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## **Assessing Media Engagement in the Anglican Communion: A Focus on Southwest Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the media relations practices of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in Southwest Nigeria, aiming to evaluate their effectiveness in fostering communication with stakeholders and enhancing public engagement. It addresses a significant scholarly gap by examining religious media engagement through a robust theoretical lens, which underscores the importance of dynamic communication systems, mutual understanding, strategic agenda management, and stakeholder responsiveness within organisational media relations. Collection of theories including the systems theory and excellence theory provided framework for this study. The study adopted a descriptive research design using a mixed-methods approach. The population comprised internal stakeholders (clergy and church members) and external stakeholders (journalists, media professionals, and community members) across six dioceses, one per state in Southwest Nigeria. A sample of 799 respondents was drawn using Slovin's formula and selected through a combination of simple random and purposive sampling. Data collection instruments included structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with six diocesan media officers and six external media practitioners. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and mean scores), while qualitative data were thematically analysed to complement and validate the findings. Results revealed that the Church demonstrates a high level of media engagement characterised by accessibility, message dissemination, and responsiveness. Nonetheless, limitations such as inconsistent media strategy across dioceses, lack of media training, and weak feedback mechanisms were identified. The study concludes that expanding its digital media presence, optimising crisis communication strategies, greater investment in media technology, and regular training for media officers are essential for improving the Church's media relations practices.

**Keywords:** Media Relations, Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), Practices, Southwest Nigeria.



## 1 INTRODUCTION

As society becomes more interconnected through digital media and the rapid flow of information, religious organisations must navigate public perception, manage media relations, and foster transparency to maintain credibility and trust. Religious institutions have historically been regarded as pillars of morality and community cohesion, but they now face growing scrutiny in an era marked by misinformation, media sensationalism, and changing audience expectations. The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), with its vast membership and influence, interacts with diverse stakeholders, including clergy, laity, media practitioners, and the general public. Effective PR practices ensure that the church's mission and activities are communicated clearly, fostering unity, engagement, and a positive perception among its followers and the broader society.

Public relations is “the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends<sup>1</sup>.” The origins of media relations can be traced back to the early 20th century, when Ivy Lee, known as the "father of public relations," introduced principles of transparency and truthfulness in engaging with the press. Lee's declaration, "Accuracy, Authenticity, and Interest," laid the foundation for modern media relations, emphasizing the importance of providing credible information to the media.<sup>2</sup> Over the decades, the practice evolved alongside technological advancements, from print media to the rise of electronic media such as radio and television, and eventually digital platforms. Each phase introduced new tools and challenges, reshaping how organisations interact with the media. Core functions of media relations includes: crafting of key messages aligned with an organisation's goals. This involves producing press releases, opinion pieces, and feature stories that resonate with both the media and the public<sup>3</sup>. The message is usually newsworthy, accurate, and tailored to the audience.

Media relations are relevant across sectors. In corporate sector, businesses use media relations to manage reputations, launch products and respond to crises; in nonprofit organisations, media relations help to raise awareness, attract funding and advocate for social issues; and in government and politics, political figures and institutions rely on media relations to communicate policies and shape public opinion. The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) is one of the largest and

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most influential Christian denominations in Nigeria, with deep historical roots and a broad reach across the country. Since its inception, the Church has grown to become a prominent institution, not only for worship but also for its involvement in social, educational, and ethical issues affecting Nigerian society. In Southwest Nigeria, the Church has established a significant presence, marked by numerous dioceses, parishes, and a dedicated membership base.<sup>4</sup>

The Anglican Church's presence in Nigeria began with the arrival of Christian missionaries from the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in [1842](#) led by Thomas Birch Freeman and Henry Townsend<sup>18</sup>. These early missionaries focused on the Yoruba people in the Southwest region, particularly in cities like Badagry, Abeokuta, and Lagos<sup>5</sup>. The introduction of Christianity was intertwined with the abolition of the slave trade, as the church played a significant role in resettling freed slaves in the newly established colonies<sup>6</sup>.

The spread of Anglicanism in Nigeria was marked by the establishment of schools and hospitals, which became vital in promoting Western education and healthcare<sup>7</sup>. These institutions laid the foundation for the church's influence on Nigerian society, attracting many to the new faith and helping to integrate Western cultural values with traditional African customs. By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Anglican Church had expanded significantly, establishing dioceses and parishes across Nigeria<sup>8</sup>. The consecration of Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther, a Nigerian, as the first African bishop of the Anglican Church on June 29, 1864 at Canterbury Cathedral in England, was a significant milestone, symbolising the Church's commitment to indigenous leadership and self-governance<sup>9</sup>

The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) employs a structured media engagement strategy that integrates traditional and modern communication methods to enhance its mission and connect with internal and external stakeholders. At the heart of this structure is a three-tiered approach that operates at the national, diocesan, and parish levels, ensuring effective communication across its vast membership base. At the national level, the Church's media activities are coordinated by a central communication office, which oversees media relations, manages official press releases, and engages with national media outlets. This office is often headed by a Media Director or Communication Officer who reports directly to the Primate of the Church<sup>10</sup>.



Diocesan Communication teams function semi-independently under the supervision of diocesan bishops. They handle localised media activities, such as publicising diocesan events, producing newsletters, and maintaining relationships with local media practitioners. These teams also coordinate with the central office to ensure that messaging aligns with the Church's overall vision<sup>11</sup>. The Church has embraced modern technology by establishing the Advent Cable Network Nigeria (ACNN) in 2013. ACNN serves as a dedicated platform for broadcasting religious programmes, services, and news. It also supports live-streaming of events, enabling the Church to reach a global audience, including the Nigerian diaspora.

Additionally, many dioceses maintain active social media accounts, websites, and mobile apps to engage younger members and facilitate two-way communication.<sup>12</sup> This structure reflects the Church's effort to balance traditional evangelism with contemporary media practices. This study seeks to assess the public relations practices by the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), with a specific focus on media relations practices. The scope of the study covers the geographical confines of Southwest Nigeria, where the Church has significant presence. This region includes states such as Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo and Ekiti. The focus is on six dioceses of the Church, namely: Lagos Diocese (Lagos state), Ibadan Diocese (Oyo state), Egba Diocese (Ogun state), Osun Diocese (Osun State), Akure Diocese (Ondo state) and Ekiti Diocese (Ekiti State). Finally, the study primarily focuses on current media relations practices of the Church.

## **2 STATEMENTS OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Effective media relations play a crucial role in enhancing the visibility, reputation, and influence of organisations, including religious institutions. The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), a prominent religious body in Southwest Nigeria, relies on media engagement to communicate its spiritual messages, foster societal development, and maintain its relevance in an increasingly media-driven society. Despite the importance of media relations in religious communication, there is a lack of systematic assessment of how the Church engages with the media, both internally (among clergy and members) and externally (with journalists and the public). Existing studies on public relations and media practices in Nigeria tend to focus on sectors such as politics, education, and business, leaving a gap in understanding the specific dynamics of religious media relations. This study, therefore seeks to fill this gap.



### **3 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW**

#### **3.1 Concept of Media Relations**

Media relations is a core component of public relations that centers on the strategic engagement between organisations and media professionals. It involves building long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with journalists, editors, bloggers, and broadcasters in order to facilitate accurate and positive media coverage. The aim is to inform the public via the media about an organisation's activities, mission, and goals in a consistent and credible manner.<sup>13</sup> Media relations and public relations perform quite different functions. Public relations (PR) is communication management and aims to make organisations transparent and responsive. Since the 1960s, organisations have increasingly faced legal and moral obligations to balance financial success with social, environmental and ethical responsibility. PR as a three-step process ensures firstly, that organisations listen to and understand public expectations for reasonable behaviour, secondly, that organisations' behaviour matches those expectations and finally, that they are publicly recognised as responsible<sup>14</sup>. Media relations (MR), on the other hand is a specialised sub-branch of public relations dealing primarily with step three of the process recognition. MR staff increase public awareness and understanding of an organisation's activities by sending information to the media and by inviting the media to see operations first-hand<sup>15</sup>.

MR is not necessarily the best method of obtaining public recognition, however. Patterson argues that today's main PR challenge "isn't getting noticed, it's getting believed and trusted"<sup>16</sup>. A common historical argument for using media to communicate has been that editorial (anything written by a journalist) has more credibility with audiences than direct communication (such as advertising), because it is seen as coming from an independent third party. However, academic research suggests that this may be one of the many popular 'myths' surrounding media influence<sup>5</sup>. Many experienced PR practitioners consider MR to be less ethical and, given increasing media and public cynicism towards 'PR stunts' and 'spin doctors', less effective and trusted than other PR methods. Direct and personalised communication that enables organisations to gather feedback and create dialogue with employees, communities, governments, shareholders, members, customers, trading partners and other stakeholders is increasingly gaining ground. The media remain, however, too powerful for any business to ignore.



### **3.2 Role of Media Relations in Crisis Communications**

Media relations play a critical role in crisis communications, acting as the interface between an organisation and its various stakeholders during times of crisis. The effectiveness of media relations in crisis scenarios can significantly influence public perception, stakeholder trust, and the overall outcome of the crisis management effort. This paper explores the strategies, challenges, and best practices of media relations in the context of crisis communications, drawing on relevant scholarly research and industry case studies. Crisis communication is defined as the dialogue between an organisation and its publics prior to, during, and after the negative occurrence<sup>17</sup>. The primary goal of crisis communication is to mitigate damage, protect the organisation's reputation, and restore normalcy. Media relations are integral to this process because the media serve as the primary conduit through which information about the crisis is disseminated to the public. Successful media relations during a crisis depend on pre-established relationships with journalists, transparent communication, and a strategic approach to message dissemination.

One of the fundamental strategies in media relations during a crisis is the preparation and implementation of a crisis communication plan. Such a plan typically includes pre-drafted messages, designated spokespersons, and protocols for media interaction. The crisis communication plan must be adaptable to different types of crises and should be regularly updated and rehearsed. Scholars suggest that organisations that are well-prepared for crises can respond more swiftly and effectively, thereby reducing the negative impact of the crisis<sup>18</sup>. A critical element of the crisis communication plan is the identification and training of spokespersons. These individuals are responsible for conveying the organization's messages to the media and must be equipped to handle challenging questions and high-pressure situations. The importance of media training for spokespersons, which includes rehearsing key messages, practicing interview techniques, and learning to maintain composure under scrutiny. Well-trained spokespersons enhance the organisation's credibility and can help to manage the narrative during a crisis.

Transparency and honesty are paramount in crisis communications. The organisation must provide accurate and timely information to the media, even if the news is unfavorable. Attempts to



withhold information or mislead the public can backfire, leading to increased scrutiny and erosion of trust. Honesty fosters trust and credibility, which are crucial for maintaining stakeholder confidence during a crisis. This principle aligns with the ethical guidelines of public relations, which advocate for truthfulness and transparency in all communications. Another important strategy is the rapid dissemination of information. The advent of social media and the 24-hour news cycle mean that news spreads quickly, and delays in communication can lead to the proliferation of rumors and misinformation. Organisations must be prepared to provide updates as the situation evolves, using both traditional and digital media channels. The use of social media in crisis communications allows organisations to reach a broad audience quickly and can facilitate direct interaction with stakeholders. However, the fast-paced nature of social media also requires constant monitoring and swift responses to emerging issues.

Effective media relations in crisis communications also involve understanding the needs and expectations of journalists. During a crisis, journalists are under pressure to report accurate and timely information. Organisations can support journalists by providing clear, concise, and factual information, as well as access to knowledgeable sources. Research found that journalists appreciate timely updates and the availability of spokespersons who can provide authoritative insights. By meeting these needs, organizations can foster positive relationships with journalists and ensure that their side of the story is accurately represented<sup>19</sup>. Managing the narrative is another crucial aspect of media relations in crisis communications. While it is important to acknowledge the crisis and provide factual information, organizations must also frame the narrative in a way that highlights their response efforts and commitment to resolving the issue. This can include sharing details about corrective actions, expressing empathy for those affected, and outlining steps being taken to prevent future occurrences. Framing the narrative helps to shape public perception and can mitigate the reputational damage caused by the crisis.

Despite the best efforts of practitioners, media relations in crisis communications are fraught with challenges. One significant challenge is the unpredictable nature of crises, which can vary widely in their causes, scope, and impact. This unpredictability requires flexibility and adaptability in the organisation's response. Additionally, the intense scrutiny from the media and the public during a



crisis can amplify minor missteps, making it imperative for organizations to execute their communication strategies flawlessly. Scholars highlight that the complexity of crises necessitates a dynamic approach to communication, where strategies are continuously adjusted based on the evolving situation<sup>20</sup>. The role of media monitoring cannot be overstated in crisis communications. Continuous monitoring of media coverage allows organisations to gauge public sentiment, identify emerging issues, and adjust their communication strategies accordingly. Media monitoring tools can track both traditional and social media, providing insights into how the crisis is being perceived and reported. Effective media monitoring enables organizations to respond proactively to misinformation and to address stakeholder concerns in a timely manner.

### **3.3 Measuring Media Relations Success**

Media relations success is commonly defined by the achievement of strategic communication goals related to media coverage, message dissemination, stakeholder engagement, and reputation management. Effective measurement involves assessing the impact of media relations activities on organisational objectives, such as enhancing brand visibility, shaping public perception, influencing stakeholder behaviour, and supporting business outcomes. One fundamental metric in measuring media relations success is media exposure or media coverage. Quantitative indicators include the volume of media mentions, the reach of media placements, and the frequency of media coverage over a specified period. Media exposure metrics provide insights into the extent to which an organization's messages and narratives have penetrated the media landscape and reached target audiences.

However, mere volume of media coverage does not necessarily equate to success. Qualitative evaluation is essential to assess the quality and tone of media coverage. Content analysis techniques can help assess the sentiment of media mentions (positive, neutral, or negative), the framing of key messages, and the alignment with organisational goals<sup>21</sup>. Positive sentiment and favorable framing indicate effective media relations strategies that contribute to enhancing organizational reputation and credibility. Beyond media exposure and sentiment analysis, media impact metrics measure the influence of media coverage on audience perceptions and behaviors.



This includes assessing changes in brand awareness, shifts in public opinion, increases in website traffic or social media engagement following media exposure, and other indicators of audience response. For example, spikes in online mentions or social media shares related to a media story can indicate heightened public interest and engagement driven by media relations efforts.

Another crucial aspect of measuring media relations success involves assessing the effectiveness of media relationships and journalist interactions. Relationship metrics may include tracking the frequency and depth of interactions with key journalists, the establishment of positive rapport, and the level of journalist satisfaction with the quality and relevance of information provided. Strong relationships with journalists can lead to more favorable media coverage and increased opportunities for proactive media placements. Furthermore, measuring media relations success extends to evaluating the impact on organisational reputation and stakeholder perceptions. Reputation metrics may involve surveys or focus groups to gauge changes in stakeholder attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions before and after media relations campaigns. These qualitative insights provide valuable feedback on how media coverage has influenced public trust, credibility, and overall reputation management efforts.

In recent years, the evolution of digital media and social analytics has expanded the toolkit for measuring media relations success. Digital metrics include online mentions, social media shares, likes, comments, and other forms of engagement that amplify the reach and impact of media coverage. Digital analytics tools enable real-time monitoring and analysis of media performance across multiple platforms, offering practitioners insights into audience demographics, geographic reach, and sentiment trends. Challenges in measuring media relations success include the complexity of attributing outcomes to specific media activities amidst multiple communication channels and touchpoint. The integration of media measurement with overall communication and marketing analytics remains a persistent challenge for practitioners seeking to Demonstrate Return on Investment (ROI) and align media relations metrics with organisational goals.

Moreover, the subjectivity of qualitative evaluation methods and the need for standardised measurement frameworks pose challenges in benchmarking media relations performance across



industries and organisations<sup>85</sup>. Practitioners must navigate these challenges by adopting a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches tailored to the specific goals, objectives, and contexts of media relations campaigns.

## 4.1 THEORETICAL REVIEW

### 4.1.2 Systems Theory

Systems theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding organisations as complex, interconnected systems that interact dynamically with their environments. Developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy, this theoretical perspective emphasizes the holistic view of organisations, focusing on the relationships and interactions among their various components rather than isolating individual elements<sup>22</sup>. In the realm of public relations (PR), systems theory plays a crucial role in shaping strategies, particularly in the domain of media relations. Public relations is fundamentally concerned with managing relationships between organisations and their stakeholders to achieve strategic communication goals and enhance organisational reputation<sup>23</sup>. Media relations, as a subset of PR, involves managing interactions with journalists, editors, and media outlets to influence public perception and secure favorable coverage. Systems theory enriches our understanding of media relations by highlighting how this subsystem interacts with other organisational functions and external stakeholders, shaping overall organisational communication strategies.

Systems theory views organisations as dynamic entities where components interact synergistically to achieve common goals. This perspective is particularly relevant in PR, where organisations navigate complex relationships with stakeholders, including the media, to manage reputation and promote their interests. By adopting a systems view, PR professionals can better understand the interconnectedness of organisational communication efforts and tailor strategies that align with broader organisational objectives. Media relations strategies aim to cultivate positive relationships with journalists and media outlets to influence public opinion and enhance organisational visibility. From a systems theory perspective, media relations can be analysed as a subsystem within the organisational system. This subsystem interfaces with other organisational functions such as

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marketing, corporate communications, and public affairs, as well as with external entities including the media and the general public. Understanding these interdependencies allows PR practitioners to navigate the complexities of media interactions more effectively.

Systems theory underscores the interdependent nature of organisational communication, where actions and decisions in media relations impact organisational reputation and public perception. Media coverage and editorial decisions influence how organisations are perceived by stakeholders, while organizational responses can shape subsequent media narratives. This feedback loop emphasises the importance of strategic communication and proactive engagement in managing media relations effectively.

#### **4.2 RELEVANCE OF SYSTEM THEORY TO THIS STUDY**

The media landscape is characterised by rapid evolution, with diverse platforms, channels, and audience segments influencing communication dynamics. Systems theory emphasises the need for organisations to adapt their media relations strategies in response to changing media practices and societal trends<sup>24</sup> by understanding these complexities, PR professionals can anticipate shifts in media behaviour and adjust strategies to maintain alignment with organisational goals.

Effective media relations often require PR professionals to act as boundary spanners, facilitating communication between the organisation and external stakeholders, including the media. Systems theory highlights the role of boundary-spanning activities in managing information flow, building relationships, and ensuring consistency in messaging across different channels. This strategic function is essential for navigating the interface between organisational operations and external perceptions.

Systems theory provides a robust theoretical foundation for understanding the intricate dynamics of organisational communication, particularly within the context of media relations in public relations strategies. By emphasising interdependence, feedback loops, complexity, adaptation, and boundary spanning, systems theory enhances our comprehension of how organisations strategically manage media interactions to achieve communication objectives and enhance overall



organisational effectiveness. Applying systems theory principles allows PR practitioners to navigate the complexities of media relations more strategically, ensuring alignment with organisational goals and fostering positive stakeholder relationships.

## 6. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts descriptive research design. The study assesses the media relations practices of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in Southwest Nigeria., the population consists of various internal and external stakeholders associated with the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in Southwest Nigeria. These include Church members, staff and media officers (internal stakeholders).

The Study covers Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, and Ekiti States. One Diocese was selected from each State: Diocese of Lagos (Lagos State), Diocese of Egba (Ogun State), Diocese of Ibadan (Oyo State), Diocese of Osun (Osun State), Diocese of Akure (Ondo State) and Diocese of Ekiti, (Ekiti State). The simple random sampling was used to select internal and external stake holders for quantitative data gathering using purpose sampling to select internal stakeholders (media officers) and external stakeholders (media practitioners) to gather qualitative data using semi-structured interview guide.

The key informant interview was conducted with six media officers representing six dioceses in the zone and six media practitioners representing the broadcast and the print media from the six states in the zone.

To determine the sample size for the quantitative aspect of the study, the Slovin's Formula<sup>2</sup> was used for the internal stakeholders (Church members: lay and clergy) and external stakeholders (members of the general public).

The sample size for internal stakeholders i.e. church members was determined based on the total population supplied by the Clerical secretaries of the six Dioceses which was put at 126,693. Using Slovin's formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2)}$$

Population size (**N**) = 126,693

Margin of error (**e**) = 0.05

$$e^2 = 0.05^2 = 0.0025$$

$$n \text{ therefore} = \frac{126,693}{1+126,693 \times 0.0025}$$

This gives:

$$n = \frac{126,693}{1+316.7325} = \frac{126,693}{317.7325} = 399$$

**399** ÷ **6** dioceses give an approximate sample size of **67** per diocese

The sample size of external stakeholders, i.e. general public was also determined based on the estimated population of the areas of the six dioceses using the Slovin's Formula:

Population size (**N**) = 8,224,736

Margin of error (**e**) = 0.05

Calculate **e**<sup>2</sup> (which is 0.05<sup>2</sup> = 0.0025)

This result in:

$$n = \frac{8,224,736}{1+8,224,736 \times 0.0025}$$

This result in:

$$n = \frac{8,224,736}{1+20,561.84} = \frac{8,224,736}{20,562.84} = 400$$

This gives a sample size of approximately 400 to ensure the desired margin of error.

**400** divided by six dioceses therefore gives the approximate sample size of **67** per diocese.

The Interview Guide has the following parts:

Instruction: A brief section introducing the purpose of the interview and a guarantee of confidentiality.

Section 1: Background Information: This is to glean information about the interviewee and to ensure that he/she is familiar with the media relations practices of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican communion) in the state where he/she works (in case of the media practitioner).

Sections 2, 3, 4, & 5 are designed to provide answers for the four research questions of the study. Section 6 was designed to get the interviewee to suggest improvements for enhancement of media relations practices of the Anglican Church in Southwest, Nigeria. The interview guide concludes with appreciation for the co-operation of the interviewee.

## 7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section discusses the findings in relation to the research questions, providing a comprehensive overview of the results.

### 1 Instrument Response Rate

**Table 1: Instrument Response Rate**

S/N	Research Instruments	Amount administered	Amount retrieved	Amount Validated	Rate of Response
1	<b>Assessment of Media Relations Practices of the Church of Nigeria (AMRP-CN)</b>	799	750	750	93.9%

**Source: Researcher’s Fieldwork, 2024**

Table 1 presents the amount of research instruments that were administered, collected (retrieved), and validated, including the rate of responses. The study utilised a questionnaire named "Assessment of Media Relations Practices of the Church of Nigeria" to gather data. The questionnaire was administered to 799 participants both internal and external stakeholders. Out of the 799 administered questionnaires, 750 were retrieved. All 750 retrieved questionnaires were validated for analysis, indicating a high quality of responses. The response rate for the study was 93.9%, which is high and suggests a very good level of engagement from the participants. The fact that all retrieved questionnaires were validated for analysis suggests that the research instrument was well-designed and clearly understood by the participants, resulting in the collection of reliable and high-quality data.

### 2 Presentation of Research Questions

**Research Question One:** What are the media relations practices of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in Southwest Nigeria?

**Table 2: Media Relations Practices**

S/N	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	M	S.Dev	Remark
1	The church actively engages with local media in Southwest Nigeria.	24 (3.2)	685 (91.3)	42 (5.5)	0 (0)	2.98	0.29	Agree
2	It regularly issues press releases to inform the public about its activities.	162 (21.6)	501 (66.8)	87 (11.6)	0 (0)	3.10	0.57	Agree
3	Social media platforms are used effectively to communicate with the public.	314 (41.8)	400 (53.4)	35 (4.7)	0 (0)	3.37	0.57	Agree
4	The organisation holds press conferences to address important issues.	34 (4.5)	580 (77.4)	138 (18.2)	0 (0)	2.86	0.46	Agree
5	Journalists have easy access to the spokesperson or media contact.	243 (32.4)	448 (59.7)	59 (7.9)	0 (0)	3.24	0.59	Agree
6	Accurate and timely information is provided to the media.	505 (67.4)	229 (30.5)	16 (2.1)	0 (0)	3.65	0.52	Strongly Agree
7	The organisation responds promptly to media inquiries.	276 (36.8)	400 (58.7)	34 (4.5)	0 (0)	3.32	0.58	Agree
8	The organisation organizes events to foster relationships with the media.	174 (23.2)	576 (76.8)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.23	0.42	Agree

9	The organisation's leadership is visible and accessible to the media	341 (45.5)	371 (49.5)	38 (5.0)	0 (0)	3.41	0.58	Agree
10	The organisation's media strategy includes both traditional and digital media.	47 (6.3)	704 (93.7)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.06	0.24	Agree

**Weighted Mean = 3.22; S.D = 0.48; Overall Decision = Agree**

**Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2025**

**KEY:** Strongly Agree (SA)=4, Agree (A)= 3, Disagree (D)= 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1, S. Dev = Standard Deviation, M= Mean

**Threshold:** mean value of 0.000-1.499 = Strongly Disagree (SD); 1.500-2.499 = Disagree (D); 2.500-3.499 =, Agree (A); 3.500 to 4.500= Strongly Agree (SA).

Table 2 presents the media relations practices of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in Southwest Nigeria, using a rating scale with responses ranging from 'Strongly Agree (SA)' to 'Strongly Disagree (SD)'. The results show a general agreement that the Church actively engages with local media, with 685 respondents (91.3%) agreeing and 24 respondents (3.2%) strongly agreeing, resulting in a mean score of 2.98 and a standard deviation of 0.29. Regular issuance of press releases to inform the public received strong support, as 501 respondents (66.8%) agreed and 162 respondents (21.6%) strongly agreed (mean = 3.10, S.D. = 0.57). Similarly, the use of social media for communication was positively rated, with 400 respondents (53.4%) agreeing and 314 respondents (41.8%) strongly agreeing (mean = 3.37, S.D. = 0.57). The practice of holding press conferences to address important issues was acknowledged by 580 respondents (77.4%) who agreed, while 34 respondents (4.5%) strongly agreed (mean = 2.86, S.D. = 0.46). Access to a spokesperson or media contact was also rated favorably, with 448 respondents (59.7%) agreeing and 243 respondents (32.4%) strongly agreeing (mean = 3.24, S.D. = 0.59).

Additionally, the church was perceived as providing accurate and timely information to the media, with 505 respondents (67.4%) strongly agreeing and 229 respondents (30.5%) agreeing (mean =



3.65, S.D. = 0.52). The church's prompt response to media inquiries was affirmed by 400 respondents (58.7%) agreeing and 276 respondents (36.8%) strongly agreeing (mean = 3.32, S.D. = 0.58). Organising events to foster relationships with the media was also viewed positively, with 576 respondents (76.8%) agreeing and 174 respondents (23.2%) strongly agreeing (mean = 3.23, S.D. = 0.42). Moreover, the visibility and accessibility of the church's leadership to the media were endorsed, as 371 respondents (49.5%) agreed and 341 respondents (45.5%) strongly agreed (mean = 3.41, S.D. = 0.58). The inclusion of both traditional and digital media in the Church's media strategy was also strongly supported, with 704 respondents (93.7%) agreeing and 47 respondents (6.3%) strongly agreeing (mean = 3.06, S.D. = 0.24). Overall, the weighted mean score of 3.22 with a standard deviation of 0.48 indicates a general agreement among respondents that the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in Southwest Nigeria engages in effective media relations practices (Mean=3.22; SD=0.48). The data suggests that the Church maintains a strong media presence through active engagement, timely information dissemination, and accessibility to journalists and the public.

**Research Question Two:** What is the level of deployment of media relations practices of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in Southwest Nigeria?

**Table 3: Level of Deployment of Media Relations Practice**

S/N	Items	VHL (%)	HL (%)	LL (%)	VLL (%)	M	S.D	Remark
1	Participation in radio and television interviews is frequent.	184 (24.5)	566 (75.5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.24	0.43	High Level
2	Collaboration with influential community figures is utilised to boost media coverage.	144 (19.2)	484 (64.5)	122 (16.3)	0 (0)	3.03	0.60	High Level



<b>3</b>	Traditional media (newspapers, magazines) is used to disseminate information.	194 (25.8)	556 (74.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.26	0.44	High Level
<b>4</b>	Press conferences are organised to address significant issues.	353 (47.1)	364 (48.5)	33 (4.4)	0 (0)	3.40	0.62	High Level
<b>5</b>	Timely responses are provided to media inquiries.	272 (36.3)	448 (59.7)	30 (3.9)	0 (0)	3.32	0.55	High Level
<b>6</b>	Email newsletters are regularly used to keep members informed.	166 (22.1)	584 (77.9)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.22	0.42	High Level
<b>7</b>	Local media outlets are frequently engaged to promote events.	527 (70.3)	215 (28.)	8 (1.1%)	0 (0)	3.69	0.48	Very High Level
<b>8</b>	Partnerships with local journalists are well-established for better media coverage.	275 (36.6)	448 (59.7)	27 (3.7)	0 (0)	3.33	0.54	High Level
<b>9</b>	The social media is effectively used to communicate with the congregation.	184 (24.5)	550 (73.3)	16 (2.2)	0 (0)	3.23	0.46	High Level



<b>10</b>	Community outreach programs are used to enhance media presence.	359 (47.9)	353 (47.1)	38 (5.0)	0 (0)	3.43	0.59	High Level
<b>11</b>	Media monitoring and analysis are used by the Church.	466 (62.1)	259 (34.5)	25 (3.4)	0 (0)	3.59	0.56	Very High Level

**Weighted Mean = 3.34; S.D = 0.52; Overall Decision = High Level**

**Source: Researcher’s Fieldwork, 2024**

**KEY:** Very High Level (VHL)=4, High Level (HL)= 3, Low Level (LL)= 2, Very Low Level (VLL) = 1, SD = Standard Deviation, M= Mean

**Threshold:** mean value of 0.000-1.499 = Very Low Level (VLL); 1.500-2.499 = Low Level (LL); 2.500-3.499 =, High Level (HL); 3.500 to 4.500= Very High Level (VHL).

**Table 3** shows the level of deployment of media relations practices by the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in Southwest Nigeria, using a rating scale ranging from 'Very High Level (VHL)' to 'Very Low Level (VLL).' The table reveals a strong agreement that media engagement is a key aspect of the church’s communication strategy. Participation in radio and television interviews was rated at a high level, with 566 respondents (75.5%) indicating a high level of involvement and 184 respondents (24.5%) indicating a very high level, yielding a mean score of 3.24 and a standard deviation of 0.43. Similarly, collaboration with influential community figures to enhance media coverage was rated highly, with 484 respondents (64.5%) reporting a high level and 144 respondents (19.2%) a very high level, while 122 respondents (16.3%) reported a low level (mean = 3.03, S.D. = 0.60). The use of traditional media, such as newspapers and magazines, for information dissemination was also rated high, with 556 respondents (74.2%) indicating a high level and 194 respondents (25.8%) a very high level (mean = 3.26, S.D. = 0.44). The organisation of press conferences to address significant issues was also recognized as a high-level practice, with 364 respondents (48.5%) agreeing and 353 respondents (47.1%) strongly agreeing (mean = 3.40,



S.D. = 0.62). In terms of timely responses to media inquiries, 448 respondents (59.7%) reported a high level and 272 respondents (36.3%) a very high level (mean = 3.32, S.D. = 0.55). The use of email newsletters for member communication was confirmed as a high-level practice, with 584 respondents (77.9%) indicating a high level and 166 respondents (22.1%) a very high level (mean = 3.22, S.D. = 0.42). Local media engagement for event promotion was rated as very high, with 527 respondents (70.3%) reporting a very high level and 215 respondents (28.6%) a high level (mean = 3.69, S.D. = 0.48). Well-established partnerships with local journalists were acknowledged by 448 respondents (59.7%) indicating a high level and 275 respondents (36.6%) a very high level (mean = 3.33, S.D. = 0.54).

The effective use of social media to communicate with the congregation was affirmed by 550 respondents (73.3%) indicating a high level and 184 respondents (24.5%) a very high level (mean = 3.23, S.D. = 0.46). Community outreach programs were also highly rated in enhancing media presence, with 353 respondents (47.1%) reporting a high level and 359 respondents (47.9%) a very high level (mean = 3.43, S.D. = 0.59). Lastly, media monitoring and analysis were identified as a very high-level practice, with 466 respondents (62.1%) indicating a very high level and 259 respondents (34.5%) a high level (mean = 3.59, S.D. = 0.56).

**Overall**, the weighted mean score of 3.34 with a standard deviation of 0.52 indicates that respondents generally perceive media relations practices as being deployed at a high level by the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in Southwest Nigeria. The findings suggest that the church is proactive in leveraging traditional and digital media to enhance its communication strategy and outreach efforts.

### **How does your Diocese gather feedback from its members and the public using various channels?**

A: We distribute feedback forms during church services and collect input through our dedicated WhatsApp groups. We also use online surveys sent out monthly and carefully monitor the engagement and comments on our official social media pages.



**Q: In what ways are the concerns and interests of the stakeholders of your Diocese addressed?**

A: We address concerns by holding bi-monthly feedback sessions with the congregation. These sessions are often followed by targeted responses from our pastoral team, either through radio programs or social media posts. We prioritise listening to both the congregation and the broader community.

**Q: What processes or strategies does your Diocese have in place for responding to negative media coverage or crises?**

A: Our crisis management strategy focuses on transparent communication. When faced with negative press, we release clarifications through official church channels and work closely with trusted journalists to ensure accurate representation. We also mobilise the Media Advisory Committee to help manage any media fallout.

**Q: How effective is your Diocese's media outreach in enhancing its visibility, credibility, and the achievement of its aims and objectives?**

A: Our media outreach has allowed us to effectively spread the message of the Church, especially through regional radio broadcasts. By ensuring that our media relations are consistent and responsive, we've seen greater engagement and a strengthened image of the Diocese among stakeholders.

**Q: What improvements would you suggest to enhance your Diocese's media deployment and engagement?**

A: We need to improve the consistency of our digital content. While we're doing well on platforms like Facebook and Instagram, enhancing our YouTube content with professional production would strengthen our digital presence.

### **3. Diocese of Osun (Osun State)**

*Q: What is the name of your Diocese and its coverage area?*

*A: The Diocese of Osun, which covers the region of Osun State.*



**Q: Can you tell me about your role in the Diocese?**

A: I work with the Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC), having been involved in media work for over 32 years. They are familiar with the media relations practices of the Diocese of Osun due to their extensive work as a journalist, covering various diocesan events and interacting with church leadership.

**Q: How long have you been serving in this position?**

A: I have over 32 years in the media industry, with significant involvement in covering diocesan events.

*Section 2: Media Relations Practices*

**Q: What are the media relations practices of your Diocese?**

A: The Diocese engages with the media primarily through press conferences and media interactions, especially during significant events like synods. The relationship with the media is positive, ensuring that the Diocese receives favourable publicity.

**Q: Who handles the media relations of the Diocese?**

A: Historically, the media relations were managed by a single individual who handled various media tasks. However, there is no clear departmental structure, and the role was often individualistic rather than institutionalised.

**Q: How would you describe your Diocese's approach to media relations practices?**

A: The approach is not fully structured or consistent but is rather event-based. The Diocese's media engagement is primarily reactive, relying on press conferences and interactions with journalists when major events are happening. There are positive relationships with media professionals, but there is a lack of a continuous and formalised media presence.

*Section 3: Deployment of Media Relations Practices*

**Q: How does your Diocese use broadcast and print media to disseminate information to its stakeholders?**



A: The Diocese uses broadcast media for program promotions, special services, and church events. They also engage in paid advertisements through radio, television, and print media. However, the use of print media is limited to announcements during significant events.

**Q: Does your Diocese use digital platforms to communicate with its stakeholders?**

The Diocese of Osun uses digital media platforms like social media and blogs but has not fully utilised platforms like Instagram or TikTok for broader engagement, particularly with younger audiences. The interviewee believes the Diocese is aware of the need for such digital communication but cannot confirm regular, specific use.

**Q: How often and effectively does the Diocese use broadcast and print media?**

A: Broadcast media is used for special events and programs, though not on a regular, weekly basis. Print media is used during major diocesan events such as synods, but there is no extensive use beyond that.

***Section 4: Engagement with Stakeholders***

**Q: How do the communication efforts of your Diocese engage its members and the public?**

A: Internal stakeholders (members) are engaged through announcements in Church bulletins, radio programs, and newsletters. External stakeholders are engaged via press releases and media interactions. The interviewee indicates that the media effectively reaches the public, as evidenced by media inquiries and feedback

**Q: How does your Diocese gather feedback from its members and the public?**

A: While there is no formalised feedback collection process mentioned, the interviewee notes that feedback from the public is received informally through media channels like radio and social media.

**Q: How does your Diocese monitor media coverage of its activities?**

A: The Diocese relies on media practitioners' observations to gauge public perception, with no formalized monitoring systems mentioned.

### *Section 5: Effectiveness of Media Relations Practices*

**Q: How effective is your Diocese’s media outreach in enhancing its visibility, credibility, and the achievement of its aims and objectives?**

A: The Diocese’s visibility and credibility are positively impacted by its media relationships. However, the interviewee suggests that there is a lack of a continuous, structured strategy for media relations that could enhance these further.

### *Section 6: Suggestions for Improvement*

**Q: What improvements would you suggest for enhancing your Diocese’s media deployment and engagement?**

A: i. Establishing a dedicated media relations department or unit.

ii. Improving digital media engagement, especially with platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to target younger audiences.

iii. Producing consistent content that tells the story of the Diocese and its programs.

iv. Using media houses more effectively for press briefings and other public relations efforts.

v. Structuring a more consistent media engagement strategy.

The demographic analysis revealed a higher male representation in the study, with the majority of respondents aged 26 and above. Most participants were well-educated, holding at least a B.Sc. degree, and the largest occupational groups were civil servants and business owners. Community members formed the majority of respondents, and the predominant religious affiliation was Christianity, aligning with the study's focus on the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).

Findings indicated that the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in Southwest Nigeria engages in effective media relations practices. The Church maintains a strong media presence through active engagement, timely information dissemination, and accessibility to journalists and the public. The use of social media, press releases, and press conferences highlights its commitment to structured communication. Respondents perceive the Church's media relations practices as highly effective. The Church effectively leverages traditional and digital media to

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enhance communication and outreach. The adoption of media convergence, blending traditional and new media, aligns with contemporary public relations strategies, ensuring increased engagement with the public.

Media relations practices were found to be effective in engaging stakeholders. Respondents acknowledged that the Church's communication strategies, including digital engagement, media events, and strategic press relations, successfully connect with both the congregation and the broader community. However, challenges persist in fully integrating digital tools into its communication approach. The Church's media relations strategies significantly enhance its public image, increase awareness, and foster trust. Its ability to maintain transparency and credibility aligns with best practices in media relations. However, findings indicate that religious organisations still face challenges in optimising digital media for engagement.

Interviews with media officers and practitioners further confirmed that the Diocese of Ibadan and the Diocese of Lagos actively engage in media relations through press releases, press conferences, and social media platforms. The structured media strategy, managed by trained professionals, integrates traditional media, digital platforms, and community engagement. Additionally, feedback mechanisms such as surveys, social media interactions, and stakeholder consultations strengthen public trust. Despite the effectiveness of the Church's media strategies, areas for improvement were identified, including the need for greater investment in media technology, enhanced crisis communication strategies, and expanded engagement on platforms like TikTok and Instagram to connect with younger audiences. Strengthening media partnerships and providing regular training for media officers were also recommended to enhance the Church's communication efforts.

## **8 CONCLUSIONS**

The findings of this study demonstrated that the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in Southwest Nigeria actively engages in media relations practices that enhance its communication strategies and stakeholder engagement. The Church effectively utilises both traditional and digital media platforms to disseminate information, foster public trust, and maintain a strong media

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presence. Its proactive use of press releases, social media, and press conferences underscores its commitment to structured and transparent communication.

The high level of engagement observed suggests that the Church's media relations strategies contribute significantly to its public image and outreach efforts. However, despite its effectiveness, there remain opportunities for improvement, particularly in expanding its digital media presence, optimising crisis communication strategies, and strengthening relationships with media professionals. The need for greater investment in media technology and regular training for media officers also emerged as key recommendations to sustain and enhance the effectiveness of the Church's communication efforts.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. The Church of Nigeria should invest in advanced media technology to enhance content production and dissemination.
2. Media officers should undergo regular training in digital communication, crisis management, and strategic media relations.
3. The Church should expand its social media engagement to platforms like TikTok and Instagram to connect with younger audiences.
4. Strengthening partnerships with media houses will improve visibility and ensure consistent media coverage.
5. A structured crisis communication team should be established to manage misinformation and negative media reports effectively.

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