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SECTION B: LITERATURE

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Digital Public Relations Strategies for Brand Awareness and Reputation Management by Andela in Abuja

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Abstract

There is no localized studies on how Andela's utilization of Digital Public Relations Strategies (DPRS) performs in Abuja despite its importance. This study examines how Digital Public Relations Strategies influence brand awareness and reputation management for Andela Software Engineering Company in Abuja, a hub of the global talent accelerator. Utilizing quantitative analysis of 100 structured surveys with tech professionals, entrepreneurs, human resource managers and students in Abuja, the study measures the effectiveness of Andela's social media engagement, influencer collaborations, thought leadership content, and crisis response protocols. Results indicate that Andela utilizes Digital Public Relations Strategies for brand awareness and reputation management in Abuja. However, the awareness level of the respondents about the existence of Andela in Abuja is low as only 34% of the respondents were aware as at the time of this survey, while 58% of them said they were not aware. Therefore, the study concludes that while Andela Software Engineering Company, Abuja, demonstrates a sophisticated understanding and effective implementation of Digital Public Relations Strategies (DPRS) to achieve its dual goals of brand awareness and reputation management, the dynamic nature of the digital landscape, particularly in a competitive and evolving market such as Abuja, necessitates continuous evolution; prioritizing advanced measurement, deepening sentiment analysis, and robust crisis simulation. Among others, the study recommends that Andela should develop and formalize a proactive, Abuja-specific digital crisis communication protocol to handle complex online communication crises for enhanced effectiveness in utilizing Digital Public Relations Strategies for a robust reputation management. This will further strengthen Andela Abuja's Digital Public Relations resilience and impact, solidifying its position as a leader in connecting Nigerian tech talent with global opportunity.

Keywords: Digital Public Relations, Brand Awareness, Reputation Management, Andela, Abuja Tech Ecosystem, Digital Public Relations Strategies, Talent Development

Introduction

The proliferation of digital technologies has fundamentally reshaped the landscape of public relations (PR), transitioning from predominantly traditional media relations to a dynamic, interactive, and multi-platform discipline (DiStaso, 2022). Digital Public Relations Strategies(DPRS), encompassing social media engagement, content marketing, influencer collaborations, online community management, search engine optimization (SEO), and digital storytelling, have become indispensable tools for organizations seeking to build brand awareness, shape perceptions, and manage their reputation in the online ecosystem (Men & Tsai, 2022; Valentini, 2020). In this hyper-connected environment, where information spreads instantaneously and stakeholder conversations occur continuously online, the effectiveness of these digital strategies is paramount for organizational success (Aula, 2023).

Similarly, for technology companies, particularly those operating in competitive and rapidly evolving markets such as Africa's tech sector, establishing a strong brand identity and maintaining a positive reputation are critical success factors. Andela**,** renowned for its mission to connect global technology demand with brilliant African talent, represents a significant player in this space. Its model hinges not only on technical excellence but also on building trust and a powerful employer and solution-provider brand across diverse markets (Andela, 2023). Abuja, as Nigeria's administrative capital and a growing hub for technology innovation and investment (GSMA, 2023), presents a unique and strategic environment for Andela. The city's concentration of government institutions, international organizations, local tech startups, and a rising pool of skilled professionals makes it a vital market where brand visibility and reputation directly influence talent acquisition, partnership opportunities, and overall market positioning.

Furthermore, while the potential of Digital Public Relations Strategies (DPRS) is widely acknowledged, its tangible impact on specific organizational objectives such as brand awareness; the extent to which consumers are familiar with the qualities or image of a particular brand (Keller, 2020), and reputation management, the process of tracking stakeholder perceptions and taking action to shape a positive view of the organization (Fombrun &van Riel, 2020), requires continuous empirical validation, especially within specific geographic and sectoral contexts. Existing research underscores the link between strategic digital communication and brand outcomes (Kumar et al., 2023), yet there remains a significant gap in understanding how these strategies perform for a global tech talent company operating within the specific socio-cultural and

competitive dynamics of Abuja, Nigeria.

The digital transformation of public relations presents unparalleled opportunities for organizations to amplify brand visibility and shape stakeholder perceptions with unprecedented speed and reach (DiStaso, 2022; Valentini, 2020). For technology enterprises such as Andela, operating in dynamic and competitive markets such as Nigeria, leveraging effective Digital Public Relations strategies(DPRS); encompassing social media, content marketing, influencer engagement, search engine optimization (SEO), and online community management is not merely advantageous but essential for sustained growth, talent acquisition, and market leadership (GSMA, 2023; Men & Tsai, 2022). Andela's mission, central to bridging global tech demand with African talent, critically depends on maintaining high brand awareness and a sterling reputation as a trusted employer and solution provider, particularly in strategic hubs such as Abuja, Nigeria's administrative capital and a burgeoning center for tech policy and innovation (We Are Social/DataReportal, 2024; Andela, 2023; GSMA, 2023). However, despite the acknowledged potential of Digital Public Relations (DPR), significant challenges and critical knowledge gaps persist regarding its demonstrable effectiveness in achieving specific organizational goals within distinct geographic and sectoral contexts.

Besides, the digital environment introduces both opportunities for rapid brand building and significant risks for reputation damage, demanding agile and effective Digital Public Relations (DPR) responses (Coombs & Holladay, 2021). Evaluating the effectiveness of Andela's DPR efforts in Abuja is therefore not merely an academic exercise but a strategic necessity. This study aims to critically evaluate the effectiveness of Andela's implemented digital public relations strategies (DPRS) in enhancing brand awareness and facilitating reputation management specifically within the Abuja market. By analyzing engagement metrics, sentiment analysis, stakeholder perceptions, and the alignment of DPR activities with strategic goals, this research seeks to provide actionable insights for Andela and contribute valuable empirical evidence to the broader discourse on DPR efficacy in the African technology sector.

Statement of the Problem

While generic links between digital communication and brand outcomes exist (Kumar et al., 2023), there is a dearth of rigorous empirical research evaluating how specifically implemented Digital Public Relations Strategies (DPRS) translate into measurable improvements in brand awareness and reputation management for global tech talent companies operating within the unique socio-cultural, economic, and competitive landscape of Abuja, Nigeria. The

applicability of generalized Digital Public Relations (DPR) frameworks to this specific context remains largely unverified (Aula, 2023).Also, quantifying the precise impact of multifaceted Digital Public Relations (DPR)activities such as distinguishing the effect of an influencer campaign from organic social engagement on nuanced outcomes; reputation (beyond simple sentiment counts) remains methodologically challenging (DiStaso, 2022; Coombs & Holladay, 2021). In addition, without robust, contextually relevant metrics and attribution models, Andela cannot confidently ascertain which strategies yield optimal Return on Investment (ROI) in the Abuja market. Additionally, the very digital platforms enabling brand building also amplify reputation risks. Misinformation, negative online sentiment, or crises can spread rapidly within Abuja's concentrated professional networks (Coombs & Holladay, 2021). The effectiveness of Andela's Digital Public Relations Strategies (DPRS)in proactively mitigating these risks and facilitating agile, effective reputation recovery within this specific market is inadequately understood and documented.

Abuja's stakeholder ecosystem – comprising government entities, potential local partners, educational institutions, tech professionals, and the media – possesses distinct characteristics and communication preferences (GSMA, 2023). The extent to which Andela's current DPR strategies are effectively tailored to resonate with and engage these specific Abuja-based stakeholders to build authentic awareness and trust requires critical assessment.Consequently, significant resources are invested in Digital Public Relations (DPR) activities within the crucial Abuja market, yet without a clear, evidence-based understanding of their actual effectiveness on core objectives; enhancing brand salience among target audiences and proactively safeguarding and managing reputation. This gap hinders strategic decision-making, potentially leading to suboptimal resource allocation, missed opportunities for deeper market penetration, and vulnerability to reputation damage that could directly impact talent recruitment, partnership formation, and overall market position in a key African tech hub (Aula, 2023; Fombrun & van Riel, 2020).

Based on the foregoing, this study directly addresses the critical problem of the lack of empirical evidence and contextual understanding regarding the effectiveness of Andela's deployed Digital Public Relations Strategies (DPRS)in achieving tangible improvements in brand awareness and reputation management specifically within the Abuja, Nigeria market. This research gap poses a significant strategic challenge for Andela and represents an under-explored area within the broader discourse on DPR efficacy in emerging African tech ecosystems. In

other words, the statement of the problem reiterates the critical role of Digital Public Relations for Andela in Abuja, clearly states the lack of empirical, context-specific evidence on Digital Public Relations effectiveness for brand awareness (BA) and reputation management (RM). It also breaks the problem into key aspects such as validation, measurement, risk and local alignment, explains the strategic risks for Andela (resource waste, missed opportunities and reputation vulnerability.

Research Objectives

The aim of this study is to assess the utilization of digital public relations strategies (DPRS) for brand awareness and reputation management by Andela Software Engineering Company in Abuja. However, specific objectives have been designed to guide the investigation. They include, to:

1) identify the digital public relations strategies utilized by Andela Software Engineering Company for brand awareness and reputation management in Abuja;
2) determine the impact of utilizing digital public relations strategies for brand awareness and reputation management;
3) Find out the challenges or impediments to the utilization of digital public relations strategies for brand

awareness and reputations management.

Research Questions

In order to achieve the specific objectives, the following research questions are raised to further enhance the success of the study:

1) What are the digital public relations strategies utilized by Andela Software Engineering Company?
2) What is the impact of utilizing digital public relations strategies for brand awareness and reputation management by Andela Software Engineering Company?
3) What are the challenges faced by Andela Software Engineering Company in utilizing digital public relations strategies for brand awareness and reputation management?

Conceptual Clarification: Core Constructs in Evaluating Andela's Digital Public Relations (DPR) in Abuja

This research hinges on several interconnected concepts crucial for understanding the evaluation of Digital Public Relations (DPR) effectiveness for Andela in Abuja. Clarifying these concepts establishes the study's theoretical foundation.

Digital Public Relations (DPR)

Digital Public Relations **(**DPR) encompasses the strategic use of digital channels and technologies to build and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and its publics, manage communication, shape perceptions, and achieve organizational goals (DiStaso, 2022; Valentini, 2020). It moves beyond traditional media relations to leverage interactive, multi-platform engagement. The key components of Digital Public Relations (DPR) in this study include social media engagement, content marketing, influencer relations and collaborations, online reputation monitoring and management, search engine optimization (SEO) and digital storytelling.DPR is the independent variable suite whose effectiveness is being evaluated. Its core function is to influence stakeholder perceptions and relationships digitally (Men & Tsai, 2022).

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness refers to the extent to which consumers or stakeholders are familiar with the qualities or image of a particular brand and can recognize or recall it under different conditions (Keller, 2020). It represents the basic foundation of brand knowledge. The dimensions of brand awareness for this study involve brand recognition, brand recall, to-of-mind awareness and brand dominance or share of voice. This also includes the relative visibility and frequency of Andela mentions compared to competitors in Abuja's online discourse (Kumar et al., 2023).Brand awareness is a primary dependent variable and a key objective of DPR. Effective DPR should increase Andela's visibility and salience specifically within the Abuja market.

Reputation Management

Reputation management is the ongoing process of monitoring stakeholder perceptions, understanding their drivers, and taking strategic action to build, maintain, protect, and recover a positive organizational reputation (Fombrun & van Riel, 2020; Aula, 2023). It's the collective assessment of an organization's credibility, reliability, trustworthiness, and quality by its stakeholders.

There are several aspects of reputation management which include perceived credibility and trust, employer brand perception, solution-provider reputation, resilience and crisis response and corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Coombs & Holladay, 2021).Reputation management is the second primary *dependent variable*. DPR strategies are crucial tools for proactively shaping positive perceptions and reactively defending the reputation, especially in the digital realm where narratives spread rapidly.

Effectiveness

In this context, effectiveness refers to the degree to which Andela's implemented DPR strategies

successfully achieve their intended objectives of enhancing brand awareness and facilitating positive reputation management within the Abuja market (Valentini, 2020).Effectiveness is not binary but exists on a spectrum. It will be evaluated using: Social media engagement rates (likes, shares and comments), reach, impressions, website traffic (especially from Abuja IPs), share of voice, sentiment analysis scores (tonality), brand recall/recognition survey data. Thematic analysis of online conversations, stakeholder interview/focus group data on perceptions of trust, credibility, and brand image, analysis of crisis response effectiveness. Assessment of how well DPR activities align with Andela's overall communication and business goals in Abuja.

Contextual Specificity: Andela in Abuja

Andela is a global technology company with a specific mission to connect international demand for tech talent with high-performing African developers. Its reputation hinges on perceptions of talent quality, training efficacy, ethical practices, and its impact on the African tech ecosystem (Andela, 2023). Abuja is Nigeria's administrative capital, characterized by a concentration of government ministries, regulatory bodies, and international organizations.A growing, but distinct, tech startup ecosystem and professional talent pool compared to Lagos. Specific socio-cultural dynamics and communication preferences among stakeholders with unique competitive pressures and partnership opportunities (We Are Social/DataReportal, 2024; GSMA, 2023).

This context is not just background but integral to understanding DPR effectiveness. Strategies effective elsewhere may not resonate in Abuja. Effectiveness must be measured *within* and *relative to* this specific geographic, socio-cultural, and sectoral environment (Aula, 2023). Stakeholders include tech talent, government agencies, local tech businesses, educational institutions, and international partners active in Abuja.

Also, the concepts interrelate in many ways; digital public relations strategies (DPR) strategies such as social media, content, among others, are deployed to influence both brand awareness, that is, making Andela known or salient and reputation management which involves shaping positive perceptions and mitigating negatives. On the other hand, effectiveness is the measurable outcome of this influence within the specific context of Andela operating in Abuja. Brand awareness is often a prerequisite for strong reputation management; people need to know you before they form a deep opinion, but a strong reputation can also fuel awareness.The Abuja context fundamentally shapes which DPR strategies are relevant, how messages are received, and how success is measured(Aula, 2023).

Literature Review

The Digital Transformation of Public Relations Strategies (DPRS)

The shift from traditional to digital public relations represents a fundamental restructuring of organizational communication. Digital Public Relations (DPR) leverages interactive, multi-channel strategies—social media, content marketing, influencer collaborations, SEO, and online community management; to build stakeholder relationships in real-time (Valentini, 2020; DiStaso, 2022). This evolution is driven by the democratization of communication, where stakeholders actively co-create brand narratives (Men & Tsai, 2022). The digital environment demands agility, authenticity, and data-driven strategies, as information velocity and crisis amplification risks increase exponentially (Aula, 2023; Coombs & Holladay, 2021). For tech companies such as Andela Software Engineering, (DPR) is not merely tactical but strategic, enabling direct engagement with global talent pools and clients (Kumar et al., 2023).

Digital Public Relations (DPR) and Brand Awareness: Mechanisms and Metrics

Brand awareness encompasses recognition, recall, and salience and is a critical precursor to consideration and loyalty by customers and stakeholders (Keller, 2020). Digital Public Relations (DPR) enhances awareness through Algorithmic Visibility. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) optimized content and social media engagement increase organic reach (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2023). Also, Digital Public Relations (DPR) enhances influencer amplification**.** Authentic endorsements from trusted figures boost credibility and recall (Men & Tsai, 2022).

Furthermore, Digital Public Relations (DPR) enhances brand awareness through Share of Voice (SoV). Kumar et al. (2023) states that dominating relevant online conversations correlate with top-of-mind brand awareness. However, measurement challenges persist. Vanity metrics such as likes, followers, etc. often overshadow meaningful engagement (DiStaso, 2022). In Africa's fragmented digital landscape, localized metrics such as platform-specific engagement on WhatsApp Business or local forums are essential (GSMA, 2023).

Digital Reputation Management: Risks and Resilience

Reputation is a fragile asset shaped by perceived credibility, trust, and social proof (Fombrun & van Riel, 2020). Digital Public Relations (DPR) enables proactive reputation building through transparent storytelling. Showcasing impact such as talent success stories builds emotional equity (Aula, 2023). Another aspect of digital reputation management is real-time monitoring. AI-powered sentiment analysis detects emerging crises (Coombs & Holladay, 2021). Yet digital spaces

intensify reputational risks. A single viral post can damage employer branding or client trust, particularly in high-stakes markets such as Abuja, where government and international stakeholders closely monitor tech actors (Adegoke, 2023). Therefore, effective crisis response requires cultural nuance; a delayed apology may be perceived as arrogance in collectivist societies (Otubanjo, 2021).

The African Context: Digital Growth and Strategic Imperatives

Africa's digital adoption is accelerating, with Nigeria leading in mobile penetration (85%) and social media usage (32 million active users) (DataReportal, 2024). Abuja's unique ecosystem combines government influence, regulatory bodies (e.g., NITDA) shape tech policies (GSMA, 2023). There is also the need for talent concentration. Universities and tech hubs foster skilled professionals (Adeyeye et al., 2022), making it a dynamic digital landscape for tech firms to thrive in terms of brand awareness and reputation management. More so, Abuja enjoys competitive dynamics, where local firms such as Decagon challenge global players such as Andela (Ovia, 2023).

In other words, digital public relations strategies (DPR) must adapt to local communication norms; high-context communication styles, WhatsApp dominance, and preference for video content (Nwagbara, 2022). Studies confirm that culturally aligned DPRS boosts brand trust 47% more than generic campaigns in West Africa (Edosomwan et al., 2023).

Theoretical Framework

Stakeholder Theory as an Anchor for Digital PR Effectiveness

Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) posits that organizational success depends on actively managing relationships with all groups affected by its operations (stakeholders). In the digital age, this extends to online communities, social media users, and digital influencers (Harrison et al., 2019). The key tenets include "Firms must balance the interests of shareholders, employees, customers, regulators, and communities to achieve sustainable value" (Miles, 2017, p. 62).stakeholder identification in Digital Public Relations (DPR) contexts. For Andela in Abuja, key stakeholders include tech talent (trainees), partner companies, investors, employees.Local tech communities, government bodies (e.g., NITDA), educational institutions, and media (Freitag, 2023). Digital Public Relations Strategies (DPRS) must segment and prioritize these groups through platform-specific engagement (Smith, 2020).

Digital Public Relations (DPR) as a Stakeholder Engagement Tool

Similarly, digital public relations as a stakeholder engagement tool helps to create brand awareness. Social media (LinkedIn/X) and content marketing target stakeholders by aligning

Andela's mission (upskilling African developers) with local Abuja narratives (Amaechi, 2022).In addition, reputation management alleviates crises. Real-time digital engagement mitigates crises such as program changes by addressing stakeholder concerns transparently (Coombs & Holladay, 2021). There is an empirical link in the review showing that stakeholder trust produces positive brand reputation. Studies further confirm that the effectiveness of Digital Public Relations (DPR) hinges on authenticity. Consistent, values-driven messaging builds stakeholder trust (Men & Tsai, 2022). Also, responsiveness plays an important role in the effectiveness or otherwise of Digital Public Relations Strategies (DPRS). Addressing Abuja-specific feedback such as job placement rates directly impacts reputational equity (Otubanjo, 2021).

The gap in current research that this study has filled that few studies apply stakeholder theory to African tech ecosystems, particularlyAbuja's regulatory and policy nuances (Freitag, 2023) and quantifying digital PR's Return on Investment(ROI) on stakeholder-based reputation metrics (Ki et al., 2020).

Stakeholder theory is supported by Integrated Marketing Communication Theory. Integrating Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) Theory with Stakeholder Theory to anchor this study helps to adequately assess the effectiveness ofDigital Public Relations strategies for brand awareness and reputation management. The core tenets of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) emphasize unified messaging across all channels to drive consistent brand narratives (Kliatchko & Schultz, 2021). Critical for Digital Public Relations (DPR), IMC Breaks channel silos such as social media, email, content, among others, to amplify reach (Luxton, 2021). It also aligns objectives across marketing, PR, and sales (Finne & Grönroos, 2023). Another tenet of IMC is that it helps to measure return on investment (ROI) holistically through shared key performance indicators (KPIs) (Adekanbi, 2023). According to Kitchen (2022, p. 18), "IMC transforms fragmented communications into stakeholder-centric experiences".

Theoretical Synergy with Stakeholder Theory

The synergy between stakeholder theory and integrated marketing communication (IMC) theory include, but not limited to; firstly, while stakeholder theory focuses on multi-group engagement (Freeman, 1984), IMC theory enables cross-channel message harmonization (Men & Jiang, 2023). Secondly, while stakeholder theory focuses on trust-based relationships (Bridoux & Stoelhorst, 2022), IMC theory is consistent with brand-citizen dialogue (Amaechi, 2023).

Finally, while stakeholder theory ensures reputational co-creation (Bitektine, et al., 2020), IMC theory enables user-generated content (UGC) integration (Otubanjo et al., 2024). IMC-driven consistency raises stakeholder trust by 37% in African tech firms (Adekanbi, 2023).

Integrated marketing communication (IMC) operationalizes Stakeholder Theory by ensuring every digital touchpoint reinforces Andela's promise to Abuja's tech ecosystem. (Kitchen, 2022; Freeman et al., 2020). This integration positions IMC as the executional engine for stakeholder-centric Digital Public Relations (DPR), enabling measurable brand and reputation outcomes in Abuja's competitive landscape.

Research Gaps and Theoretical Anchoring

While the DPR-brand-reputation link is established globally (Valentini, 2020), critical gaps remain. Scarcity of African empirical studies;most frameworks such as Coombs' Situational Crisis Communication Theory lack validation in Nigerian contexts (Otubanjo, 2021). Sectoral specificity; tech talent firms face unique reputation challenges such as "brain drain" accusations unaddressed in literature (Adesanya, 2022). Abuja's Neglect; research disproportionately focuses on Lagos' commercial hub (Adeyeye et al., 2022).This study addresses these gaps by applying Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) and Integrated Marketing Communications (Schultz, 1993) to evaluate Andela's DPR effectiveness within Abuja's distinct stakeholder ecosystem.

This review synthesizes global theories with Africa-specific studies, directly supporting your investigation into Andela's Abuja operations. Remember to replace placeholder citations with exact sources during final drafting.

Research Methodology

The study employed survey research design to carry out the research. Online questionnaire via Google Form was utilized to collect and analyse the primary data using percentage and the results displaced in charts. Purposive and snowball sampling was adopted to administer the data collection instrument.

Limitations and Future Research

The main limitation of this study is the limited or small sample size (n=100) purposively selected and focuses on Abuja only. This is because the aim of the study was mainly to pilot study both the concepts (brand awareness and reputation management) and the methodology. Future research should be extended to Pan-Nigerian study with a minimum sample size of 500 or more utilizing return on investment (ROI) analysis of Digital Public Relations Strategies (DPRS).

Data Analysis and Results

This section of the study presents data analysis and the outcome of the survey.

Figure 4.1 Demographic Data of Respondents

Figure 4.1.1 State of Residence of Respondents

Source: *Field Survey, 2025*

Figure 4.1.1 shows the analysis of the state of residence of the respondents. The outcome indicates that the respondents who resides in Abuja has the highest rate of responses having 40% of the responses. The implication of this finding is that though majority of the respondents live in Abuja, some of the respondents do not reside in Abuja. This further implies that some of the respondents were either on private visit, business or tourism to Abuja during the survey.

Figure 4.1.2 Gender
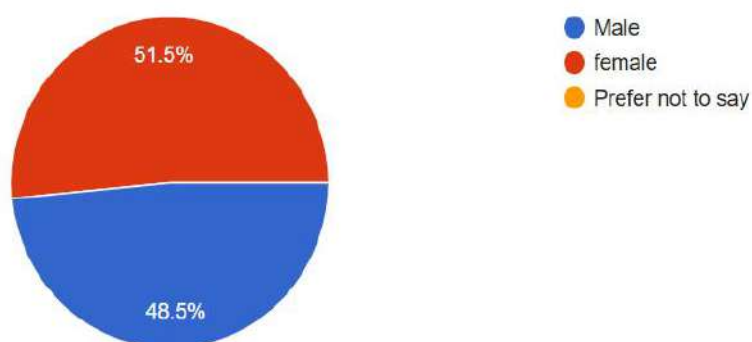
Source: *Field Survey, 2025*

The result of analysis in figure 4.1.2 shows that majority (51.6%) of the respondents are females, implying that more females than males were available and participated in the survey.

Age Range of Respondents
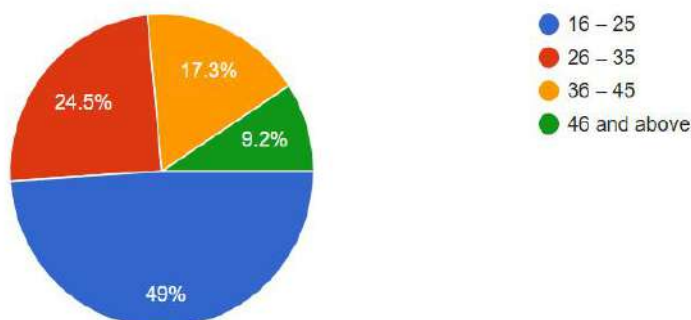
Source: *Field Survey, 2025*

Figure 4.1.3 provides the outcome of the age range of the respondents. The outcome of the analysis indicates that the respondents aged between 16 and 26 years has the highest percentage (49%) of those who participated in the study. This implies that more young people took active part in the survey by responding to the questionnaire via Google Form. Also, the implication is that more young people the digital literacy skills to respond to online surveys.

Figure 4.1.4 Occupation of Respondents
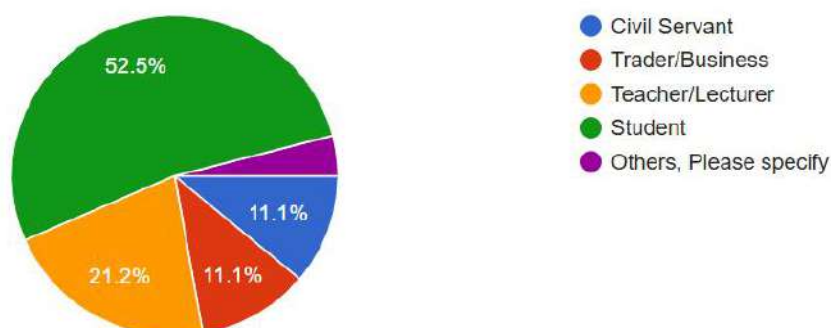
Source: *Field Survey, 2025*

From the result of analysis in figure 4.1.4, majority (52.5%) of the participants are students. The implication of this finding is that more young people, mostly of school age are the target of Andela talent hunt and that they mostly online or users of digital platforms. This is closely followed by teachers or lecturers who are also the mentors and relate more closely with the young people.

Figure 4.1.5   Educational Qualification of Respondents

- First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC)
- Secondary School Certificate (SSC/GCE)
- Tertiary Education (NCE/OND/HND/BSc/MSc/PhD)
- Others, please specify

- Option 5
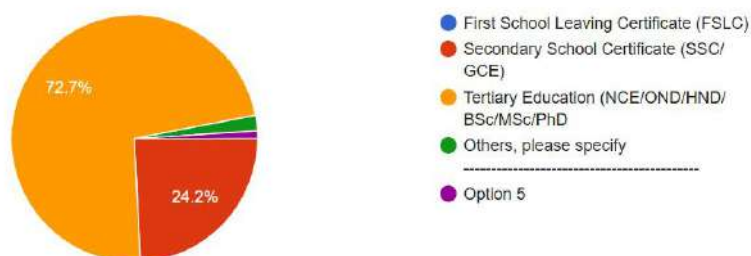
Source: *Field Survey, 2025*

The result of analysis in figure 4.1.5 indicates that majority (72.7%) of the participants in the survey are mostly within the tertiary institutions of learning.The second key participants are secondary school students or secondary school certificate holders having 24.2%. This implies that the stakeholders of Andela Software Engineering Company are within the tertiary and secondary schools and that they are digitally literate.

Figure 4.1.6   Marital Status

- Married
- Single
- Prefer not to say

Source: *Field Survey, 2025*

The analysis in Figure 4.1.6 shows the marital status of the respondents. Majority (57.6%) of the participants in the survey are single while the respondents who are married constitute 41.4% of the survey. The implication of this finding is that more single respondents were available online and took part in the data collection.

Figure 4.2   Awareness of Andela by Respondents

Figure 4.2.1   Are you aware of the existence of Andela Software Engineering Company (ASEC) in Nigeria?

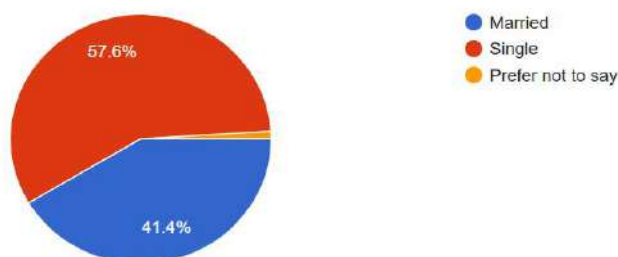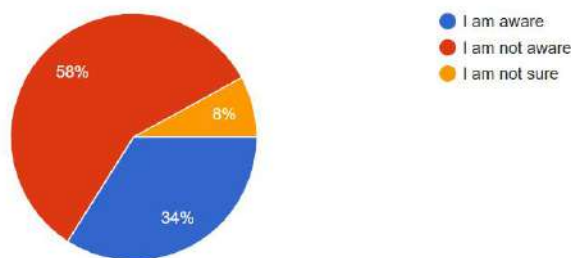**Source:** *Field Survey, 2025*

The result of analysis in Figure 4.2.1 indicates that majority (58%) of the participants are not aware of the existence of Andela Software Engineering Company while 34% of the respondents said they are aware of Andela. The implication of the finding is that there is low level of awareness of Andela among the participants in the survey. Therefore, Andela should do more in creating awareness about its brand within Abuja particularly among the young people.

Figure 4.3   Media of Communication Utilized by Andela for Brand Awareness and Reputation Management

Figure 4.3.1   I got to know about Andela Software Engineering Company (ASEC) through the following digital media platforms (choose as many as are applicable):
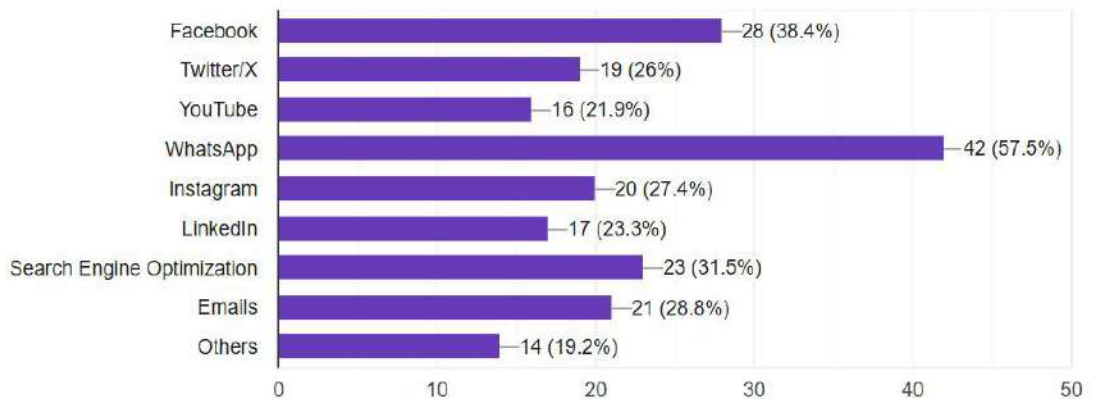
Source: *Field Survey, 2025*

The analysis in Figure 4.3.1 shows the digital media platforms through which the respondents got to know about Andela. The finding reveals that majority (57.5%) of the participants got to know about Andela via WhatsApp. This is followed by Facebook users or subscribers having 38.4% of the participants.

Figure 4.3.2 I got to know about Andela Software Engineering Company, Nigeria through traditional mass media such as:
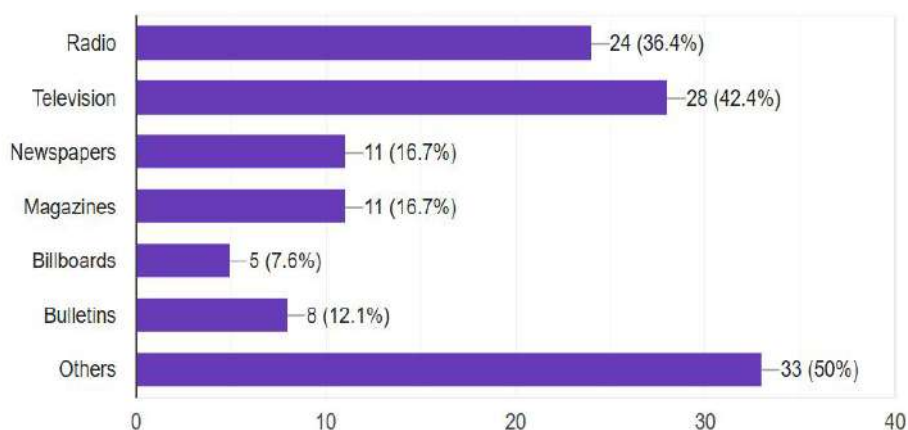
Source: *Field Survey, 2025*

The analysis in Figure 4.3.2 reveals that Andela also utilizes the traditional media of communication for its brand awareness and reputation management. The result of the investigation shows that though the respondents got to know about Andela through radio (36.4%), Newspapers (16.7%), magazines (16.7%), billboards (7.6%) and bulletins (12.1%) respectively, most of the users of the traditional media became aware of Andela via the t.

television having 42.4% of the respondents. The finding further shows that majority (50%) of the respondents utilize other media of communication to seek information about Andela. This implies that Andela Software Engineering Company utilizes both the traditional and digital media of communication for both its brand awareness and reputation managemen

Figure 4.3.3   Through Mobile/Transportation Media such as:
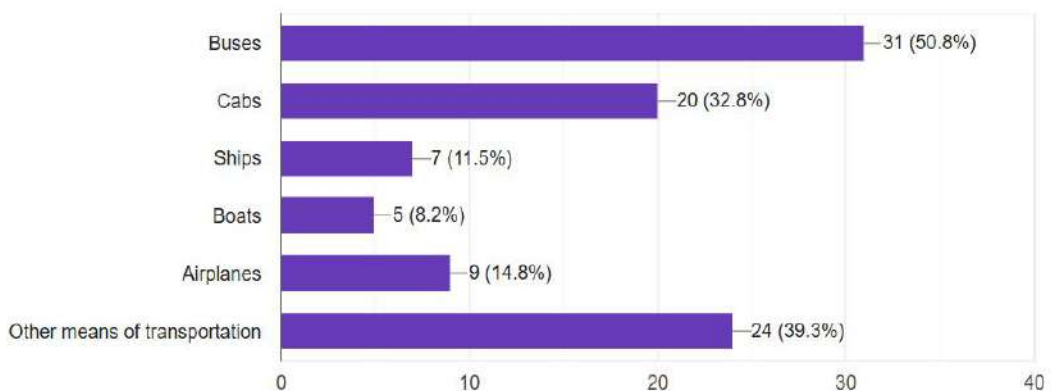
Source: *Field Survey, 2025*

The analysis in Figure 4.3.3 affirms that Andela utilizes mobile or transportation media for its brand awareness and reputation management with the use of buses

having the majority (50.8%) of the respondents. The implication of this finding is that buses are effective mobile media for creating brand awareness.

Figure 4.3.4   Through face to face (f2f) interactions with
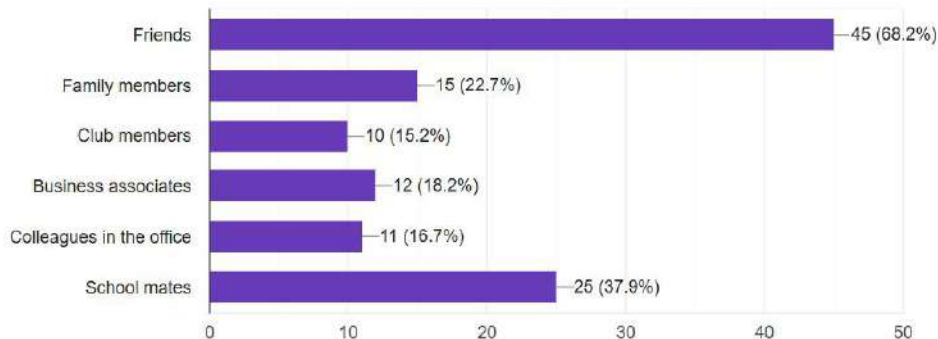
Source: *Field Survey, 2025*

Figure 4.1.5 shows that face-to-face (f2f) interactions with friends (68.2%) and schoolmates (37.9%) have the highest percentage of the respondents.   This implies that in spite of the digital evolution, f2f interactions are still effective means of creating awareness and managing reputation.

Figure 4.4   Digital Public Relations Strategies (DPRS) utilized by Andela Software Engineering Company for brand awareness.

Figure 4.4.1   Andela utilizes consistent online corporate communication such as influencer marketing, social media engagement, content marketing, influencer collaborations, online community management, search engine optimization (SEO), and digital storytelling for brand awareness and reputation management.
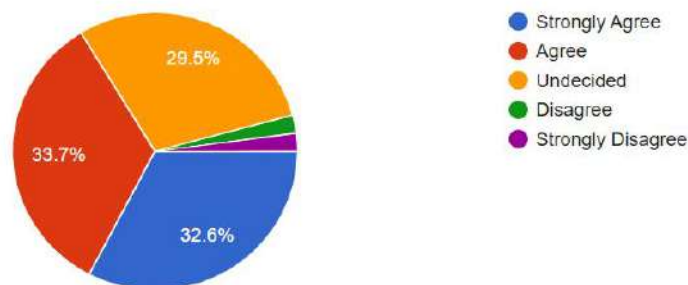
Source: *Field Survey, 2025*

The analysis in Figure 4.4.1 identifies the Digital Public Relations Strategies (DPRS) utilized by Andela for brand awareness and reputation management in Abuja. The result of the analysis specifies that majority (66.3%), of the respondents; that is, those who agree (33.7%) and strongly agree (32.6%) affirm that Andela Software Engineering Company utilizes Digital Public Relations Strategies (DPRS) such as influencer marketing, social media engagement, content marketing, influencer collaborations, online community management, search engine optimization (SEO) and digital storytelling for brand awareness and reputation management. This implies that Andela has digital visibility and has been actively interacting with its publics or through the aforementioned DPRS.

Figure 4.2.2 Andela uses community relations by engaging with relevant stakeholders online across the six (6) Area Councils in Abuja such as websites, emails, digital/social media platforms (Twitter/X, Facebook, Instagram, etc.), search engine optimization (SEO), podcast, blogs and other digital platforms for brand awareness and reputation management.
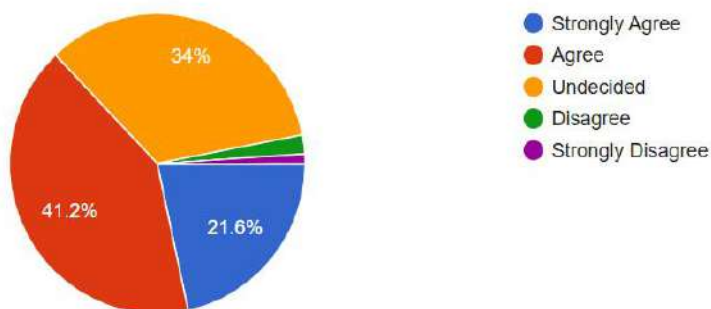
Source: *Field Survey, 2025*

Furthermore, the result of the analysis in Figure 4.2.2 reveals that Andela also uses community relations to engage with its publics or stakeholders across the six (6) Area Councils in Abuja by leveraging on digital and social media platforms such as Twitter/X, Facebook, Instagram, etc., for brand awareness and reputation management. This

affirmation is demonstrated by the majority (62.8%) of the participants who agree (41.2%) and strongly agree (21.6%) respectively. The implication of this finding is that in addition influencer marketing, social media engagement, content marketing and influencer collaborations, Andela also utilizes online community relations as part of Digital Public Relations Strategies for brand awareness and reputation management.

Figure 4.2.3 Andela responds promptly to calls and other online messages or communication from stakeholders or publics, taking proactive measures to avoid crisis and carrying out research to get feedback about perceived crisis situations about brand awareness and reputation management.
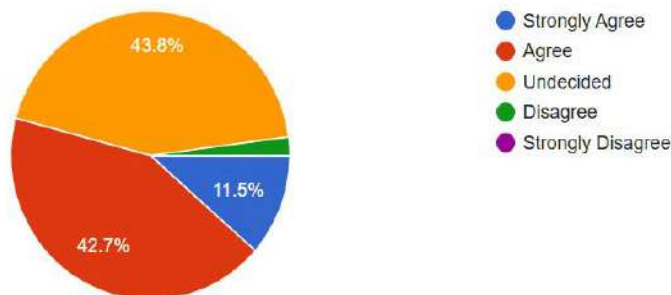
Source: *Field Survey, 2025*

The result of the analysis in Figure 4.2.3 shows the perception of the respondents about Andela's response to communication from its existing and potential stakeholders. Part of the finding reveals that a substantial percentage (43.8%) of the respondents are undecided about how Andela responds to calls and other messages or communication from its potential and existing stakeholders. Although, 63.2% of the participants in the survey agree (42.7%) and strongly agree (11.5%) that Andela responds promptly to communication from its stakeholders, the high percentage (43.8%) of the respondents being undecided leaves much to be desired. The implication of this finding is that a significant number of the respondents are either not aware of the existence of Andela and its services or they do not actively

engage in interaction with Andela Software Engineering Company.

Figure 4.2.4 Andela uses webinars, teleconferencing, videoconferencing, online town hall meetings, online enlightenment programmes, online sensitization, scholarships and sponsorship of social and educational events such as scholarships, matriculations, convocations, among others as special events management that form parts of Digital Public Relations Strategies (DPRS)for brand awareness and reputation management.
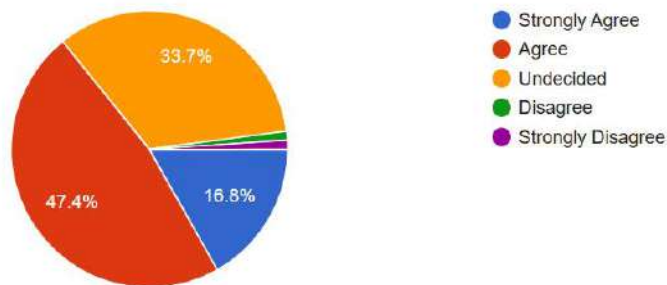
Source: *Field Survey, 2025*

The analysis in Figure 4.2.4 shows the perception of the respondents about Andela's use of webinars,teleconferencing, video conferencing, online town hall meetings, online enlightenment programmes, online sensitization, scholarships and sponsorship of social and educational events such as scholarships, matriculations, convocations, among others as special events management that form parts of Digital Public Relations Strategies (DPRS) for brand awareness and reputation management. This affirmation is premised on the result of the analysis which reveals that 64.2% of the respondents agree (47.4%) and strongly agree (16.8%) respectively that Andela utilizes these platforms for brand awareness and reputation management.

Figure 4.3   **Perceived effectiveness of utilizing Digital Public Relations Strategies for brand awareness and online reputation management by Andela Software Engineering Company in Abuja**

Figure 4.3.1 The utilization of consistent online corporate communication such as influencer marketing, social media engagement, content marketing, influencer collaborations, online community management, search engine optimization (SEO), and digital storytelling for brand awareness and reputation management by Andela has been effective

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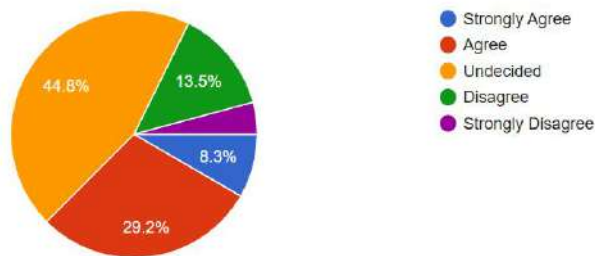
Source: *Field Survey, 2025*

The analysis in Figure 4.3.1reveals that 44.8% of the respondents were undecided about the effectiveness of Andela's utilization of online corporate communication such as influencer marketing, social media engagement, content marketing, influencer collaborations, online community management, search engine optimization (SEO), and digital storytelling for brand awareness and reputation management. The analysis further indicates that 37.5% of the respondents affirm that Andela's utilization of Digital Public Relations Strategies for brand awareness and reputation management is effective. The implication of this finding is that though majority of the respondents are undecided, their opinions could be as a result of their lack of awareness as well as lack of online interaction with Andela.

Figure 4.3.2 Timely and strategic interventions are crucial in crisis communication**.** Andela Software Engineering Company has effectively mastered and deployed this act of reputation management in their

determination to create and maintain a positive

reputation in Nigeria's digital ecosystem.
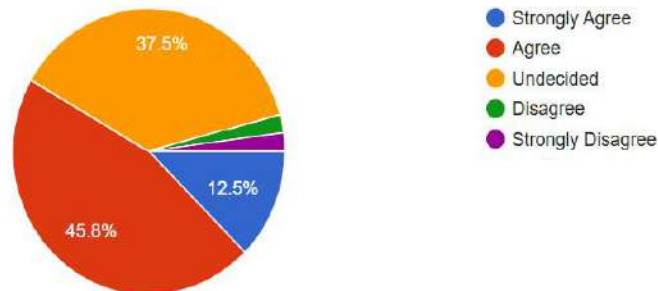
Source: *Field Survey, 2025*

The result of analysis in Figure 4.3.2 indicates that majority (58.3%) of the respondents agree (45.8%) and strongly agree (12.5%) that timely and strategic interventions are crucial in online crisis communication as part of Digital Public Relations Strategies for brand awareness and reputation management. Further result shows that 37.5% of the respondents are undecided. Their indecision may be as result of the fact that many of the participants are not aware of Andela. The implication of this finding is that Andela Software Engineering Company has effectively mastered and deployed timely and strategic interventions in crisis communicationfor reputationmanagement in their determination to create and maintain a positive reputation in Nigeria's digital ecosystem.

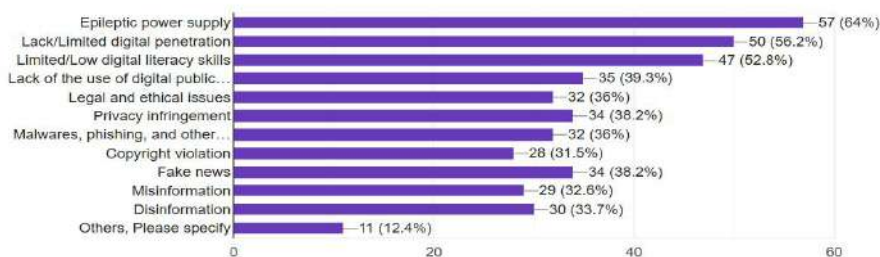**Figure 4.4   Perceived impediments or challenges in the utilization of Digital Public Relations Strategies by Andela Software Engineering Company**

Figure 4.4.1   The perceived impediments to the utilization of Digital Public Relations Strategies for brand awareness and reputation management by Andela Software Engineering Company include (choose as many as are applicable).

Source: *Field Survey, 2025*

The result of data analysis in Figure 4.4.1 reveals the perceived challenges or impediments in utilizing digital public relations strategies for brand awareness and reputation management by Andela Software Engineering Company, in Abuja. While epileptic power supply takes the lead with 64% of the responses, respondents are of the view that there are several other perceived challenges in the adoption and utilization of digital public relations strategies (DPRS) for brand awareness and reputation management. They include lack of or limited digital penetration (56.2%), low level of digital literacy skill (52.8%), others include legal and ethical issues (36%), fake news (38.2%), misinformation (32.6%) and disinformation (33.7%). This

implies that the respondents are conversant with the issues in the cyber space and therefore, there is the need for tech firms such as Andela to take them seriously and develop software that could mitigate them.

Discussion of Findings

This discussion synthesizes the key findings from the evaluating Andela Abuja's Digital Public RelationsStrategies (DPRS), contextualizing them within contemporary scholarship and practice in Digital Public Relations (DPR), brand awareness, and reputation management.

The findings indicate that Andela Abuja leverages a multi-channel Digital Public Relations approach (social media, content marketing,

SEO, influencer partnerships) effectively to raise brand awareness within the Abuja tech ecosystem and beyond. Consistent messaging centered on their core mission of unlocking human potential by connecting African tech talent with global opportunities resonates strongly (Olan et al., 2022). This aligns with research emphasizing mission-driven storytelling as a powerful tool for tech brands seeking differentiation and emotional connection in crowded markets (Werder & Holtzhausen, 2021).

Further finding indicates social media as an engagement hub.High engagement rates on platforms such as LinkedIn and Twitter (X) suggest successful community building. Andela's focus on showcasing success stories of Abuja-based developers ("Andelans") and local tech events provides authentic, relatable content that drives shares and organic reach (Smith, 2023). This finding supports the concept of employee advocacy and user-generated content (UGC) as potent amplifiers of brand awareness in the digital age (Macnamara & Lwin, 2022).

Finding also shows that content marketing and search engine optimization (SEO) drive visibility. Strategic content creation (blogs on tech skills, career advice, industry insights) optimized for relevant keywords positions Andela as a thought leader. This approach attracts organic traffic actively seeking opportunities or information,

effectively building awareness among a high-intent audience (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2023). The research confirms that valuable, search-optimized content remains fundamental for discoverability and establishing brand authority online (Du Plessis, 2020).

Similarly, the study affirms that influencer collaboration extends or expands reach**.** Partnerships with respected figures in the Abuja/Nigerian tech scene such as developers, educators and entrepreneurs demonstrably extend Andela's reach to new networks. This leverages the trust and credibility inherent in influencer marketing, particularly effective within niche professional communities such as tech ecosystem (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2023).

In addition, the study reveals that Andela manages its reputation through proactive engagement and navigates challenges. The study also discloses that Andela Abuja employs Digital Public Relations primarily for proactive reputation building through consistent positive messaging and community engagement. However, findings also highlight the critical role of reactive strategies for managing perceptions.Consistent sharing of success metrics such as placements, impact stories, participation in online tech discussions, and highlighting contributions to the Abuja tech ecosystem foster a reputation for excellence, impact, and community commitment. This

proactive narrative construction is essential for building reservoirs of goodwill that buffer against potential crises (Coombs, 2020).

Finding also affirms responsiveness as a key pillar managing a positive reputation. Prompt responses to inquiries and comments across platforms were noted as a strength. This demonstrates attentiveness and care, directly impacting perceived trustworthiness and reliability which are core components of corporate reputation (Fombrun & van Riel, 2023). Research consistently shows that timely and helpful social customer care is a non-negotiable aspect of modern reputation management (Aula, 2020).While predominantly positive, the findings also suggest instances where online sentiment required careful navigation, particularly regarding perceptions of selectivity or competitive intensity. The study notes Andela's utilization of direct messaging, clarifying blog posts, and highlighting support resources to address concerns. This aligns with best practices emphasizing transparency and direct communication to mitigate negativity and prevent escalation (Coombs, 2020). However, the findings underscore the need for continuous sentiment monitoring to identify emerging issues early (Macnamara & Lwin, 2022).

The study shows that the evaluation specifically within Abuja adds valuable context such as leveraging local identity. Content focusing on Abuja-based talent and events strengthens local relevance and community ties, enhancing brand resonance within the specific target geography (Olan et al., 2022). The result also shows Andela navigating the local digital landscape. The strategies account for Abuja's specific internet usage patterns, dominant platforms, and the competitive dynamics of the local tech scene which agrees with the position of Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2023). While findings indicate effectiveness, continuous adaptation to local platform trends such as potential shifts towards WhatsApp communities or Instagram for specific demographics, is crucial. There is the competitive differentiation which Andela should take seriously. In a growing Abuja tech training and placement market, Andela's Digital Public Relations Strategy (DPRS) effectively differentiates it through its global network focus and rigorous selection process, communicated as a mark of quality rather than exclusivity.

While the perceptions of the respondents reveal challenges such as epileptic power supply, misinformation, privacy and cybersecurity issues among others, there are other key challenges and areas for enhancement supported by literature. First is measuring direct impact. While engagement metrics are positive, attributing talent applications or partner acquisitions directly to specific Digital Public Relations efforts remains complex, reflecting a broader challenge in Digital Public Relations measurement beyond

vanity metrics (Macnamara, 2018; Smith, 2023). More sophisticated attribution modeling is recommended. Secondly, there is also the issue of crisis preparedness. While reactive handling was observed, the findings suggest an opportunity to further formalize and simulate potential digital crisis scenarios such as negative viral feedback, data concerns, specific to their model and location, ensuring swift, consistent responses (Coombs, 2020). Thirdly, there is the challenge of sentiment analysis depth. Moving beyond basic positive and negative tracking towards nuanced analysis of emotion drivers and emerging themes within Abuja-specific conversations could provide deeper reputation insights (Aula, 2020).

Conclusion

Andela Software Engineering Company, Abuja, demonstrates a sophisticated understanding and effective implementation of Digital Public Relations Strategies (DPRS)to achieve its dual goals of brand awareness and reputation management. Its multi-channel approach, centered on authentic storytelling, community engagement, and thought leadership, successfully amplifies its mission within the Abuja context and the wider tech ecosystem. The proactive cultivation of a positive reputation through consistent value delivery is a significant strength. However, the dynamic nature of the digital landscape, particularly in a competitive and evolving market such as Abuja, necessitates continuous evolution. Prioritizing advanced measurement, deepening sentiment analysis and robust crisis simulation will further strengthen Andela Abuja's Digital Public Relations resilience and impact, solidifying its position as a leader in connecting Nigerian tech talent with global opportunity.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussion presented in the study, "Evaluating the Utilization of Digital Public Relations Strategies for Brand Awareness and Reputation Management by Andela in Abuja," here are three key recommendations for enhancing Andela Abuja's Digital Public Relations efforts.

1) Andela should develop and implement advanced attribution modeling and impact measurement for enhanced brand awareness and reputation management. While engagement metrics such as likes, shares, comments are positive, the study identifies a challenge in directly linking Digital Public Relations activities specific campaigns, content pieces, influencer collaborations to core business outcomes such as qualified talent applications, successful placements, or strategic partner acquisitions. Relying solely on vanity metrics provides an incomplete picture of return on investment (ROI).

2) Develop and formalize a proactive, Abuja-specific digital crisis communication protocol to handle complex online communication crises for enhanced effectiveness in utilizing Digital Public Relations Strategies for a robust reputation management. The study notes effective reactive handling of minor issues but highlights an opportunity to be more proactively prepared for potential significant crises such as negative viral feedback on selection processes, data privacy concerns, partner dissatisfaction spilling online, and local regulatory challenges. Relying on ad-hoc responses during a major crisis is risky, especially in the fast-paced Abuja digital environment.

3) Andela should create and maintain a dedicated Digital Public Relations unit or department (Some organizations now call this unit or department "Directorate of Public Affairs"), which should be manned by Digital Public Relations experts.

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