


# Strategic Public Relations Practices and Consumer Buying Behaviour in Sub Saharan Africa: A Study of Nigeria's Fast Moving Consumer Goods Industries

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## Abstract

The purpose of this work was to assess if strategic public relations practices have made and appreciable impact of consumer buying behavior in Nigeria. In a descriptive research design, we adopted quantitative survey and both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to answer the four research questions. Primary data was generated from a sample of 800 respondents selected across the six geopolitical zones of the country using multiple sampling techniques. Results from the estimation of a multiple regression analysis to determine impact of both community relations practice, customer relations practice, media relations practice and government relations practice shows that significant efforts have been made by strategic public relations practitioners in the area that will help businesses succeed in the true sense of business success. The study concluded that any increase in the strategic public relations practice affects consumers' decision to buy, hence increases the profitability of the companies while also preserving the environment and image of the company. In line with the finding, the study recommended a nuanced approach to strategic public relations practices in the Nigerian context, where diverse consumer preferences and behaviours are at play and continuous monitoring and adaptation of strategic PR practices remains very critical.

**Keywords:** Public Relations, Consumer Behaviour, Fast-Moving Consumer Goods, Sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria.

## Introduction

In Sub-Saharan Africa, doing business is metamorphosing so fast that in these days' marketplace, consumers increasingly seek beyond just products and services but brands that align with their values and make a positive impact on society (Aaker, 2021; Kotler & Keller, 2022; Nwanmuoh et al, 2024b). It is no doubt a time filled with plenty of challenges issues for the business world, as noted by (Ekakitie & Sado, 2023; Akhigbe, 2024) the hurdles ranges from infrastructure deficits and political instability to a diverse range of

cultural contexts and regulatory environments. Hence balancing profits with making a positive impact is even tougher when you're dealing with limited resources, huge inequality, and pressing social problems (Ali & Ali, 2017; Kotler & Armstrong, 2021; Yadav, 2022). Yet, in all these, opportunities still exist for responsible companies that want to make a difference.

According to Nwanmuoh et al (2024c), public relations practitioners for years have been focusing on crafting a positive image for companies, but in Sub-Saharan Africa today, expectations are higher on brands to do more than just sell products. To Haider and Shakib (2018), Solomon et al (2021), Tabie (2022), consumers seek businesses that align with their values, that contribute to society, and that champion a greater good. This is what strategic public relations practice (SPRP) plays a major role.

Strategic public relations (PR) which can also be called purpose-driven PR plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer behavior by highlighting an organisation's commitment to social responsibility (Jones et al, 2020), ethical practices (Ahmed & Ashfaq, 2022) and overall purpose (Uduji et al, 2024b; Nwanmuoh et al, 2024a). SPRP surpasses traditional press releases and media placements. To Smith & Johnson (2018), Smith (2019), Brown et al (2020) and Uduji and Okolo-Obasi (2023b), it's about weaving a brand's core values into the very DNA of its communication strategy.

Ramanathan et al (2017), Uduji and Okolo-Obasi (2022a), also averred that SPRP is all about understanding the reason behind the company's existence and using that understanding to guide every interaction with the public. The strategic PR practices goes beyond traditional PR strategies and attentions on communicating a brand's mission, values, and social impact with the primarily aim to promoting products and services (Ashley, 2021). Roncha and Radclyffe-Thomas (2016) noted that SPRP has been embraced by Nigerian brands in innovative ways.

In Nigeria, Strategic PR practices remains part of everyday society as practitioners increasingly bombard the people with effort to reach out to the public (Asongu et al, 2020; Nwanmuoh et al, 2022). Strategic PR practices tell stories of a brand in the form that will resound with consumers on an emotional level that will foster trust and loyalty (Urgorji, 2012; Uduji Okolo-Obasi (2023). These Strategic PR practices are meticulously crafted to capture public attention, spark interest of the customers, and ultimately influence the buying behaviour of the consumers (Nwosu & Uffoh, 2017). Recently, the impact of PR practices on consumer choices and preferences became a subject of debate (Nwanmuoh et al 2024a).

While some proponent scholars opine that Strategic PR practices helps build consumer trust by transparently communicating a brand's efforts and achievements in areas like sustainability, ethical sourcing, and community involvement (Okolo-Obasi et al, 2021; Uduji et al, 2021a). Others Agbonifoh (2007), Mairiga (2017), Asongu et al (2019a), and Cialdini (2020), argue that it also, enhances brand perception by showcasing a company's positive impact on society (Mairiga, 2017), encourages consumer engagement by creating meaningful content that resonates with the audience (Uduji et al, 2021b); influences

purchasing decisions by highlighting the ethical and social aspects of a brand's offerings (Ekakitie et al, 2022), fosters emotional connections by aligning a brand's story with the personal values and beliefs of its audience (Asongu et al, 2019c). On the other hand, scholar like Nnamani (2017), Nwanmuoh et al (2021, 2023) still maintain that even though many qualities have been enumerated as what SPRS can offer, the exact impact has not been seen in Nigeria and other SSA nations.

Yet other set of scholars opine that to comprehensive understand the impact of strategic public relations on consumer buying behavior requires consideration of various factors like the demographic characteristics of the target audience (Stanford et al., 2019; Okolo-Obasi & Uduji ,2022), the cultural context (Quora, 2018; Nwanmuoh et al, 2024c), and the psychological aspects of consumer decision-making (Schwartz, 2017; Uduji et al, 2019c).

Within this context, the paper addresses the need to comprehend how different strategic public relations practices impact consumer buying behaviour. The contemporary PR landscape is marked by a diverse array of relations like community, customers, media, and government relation. Each of these approaches employs distinct tactics and messaging styles, which can have varying degrees of influence on consumers' choices and preferences. Because the understanding of how PR practices affect consumer buying behaviour is crucial for firms seeking to maximize their business efforts (Ahmed & Ashfaq, 2022, Uduji, 2012) and for consumers aiming to make informed decisions (Sharma, 2018, Asongu et al, 2019c), this inquiry is essential not only for businesses seeking to optimize their business strategies in a cluttered strategic PR but also for consumers aiming to make informed decisions amid the constant barrage of PR messages. Hence, this paper adds to the public relations consumer buying behavior debate in four areas of great interest in the literature. These four areas of focus similarly represent four main questions notably:

1. What is the impact of community relations practice on consumer buying behavior?
2. What is the effect of customer relations practice on consumer buying behavior?
3. What is the effect of media relations practice in influencing consumer buying behavior?
4. What is the effect of government relations practice in influencing consumer buying behavior?

### **Study Hypothesis**

In Nigeria, businesses habitually measure their success by how much money they make from the consumers and for their investors (Nwodu, 2018) while this is very important, there is a need to fully capture the complexities of doing business in Nigeria and Africa. Nigeria and Africa as a whole is built on strong commitment to community relationships which everyone shares in the benefits. Hence, a true success in any African company must be measured on a broader approach that considers more than just profits. Both public relations, advertisement and other marketing practices must consider this community relationship in pursuance of consumers.

Businesses need a strategic to make a real difference, big-picture plan (Fofie, 2016). the people who are affected by the company must be listened to and implement the business goals to match their needs. Building a business that can last and protect the environment is key to long-term success. Showing how the company is making a positive impact not only proves its commitment but also helps plan for the future. On the other hand, there is a big role that Governments must play to ensure the success of a business Asongu et al, 2019b; Uduji & Okolo-Obasi, 2022b). Good relationship with the government helps in catalysing the success of otherwise of any business. A single policy of the government will either mar or make a business. Also, it is very essential to understand consumer perceptions of a brands. This is simply because consumers in Nigeria and Africa in general are increasingly valuing firms that contribute to society. Hence, understanding and meeting customer needs is pivotal enhanced brand loyal consumer base and overall growth in business. Unfortunately, most of the aforementioned are not captured in the strategic public relation practices of most of the companies in Nigeria. It is these bases that we hypothesized that the:

- strategic public relations practice of community relations has not made significant effect on consumer buying behavior
- strategic public relations practice of customer relations has not made significant effect on consumer buying behavior
- strategic public relations practice of media relations has not made significant effect on consumer buying behavior
- strategic public relations practice of government relations has not made significant effect on consumer buying behavior

The study effectively used a quantitative approach and applied survey. The rest of the paper is presented in the following order: literature and theoretical underpinnings (Section 2); methods and material (Section 3); result and corresponding discussions (Section 4), and the closing section -- implications and future research directions (5).

## **Literature and Theoretical Underpinnings**

### **Strategic Public Relations Practices (SPRP)**

In modern business effort, SPRP is the backbone and fulcrum upon which consumers' perceptions are shaped and buying behaviours influenced (Solomon et al., 2020; Uduji & Okolo-Obasi, 2023a). The strategic public relation campaigns are multifaceted and dynamic, encompassing a wide array of media and strategies designed to engage target audiences effectively (Tehria, 2017; Uduji et al, 2020b). Each of these strategies are tailored to achieve specific objectives. Traditional advertising channels, such as print, television, radio, and outdoor media like billboards and posters, offer broad reach and are particularly effective for brand exposure (Olsen & st. George, 2020; Asongu et al, 2020). Print ads provide tangible content that consumers can revisit, while television and radio ads use the power of sight and sound to create impactful messages (Sharma, 2018; Presbey, 2020). In contrast, digital advertising campaigns have gained prominence in recent years. They

include online banners, email marketing, social media advertising, and pay-per-click (PPC) campaigns (Smith, 2019; Nwanmuoh, 2020). Digital platforms provide precise targeting capabilities, real-time data analysis, and interactive features that allow businesses to engage with consumers on a personal level (Uduji and Okolo-Obasi, 2018, 2020; Powers et al., 2020).

The strategies employed in strategic or purpose-driven PR practice are diverse and designed to effectively communicate with the target audience, either the consumers, entire community, media or even the government (Awan, 2022). According to Osakwe and Chovancová (2015), Ashley, (2021), Uduji and Okolo-Obasi (2021a), one prevalent strategy is storytelling, which aims to create an emotional connection between the audience and the brand. To Rahmi et al (2021), the compelling narratives, brands can evoke emotions, resonate with consumers, and differentiate themselves in a crowded marketplace.

Additionally, SPRP often incorporate persuasion techniques rooted in psychology, such as social proof, scarcity, and reciprocity (Cialdini, 2018). These principles tap into human cognitive biases, influencing consumers' decision-making processes and motivating them to take action.

To a reasonable extent, SPRP are complex and multifaceted endeavours that encompass various types, goals, and strategies. Understanding the fundamental concepts behind them is essential for businesses seeking to create impactful marketing efforts that resonate with their target audiences. As technology and consumer behaviours continue to evolve, staying informed about the latest advertising strategies and trends is imperative for businesses aiming to excel in the real sense of success.

### **Consumer Buying Behaviour**

The buying behaviour of consumers is a multipart field of study involving psychology and decision-making processes (Rook & Fisher, 2017). At the core of understanding consumer buying behaviour lies the Consumer Decision-Making Process. This process consists of several stages, including problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016). Recognizing a problem or need is often the first step that triggers the consumer's decision-making journey. It is during this stage that consumers become aware of a discrepancy between their current state and desired state, prompting them to seek a solution through purchasing.

The next step is gathering and reviewing information about potential solutions to their problem which may include comparing product features and prices (Rook & Fisher, 2017; Uduji et al, 2019c), as well as the impact of such brand on the entire community environment (Solomon et al., 2020). Kotler & Armstrong (2016), noted that evaluation of alternatives is a critical stage where the consumers weigh the pros and cons of each alternative to arrive at a decision. In all, consumers' perception of the brand and its alignment with their values can significantly impact their choice (Ekakitie, 2021). Post-purchase evaluation is the final stage, where consumers reflect on their purchase and assess

whether it met their expectations (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016). If the product or service exceeds their expectations, it can lead to satisfaction and potentially brand loyalty. Conversely, if the experience falls short, it may result in dissatisfaction and negative word-of-mouth.

Generally, consumer buying behaviour is a complex phenomenon rooted in various theoretical foundations. Understanding the decision-making processes, factors influencing choices, and models that underpin consumer behaviour is crucial for businesses seeking to tailor their advertising campaigns to resonate with their target audiences effectively. By delving into these theoretical aspects, marketers can gain valuable insights into how consumers make purchasing decisions and, in turn, create more persuasive and impactful advertising campaigns (Solomon et al., 2020).

### **Theoretical Framework**

In the pursuit of twigging the intricacies of consumer behaviour within the context of strategic PR practices, we employed the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) as the theoretical framework underpinning the study. TPB as posited by Ajzen, (2015) seeks to explain and predict human behaviour which includes consumer buying behaviour. It posits that individuals make deliberate decisions based on their intentions to perform certain functions. According to Rezaei and Ismail (2014), TPB suggests in the context of consumer behaviour that a consumer's intention to purchase a product or service is a crucial determinant of their actual buying behaviour. The theory emphasized Attitudes, and Perceived Behavioural Control. While attitude refer to an individual's overall evaluation of a behaviour or action, such as buying a particular product (Mulia, 2019), subjective norms encompass the perceived social pressure or influence from others regarding a specific behaviour (Obinna, 2017). Perceived Behavioural Control on the other hand, relates to an individual's perception of their ability to perform a behaviour (Okudo, 2017).

The TPB offers a valuable lens through which one can understand how SPRP consumer buying behaviour as it examines the interplay of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, researchers and marketers can gain insights into the underlying motivations that drive consumers to make specific purchasing decisions. A proper understanding of how these factors interact and contribute to consumer buying behaviour is essential for both scholars seeking to advance the field of consumer psychology and practitioners aiming to design more effective advertising campaigns in an increasingly competitive marketplace (Uduji & Okolo-Obasi, 2024).

### **Methods and Material**

#### **Research Design**

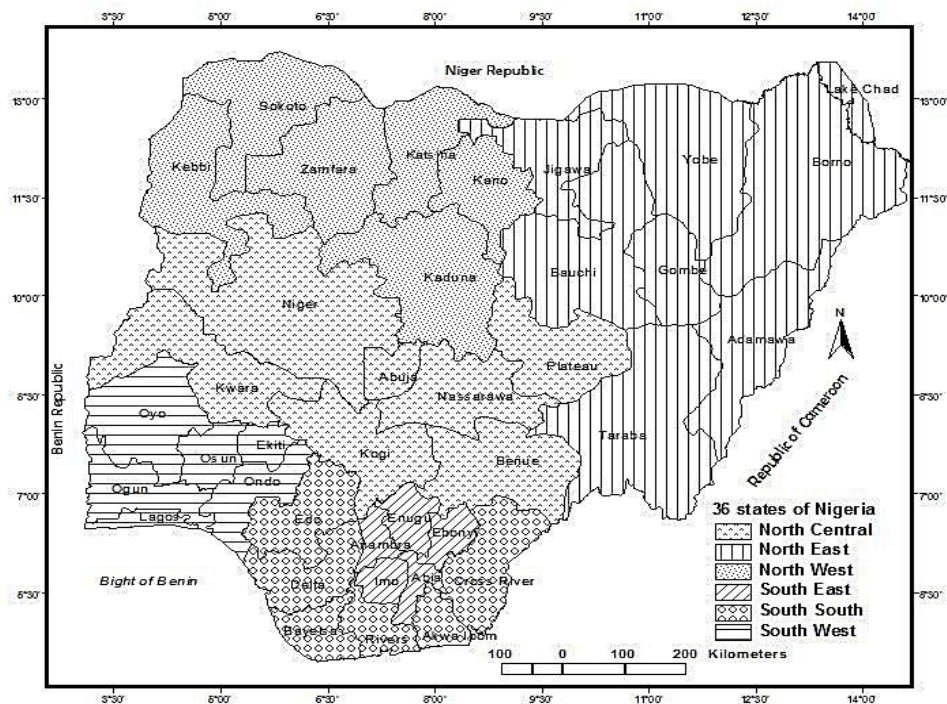
The research design employed for this study is descriptive in nature utilizing a quantitative survey. We employed this based on our consideration of objectives of this study which looks at the relationship between SPRP and the consumer buying behaviour. Because numerical data are involved, quantitative approach was deemed most appropriate to ensure rigorous



statistical analysis (Saunders et al, 2016; Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Uduji and Okolo-Obasi 2019, 2022c)

### Population of the Study

The target population for this study is the consumers in both rural and urban communities in Nigeria. The Nigeria's diverse consumer landscape, characterized by distinct preferences, socio-economic conditions, and cultural factors across all regions, necessitates a focus on this demographic to gain comprehensive insights into consumer behaviour (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Engel et al, 2019; Anderson et al., 2020). Figure 1 identifies the constituents' administrative states of all the geopolitical zones of Nigeria.



**Figure 1:** Constituent administrative states of the geopolitical zones of Nigeria

**Source:** Adapted with modification from Uduji and Okolo-obasi, 2018

### Sample Size

We calculated the sample size used in this study using the Yamane (1967) formula which is mathematically represented as follows:

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

Where,  $n$  = the sample size;

$N$  = the population of the study area and  $d$  = margin of error at 0.05 for CI at 95%;

Using the 2016 estimated population by NPC (2017), we therefore, calculated the sample size thus:

$n = \frac{50,619,290}{1+50,619,290 (0.05)^2} = n = \frac{50,619,290}{1+483751} = 399.984$ ; approximately 400. However, we further multiplied this by two to minimize error of sampling. Hence, the total sample size used was 800 respondents.

### Sampling Procedure

To ensure that the relevant population is represented, we used multi-stage sampling in selecting the final respondents used for the study. The stages involved in the selection are as follows: in the first stage, we followed the six national geopolitical zone as our first cluster to select one state from each zone (cluster). Hence, we purposefully selected Benue State from the North-Central cluster, Bauchi State from the North-East cluster, Kano State from North-West. Others are Imo State from South-East, Rivers State from South-South cluster, and Lagos State from South-West cluster. The purpose was based on the highest populated state in each zone. In the next stage, we listed all the Local Government Areas (LGAs) in each of the selected States using purposive sampling, two LGAs were selected. The purpose was based on the highest populated LGA in the state. Thus, a total of 12 LGAs were selected for the study. In the next stage, to ensure proper representation, the main communities in the selected LGAs were listed and two communities were randomly selected from each LGA, giving a total of four communities per state and 24 communities for the study. In the last stage, from the communities selected, we randomly 800 respondents (see Table 2).

**Table 1:** Sample size determination table

Selected States (Geopolitical Zones)	Total Population	% Total Population	Sample per State	Sample per Community
Kano (North-West)	13,076,892	26	207	52
Benue (North-Central)	5,741,815	11	91	23
Bauchi (North- East)	6,537,314	13	103	26
Rivers (South-South)	7,303,924	14	115	29
Lagos (South-West)	12,550,598	25	198	50
Imo (South-East)	5,408,756	11	85	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,619,299</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

**Source:** NPC, 2017/Authors' computation

### Data Collection

We used written semi-structured questionnaire to generate data used for the study from primary sources. The use of this technique was informed by the fact that, the views of the people being studied on all the issues are paramount. The SSI was the major tool used for the survey to glean data from the 800 respondents. The questionnaire was directly administered by the researchers with the help of research assistants. The use of local



research assistants was because of the inability of the researchers to speak the different local languages and dialects of the many ethnic groups in the sampled communities.

### Method of Data Analysis

The collected data was rigorously treated and cautiously analyzed to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses with both descriptive and inferential statistics. We presented the results of descriptive statistics in tables, figures and charts. Also, we used inferential statistic tool of logit model to estimate the functions of selected dependent and control variables.

Based on the specific objectives of this study, a multiple regression model was estimated to predict the impact of SPRP the independent variables proxied by 1) community relations practice, 2) customer relation practice, 3) media relations practice and 4) government relation practice on consumer buying behaviour (dependent variable).

The multiple regression model can be represented as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \dots \dots \dots \beta_n X_{4n} + \varepsilon \quad \text{Equation (1)}$$

Where:

Y stands for Consumer Buying Behaviour

In this model:

$X_1$  = community relations practice

$X_2$  = customer relations practice

$X_3$  = media relations practice

$X_4$  = government relations practice

$\beta_0$  is the intercept, representing the expected value of the dependent variable when all independent variables are zero.

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$  and  $\beta_4$  are the coefficients associated with the independent variables: and

$\varepsilon$  represents the error term, accounting for unexplained variability in consumer buying behaviour.

### Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations played a pivotal role in guiding every facet of the research process, underscoring its paramount importance (Saunders et al., 2016). To safeguard the rights and well-being of the participants, rigorous measures were implemented. Foremost among these was the requirement of informed consent, which was diligently obtained from all individuals who participated in the study. Before their involvement, participants were provided with comprehensive information regarding the study's objectives, the utilization of their data, and their inherent rights as contributors (Anderson et al., 2020). This ensured transparency and allowed participants to make an informed decision about their participation. The study was conducted in full adherence to ethical guidelines and principles, as expounded in the work of Saunders et al. (2016). These ethical considerations

were not just a procedural formality but a commitment to maintaining the highest ethical standards in every aspect of the research endeavour.

### **Results and Discussion**

We looked at some of the respondents' social (education), demographic (age, marital status, household size) and economic (occupation, earnings) features. The descriptive analysis is very vital as it assist in having a grasp of the socio-economic and demographic dissimilarities in status of the women in the treatment group as well as those in the control group.

The age groups are categorized as "18-24," "25-34," "35-44," "45-54," and "55 and Above." Out of the 104 respondents, 7.7% fell into the "18-24" age group, 25% were in the "25-34" age group, 29.8% were "35-44" years old, 16.3% were in the "45-54" age group, and 21.2% were "55 and Above." Notably, the study successfully attracted diverse range of age of respondents which enhances the generalizability of the study's findings. The age distribution aligns with our objective of comprehensively understanding the effect of SPRP on consumer buying behaviour, as consumer preferences and behaviours can vary significantly with age (Anderson et al., 2020). On the other hand, information about the gender distribution of the respondents shows that 65.6% of the respondents are identified as male, about 34.4% are identified as female. There is a little gender imbalance in the respondents that could influence the research findings, as consumer preferences and behaviours are known to differ based on gender (Bell et al., 2019). However, the study's findings could not be said to be more representative of male consumer perspectives and behaviours in response to advertising campaigns. Irrespective of the gender inequality, the finding still offers valuable insights into the impact of SPRP on consumer buying behaviour.

**Table 2:** Demographic and Socio-economic Distribution of Respondents

Age of Respondents					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Valid	18-24	62	7.7	7.7	7.7
	25-34	200	25	25	32.7
	35-44	238	29.8	29.8	62.5
	45-54	130	16.3	16.3	78.8
	55 and Above	170	21.2	21.2	100
	Total	800	100	100	
Gender of Respondents					
	Male	525	65.6	65.6	65.6
	Female	275	34.4	34.4	100
	Total	800	100	100	
Educational Background of Respondents					
Valid	None	132	16.5	16.5	16.5
	Primary	232	29	29	45.5
	Secondary	295	36.9	36.9	82.4
	Tertiary	76	9.5	9.5	91.9
	Others	65	8.1	8.1	100
	Total	800	100	100	
Employment Status:					
Valid	Employed	325	40.6	40.6	40.6
	Self-employed	212	26.5	26.5	67.1
	Unemployed	134	16.7	16.7	83.8
	Student	67	8.4	8.4	92.2
	Others	62	7.8	7.8	100
	Total	800	100	100	

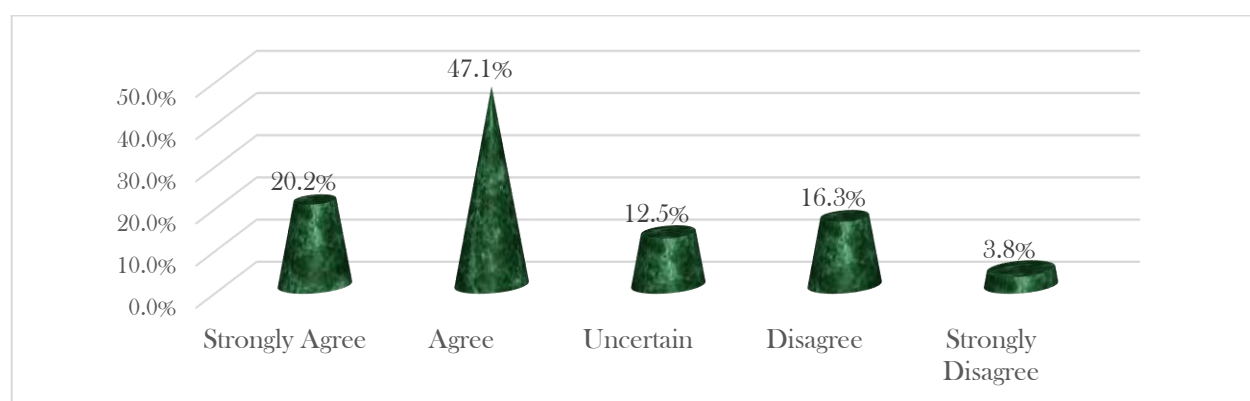
**Source:** Authors' computations

The findings of this study also suggest that while 83.5% of the respondents are literate, only about 16.5% are illiterate sample is primarily composed of individuals with advanced educational qualifications. This reflects a well-educated sample, which can be advantageous as educated individuals may have a more nuanced understanding of SPRP. Also, the findings indicate that a significant portion of the respondents about 68% were part of the workforce at the time of the survey while 8.4% are students, 16.7% unemployed and another 7.8% respondents whose employment status are not known with certainty. Understanding the employment status of respondents is crucial when interpreting the study's findings, as it can influence consumer behaviour and responses to SPRP (Pettigrew et al, 2017; Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). For instance, employed individuals may have different spending patterns compared to unemployed respondents.

### Data Analysis and Answers to Research Questions

#### Do community relations practice significantly influence consumers' choice of products and buying behaviour

Analysis Figure 2 provides an overview of respondents' perceptions regarding the influence of community relations practices on consumer buying behavior. While majority of respondents either "Agree" (47.1%) or "Strongly Agree" (20.2%) that strategic PR practices that targets the benefit of the community influence consumers' choice of products, about 20.1% (16.3 disagreed and 3.8 strongly disagreed) are not in support with the proposition about 12.5% were undecided.



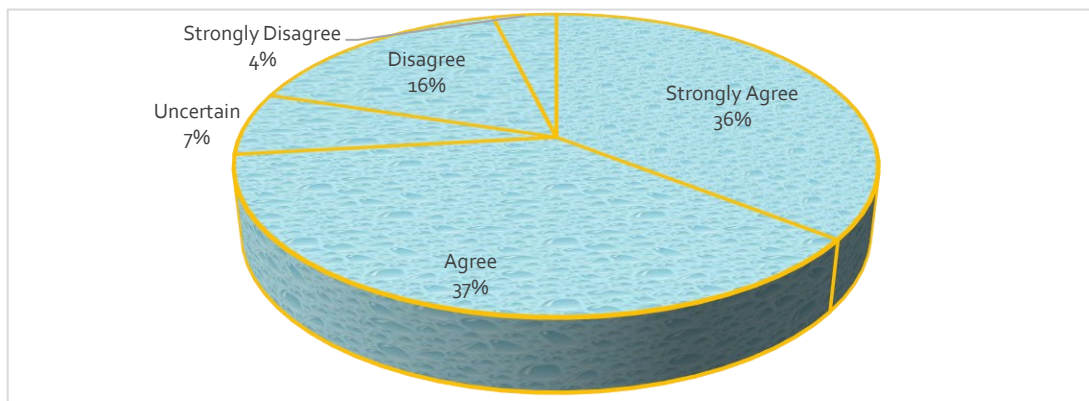
**Figure 2:** Community Relations Practice and Consumers' Buying Behaviour

**Source:** Authors Computation

This result aligns with existing literatures Nwanmuoh et al (2024), Uduji (2012) and others that highlights the effectiveness of community relations practices as strategic PR practices that drives consumer purchasing behaviour.

#### Do Customer Relations Practice Significantly Influence Consumers' Choice of Products and Buying Behaviour

Analysis (Figure 3) presents the responses on impact of customer relations practices on consumers' buying behaviour. The results indicate that a significant proportion of respondents about 73% agreed (strongly agree - 35.6%) and agree - 37.5%) that customer relations practice has significant impact on consumer buying behaviour.

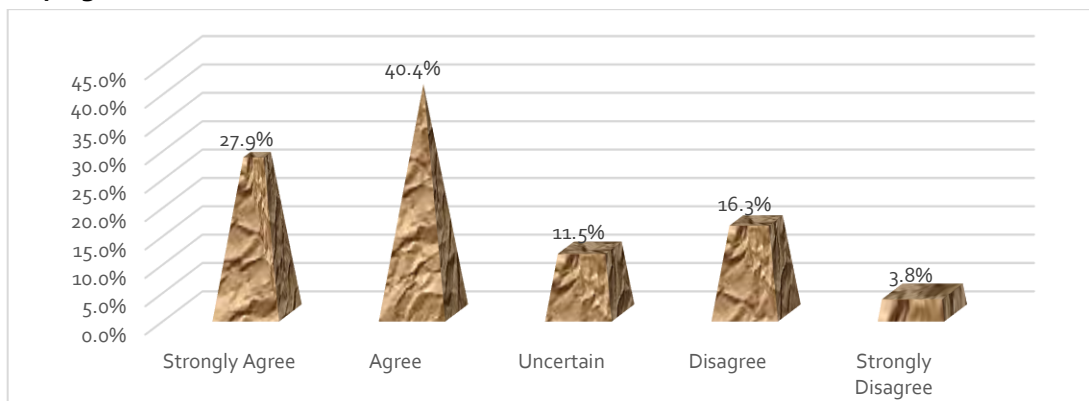


**Figure 3:** Customer Relations Practice and Consumers' Buying Behaviour

**Source:** Authors Computation

This finding reinforces the position of Uduji et al (2024a, 2023) in that recognizing the diversity of consumer beliefs and attitudes SPRP should be tailored toward effective engagement of customer.

#### Do Media Relations Practice Significantly Influence Consumers' Choice of Products and Buying Behaviour



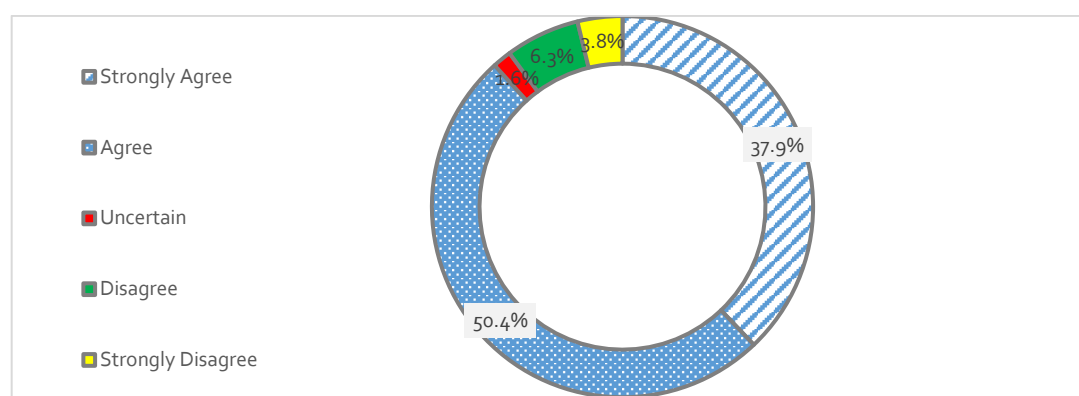
**Figure 4:** Media Relations Practice and Consumers' Buying Behaviour

**Source:** Authors' Computation

Analysis (Figure 4) presents the responses on impact of media relations practices on consumers' buying behaviour. The outcome shows that an ample portion of the respondents about 68.3% (27.9 –strongly agree, and 40.4 – agreed) agrees that media relationship practices impacts significantly on consumers' buying behaviour. The finding underscores the persuasive power of the media in expanding consumer consideration and potentially driving impulse buying (Solomon et al, 2019) businesses can leverage on their cordial relationship with the media and craft compelling promotions that resonate with the target audience (Uduji and Okolo-Obasi, 2017).

### Do Government Relations Practice Significantly Influence Consumers' Choice of Products and Buying Behaviour

Analysis (Figure 5) presents the responses on impact of media relations practices on consumers' buying behaviour. The outcome shows that an ample portion of the respondents about 88.3% (37.9 –strongly agree, and 50.4 – agreed) agrees that government relationship practices impacts significantly on consumers' buying behaviour.



**Figure 5:** Government Relations Practice and Consumers' Buying Behaviour

**Source:** Authors' Computation

The finding buttresses the findings of Haider and Shakib (2018), and Nwanmuoh et al (2024b) in that power to build or destroy customer loyalty lies in the hands of the various governments. To Ekakitie and Sado (2023) one hopeless policy from the government destroys every desire the consumers have for a brand. Hence, businesses should explore all avenue to maintain good relationship with governments (Uduji Okolo-Obasi, 2023)

The correlation estimates presented in Table 3 reveal important insights into the relationships between the variables under investigation. Notably, the focus is on how consumer buying behaviour correlates with different strategic public relations practice. First, an interesting pattern was observed as Consumer Buying Behaviour exhibits a moderate positive correlation of 0.461 with community relations practice. Also the associated p-value is statistically significant ( $p = 0.026$ ), indicating that this correlation still holds with a high level of confidence based on the current sample size.



**Table 3:** Correlation Estimates

		Consumer Buying Behaviour	Community Relations Practice (CRP1)	Customer Relations Practice (CRP2)	Media Relations Practice (MRP)	Government Relations Practice (GRP)
Pearson Correlation	Consumer Buying Behaviour	1.000	0.461	0.938	0.661	0.541
	CRP1	0.461	1.000	0.540	0.219	0.312
	CRP2	0.938	0.540	1.000	-0.146	0.241
	MRP	0.661	0.219	-0.146	1.000	0.132
	GRP	0.541	0.312	0.241	0.132	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Consumer Buying Behaviour	.	0.269	0.031	0.041	0.032
	CRP1	0.269	.	0.230	0.391	0.225
	CRP2	0.031	0.230	.	0.427	0.107
	MRP	0.041	0.391	0.427	.	0.114
	GRP	0.032	0.225	0.107	0.114	.
N	Consumer Buying Behaviour	4	4	4	4	4
	CRP1	4	4	4	4	4
	CRP2	4	4	4	4	4
	MRP	4	4	4	4	4
	GRP	4	4	4	4	4

**Source:** Author' computation

On the other hand, the correlation between consumer buying behaviour and Customer relations practice is notably stronger, standing at 0.938. This indicates a robust and highly positive relationship. Importantly, the p-value associated with this correlation is statistically significant ( $p = 0.031$ ), signifying the reliability of this relationship. Also, the correlation between Consumer Buying Behaviour and media relations practice is relatively strong with a coefficient of 0.661. This suggests another strong positive relationship which is statistically significant ( $p = 0.041$ ). Lastly, the correlation between consumer buying behaviour and government relations practice is moderately stronger as it stands at 0.541 and statistically significant with p-value of 0.032.

Generally, the findings collectively highlight the considerable impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable showcasing both community, customers, media as well as government relations practices have positive impact on consumers buying behaviour. On this regard the study while reaffirming the positions of Yadav (2022), and Ahmed and Ashfaq (2022) equal disproved that of Urgorji (2012) in that strategic public relations practices are very essential in the modern day sustainable business ventures. As opined by Jones et al (2020) and supported by this study, to effectively measure social impact, it is

expedient that businesses adopt full-bodied metrics and frameworks that bring into line with their purpose. To Kotler & Keller (2022), Uduji et al (2024) and as seen in this study, the framework involves identifying key performance indicators (KPIs) that reflect the desired outcomes and regularly assessing progress. It is the opinion of this study therefore, that in implementing strategic public relations practices, a need arises that collective power of purpose should be used to build a more equitable and sustainable Nigeria and Africa, where businesses are not simply profit centres but catalysts for positive change.

Similarly, the findings of this study point out that businesses in Sub-Saharan African are presented a unique opportunity in the place of SPRP to volte-face completely the meaning of success in running of a company. As opined by Akhigbe (2024), the strategic public relations practices of firm should tow the new way of thinking that has to align in perfection with the African values of Ubuntu, which is all about caring for others and working together. This approach can transform businesses into powerful forces for good, driving economic growth while uplifting communities and improving lives.

### **Conclusion and Policy Implications**

In summary, this study contributes to our understanding of the multifaceted relationship between strategic public relations practices and consumer buying behaviour. While community, consumer, media and government relations have strong positive correlations with consumer buying behavior, the study emphasize the need for a nuanced approach to public relations, taking into account the exclusive impact of each PR practices on consumer behaviour. Businesses as a matter of fact should draw from these insights to refine their strategic PR and better connect with their target audiences.

In conclusion, the findings of this study provide valuable insights into the impact of different SPRP on consumer buying behaviour in Nigeria and Sub-Saharan Africa. Through a quantitative analysis of data collected from 800 respondents selected using multi-staged sampling technique, it became evident that community relations practice, customer relations practice, media relations practice and government relations practice have a significant positive influence on consumer buying behaviour and consumer choices. These results align with the common marketing strategies employed by businesses to stimulate purchases and foster brand loyalty. These findings have practical implications for businesses and marketers, emphasizing the importance of tailoring SPRP to the specific sectors that resonates most with their target audience. Furthermore, the study highlights the need for a nuanced approach to strategic public relations practices in the Nigerian context, where diverse consumer preferences and behaviours are at play.

This study contributes significantly to the existing body of knowledge in several key areas. Firstly, it enhances our understanding of the dynamics between SPRP and consumer behaviour in the Nigerian context. While prior research has primarily focused on Western practices, this study delves into the specific nuances of Nigeria's diverse and dynamic consumer landscape. It provides valuable insights into how strategic public relations practices impact consumer choices, shedding light on the unique factors influencing buying

behaviour in Nigeria. this has practical implications for businesses operating in Nigeria. The recommendations offered in this study provide actionable insights for business promoters to design more effective public relations strategies that resonate with Nigerian or Sub-Saharan African consumers. Such strategies have to tailor public relation practices to involve sustainability at all side to ensure that businesses are truly successful in every sense of successful business.

This study in addition highlights the need for continuity in research and development of SPRP in the Nigeria and Sub-Saharan Africa's business landscape. This is owing to the fact that both consumer behaviours and technology continues to evolve, hence, continuous monitoring and adaptation of strategic PR practices are crucial. In all the study enriches our understanding of the complex relationship between strategic public relations practices and consumer behaviour in Nigeria.

### Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/ or publication of this article.

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