

# Public Relations Strategies and Employee Relations in The University of Uyo Teaching Hospital

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*Abstract—This study examined Public Relations (PR) strategies and employee relations the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital (UUTH). The research was anchored on the Two-Way Symmetrical Model of Public Relations and the Social Exchange Theory. The study sought to find out the PR strategies employed by the management of UUTH and to determine the extent to which PR practices mitigate industrial conflict and enhance staff commitment within the organization. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all administrative, medical, and ancillary staff of UUTH, which was put at 2172. Using a stratified sampling technique, a sample size of 338 respondents was drawn. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that UUTH employed a mix of strategies, including regular staff meetings (Mean = 4.30) and modern digital platforms. The PR strategies were perceived as effective, with 81.5% of respondents rating them as "Effective" or "Highly Effective." Empirical evidence revealed a strong, positive relationship between the PR practices and key organisational outcomes: clear communication positively influences staff commitment (Mean = 3.75) and significantly reduces the likelihood of strikes and industrial action (Mean = 3.79). The study concludes that the adoption of dialogic, two-way symmetrical PR strategies is an essential strategic management function for fostering a cooperative organizational climate. It was recommended that UUTH management immediately allocates adequate funding and staffing to the PR unit to sustain the positive employee relations achieved and ensure uninterrupted healthcare service delivery.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is one of the least developed countries in the world. The country's healthcare sector is facing a number of issues, such as insufficient staff that is unable to meet international standards and fulfil the domestic needs. Nigeria has a population of approximately 237 million people with a growth rate of 4.8 million yearly, but new medical students' intake is only 47,000 per year (Mian, Hamza & Bokhari, 2019). The nurse-patient ratio recommendation according to World Health

Organisation (WHO) is 1 nurse for every 4 patients, whereas Nigeria has about 1 nurse to 60 or 80 patient's ratio. Doctors are no exception as World Health Organisation (WHO) puts the Doctor-Patient ratio at 1:600 standards as against Nigeria standard which is almost 1:10,000 patients. The import here is that there is a serious brain-drain among employees in the Nigerian health sector.

The Nigerian public healthcare sector is experiencing voice challenges among those delivering healthcare services in the country (Njiiri, 2012). The sector is characterised by heavy unionisation which has led to rampant industrial unrest. Strike actions in Nigeria's health sector have become a recurring challenge, significantly disrupting healthcare delivery. Between 2000 and 2020 alone, health workers (including doctors, nurses, and allied professionals) have embarked on at least twelve nationwide strikes, resulting in over 260 days of service disruption (Hum Angle Media, 2020). These strikes are often driven by unresolved issues such as poor remuneration, delayed salaries, lack of essential medical equipment, and unfavourable working conditions (Oleribe, Momoh, Uzochukwu, Mbofana, Adebisi, Barbera, Williams, & Taylor, 2018). The frequent industrial actions not only paralyse hospital services but also lead to increased mortality rates, especially among vulnerable populations, as patients are forced to seek care in overstretched private facilities. The prevalence of these challenges are not unconnected to the fact that the practice of public relations which should facilitate good working relationships is highly neglected by those in management positions in the Nigerian healthcare system.

In Nigeria, public healthcare institutions are often characterised by strained labour relations, industrial disharmony, and poor communication between management and staff (Adewale & Anthonia, 2020). Amidst these challenges, the role of public relations (PR) in managing internal communications and fostering organisational harmony becomes

increasingly significant. Public Relations (PR) plays a vital role in ensuring effective healthcare service delivery by fostering trust, enhancing communication, and promoting positive engagement between healthcare institutions and their stakeholders. A well-structured PR strategy helps healthcare organisations maintain a strong reputation, build public confidence, and improve overall patient satisfaction. One of the primary functions of PR in healthcare is building trust and credibility. Transparent communication through media engagement, community outreach, and digital platforms ensures that the public receives accurate and timely health information (Airaoje, Aondover, Obada, Akin-Odukoya, & Ridwan, 2024). When healthcare institutions actively share updates about medical advancements, policy changes, and public health initiatives, they create a sense of reliability and dependability among patients and stakeholders.

Like many tertiary health institutions in Nigeria, the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital (UUTH) operates in a challenging administrative structure. The organisation is plagued by limited resources, ineffective communication between doctors and patients, demotivated staff, inadequate equipment, and various other shortcomings. Patients visiting the hospitals often encounter excessive waiting times, unhelpful non-medical staff, and a lack of clear service points (Ekpo & Essien, 2022). Reports of staff discontent, protests, and allegations of poor management have surfaced in recent years (Ekpo & Essien, 2022). These developments underscore a pressing need to examine how internal public relations strategies are formulated and implemented to address employee concerns, manage conflicts, and maintain industrial harmony.

The values of excellent internal communications have been noted in fostering better relationships with employees and espousing employee engagement. This study attempts to expand upon these existing scholarly endeavours by examining employee-organisation relationships and investigating how UUTH's symmetrical internal communication efforts could influence its employees' perception of relationship outcomes and the subsequent employee behaviours and their loyalty intention.

### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Although the role of public relations in image building is well acknowledged, its potential as a tool

for strengthening internal relationships, managing organizational tensions, and fostering employee engagement remains overlooked, particularly within the sphere of public healthcare institutions in Nigeria. Much of the literature has focused predominantly on general employee relations or union-management conflicts, with limited empirical research on how strategic PR can influence and improve employee relations within hospital settings (Nwosu, 2017; Okoro & Agbo, 2020). This gap in literature necessitates an inquiry into the Public Relations strategies employed by the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital to manage employee relationships. The question then is: What are Public Relations strategies employed by the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital to manage employee relations? How effective are these PR strategies in promoting employee satisfaction and institutional communication? To what extent are employees involved in the internal communication processes at UUTH? What challenges are encountered by the PR or communication unit in managing staff relations within the hospital? What is the impact of public relations strategies on employee morale and institutional harmony at UUTH?

### 1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives were to:

- i. identify the Public Relations strategies used by UUTH in managing employee relations;
- ii. assess the effectiveness of these PR strategies in promotional employee relations;
- iii. examine the level of employee involvement in internal communication processes at UUTH;
- iv. determine the impact of Public Relations strategies on employee relation and institutional harmony at UUTH.
- v. explore the challenges faced by the hospital's PR or Communication unit in managing employee relations;

### 1.4 Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions:

- i. What are public relations strategies employed by the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital to manage employee relations?
- ii. How effective are these PR strategies in promoting employee relations at UUTH?

- iii. To what extent are employees involved in the internal communication processes at UUTH?
- iv. What is the impact of Public Relations strategies on employee relation morale and institutional harmony at UUTH?
- v. What challenges are encountered by the PR or communication unit in managing employee relations within the hospital?

## II. REVIEW OF CONCEPTS

### Employee Relations

Employee relations (ER) as a discipline initially emerged to address workplace problems such as unemployment and power imbalances between employees and employers by focusing on the practices of workplace institutions and organisational behaviours (Kaufman, 2004). It is a multidisciplinary field that studies the employment relationship dealing with both unionized and non-unionized workers (Salamon, 2000). ER encompasses 'the processes of regulation and control over workplace relations, the organisation of tasks, and the relations between employers and their representatives, and employees and their representatives, and is the sum of economic, social and political interactions in workplaces where employees provide manual and mental labour in exchange for employability, compensation as well as the institutions established for the purpose of governing workplace relations (Gospel & Palmer, 2004).

Organisations can use collective bargaining to improve employee performance by incorporating compensation for employees who have a good record of performance, resolving conflicts collectively and establishing a mechanism for conflict management and maintenance (Slaikeu, 2006). If workers perceive unfairness, they will sense relative deprivation and feel the wage-effort bargain has been breached; and they will then respond with absenteeism, exit, reduced effort, or direct conflict which in turn adversely affects their performance and that of the organisation (Peetz & Preston 2009).

According to Chaudhry, Sajjad and Khan (2011) employee relations practices impart a significant role to enhance performance of organisations indirectly. In their study, they found that performance of employee depends upon job satisfaction, compensation structure, reward plans, promotions,

motivation, environment, training, staffing and succession planning. Resource based view (RBV) theory provided base that high performance work practices directly affect organisational performance (Paauwe, Guest & Wright, 2014). Bloom and Van Reenen. (2010) has indicated that modern ER practices have large effects on productivity and profitability.

Effective employee relations practices have become essential in enabling the delivery of healthcare services to the public thereby influencing the performance of the sector. Available literature indicates that ER practices are positively related to organisational and employee performance. For instance, Shahzad, Bashir & Ramay (2008) in their study titled "impact of HR practices on perceived performance of university teachers in Pakistan reported a positive significant relationship between compensation practices, promotion practices and employee performance. Huselid (1995) used eleven practices in his study which are personnel selection, performance appraisal, incentive compensation, job design, grievance procedures, information sharing, attitude assessment, labour-management participation, recruitment efforts, employee training and promotion criteria and found a significant relationship between compensation and employee's outcome.

### Internal Communication Outcomes

In the search for indicators of public relations effectiveness, three major approaches have emerged: organisation-public relationships, reputation, and engagement. Relationships are perceived as one of the major outcomes of public relations (Grünig et al., 2002), and are therefore, a central measure to assess the value or effectiveness that public relations provide to organisations. The high level of interest on relationship management has led scholars to suggest that it has emerged as a paradigm in the public relations field (Ledingham & Bruning, 2000; Huang, 2001).

Over the past two decades, a large number of studies in a wide variety of contexts have evaluated the effectiveness of public relations by using relationships as an outcome measure (Seltzer & Zhang, 2011; Sweetser & Kelleher, 2016). Along with relationships, reputation is also considered a key concept in contemporary public relations and a major criterion that can be used to measure and demonstrate

the value of public relations. Reputation has been described as the strongest determinant of any corporation's sustainability (Firestein, 2006) and plays a role in determining the support and beneficial behaviours that publics express toward organisations (Fombrun & van Riel, 2003). Reputation measures the standing a firm has with its internal and external publics (Fombrun & van Riel, 2003).

In addition to relationships and reputation, engagement is a third major outcome generated by public relations efforts in an organisation (Tkalac Verčič & Pološki Vokić, 2017; Tsai & Men, 2018). Engagement has become an important concept in the area of public relations (Johnston, 2014; Kang, 2014; Men & Tsai, 2014; Taylor & Kent, 2014) that is being used as a measure related with consequences that boost an organisation's bottom line (Edelman, 2015; Jiang, Luo, & Kulemeke, 2016). The increased level of need for authentic stakeholder involvement and the notion that engagement is a determining aspect of organisational behaviour (Johnston, 2014), has led several in the industry to proclaim engagement as the new paradigm in public relations (Edelman, 2008).

All three of these indicators—relationships, reputation, and engagement—have been studied from both an external and internal perspective. Numerous studies have examined the role that internal communication plays in developing employee-organisation relationships (EORs) (Kim & Rhee, 2011; Men, 2014a; Kang & Sung, 2017; Kim, 2018), reputation (Johnston & Everett, 2012; Men & Stacks, 2013), and engagement (Men, 2012; Tkalac Verčič & Pološki Vokić, 2017).

#### Theoretical Framework

Two theories were used to give more credence to this study: Social Identity theory and Social Exchange theory.

#### Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory was first introduced by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in 1979. Tajfel and Turner (1979) argued that an individual's self-concept is partly derived from their membership in social groups. Social Identity Theory posits that individuals categorise themselves and others into social groups, which influences their behaviours, attitudes, and sense of belonging. When individuals strongly identify with a particular group, such as their workplace, they are likely to adopt behaviours and

attitudes that reflect their commitment to the group's values and objectives. This theory is central to understanding organisational identification, as employees who view their workplace as part of their identity are likely to remain loyal to the organisation and advocate for it.

#### Social Exchange Theory

SET, one of the most influential paradigms for explaining workplace relationships, refers to the obligations that are generated through a series of interdependent interactions (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This theory has made immense contributions to management, sociology, psychology, and anthropology fields (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) in explaining workplace behaviour. According to Hoppe (2018) based on SET, two parties exchange a series of interactions that generate obligations. Social exchanges or interactions between two parties generate appreciation, gratitude, and trust. Beneficial consequences emerge when employees perceive that their organisations communicate effectively and care about them (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

#### Review of Empirical Studies

Aman-Ullah, Aziz & Ibrahim (2020), carried out a test of employer branding as an antecedent of employee retention along with serial mediation relationship of job satisfaction, organisational identification, and employee loyalty. The study established a multiple coefficient correlation of 0.693 (69.3%) between employee relations practices and organisational performance. Muthoka concluded that employee relations practices influence organisational performance of Public Healthcare Sector in Kenya. Bayo and co (2023) investigated the relationship between relationship management and employee commitment in the public hospitals in Port-Harcourt. The results of the study revealed a positive relationship between relationship management and indicators of employees' commitment in the Port Harcourt public hospitals.

Eke and Alikor (2025) examined the role of public relations expertise in enhancing and improving healthcare delivery and management at Rivers State University Teaching Hospital. The findings revealed that, public relations practices at Rivers State University Teaching Hospital (RSUTH) are currently limited and largely reactive, with communication strategies focused mainly on crisis management and health campaigns, rather than on proactive

engagement or fostering long-term relationships with patients, staff, and the broader community.

Pearson Product Moment of Correlation (PPMC) coefficient.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted survey as its research design. Surveys was conducted to collect quantitative data on internal communication practices and employee relation practices. The population of this study concentrated on employees of University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. According to the Human Resource Unit of the organisation, the number of employees at UUTH as at the time of carrying out this research is put at 2172. Using Taro Yamane formula, the sample size for this study was approximately 400.

This involved a multi-stage sampling procedure involving stratified random sampling and purposive sampling. At the first stage, stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation from different departments and hierarchical levels within the organisation. Also, purposive sampling was used in selecting staff of the organisation for in-depth interview.

To collect data for the study, a structured questionnaire was formulated in line with the research questions to collect data from the respondents. To assess reliability, a pre-test was conducted among healthcare workers in Uyo who are not part of the study’s population, using a test-retest strategy. The data from the two tests was subjected to the main reliability test using Cronbach Alpha  $\alpha$  reliability method resulting in a .89 coefficient score. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS v.23) was used as a tool for the analyses. Presentations of data were done using simple frequency tables. The hypotheses were tested with

IV. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Out of 400 copies of questionnaire administered on respondents, 390 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and found useable for the analysis, thus giving a return rate of 97.5% and a mentality rate of 2.5%.

Table 4.1.6: Existence of PR Unit

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	373	95.6
No	17	4.4
Total	390	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.1.6 indicates respondents’ awareness of a Public Relations unit in the hospital. Majority of respondents (95.6%) confirmed the existence of a PR unit. This suggests that the PR unit is widely recognised among staff in the hospital.

4.1.7: Functionality of PR Unit

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very functional	202	51.7
Functional	129	31.1
Not functional	58	15.2
Total	390	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.1.7 presents respondents’ assessment of the functionality of the PR unit. The results show that majority of respondents (51.7%) rated the unit as very functional This indicates that the majority of respondents believed the PR unit performed its responsibilities effectively.

Table 4.1.8: Mean Rating of Respondents on PR strategies/channels utilised by UUTH’s management in managing relations with employees.

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Weight Mean Score	Decision Rule
1	The hospital provides regular internal updates through memos, circulars, and notices to communicate policies to staff.	200	127	33	10	3.22	Accepted
2	The hospital publishes internal bulletins/ newsletters for staff information.	192	114	67	187	3.23	Accepted

3	Staff meetings (departmental/general) are held regularly to share information.	224	133	20	13	3.45	Accepted
4	There are formal feedback mechanisms (suggestion boxes, surveys) for employees to communicate with management.	189	150	40	15	3.33	Accepted
5	The PR unit uses digital platforms (intranet, WhatsApp groups, email) for internal communication.	178	150	30	32	3.21	Accepted
6	Management uses dialogue to settle dispute with staff	201	106	40	43	3.19	Accepted
7	Staff achievements are acknowledged by management	196	109	40	45	3.16	Accepted
8	Social programmes (sport, end of the year parties) are organised by the hospital to strengthen employee-management relations	152	120	50	68	4.5	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.1.8 presents respondents' mean ratings on PR strategies/channels used by management to relate with employees. All items had mean scores above the acceptance benchmark of 3.0, indicating that respondents generally agreed that these strategies were being implemented. This suggests that the hospital employed multiple PR strategies to foster effective employee relations.

Highly Effective	167	42.8
Effective	172	44.1
Not Effective	51	13.1
Total	390	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.1.9: Respondents Ratings of the UUTH PR Effectiveness of Strategies

Options	Frequency	Percentage
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Table 4.1.9 shows respondents' overall rating of PR strategies in the hospital. The data reveals that majority of respondents (86.9%) considered the strategies highly effective and effective. This indicates that most respondents believed the PR strategies were effective in managing employee relations.

Table 4.1.11: Mean Ratings of Challenges faced by UUTH's PR team.

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean score	Decision Rule
1	The PR unit is understaffed	204	97	40	49	3.6	Accepted
2	There are insufficient funding/resources for the PR unit	100	234	26	30	3.03	Accepted
3	Management does not prioritize internal communication.	92	256	22	20	3.07	Accepted
4	Lack of training limits PR unit's capacity.	174	166	28	22	3.26	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.1.11 presents respondents' views on challenges confronting the PR unit. These findings show that although the PR unit is functional, it faces several operational challenges.

Table 4.1.12: Mean Ratings of Respondent’s on the extent of impact of UUTH’s PR strategies on Employee Relations.

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean score	Decision Rule
1	Effective communication from management improves my job satisfaction.	189	161	20	20	3.33	Accepted
2	PR strategies at UUTH positively influence staff commitment.	172	183	15	20	3.33	Accepted
3	Clear and open communication reduces likelihood of strikes and industrial action.	168	176	36sss	30	3.33	Accepted
4	I am more likely to recommend UUTH as a good place to work.	170	167	23	30	3.22	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.1.12 presents respondents’ mean ratings on how PR strategies influence employee morale. These indicate that PR practices positively contribute to employee morale and workplace harmony.

## V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section interprets the results of the study, compares them with existing empirical studies, and highlights the implications for the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital (UUTH).

To answer research question one, the study revealed that UUTH employs a multi-channel approach to public relations. The data indicates that the most dominant strategies include regular staff meetings (Mean=3.22), internal updates via memos/circulars (Mean=3.23), and formal feedback mechanisms (Mean=3.33). There is also a significant adoption of digital platforms like WhatsApp and intranets (Mean=3.21). This suggests that the hospital management is actively moving away from purely top-down instructions toward more interactive communication methods. This agrees with Raman’s and Singh’s (2006) assertion that management should regularly have interface with employees to inform them of developments in the organisation. The heavy reliance on staff meetings supports the Two-Way Symmetrical Model proposed by Grunig & Hunt (1984), which emphasizes on dialogue. However, unlike Eke and Alikor (2025), who found PR in Rivers State hospitals to be largely reactive, the UUTH data suggests a more structured PR strategies and consistent use of internal communication channels.

Table 4.19 vividly shows respondents rating of the effectiveness of UUTH Public Relations Strategies. The study found that the majority of respondents (86.9%) perceive the PR strategies at UUTH as either "Effective" or "Highly Effective". It appears that recent efforts by the PR unit have improved the perception of management among staff. This finding supports Kim and Rhee (2011), who noted that strategic internal communication improves employee-organisation relationships. It also corroborates Bayo and Dagogo (2023), who found a positive relationship between relationship management and employee commitment in Port Harcourt hospitals.

Table 4.1.10 shows the mean ratings of respondents as to the extent to which UUTH’s management involves its employees in decision making. In statement 1, with a WMS of 1.83, employees disagreed that management of UUTH do not consult before policy changes are implemented; item 2, staff are not given opportunities to participate in decision making that affect their work (WMS 2.02); Item 3, suggestions given by employees are not acted upon or taken seriously (WMS 1.75). It is only item 4 which deals with Heads of Departments encouraging staff input at meetings that was accepted, with a WMS of 3.48. It also rejects Muthoka (2016) study, who concluded that employee voice practices significantly influence organisational performance in the healthcare sector. When employees feel involved in decision-making, it reduces resistance to change-a common issue in the healthcare sector.

In table 4.1.12, the mean rating of respondents' on the impact of UUTH public relation strategies on employee relations is vividly captured. The findings show a strong consensus that PR strategies positively influence job satisfaction with; staff commitment (Mean=3.33) and reduce the likelihood of strikes (Mean=3.33). Furthermore, employees indicated a willingness to recommend UUTH as a good place to work (Mean=3.22), which is a key indicator of employee advocacy. This confirms Thelen and Men (2020), who found that internal communication fosters employee advocacy. It also supports the Excellence Theory, which posits that good communication reduces organisational conflict and builds trust. The results directly answer the research question regarding the link between PR and harmony, showing that communication is a critical tool for conflict resolution as suggested by Olakunle (2008).

Despite the recorded successes, the PR unit faces severe structural challenges. The data explicitly highlights insufficient funding (Mean=3.03) and understaffing (Mean=3.6) as major hurdles. There is also a perception that management does not fully prioritise internal communication (Mean=3.07), and lack of training limits PR unit's capacity (WMS 3.26). This finding echoes the work of Joseph (2017) and Njiiri (2012), who noted that PR is often neglected by management or treated as a peripheral function in Nigerian organisations. It also aligns with Eke and Alikor (2025), who identified resource limitations as a barrier to proactive PR in teaching hospitals. The implication is that the current effectiveness of the PR unit may be unsustainable.

## VI. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study investigated the relationship between Public Relations strategies and employee relations in the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital (UUTH). The following key findings were established:

1. The most prominent and frequently used strategies are regular staff meetings (Mean = 3.22), the use of internal memos and circulars (Mean = 3.23), and the adoption of digital platforms like WhatsApp and the intranet (Mean = 3.21) for internal information dissemination.
2. The PR strategies implemented at UUTH are perceived as highly effective by the staff. A significant 86.9% of the respondents rated the strategies as either "Effective" or

"Highly Effective," indicating a positive perception of communication efforts by management.

3. Table 4.1.10 revealed that UUTH does not practice participatory management, where employees are consulted before major policy challenges are made.
4. There is a strong, positive correlation between the PR strategies and key indicators of employee relations. Highly agreed that clear and open communication reduces the likelihood of strikes and industrial action (Mean = 3.33). The strategies positively influence staff commitment (Mean = 3.33) and improve job satisfaction (Mean = 3.33).
5. It was further revealed, the PR unit faces critical operational challenges, primarily insufficient funding (Mean = 3.03) and understaffing (Mean = 3.6). These resource constraints pose the greatest threat to the sustainability of the current effective communication system.

## VII. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that effective public relations is a fundamental and indispensable tool for achieving organizational harmony and mitigating industrial conflict in the healthcare sector, particularly at the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital. The hospital's successful adoption of a two-way, symmetrical communication model, evidenced by the high ratings for staff meetings and formal feedback mechanisms, has demonstrably bridged the communication gap between management and staff. By prioritising transparency and dialogue, UUTH has effectively improved staff commitment, enhanced job satisfaction, and reduced the probability of industrial strikes. This finding unequivocally supports the premise that public relations is an essential strategic management function that sustains a positive organizational climate, rather than merely a reactive or ceremonial function. In sum, the study confirms that effective PR strategies are directly proportional to positive employee relations at UUTH.

## VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and the conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are offered to the management of the University of Uyo Teaching

Hospital (UUTH) and other tertiary health institutions in Nigeria:

1. Management should ensure that the practice of consulting staff before policy changes is institutionalised across all departments. This should involve mandating the inclusion of departmental representatives in key decision-making committees, thereby maintaining the high level of trust that currently exists.
2. Management should move beyond simple "suggestion boxes" to implement formal, annual employee Communication Audits. This will measure communication effectiveness consistently and ensure management is always attuned to emerging staff grievances before they escalate into conflict.
3. Management must address the critical issue of insufficient funding. PR is not an expense but an investment. A dedicated, sufficient budget should be allocated for employment of staff operational activities, technology upgrades, and training to ensure communication quality does not deteriorate.

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