

# The Role of Public Relations in Safeguarding Organisational Image during Industrial Action in Nigeria (A Study of Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo)

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## Abstract

This paper examined the role of public relations in safeguarding organisational image during industrial action. The study was anchored on Marxian (conflict) Theory. Survey method was used in the study and a total population of 2975, 400 sampling size was purposely selected and this comprised of 200 Teaching and 200 Non-Teaching Staff of the institution. Questionnaires were employed as primary instruments of data collection. The findings revealed that, public relation play majorly role of reconciliation in safeguarding organisational's image especially during industrial action. It also revealed that, Public Relations in Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo help in safeguarding the image of the institution especially during industrial action. The study concluded that, public relations help in safeguarding organisations image especially during industrial action. It also concluded that public relation helps to build institutional image especially in Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo. Finally, the study recommended that organizations especially Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo management should give much credent to public relations as it serve a mean of safeguarding organisation image especially during industrial action. It also recommends that, public relation in every organisation should ensure effective communication especially during organizational conflict.

**Key Terms:** Public Relations, Industrial Action, Organisational Image

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## Introduction

In every organization, the need to maintain the image of the organization is of great importance especially during internal crisis or industrial action as this will help the organisation to sustain its selling image in the society.

In today's competitive market, reputation can be a company's biggest asset as it will help such organisation to stand out and gives it a competitive edge among its contemporary because the corporate image of an organization forms a strong marketing communication and enhances public patronage. The results of this could encourage high patronage (Omale, 2017). The result of high productivity, improved sales of product and services, fight competitive challenges, encourage employee relations, improve financial relations with customers and financial institutions, regulate relationships and minimize crises in organizations, increase public confidence that could encourage quality in staff recruitment (Ehikwe, 2015). However, effective Public Relations can help manage reputation in communication and building good relationship within the organization stakeholders and the members of staff in order to ensure smooth running of an organisation. No doubt, every organisation that wants to succeed must not only consider its image among her numerous public, but must continue to invest in the management of its corporate image. A corporate image refers to how a corporation is perceived. It is a generally accepted image of what a company stands for. Typically, a corporate image is designed to be appealing to the public, so that the company can spark an interest among consumers, create share of mind, generate brand equity, and thus facilitate product sales (Tudolo, 2017).

The structurally differentiated character of contemporary work-organisations, whether in the manufacturing or service industry inevitably generates conflicts of interest that often result to industrial action. These conflicts of interests arise in groups because of the scarcity of freedom, position and resources (Ajemunigbohun, 2010). Workplace crises which includes, protest, industrial strike etc are thus endemic despite the best of management practices in organizations and manifests in various forms as an intrinsic and unavoidable feature of the employment relationship. It is by nature an ever-present process and more likely to occur in hierarchical organisations where people with a divergent view, opinion and background interact. However, industrial action in work-relations is not an aberration, since it creates or provides an opportunity for correction and reconciliation for the betterment of both the organisation and the workers at large (Osad and Osas, 2013).

According to Kazimoto (2013), workplace conflict is described as the presence of discord that occurs when goals, interests or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible in an organization. It is a communication process and an inevitable consequence of transactional relationship manifesting in disagreement and dissonance with and between individuals and groups in the work environment. In this context, workplace conflict is a fact of life in any organisation as long as people will compete for jobs, power, recognition and

security (Adomie and Anie, 2005). Therefore, the task of management is not to suppress or resolve all conflicts but to manage them in order to enhance and not to detract from organisational performance.

Educational institutions of all levels, especially tertiary institutions in Nigeria are not excluded from industrial action. Nigerian tertiary institutions also have their fair historical of conflicts and crises such as: Kafaru Tinubu vs Students crisis 1974; Ali must Go vs. student crisis on 1978; Rice crisis vs. Ahmadu Bello University 1981; Accident vs. Ali University Ekpoma crisis of 1988 etc. To recast on the crises, riots and rampaging exercises by students in their various institutions in Nigeria cannot be expressed, not to talk of employee/employers clashes with strike action and demonstrations. Globally, the worth of public relations in any organisation cannot be overlooked. This is largely dependent on the fact that the public relations unit of any organization is crucial to the success of any organisation by developing and fostering its corporate image. Base on the above, it's become imperative to evaluate public relations' role in safeguarding organisational image during industrial action with a study of Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Industrial action has been a common phenomenon in every organisation especially government owned organisation in Nigeria. Overtime, every attempt to correct or demand for workers welfare especially salary, it always result in to industrial action base on the negligence from either the government or the management of such government organisation. Buike Oparaugo (2021), in his research, "Role of Public Relations in Corporate Image Building and Sustenance" find out that, Public relations (PR) is a strategic approach towards the creation of goodwill and brand image through developing a cordial relationship between the organization and its management functions. However, the means of managing crises during industrial action becomes paramount as there will be a need to protect or safeguard the image of such organisation and foster peace and clear undefined terms and conditions leading to such industrial action. (Botan, 2016) posit that, the objective of public relations is promoting mutual understanding with audiences and with confidence and strong reasoning and logic meanwhile safeguarding organization interests especially during industrial crises. Hence, in ensuring this, the public relations in such organization is saddle with the responsibility of ensuring effective communication in order to eliminate communication gaps, and gives a prior attention to the analysis of trends, predicting their likely consequence and with planned programmes of action tries to safeguard the image of such organisation during industrial action. It is against this background that this paper evaluates public relations' role in safeguarding organisational image during industrial action with a study of Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo.

### **Research Question**

1. **What are** the roles of public relations in safeguarding organisational image during industrial action?
2. Whether Public Relations in Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo help in safeguarding the image of the institution during industrial action?
3. To what the extent does Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo make used of public relations to build the institutional image?

### **Literature Review**

#### **The Concept of Public Relations**

Public relations according to Hanson (2015), "is defined in modern times as the management functions that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the public on whom its success or failure depends". Baran (2017) also sees public relations as a management that uses two-way communication to mesh the needs and interests of an institution or person with needs and interests of the various publics with which that institution or person must communicate. Public Relations Strategies such as news/information management, publicity, crisis management and others can go a long way to encourage Universities in Nigeria to handle strike actions effectively.

According to Nnamani (2016), the concept of Public Relations is framed on the art and science of creating and maintaining mutual understanding and acceptance between human individuals, groups, organizations, companies, etc. PR is not mere words or talking without good deeds but rather deeds backed by well-packaged and timely words beamed at the right audience (Onyiaji, 2016). Public Relations practice involves the need for research prior to initiating actions, careful planning and thorough evaluation or measurement of results (Chile, 2014). Public Relations is simply an apparatus for effective communication strategies in promoting marketing, relationships and building bridges of various organiza-tional and their publics (Chile, 2014).

Public Relations is one of many communication-related disciplines undergoing radical changes today (c). Public Relations is a top management function that helps achieve organizational objectives, define philosophy and facilitate organizational change (Oparacke, 2012). PR are embedded in sustained programmes and policies of mass marketing communications that contains rational messages and directed at the public of an organization with the prime interest and objective of balancing a plethora of dynamics evidence by lasting relationships and

community spirit (Madu, 2010). Public Relations (PR) practice is deliberate, planned and sustained the effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organisation and its public (Chartered Institute of Public Relations, CIPR). PR consists of all forms of planned communication, outwards and inwards, between an organisation and its public for the purpose of achieving specific objectives concerning mutual understanding (Jefkins, 2016). The literature presents public relations as a management function, which uses the attributes of management (e.g., planning, collaborative decision making, and research) to foster the organization's ability to build mutually beneficial relationships on which the corporate vision and mission depend (Grunig, 2018). The second stream in the literature presents public relations as communication management, which focuses on the flow of communication between an organization and its publics to achieve effective relationships (Grunig, 2018). The third stream of literature presents public relations as relationship management so that communication is a property of those relationships rather than the conduit between organizations and publics (Broom, 2017). Black (2014) in his definition of Public Relations puts it, "Public Relations practice is the art and science of achieving harmony with the environment through mutual understanding based on truth and full information". Offonri, (2015) defines Public Relations as "the business of creating and maintaining public understanding and support through effective communications".

### **Industrial Conflicts and Strikes**

The human society is full of conflicts. Conflicts arise as a result of disagreement between two antagonising parties/classes. With reference to the industrial society, industrial conflict is the inability of parties to an employment relations (employers and employees represented by their unions or groups) to reach agreement on any issue connected with the object of employer-employee interactions (Fajana, 2000). Industrial conflicts could also be seen as a breakdown of cordial relationship between labour and management. Industrial conflict is thus, the result of an unpalatable, imbalanced and antagonistic relationship and interaction between and among parties involved in industrial relations.

Many discussions on industrial conflicts refer to strikes. Strikes are the most overt form of industrial conflicts. Thus, Fajana (2000) defines strike as a temporary cessation of work efforts by employees in the pursuance of a grievance or demand. Strikes have become a significant approach toward expressing workplace grievances. Adeogun (2018) remarked that strike is all about "grievances, actual or imagined, arising from industrial life. Okene (2018). However, added that "in an unashamedly capitalist society like Nigeria, where there is ostentatious display of wealth by the rich, where majority of the workers eke a living out of their wages while their employers live in absolute affluence with the widest ostentation, it is submitted that workers' grievances can hardly be described as 'imagined'". In a society such as ours, where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer; where the capitalists unimaginably exploit the proletariat, strike becomes an asset. Obviously, strike becomes the only weapon to be employed by workers to compel a recalcitrant employer (especially the government as an employer, as in Nigeria) to recognise and bargain with trade unions, to comply with the terms and conditions of an employment relationship (Okene, 2018).

### **Reasons and Causes of Industrial Action and Strikes in Nigeria**

Tensions created by incessant strikes in the country have become alarming. This would prompt a discerning mind to enquire for an understanding as to the reasons and causes of industrial conflicts. Though there may be ready answers to this, the following are some of the identified reasons why workers and their unions answer Marx's clarion call of 'revolting against capital'. Adopting a micro theory of conflict, Fashoyin (2017) identified the following causes of industrial conflicts: structural-organisational causes; inadequate decision-making power; management policies; intra-organisational policies; interpersonal and personal sources; and procedural sources. However, in addition to Okene's (2018) identified causes of strikes, the following issues are identified to bring about industrial conflicts and strikes.

#### **Refusal of Union recognition**

Workers often resort to strike so that the employer would recognise them as a union and thus, make them parties in collective bargaining. Currently, a breakaway faction of the Association of Senior Staff of Banks, Insurance and Financial Institutions (ASSBIFFI) in Union Bank, known as Union Bank Association of Senior Staff (UBASS) is involved in a trade dispute so as to force the management of Union Bank to accord them recognition as a collective bargaining party.

#### **Bringing the plight of workers to bear**

This is perhaps, the most singular reason why labour embarks on strike actions. Unconducive working environment, inadequate pay packages, poor welfare services, etc, are some plights of the workers that spur them to strike. For example, in 2010, medical doctors in Ondo State embarked on strike to protest the level of insecurity in the state which had led to the kidnapping and killing of its members. Also in 2010, the NLC and

TUC directed its members to down tools (as a warning) to press home their demand for an enhanced 'living' wage.

### **Failure of collective bargaining**

This is another major reason for industrial conflicts and strikes. Okene (2018) avers that "the main justification for industrial action is the failure of collective bargaining". When workers and employers engage in collective bargaining, there is no guarantee that it will be successful. Even when successful, there is no guarantee that it will be honoured.

Consequently, unsuccessful bargaining and failure to adhere to agreed terms naturally lead to industrial conflicts and dislocation of industrial harmony and peace. For example, the just ended industrial imbroglio between ASUU and South-East governments stem from the inability of the state governments in the South-East to honour and implement the FG-ASUU 2007 agreement.

### **Unpopular and harsh public policies**

Unfriendly and harsh policies by governments and employers are veritable factors that have caused many severe industrial conflicts. Most public policies made by government have met stiff opposition by the labour. Workers and their unions usually resort to strikes to express their displeasures on such perceived anti-labour policies, decisions and/or legislations.

In Nigeria, a number of public policies have stirred series of strike actions. Notably, among such policies, was the incessant fuel price hike that was the mainstay during President Olusegun Obasanjo's civilian administration (1999 to 2007). During this time, Nigeria witnessed frequent and regular series of strike actions called by the central labour organisation, NLC, led by the 'powerful' comrade Adams Oshiomohle. These actions were as a result of labour's disapproval and total rejection of such fuel price hikes. Elsewhere, France, in 2010, witnessed a damaging strike action and protest against government's decision to review upward the retirement age of workers.

### **Roles of Public Relations in an Organization**

According to Broom (2015). Almost all large organizations either have a public relations department or outsource their public relations needs to a company. Public relations is seen as a vital part of maintaining the organization's image and of communicating its message to its customers, investors and the general public. A positive perception of a company or non-profit can increase its sales and improve its bottom line.

The functions and key tasks of a public relations specialist can be varied.

### **Public Image Strategy**

Public relations strategists will work with top executives in the organization to craft an overview of how the company wants to be perceived, and how it is going to project a positive image. This can involve focusing in on exactly the right message, and then deciding on the broad outlines of a campaign to disseminate that message (Broom, 2015).

### **Outreach Events**

According to Heath, (2016). Public relations professionals often arrange events to raise the profile of the organization or lend its brand and name to a charitable event that represents the philosophy of the company. Think of a corporation sponsoring a Special Olympics event, or a hospital organizing a health outreach day in its town.

### **Media Relations**

Heath, (2001). Talking with the media is a core function of public relations departments.

Public relations professionals field questions from reporters, arrange for interviews with key individuals in the organization and write press releases to make the media aware of company events or achievements.

### **Handling Emergencies**

According to Christians, (2018). Sometimes a company or organization is struck by a disastrous event that ruins its public image. This might be an oil company that has to deal with a high profile spill, or a food company that has a contamination event. Public relations professionals decide how the organization will repair the damage to its image, communicate how it is dealing with the problem and regain control of its message.

### **Public Relations in Sustainable Corporate Image: A Global Review**

According to Bowen, (2000). Public relations (PR) are the way organizations, companies and individuals communicate with the public and media. A PR specialist communicates with the target audience directly or

indirectly through media with an aim to create and maintain a positive image and create a strong relationship with the audience. Examples include press releases, newsletters, public appearances, etc. as well as utilization of the world wide web.

The world of business is characterized by fierce competition and in order to win new customers and retain the existing ones, the firms have to distinguish themselves from the competition. But they also need to create and maintain a positive public image. A PR specialist or firm helps them both create and maintain a good reputation among both the media and the customers by communicating in their behalf and presenting their products, services and the overall operation in the best light possible. A positive public image helps create a strong relationship with the customers which in turn increase the sales. Bowen, (2000). Bowen, (2013). Suggests that PR specialists and firms use a number of tools and techniques to boost their clients' public image and help them form a meaningful relationship with the target audience. To achieve that, they use tools such as news releases and statements for media, newsletters, organisation and participation at public events conferences, conventions, awards, etc. PR specialists of course also utilise the Internet tools such as social media networks and blogs. Through the mentioned tools, PR specialists give the target audience a better insight into their clients' activities and products/services as well as increase publicity.

According to Bowen, (2013). Public relations (PR) are the practice of managing the spread of information between an individual or an organization (such as a business, government agency, or a nonprofit organization) and the public. 1 Public relations may include an organization or individual gaining exposure to their audiences using topics of public interest and news items that do not require direct payment. This differentiates it from advertising as a form of marketing communications. Public relations is the idea of creating coverage for clients for free, rather than marketing or advertising. An example of good public relations would be generating an article featuring a client, rather than paying for the client to be advertised next to the article. The aim of public relations is to inform the public, prospective customers, investors, partners, employees and other stakeholders and ultimately persuade them to maintain a certain view about the organization, its leadership, products, or political decisions. Public relations professionals typically work for PR and marketing firms, businesses and companies, government, government agencies and public officials as PIOs and nongovernmental organizations and nonprofit organizations. Jobs central to Public Relations include account coordinator, account executive, account supervisor and media relations manager Bowen, (2013).

Public relations specialists establish and maintain relationships with an organization's target audience, the media and other opinion leaders. Common responsibilities include designing communications campaigns, writing news releases and other content for news, working with the press, arranging interviews for company spokespeople, writing speeches for company leaders, acting as an organization's spokesperson, preparing clients for press conferences, media interviews and speeches, writing website and social media content, managing company reputation (crisis management), managing internal communications, and marketing activities like brand awareness and event management. Success in the field of public relations requires a deep understanding of the interests and concerns of each of the client's many publics. The public relations professional must know how to effectively address those concerns using the most powerful tool of the public relations trade, which is publicity.

According to Bowen, (2004)., the public relations counsel is the agent working with both modern media of communications and group formations of society in order to provide ideas to the public's consciousness. Furthermore, he is also concerned with ideologies and courses of actions as well as material goods and services and public utilities and industrial associations and large trade groups for which it secures popular support. Bowen, S (2004). Building and managing relationships with those who influence an organization or individual's audiences has a central role in doing public relations. Bowen, (2004). After a public relations practitioner has been working in the field, they accumulate a list of relationships that become an asset, especially for those in media relations.

### **Public Relations Practice in Institutions of Higher Learning in Nigeria**

The recognition of public relations as a management functions in institutions of higher learning to manage issues and crises. Public Relation keeps them informed on public opinion and the best to create a harmonious environment for academic work in this changing world. Public relations activities are necessary for these institutions so that the future can be predicted (Nwosu, 2014). He stated the fact that every organisation needs to work hard to maintain the policies goodwill that points to the need for institutions of higher learning to work much harder because of the declining image Institutions of higher learning caused by problems ranging from the terror unleashed on innocent citizens by secret cults, to industrial action by the academic and non- academic staff. But instead of having a viable public relations outfit to achieve the above objective, what we have in our institutions in the place of PR department is confusion. Salau (2001) discovers that in some situations what is expected to be the public relations units are labelled information unit, some institutions call their PR department information and protocol unit while others label theirs PR unit.

He also observed that in some institutions the PR unit is located in the office of the Chief Executive of such

institution who may be the vice-chancellor, rector or provost, and, in some other institutions; PR unit is attached to the Registrar who is the administrative head of that institution. The consequences of the above arrangement are grave as the PR unit is not given a free hand to work since the PR Executive might be expected to perform the duties of a public officer or worst still act as an errand boy under such an arrangement. Yet this is the arrangement we have in most of our institutions of higher learning. Formally, institutions of higher learning used publicity in place of public relations but today, many of them have resorted to public relations to educate and inform their relevant publics about building a good public image for their institutions.

Despite these recognition public relations has received, PR experts believe that PR is not yet taken seriously in educational institutions. However, there would not have been any need for public relations in schools had it been that government monopoly of tertiary educational institutions is still as strong as it used to be in the past. But now, the growing competition between government and institutions of higher learning for autonomy has led to the demand for public relations in institutions of higher learning.

### **Safeguarding Organisation Image through Effective Public Relations: Corporate Examples**

Gauthier (2001). In this present global scenario where the whole world is a single market, organizations have learned the significance of establishing corporate image through effective and continuous public relations between their organization and various stakeholders to facilitate their business in building a strong relationships and establishing a unique identity for their growth and survival. This can be done by expanding their network of customers through proper information dissemination and just advertising and publicity are not enough to influence the people because they have become less responsive to these traditional methods of corporate communications. If image is important for the individual, it is essential for an organisation. Image should be treated as an asset and should be planned, developed analysed and managed along with other valuable assets. The right image greatly enhances an organisation's sphere of influence and is as important as other assets such as capital, plant and technology."The greatest risk to your professional image is the failure to factor image into your business decisions".

The problem a company faces is that different audiences will interpret a message in different ways. The management of the corporate image is thus an ongoing task. Corporate image includes information and inferences about the company as an employer, as a seller, as an investment and as a corporate citizen. A company will have more than one image depending on the nature of the interaction it has with the different groups. Since people tend to "humanize" companies Gauthier (2001), corporate image may also include characteristics often attributed to humans such as "caring", "friendly", and "ruthless" and so on. The first step in attempting to influence and manage the corporate image of an organization is to understand the process by which corporate image is formed.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Marxian (conflict) Theory**

The conflict theory is embedded in the works and ideas of Karl Marx. This theory explains that conflict is inevitable and stems from inequalities of power and economic wealth inherent in a capitalist economy or society. In Marxian analysis, conflict is attributable to an enduring power struggle between workers and their employers over the control of various aspects of work (Fashoyin, 2017). Identifying the causes of workplace conflict which include industrial strike, Fashoyin (2017) further submits that "inequality in the distribution of the proceeds of industry, job-insecurity of the worker, and poor management control strategies breed grievances which lead to industrial action."

Here, industrial action is seen as inevitable, and trade unions are a natural response of workers to their exploitation by capitalists, since it is rather difficult and dangerous for workers to individually express their grievances to management. This theory posits that there may be periods of acquiescence in this conflicting relationship. However, the institutions of joint regulations are believed to enhance rather than limit management's position as they presume the continuation of capitalism rather than challenge it. This theory (Marxian conflict) is of much relevance in explaining industrial relations in Nigeria. Observably, industrial relations in Nigeria is largely imbalanced and antagonistic between the parties involved, often in favour of capital. The employer is wielding so much power at the expense and exploitation of the worker. Thus in response to such exploitative tendencies, industrial conflicts result, conflicts over processes of work relations and control. With regards to wages, while the capitalist endeavours to induce labour right, the wage worker on the other hand, tries to press their demand through industrial action (Fajana, 2000).

However, the two theories are relevant to this study as they both explain the concept understudy. The theory of organizational image management explain the concept of building and safeguarding organizational image while marxian (conflict) theory explain the reason for industrial action in an organisation especially in Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo.

## METHODOLOGY

Research design of the study is survey method. Therefore, the area selected for this paper is Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo and the study. However, the researchers sampled the opinion of the staff for proper data gathering. The population of this study which is 2975 comprises of the entire staff of Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo. Moreover, this paper employed a purposive sampling approach in which 200 non-teaching staff and 200 academic staff was considered as respondents for this study. Hence the sample size of this study is 400. The research instruments used was questionnaire, it was purposively administered to both academic and non-academic staff of the selected tertiary institution.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

#### Index Table:

**Research Question: What role does public relations have in safeguarding organisational image during industrial action and**

S/No	Item Response	No of Respondent	Percentage (%)
i	Does public relation play any significant role in safeguarding organisational image especially during industrial action?	Yes (278)	72
		No (108)	28
		<b>Total (400)</b>	100
ii	What role does public relation play in safeguarding organisational image especially during industrial action?	Reconciliation role (358)	93
		Negotiation role (24)	6
		Resolution role (4)	1
		<b>Total (400)</b>	<b>100</b>
iii	Does Public Relations serve as a means of achieving organizational goals and objectives?	Yes (231)	60
		No (155)	40
		<b>Total (400)</b>	100

From the above table, **item i**, it was discovered that 278 respondents representing 72% admit that public relation play significant role in safeguarding organisational image while the remaining 108 respondents representing 28% have contrary opinion. Also in **item ii**, 358 respondents representing 93% admitted that public relation play reconciliation role in safeguarding organisational image especially during industrial action, 24 respondents representing 6% admit that public relation play negotiation role in safeguarding organisational image especially during industrial action while the remaining 4 respondents representing 1% admit public relation play resolution role. Finally in **item iii**, 231 respondents representing 60% admit that, Public Relations serve as a means of achieving organizational goals and objectives, while the remaining 155 respondents representing 40% have contrary opinion.

**Research Question 2: Does Public Relations in Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo help in safeguarding the image of the institution during industrial action and To what extent does Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo make used of public relations to build the institutional image?**

S/No	Item Response	No of Respondent	Percentage (%)
i	Is there functional Public Relation Unit in Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo?	Yes (301)	78
		No (85)	22
		<b>Total (400)</b>	100
ii	Do Public Relations in Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo help in safeguarding the image of the institution especially during industrial action?	Yes (276)	72
		No (110)	28
		<b>Total (400)</b>	<b>100</b>
iii	To what the extent does Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo make used of public relations to build the institutional image?	To a greater extent (136)	35
		To a some extent (213)	55
		On rear occasion (37)	10
		<b>Total (400)</b>	100

From the above table, **item i**, it was discovered that 301 respondents representing 78% admit that there is functional Public Relation Unit in Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo while the remaining 85 respondents representing 22% have contrary opinion. Also in **item ii**, 276 respondents representing 72% admit that Public Relations in Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo help in safeguarding the image of the institution especially during industrial action while the remaining 110 respondents representing 28% have contrary opinion. Finally, in **item**

iii, 136 respondents representing 35% admit that Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo make used of public relations to build the institutional image to a greater extent, 213 respondents representing 55% admit that Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo make used of public relations to build the institutional image to some extent, while the remaining 37 respondents representing 10% admit that Federal University Technology Akure make used of public relations to build the institutional image on rear occasion.

### Discussion of Findings

This paper evaluate Public Relations role in safeguarding organisational image during industrial action with a focus on Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo. **Question 1** examined the role of public relations in safeguarding organisational image during industrial action. However, the findings revealed that public relation majorly play reconciliation role in safeguarding organisational image especially during industrial action. **Question 2** ascertained whether Public Relations in Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo help in safeguarding the image of the institution during industrial action. Hence the findings of this study revealed that Public Relations in Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo help in safeguarding the image of the institution especially during industrial action. Finally, **Question 3** examined the extent to which Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo make used of public relations to build the institutional image, the findings of the study revealed that Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo make used of public relations to build the institutional image to a greater extent.

### Summary

This paper evaluate Public Relations role in safeguarding organisational image during Industrial action. However, **Marxian (Conflict) Theory** was used and as survey design was consider appropriate for the study. However, the entire population of 2321 which is the total population of Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo staff was chosen as the population of the study and purposive sampling technique in which 400 sampling size was considered as the sampling size. Moreover, primary source of data collection was considered appropriate for the study as questionnaire was administered on the respondents. The questionnaire was duly attested by the respondents and retrieved by the researcher for analysis through simple percentage data presentation. This paper through findings revealed that, public relations majorly play reconciliation role in safeguarding organisational image especially during industrial action.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of this paper, the paper concluded that public relations help in safeguarding organisation image especially during industrial action. It also concluded that, public relations majorly play reconciliation role in safeguarding organisational image especially during industrial action. Moreover, the study also concluded that, public relations helps to build institutional image especially in Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo.

### Recommendations

In view of the foregoing, the following recommendations were made:

- It recommends that organizations especially Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo management should give much credent to public relations as it serve a means of safeguarding organisation image especially during industrial action.
- It also recommends that, public relation in every organisations should ensure effective communication, especially during organizational conflict.
- The study recommends that, organisations should give cognizance to employee welfare in order to avoid industrial action.

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