www.ijarp.com ISSN 2456-9992 Page: 01-16

International Journal Advanced Research Publications

Research Article

Volume: 02
Issue: 10

GOVERNMENT PRESS SECRETARIES AND REPUTATION MANAGEMENT IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA

***Ibe E. Onyegbule, Godwin B. Okon, Harcourt-Whyte Dike, Itieke-Idamieba Harry**

Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Article Received: 20 September 2026, Article Revised: 10 October 2026, Published on: 30 October 2026

***Corresponding Author: Ibe E. Onyegbule**

Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Doi: https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijarp.9589

ABSTRACT

The contemporary media environment has transformed government communication from a largely centralised process into a complex and continuously contested communicative activity. Government press secretaries are consequently required not only to source and disseminate official information but also to employ strategic communication techniques and respond to misinformation, hostile media narratives, public backlash and institutional constraints that may affect government reputation. This study examines the role of government press secretaries in reputation management in selected South-South Nigerian states, focusing specifically on how they source and disseminate government information, techniques employed in managing government representations across media forms, and the challenges encountered in their day-to-day reputation management activities. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and was anchored on Image Restoration Theory and Reputation Management Theory. The population comprised 122 press secretaries attached to governors, deputy governors and commissioners in Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Delta States. Findings show that press secretaries obtain government information predominantly through official memos, briefings, directives and government documents, while dissemination occurs through press releases, interviews, social media and other formal communication channels. The findings further reveal that clear and audience-tailored messaging, visual communication, media training, regular updates and feedback engagement constitute important reputation management techniques. However, misinformation and fake news, limited resources, the tension between transparency and confidentiality, rapidly

changing media environments, public backlash and negative media coverage constitute major challenges. The study concludes that effective government reputation management requires accurate and timely information sourcing, ethically grounded strategic communication, continuous feedback and adequate institutional and technological support. It recommends clearer information-verification procedures, integrated traditional-digital communication strategies, professional capacity development, stronger fact-checking mechanisms and greater strategic autonomy for press secretaries.

KEYWORDS: Government Reputation, Press Secretary, Rreputation Management, Government Communication, South-South Nigeria, Media Relations, Misinformation.

INTRODUCTION

Government communication has traditionally relied on institutional structures through which official information is generated, verified and disseminated to the public. The emergence of a highly diversified media environment, however, has transformed this process. Information now circulates through multiple channels and actors, making government communication more immediate but also more fragmented. It is observed that citizens, journalists, bloggers, influencers and politicians increasingly participate in constructing public narratives about government actions, thereby reducing the centralised authority previously enjoyed by official government communication channels.

This development has important implications for government reputation. Reputation represents the accumulated perception of an organisation or institution among its publics, while reputation management involves deliberate communication and organisational practices intended to create, maintain or restore favourable perceptions. The role of the government press secretary is therefore particularly significant because the office represents an institutional communication bridge between government and the public.

The importance of strategic government communication is reinforced by Akpan and Obukoadata (2009), whose study of public relations and environmental crisis management in the Niger Delta recognised the importance of public relations in crisis management and institution-public relationships. Their work is particularly relevant to this study because both are situated within the Niger Delta/South-South environment and concern communication strategies for managing relationships between institutions and their publics.

Reputation management has become even more important as governments face misinformation, disinformation, negative media narratives and rapid public reactions. Albert

(2020), demonstrates the importance of public relations in building and maintaining organisational reputation and highlights the strategic role of communication in shaping public perceptions.

Similarly, Pikolomzi and Bongani (2020) demonstrate the importance of media representation, community perceptions, stakeholder participation, openness, accountability and collaborative media relations in government reputation management.

Adeyemi, Eke and Asak (2025), working within the Nigerian context, demonstrate the importance of proactive government communication, openness, prompt information sharing and stakeholder participation in crisis situations.

Against this background, this article focuses on three specific dimensions of government reputation management: information sourcing and dissemination; techniques for managing government representations; and the challenges encountered by press secretaries.

Statement of the Problem

The expansion of digital communication has created an environment in which government information is no longer transmitted exclusively through established institutional and journalistic gatekeepers. Information can be produced, shared, interpreted and challenged almost instantaneously. The paper observes that this development has democratised communication while simultaneously producing a fragmented media ecosystem in which competing actors construct narratives about governance.

For press secretaries, the implications are significant. Their conventional responsibility of preparing and releasing official information now exists alongside the need to monitor public reactions, respond to misinformation, manage crises, maintain message consistency and protect government credibility. The challenge becomes even more pronounced where negative or inaccurate narratives circulate more rapidly than official corrections.

The problem is not simply the availability of communication channels. It also concerns the quality, timing, credibility and strategic presentation of government information. A poorly framed message may create misunderstanding; a delayed response may permit misinformation to become established; excessive political framing may weaken credibility; and insufficient resources may limit the ability of a press office to engage effectively across multiple platforms.

Although reputation management has received scholarly attention, the paper identifies comparatively limited attention to the specific ways government press secretaries navigate a multi-platform communication environment in their efforts to manage government

reputation. This article therefore focuses on the operational realities of government press secretaries in selected South-South Nigerian states.

Objectives of the Study

The article objectives are specifically:

1. To find out how press secretaries source and disseminate government information.
2. To examine the techniques often adopted by press secretaries in the management of government representations on various media forms.
3. To find out the challenges press secretaries often encounter in their day-to-day management of government reputation.

Research questions

The study is guided by the corresponding research questions:

1. How do press secretaries source and disseminate government information?
2. What are the techniques often adopted by press secretaries in the management of government representations on various media forms?
3. What are the challenges press secretaries often encounter in their day-to-day management of government reputation?

Theoretical Framework

Image Restoration Theory

The study draws on Benoit's Image Restoration Theory. The theory is a framework for understanding how individuals and organisations respond when their image or reputation is threatened. Its basic assumptions are that communication is goal-directed and that maintaining a favourable reputation constitutes an important communication goal.

The relevance of the theory to government press-secretarial practice is apparent because governments routinely encounter events, allegations, controversies and narratives capable of damaging public confidence. Press secretaries consequently require communication strategies capable of reducing reputational damage, correcting misinformation and restoring credibility.

The theory identifies responses including denial, shifting blame and corrective strategies. It also emphasises the importance of perceived responsibility, the severity of the reputational threat, stakeholder expectations, media coverage and public opinion.

For government communication, however, image restoration cannot be understood exclusively as reactive crisis management. The paper also recognises the importance of

proactive reputation cultivation, ethical communication, stakeholder relationships and long-term trust.

However, this study also recognises limitations of communication-centred approaches to reputation repair. Seeger (2006) questions approaches that place excessive emphasis on communication strategies without sufficient attention to organisational behaviour and stakeholder relationships, while Coombs (2007) demonstrates that crisis-response effectiveness can vary according to situational conditions.

Reputation Management Theory

Reputation Management Theory provides the second theoretical foundation. The paper attributes the development of the theory to Fombrun and presents reputation as a collective perception shaped by organisational behaviour, communication, media coverage and public conversation. Reputation management consequently encompasses reputation building, maintenance and repair.

The theory's positioning associates press-secretarial communication with strategic stakeholder communication and argues that government information must be correctly stated and systematically distributed to preserve accuracy and reliability (Akpan & Obukoadata, 2009).

The theory is particularly useful for analysing government communication because public reputation is not created solely by official statements. It emerges from interactions among governments, citizens, journalists, communities and other stakeholders. Consistency, transparency, responsiveness and strategic messaging are therefore identified as central components of effective reputation management. Akintaro and Ekhareafo (2017) similarly demonstrate the importance of strong stakeholder relationships and continuous public communication in building institutional reputation.

Together, the two theories provide complementary explanations. Reputation Management Theory explains the continuing cultivation and maintenance of government credibility, while Image Restoration Theory explains communication responses when that reputation is threatened.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this article is derived directly from the study's focus on how government press secretaries source and disseminate information, employ communication techniques in managing government representations, and confront challenges in the day-to-

day management of government reputation. The framework positions the government press secretary as the central communication actor linking government information, media channels, strategic communication practices and public perception.

Conceptually, government reputation management is understood in this study as a continuous communication process through which government information is obtained, processed, strategically presented and disseminated to relevant publics in order to influence, maintain or restore perceptions of the government.

The framework is therefore built around four closely related components: government information sourcing, strategic communication and representation, media dissemination and engagement, and government reputation outcomes.

Government Information Sourcing

The first component concerns the manner in which press secretaries obtain information for public communication. Findings from the study show that press secretaries rely substantially on official government documents, memoranda, briefings, directives and interactions with communication government officials. These sources provide the institutional basis from which official messages are developed. (Akpan & Obukoadata, 2009).

Information sourcing is therefore the foundation of the reputation-management process. If information is inaccurate, incomplete or delayed at the sourcing stage, the subsequent communication process may be compromised. Conversely, authoritative and properly verified information provides a basis for credible government.

Strategic Communication and Representation Management

The second component concerns the transformation of sourced information into messages appropriate for different audiences and media environments. Akpan and Obukoadata (2009) identify clear and concise messages, audience-specific communication, visual materials, regular updates, media training and feedback engagement as important techniques.

The conceptual relationship here is that information does not automatically become reputation-enhancing simply because it originates from government. It must be appropriately framed, presented and contextualised for audiences.

Press secretaries consequently perform a representational function. They determine how government policies, programmes, activities and responses are presented to the public. The study's findings on framing, agenda-setting, crisis communication and targeted messaging reinforce this conceptual position.

Media Dissemination and Public Engagement

The third component is the media environment through which government messages reach publics. The study demonstrates that press secretaries use official press releases, interviews, newspapers, radio, television, social media and other communication channels.

The conceptual framework therefore recognises media dissemination as an interactive rather than exclusively linear process. Government messages are transmitted through media but are also interpreted, discussed and evaluated by audiences. Feedback consequently becomes part of the communication process.

This explains why the study found monitoring of news outlets and public feedback to be an important component of press-secretarial practice. Public reactions provide information that may subsequently influence the government's communication strategy.

Government Reputation Outcomes

The final component is government reputation. Reputation represents the cumulative perception formed by publics from government behaviour and communication. In the context of this article, effective reputation management is expected to contribute to credibility, public confidence, favourable perceptions and the capacity to respond effectively to reputational threats.

The relationship is not necessarily automatic or linear. Even well-designed government communication may encounter competing narratives, misinformation, negative media coverage or political controversy. The study consequently identifies misinformation, public backlash, limited resources, changing media environments and the transparency-confidentiality dilemma as important contextual challenges.

Contextual and Intervening Factors

The framework also recognises that the relationship between government communication and reputation is influenced by contextual factors. These include misinformation and fake news, negative media coverage, political intervention, resource constraints, rapidly changing media technologies, audience preferences and the need to balance transparency with confidentiality.

These factors may either strengthen or weaken the effectiveness of government communication. For example, timely and accurate information may enhance credibility, whereas delayed responses to misinformation may permit competing narratives to gain influence.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Ihejirika and Omego (2011) see survey research as the appropriate approach for examining characteristics, opinions and behaviours of a defined population.

Population and Sample

The study population consisted of press secretaries associated with governors, deputy governors and commissioners in four selected South-South states: **Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Delta**. The paper reports a total population of 122 press secretaries. Bayelsa accounted for 29 commissioner press secretaries, Rivers 26, Akwa Ibom 26 and Delta 33 in addition to the 8 press secretaries attached to the four governors and the four deputy governors.

Because the population was considered manageable, the researcher adopted a census approach, thereby including the entire population of 122 in the study.

Instruments

The researcher employed a questionnaire and interview guide. The questionnaire was structured around the study's research questions, while interviews provided qualitative explanations of press-secretaries experiences.

Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire and interview guide were subjected to expert review by the supervisors and two senior faculty members in the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Rivers State University. Reliability was examined using a test-retest procedure and Cronbach's alpha. The reported reliability coefficient was 0.814, while the paper subsequently notes a coefficient of 0.74 in discussing reliability criteria.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using frequencies and Weighted Mean Scores (WMS) derived from a four-point Likert scale. The response weights were Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2 and Strongly Disagree = 1. A mean of 2.5 constituted the decision benchmark: scores of 2.5 and above were interpreted as agreement, while scores below 2.5 indicated disagreement. Qualitative interview data were analysed using Yin's explanation-building technique.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Government Information Sourcing and Dissemination

Research Question One examined how press secretaries source and disseminate government information.

Table 1: Methods of Disseminating Government Information.

S/N	Method	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	Decision
1	Official memos issued from government offices	70	30	10	5	115	3.52	Agreed
2	Regular briefings with government officials	60	40	10	5	115	3.43	Agreed
3	Social media platforms for updates and announcements	80	25	5	5	115	3.65	Agreed
4	Engagement with journalists for background information	50	45	15	5	115	3.30	Agreed
5	Monitoring news outlets and public feedback to adapt messaging	75	30	5	5	115	3.57	Agreed

All five measures received mean scores above the 2.5 decision benchmark. The strongest item was the use of social media for updates and announcements, with a mean of **3.65**, followed by monitoring news outlets and public feedback (**3.57**) and official memos (**3.52**). Engagement with journalists recorded the lowest, although still positive, mean of **3.30**.

The results therefore indicate that government information sourcing and dissemination are not confined to a single institutional route. Rather, press secretaries combine official documents, briefings, journalists, social media and public-feedback mechanisms.

The qualitative interviews reinforce this finding. A Ministry of Information press secretary explained that information was largely obtained from executive council and cabinet briefings and government materials, while dissemination involved press releases, government bulletins and state-controlled media. A Ministry of Finance press secretary described the additional scrutiny required for financial information, while a governor's press secretary explained that information was obtained through collaboration with advisers and agency executives before official approval and dissemination.

This suggests that sourcing is fundamentally institutional and hierarchical, while dissemination is increasingly multi-channel. The press secretary operates between the government as information producer and the public as information consumer.

Reputation-Management Techniques

Research Question two investigated the techniques adopted by press secretaries in managing government representations.

Table 2: Techniques Adopted by Press Secretaries.

S/N	Technique	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	Decision
1	Crafting clear and concise messages for specific audiences	80	30	5	0	115	3.70	Agreed
2	Using visuals and infographics	75	30	5	5	115	3.57	Agreed
3	Implementing media training	60	40	10	5	115	3.43	Agreed
4	Scheduling regular updates to maintain transparency	70	35	5	5	115	3.52	Agreed
5	Engaging feedback to adjust narratives and address concerns	75	30	5	5	115	3.57	Agreed

The highest-rated technique was **crafting clear and concise messages tailored to specific audiences**, with a mean score of **3.70**. Visuals and infographics and feedback engagement each recorded **3.57**, regular updates recorded **3.52**, while media training recorded **3.43**. All items were therefore accepted by respondents.

The qualitative findings provide greater interpretive depth. The paper reports that press secretaries use framing, agenda-setting, crisis communication, media briefings and tailored messaging to manage government representations. Framing and agenda-setting are used to highlight positive dimensions of government policies and reduce emphasis on negative elements, while crisis situations may trigger corrective, enhancing and minimising strategies.

The study further indicates that communication is adapted to media formats. Social media may employ infographics and hashtags; print communication may rely on comprehensive press releases; and broadcast communication may employ concise soundbites. Media kits, talking points and frequently asked questions are also identified as tools for maintaining message consistency.

The results demonstrate that government reputation management is not simply a matter of issuing favourable publicity. It involves **message design, audience segmentation, visual communication, timing, media preparedness and feedback management**.

Challenges of Day-to-Day Government Reputation Management

Research Question three examined the challenges encountered by press secretaries.

Table 3: Challenges Faced by Press Secretaries.

S/N	Challenge	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	Decision
1	Navigating misinformation and fake news on social media	90	20	5	0	115	3.78	Agreed
2	Limited resources for extensive media outreach	75	25	10	5	115	3.52	Agreed
3	Balancing transparency with confidentiality	70	30	10	5	115	3.48	Agreed
4	Adapting to rapidly changing media landscapes and audience preferences	80	30	5	0	115	3.65	Agreed
5	Handling public backlash and negative media coverage	85	25	5	0	115	3.74	Agreed

The strongest challenge was **misinformation and fake news on social media**, with a mean of **3.78**. Public backlash and negative media coverage followed closely at **3.74**, while rapidly changing media environments recorded **3.65**. Limited resources and the transparency-confidentiality dilemma recorded **3.52** and **3.48**, respectively.

The qualitative evidence adds political and institutional dimensions to these quantitative results. A Ministry of Health press secretary identified misinformation and disinformation as major problems, noting that unsubstantiated claims can spread faster than facts and that bureaucratic delays in clearing official statements may hinder timely responses. A Ministry of Works press secretary identified funding constraints and poor internet connectivity as practical limitations. A State Assembly press secretary highlighted political involvement and the tension between loyalty to political principals and responsibility to communicate truthfully.

The challenge is therefore multidimensional. It includes technological pressures, information disorder, resource limitations, bureaucratic procedures, political intervention and negative media narratives.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Information Sourcing, Accuracy and Reputation

The finding that press secretaries depend substantially on official memoranda, briefings and directives reflects the institutional nature of government communication. Such sourcing

mechanisms provide an authoritative basis for public communication and can help reduce inaccuracies before information reaches the public.

This finding is consistent with Reputation Management Theory, which places considerable emphasis on consistency, transparency and strategic communication. The paper argues that press secretaries ensure that information is accurately stated and systematically distributed in ways capable of preserving reliability.

The findings indicate that press secretaries obtain government information from official memoranda, briefings and directives and subsequently disseminate it through press releases, interviews and social-media posts.

This finding is consistent with Akpan and Obukoadata (2009), whose work emphasises strategic stakeholder communication and the importance of coherent institution-public relationships.

The finding also corresponds with Benoit's (1995) Image Restoration Theory because official information provides the basis for denial, remediation, correction and other responses when government reputation is threatened. The thesis specifically associates denial, remediation and boosting with reputation repair (Benoit, 1995).

Pikolomzi and Bongani (2020) further found that clear government narratives across multiple platforms can increase public confidence, while Adeyemi, Eke and Asak (2025) emphasise effective information sourcing and transmission in democratic communication.

The finding also raises an ethical consideration. Akintaro and Ekhareafo (2017) stress the importance of balancing institutional interests with continuous and credible communication. The thesis similarly finds that press secretaries sometimes have to balance political allegiance with ethical accountability.

In a rapidly changing media environment, this tension can become reputationally consequential. Delayed official communication may create an information vacuum that alternative actors fill. The result is that accuracy remains important, but accuracy without timeliness may be insufficient for effective reputation management.

Techniques Used in Managing Government Representations

The study found that press secretaries employ framing, agenda-setting, crisis communication, media briefings and tailored messaging in managing government representations.

The thesis explicitly connects these techniques to Reputation Management Theory and argues that they are important for communicating government narratives and responding to public expectations (Akpan & Obukoadata, 2009).

Framing and agenda-setting are used to emphasise favourable aspects of government policies and minimise negative interpretations. During crises, press secretaries may use enhancement, correction and minimisation strategies. The thesis connects these practices with Image Restoration Theory and cites Albert (2020) in support of the argument that such approaches can restore public confidence and reduce reputational damage.

The study further shows that messages are adapted to different media formats. Infographics and hashtags may be employed on social media, comprehensive releases for print media and soundbites for radio and television. Pikolomzi and Bongani (2020) are cited as supporting the importance of such tailored communication for clarity and government legitimacy.

Adeyemi, Eke and Asak (2025) emphasise crisis prediction and proactive communication, while the thesis indicates that press secretaries use media kits, talking points and FAQs to maintain consistency.

However, strategic framing has ethical limits. The thesis warns that excessive framing or propaganda, when not balanced with facts, may damage credibility (Akintaro & Ekhareafo, 2017).

Feedback as Reputation Management

One important finding is the emphasis placed on monitoring news outlets and public feedback. This moves government communication beyond the traditional one-way model.

Reputation is shaped by how audiences interpret and respond to government communication. Consequently, feedback provides press secretaries with information about whether official narratives are understood, accepted, contested or rejected. Social media is particularly significant because it provides immediate opportunities for governments to observe public reaction and respond to emerging issues.

The paper concludes that feedback engagement helps press secretaries analyse public problems and respond to them, thereby strengthening credibility.

Challenges Encountered by Press Secretaries

The findings identify misinformation, media bias, online pushback, resource constraints and political intervention as major challenges.

These findings correspond with Reputation Management Theory, which argues that government communicators must balance institutional objectives with public expectations (Akpan & Obukoadata, 2009).

Misinformation presents a particularly serious challenge. Albert (2020) is cited in the thesis in relation to the rapid spread of misinformation and the difficulty of correcting false narratives before reputational damage occurs.

Resource constraints constitute another challenge. Pikolomzi and Bongani (2020) agree in relation to the importance of sustained investment in communication infrastructure, training and proactive reputation management.

Adeyemi, Eke and Asak (2025) further identify citizen journalism and online activism as challenges because social-media users may create narratives before official government statements are released.

Political intervention presents an ethical challenge. Akintaro and Ekhareafo (2017) are cited in the thesis in relation to the effect of political attachment on professional and unbiased communication.

The paper's theoretical discussion suggests that misinformation represents an image threat because inaccurate narratives may influence public perception before official communicators have the opportunity to respond. It reports that misinformation may spread faster than official corrections, thereby forcing press secretaries into a reactive communication position.

The practical consequence is that reputation management must incorporate continuous monitoring**,** verification and rapid-response communication rather than waiting until a negative narrative has become established.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that government press secretaries occupy a critical position in the management of government reputation in South-South Nigeria. Their responsibilities extend beyond the mechanical dissemination of official information. They source information from institutional authorities, transform it into public-facing messages, select appropriate communication techniques, monitor public reactions and respond to threats capable of damaging governmental credibility.

The findings demonstrate that official press releases, briefings, social media, journalist engagement and feedback monitoring constitute important components of the information process. At the same time, audience-tailored messaging, visual communication, regular updates, media training and feedback engagement form significant components of reputation-management practice.

However, the effectiveness of these activities is constrained by misinformation, limited resources, rapidly changing media conditions, confidentiality requirements, public backlash,

negative coverage and political intervention. These challenges demonstrate that government reputation management requires both communication competence and institutional support.

The central implication is that effective government reputation management should be understood as a continuous process of accurate information sourcing, strategic message construction, ethical representation, audience engagement, feedback monitoring and rapid response.

Recommendations

First, government press officers should establish clearer procedures for sourcing, verifying and approving official information before dissemination. The paper specifically recommends clearer rules for evaluating government papers, briefings and directives to improve accuracy and timeliness. Press secretaries should develop integrated communication plans that connect traditional media with digital platforms rather than treating them as competing systems.

Secondly, government should provide continuous professional development in digital communication, social media management, fact-checking, crisis communication and multimedia storytelling. The framing, agenda-setting and crisis communication should be guided by factual accuracy and ethical communication rather than manipulative propaganda. Governments should invest on fact-checking mechanisms and rapid-response communication structures capable of countering misinformation before it becomes established.

Finally, press secretaries require sufficient resources and reasonable professional autonomy to discharge their responsibilities effectively. The article's conclusion similarly emphasises proactive communication, digital technologies, professional ethics, strategic autonomy and adequate resources as necessary conditions for effective government credibility.

Contribution to Knowledge

This article contributes to the literature by isolating the operational role of press secretaries in government reputation management within the South-South Nigerian context. It demonstrates empirically that reputation management involves the interaction of information sourcing, message construction, audience adaptation, feedback and crisis response.

It also highlights the importance of examining reputation management as an institutional communication process rather than solely as a public-relations outcome. The paper identifies misinformation, digital backlash, political meddling and resource limitations as practical challenges requiring policy and training responses.

LIMITATIONS

The article inherits the principal limitations in its geographical coverage which is restricted to selected South-South states, particularly Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Delta, and its principal perspective is that of government press secretaries. This narrow South-South focus may limit generalisability.

The study should therefore not be interpreted as representing all Nigerian government communicators. Rather, it provides contextual evidence from selected South-South states.

REFERENCES

1. Akintaro, G. M., & Ekhareafo, D. O. (2017). *An evaluation of reputation management in selected federal universities in South West Nigeria*. Covenant Journal of Communication, 4(1).
2. Akpan, I., & Obukoadata, P. (2009). Public relations role and impact in managing environmental related crisis in the Niger Delta. *LWATI: A Journal of Contemporary Research, 6*(1).
3. Benoit, W. L. (1995). *Accounts, excuses, and apologies: A theory of image restoration strategies*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
4. Coombs, W. T. (2007). Protecting organization reputations during a crisis: The development and application of situational crisis communication theory. *Corporate Reputation Review, 10*(3), 163–176. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.crr.1550049.
5. Fombrun, C. J. (1996). *Reputation: Realizing value from the corporate image*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
6. Fombrun, C. J., & van Riel, C. B. M. (2004). *Fame & fortune: How successful companies build winning reputations*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education