



Reputation Management Strategies of the Nigeria Police and Protectees' Perceptions in Taraba State, Nigeria

Rabecca Babale Haruna*

^aDepartment of Mass Communication, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Taraba State University, Jalingo, Taraba State, Nigeria

Corresponding email: rebeccaharuna90@gmail.com

Abstract

This study assessed the reputation management strategies of the Nigeria Police Force and protectees' perceptions of these strategies in Taraba State, Nigeria. The study was anchored in Relationship Management Theory and adopted a mixed-methods approach, using a questionnaire and an interview guide to collect data from protectees and members of the Public Relations Unit of the Nigeria Police Force in Taraba State. The findings revealed that the major reputation management strategies employed by the Nigeria Police Force in the state were prompt handling of complaints, professional conduct and community relations. This suggests that the police prioritise professionalism and community-oriented approaches in managing their relationships with the public. The findings further indicated that the reputation management strategies implemented by the Nigeria Police Force were perceived as effective, having improved the public image of the police and strengthened public trust in the institution. The study concludes that, although the Nigeria Police Force is making deliberate efforts to manage its reputation, the misconduct of some officers continues to tarnish the image of the Force, thereby undermining these efforts. The study recommends that the Nigeria Police Force should strengthen officers' training, promote transparency, improve communication and enforce discipline to enhance the effectiveness of its reputation management strategies.

Keywords: Nigeria Police Force, police brutality, protectees, public relations, reputation management

Introduction

The growth and advancement of corporate organisations and institutions globally have ushered in an era of competition among the corporate world. In the bid to gain a favourable advantage over their contemporaries, corporate organisations are resorting to different strategies and techniques (Mai et al., 2023). This development is fuelled by the drive to build a good name, which is expected to translate into good fortune for organisations. It is on this premise that public relations, through diverse techniques and approaches, is considered a crucial part of corporate organisations' functions and activities. Such activities, which are deliberately designed and geared towards building the image of an organisation, are subsumed in a practice called reputation management (Nuortimo et al., 2026). Some studies have found a positive relationship between favourable organisational perceptions and public patronage (Gli et al., 2023; Mohammed et al., 2023). Consequently, where an organisation has a favourable perception in the eyes of the public, it tends to enjoy good patronage and goodwill from members of the public, and vice versa (Inobemhe et al., 2023).

Owing to the primacy of reputation, most organisations have recognised public relations as an essential part of their operations, saddled with the responsibility of building and maintaining cordial relationships with their publics (Umaru et al., 2025). This becomes necessary in this age and time, when an organisation's reputation has become a major determinant of the support and



patronage it elicits from the general public. Dike et al. (2025) opined that strategic corporate communication, such as reputation management, is highly instrumental in improving organisational effectiveness, strengthening stakeholder trust through transparent communication, and helping organisations manage reputational risks through proactive crisis communication. This explains why organisations go all out, using different media channels and techniques, to defend their reputations whenever they are smeared with campaigns of calumny. In corroboration, Chiakaan et al. (2024) opined that a good name is what every responsible organisation strives for in order to gain a favourable disposition from the publics concerned. Having a good name is the hallmark of reputation management.

Just like every other corporate organisation in the public and private sectors, the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has also adopted various reputation management techniques to manage its reputation locally and internationally. This is due to the several challenges that inundate the Nigeria Police Force and the country at large. It is important to note that Nigeria faces specific challenges, such as police brutality, corruption and the #EndSARS movement in 2020, which significantly impacted public perception (Amnesty International, 2020). The NPF is embroiled in a plethora of image-related issues within Nigerian society, including cases of corruption, police brutality meted out by members of the disbanded Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), and extortion, among others. Different policies have been adopted by the Nigeria Police Force to salvage what is left of its image in the eyes of the public, but it seems that not much has been achieved over the years. This necessitated the utilisation of reputation management techniques as another measure to remedy the image problem of this law enforcement agency. It is noted that the top hierarchy of the Force saw the need to embark on a series of activities to reposition the Force, as well as build a favourable image between itself and the community it answered the call to serve (Inobemhe et al., 2023).

Reputation is one of the most valuable assets of every public institution because it shapes the level of public confidence, cooperation and support that the institution receives. For the Nigeria Police Force, maintaining a positive reputation is important because policing depends greatly on the willingness of citizens to provide information, report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement officers. In recent years, the Nigeria Police Force has introduced several reforms and communication strategies aimed at improving its relationship with the public, following widespread concerns over police misconduct, abuse of power and declining public trust. Despite these efforts, studies continue to show that many Nigerians remain doubtful about the effectiveness of these interventions, suggesting that reputation is built not only through communication but also through consistent professional conduct and quality service delivery (Ike et al., 2022; Akinlabi, 2022).

Taraba State presents an important setting for examining how the reputation management techniques of the Nigeria Police influence the perceptions of protectees and other beneficiaries of police protection services, owing to the dearth of empirical evidence. Protectees, including government officials, traditional rulers, political office holders, business leaders and other individuals under police protection, interact more closely with police officers than the general public and are therefore well positioned to assess the effectiveness of the police's relationship-building efforts. Their experiences and perceptions provide useful evidence on whether reputation management techniques such as professionalism, respectful communication, responsiveness, ethical conduct and stakeholder engagement are achieving their intended objectives.



Understanding these perceptions is particularly important at a time when the Nigeria Police Force is seeking to strengthen public confidence through improved community relations and institutional reforms. Findings from this study will therefore contribute to a better understanding of how reputation management practices influence public perception and may provide useful guidance for improving police–public relations in Taraba State and Nigeria as a whole (Kooffreh, 2025; Omoyeni et al., 2026).

Statement of the Problem

The concept of reputation management is gaining traction among researchers owing to the significance of reputation in the corporate world. The value attached to reputation has made most organisations to pay attention to how they are being perceived by the public as it translates into goodwill. The Nigeria Police Force is expected to maintain public confidence through professional conduct, effective communication, accountability and positive relationships with the communities it serves. However, public perceptions of the police remain an important concern, particularly in a security environment where citizens depend on the police for protection, safety and the enforcement of law. However, the erosion of public confidence in the police is compounded by documented unethical practices which include but not limited to extortion, unlawful arrests, and brutality toward civilians, which fuel narratives of institutional failure and tarnished image (Ibe, et al., 2024). This reputational deficit does not only weaken the police’s capacity to foster cooperative relationships with communities but it also complicates the experiences and perceptions of protectees individuals and groups who rely on the NPF for safety and security. The trust gap appears to have distorted the perception the public have about the Nigeria Police Force and it also hampers the effectiveness of reputation management strategies. This has exacerbated the image problem of the NPF thereby necessitating the application of reputation management techniques to salvage what is left of their reputation and to regain public trust and confidence.

For protectees in Taraba State, the problem is not simply whether the police engage in reputation-building activities, but whether these activities reflect the experiences and expectations of those receiving police protection. Although the Nigeria Police Force has a public relations structure and engages in community relations and public communication, there is paucity of publicly available empirical evidence showing how protectees in Taraba State perceive these efforts and whether they consider them effective in building trust, confidence and favourable police image. A recent study on community policing in Jalingo found generally positive perceptions of police-community relations, but comparatively weaker trust, highlighting the need for further investigation into the experiences of specific groups served by the police (James et al., 2026). Consequently, the extent to which the reputation management strategies of the Nigeria Police influence protectees' perceptions in Taraba State remains insufficiently understood. This creates a need to examine the strategies employed by the police, how protectees perceive them, and the relationship between these strategies and the image of the police among those they are meant to protect. This study is therefore carried out to determine the reputation management approaches by Nigeria Police Force and the perception of protectees’ in Taraba State.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the Reputation Management Strategies of the Nigeria Police and Protectees' Perceptions in Taraba State, Nigeria. However, the specific objectives are to:



1. Identify the reputation management techniques of the Nigeria Police Force and Protectees in Taraba State
2. Examine the perceived effectiveness of the reputation management techniques in redeeming the image of the Nigeria Police Force before its Protectees in Taraba State.

Reputation Management

Reputation management is a multidisciplinary concept that has garnered widespread attention in organizational communication, public relations, corporate governance, and crisis management research (Nuortimo et al., 2026). The concept is a combination of two words, namely “reputation and management.” Reputation is a set of assumptions, beliefs, ideas and images that reflect the position and respect of the given object, person, social group, product, organisation, higher institution of learning and host of others (Ojo & Onoapepo, 2020). Management is concerned with the judicious and or proper use of something to preserve its worth and/or value over time. Reputation management refers to the strategic behaviour and processes adopted by an individual, organisation, or institution to influence, protect, and enhance its image or public reputation. Reputation is an abstract but very precious asset, typically established over time through routine behaviour, communication, and stakeholder relationships. In the modern digitized and highly interconnected world, reputation management has grown more complex, urgent, and relentless due to the instantaneity of public scrutiny and the viral contagion of information.

Reputation management essentially entails efforts to monitor how an organization is perceived by its stakeholders the public, customers, media, government, and internal constituencies and ensure that this perception aligns with desired identity or brand image. Fombrun and van Riel (2004) define corporate reputation as a collective representation of a firm's past actions and future prospects that define the firm's overall appeal to all of its key constituencies. The definition emphasizes reputation's dual frames: it is shaped by both future expectations and past behavior. Reputation management, therefore, involves backward-looking as well as forward-looking activities.

Literature Review

Related literatures were reviewed to situate the study within the context of extant research and to gain new insight.

Understanding the Perception of the Public towards the Nigeria Police Force

In Nigeria, reputation management has become a crucial component of organisations' communication efforts, given the competitive and digital environment in which they function, where public perception can be swift. Reputation management is the process that organizations employ to establish trust, maintain goodwill, and safeguard their image with their stakeholders including customers, employees, investors, government agencies, and host communities. Companies in the telecommunications, banking, oil and gas, manufacturing and public sector sectors now focus more on their reputation as it is easily damaged, which leads to customer disloyalty and loss of public acceptance. The studies reveal that the most common strategies for reputation management that are employed by organisations in Nigeria are public relations activities, media relations, corporate social responsibility, dialogue, community relations, crisis communication and digital media engagement (Awoyemi et al., 2023).

The image of the Nigeria Police Force has remained a major issue in Nigeria for many years. Citizens' perceptions of the police influence cooperation, crime reporting, and support for security activities. Research in Nigeria indicated that the image of the police is largely shaped by



issues of corruption, police brutality, lack of professionalism, poor service delivery and lack of public confidence in the police. A major challenge that has been noted in the literature is the lack of public confidence in the Nigeria Police Force. Tiwaa (2024) said Nigerians were not confident in the police as they had witnessed incidents of corruption, harassment, and unfair conduct by the police many times. The study showed that trust has been a major problem that has caused some citizens to refuse to seek solace from police for justice and security. This inaction has spurred some individuals to take refuge in informal security groups and mob violence, rather than relying on the police for protection, the researcher added.

Likewise, Agbontaen and Omoruyi (2025) noted that corruption among the police officers in Nigeria has a significant impact on the perception of the police by the public. The study cited that improper police practices like bribery, extortion, illegal detention, selective enforcement of law have reduced the trust in police institution. The researchers found that Nigerian citizens view that corruption by officers decrease fairness in police operations and that it hinders efficient crime control. Police misconduct is another significant concern to public attitudes toward the police. Adebusi, Oluwafemi, and Aigboje (2023) reported that when citizens feel victim or witness to police misconduct, they tend to have negative attitudes towards the police. The study clarified that when the police use their power badly or harass or treat people unfairly, they lose respect for the police service. The authors also found that people are more likely to trust the police when they behave fairly and respectfully towards the public.

Professionalism is also a topic that has been discussed in literature. Onyepuemu and Ashade (2023) contended that, professionalism in the police is one of the key factors that influence public opinion. The study showed that some officers' lack of proper training, discipline and professional demeanour negatively impact police service in Nigeria. The researchers said that when officers don't behave, public trust and cooperation diminishes. The study also said people feel more inclined to cooperate with the police if they are honest, disciplined and treat them with respect and dignity.

Theoretical Framework

Relationship Management (RM) Theory

The theory adopted for this work is the Relationship Management theory which was propounded by Robert Waterman and Thomas Peter in 1982. It postulates that the success of an organisation's programs depends largely on the quality of its relationship and not the quantity of the messages produced. The theory emphasises the place of relationship in public relations (Waters & Bortree, 2012).

Omodan et al. (2020) highlighted the core tenets of the relationship management theory to include but not limited to two-way communication, openness, trust, adaptability and flexibility. Two-way communication is crucial in building and maintaining cordial relationship between two or more persons or groups. It is difficult if not impossible for any relationship to thrive in the absence of two-way communication between the parties involved. Organisations therefore engage in two-way communication with their external publics through their public relations unit. This helps to keep the publics abreast on the activities of the organisation and vice versa. In addition to communication, openness and trust are also indispensable reputation management. Trust plays a vital role and serves as a major determinant in the extent to which external public would relate with an organisation. Where there is no trust between the external publics and an organisation, they are bound to have a strained relationship where nothing can be achieved.



The core focus of public relations is relationships which thrive on Mutual Benefits. Public relations suggest that an organisation's interactions with its constituents should be advantageous to both parties. This implies that the relationships should provide value, fulfilment, or advantages for all parties particularly the institution and the publics (Omodan, et al., 2020). In addition, the theory accentuates the place of prioritizing long-term connections over immediate profits, helps to maintain stakeholders' loyalty and support throughout time. More so, it also recognizes the dynamic character of relationships and promotes the organisation's ability to adjust to evolving conditions. Furthermore, relationship management theory it emphasizes the importance of trust as the cornerstone of interpersonal relationships. When built and maintained, trust is a powerful tool that may boost credibility and foster favourable opinions. Also, the theory offers direction on confronting and resolving conflicts constructively by acknowledging that conflicts are inevitable.

On the other hand, the shortcoming of the theory according to (Deszczyński, 2021) is that the theory is subjective in evaluating stakeholders' assessments of a relationship's success can differ from one another. Standardized parameters for evaluating the efficacy of relationship management initiatives could be lacking. Although good communication is a key component of relationship management success, an organisation may find it difficult to successfully use the theory if it suffers from communication barriers or lacks excellent communication skills.

This theory relates to the current study because reputation management is highly dependent on relationship management. Reputation can only thrive where there is positive relationship. The Nigeria Police Force must as a matter of necessity make deliberate efforts to build and maintain favourable relationship with members of the public as their slogan posited that "Police is your friend." They must go beyond using the slogan as a mantra of making it a public experience and reality. This can be achieved through the use of reputation management strategies which the Public Relations Officer of the Nigeria Police must leverage upon to both build and maintain the reputation of the Force.

Research Methodology

This study adopted mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative designs were adopted for the purpose of this study. For the quantitative aspect of the study, descriptive survey research design method was adopted where questionnaire was administered to solicit response from a cross-section of a group of people to retrieve data. This design is appropriate because the focus of this study is assessing the reputation management techniques of the Nigeria Police and Protectees perception in Taraba State. In addition to the use of descriptive survey, the study also utilised qualitative approach where Key Informant interview was used to collect data. Members of the Public Relations Unit of the Nigeria Police Force were interviewed in order to ascertain the reputation management techniques by the Nigeria Police Force in the state.

The population of this study therefore, majorly consisted of the members of the Public Relations Unit of the Nigeria Police Force and protectees who are residents of the state particularly from the three Senatorial districts in the state who serve as direct beneficiaries and recipients of every Public Relations technique and policy made by the Nigeria Police Force in Taraba State. The selected LGAs include Jalingo 220,700 (Taraba north), Bali 332,000, (Taraba central) Wukari LGAs 374,800 (Taraba south). The total projected population for the selected local government areas in Taraba state as given by National Bureau of Statistics is 927,500 (NBS, 2022). Therefore, the population of this study is 927,500. One local government area is selected from each of the Senatorial district in the state to serve as microcosm of the state at large. The aforementioned local



government areas were selected because they serve as the senatorial districts' headquarters for the three senatorial zones in the state. The sample of this research was determined using Krejcie and Morgan sampling table. According to Krejcie and Morgan sampling table, any research population that is within the range of 1,000,000 and above required 384 as the appropriate sample size. The state Police Public Relations officer of Taraba State Command was interviewed alongside three (3) other members of the Police Public Relations' unit in Taraba state. The qualitative data were analysed thematically in line with the objectives of the study

Data Presentation

Table 1. Reputation Management Techniques Employed by the Nigeria Police Force

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1	Nigeria Police Force applies reputation management techniques in redeeming its image.	85 (22.2%)	209 (54.4%)	30 (7.8%)	60 (15.6%)	384 (100%)
2	Police officers in Taraba State engage in community-oriented programmes to build trust with the public.	183 (48.4%)	103 (26.8%)	53 (13.8%)	42 (10.9%)	384 (100%)
3	The Nigeria Police Force effectively uses media platforms to communicate its achievements and activities.	186 (48.4%)	110 (28.6%)	46 (12.0%)	42 (10.9%)	384 (100%)
4	Prompt complaint-handling and feedback mechanisms are used by the police to manage their public reputation.	189 (49.2%)	119 (31.0%)	26 (6.8%)	50 (13.0%)	384 (100%)
5	Professional conduct of officers is used as a strategy to enhance the image of the Nigeria Police Force.	179 (46.6%)	130 (33.9%)	27 (7.0%)	48 (12.5%)	384 (100%)

Note: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree.

The findings in Table 1 indicate that respondents generally perceive the Nigeria Police Force as employing various reputation management techniques in Taraba State, although the extent to which these techniques are recognised varies. In examining the application of reputation management techniques to redeem the image of the police, 76.6% of respondents showed positive affirmation, while 23.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This suggests that most respondents recognise the police as making efforts to improve its public image. Similarly, 75.2% acknowledged the use of community-oriented programmes to build public trust, while an aggregate of 77.0% recognised the use of media platforms to communicate police achievements and activities. Prompt complaint handling and feedback mechanisms received 80.2% agreement, representing the highest combined positive response among the five items. In addition, 80.5% agreed that professional conduct among police officers serves as a strategy for enhancing the image of the Nigeria Police Force. Overall, the findings suggest that community engagement, media communication, complaint handling and professional conduct are recognised by respondents as reputation management techniques used by the police in Taraba State.

The implication is that the Nigeria Police Force has several reputation management approaches that could help strengthen its relationship with protectees and improve public confidence. However, respondents' recognition of these techniques does not necessarily establish that the strategies are consistently implemented or that they have successfully improved police reputation. The proportion of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed across the items also suggests that experiences and perceptions are not entirely uniform. The police therefore need



to ensure that community engagement is meaningful, media communication is transparent, complaints receive prompt attention and officers maintain professional conduct in their dealings with protectees. These efforts should be supported by regular assessments of public perceptions to determine whether reputation management practices correspond with the experiences and expectations of those receiving police protection.

Table 2. *Perceived Effectiveness of Reputation Management Techniques in Redeeming the Image of the Nigeria Police Force Before Its Protectees in Taraba State*

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1	The Nigeria Police Force effectively applies reputation management techniques.	213 (55.5%)	103 (26.8%)	22 (5.7%)	46 (12.0%)	384 (100%)
2	The general attitude of police personnel towards protectees is good.	225 (58.6%)	87 (22.7%)	30 (7.8%)	42 (10.9%)	384 (100%)
3	The police respond more promptly to security concerns than they did in the past.	227 (59.1%)	87 (22.7%)	34 (8.9%)	36 (9.4%)	384 (100%)
4	Reputation management efforts have helped improve the public image of the Nigeria Police Force in Taraba State.	224 (58.3%)	94 (24.5%)	26 (6.8%)	40 (10.4%)	384 (100%)
5	The reputation management strategies of the Nigeria Police Force have improved my confidence in the police.	206 (53.6%)	112 (29.2%)	16 (4.2%)	50 (13.0%)	384 (100%)

Note: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree. N = 384.

The findings in Table 2 show that respondents generally perceive the reputation management techniques of the Nigeria Police Force as effective in improving its image and relationship with protectees in Taraba State. Across the five items, the cumulative presentation of respondents in agreement ranged from 80.2% to 82.8%. Specifically, 82.3% of the respondents agreed that the Nigeria Police Force effectively applies reputation management techniques, while 81.3% considered the general attitude of police personnel towards protectees to be good. In the same vein, 81.8% agreed that the police responded more promptly to security concerns than they did in the past. The finding that 82.8% agreed that reputation management efforts have improved the public image of the police rank topmost among the various positive response across the items. Also, 82.8% indicated that the reputation management strategies had improved their confidence in the police. Overall, the results suggest that a substantial majority of protectees perceive the reputation management efforts of the Nigeria Police Force as producing positive outcomes in terms of police image, personnel attitude, responsiveness and public confidence.

It could be deduced from the findings of this study that reputation management appears to be an important factor in shaping protectees' perceptions of the Nigeria Police Force in Taraba State. The relatively high level of agreement across all five items measured suggests that efforts involving improved conduct, responsiveness and communication may be contributing to a more favourable perception of the police. In particular, the improvement in public image and confidence indicates that reputation management may extend beyond merely presenting a favourable image to the public and may also influence how protectees assess their relationship with the police. However, the presence of between 17.2% and 19.8% disagreement across the items shows that the



positive perception is not general and uniform. This suggests that some protectees may still have reservations about the effectiveness of police reputation management efforts. The police therefore need to sustain the practices that are producing positive perceptions while paying attention to the experiences of those who remain dissatisfied, particularly in relation to police responsiveness, personnel attitude and confidence in the institution.

Qualitative Data Presentation

Key Informant interview was conducted with the State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) Taraba State Command alongside other three officers. The interview data collected were presented thus:

Findings from the interviews revealed that different techniques are used by the Nigeria Police Force in managing its relationships with its protectees in Nigeria. Be that as it may, these techniques are not necessarily referred to as reputation management techniques by the police, but they essentially serve the purpose of building and maintaining cordial relationships between the police and the public, especially the immediate environment in which they operate. Members of the Public Relations Unit of the Nigeria Police Force, Taraba State Command, stated that community relations and dialogue are key techniques used by the Nigeria Police Force in the state to build and maintain direct and cordial relationships with the public. This is in view of the fact that the police do not operate in isolation from the public but, as a matter of fact, have a direct responsibility for the safety of the lives and property of members of the public. Discharging this responsibility requires contact with the people. While responding to the question on the reputation management strategies used by the Nigeria Police Force in Taraba State, one of the participants stated as follows:

I will start by saying with the new leadership that we have in Taraba State, the major strategies and techniques that have been used have just been wonderful, because the new leadership that just assumed has been like up and running with community building and interacting with the grass roots' leaders and then also the Police Public Relation Officer has been trying his best to see that he acts as a bridge between the Nigeria police force officers and the public(P4).

This connotes that community relations where direct communication is maintained with the people at the grassroots is used by the Police to bridge the communication gap that often exist between the duo. The public relations officers further buttressed that direct interaction with the members of the public serve as ground framework for either building or damaging the reputation of the Police depending on how it is utilised. This surmises that if this reputation management techniques are judiciously used, they can foster cordiality and partnership between members of the public and the Police. The participant added thus;

I can say the interaction between the police officers and the protectees is like the ground framework of building or damaging the reputation because there wouldn't be police without the people that they are protecting. So as far as I'm concerned, the ways in which we can actually build or damage the reputation in Nigeria Police Force is actually by interacting in a good way with the protectees or the people that we are protecting and then trying as much as possible to be friendly and to be open with the people that we are protecting(P4). Similarly, another participant added thus;



Basically, we tend to create a reasonable relationship between the public and the police. We make sure the public see us as being friendly so that we can attend to them and then they will have the rights to give us information and then they will not be scared(p1).

It could be deduced that the Nigeria Police Force makes conscious and deliberate efforts to maintain direct contact with the public as a means to having favourable perception in the eyes of the public. This perception is what often translates into gaining good reputation and winning the trust of the public.

Results from the interviews have also revealed divergent opinions on the effectiveness of the reputation management techniques used by the Nigeria Police Force in redeeming its image before its protectees. While some of the Public Relations Officers of the NPF felt the techniques are effective, others felt they are not effective in redeeming the image of the NPF before its protectees. This shows there are varied opinions on the effectiveness of the reputation management techniques used by the NPF in their reputation management. These two contradictory opinions are only a clear indication that two contrary truths can coexist. Apparently, the reputation management techniques of the Nigeria Police Force recorded success in some places whereas it failed in other places. One of the participants commented thus;

For the time I've been in Taraba, the techniques the Taraba State Command is using in managing situations in Taraba have been effective. Because sometimes an officer can be in his house and then somebody will call him and give him reliable information that will help the police attend to crimes and calm down situations. So, I believe the technique of being friendly to the public is effective(P1).

It is glaring to note that some members of the public still have trust in the NPF and they see the need to share credible information with the Police whenever the need arises. This shows the protectees have the confidence to call and share information with the Police consequent upon the relationship the Police has built with them. This suggests that the reputation management techniques are effective enough to elicit the trust of the people to have confidence in the Police force and to contact them whenever occasion demands. The study has also shown that it is as a result of the friendliness of the Nigeria Police with the protectees that enable the people to have the liberty to contact the Police in their time of need. More so, the members of the Police Public Relations unit added that for the protectees to contact the police officers it means they are not afraid of approaching the police and they believe the officers can intervene in their situation to bring the needed solution. On the other hand, another participant stated that;

Honestly, in Taraba State, that interaction between police and the public is not working. Because everybody feels police is a corrupt organization, this and that, so they don't even give listening ears to, okay, police are creating awareness, okay, can we listen to them and understand that in Taraba State, it is not working. That's just the honest truth. And then we've been finding it difficult interacting with members of the public here in Taraba State because they don't even want to listen to us. So that's it (P2).

It could be inferred from the study that the negative perception of the public on the Nigeria Police Force undermines the effectiveness of the reputation management techniques used by the Force. Even though the NPF is making conscious efforts to build and maintain cordial relationship with the public using different techniques, the negative perception the people have about the Police stand as a hindrance to winning the trust and confidence of some members of the public. While the same reputation management techniques were said to be effective, other participants affirmed



from their experience with the members of the public that the techniques are not effective. Suffice to say that the two ‘truths’, although contrary but they coexist as the reality of the reputation management techniques of the NPF before their protectees in Taraba State. In identifying the most effective of the reputation management techniques, the participant added thus;

To be honest, none of them is working. None. Be it on media, be it physically. It's not just working. Here in Taraba State, it's not working. I don't know about other states, but here in Taraba State, it's not working. Because even if you go online, if you see the tantrums people are trying at police officers here in Taraba State, you would know that there is no relationship between. The members of the public and the police, everybody is just on their own.

This clearly shows that the reputation management techniques used by the NPF in Taraba State are not all round effective in some places as the officers are being resisted and insulted online and offline. Be that as it may, the insults and resistance do not completely discredit the reputation management techniques as the study has shown that those insults are meted out of the previous experiences the members of the public have had with the police.

Discussion of Findings

This section of the study is devoted to discussing the findings of the study in line with the research objectives. First of all, the study made efforts to identify the various reputation management techniques used by the Nigerian Police Force and Protectees in Taraba State.

The quantitative data revealed that most of the respondents stated that the extent to which Nigeria Police Force apply reputation management techniques is low. This contrast with the qualitative data which revealed that the Nigeria Police Force actively utilise different reputation management techniques as affirmed by the Police Public Relations unit personnel. Also, majority of the respondents cumulatively agreed that Police officers in Taraba State engage in community-oriented programmes to build trust with the public. This aligns with the interview data which also show that the NPF utilises community relations and dialogues as their foremost reputation management techniques in maintaining their relationship with their protectees.

In addition to that, the study has shown that the Nigeria Police Force effectively uses media platforms to communicate its achievements and activities. This position is also in line with the qualitative data which also affirmed that the Nigeria Police Force use media platforms in addition to direct communication with the community. Furthermore, most of the respondents agreed that prompt complaint-handling and feedback mechanisms are used by the police to manage its public reputation as evidently seen in the findings of the study. This also corroborates the response from the Police Public Relations unit personnel who stated that they respond promptly to the distress call and complaints of the protectees. More so, the findings also revealed that professional conduct of officers was used as a strategy to enhance the image of the Nigeria Police Force as affirmed by a large majority of the respondents. This contrasts slightly with the interview data which revealed that the conduct of few officers who are regarded as “bad eggs” in the service are responsible for the tarnishing of the image of the NPF generally. In identifying the reputation management techniques of the NPF, the study shows that among the various reputations management techniques used by the Nigeria Police Force, prompt handling of complaints, professional conduct and community relations ranked topmost from both quantitative and qualitative data. This is to say that the Nigeria police prioritises professionalism and community-oriented approach in the reputation management with their protectees. This is in consonance with the tenets of Relationship



management theory which emphasises two-way communication, openness, trust, adaptability and flexibility between an institution and the target audience.

The findings of this study agree with Awoyemi et al (2023) who also stated that the most common strategies for reputation management that are employed by organisations in Nigeria are public relations activities, media relations, corporate social responsibility, crisis communication and digital media engagement. This shows that the Public Relations unit of the Nigeria Police Force utilise strategies that are not only in tandem with contemporary public relations practice but to also win the trust and confidence of their protectees as seen in the study. The core reputation management strategy identified in this study involves interaction between police and the public to clear misunderstandings, create awareness, and foster cordial relationships.

In the same vein, Adeyemi et al (2024) also averred that organisations can ensure public trust and credibility by implementing effective public relations strategies such as stakeholder engagement, ongoing communication, transparency, and feedback mechanisms. Apparently, stakeholder engagement which was employed by the NPF in community relations and dialogue has proven to be a popular reputation management strategy used by many organisations due to its potency in promoting cordial relationship between an organization and its publics.

The study revealed that majority of the respondents cumulatively agreed that Nigeria Police Force effectively applies Reputation Management Techniques as affirmed by overwhelming majority of the entire respondents. This position is in tandem with the qualitative data which also state that the reputation management techniques of the NPF was effective even though failure was recorded in some areas. Additionally, majority of the respondents cumulatively agreed that the general attitude of Police personnel towards protectees is good as affirmed by majority of the respondents. This is in consonance with the position of Police Public Relations unit who stated that they approach the protectees in a friendly and professional manner in order to win their trust and confidence. In the same vein, majority of the respondents cumulatively agreed that the police responded more promptly to security concerns than they did in the past. This also agrees with qualitative data which averred that the Police respond swiftly to distress calls and complaints. Additionally, the study also revealed that the reputation management efforts have helped improve the public image of the Nigeria Police Force in Taraba State. Similarly, majority of the respondents affirmed that the reputation management strategies of the Nigeria Police Force have improved confidence in the police in Taraba State. It could be deduced from the study that the reputation management techniques of the Nigeria Police Force was effective to the point of eliciting favourable perception and testimony from majority of the members of the public who are the protectees. These results have shown that the reputation techniques have helped to improve the public image of the Nigeria Police Force in Taraba State as well as increasing the confidence of the protectees in the force. This aligns with the tenet of Relationship management theory which posits that the success of an organisation's programs depends largely on the quality of its relationship and not the quantity of the messages produced.

The findings of this study are in consonance with Okungbowa et al (2025) who said that organisations that maintain regular communication with stakeholders often enjoy higher levels of trust and public support. This shows that there is a relationship between the reputation managements techniques organisations apply and the relationship vis-à-vis trust they elicit from their publics. Organisations in Nigeria operate in an environment where information spreads rapidly through traditional and digital media. As a result, many organisations including the Nigeria



Police Force now invest in communication strategies aimed at protecting and improving their public image. Studies have shown that reputation management techniques such as public relations, corporate social responsibility, digital communication, stakeholder engagement, and crisis communication have helped many organisations improve public confidence and maintain organisational stability.

On the contrary, Kwene and Tartsea-Anshase (2025) determined that using digital media in a transportation company in Abuja resulted in increased brand visibility, customer loyalty, complaints handling, and public trust. The research also identified that organisations that react quickly to complaints via the internet are more likely to have positive relationships with customers. Digital communication has therefore emerged as a potent means of enhancing organisational images in Nigeria. Although, digital media engagement was not one of the reputation management techniques used by the Nigeria Police Force but it appears to be a promising technique that can improve the relationship between the Police Force and their protectees.

Conclusion

From the analysis of the findings of this study, it can be deduced that both the quantitative and qualitative results revealed that the Nigeria Police Force has various strategies to achieve good relationship with the members of the public in their reputation management. The success of the Nigeria Police Force depends not only on its ability to maintain law and order but also on the confidence and support it receives from those it serves. Reputation management has therefore become an important part of modern policing because it helps to build trust, encourage cooperation and strengthen the relationship between the police and the public. This study concludes that the perception of protectees in Taraba State is largely influenced by the professionalism, communication style, responsiveness, ethical conduct and accountability demonstrated by police officers in the course of their duties. A positive reputation can only be sustained when reputation management techniques are supported by consistent actions that reflect fairness, respect for human rights and quality service delivery. The findings of this study are expected to provide useful insights for the Nigeria Police Force and other stakeholders in developing practical strategies that will improve public confidence, strengthen police-protectee relationships and enhance the overall image of the police in Taraba State and Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings of this research, the following recommendations are provided below:

1. There is a need for the public relations unit of the Nigeria Police Force to integrate social media in consolidating the community relations and dialogue with their protectees online and offline.
2. There is need for continuous improvement of the reputation management techniques through training, transparency, communication and discipline of officers of the Nigeria Police Force.

References

- Adams, J.O. (2020). The Portrait of the Nigeria Police Force in Selected Yorùbá Written Literary Texts. *Unpublished Thesis*. University of Ibadan
- Adeyemi, M. O., Eke, C., & Chimezie, U. H. (2024). Enhancing credibility and accountability in Nigeria's public institutions: Strategic public relations approaches. *Advance Journal of*



- Agbontaen, E. S., & Omoruyi, O. L. (2025). Public Perception Of Corruption In The Nigerian Police Force And Its Effect On Crime Control. *Journal of the Management Sciences*, 62(2), 222-235.
- Akinlabi, O. M. (2022). Police–Citizen Relations in Nigeria: Obstacles to Trust and Cooperation with the Police. In *Policing and the rule of law in Sub-Saharan Africa* (pp. 50-69). Routledge.
- Akintaro, G., & Ekharefo, D. (2017). An evaluation of reputation management in selected federal universities in South West Nigeria. *Covenant Journal of Communication*. <https://journals.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/index.php/cjoc/article/download/515/373>
- Alemika, E. E. O. (2010). Police practice and police research in Nigeria. *Police Practice and Research*, 11(2), 113-128. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15614260902830063>
- Awofadeju, O. (2023). The impact of effective public relations on organisational performance in Micmakin Nigeria limited. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/370398471_The_impact_of_effective_public_relations_on_organisational_performance_in_Micmakin_Nigeria_limited
- Awoyemi, O., Attah, R. U., Basiru, J. O., & Leghemo, I. M. (2023). Strategic integration of media and public relations to address communication barriers in organizational reputation management. *Open Access Research Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 6(1), 76-85. <https://doi.org/10.53022/oarjms.2023.6.1.0035>
- Chiakaan, G.J., Tsafa, T. & Idi, S. (2024). *Understanding International Public Relations: A modern perspective-* Lampert Academic Publishing
- Chiakaan, J.G., Kaigama, K.P. & Ayagwa, F.M. (2022). Towards introducing Public Relations Programme in the Nigerian Military Institutions for improved Defense Security and Sustainable Development. A Paper submitted for presentation at the Nigerian Defense Academy Conference on Defense Security and Sustainable Development in Africa: Emerging challenges and responses.
- Dike, H. W. (2025). Strategic corporate communication: A tool for enhancing organizational performance in Nigeria. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 9(4), 3192–3206. <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.90400501>
- Fombrun, C. J., & van Riel, C. B. M. (2004). *Fame & Fortune: How Successful Companies Build Winning Reputations*. Pearson Education.
- Gli, D. D., Tweneboah-Koduah, E. Y., Odoom, R., & Kodua, P. (2023). The effect of corporate reputation on customer loyalty in the Ghanaian banking industry: The role of country-of-origin. *African Journal of Economic and Management Studies*, 15(1), 73–87. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AJEMS-12-2022-0492>



- Ibe, M., Maciver J., & Awajiowa, J. (2024). *An Assessment of Public Relations Techniques in Rebranding Nigeria Police Image: A Study of Rivers State Police Command*
- Ike, T., Singh, D., Jidong, D. E., Ike, L. M., & Ayobi, E. E. (2022). Public perspectives of interventions aimed at building confidence in the Nigerian police: A systematic review. *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, 17(1), 95-116. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18335330.2021.1892167>
- Inobemhe, K., Garba, S., Udeh, N.S. Santas, T. (2023). A Discourse On Public Relations and Image Management Strategies Of The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) Aftermath Of Endsars Protests Across Nigeria. *Uluslararası Halkla İlişkiler ve Reklam Çalışmaları Dergisi*, 6(1), 127-157.
- James, A., Abanyanm, N. L., & Adaki, A. Y. (2026). Impact of Community Policing on Crime Control in Jalingo Local Government Area, Taraba State. *Taraba State University Journal Of Sociology*, 6(1), 170-196.
- Kooffreh, B. (2025). *Public Attitudes Toward the Nigerian Police: An Examination of Trust Indicators at Micro Levels* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Mississippi).
- Kwene, U. M., & Tartsea-Anshase, M. (2025). Assessment of the utilization of digital media for reputation management by a leading transportation company (Company G), Abuja. *YASIN*, 5(6), 5916-5948. <https://doi.org/10.58578/yasin.v5i6.7882>
- Mai, N. K., Nguyen, K. T. A., Do, T. T., Phan, L. N., & Ho, N. T. (2023). Corporate social responsibility strategy practices, employee commitment, reputation as sources of competitive advantage. *SAGE Open*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231216248>
- Muhammed, E., Ojeleye, Y. C., Tunde, S. J., & Taiwo, K. H. (2023). Brand image and customer purchase intention in Nigeria's telecommunications sector. *Lapai Journal of Economics*, 7(1), 132–144. <https://doi.org/10.4314/lje.v7i1.9>
- Nuortimo, K., Harkonen, J., & Breznik, K. (2026). Exploring corporate reputation and crisis communication. *Journal of Marketing Analytics*, 14, 4–25. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41270-024-00353-8>
- Ojo, T. O., & Onaopepo, I. B. (2020). Corporate reputation management and the Nigerian tertiary institutions: Assessment of stakeholders' perception of corporate image of Lagos State University (LASU) between 2007 and 2017. *Hallmark University Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 2(2), 153-168.
- Okungbowa, P., Adedoyin, S., & Achilike, N. (2025). Exploring and managing reputation quotient of selected Nigerian deposit money banks: The role of public relations. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*.
- Omodan, B. I., Tsotetsi, C. T., & Dube, B. (2020). Analysis of human relations theory of management: A quest to re-enact people's management towards peace in university system. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 18, 10.



Omoyeni, S. O., Oladimeji, L. F., & Omoyeni, T. J. (2026). Exploring the Principles, Practices and Challenges of Community Policing in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Political Science and Administration*, 14(2), 62-79.

Santas, T. (2025). Public perception of the reputation management strategies of Dangote Group Refinery.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/396559787_Public_perception_of_the_reputati_on_management_strategies_of_Dangote_Group_Refinery

Tiwaa, D. F. A. (2024). Institutional distrust trap: An analysis of the effect of public distrust in the Nigeria Police Force. *Policing and Society*, 34(8), 846–860. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2024.2341121>

Umaru, H.A., Chiakaan, J.G., & Kaigama, P.K. (2025). Public Relations and image management of the Nigeria Police Force in Adamawa State. *Jalingo Journal of Social and Management Sciences*. 6(4) 2025

Waters, R.D.&Bortree, D.S.(2012). Advancing relationship management theory: Mapping the continuum of relationship types.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0363811111001093>

AI Disclosure:

Artificial intelligence tools like Auris and Note GPT were used to transcribe the interview data and the data were cross checked manually to eliminate transcription errors. The study also used ChatGPT for editing and proofing of the text.
