

Celebrity Public Relations: Managing the Image and Reputation of David Adeleke (Davido)

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to: highlight the relevance of Public Relations (PR) in managing the image and reputation of public figures, using famous Afrobeats musician, David Adeleke (Davido), as a case study. The study used the Image Restoration and Agenda Setting theories for its theoretical framework. It utilised a mixed-method approach and purposive sampling technique, to content analyse 714 social media posts from Davido's handles on X, Instagram, and Facebook, and conducted 3 focus group discussions with 15 of Davido's fans. The findings revealed that Davido's PR strategies include consistent audience engagement, philanthropy, and brand collaborations, which have been effective in maintaining a positive public image. However, challenges such as the spread of misinformation, negative media coverage, and public scrutiny on social media platforms remain significant obstacles. The study concluded that PR is a vital tool for public figures in navigating the complex media landscape for maintaining their public personas. The study, therefore, recommended, among other things, that, effective PR strategies, when complemented with proactive crisis management and transparent communication, can enhance a celebrity's image and reputation; public figures like Davido should leverage social media analytics to anticipate potential crises and invest in professional PR teams for sustained image management. This research contributes to the body of knowledge on celebrity PR by providing a detailed analysis of social media's role in shaping public perceptions, and recommending best practices for managing celebrities' reputation in the digital age.

Keywords: Public relations, Celebrity PR, Image, Reputation, Davido

INTRODUCTION

The rise of celebrity culture has profoundly shaped the dynamics of media, public perception, and societal values. Celebrities are cultural icons and influential figures whose public personas often dictate trends, shape opinions, and mobilise social actions. Public relations (PR) plays an integral role in crafting, maintaining, and managing the images and reputations of these public figures, creating a bridge between celebrities and their audiences. Celebrity PR hinges on reputation management and strategically curating personas to align public perceptions with desired narratives (Wilcox et al., 2015). PR extends beyond traditional media relations to encompass a variety of strategies aimed at cultivating and maintaining the visibility and relevance of public figures. Ziek (2016) identifies Celebrity PR as a specialised area within the broader field of public relations, emphasising its role in positioning celebrities as cultural intermediaries. This approach enables celebrities to transcend their primary professional domains to influence the cultural, political, and economic spheres.

Public relations, as articulated by Langham (2018), is a proactive and reactive discipline that seeks to mitigate risks, amplify achievements, and foster connections between celebrities and their stakeholders. The strategic crafting of celebrity personas, as explored by Colapinto and Benecchi (2014), involves leveraging both traditional and digital media to present coherent and relatable narratives. These efforts are underpinned by principles of authenticity and credibility, which are essential for fostering trust and loyalty among fans and audiences.

In Africa, particularly in Nigeria, celebrities serve as powerful cultural symbols whose influence extends beyond entertainment to economic and political arenas. According to Okorie (2023), the media landscape in Africa amplifies the power of celebrities, positioning them as agents of cultural representation and social change. Celebrities like David Adeleke, the famous Afrobeats musician who goes by the stage name, Davido, exemplify this phenomenon, leveraging their platforms to advocate for causes, inspire social movements, and shape public discourse.

The intersection of celebrity culture and public relations in Nigeria is further explored by Odionye et al. (2021), who highlight the influence of celebrity endorsements on consumer behaviour. The integration of celebrity personas with brand identities not only enhances marketability but also reinforces the cultural significance of celebrities.

The advent of social media has revolutionised the practice of celebrity PR, offering direct channels for interaction between celebrities and their audiences. Platforms like X, Instagram, and TikTok enable celebrities to communicate unfiltered messages, engage with fans, and manage their reputations in real time. Ciszek (2020) emphasises the importance of social media as a tool for image management, allowing celebrities to navigate crises and maintain visibility.

However, the management of celebrity reputation is fraught with challenges, including gender dynamics and ethical dilemmas. Arthurs (2013) explores the gendered dimensions of reputation management, noting that societal expectations often impose additional scrutiny on female celebrities. While the focus of this study is on a male celebrity, Davido, understanding these dynamics is essential for a comprehensive analysis of celebrity PR practices. Ethical considerations also play a critical role in celebrity PR, particularly in the management of controversies and crises. Maiorescu (2017) highlights the significance of authenticity and accountability in repairing tarnished reputations.

The management of celebrity images and reputations is a complex and dynamic process that integrates theoretical insights with practical applications. Therefore, this study focuses on the role of PR in managing the image and reputation of Davido, a renowned Nigerian artiste and one of Africa's leading celebrities. This is because the case of Davido offers a compelling example of how public relations strategies shape the narratives, influence, and impact of public figures. By examining the interplay between celebrity culture, media dynamics, and societal values, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of PR in managing the image and reputation of celebrities within the Nigerian and African contexts.

Statement of the Problem

The rise of celebrity culture in Nigeria and globally has shifted the dynamics of public relations and media influence, making celebrity management a crucial aspect of reputation and image control. Celebrities, as public figures, command significant social influence, shaping public opinion, consumer behaviour, and even political affiliations (Okorie, 2023). However, the increasing visibility of celebrities, particularly through digital and social media, has intensified the challenges associated with managing their public images. Issues such as scandals, advocacy missteps, and controversies have often marred the reputations of these individuals, raising questions about the effectiveness of public relations strategies in this unique context (Colapinto & Benecchi, 2014; Ciszek, 2020).

In Nigeria, the entertainment industry has witnessed significant growth, with celebrities Davido becoming household names, not just for their artistry but also for their social and cultural impact. Davido's persona, for instance, extends beyond his music career into philanthropy, activism, and brand endorsements, making him a multifaceted public figure. Managing such a diverse public image is complex and demands strategic approaches to ensure consistency, authenticity, and resilience against potential reputational crises (Odionye et al., 2021). Despite his positive contributions to social causes and popular culture, Davido has not been immune to controversies that challenge his public image, including personal scandals and criticism of his advocacy roles. These incidents underscore the necessity of understanding the nuanced application of public relations in celebrity management.

The problem, therefore, lies in the limited exploration of culturally specific public relations approaches that address the dynamic and multifaceted nature of celebrity management in Nigeria. By examining Davido's case, this study aims to contribute to the discourse on the evolving role of public relations in navigating the complexities of celebrity image and reputation in a highly digitalised and culturally rich environment. This analysis is critical for developing strategies that not only enhance public perception but also ensure long-term sustainability of celebrity brands amidst constant scrutiny and changing public expectations (Ziek, 2016; Langham, 2018).

Research Questions

The study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. How relevant is public relations as a tool for managing the image and reputation of public figures like Davido?
2. What public relations strategies does Davido's team employ to manage his image and reputation?
3. How effective are these strategies in maintaining a positive public image for Davido?
4. What challenges does Davido's team face in managing his image and reputation?
5. How does social media shape Davido's public image and reputation?

Profile of David Adeleke (Davido)

David Adedeji Adeleke, popularly known as Davido, is a Nigerian singer, songwriter, and record producer who has made a huge mark on the global music industry. Davido holds dual Nigerian-American citizenship because he was born in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Despite his American citizenship, Davido, who was born on November 21, 1992 has deep Nigerian roots which he celebrates in his chosen music genre, Afrobeats. His father, Adedeji Adeleke, is a business magnate and philanthropist, and his late mother, Veronica Adeleke, was a university lecturer.

Davido's foray into music began in 2011 when he released his debut single, "Back When," featuring Naeto C. However, it was his breakout single, "Dami Duro," that catapulted him to fame. The track, released in 2012, became an anthem across Nigeria and earned him widespread recognition. That same year, he released his debut studio album, "Omo Baba Olowo" (OBO), which solidified his status as a force in the Afrobeats genre and earned him the nickname, OBO.

Davido's music is a fusion of Afrobeat, Afropop, and global contemporary sounds. His ability to blend traditional African rhythms with modern beats has earned him international acclaim. Over the years, he has released numerous chart-topping singles, including "If," "Fall," and "FIA." "Fall," in particular, became one of the longest-charting Nigerian pop songs in the USA and the UK.

In 2019, Davido released his second studio album, "A Good Time," which featured collaborations with global stars such as Chris Brown, Popcaan, and Summer Walker. The album's success marked a significant milestone in the globalisation of Afrobeats. His third album, "A Better Time" (2020), further showcased his international appeal, featuring artists like Nicki Minaj, Lil Baby, and Nas.

Davido is one of the most decorated artists in Africa, with numerous awards to his name, including BET Awards, MTV Africa Music Awards, and AFRIMA Awards. His music has transcended borders, earning him collaborations with international artists and performances at major events like the Wireless Festival, BET Awards, the Africa Cup of Nations, and the FIFA World Cup.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Public Relations and Image Management

Public Relations (PR) plays a significant role in shaping and managing the public perception of organisations, individuals, or brands. Central to PR is image management, which is the process of cultivating, shaping, and

maintaining a favorable image in the eyes of the public. In an era of heightened media attention and rapidly shifting public sentiments, managing an organisation's image has become increasingly complex and essential. Image management is not only about promoting a positive image but also involves controlling and mitigating any negative perceptions that might arise. It is crucial because the public image of an organisation directly impacts its reputation, customer loyalty, stakeholder relationships, and ultimately, its financial success.

Public Relations professionals are responsible for creating and maintaining this positive image through strategic communication efforts, utilising media relations, crisis management, social media engagement, and brand identity strategies. Scholars such as L'Etang (2016) argue that PR practitioners help shape public perceptions by crafting narratives that align with the organisation's values and objectives. Through careful message crafting, PR professionals ensure consistency across all communication channels, which is critical for fostering public trust. According to Kruckeberg and Starck (2015), the role of PR is increasingly important because public perception can be fickle, and organisations must continuously work to maintain their image in the face of evolving societal attitudes and media landscapes.

One of the most effective methods of managing an organisation's image is through media relations. The media serve as powerful tools for shaping public perception, and PR professionals often rely on journalists and media outlets to disseminate favorable news about their organisation. Positive media coverage can significantly enhance an organisation's image, while negative press can lead to a loss of public trust and credibility. In this context, managing media relations becomes a critical component of image management. By maintaining good relationships with journalists and ensuring that media coverage remains consistent with organisational goals, PR professionals can foster a positive image for their clients (Fawkes, 2015). However, it is important to note that media relations are a double-edged sword; negative media coverage, whether through investigative reporting or public scandals, can harm an organisation's reputation, requiring PR professionals to engage in damage control.

The foregoing concerns extend to the management of the image and reputation of public personalities like celebrities. And in this digital age where the dissemination of information is usually instantaneous across multiple channels with potential global reach, the PR professionals tasked with the responsibility of managing the image of important personalities and organisations need to monitor both the traditional and new media ceaselessly for mentions and stories about their principals in order to amplify the good and rebut the bad without delay to afford lasting damage (Ohaja, 2011).

Empirical Review

Maiorescu (2017) did a study on how celebrities navigate crises and scandals through public relations efforts targeted at their followers and the wider public. The study focused on communications on Twitter after Hollywood A-list actor, Johnny Depp, was accused of domestic violence. The study examined Johnny Depp's communication practices in the 15 years prior to the accusations and ran Chi-Square tests on users' responses on Twitter to the accusations. The study found that long-time followers of Depp had perceptions of his values which affected how they attributed responsibility to him on those allegations. The study concluded that those whose culture aligned with Depp's values tended to absolve him and vice versa. This buttresses the importance of online visibility, meaningful communication with one's followers and transparency so that in a time of crisis, many people who know the celebrity can show support.

A study carried out by Ateke et al. (2021) provides valuable empirical insights into the impact of celebrity endorsements on brand image, particularly in the fast food sector. The aim of the study was to determine how celebrity endorsements influence various facets of brand image, including brand awareness and brand personality, and to explore the strength of these relationships. The researchers employed the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation (ρ) using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyse the data collected through a questionnaire administered to 418 customers of fast food outlets in Port Harcourt. The findings of the study suggested that celebrity endorsement plays a significant role in shaping brand image, with notable differences in how it impacts various brand image metrics.

The study's results indicated a strong and positive correlation between celebrity endorsement and brand awareness, suggesting that celebrity endorsements can effectively enhance a brand's visibility and recognition

among consumers. This outcome aligns with existing literature on celebrity endorsement, such as Liao et al. (2017), which emphasises the influence of celebrities in making products or services more recognisable and attractive to potential consumers. Celebrity endorsement has long been regarded as an effective tool for increasing brand visibility, as celebrities often possess a broad reach and credibility that brands can leverage to capture the attention of target audiences.

The findings, however, revealed a moderate correlation between celebrity endorsement and brand personality, suggesting that while celebrity endorsements have some influence on how consumers perceive a brand's personality, the effect is less pronounced compared to brand awareness. Brand personality refers to the human characteristics attributed to a brand, such as sincerity, excitement, or sophistication, and plays a crucial role in shaping consumer loyalty and brand preference. The moderate relationship found in the study could be attributed to the complex nature of brand personality, which is influenced by various factors beyond celebrity endorsement, such as brand values, product quality, and customer service. However, the study underscores that a celebrity's image and characteristics can still contribute to shaping the overall perception of a brand, especially when the celebrity's values align with the brand's identity. The study concluded that celebrity endorsement is a crucial communication strategy for building a strong brand image. The researchers advised marketers to carefully consider the fit between the celebrity and the brand to maximise the benefits of endorsement.

Another study, Jemisenia et al. (2019), provides valuable insights into the effects of celebrity PR, particularly through social media, on body image and self-esteem among young women in Nigeria. The study explored the relationship between local female celebrity Instagram images and how they influence on body satisfaction and self-esteem, providing an understanding of the impact of celebrity images in a non-Western context. The researchers utilised an experimental method to investigate how different types of celebrity images—specifically thin-ideal, plump-ideal, and neutral—affected young Nigerian women's body satisfaction and self-esteem.

The results revealed a significant correlation between the types of images viewed and the participants' psychological responses. The women who viewed thin-ideal images reported the highest levels of body satisfaction and self-esteem, whereas those who viewed plump-ideal images reported the lowest satisfaction and self-esteem levels. Interestingly, neutral images had a less significant effect on the participants' body satisfaction and self-esteem than the thin and plump ideals. This finding underscores the power of media representations in shaping women's perceptions of themselves and their bodies.

The study's findings have crucial implications for understanding the role of celebrity PR in shaping self-perception, particularly as the celebrity culture on platforms like Instagram increasingly influences global and local perceptions of beauty.

This study serves as an important empirical contribution to the growing body of research on celebrity PR, body image, and self-esteem in the digital age. It demonstrates the powerful influence that celebrity images, disseminated through platforms like Instagram, can have on young women's psychological well-being. The findings suggest that celebrity PR, particularly in the form of carefully curated social media content, plays a significant role in constructing and reinforcing beauty ideals, which can have both positive and negative consequences for individuals' self-perception. This study highlights the impact of celebrity social media images on body satisfaction but does not address how celebrities use social media to manage their overall image and reputation. The gap lies in understanding the strategic use of social media for broader public relations purposes.

The present study fills this gap by examining Davido's active social media presence to illustrate how celebrities engage audiences, counter controversies, and maintain relevance through curated digital narratives.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Image Restoration and Agenda Setting theories. The Image Restoration Theory, developed by Benoit (1995), provides a conceptual framework for understanding how individuals or

organisations respond to crises that threaten their public image. Benoit's theory is centered around the notion that when a person's reputation is damaged, they must employ strategies to restore their image. This theory is particularly relevant to celebrity public relations because celebrities often find themselves in situations where their image is under scrutiny due to scandals, controversies, or missteps. Benoit's framework outlines several strategies for image repair, including denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification (Benoit, 1995). For instance, if a celebrity like Davido faces a backlash over a controversial statement or behaviour, he might deny the accusation (denial), shift the blame to external factors (evasion of responsibility), minimise the harm caused by reshaping perceptions of what they said (reducing offensiveness), take steps to rectify the situation like doing something good (corrective action), or apologise publicly (mortification).

On its part, the Agenda-Setting Theory, proposed by McCombs and Shaw (1972), provides a complementary perspective to Image Restoration Theory by explaining how media coverage influences public perception. Agenda-setting theory posits that the media play a critical role in determining which issues and individuals are given prominence, and this attention shapes public discourse and perceptions of salience. In the context of celebrity public relations, Agenda-Setting Theory is particularly relevant because media outlets are often the primary channel through which a celebrity's image is crafted and disseminated. By controlling the narrative in the media, a celebrity's public relations team can influence what the public focuses on and how it perceives the celebrity.

In the case of a celebrity like Davido, his public relations team might work to set the agenda by directing media attention to his charitable activities, music achievements, or family life, while downplaying any negative or controversial aspects of his public image. This strategy can be used to shape how the public perceives Davido, focusing their attention on positive attributes and accomplishments, rather than on scandals or criticisms.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed mixed methods design, comprising content analysis and focus group discussions, to achieve the study's objectives. Drawing inspiration from Ohaja (2003), the researchers hold that topics related to media coverage across diverse issues necessitate the application of content analysis for thorough evaluation and interpretation. According to Ohaja (2003), content analysis is a research method that facilitates both quantitative and qualitative description of manifest communication content in an objective manner.

Focus group discussions (FGD), on the other hand, involve organised conversations with small group of people to gather information, perspectives and opinions on a certain topic. FGD is a research method that allows participants to share their thoughts, attitudes and experiences in an organised and interactive setting.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was employed to select both the digital platforms and participants for the focus group discussion to ensure relevance and depth in the study. The platforms analysed were Davido's official social media pages on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and Instagram, chosen because they serve as primary channels for showcasing his public relations strategies and their impact on his image and reputation. For the focus group discussions, participants were selected based on their active engagement with Davido's social media content and their familiarity with celebrity culture. This group was purposefully chosen to provide diverse, firsthand insights into audience perceptions of Davido's image management and the effectiveness of his public relations efforts across these platforms.

On the whole, 714 of posts on Davido's social media pages were content analysed and three FGDs of five participants each were held.

Data Presentation and Analysis

As a preamble, this research utilised selected media platforms and online content as a yardstick to analyse the public relations strategies employed by Davido in managing his image and reputation. The findings are presented below in alignment with the research questions:

Research Question One: How relevant is public relations as a tool for managing the image and reputation of public figures like Davido?

Table 1: Relevance of Public Relations

Social Media Platform	Promoting Positive Image	Crisis Management	Building Brand Loyalty	Total	Percentage
Facebook	49(9.42%)	15 (2.88%)	72 (13.85%)	136	26.15%
X	37 (7.12%)	40 (7.69%)	69 (13.27%)	146	28.08%
Instagram	60 (11.54%)	53 (10.19%)	125 (24.04%)	238	45.77%
Total	146 (28.08%)	108 (20.77%)	266 (51.15%)	520	100%

The table highlights the effectiveness of public relations strategies on Davido's image and reputation across three primary categories—Promoting Positive Image, Crisis Management, and Building Brand Loyalty—on three social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter (X), and Instagram.

This result shows Instagram's crucial role in maintaining a positive public image, managing crises, and building brand loyalty, while X and Facebook also contribute but in relatively smaller measures. Public relations through social media emerges as a potent tool for public figures like Davido in shaping their reputation and managing their public image across different domains.

Research Question Two: What public relations strategies does Davido's team employ to manage his image and reputation?

Table 2: Public Relations Strategies

Social Media Platform	Media Appearances	Philanthropic Activities	Social Media Engagement	Endorsements and Partnerships	Total	Percentage
Facebook	68	21	20	19	128	26.06%
X	80	9	33	21	143	29.04%
Instagram	120	15	51	34	220	44.90%
Total	268	45	104	74	491	100%

The table above presents an evaluation of the public relations (PR) strategies employed by Davido to manage his image and reputation across various social media platforms. The data was categorised into four key strategies: media appearances, philanthropic activities, social media engagement, and endorsements and partnerships. The table further breaks down the total contributions of each strategy across the three major social media platforms: Facebook, X, and Instagram, providing a comprehensive overview of their roles in shaping Davido's public persona.

Overall, the data suggest that Davido's PR strategies are well-distributed across social media platforms, with a notable emphasis on media appearances, which serve as the cornerstone of his brand-building efforts. Instagram emerges as the primary platform for managing his image, with X playing a critical role in engagement and real-time crisis management. While philanthropic activities are not as heavily emphasised on these platforms, they remain an important part of his public relations efforts, reinforcing his image as a socially responsible and influential figure in the entertainment industry.

Research Question Three: How effective are these strategies in maintaining a positive public image for Davido?

Three focus group discussions of 5 participants each were organised to answer this research question. The aim was to evaluate the effectiveness of public relations strategies adopted by Davido as identified in answer to Research Question Two. Participants discussed the resonance of these strategies using three categories: Strong Positive Impact, Mixed Results, and Limited Effectiveness, each one illustrated by events in Davido's career.

These categories were derived from audience reactions, dominant comments, and engagement metrics such as likes, shares, and criticisms across social media platforms studied.

On Davido's media appearances, for example, participants highlighted several instances where they garnered overwhelmingly positive feedback. His performance at the BET Awards and interviews on platforms like CNN's "African Voices" were mentioned as notable successes. These appearances resonated with audiences because they showcased his achievements, personality, and global recognition.

On his philanthropy, one of the most celebrated instances was his decision to donate over ₦200 million raised from his birthday crowdfunding campaign to orphanages across Nigeria, adding ₦50 million from his own purse.

Similarly, Davido's social media presence is one of the most dynamic elements of his public relations strategy. With millions of followers across platforms, his posts receive widespread attention, making social media a vital tool for maintaining his public image. The most notable instance where social media did wonders for Davido was his heartfelt announcement of his 2024 marriage to Chef Chioma, which he titled "Chivido."



Figure 1: Davdo and Chioma during the buildup to their wedding

(Source: Davido's Instagram page)

This event captured widespread attention and was celebrated as a testament to love and commitment, especially given the ups and downs of the couple's relationships over the years and Davido's reported affairs with other ladies. Posts showcasing their wedding preparations, intimate moments, and expressions of gratitude to fans elicited an overwhelmingly positive response. One participant noted that, "The Chivido story humanised Davido and made him even more relatable as a family man." This level of emotional connection, combined with high engagement metrics—millions of likes, shares, and congratulatory comments—solidified the event as having a strong positive impact on his public image.

Furthermore, participants unanimously agreed that Davido's partnerships with major global brands, such as his endorsement deals with Nike, Puma, and Pepsi, were highly successful. These collaborations, they maintained, aligned seamlessly with his image as a global music icon and trendsetter.

Research Question 4: What challenges does Davido's team face in managing his image and reputation?

This research question was also answered via focus group discussions. The goal in this case was to explore the challenges Davido encounters in managing his image and reputation. The participants provided diverse perspectives, drawing from personal observations and real-life scenarios. Their responses were analysed and thematically categorised to highlight the recurring patterns and key issues, namely, Personal Controversies, Negative Media Coverage, Online Trolls and Criticism, and Competitive Industry Pressures.

Participants cited publicized family feuds and rumours about Davido's relationships as some of the personal controversies that attract significant media and public attention. While some participants argued that such scrutiny is inevitable for a celebrity of Davido's stature, others felt that the extensive focus on his personal affairs detracts from his contributions to the music industry. One participant noted that "fans sometimes prioritise his lifestyle over his artistry,"

With respect to online trolls and criticism, one participant explained that, "The internet is brutal, and even Davido's positive actions are sometimes met with skepticism or outright negativity." The participants acknowledged that while Davido occasionally responds to trolls, such interactions sometimes escalate the situation and attract further criticism. The group suggested that ignoring such negativity or using humour to diffuse tension would be best.

The participants also mentioned competitive industry pressures in the form of constant demands for new music from Davido, constantly comparing him to other artistes and warning that some upcoming artistes have it about to overtake him.

Research Question 5: What role does social media play in shaping Davido's public image and reputation?

For the research question 5, the focus group discussions also provided answers. The participants reflected on the multifaceted nature of social media, providing examples from Davido's public engagements and media narratives. Their contributions were systematically analysed and thematically organised to capture the key roles of social media as Amplifying Positive Stories and Escalating Negative Perceptions. Social media were also said to provide opportunities for Real-Time Fan Interaction as well as Virality and Influence.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study underscore the critical role of public relations in managing the image and reputation of public figures. For Davido, the strategic use of social media platforms like Facebook, X and Instagram has proven highly effective in promoting a positive image, managing crises, and building brand loyalty.

Davido's strategic use of social media exemplifies the trend Ohaja (2011) highlighted as a sine qua non for PR practice in the digital age, which is constant vigilance and visibility. Through curated posts, timely responses to public discourse, and consistent engagement with followers, Davido reinforces his brand identity while managing potential reputational risks. This aligns with the findings of Colapinto and Benecchi (2014), who argue that social media serve as platforms for both self-presentation and reputation repair. In Davido's case, his PR team's handling of controversies demonstrates the application of Image Restoration Theory, which prioritises transparency and proactive measures to rebuild public trust.

These efforts on social media are complemented with media appearances, philanthropic activities, and endorsements. For instance, Davido's involvement in philanthropic activities and his support for the #EndSARS movement underscore his perception as a socially conscious figure.

Furthermore, Davido's endorsements and collaborations with global brands amplify his status as an ambassador of African excellence.

However, challenges such as personal controversies, negative media coverage, and competitive pressures highlight the complexities of reputation management in the digital age. By adopting a more integrated and

innovative PR strategy, Davido can further enhance his public image and solidify his status as a leading figure in the music industry.

CONCLUSION

Evidence from the findings of this study makes it possible to conclude that social media, particularly platforms like Instagram, play a crucial role in shaping and managing the public image of public figures. The use of image restoration strategies, especially through visual content, was found to be effective in restoring and maintaining positive perceptions, particularly during times of crisis. Overall, the study concludes that effective public relations strategies, especially in the digital age, require a comprehensive understanding of audience expectations, timely responses, and the strategic use of social media content to maintain a favorable public image.

This study contributes to the broader understanding of PR dynamics in contemporary celebrity culture, aligning with existing literature and providing practical insights for public figures navigating the complexities of reputation management in the digital age.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study the researchers recommends as follows:

1. Celebrities should consistently communicate transparently with their audience to build trust and foster long-term relationships. This includes maintaining a clear, authentic message across all platforms to strengthen credibility and engagement.
2. Celebrities should leverage social media platforms like Instagram to increase engagement and enhance their image. Investing in high-quality visual content that aligns with the values and expectations of their target audience is key to maintaining appeal and relevance.
3. Anticipating reputational risks and preparing responses based on the Image Restoration Theory is essential. Public figures should address controversies swiftly and effectively to mitigate potential damage to their image. Engaging with professional PR experts will help navigate challenges like trolling and negative media coverage.
4. Celebrities should integrate community engagement initiatives and partnerships into their PR strategies. These activities, along with effective agenda-setting, can help position them as socially responsible and relatable figures.
5. Continuous research into audience preferences and expectations is necessary for tailoring PR strategies. By staying attuned to evolving trends, celebrities can adapt their approaches to maintain relevance, foster positive perceptions, and build a resilient brand over time.

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