

Public Relations as a Tool for Effective Healthcare Service Delivery: A Study of National Eye Centre, Kaduna

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Abstract

For an organization to establish and maintain its relevance in the society, there is the need for constant harmonisation of the organisation's interests with the interest of its target publics. Moreso, in a hospital setting which offers intangible services. This study, "Public Relations as a Tool for Effective Healthcare Service Delivery. A Study of National Eye Centre, Kaduna", examined the public relations activities in National Eye Centre, the level of enhancement of patients'/relations' satisfaction and staff motivation by those activities as well as the challenges faced by the public relations unit in undertaking PR activities. The study adopted the two-way symmetrical model of public relations practice. Quantitative research approach using survey research method was employed with the use of questionnaire as instruments of data collection. The quantitative data gathered were analysed using descriptive data analysis in form of frequency tables and percentages while the qualitative data were set out in theme, analysed and interpreted. Findings from the study showed that National Eye Centre, Kaduna, employs public relations activities such as information management, media management, customer relations, community relations, hospital publications, management of the hospital events, research, amongst others, and these activities enhance patients' satisfaction to a very high level and positively affect staff motivation. The study concludes that public relations, though a non-medical factor, as a tool brings about effective healthcare service delivery since it affects staff motivation positively and enhances patients'/relations' satisfaction. The study, therefore, recommends that hospitals should continue to employ public relations activities since it has been proven through this research that public relations activities, though non-medical services, are crucial in motivating the internal public such as staff and enhancing patients'/relations' satisfaction.

Keywords

Public Relations, Effective Healthcare, Service Delivery, National Eye Centre and Kaduna



I. Introduction

Every organization exists to satisfy certain need(s) of the public by creating products, services or ideas, and its growth and survival will depend on how effective its relationship with that public is. One way of creating an effective relationship is through the use of the tool of public relations, a tool that is as old as creation as people have always needed to get other human beings to approve of their ideas or decisions. Public relations aims to create and sustain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics by informing and eventually persuading them - clients, employees, shareholders, partners, community, finance houses, media, government and other stakeholders - to hold and maintain a favourable opinion towards the organisation, its products, services and ideas (Ahmed & Msughter, 2022).

As Cabot (2012) observed, the idea of public relations has been around for as long as people have sought to persuade other people to get them to do something, not do something or keep on doing something. Individuals, groups, organisations and governments make this persuasion because they are concerned about the impression or image others have of them. This means that organizations that aim to grow, succeed and maintain the success are always concerned about the images or reputation they create in the minds of the public that they serve (Airaoje et al., 2024). Kotler, as cited in Onyiengo (2014) states that in organisations, people respond to the image they have of an organization, and not necessarily to its reality. He is of the opinion that publics holding a negative image of an organization will avoid or disparage the organization while those holding a positive image will be drawn to it to patronize its goods or services. For this one reason, organisations should be interested in learning about their images to facilitate rather than impede the delivery of satisfaction (Airaoje et al., 2023).

A favourable image is created when, according to Kotler, the organisation creates real satisfaction for its clients and let others know about it. Letting others know about it will mean the organization passing timely and correct information to the clients and other stakeholders / publics the organisation deals with. Put another way, communication of adequate information promptly to the publics of the organisation. This is what PR practitioners do: communicate with the publics of the organization to ensure a favourable image or good reputation of the organization before its publics. Tengilimoglu et al., (2007) lent credence to this when they said that attention should be given to creation of a positive image by improved public relations activities since image and reputation are a key consideration by clients. To the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR), public relations is the discipline which looks after reputation with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing opinion and behavior. What this, therefore, means is that service can be said to have been effectively delivered when there is understanding and support from the organisation's publics (Airaoje et al., 2024).

Communicating with the relevant publics has become imperative, especially in the information age which presents people with diverse information sources, and where genuine and constant communication is now vital to the growth and development of any organisation be it public or private, and public relations prides itself as being the voice of an organization to meet its communication needs. It is very necessary that an organization communicate with people which its activities affect and who affect its activities because in a world of constant connectivity, ability to measure up with quality and timely answers goes a long way in boosting the reputation of the organization before its publics (Mullen & Rennane (2017).

For public relations to effectively create a mutual understanding between an organization and its publics, scholars have expounded that it should be a part of the top decision-making body of the organization. Thus, following the arguments of scholars like Grunig (2001), Cutlip et al., (2006), public relations is a management function that should be positioned at the very top of the corporation hierarchy (Vercic et al., 1996). Also, according to Grunig (2001), "organizations that employ individual public relations practitioners or public relations firms have begun to recognize public relations as an important management function" (p2). Grunig (2001) explained that organisations with effective public relations see PR as having value for the organization because it helps to create a balance between the self-interest of the organization and the interest of those who can affect or are affected by the organization. But scholars and empirical studies have also

shown that public relations are mostly not located at the management level (Aliough et al., 2023).

Rather, decisions on how public relations should be managed are made by the dominant coalition of the organisation (Grunig & Grunig, 2008), a group to which the public relations executive of the organization does not usually belong. Nonetheless, every organisation, no matter its size, industry or organizational type (profit or non-profit) is obligated to meeting publics' and stakeholders' expectations through organisational activities, outputs and efforts, and the organisation, in turn, enjoys the benefits, support and rewards (profits, funds, aids, brand loyalty, etc) that publics and stakeholders bestow on them. Meeting those expectations will include communicating the right message to the organisations' publics and stakeholders through public relations which has been defined as a management tool designed to gain support among a firm's various internal and external publics.

Like any other industry, the above is very true in the health care industry. Through continuous communication with the hospital's patients/relatives and other of its publics, public relations helps creates trust and provides the required information. This helps the hospital maintain good relations with both its internal and external publics. Thus, public relations benefit healthcare delivery in areas such as effective communication, creating a positive image, well made strategies and maintaining a good reputation (Bharti, 2022).

Due to ethics, hospitals are not expected to advertise, but, the constant changes in the health care delivery system have often led to increased need for communication with important publics (Tomic et al., 2010). Considering the centrality of hospitals, medical centres, health centres and other health institutions to the life of the modern man from the time of his conception till the time of death, an effective resolve of his health challenges in between this period will need a mutual relationship between him the patient and the hospitals. This has often led to the need for constant communication with not just the patients but, other important publics of the hospital as well (Aondover et al., 2022). The need to create viable, effective and improved communication between health care providers (staff) and patients on one hand, and hospital and its other target publics on the other hand, is a crucial one.

Moreover, the pressure to maintain a cordial relationship is felt more by health institutions now more than before due to the changing nature of the health care industry leading to increasing agitation among the publics (especially patients) of the health institutions for better service delivery. Kirdar (2007) points out that patients are not sufficiently informed to be able to evaluate the technical aspects of the quality of healthcare and treatment services. Therefore, their perception (positive or negative) of the hospital depends not only on receiving adequate medical services but also on non-medical customer services such as friendly and sincere relations, or otherwise, when they are receiving the service, access to doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers, ability to establish communication, physical environment condition (e.g. clean water, power supply, parking lots, room services, medical supplies, number of beds, laundry services, outer appearance of the hospital, etc), importance attached to food services, waiting time, a relatively short bureaucratic process and other factors. These non-medical services are important in shaping patient/customer satisfaction (Hile et al., 2022).

In line with the above expectations, therefore, government-owned hospitals especially in developing countries (Nigeria inclusive) are, often times, criticized by the wider public as lacking effective service delivery as patients complain of inadequate facilities, long waiting time, neglect by and insults from hospital workers and other forms of negative attitude of the hospital staff. All these point to the fact that there are increased

agitations and calls for new and better ways to manage public opinion concerning our hospitals. They are also a pointer to the fact that most public hospitals are not adequately using public relations activities to enhance health care service delivery (Msughter et al., 2023). This informed the researcher of the need to investigate the use of public relations in promoting effective health care service delivery in a government or publicly-owned hospital and the image of such a hospital before its employees and patients/their relatives, with focus on National Eye Centre, Kaduna. As the only government-owned eye specialty, how are public relations activities used at national Eye Centre, Kaduna to bring about effective health care services to the satisfaction of the patients/relatives and employees? This is what this study aimed at.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the public relations activities used at National Eye Centre, Kaduna.
2. To find out the level at which public relations activities used by National Eye Centre Kaduna enhance patients/ relations' satisfaction.
3. To examine the extent to which public relations activities employed at National Eye Centre Kaduna affect staff motivation
4. To identify the challenges faced by the public relations unit of National Eye Centre Kaduna in undertaking its functions.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Literature Review

Several studies have been conducted in the past, an empirical review of some of which show that public relations was either not being employed at all in the organization studied, still at the pre-historic stage, in the early stage of the organisation's publics becoming aware of it or where established, concentrating on only one aspects of the organisation's publics. In a study, "An Assessment of Public Relations as a Tool for Repositioning the Image of the Nigerian Police Force, a Study of Lagos Command", Oluwasola (2016) assessed public relations as a tool for repositioning the image of the Nigerian Police with focus on the Lagos Command of the Force. The researcher adopted survey research method using the questionnaire and semi – structured interview guide to obtain data from 205 respondents.

Findings from the research show that although the Nigerian Police Public Relations Department's activities are beginning to penetrate into the minds of the public, its current media relations practice and concerted efforts are inadequate to completely erase police's negative image. The researcher recommends that police personnel appointed to man the NPPRD must be certified public relations persons. Also, the discriminatory media relations practice of the PPRO, Lagos Command, must be urgently addressed. This shows that public relations activities are engaged in by the Nigerian Police but, inadequate to create a positive image of the Force before its publics.

The study is relevant to the present study in that both looked at public relations as a tool for effective service delivery and made use of questionnaire and interview guide. It, however, differs from the present study which focuses on the health sector while it focuses on the security sector. Related to the present study in focus, is the study by Kehinde and Igbozuruike (2016) on "Public Relations as a Tool for Effective Healthcare Management". The researchers made use of questionnaire to collect data from 150 respondents sampled from the staff of Hetta hospital. The study found out that there is a positive relationship between good public relations and patients' satisfaction with the way they are attended to

at the hospital. The implication of this, the researchers said, is that in any healthcare organisation, which services are intangible, the attitude and competence of staff are very important in engendering customer satisfaction. The study recommends that healthcare organizations use public relations to promote the sales of their services judging by its effectiveness as indicated by the study.

Contrary to Oluwasola (2016), who found out that the current PR efforts by the Nigerian Police are inadequate to create a positive relationship between it and its different publics, Kehinde and Igbozuruike (2016)'s findings show that public relations activities are effectively being used at the Hetta Hospital to bring about patients' satisfaction, indicating the positive impact of public relations on the publics of an organisation. Kehinde and Igbozuruike (2016)'s study relates to the present work in that both see public relations as a tool to enhance healthcare service delivery, but differ as the former focuses on a private hospital while the latter focuses on a government-owned hospital, the structure and operations of which differ from those of a private hospital in several ways.

In "The Practice and Challenges of Public Relations within two Ethiopian Towns: Harar et al., in Kehinde and Igbozuruike (2016) assessed the roles and functions of public relations within the organisations in Harar and Dire Dawa towns. The study generated quantitative data through an introspective Likert-Scale questionnaire with the respondents selected using simple random sampling technique. Descriptive data analysis was used to communicate the findings of the study. The findings show that the practice of public relations in the towns under study is very deprived and highly challenging for effective performance and implementation of public relations activities because the major perspectives of public relations roles and functions are not clearly identified. The paper observed that the issue of public relations is still at its pre-historic stage which deals with propaganda, publicity and manipulation. The findings go contrary to those of Kehinde and Igbozuruike (2016) on another side of the same continent, which found out that there is a positive relationship between good public relations and customer satisfaction. Geremev (2017) recommends public relations practitioners should get involved in strategic management, decision making and implementation of organizational planning.

Sheriko (2015) conducted a study on "Accounts of PR Practices and Challenges by Senior Managers: A Qualitative Exploratory Study". Taking a collective study approach in the form of a comprehensive analysis of in-depth, semi-structured interview data, the study examined how senior managers of small successful nonprofit organisations work towards their goals and use communication/public relations aid in that effort. It also examined the challenges of those organisations, how these challenges are mitigated and in turn, how their communication practices reflect Grunig's Excellence Model. The study goes in line with Geremev (2017), who also looked at practices and challenges of public relations, but in another continent of the world and with contrary finding of public relations still being at the prehistoric level in that part of the world as earlier pointed out above.

Findings from Sheriko (2015) revealed a number of cost-efficient or compensatory methods of communicating to gain the most impact on the organisation's publics using social media, member base building and relationship building, among other methods. All participants in the study acknowledged they were not immune to challenges in reaching their goals like the findings in Geremev (2017) (but, of different dimensions) and have been able to mitigate those challenges enough to succeed, by ensuring that, as senior managers, they are in constant balancing act between satisfying their goals and the challenges they have as a small nonprofit.

The findings also show that the public relations units/managers had a voice in the decision making of their organisation in that organisational planning brought it into

consideration and looked for ways to minimise the negative side of organisational activities through communication. This is in line with the findings of Likely (2010) which show that in most of the situations analysed, the head of the communication group works directly with the most senior executive and in 50% of the situations, sits as a permanent member of the top management committee. It also corroborates the scholarly view that public relations is a management function.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The researcher anchored the study on the two-way symmetrical model as a theoretical basis for the study because of their relevance to public relations practice. This is the last of the four models of public relations practice put forward in 1984 by Grunig and Hunt in their book, “Managing Public Relations”. The first three models are the press agency, public information and two-way asymmetrical model. The two-way symmetric model, a component of the excellence theory, was further developed by Grunig, his wife: Larissa Grunig, and his disciples. The model represents a public relations orientation in which organizations and their publics adjust to each other. The two-way symmetrical model of public relations as described in Grunig’s Excellence Theory is focused primarily in making sure that decisions made by an organization are mutually beneficial between itself and its audiences (Namadi & Aondover, 2020).

To Otubanjo, Amujo and Melewar (2010), it is a two-way communication method based on mutual understanding and dialogue between information senders and receivers; where both the senders and receivers are persuaded and their attitudes and behaviours modified in the process of the public relations campaign. It focuses on mutual understanding and two-way communication rather than one-way persuasion. In the concept of the two-way symmetric model, public relations practitioners choose to satisfy both sides rather than ignore one side in order to have long term relationships (Obada et al., 2024). The proponents of the model are of the view that the public relations practitioner should serve as a link between the organization and key publics rather than as a persuader. Explaining the model, Grunig (2001) said:

The two-way symmetrical model describes a model of public relations that is based on research and that uses communication to manage conflict and collaborate with strategic publics. Because the two-way symmetric model bases public relations on negotiation and compromise, it does not force the organization to make the choice of whether it is right on particular issues. Rather, two-way symmetrical public relations allows the question of what is right to be settled by negotiation... since nearly every side to a conflict... believes its position to be right.... The two-way symmetrical model makes organizations more effective in building relationships with publics (Grunig, 2001, p1).

Grunig further explains that the principle of symmetry means that the values and problems of both organizations and publics are equally important. Here, Grunig is saying that an organization is no more important than its publics and vice versa; both are equal stakeholders in the relationship. Therefore, organizations must communicate symmetrically with publics (taking the interests of both the organization and publics into account to cultivate high-quality, long-term relationships with them (Obada et al., 2021). Thus, the word “symmetrical” is used because the model attempts to create a mutually beneficial situation. Two-way dialogue, therefore, makes public relations inherently ethical and helps to make the organization more socially responsible.

Thus, for organizations that desire excellent public relations, symmetrical communication which describes a communication strategy that is most effective in

building a long-term relationship that satisfies both the organization and its publics is mandatory at a time of crisis and essential at all other times, for it helps maintain both the organisation's best interest and its audiences' best interest at the forefront in the most fair and balanced way possible (Obada et al., 2021).

Its importance to Public Relations field notwithstanding, some schools of thought are of the opinion that symmetry is difficult to attain in some situations, including the healthcare system based on constraints such as patient privacy, confidentiality and risk management issues. According to Bowen in Aondoer (2020), some have suggested that Grunig is too idealistic in his theory of two-way symmetrical communication, with some arguing that it simply is not realistic in the practical setting. Contrarily, Bowen says that Grunig's theory challenges PR professionals in the field to implement components of his theory in a world where most people view the work of PR professionals as simply securing media coverage as a main task and goal. He is of the opinion that the two-way symmetric model challenges PR practitioners in the practical setting to move deeper into their field in order to increase the value of PR as a whole to an organization. Due to the criticism of the two-way model, a fifth model termed mixed-motive model emerged.

However, this researcher believes that the model is possible to achieve in the field and can ultimately result in stronger relationships between an organization and its publics, if, in relating with the organisation's publics, the public relations professional expectedly brings to bear persuasion, dialogue and taking into an equal consideration, the interests of both the organization and the publics in their relationship.

The two-way symmetrical model is a component of the excellence theory of public relations. As such, both are relevant to this study. Since public relations is a communication tool that enables mutual relationship, the two-way symmetric model expounded, could increase the contributions of public relations to organizational effectiveness. Hospitals, being service organizations, depend on goodwill and mutual relationship with their various publics for the achievement of their goals and objectives. According to Grunig (2001), the model is one of the set of ideal types that described the typical ways in which contemporary public relations is practised. Thus, the researcher sees the model as relevant to the study as it attempts to analyse the practice of public relations in National Eye Centre in the efforts of the hospital at delivering effective health care service for the ultimate achievement of its vision and mission (Usman et al., 2022).

Health care service cannot be said to be effectively delivered if there is no motivation for the giver and then satisfaction to the receiver of the service (Vitalis et al., 2025). Thus, there is need for mutual understanding between the service provider/giver and receiver, hence the relevance of the two-way symmetric model (which represents a public relations orientation in which organizations and their publics adjust to each other), to this topic.

III. Research Methods

This study used quantitative method of survey for data collection. This study was carried out in National Eye Centre located off Nnamdi Azikiwe Expressway, Kaduna. The population for this study consists of the internal (staff) and external (patients/accompanying relatives- relatives accompany patients who cannot get to, move around the hospital or access hospital services on their own) publics of the hospital who are of diverse cultures, education, economic and social levels. The management and staff of the hospital are 600 (consisting of 313 clinical staff and 287 non-clinical staff), five of whom are PR professionals (Source: Human Resource Division, 2020).

The Krejcie and Morgan table was used to draw a sample of the population for data collection as follows: 234 respondents from the staff nominal roll of 600 plus 191 from the 382 patients that attended the specialty/consultant clinics weekly. The total sample is, therefore, 426. This was drawn through proportionate stratified random sampling method of probability sampling and convenience and purposive sampling methods of non-probability sampling. One, to get 234 respondents from the staff population of 600, proportionate stratified random sampling was used. The staff were stratified into clinical (313(52%) and non-clinical (287(48%) staffs and the questionnaire were proportionally allocated.

IV. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Level of Satisfaction with the First Come First Served Arrangement

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	76	39.8
Satisfied	93	48.7
Fairly satisfied	19	10.0
Unsatisfied	3	1.6
Total	191	100

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 1 above shows that 76 representing 39.8% of the respondents were very satisfied with the “first come first served” arrangement mode of seeing patients in the hospital. 48.7% were satisfied, 19(10%) were fairly satisfied while the remaining 1.6% were not satisfied. This shows that majority of the respondents were satisfied with the first come first served arrangement.

Table 2. Level of Satisfaction with the Notices/Directional Signs Provided within the Hospital

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	104	54.5
Satisfied	79	41.4
Fairly satisfied	7	3.7
Unsatisfied	1	.5
Total	191	100

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 2 shows that 54.5% of the respondents were very satisfied with the provision of notices and directional signs to different parts of the hospital, 41.4% were satisfied, 3.7% fairly satisfied while the remaining 0.5% was not satisfied. This means that most of the respondents were satisfied with the notices and directional signs provided. This indicates that the notices and directional signs were clearly communicated to them and so they could easily access different sections of the hospital for health care services.

Table 3. Level of Satisfaction with Communication with the Staff

Satisfaction level with the way medical personnel explain patients' condition	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	96	50.3
Satisfied	80	41.9

Fairly satisfied	10	5.2
Not satisfied	5	2.6
Total	191	100
Satisfaction level with the non-medical personnel's attitude	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	65	34.0
Satisfied	90	47.1
Fairly satisfied	33	17.3
Not satisfied	3	1.6
Total	191	100

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 3 above shows that 50.3% of the respondents were very satisfied with the way medical personnel explain their conditions to them, 41.9% were satisfied, 5.2% said they were fairly satisfied while the rest 2.6% said they were not satisfied. This means that the respondents that were very satisfied with the way medical personnel explained the patients' condition to them have the highest percentage. Similarly in the area of non-medical personnel attitude, 34.0% of the respondents indicated that they were very satisfied, 47.1% said they were satisfied, 17.3% were fairly satisfied while the rest 1.6% were not satisfied. This indicates that majority of the respondents were satisfied with the attitude of the non-medical personnel in their relationship with them while taking healthcare services. The implication of this finding is that PR activities are used by National Eye Centre to create mutual understanding with its publics, thereby ensuring that it and its publics adjust to each other as expounded in the two-way symmetrical model by (Grunig & Grunig, 2001).

Table 4. Level of Satisfaction with Communication with the Staff

Hospital's response to patients' complaints / suggestions	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	116	60.7
Satisfied	51	26.7
Fairly satisfied	20	10.5
Not satisfied	4	2.1
Total	191	100
Promptness of communication in case of a change in hospital appointment	Frequency	Percentage
Very prompt	90	47.2
Prompt	62	32.4
Fairly prompt	33	17.3
Not prompt	6	3.1
Total	191	100

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 4 shows that over 60% of the respondents were very satisfied with the hospital's response rate to patients' complaints and suggestions, 26.7% were satisfied, 10.5% were fairly satisfied while the remaining 2.1% were not satisfied. This shows that majority of the respondents were satisfied with the response rate to complaints and suggestions. Also, table 4 indicates that 47.2% of the respondents believed that the hospital communicated them very promptly if there was any change in their appointment date,

32.4% believed the communication was prompt, 17.3% believed the communication was fairly prompt while the remaining 3.1% of the respondents believed that the communication was not prompt as they don't usually discover the change until they get to the hospital and are told the appointment would not hold. This shows that majority of the respondents were promptly communicated to notify them if there was any change in their appointment.

Table 5. Level of Satisfaction with Communication through the Media

Information received from the hospital pamphlets, fliers, etc	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	31	16.2
Satisfied	41	21.5
Fairly satisfied	27	14.1
Not satisfied	92	4.2
Total	191	100
Information about NEC through the Conventional Media		
Very satisfied	41	21.5
Satisfied	62	32.5
Fairly satisfied	19	9.9
Not satisfied	69	36.2
Total	191	100
Information about NEC through the Social Media	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	15	7.9
Satisfied	62	32.5
Fairly satisfied	12	6.3
Not satisfied	102	53.4
Total	191	100

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 5 shows that 31(16.2%) of the respondents were very satisfied with the level of information received through the hospital pamphlets, leaflets, fliers, brochures, etc, 21.5% were satisfied, 14.1% were fairly satisfied while 48.2% were not satisfied. What this means is that a little over half of the respondents were satisfied with the information received through the hospital pamphlets, etc, at the same time indicating that close to half of the respondents were not satisfied.

Table 5 also shows that 41(21.5%) of the respondents were very satisfied with the level of information they received about NEC through the conventional media, 32.5% were satisfied, 9.9% were fairly satisfied while the rest 36.5% were not satisfied. This shows that majority of the respondents were satisfied with the level of information received through the conventional media, while more than one-third of the respondents were not satisfied.

The table above also shows that 7.9% of the respondents were very satisfied with the level of information about NEC received through the social media, 32.5% were satisfied, and 6.3% were fairly satisfied while the remaining 53.4% were not satisfied. This indicates that more than half of the respondents were not satisfied with the level of information received about NEC received through the social media. This finding upholds the position of Kirdar (2007) and that of Baabaki, Ahmed, Pashtenko and Makarem, (2017)

that shaping patient/customer satisfaction depends not only on receiving adequate medical services, but also on non-medical customer services such as friendly and sincere relations, or otherwise when they are receiving the service, ability to establish communication, relatively short bureaucratic process, etc.

Table 6. Frequency of the Response Rate- Staff

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage
Distributed	234	100
Returned	230	98.3
Unreturned	4	1.71
Usable	230	100
Unusable	0	0%

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 6 shows the response rate in frequency and percentage. 234 questionnaires were distributed. 230 were returned while four were not returned.

Table 7. Demographic Representations of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	118	51.3
Female	112	48.7
Total	230	100
Post/level		
1-5	21	9.1
6-10	91	39.6
11-13	85	37.0
Above 13	33	14.3
Total	230	230
How long have you worked in this hospital?		
1-5 years	41	17.8
6-10 years	53	23.0
11-15 years	37	16.1
16-20 years	15	6.5
Above 20 years	84	36.5
Total	230	100

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 7 above shows that 118 or 51.3% of the respondents were males while 48.7% were females. From the data, we can say that NEC had a slightly higher number of male staff than female staff. For the post/level, the table shows that 9.1% of the respondents were between levels 1 and 6, 39.6% were between levels 6 and 10, 37% were between levels 11 and 13 while the remaining 14.3% were above level 13. This means that the lowest levels had the least number of respondents in the study while most of the respondents were senior staff. On the service year range, table 4.8 reveals that 17.8% of the respondents had worked at NEC for between 1 and 5 years, 23% had spent between 6 and 10 years, 16.1% between 11 and 15 years, 6.5% had worked for between 16 and 20 years

while the remaining 36.5% had worked in the hospital for more than 20 years. This reveals that more than half of the staff had worked in NEC for more than 10 years, indicating an experienced workforce.

Table 8. Induction Training

Have you been given induction training since you were employed?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	177	77.0
No	53	23.0
Total	230	100
Do you agree that the training given you on how to relate with patients and fellow staff during the induction training helps you in your work at the hospital?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	86	48.6
Agree	86	48.6
Not sure	3	1.7
Disagree	2	1.3
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	177	100

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 8 above shows that 77% of the respondents have been given an induction training since they were employed while the remaining 23% said they have not been given. This implies that more than two-third of the staff have been given an induction training since they were employed. The table also reveals that 86(48.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the induction training they received helped them in their work at the hospital, another 48.6% agreed that the induction training helped them in their work, 1.7% are not sure, 1.3% disagreed while none of the respondents strongly disagreed that the training helped them in their work. This means that majority of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the training helped them in their work.

Table 9. Existence and Functionality of the PR unit

Are you aware of the existence of the PR unit?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	227	98.7
No	3	1.3
Total	230	100
How functional is the PR unit?		
Very functional	159	70.0
Functional	66	29.1
Not functional	2	.9
Total	227	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2022)

From the table above, it can be seen that 227(98.7%) of the respondents were aware of the existence of the Public Relations unit, as they said yes, while the remaining 1.3% were unaware. This means that majority of the respondents were aware of the existence of

the PR unit. On the functionality of the unit, table 4.10 above reveals that 70% of the respondents said the PR unit was very functional, 29.1% believed it was functional while the rest 0.9% believed it was not functional. This indicates that most of the respondents believed the Public Relations unit was functional.

Table 10. Communication with Staff

How often are you communicated through memo/circular, notice board, meeting, word of mouth?	Frequency	Percentage
Very often	59	25.7
Often	126	54.8
Fairly often	32	13.9
Not often	13	5.7
Total	230	100
Do you agree that the modes of communication stated above are effective?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	65	28.3
Agree	137	59.6
Undecided	16	7.0
Disagree	9	3.9
Strongly disagree	3	1.3
Total	230	100

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The table above shows that 59(25.7%) respondents were of the opinion that they were communicated very often, 54.8 % were often communicated, 13.9% were fairly often communicated while the rest 5.7% were not often communicated. This indicates that a high percentage of the staff were often communicated. The implication of this is that the morale of the respondents to work will likely be boosted to work since they were often communicated on their job role. Moreover, table 4.11 shows that 28.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that the modes of communication stated were effective, 59.6% agreed that they were effective, 7% of the respondents were undecided, and 3.9% disagreed with the statement that the modes were effective while the remaining 1.3% strongly disagreed. It was evident from table 4.10 that majority of the respondents agreed that the modes of staff-management communication were effective, meaning that they were satisfied with the modes.

Table 11. Staff Motivating Factors

Do you agree that the following will motivate you to give your best service?	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Training/Development	74.8	21.3	0.9	1.3	1.7
Good management-staff communication	66.5	-	30.4	0.4	2.6
Recognition	60.4	33.0	3.9	1.7	0.9

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 11 above shows that 74.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that they would be motivated by training/development to give their best service, 21.3% agreed they would be motivated by training/development, 0.9% were undecided, 1.3% disagreed while the rest 1.7% strongly disagreed. This shows that majority of the respondents would be motivated by training/development to give their best on the job. This implies that the training the PR unit gives on how to relate with patients/relatives and fellow staff will lead to staff being motivated to deliver health service effectively. Also, table 11 shows that 66.5% of the patients strongly agreed that good management- staff communication would motivate them to give their best, none indicated agreed, 30.4% were undecided, 0.4% disagreed while the remaining 2.6% strongly disagreed. This indicates that majority of the respondents would be motivated by good management-staff communication to give their best service. This reveals that majority of the respondents would be strongly motivated by good management-staff communication to give their best service while about one-third were either undecided or disagreed.

In the same vein, 60.4% of the respondents strongly agreed that they would be motivated by recognition to give their best service, 33% agreed, 3.9% were undecided, 1.7% disagreed while the rest 0.9% strongly disagreed. This indicates that majority of the respondents would be strongly influenced by recognition to give their best service on the job. This goes in line with the study by Roberts (2005), which indicated that there is a positive relationship between recognition and motivation.

V. Conclusion

The study examined public relations as a tool for effective health care service delivery at National Eye Centre, Kaduna. The findings showed that public relations activities such as information management, media management, customer relations, community relations, hospital publications, management of the hospital events, PR training for staff, research, amongst others, are engaged in by the hospital. PR activities engaged in by National Eye Centre, Kaduna leads to a high level of patients/relations' satisfaction as they expressed satisfaction with the way their medical condition was explained to them, clearly provided directional signs, attitude of the staff, prompt and adequate communication with them about their conditions, among others, all acts which are pointers that attitude, communicative actions and competence of staff are very important in engendering customer satisfaction.

Even though customer relations activity which is a major function of Public Relations has been officially taken over by the SERVICOM unit, the Public Relations unit still works in conjunction and closely with the SERVICOM unit to ensure effective health care service delivery at the hospital. The public relations activities employed at National Eye Centre Kaduna, affect staff motivation to the extent that the PR trainings for staff on how to relate with patients and the effective modes of communication between staff and management have impacted positively on the staff, empowering them to give their best service in health care service. However, public relations practice at National Eye Center is not without challenges. The challenges facing the PR unit include lack of involvement in management decisions (as the head of PR is not a member of the top management committee), lack of major equipment necessary for a standard PR unit, paucity of funds and inadequate training and retraining of the PR unit staff. From the findings, the researcher concludes that National Eye Centre, Kaduna employs public relations activities which are being used to promote effective health care service delivery as staff are

motivated by such activities to give health care service to patients/relations, who in turn express satisfaction with both the medical and non- medical aspects of the treatment.

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