

$$n = 333.3$$

Therefore, the sample size for this study is 333 respondents.

3.4 Sampling Technique

This study adopted a multi-stage sampling technique, which involved a combination of stratified, purposive, and simple random sampling methods at different stages of the research process.

Firstly, a stratified sampling technique was used to distinguish the two campuses of the University of Benin, Ugbowo and Ekehuan, in order to collate the population of Pentecostal fellowship members from both campuses.

Secondly, a purposive sampling technique was applied in the selection of fellowships. Six Pentecostal fellowships were chosen out of the forty-one (41) available on campus based on certain distinguishing features. These fellowships were selected because they are well-known among students and staff, have physical church affiliations outside campus and possess active public relations units or departments, such as follow-up teams, evangelical units, media teams, and announcement departments.

Lastly, a simple random sampling technique was employed in the distribution of research instruments among members of the selected fellowships. This ensured that each member had an equal chance of being selected to participate in the study.

3.5 Instrument of Data Collection

The instrument that was used in collecting data from respondents is questionnaire. A questionnaire is a set of written questions used to collect information from people. According to Asemah et al (2017), “a questionnaire is a structured form, either written or printed, consists of a formalized set of questions designed to collect information on some subject or subjects from one or more respondents.” It is used to gather people's opinions or experiences in a simple way so that things can be understood from their point of view. For this research, the questionnaire was divided into four (4):

Section A: This contains the demographic information

Section B: This contains the awareness and understanding of public relations

Section C: This contains the assessment of public relations strategies used

Section D: This section contains suggestions and general opinion

3.6. Validity of the instrument

Asemah et al (2017) sees validity as the appropriateness, meaningfulness and usefulness of the specific inferences made from test scores or data collected. The research instrument was subjected to proper scrutiny and submitted to the research supervisor for all necessary adjustments and corrections which were effected before distribution.

3.7. Reliability of the instrument

Asemah et al. (2017) refers to the reliability of instrument as the consistency of scores obtained by the same person when retesting with an identical test or with an equivalent form of the test on different occasions. A pilot study was conducted in relation to this study with 10 random Pentecostal fellowships leaders and questionnaire was distributed to students for a trial.

3.8. Method of Data Collection

Data was collected using online questionnaire (Google forms) to facilitate data collection from respondents. The survey asked relevant and open ended questions in relation to the study in four sections.

3.9. Method of Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was done through frequencies, tables and basic percentages with necessary explanations placed under each table for easier interpretation.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

This chapter presents and analyses the data collected through the questionnaire. It is organised into two sections which are the respondents view on the assessment of public relations strategies among Pentecostal fellowships in the university of Benin and the discussion of findings. A total of 333 questionnaires were distributed and all were successfully retrieved resulting in a 100% rate.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by gender

Variable	Responses	Percentage

Male	123	36.9
Female	210	63.1
Total	333	100

Table 1 reveals that 210 female respondents, making up 63.1% were more available to participate in the study compared to 123 male respondents representing 36.9%.

Table 2: Distribution by educational level

Variable	Responses	Percentage
100	30	9
200	60	18
300	54	16.2
400	141	42.3
500	27	8.1
Postgraduate	21	6.4
Total	333	100

This table shows that respondents that took part in the study were of different levels of study. However, 400 level students contributed the largest fraction of respondents 141 (42.3%), with 200 level students accounting for 60 (18%), then 300 level 54 (16.2%), next 100 level 30 (9%), after which came 500 level 27 (8.1%), and finally, postgraduate 21 (6.4%).

Table 3: Which Pentecostal fellowship do you attend in Uniben

Variable	Responses	Percentage
Living faith Campus Fellowship	33	9.9
Redeemed Campus Fellowship	54	16.2
Mountain of Fire Campus Fellowship	90	27
Deeper life Campus Fellowship	45	13.6
Believers Loveworld Campus Fellowship	63	18.9
Christ Apostolic Church Youth Fellowship	48	14.4
Total	333	100

This table displays the Pentecostal fellowships selected for this study and the number of people who attend these various fellowships. 90 respondents attend Mountain of Fire Campus fellowship representing (27%). Next, the Believer's Loveworld Campus fellowship has 63 respondents amounting to (18.9%), a significant portion of people attend the Redeemed Campus fellowship 54 (16.2%), 48 people attend Christ Apostolic Church Youth Fellowship reflecting 14.4%, Deeper life Campus fellowship has a total respondent of 45 constituting 13.6% and lastly, 33 people attend Living faith campus fellowship accounting for 9.9%.

Table 4: How often do you attend fellowship programs

Variable	Responses	Percentage
Very frequently	72	21.6
Frequently	111	33.3

Occasionally	111	33.3
Rarely	39	11.8
Not at all	0	0
Total	333	100

This table indicates that 111 respondents (33.3%) agreed that they attend Pentecostal fellowship programs either frequently or occasionally. Additionally, 72 respondents (21.6%) reported attending very frequently, while 39 (11.8%) attend rarely. Notably, there were no respondents who indicated they do not attend at all.

Table 5: My fellowship uses social media platforms to communicate with members

Variable	Responses	Percentage
Strongly agree	144	43.2
Agree	126	37.8
Neutral	42	12.6
Strongly disagree	18	5.5
Disagree	3	0.9
Total	333	100

This table shows that a majority of respondents, 144 (43.2%), strongly agree that their fellowship uses social media platforms to communicate with members, while 126 (37.8%) also

agree. A smaller portion of 42 respondents (12.6%), remained neutral. Only a few disagreed, with 18 (5.5%) strongly disagreeing and just 3 (0.9%) disagreeing.

Table 6: My fellowship has a structured follow up team to engage new or absent members.

Variable	Responses	Percentage
Strongly agree	84	25.2
Agree	165	49.5
Neutral	54	16.2
Strongly disagree	24	7.3
Disagree	6	1.8
Total	333	100

This table shows that 165 respondents (49.5%) agreed with the statement, while 84 (25.2%) strongly agreed. Additionally, 54 people (16.2%) remained neutral. A smaller portion expressed disagreement, with 24 respondents (7.3%) strongly disagreeing and only 6 (1.8%) disagreeing.

Table 7: Announcements during programs are clear, well structured and effective.

Variable	Responses	Percentage
Strongly agree	117	35.1
Agree	132	39.6

Neutral	51	15.3
Strongly disagree	27	8.2
Disagree	6	1.8
Total	333	100

This table shows that 132 respondents (39.6%) had a positive result agreeing and 117 (35.1%) strongly agreeing with the statement. 51 individuals (15.3%) felt neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing, a small minority of 27 people strongly disagreed while 6 people disagreed with 8.2% and 1.8%.

Table 8: My fellowship organises outreach programs or publicity campaigns.

Variable	Responses	Percentage
Strongly agree	75	22.5
Agree	123	36.9
Neutral	102	30.6
Strongly disagree	27	8.2
Disagree	6	1.8
Total	333	100

This table indicated that 123 respondents (36.9%) agreed to the statement above. 102 respondents reflecting 30.6% remained neutral, neither agreeing or disagreeing and 75

respondents strongly agreed amounting to 22.5%. 27 respondents strongly disagreed and 6 respondents disagreed representing 8.2% and 1.8% respectively.

Table 9: The publicity efforts of my fellowship positively influence me to attend

Variable	Responses	Percentage
Strongly agree	87	26.1
Agree	135	40.5
Neutral	81	24.3
Strongly disagree	24	7.3
Disagree	6	1.8
Total	333	100

Table 9 reveals 135 respondents (40.5%) who agreed to the statement above, 87 respondents (26.1%) strongly agreed, 81 respondents (24.3%) were neutral, 24 respondents (7.3%) strongly disagreed while 6 (1.8%) disagreed.

Table 10: The public relations strategies of my fellowship create a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Variable	Responses	Percentage
Strongly agree	84	25.2
Agree	132	39.6

Neutral	87	26.2
Strongly disagree	24	7.2
Disagree	6	1.8
Total	333	100

According to this table, 132 respondents (39.6%) agreed that the public relations strategies of their fellowships create a welcoming and inclusive environment. 87 respondents (26.2%) were neutral while 84 respondents (25.2%) strongly agreed. However, 24 respondents strongly disagreed while 6 respondents disagreed with a percentage of 7.2 and 1.8 respectively.

Table 11: The fellowship's use of media is effective in reaching students.

Variable	Responses	Percentage
Strongly agree	102	30.6
Agree	138	41.4
Neutral	66	19.9
Strongly disagree	15	4.5
Disagree	12	3.6
Total	333	100

Table 11 shows that 138 people (41.1%) agreed to their fellowship media being a tool to effectively reach students. 102 respondents (30.6%) strongly agreed while 66 respondents

(19.9%) remained neutral. 15 respondents (4.5%) strongly disagreed while 12 (3.6%) disagreed with the statement.

Table 12: The fellowship's communication strategies encourage consistent attendance and participation.

Variable	Responses	Percentage
Strongly agree	69	20.7
Agree	165	49.6
Neutral	75	22.5
Strongly disagree	21	6.3
Disagree	3	0.9
Total	333	100

According to this table, 165 respondents (49.6%) agreed to the above statement, 69 (20.7%) strongly agreed while 75 respondents remained neutral reflecting 22.5%. 21 respondents strongly disagreed while 3 respondents disagreed with 6.3% and 0.9% respectively.

Table 13: Limited funding affects the ability of my fellowship to carry out effective public relations strategies.

Variable	Responses	Percentage
Strongly agree	105	31.5

Agree	126	37.9
Neutral	75	22.5
Strongly disagree	15	4.5
Disagree	12	3.6
Total	333	100

This table displays 126 respondents (37.9%) who agreed that limited funding affects the ability of a fellowship to carry out effective public relations strategies. This was seconded by 105 respondents (31.5%) who strongly agreed while 75 respondents (22.5%) remained neutral. 15 (4.5%) and 12 respondents (3.6%) strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively.

Table 14: Not all members of the public relations teams are properly trained

Variable	Responses	Percentage
Strongly agree	78	23.5
Agree	132	39.6
Neutral	72	21.6
Strongly disagree	33	9.9
Disagree	18	5.4
Total	333	100

This table indicates that 132 respondents agreed that not all members of the public relations team are properly trained amounting to 39.6%, 78 respondents (23.5%) seconded to this by strongly agreeing. 72 respondents remained neutral, 33 strongly disagreed while 18 respondents disagreed respectively reflecting 21.6%, 9.9% and 5.4%.

Table 15: There is a need to adopt more creative and engaging public relations strategies to improve fellowship growth.

Variable	Responses	Percentage
Strongly agree	93	27.9
Agree	153	45.9
Neutral	66	19.9
Strongly disagree	12	3.6
Disagree	9	2.7
Total	333	100

According to this table, 153 respondents (45.9%) agreed that there is a need to adopt more creative and engaging public relations strategies to improve fellowship growth while 93 respondents (27.9%) strongly agreed with this statement. 66 respondents were neutral, 12 respondents strongly disagreed and 9 respondents disagreed with 19.9%, 3.6% and 2.7% respectively.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

RQ 1. What are the various Public relations strategies employed among Pentecostal fellowships in the University of Benin?

Table 5,6,7 and 8 reveals the various public relations strategies that are being used by various Pentecostal fellowships ranging from using social media platforms to having follow up teams or department and organizing outreach programs and publicity campaigns to reach students. In table 5, 144 respondents (43.2%), strongly agreed that their fellowship makes use of social media platforms (WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook etc.) to reach, engage and keep students abreast of the fellowship's activities. 126 respondents (37.8%) agreed to this too while 14 respondents (12.6%), remained neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing. However, 18 (5.5%) strongly disagreed to this notion while 3 (0.9%) disagreed. This finding supports Uche and Ojebuyi (2016). They revealed that Pentecostal fellowships have metamorphosed, using digital tools to stay relevant. The study found that Pentecostal fellowships are more likely to grow and thrive when they make use of online platforms, largely because their communities tend to be young, energetic, and comfortable with technology. Table 6 shows that Pentecostal fellowships largely utilize physical means too as a public relations strategy like the follow up team to reach out to and retain members. A significant number of respondents 165 respondents (49.5%) supported this statement by agreeing to this while 84 (25.2%) strongly agreed. 54 people (16.2%) remained neutral while a small portion expressed disagreement, with 24 respondents (7.3%) strongly disagreeing and only 6 (1.8%) disagreeing. This affirms Cutlip, Center and Broom (2006), which unveils “ Face to face engagement deepens trust in ways digital contact cannot; personal follow up teams embody care and continuity in relationships”. Table 7 displays that 132 respondents (39.6%) had a positive result agreeing that announcements in Pentecostal fellowships during programs are clear, well structured, and effective. 117 (35.1%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement too while 51 individuals (15.3%) felt neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing. However, 27 people strongly disagreed while 6 people disagreed with 8.2% and 1.8% respectively. This clearly shows that the messages passed are relatable, understood and relevant. Additionally, outreach programs or publicity campaigns are frequently organised as indicated in table 8 with 123 respondents (36.9%) agreeing to the statement. 102 respondents reflecting 30.6% remained neutral, neither agreeing or disagreeing and 75 respondents strongly agreed amounting to 22.5%. 27 respondents strongly disagreed and 6 respondents disagreed representing 8.2% and 1.8% respectively.

In summary, Pentecostal fellowships at Uniben use a variety of public relations strategies such as leveraging social media, having public relations teams, regular announcements, and outreach or publicity campaigns to connect with students and keep their members engaged on campus.

R.Q 2. How effective are public relations strategies to the Pentecostal fellowships in the university of Benin?

This research question was answered using table 9,10,11 and 12 which uncover how effective public relations strategies are to Pentecostal fellowships in Uniben. In table 9, 135 respondents

(40.5%) agreed that the publicity efforts of their fellowship positively influence their decision to attend services while 87 respondents (26.1%) strongly agreed making a total of 222 respondents (66.6%). 81 respondents (24.3%) were neutral while a total of 30 (9.1%) respondents disagreed. Table 10 reveals 132 respondents (39.6%) who agreed that the public relations strategies in their fellowship create a welcoming and inclusive environment for them. 84 respondents (25.2%) strongly agreed to this notion too. 87 respondents (26.2%) were neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing while 24 respondents strongly disagreed and 6 respondents disagreed with a percentage of 7.2 and 1.8 respectively. Table 11 discloses that the fellowship's use of media such as flyers, social media posts has been quite effective in reaching students. A total of 138 respondents (41.1%) agreed with this, while 102 (30.6%) strongly agreed. On the other hand, 15 people (4.5%) strongly disagreed, 12 (3.6%) disagreed, and 66 (19.9%) remained neutral. This confirms the assertion of the international journal research and scientific innovation (2022), "In Southeast Nigeria, social media has become a digital pulpit where Christians worship, evangelise and stay connected". While this current study doesn't focus specifically on Christianity in Southeast Nigeria, the observation highlights a broader truth that social media platforms have proven to be powerful tools for Pentecostal fellowships to engage with their members and foster growth. Table 12 shows that the fellowships' communication strategies encourage consistent attendance and participation with findings indicating 165 respondents (49.6%) who agreed to the above statement. 69 (20.7%) strongly agreed too while 75 respondents remained neutral reflecting 22.5%. However, 21 respondents strongly disagreed while 3 respondents disagreed with 6.3% and 0.9% respectively. Overall, the discoveries show that the public relations strategies among the Pentecostal fellowships in Uniben are largely effective.

R.Q 3. What are the challenges facing Pentecostal fellowships in implementing effective public relations strategies in the University of Benin?

This research question was answered using table 13, 14 and 15. These problems were clearly stated to be limited funding, unprofessionalism of public relations team and lack of creative and engaging public relations strategies. Table 13 reveals that 126 respondents (37.9%) agreed that limited funding affects the ability of a fellowship to carry out effective public relations strategies. This was seconded by 105 respondents (31.5%) who strongly agreed while 75 respondents (22.5%) remained neutral. On the other hand, 15 (4.5%) and 12 respondents (3.6%) strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. Table 14 unveils that the unprofessionalism of the public relations team in Pentecostal fellowships is very high with 132 respondents (39.6%) agreeing to this and 78 respondents (23.5%) strongly agreeing too. 72 respondents (21.6%) remained neutral while 33 respondents (9.9%) strongly disagreed and 18 respondents disagreed (5.4%). Table 15 shows that 153 respondents (45.9%) agreed that there is a need to adopt more creative and engaging public relations strategies to improve fellowships growth while 93 respondents (27.9%) strongly agreed with this statement and 66 respondents (19.9%) remained neutral. However, 12 respondents strongly disagreed and 9 respondents disagreed with 3.6% and 2.7% respectively. Conclusively, according to the findings it is safe to say that Pentecostal fellowships in Uniben experience some challenges amongst them are limited funding, unprofessionalism of public

relations team and lack of creative and engaging public relations strategies which affect the growth of these fellowships drastically.

R.Q 4. What are the possible recommendations for improving public relations approaches to enhance outreach, engagement and sustainability of the Pentecostal fellowships in UNIBEN?

Tables 13, 14, and 15 present the key challenges encountered by Pentecostal fellowships in the execution of their daily operations. The corresponding solutions offer informed recommendations for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of fellowship management and activities. First, building a passionate and trained Public Relations team is crucial for any organization that wants to build strong, lasting connections with its audience. A well trained public relations team understands how to navigate the complex media landscape, engage with different audiences, and respond thoughtfully to challenges. They know the power of listening as much as speaking and are equipped to adapt quickly when situations change. Passion also helps the team to be tolerant and patient when dealing with members or handling crisis situations. Ultimately, investing in a passionate and trained public relations team means investing in trust, credibility, and connection. It's these qualities that turn simple communications into meaningful conversations and create a positive reputation that lasts far beyond any campaign. Next, announcements should be more creative. Information may get people's attention but creativity is what connects. In many Pentecostal fellowships on campus, public relations often focus heavily on making announcements about event times, locations, reminders, and routine updates. While these are necessary, information alone rarely inspires engagement in today's highly stimulated campus environment. Meanwhile, creativity in public relations is not about exaggeration or entertainment, it is about presenting meaningful messages in a compelling and relatable way. This can be done by sharing testimonies that show what God is doing in the fellowship, using visuals and captions that reflect the tone and culture of the campus, communicate in a way that feels personal, warm, and welcoming and moving beyond formal language yet speaking carefully with the right choice of words. Being creative doesn't replace the message instead it enhances it, making it more relatable and engaging. Also, social media can be maximised the smart way. In today's digital age, social media isn't just a tool, it's a frontline for outreach. For Pentecostal fellowships on campus, how social media is used can greatly influence how students perceive, engage with, and respond to fellowship messages. Posting strategically and frequently is key. Messages can be posted purposefully, consistently with variety and with quality visuals too. The platforms where these messages are posted are also essential to target the right audience while messages are crafted to fit them too. Moreover, building partnerships with other students and campus groups often yields greater impact than simply promoting fellowship activities. Partnership is about building real, mutual connections with people and communities. Instead of only reaching out only during programs, consistently engaging with others both individuals and groups with a spirit of collaboration and shared purpose is necessary. These includes supporting events hosted by other student groups, even those outside the faith space, collaborating with other fellowships, departments, or cultural groups for initiatives that align with Kingdom values, listening first, rather than always leading with an agenda and showing genuine interest in the

lives and concerns of students on campus. By doing these, it shows Christ representation because Christ did not simply announce the Kingdom; He walked with people, listened to them, and built relationships too. Lastly, low budgets can be utilised effectively. Limited resources can be a major barrier to doing effective public relations but impact doesn't always require huge money. Excellent and engaging public relations contents can be done even with low or no budget. Pentecostal fellowships can use free design tools like canva to create quality flyers, stories, and posts, leverage students' creativity such as photographers, graphic designers, writers, and content creators who are often right within the fellowship, turn testimonies into content, short quotes or videos from members, maximize WhatsApp and Instagram for outreach, repurpose content and collaborate with other fellowships or groups to share platforms and resources. These ways can inspire and connect far more than polished advertisements.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 SUMMARY

This chapter delivers an extensive summary of the study "Assessment of public relations strategies among Pentecostal fellowships in University of Benin, Nigeria. This study was necessitated by the growing visibility of Pentecostal campus fellowships in promoting their activities through both traditional and digital platforms. Despite these increasing engagement, there was still little research-based evidence about how effective these efforts were. The study began with examining the various public relations strategies and streamlined them to how they were used in Pentecostal fellowships. The objectives comprise of the level of exposure of Pentecostal fellowships to public relations strategies, how effective these strategies are, the

challenges they face while operating with these strategies and the possible solutions and recommendations that can be applied for a better result. The study also adopted theories like two-way symmetrical theory, relationship management theory, situational theory of publics, agenda setting theory and framing theory to explain how communication works in public relations and guide practitioners in planning, implementing and executing effective strategies. The researcher employed the use of descriptive survey as a research method and questionnaire as an instrument for data collection from respondents. The stratified sampling technique, purposive sampling technique and simple random technique were used to select respondents. According to the detailed findings obtained in this study, it was revealed that:

1. Pentecostal fellowships in Uniben make use of a mix of traditional Public relations strategies like announcements, posters, flyers, word of mouth and modern digital strategies like websites and social media platforms to reach their audience.
2. Social media emerged as the most widely used and effective platform for mobilization, publicity, event promotion and maintaining interaction with members.
3. Respondents agreed that Public relations efforts helps Pentecostal fellowships project a positive image, counter misconceptions, and establish credibility within the university community.
4. Public relations strategies play a key role in fostering Pentecostal fellowship's unity, maintaining interaction between leaders and members and strengthening loyalty.
5. Challenges such as limited funding, lack of professional public relations training and lack of creative and engaging contents were identified as constraints to effective practice.
6. Overall, Public relations strategies were seen as central to attracting new members, sustaining participation, and ensuring the continuity of the fellowships.

5.2 CONCLUSION

This study has shown that public relations is more than just a tool for publicity in Pentecostal fellowships in Uniben, it is central to their identity growth and survival within the university community. The shift from flyers and announcements to social media platforms shows how Pentecostal fellowships are adapting to modern communication trends. These tools also help them connect and bond better, adapt and thrive regardless of the circumstances that may occur. On the other hand, challenges such as limited funds and inexperienced and untrained public relations team continue to limit their efforts. Overall the research highlights that Pentecostal fellowships stand to gain much more if they invest in stronger, well-structured Public relations practices that can secure their growth and relevance on campus.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to improve public relations strategies among Pentecostal fellowships in the University of Benin:

1. Increase funding for Public relations activities: Fellowships should create a dedicated budget for communication and publicity. This will give room for better materials, allow them run more effective digital campaigns and reduce over reliance on free or low cost strategies that may not always yield the best results.
2. Establish a structured Public relations unit and train team members: Pentecostal fellowships should have a defined public relations unit with definite roles. This will reduce over reliance on one or few people and ensure continuity when leaders graduate. Also, student leaders and public relations team members should undergo basic training in public relations, communication and digital media management. This will help professionalize their efforts and ensure that messages are well crafted, relatable and relevant.
3. Balance traditional and digital approaches: Social media being the most effective tool for mobilization and awareness, Pentecostal fellowships should use it more creatively through interactive contents, trending videos and sounds, live streams etc as this will strengthen engagement especially with the youths and tech-savvy audience. Traditional methods like posters and word of mouth should not be left out too for a wider reach.
4. Promote ethical Public relations practices: Pentecostal fellowships must ensure that their messages remain truthful, relevant and aligned with Christian values. This will help them build trust and credibility within the university community.
5. Evaluate and improve strategies: Pentecostal fellowships should regularly collect feedback from members to access the effectiveness of their public relations efforts. This will help them make adjustments and improve communication over time.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

My name is Futughe Favour, a final-year student of the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin. This questionnaire is designed to gather information for a research study on "Assessment of Public Relations Strategies among Pentecostal Fellowships in the University of Benin."

Your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used strictly for academic purposes. Kindly answer the questions sincerely and to the best of your knowledge. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Gender? ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Current Level of Study? ☐ 100 Level ☐ 200 Level ☐ 300 Level ☐ 400 Level ☐ 500 Level ☐ Postgraduate
3. Which Pentecostal fellowship do you attend in UNIBEN? ☐ Living Faith Campus Fellowship ☐ Redeemed Campus Fellowship ☐ Mountain of Fire Campus Fellowship ☐ Deeper life campus fellowship ☐ Believers Loveworld Fellowship ☐ Christ Apostolic Church Youth Fellowship
4. How often do you attend fellowship programs? ☐ Very frequently ☐ Frequently ☐ Occasionally ☐ Rarely ☐ Not at all

SECTION B: PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES USED

5. My fellowship uses social media platforms (e.g., WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook) to communicate with members. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
6. My fellowship has a structured follow-up team to engage new or absent members. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
7. Announcements during programs are clear, well-structured, and effective. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

8. My fellowship organizes outreach programs or publicity campaigns.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

SECTION C: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PR STRATEGIES

9. The publicity efforts of my fellowship positively influence my decision to attend.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

10. The public relations strategies of my fellowship create a welcoming and inclusive environment.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

11. The fellowship's use of media (flyers, social media posts, etc.) is effective in reaching students.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

12. The fellowship's communication strategies encourage consistent attendance and participation.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

SECTION D: CHALLENGES & RECOMMENDATIONS

13. Limited funding affects the ability of my fellowship to carry out effective PR strategies.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

14. Not all members of the PR/media/follow-up teams are properly trained.

Strongly Agree

☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

15. There is a need to adopt more creative and engaging PR strategies to improve fellowship growth.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

