



# Public Relations and Peace Building: A Study of Bayero University Relationship with Host Communities

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**Abstract:** *The aim of this study is to examine public relations and peacebuilding in Bayero University. The objectives of the study are to identify the community relations activities used by Bayero University, Kano in building peace with host communities; to find out if Bayero University, Kano target communities in their community relations programmes for peace building; to find out host communities' perceptions of the community relations activities adopted in peace building by Bayero University, Kano; and to determine the level of contribution public relations practice has made towards long term peace building by Bayero University, Kano. The study adopted the theoretical tenets of Excellence Theory. Survey method was employed quantitative approach as a method of data collection. A sample size of 400 respondents was selected for the survey method. Cluster sampling was used for the survey method. Questionnaire was used as instrument of data generation for the survey and structured face-to-face in-depth interview was used for qualitative data. While Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyse the quantitative data. The study discovered that the community relations activities adopted by Bayero University, Kano are through meeting between community and university management. The study found that the community relations programs adopted by Bayero University, Kano help in resolving conflict in the communities. The study concludes that public relations has long been recognised as an important tool for promoting peace by disseminating messages and information that have the power to influence public opinion.*

**Keywords:** *Bayero University, Host Communities, Peace Building, Public Relation and Relationship*

## I. Introduction

Scholars like Ishaku (2021) and Okon et al., (2021) established that public relations (PR) plays a pivotal role in peacebuilding between Bayero University, Kano (BUK), and its host communities. Kano, being a diverse city with a mix of ethnicities and religions, can sometimes experience tensions, and the university community reflects these dynamics. PR, as a strategic communication tool, can help build understanding, trust, and collaboration, which are crucial for peaceful coexistence. Okon et al., (2021) observed that PR is central to establishing open communication channels between Bayero University and the surrounding communities. Open communication helps to address misunderstandings, concerns, and misconceptions that could otherwise lead to tensions. PR professionals ensure that accurate information flows between the university and its host communities, using tools such as press releases, public meetings, radio programs, and social media platforms to foster transparency and reduce rumors that could fuel conflict (Yar'Adua et al., 2023; Aondover et al., 2025).

A key role of PR in peacebuilding is to facilitate community engagement. This involves organizing dialogue forums, town hall meetings, and other community-focused events where the university administration and local leaders can come together to discuss issues affecting both the institution and the community (Airaoje et al., 2023; Vitalis et al., 2025). By providing platforms for community members to voice their concerns, PR helps ensure that the

university understands and addresses the needs and grievances of the host community. This inclusive approach reduces tensions and builds mutual trust. Given the cultural and religious diversity in Kano, PR plays a role in promoting mutual respect and understanding between the university community and the host population (Yar'Adua & Msughter, 2023). Through awareness campaigns, educational programs, and joint cultural or religious events, PR can highlight the importance of diversity and peaceful coexistence (Onyejelem et al., 2025). This builds a culture of respect and sensitivity to the beliefs and values of both the university and the host community, which is critical in preventing conflicts (Ishaku, 2021).

Therefore, the study investigates public relations and peace building with community in Bayero University, Kano. This is important because there is more academic scholarly work on the specific community relations strategies engaged by the universities. This study presents a broad picture from the perspectives of the institution and the host communities by examining the activities, what the communities prefer, and how it can be achieved (Aliyu et al., 2023; Aondover & Akin-Odukoya, 2024). Similarly, scholars like Aliyu and Mohammed (2008) and Aondover et al., (2022) state that there is a consensus among public relations scholars that the best response to conflict is to be prepared. According to Igben (2008) preventive public relations, which is also known as proactive PR, involves taking action ahead of time. Aliyu and Mohammed (2008) also say that public relations professionals believe that proactive approach to conflict management is the most strategic approach (Vitalis et al., 2025; Vitalis et al., 2025).

This explains the reason why Peak (2001) observed that today, no matter how large, small or important an institution may be, it can be undermined if its community relations are haphazard. In an empirical study carried out by Rim-Rukeh et al., (2008) in 10 Niger Delta communities, the study found that cases of conflict are adequately discovered. The implications of conflict on communities are too far-reaching to be ignored. There are also constant environmental hazards and security threat in these communities (Aondover et al., 2024). Thus, this study intends to examine public relations and peace building in Bayero University, Kano. The examination of Bayero University, Kano's use of public relations in fostering peaceful coexistence with host communities involves a detailed look into the strategies, communication channels, and initiatives employed by the institution to create and maintain harmonious relationships (Aondover et al., 2024).

Therefore, this study offers insights into the effectiveness of PR in building trust, preventing conflicts, and promoting mutual benefits between the university and the communities surrounding it. Sambo (2024) observed that PR plays a vital role in fostering peaceful relations between Bayero University and its host communities. Through open communication, community engagement, crisis management, peace initiatives, and partnerships with local stakeholders, PR helps build an environment of trust, mutual respect, and collaboration (Msughter, 2017; Mojaye & Aondover, 2022). These efforts contribute to long-term peacebuilding and ensure that the university and its host communities can coexist harmoniously despite their differences.

### **1.1 Objectives of the Study**

The aim of the study is to examine public relations and peace building in Bayero University. The specific research objectives are:

1. To identify the community relations activities used by Bayero University, Kano in building peace with host communities.
2. To find out if Bayero University, Kano target communities in their community relations programmes for peacebuilding.

3. To find out host communities' perceptions of the community relations activities adopted in peacebuilding by Bayero University, Kano.
4. To determine the level of contribution public relations practice has made towards long term peacebuilding by Bayero University, Kano.

## **II. Review of Literature**

Scholars like Rim-Rukeh et al., (2008) carried out studies on community relations and corporate image of organisations. They tried to determine the strategies adopted by organisations in promoting their corporate image, while other scholars like Igben (2016) looked at the practice of community relations in particular organisation. According to Igben (2008) preventive public relations, which is also known as proactive PR, involves taking action ahead of time. Aliyu and Mohammed (2008) maintain that public relations professionals believe that proactive approach to conflict management is the most strategic approach. Peak (2001) believes that today, no matter how large, small or important an institution may be, it can be undermined if its community relations are haphazard. In an empirical study carried out by Rim-Rukeh et al., (2008) in 10 Niger Delta communities discovered that cases of conflict were adequately discovered. The implications of the ethnic conflict on communities are too far-reaching to be ignored. There are also constant environmental hazards and security threat in these communities. Igben (2016) explores the Niger Delta ethnic conflict through a focus on public relations (PR). It provides new insights into the nature of PR practices of government and oil companies in the region and their consequences for efforts to secure effective conflict resolution. The research draws its explanatory insights from a range of theoretical work in the disciplines of PR, communication and sociology, built primarily around 'Excellence Theory which' illuminates and advocates a two-way symmetrical model of interaction. The study utilizes stratified random and cluster sampling in conducting a survey of 400 respondents. The study also undertakes focus group research with 30 participants from three selected Niger Delta states.

The study found that the PR of the government and oil companies have been underpinned by outmoded models of PR practice that do not represent the collective interest of the strategic stakeholders of Niger Delta oil wealth. These practices do not support effective peace building and conflict processes. The explanatory model of the study points to a necessary adjustment in government and oil company PR practices in line with two-way symmetrical theory which takes account of the interests of all Niger Delta oil resource stakeholders on an equitable basis.

Plowman (2008) studied how public relations managers gain power in organizations. The findings of the study suggests that the inclusion of public relations in an organization's dominant coalition is perhaps more important to the profession of public relations than any other measure of professional growth. He went further in asserting that there is little justification for any practice of public relations unless practitioners are included in the dominant coalition. If the assertions of these and other scholars are well-founded, then determining the relationship of conflict resolution and public relations in an organization, specifically how practitioners can become part of the dominant coalition seems crucial. The findings of the study reveals that conflict resolution can empower public relations managers to become an effective part of the communication process in the management decision-making group or dominant coalition of an organization.

Olaolu (2012) studied the community relations strategies used by oil companies in managing crises in the Niger Delta. The study population comprised the community relations units of oil companies in the Niger Delta (among which Shell, Chevron and Agip were selected) and the indigenes of Omoku and Obrikom communities in Rivers State and Eruemukohwarien, Tisun and Kolokolo communities in Delta State. Though the communities studied weresomewhat peripheral to the crisis, they still reflected the true situation of things in the Niger Delta.

Both quantitative (survey) and qualitative (key informant interview and focus group discussion) methods of data collection were employed. The respondents for the survey were randomly selected while those for the interviews and focus groups were purposively selected. The study establishes that conflicts between oil companies and host communities had serious implications for the two parties and that the community relations strategies adopted by the selected oil companies were not adequate in preventing and resolving conflicts in the Niger Delta. That was because there was a lacuna between the strategies the oil companies believed host communities preferred for conflict resolution and the ones actually preferred by those communities.

The research, therefore, suggests that to reduce conflict between oil companies and host communities in the Niger Delta, companies should be mindful of conflict propelling factors identified by the respondents and stated in the work; they should improve on their community relations strategies in order to impress the community and most importantly, they should introduce grassroots approach to the implementation of their strategies, particularly the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU), for optimum results.

Uzuegbunam and Omenugha (2018) used secondary data establish that the mainstream media seem not to be living up to the bill of performing its expected role in peace-building. The study suggests a number of ways in which the new media might be opening up opportunities that make it possible to manage and resolve conflicts, including the diffusion of information and communication technologies (ICTs) that can substantially alter the contours of collective violence in developing nations. The study is situated within the Herbasasian framework of the public sphere and interrogates the essence of the new media as a critical sphere in the digital age and in dealing with the question of conflict. The study calls for peace education imperative and complementarity of both mainstream and alternative media in bridging the media-society-conflict gap.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

The study adopted the Excellence Theory, which was developed by Grunig et al., in 1970s to 1980s. The theory examines public relations roles in organizations. It also discusses the internal and external environment management that shows how the organizations have to maintain a good relationship with their stakeholders, employees and the host communities (Msughter et al., 2023). The theory also examines the public relations roles in strategic management (Aondover et al., 2022; Garba & Msaughter, 2023). It introduced symmetrical communication model to increase customers' satisfaction with organizations. The basic assumption of the theory is that public relations as a set of attributes and practices that help to build quality, long-term relationships with strategic constituencies (Grunig & Grunig, 2008).

The excellence theory first explains the value of public relations to organizations and society based on the social responsibility of managerial decisions and the quality of relationships with stakeholder publics. For an organization to be effective, according to the

theory, it must behave in ways that solve the problems and satisfy the goals of stakeholders as well as of management (Garba & Msughter, 2023). If it does not, stakeholders will either pressure the organization to change or oppose it in ways that add cost and risk to organizational policies and decisions. To behave in socially acceptable ways, organizations must scan their environment to identify publics who are affected by potential organizational decisions or who want organizations to make decisions to solve problems that are important to them. Then, 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 (Maikaba& Msughter, 2019; Idris & Msughter, 2022).

Based on this theoretical premise about the value of public relations, the excellence theory derived principles of how the function should be organized to maximize this value. Therefore, the theory shows that organisational involvement in peace building among members of the community is a critical characteristic of excellent public relations. Public relations executives play a strategic managerial role as well as administrative manager role. Therefore, since the study set to examine public relations and peace building using Bayero University, Kano, the adopted theories are related to the study as it establishes the nexus between public relations and peace building.

### III. Research Methods

The study employed survey method. The reason for the choice of survey method is based on its advantages. Among its advantages is that it can be used to investigate problems in realistic setting. Since the study is interested at getting the views and opinions of the host community in Bayero University, Kano, survey method is appropriate in this context. Also, the cost of survey method is reasonable when one considers the amount of information gathered; also, large amount of data can be collected with relative ease from a variety of people. Survey research method also allows researchers to examine many variables like (demography and life style, information, attitudes, motives, intentions) and to use the varieties of statistics to analyze the data. As such, using this method with the host community in Bayero University, Kano reduced the cost of the study.

In this study, the different host communities of Bayero University, Kano are considered as the population of the study. They include:

Communities	N
NEW SITE	
Rimin Gata	48,789
Dambare	39,897
Lengel	75,453
Rimin Zakara	21,913
Total	<b>186,052</b>
OLD SITE	
Dorayi Karama	34,768
Dorayi Babba	44.879
Janbulo	47,897
Kabuga	25,432
Total	<b>152,976</b>

AKTH	
Kundila	89,645
Gyadi Gyadi	59,894
Unguwa Uku	94,765
Darmanawa	106,213
Total	<b>350,517</b>
SCE	
Dala	96,541
Kofar Ruwar	83,764
Gwammaja	52,657
Kofar Waika	63,654
Total	<b>296,616</b>

**Figure 1.** List of BUK Host Communities and their Population

Source: (author's computation, 2023).

Therefore, 400 respondents were selected for the study from the host communities of Bayero University, Kano in line with the population strength of these host communities. The respondents in the communities were clustered into wards from the selected local government, after which the study randomly selected the communities to generate data. The study used cluster and purposive sampling techniques to select respondents and participants who provide data for the research. The cluster sampling technique was used for the purpose of identifying host communities where the campuses are located and the communities were further divided into wards for based on the local governments, after which the respondents were randomly selected from the communities. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyse the data using frequency, percentages and cross-tabulations.

#### IV. Results and Discussion

**Table 1.** Gender and Marital Status

Variables	N	%
Male	303	75.7
Female	97	24.3
Total	400	100
Marital Status	N	%
Single	300	75
Married	72	18
Others	28	7
Total	400	100

Source: (SPSS version22)

The result of the study reveals that 75.7% (N=303) are male, while 24.3% (N=97) are female. Single constitutes 75% (N=300), married 18% (N=72), and others 28% (N=7). Based on the data presented in table 1, male respondents are dominant in the study compared to females. In terms of marital status, respondents that were single were significantly high (75 percent) in the study.

**Table 2.** Respondents' age and educational qualification

Age and Education	N	%
21-30 years	290	72.5
31-40 years	65	16.2
41-50 years	31	7.7
51 years and above	14	3.5
Total	400	100
Educational Qualification	N	%
SSCE	208	52
ND/Equivalent	112	28
B.Sc/Equivalent	38	9.5
Masters	28	7
PhD/Equivalent	14	3.5
Total	400	100

Source: (SPSS version22)

The findings show that 72.5% (N=290) of the respondents are between the ages of 21 – 30 while 16.2% (N=65) range between the ages of 31-40; 7.7% (N=31) are within the ages of 41-50; and only 3.5% (N=14) are 51 years or above. In terms of educational qualification, 52% of the respondents (N=208) have SSCE; 28% (N=112) obtained ND; 9.5% (N=38) are first degree holders while 7% (N=28) have masters' degree; and 3.5% (N=14) are PhD holders. This means that majority of the respondents are between the ages of 21-30 years while respondents with SSCE certificates are significantly high compared with other categories of educational qualifications.

**Table 3.** Respondents' awareness of peace building by Bayero University, Kano

Variables	N	%
Yes	297	74.2
No	103	25.7
Total	400	100

Source: (SPSS version22)

Table 4 shows that 74.2% (N=297) are aware of community relations activities by Bayero University, Kano on peace building, while 25.7% (N=103) of the respondents are not aware of community relations activities by Bayero University, Kano on peace building. Based on the results of the study, those that are aware of the community relations activities constitute the major respondents in the study because respondents who are not aware of community relations activities by Bayero University, Kano on peace building will not be able to give adequate answers raised in the questionnaire.

**Table 4.** Respondents Perception of host communities

Variables	N	%
Highly cordial	129	43.4
Cordial	115	38.7
Fairly cordial	36	12.1
Not cordial	17	5.7
Others	-	-
Total	N = 297	100

Source: (SPSS version22)

In this table, the number of respondents dropped from 400 to 297 because out of the 400 respondents asked on their awareness of peace building by Bayero University, Kano, only 297 on said they are aware. Thus, table 5 indicates that 43.4% (N=129) of the respondents said the relationship is highly cordial, 38% (N= 115) said cordial, 12.1% (N=36) said fairly cordial, and 5.7% (N=17) said not cordial. This means that the relationship between Bayero University and its host communities can be described to be highly cordial (43.4%) in that most of the respondents are aware of the community relations activities by Bayero University, Kano to build peace with their communities and view these activities as a means of building the relationship they have with Bayero University, Kano as highly cordial as shown in the table above.

**Table 5.** BUK community relations activities in achieving peacebuilding

Variables	N	%
Meetings between community and university management	141	47.5
Organizing events for the community by the university	68	22.9
Inviting community for iftar sessions (Ramadan)	32	10.8
All of the above	56	18.8
Others	-	-
Total	N = 297	100

Source: (SPSS version22)

This table shows that 47.5% (N=141) of the respondents are of the view that meeting between community and the university management is one of the community relations activities used by Bayero University, Kano in building peace with the communities, 22.9% (N=68) said through organizing events for communities, Bayero University is able to build peace with its host communities. Furthermore, 10.8% (N=32) said another activity used by Bayero University, Kano in building peace with host communities is hosting community members for iftar sessions (Ramadan), and 18.8% (N=56) of the respondents settle on all of the above factors as ways through which Bayero University build peace with its host communities. This means that most of the respondents (47.5%) see meetings between host communities and Bayero University Management as a more common community relations activities used by Bayero University, in building peace with its host communities.

**Table 6.** Means of reaching community members

Variables	N	%
Traditional rulers	136	45.8
Head of community groups	64	21.5
Youth groups	56	18.8
All of these	41	13.8
Total	N = 297	100

Source: (SPSS version22)

The data in table 7 above indicates that 45.8% (N=136) of the respondents agree that Bayero University, Kano relates with the community through traditional rulers, 21.5% (N=64) said it is through heads of community groups, 18.8% (N= 56) said is through youth groups, and 13.8% (N= 41) of the respondents agree that Bayero University, Kano relates with their community through traditional rulers, heads of community groups and youth groups all together. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that Bayero University, Kano

relates more with its host communities through the use of traditional rulers (45.8%) as it is evident in the table above.

**Table 7.** Respondents' perception on peace building through community relations activities

Variables	N	%
Positive	177	59.6
Negative	82	27.6
Neutral	38	12.8
Total	297	100

Source: (SPSS version22)

This table indicates the perception of host communities have positive perception regarding community relations activities adopted by Bayero University, Kano in building peace. Based on the data, 59.6% (N=177) of the respondents said their perception is positive, 27.6% (N=82) said its negative, and 12.8% (N=38) of the respondents settled for neutral. This shows that host communities regarding community relations activities adopted by Bayero University, Kano in peace building.

**Table 8.** Perception of respondents about the host community and public relations efforts

Variables	N	%
<b>Highly satisfactory</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>46.5</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>26.9</b>
<b>Fairly satisfactory</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>19.5</b>
<b>Not satisfactory</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7.1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: (SPSS version22)

Respondents were asked to understand the level of satisfaction by host communities with community relations effort made by Bayero University, Kano especially in conflict resolution. The data shows that 46.5% (N=138) of the respondents said it is highly satisfactory, 26.9% (N=80) said it is satisfactory, 19.5% (N=58) agree that it is fairly satisfactory, and 7.1% (N=21) said it is not satisfactory. This shows that host communities are satisfied with the community relations effort made by Bayero University, Kano in resolving conflict.

**Table 9.** Perception of communities about public relations toward peacebuilding

Variables	N	%
Negative	68	22.9
Positive	197	66.3
Neutral	32	10.8
Total	297	100

Source: (SPSS version22)

This table tries to understand whether host communities are inflicted by public relations efforts towards peace building. Based on the data, 22.9% (N=68) of the respondents settled for negative, 66.3% (N=107) said it is positive, and 10.8% (N=32) settled for neutral. This indicates that host communities are inflicted by public relations efforts towards peace building.

Discussion of Findings

Research question one addresses the community relations activities used by Bayero University, Kano in building peace with host communities. Based on the findings, Bayero University, Kano through meetings organized with its host communities have been able to build peace and mutual understanding between the University and its varying host communities. Lederach (2005) also establishes that peace building is expected to be an enduring commitment with emphasis on mobilization of resources, including material, money, labour and associated strategies designed to promote positive relationship. By implication the essence of peace building process is to translate existing relationship from negative to positive status on a sustainable platform. This compels significant aspects of structural and psychological transformation.

Research question two is: How does Bayero University, Kano target communities in their community relations programmes for peace building. The study discovered that Bayero University, Kano target the communities through traditional rulers. Within this context, Shedrack (2009) notes that community relations is the backbone of sustained peaceful and productive co-existence between an institution and the host community.

Research question three is on the perception of host communities regarding community relations activities adopted by Bayero University, Kano in peace building. The study discovered that the perception of the host communities regarding community relations activities adopted by Bayero University, Kano in peace building is positive. Research question four has to do with the extent to which public relations contribute towards long term peace building in Bayero University, Kano. The study found that public relations contribute towards long-term peace building. Corroborating the above, Ibegbu (2011) describes peace building as a condition or situation of time in which there are strategies put in place by public relations practitioners to manage war or conflict in the society. It is a state of living in harmony or friendship with one another without violence or disagreement. Aliyu and Mohammed (2008) maintain that public relations professionals believe that proactive approach to conflict management is the most strategic approach.

This finding is similar to the findings of Shedrack (2009) who found that the idea of community relations is to establish a cordial and mutual relationship between an institution and the host community. Such a mutual relationship and rapport helps to entrench peace which in turn enables the organisation to operate effectively without hostile interference from the host community. Rummel (2012) also supported that community relations as the deliberate effort and planned programme embarked upon by an organisation to maintain a smooth relationship with the host community. He notes that people who live in the community and corporate entities and other institutions within that community must therefore, practice interdependence, cooperation, collaboration, solidarity and unification and should strive to eschew all forms of selfishness by working assiduously towards a common goal.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

This study examines public relations and peace building in Bayero University. Public relations is major tool in peace building, by obtaining favourable publicity, building up a good corporate image. An institution like Bayero University, Kano is dependent on community relations to bring about a successful and mutual understanding between it and its host communities. Moreover, public relations practice for community relations is to maintain a communication that will help to create and sustain mutual relationship and understanding

between an organisation and its host community. Communication is the link between the organization and its publics. Communication is central to many aspects of work in conflict and post-conflict settings. The use of public relations in peace building has long been acknowledged as playing a crucial part in providing information and messages that can shape popular views. This is evident in the findings of this study where community relations activities are adopted by Bayero University, Kano in the form of meetings between community and university management to bring about the desired goal of building peace. Moreover, peace building through community relations is a major component for the development of human beings and by extension Bayero University, Kano and its host communities. Therefore, the idea of community relations is to establish a cordial and mutual relationship between an institution and the host community. Such a mutual relationship and rapport helps to entrench peace which in turn enables the organisation to operate effectively without hostile interference from the host community.

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