Public Relations and Media Role in Peace Building in Nigeria

Abdullahi Aliyu Maiwada[1], Perpetua Ogechi Aondover[2], Olugbenga Charles Adewale[3], Funmi Falobi[4], Timothy Ekeledirichukwu Onyejelem[5]
[1]Department of Theatre Arts, Faculty of Arts, University of Abuja
[2,3,4]Department of Mass Communication, Caleb University, Imota, Lagos, Nigeria
[5]Department of Journalism and Media Studies Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State

Abstract

Public relations (PR) and media play crucial roles in peacebuilding in Nigeria, a nation with a diverse cultural, religious, and political landscape. In a country where ethno-religious conflicts, political tensions, and socio-economic disparities often lead to unrest, strategic PR and media efforts can foster dialogue, promote understanding, and build sustainable peace. The paper argues that PR professionals facilitate dialogue among conflicting parties by creating platforms for engagement, understanding, and negotiation. They design campaigns that promote mutual respect and tolerance. By sharing transparent and accurate information, PR efforts can bridge gaps between communities and institutions, fostering trust. PR and media are pivotal in shaping narratives, fostering dialogue, and building consensus in peacebuilding processes. By addressing challenges and adopting inclusive, transparent, and ethical approaches, these tools can significantly contribute to a more harmonious Nigeria. Conflicts are becoming more complex in more institutions and are involving multiple issues as well. Handling such conflicts enhance the client's ability to function successfully in a volatile environment. In other words, more organizations have the potential for conflict that needs to be resolved than ever before. Skills are needed by public relations managers to evaluate the divergent interests of different groups to formulate alternatives that will satisfy the parties involved in the dispute. The paper concludes that PR and media work together to suppress divisive narratives by promoting content that emphasizes shared values and diversity. In times of unrest, PR teams communicate clear, accurate, and timely information to mitigate panic and prevent escalation. Media organizations must adopt conflict-sensitive reporting, avoiding sensationalism and inflammatory language.

I. Introduction

Globally, there have been conflicts and crises that have affected humanity. The narrative is the same from Europe to Asia, Australia to America, and the Caribbean to Africa. The majority of African states appear to be perpetual war zones as a result of the continent's current unprecedented armed conflicts, ethnocultural, ideological, and religious divides, which have plunged most of them into crises and conflicts since independence (Sambo & Sule, 2024). Thus, one of the main ongoing issues influencing the political and socioeconomic environment of Africa, and Nigeria in particular, is conflict. Developing countries now find it challenging to resolve conflicts completely, despite the efforts of development specialists to achieve the required development (Sambo & Sule, 2024).

Onuegbu and Ejike (2024) noted that many communal conflicts have occurred in Nigeria, for example, the Zango-Kataf crisis in Kaduna State (1999–2001), the Tiv–Jukun

crisis in Taraba State (1999–2001), the Ife-Modakeke in Osun State (1999–2000), the Eleme–Okrika crisis, the Itsekiri–Urhobo crisis (1999–2000), the Itsekiri–Ijaw conflict, the Aguleri-Umuleri conflict in Anambra State (1995–1999), the Umuode-Oruku conflict, the Igbo-Ikom conflict in Cross-river State, and the Ezillo–EzzaEzillo of Ebonyi State, among other conflicts (Aondover et al., 2024). These wars have resulted in uncountable, permanent, and irreparable tragedies. Millions of lives have been lost, millions of naira worth of property has been wantonly destroyed, people have been uprooted and made homeless or refugees elsewhere, commercial activity and progress have stopped, and permanent adversaries have been created. These are just a few of the cumulative bad repercussions. Additionally, Ahmed (2024) empirical research demonstrates that communal disagreements give rise to a range of issues related to social frictions, including tension, antagonism, distrust, overreactions, and others.

The resolution of conflict by public relations in the institution and public policy arena is also growing in demand (Targema, 2020). Conflicts are becoming more complex in more institutions and are involving multiple issues as well. Handling such conflicts enhance the client's ability to function successfully in a volatile environment. In other words, more organizations have the potential for conflict that needs to be resolved than ever before. Skills are needed by public relations managers to evaluate the divergent interests of different groups to formulate alternatives that will satisfy the parties involved in the dispute (Airaoje et al., 2023). Otherwise, conflicts will keep arising until they are resolved. Peace is therefore a major component for the development of human beings in the whole world, without peace there can be no development. Iweze (2021) found that Nigeria has experienced incidents of conflicts which have led to loss of workforce, learning time and disruption of education services which has negatively affected the quality of education across many regions. He maintained that Nigeria has put several strategies to promote peace with deep recognition, which is the only vehicle to development.

Haider in Ahmed in Aliyu et al., (2023) maintain that the impact of violent conflict and fragility on a country's society, economy and political governance is devastating and encompassing. The effects can be tangible and visible; including killed and injured civilians, destroyed or derelict bridges and wells and damaged or inadequate health and education facilities. They can also be intangible, such as the collapse of state institutions, mistrust in government, the destruction of social relationships, psychological trauma and pervasive fear. Addressing both types of effects are essential in conflict-affected and fragile contexts (Aliyu et al., 2023).

II. Research Methods

2.1 The Role of Public Relations in Peacebuilding

According to Reardon and Cabezudo in Aliyu et al., (2023) peace is defined as the absence of social constraints and/or discord. According to Haavelsrud (2006) achieving peace is a long-term endeavor with the capacity to bring about and maintain constructive change in human society. This suggests that social change is actively sparked by peace. Reardon and Cabezudo in Aliyu et al., (2023) claim that peace catalyzes change through an interactive sequence of actions meant to advance social equilibrium in terms of fairness, justice, and observance of fundamental human rights while attempting to lessen the influence of barbarism and repressive elements in order to fully realize societal objectives (Aondover et al., 2024).

Galtung (2000) argues that although there are many ways in which peace can manifest itself, there are two primary ways in which it usually does. He states that there are two types of peace: positive and negative. He claims that while freedom from unequal resource distribution is a sign of positive peace, freedom from physical harm is a sign of negative peace. Positive peace is proactive, whereas negative peace is reactive, as noted by Galtung. Supporting his argument, Galtung acknowledges that negative peace is reactive since it aims to resolve a conflict that is already underway or poses a threat. Since this is a cessation, he describes this as the most popular public acknowledgement of peace driven regime. He however, consigns positive peace to the process that challenges the fundamental structures that have the potentials of generating conflict with the primary goal of reducing or eliminating such structures. This appears to offer an enduring period of peace, which Kevin (2004) describes as stable peace. Significantly, most peace negotiation cases tend to represent more of cessation that is reactive rather than proactive peace negotiation strategies.

Various academics have attempted to develop the idea of peacebuilding. However, it was Boutros Boutros-Ghali30 who popularized the term "peace building" in 1992. With time, the phrase has come to encompass broader definitions that acknowledge actions that enhance religious and political institutions in the pursuit of peace (Aondover et al., 2024). According to Lederach (2005) peacebuilding is expected to be an enduring commitment with emphasis on mobilization of resources, including material, money, labour and associated strategies designed to promote positive relationship. By implication the essence of peace building process is to translate existing relationship from negative to positive status on a sustainable platform. This compels significant aspects of structural and psychological transformation.

The goal is not for transient cessation of crisis but long term, thus a holistic appreciation of this enduring legacy of stable peace where justice and fairness reign are highly essential (Aondover, 2018). The road to enduring peace is conflict resolution, but where this is elusive, the inevitable becomes conflict transformation. In other words, conflict transformation is not stable peace but management of conflict through changes of certain variables that have the potential for conflict escalation in such a way as to make stakeholders live together but not in the atmosphere of holistic reconciliation. This is very common with cultural conflict as the case of Israeli and Palestinian regression relationship.

Conflict reduction measures have assumed different dimensions and conceptual terminology. Conflict reconciliation as a dimension to conflict attenuation is found to be unrealistic especially in the context of cultural conflict. Fisher et al, in Aondover et al., (2022) argued that where such happens the resort is made to conflict transformation which does not lead to conflict eradication but management of the relationships by attacking danger prone area. Though it could be difficult to achieve peace but it is imperative that effort should be directed at conflict resolution process. Besides, borrowing from Oslo peace negotiation process, public opinion had consistent support for peace rather than transformation (Garba & Msaughter, 2023). Different forms of conflict resolution exist. For the purpose of peace building, experts agree that nine forms of conflict resolution are dependable.

Plowman et al., in Garba and Msughter (2023) believe that contention is a form of conflict resolution process in which there is imposition of one's viewpoint or opinion on others. This is not different from persuasive communication and organisation focused public relations practice which has little or no sympathy for other stakeholders or especially the strategic publics. The implication of this is the difficulty in achieving effective conflict resolution but instead conflict management. Conflict management is not

known to be the most desirable end to peace building process since it often has the potentials for escalating into further conflict but in the absence of conflict resolution, conflict management becomes inevitable. It is however argued that a better approach to peace building process is conflict transformation which is considered to be a new concept and more comprehensive. Plowman et al., in Kurfi et al., (2023) see conflict transformation as an all-embracing strategy because of its inclusion of conflict resolution training, diplomatic and peace keeping in the peacebuilding process.

Cooperation is the joining of forces together by stakeholders towards achieving a result that is profitable to all concerned. To a large extent, mutual profitability is the destination of conflict resolution, since the freedom of stakeholders from dissatisfaction is the pathway to peaceful coexistence. Cooperation exists when all stakeholders believe that they secure satisfactory answers to whatever question that would have warranted the eruption of conflict in the first place.

Accommodation is surrender and a re-invention of goal probably in the face of pressure. This approach may lead to realization of peace-oriented goal if the process is at the initiative of the stakeholder who accepts defeat and draw dawn on his ambition in the context of conflict resolution strategies. On use of avoidance strategy, Plowman et al., in Kurfi et al., (2023) believe it involves the resolve of one or all the stakeholders to the conflict to take to psychological or physical exit. When this occurs, there is the likelihood that stable peace will survive as long as those who retire from the conflict remain in their respective status-quo. Unconditional constructive, as Plowman et al., (2001) argue, is the bringing together of the line of action of all stakeholders at the instance of one or more stakeholders without expecting other stakeholders to fulfill any form of requirement.

The import here is that steps taken towards reconciliation may not place equal demand on all concerned. The important factor here is that the success of this approach tends to be a function of whether stakeholders to the peacebuilding process find the expected result mutually satisfactory or not. The use of compromise means that stakeholders to the conflict mutually seek alternative point of concord to the irrespective areas of interest (Hile et al., 2023). This approach may result in conflict resolution when all stakeholders to the conflict are willing to shift ground in their respective positions. When stakeholders adopt principled approach, there is the tendency that they might not have a meeting point except the irrespective positions are alike. Win-win or no Deal according to Plowman et al., (2017) is a point of temporary truce by the stakeholders in question until a more convenient time when they can go back to the conflict resolution process. The last on the list of approaches to conflict resolution, mediated is basically the use of a third party that has neutral interest to the conflict in question.

Scholars have suggested a linkage between conflict resolution process and public relations. Some of such scholars are Grunig and Ehling (2002) who believe that public relations management and the peace-building process have significant relationship. The question is what kind of relationship exists between conflict phenomenon and public relations practice? In answer to thisquestion, resort is made first to the observation of Grunig and Stamm. According to Grunig and Stamm (2003) both are interdependent since they are invented together. But how interdependent are they? Does it mean that public relations depend on conflict phenomenon or conflict phenomenon on public relations? The answer to this question was not found in the work of Grunig who simply notes they were invented together.

To resolve this puzzle, other PR experts have tried to proffer answers. Mintzberg in Mojaye and Aondover (2022) note that public relations influences decision making process of top management of organisations. Grunig and Stamm (2003) contend that when conflict

situation occurs, public relations take it as a responsibility to move the stakeholders away into the path of resolution. This implies that public relations has the potentials to influence decision associated with conflict resolution process. This further suggests that public relations has the capacity to intervene in conflict situation rather than encourage it. The only ground on which there is the possibility of public relations dependence on conflict resolution process is in proving its relevance in terms of return on investment (ROI) when decisions it influences consequently produce freedom from conflict; the desired state for productive co-existence in an economic sense (Grunig 2006). Again, by way of its agenda building potentials, rooted in agenda setting theory, public relations practice has direct causal relationship with conflict by way of public issues.

Public relations has the potential to create and resolve conflict situations. Public relations may encourage conflict situation when its practice unethically seeks to please organisation at the expense of the larger society. When this occurs, it subsequently resorts to use of negative propaganda and persuasion in the hope of achieving alignment with the strategic publics. This is evident in the asymmetrical theory, Grunig (2006) hence the two-way symmetrical model was subsequently proposed as the basis for forging a healthy relationship between organisation and the public (Msughter, 2017). Grunig (2006) further argues that the effectiveness of organisation remains a function of the extent to which it 'fulfills corporate goals as well as aspirations of the publics'.

Public relations intervention in conflict situation was traced to post-modern public relations model. Toth (2007) delineates this model as bearing four facets namely: issues management, relationship management, communication management and rhetorical facet. Toth's model tends to summarize the position of different scholars on the interventionist model. Grunig (2006) believes that for organisations to be socially responsible, they should always track down the effects of its policies and action on the environment and symmetrically relate with the affected publics.

First, Toth believes that public relations intervene in issues management. Issue management represents the degree of sensitivity of an organisation to changes in its internal or external environment. These changes could have negative or positive impact on how the organisation operates (Grunig, 2006) but calls for prompt response with the intention of taking hisorganisation to advantage point. However very often, such effort derives from sentiments that are skewed in favour of the organisation without equal concern for the interest of other stakeholders. It is only when organisation understands and identifies with the needs and aspirations of all stakeholders that it stabilizes on the path of effectiveness.

III. Results and Discussion

3.1 Community Relations Programmes for Peacebuilding in Nigeria

According to Ibegbu in Msughter (2017) peacebuilding is a state or period of time in which public relations professionals have implemented techniques to control violence or war in the community. It is a condition in which people live in peace or friendship with one another, free from conflict or violence. The author claims that abstaining from conflict and violence entails being peaceful. It is to live in harmony with the actions and lifestyles of others. That is, to accept one another's disposition or manner of life without raising any issues. The author goes on to say that there might be good or negative peace. Positive peace occurs when all conflicts are settled and all the members of the parties involved in the conflict are happy and satisfied with the way it is settled. In negative peace, all the

members of the parties may still bear some grudges and distrust among themselves because they have just agreed or are compelled to stop the conflict.

According to Lanre (2013) there is a need to change Nigeria's culture from one of violence to one of peace because it appears that violence is progressively taking on a cultural significance there. The concept of peace is philosophically opposed to hostile, violent conflict, such as that which takes the form of angry boycotts, raucous protests, hostile arguments, and threats and accusations. Another way to think of peace is as complete harmony, tranquility, or quiet; that is, as opposed to any type of conflict, hostile or not. Rummel (2012) further states thus:

> Peace has always been among humanity's highest values and for some people, it is the supreme value. This is reflected in sayings such as: 'peace at any price', 'the most disadvantageous peace is better than the most just war', 'peace is more important than all justice', 'prefer the most unjust peace to the most just war that was ever waged', 'there never was a good war or a bad peace' and so on (p. 16).

Vajpeyi in Msughter et al., (2023) identifies six dimensions of peace and they include: individual peace through meditation, peace in the family between man and woman, child and parent, peace in society, between various communities; peace in the nation, peace on the planet and peace among nations. Peace has individual, economic, social and political values. On the individual level, peace is a combination of positive feelings of happiness, calmness, contentment, love, compassion and harmony with nature, with the absence of negative ones like pain, conflict, hostility and imbalance with nature. "We may attain this peace when the inner self and the outer environment are in balance and harmony". One who experiences peace would depict a healthy physical and mental state, which needs internal and external nourishment from, that, is spiritual and material needs.

Peace also has economic values because it allows people to enjoy economic activities, production and consumption. It is common for people to estimate costs of wars and conflicts but seldom do we measure the economic benefits of peace (Msughter et al., 2021). The social and economic effects of religious violence are often grave. They include: mass killing or what one can describe as wanton destruction of lives and property, displacement of citizens and so on. At the social and economic levels, the absence of peace can be costly. All these problems that arise from the absence of peace can be avoided in an environment of tranquility. For example, to prevent burgling one's apartment, Nigerians install burglar alarms, keep dogs, pay for security guards, and keep lights on when they go on vacations. All these involve costs since victims of burglary and violent crimes not only incur economic costs but psychological costs as well. It is against this background that Vajpeyi (2012) highlights the psychological and social consequences of the absence of peace.

According the Vajpeyi (2012) dynamic psychology deals with the problem of the absence of peace from the individual and social perspectives. Competition, diffidence and personal glory are what make men aggressive or violent, apart from the innate destructive tendency in man. Social factors include power politics, morality and the tremendous technological progress the world has witnessed recently. Iduh (2011) states that for a lasting peace to reign in Nigeria, Nigerian government should create systematic and institutionalised methods that will detect early warning signs of conflicts for pre-emptive actions and design effective conflict prevention and peace building strategies through operational structures and personnel for monitoring conflicts and transform the existing conflict(s). It is Iduh's (2011) opinion that in the search for lasting peace in Nigeria; academics, religious leaders, traditional rulers, women groups, local and international Non-

Governmental Organisations(NGOs), social critics and activists, trade associations, civil societies, various youth leaders, students bodies and multinationals companies of particular interests incorporate social responsibility, etc should be involved in conflict prevention and peace building, this will ensure enduring and sustainable peace.

Alabi (2010) states that every Nigerian, community, religious groups, ethnic nationality and governments at every level should control and manage its excesses, and inculcate the culture of tolerance, forbearance, love and fear of God to better the lots of other people. According to Alabi (2010) every Nigerian should determine to be peaceful and be an agent of peace at all times. Through the culture of peace, the country will be united and development of all kinds will then thrive. To Kane in Obasi and Msughter (2023) wanting peace is the first step in creating the conditions for it to exist. This entails trying to reduce elements that are the sources of violence and which are contrary to the establishment of peace. It is a general, day to- day attitude, applied to all aspects of life, and is not limited to looking for solutions when violence is on the verge of erupting. Forced peace cannot last. For Peace to last, it must come as a commitment made by the people. For this to happen, the basic necessities of life must be guaranteed for Nigerians (food, clothing, shelter, health, education, transportation and religious freedom). If these are provided, then there is less likelihood of revolts and violence.

3.2 Understanding Community Relations and Peacebuilding

Building a friendly and reciprocal relationship between an organisation and the host community is the goal of community relations. The establishment of a reciprocal relationship and rapport facilitates the consolidation of peace, thereby allowing the organization to function efficiently without facing opposition from the host community (Owens-Ibie & Aondover, 2024). It is obvious that understanding the definition and components of an organization's community is necessary for a thorough understanding of community relations. A community is defined as an area with interactive institutions, such as social, political, economic, and religious ones, all of which foster in their citizens a mindset and way of life centered around interdependence, cooperation, and unification.

A community is made up of social units and systems that work together to carry out important tasks that are relevant to the local area. According to Akpan (2011, p. 22), "locality relevance" refers to the state in which people are incorporated into a meaningful network of relationships with one another in a way that suits them. It is thought that the community's interacting social structure was made possible by the "attitude and practice of the interdependence, co-operation, collaboration, and unification." A community can also be viewed as one of the basic sub systems of human existence that opens the way to man's realization need. With the community's peculiar locality, relevant indices of relationship, such as interdependence, co-operation, collaboration, unification, attitude or feelings of fellowship, security, belongingness, recognition, familiarity, identity and supportiveness among community inhabitants are usually motivated and enhanced.

Based on this relevance or characteristics of community, community relations is seen as a special area that exploits and utilise the necessary techniques, functions and media of public relations to address community relevant issues. Yar'Adua and Msughter (2023) established that "community relations is the social responsibility which organisations owe to the people in that area of operation". Canfeld in Yar'Adua and Msughter (2023) see community relations by what it does and the reason for doing so, much co-existence between the institution and the community in which it operates. He sees good community relations as making an organisation a corporate citizen of the community which must do

everything to enable the society to be well governed and provide socio-economic activities in the community.

Rummel in Yar'Adua and Msughter (2023) see community relations as the deliberate effort and planned programme embarked upon by an organisation to maintain a smooth relationship with the host community. He notes that people who live in the community and corporate entities and other institutions within that community must therefore, practice interdependence, cooperation, collaboration, solidarity and unification and should strive to eschew all forms of selfishness by working assiduously towards a common goal. The need for the functional interdependence arose from the fact that the people of the host community cannot exist successfully without the corporate entities and institutions, nor can the latter operate successfully and profitably without the former.

The success of this mutual relationship thus depends on proper understanding and adequate knowledge of each other, easily facilitated by functional communication services, knowledge of the community, its pressing needs, social status structure, channels of communication, social agent, opinion leader, among other issues. This action helps the institutions to understand the community needs and aids them in proper discharge of their social responsibilities. Thus, peak (2018) says every corporate organisation should as a matter of necessity know the community and the needs of the community and the ones that organisation can provide.

Shedrack in Msughter et al., (2021) note that community relations is the backbone of sustained peaceful and productive co-existence between an institution and the host community. If Bayero University, Kano could adopt the true principle of community relations, there would be less conflict in the host communities. Shedrack in Msughter et al., (2021) write that an organistion cannot operate successfully without effective community relations. The basic ingredients of community relations translate practically into social responsibility on the part of the organisation. This means that by operating within the community, the organisation should not only identify within the community but should actually discharge some fundamental social responsibilities to the community.

Benson-Eluwa in Msughter et al., (2021) hold that many institutions in Nigeria do not have plans for issues and crisis management. They operate as if they have everything at their disposal. What they do in times of crisis is to take measures instead of giving support to public relations expert in managing the issues until it is too late to avert crises. They shy away from their social responsibilities. Such social responsibilities include scholarship, hospitals, building of community hall, boreholes, etc.

The above literature lays credence to the stand of Cutlip and Centre (2010) that since an institution is dependent upon the environment for many things such as the charter to operate, personnel, funds for operating expenses and growth, freedom from undue regulations and harassment and many other benefits, it must therefore be socially responsible to the host community. Giving a clear instance of the benefit of effective community relations, Shedrack (2009) points out that:

> Sometimes, two organisations operating in a particular environment are treated in different ways by people in the environment or community neighbours. Whereas company "A" may be liked and protected by the indigenes, company "B" may be hated and sabotaged from time to time by same people. One explanation for this varied treatment is the angle from which each of the companies interprets the concept of community social responsibility (p. 88).

Explicitly, Kogan in Msughter (2017) holds that community relations is "the management functions that evaluates community attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or group or an organisation with the community interest and

executes a programme of action to earn community understanding and acceptance". In Kogan viewpoints, community relations is no less a serious part of public relations practice. In respect of that, communication becomes the main effective tool required in maintaining and sustaining mutual relationship, understanding, goodwill and acceptance in the community where the organisation exists. Therefore, to achieve mutual relationship with members of the community, the organisation should adopt the practice of community relations that considers: (i) the fundamental principles of operation; (ii) the need to define community relations objective and (iii) the importance of community relations, public complaints and expectations.

The fundamental principles of community relations practice as stated in Cutlip and Center (2010, p. 12) are: interdependence, analysis, policy and participation. Clearly, the interdependence approach is founded on the understanding that the platform for continuing effective relationship among all those who contribute in the well being of community. There are three basic schools of thought that support this principle. The first is "community centered or personal service" school. This emphasises that organisations or managers are personally responsible for the development of the community. The second school of thought is based on the "organisation centered", which advocates that organisation is to educate citizens on the economics of development so that favourable attitudes towards profitable operations of business can be made possible. The third school is the "employee relations extension". It holds that employee satisfaction would result to comparative efforts by local officers. The values of this school of thoughts still exist in most organisations community relations programmes.

The analysis approach is based beyond acceptance of interdependence method by managers of community relations programme. This is the analysis of community needs, which can lead to efficient implementation of the programmes. Such need include: adequate education, employment opportunities, good roads, good health centre, proper housing facilities etc. The policy approach concerns the translation of organisation good intentions about the community members into statements of policy that would guide the firm's efforts towards achievement of goal. The participation approach to community relations practice portrays the need for an organisation to involve the community people in matters concerning the organisation.

3.3 Community Relations and Public Relations Practice in Peacebuilding

Community relations research shows that gaining the community's understanding and support for an organization is a difficult task. The management philosophy as it relates to the organization's duty to the community must be explicitly stated in the community relations policy. Both expressive and instrumental implementation of this policy are required. Implementing "is when the organization actually implements projects aimed at improving the community and making it a better place to live and expressively when the organization promotes itself and shows its goodwill towards the community," (Seitel, 2012, p. 438). Since community relations activities are geared towards achieving some desirable needs, most, if not all organisations, according to Seitel (2012, p. 438) have the following community relations objectives:

1. To inform the community about the operations of the organisation; its product, number of payroll, tax payment, employee benefits, growth and support for community programmes;
2. To correct misunderstanding, react to criticism and removal of any form of disaffection that might exist among community neighbour;

3. To gain a favourable opinion of the community especially during strike and social unrest by indicating the organisation's position on the issues on ground;
4. To tell employees and families about organisation activities and development so that they can inform their friends and neighbours about the organisation and favourably influence opinion.
5. To inform the community member about the organisation's contribution to community welfare and development and to obtain support for legislation that favourably affect business activities in the community;
6. To create personal relationship between the organisation management and community leader by inviting leader to visit the plant and offices, meet management and see employee at work;
7. To contribute to community project through funds, materials and employee services to local health needs and campaigns;
8. To contribute to community culture by providing funds for exhibitions, concerts and drama festivals, etc;
9. To encourage youth and adult education by co-operating with administrators and teachers in providing students vocational guidance, teaching aids and financial support to further their education;
10. To aid sport and recreational activities by providing athletics, fields, swimming pools, tennis court, etc for use by community residents and by sponsoring teams and sports events;
11. To aid the economy of the local community by purchasing operating power supplies and equipment from local merchants and manufactures;
12. To associate with other local businesses in advancing economic and social welfare of the community through joint community relations programmes;
13. To provide employment opportunities that assist in improving their standard of living and thereby contributing to the development of the economy;
14. To encourage better community governance by encouraging employees to run for public offices, or volunteer to serve on board and committees, lending company executives to community agencies to provide specialised advice and assistance to community problems and making company facilities and equipment available to the community in times of emergency.

3.4 Peace-building, Corporate Social Responsibility and Public Relations Roles

According to academics and professionals such as Masuku and Moyo (2013) and Minjibir (2018), PR is identical with corporate social responsibility and public relations. A lot of people think that CSR is a part of public relations. According to certain academics, such as Masuku and Moyo (2013), CSR is a creation of public relations. According to Masuku and Moyo (2013), public relations (PR) aims to establish and preserve a company's long-term favorable image, reputation, and popularity so that all segments of the public have an extremely transparent and clear understanding of the organization and its operations.

Aaron (2012) observes that the current thought about CSR has had a profound influence on the behaviour of corporate organisations, whose commitments to socially responsible conducts are consistently exhibited. He however, said whether this mainstreaming of CSR is essentially meant for image management of corporations or contribution to development remains a subject of active scholarly contestation.

According to Goodwin and Bartlett (2008) fundamental societal changes during the 1970s, saw the practice of public relations evolve from its information dissemination

origins into a discipline that was more about issue response, accountability and social responsibility as central to organisation public relationships. But it can be argued that corporation's contributions to development, particularly of communities and individuals (primarily employees) are a manifestation of good public relations. Contributions to development can be seen as part of the outcomes or the processes of establishing and sustaining long-term, positive organisation- public relationships.

Taking the 'stakeholder' perspective into consideration would give the extent to the relationship between CSR and public relations. Along this line, CSR is regarded as a strategic tool for the enhancement of beneficial relationships between organisations and their stakeholders. Hou and Reber (2011) observe that:

> For corporations, the adoption of CSR strategies can enhance the relationships with multiple stakeholders. Therefore, it is necessary to communicate CSR activities and use effective relationship management to satisfy stakeholders' expectations and achieve the expected goals of CSR initiatives (p. 166).

The concept of roles is rooted in structural-functionalist theory and refers both to the acts performed by people in certain positions within an organization as well as their relationships with people in other roles. Research on the role of public relations is well developed and has a long history. In a review of roles research in public relations, Dozier et al., in Msughter et al., (2023) propose that "practitioner roles are key to understanding the function of public relations and organizational communication". Broom and Smith (1979) originally conceptualized the following four practitioner roles in public relations:

a. Expert prescriber: an informed practitioner who dispenses advice to management who passively follows the directions;

b. Communication facilitator: a "go-between" or liaison who manages information flow between management and its publics;

c. problem-solving facilitator: practitioner who involve management in a systematic process to solve communication problems;

d. Communication technician: a skilled service provider who provides communication asked for by management.

Dozier et al., in Msughter et al., (2023) later rearticulate the activities of public relations practitioners as two basic organizational roles: the communication manager and the communication technician. Although conceptual differences can be drawn for expert prescription, problem solving process facilitation, and communication facilitation, these activities commonly are performed interchangeably by the same practitioner, as part of a common underlying role (the communication manager) (Yar'Adua & Msughter, 2023). Empirical studies examining public relations models and practitioner roles showed that the manager role correlates most closely with the two-way symmetric and asymmetric models of public relations. These findings are consistent with the theory of excellence, which proposes that having the knowledge to play the manager role is a critical factor in achieving excellence.

The knowledge or expertise needed to play the manager role was further defined through an in-depth continuation of study on public relations excellence. Dozier et al., (2002) reevaluate the role enactment taking into account three perspectives: participants' self-reported key areas of expertise or knowledge, participants' self-reported most frequent activities, and the dominant coalition's self-reported expectations of public relations managers.

IV. Conclusion

Public relations (PR) and the media are critical players in peacebuilding efforts in Nigeria, a country frequently challenged by interethnic tensions, political conflicts, and insurgencies. PR practitioners create campaigns that promote unity and peace. For example, public figures, influencers, and grassroots leaders can be engaged to champion coexistence messages. PR and media work together to suppress divisive narratives by promoting content that emphasizes shared values and diversity. In times of unrest, PR teams communicate clear, accurate, and timely information to mitigate panic and prevent escalation. Media organizations must adopt conflict-sensitive reporting, avoiding sensationalism and inflammatory language.

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