

CAN THE ADOPTION OF PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES HELP IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE CONSUMPTION OF MKPURU-MMIRI AMONG YOUTHS IN ISI-UZO LGA, ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA?

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ABSTRACT

The increasing consumption of **Mkpuru-mmiri** (methamphetamine hydrochloride) among the youths in various communities, towns and cities across in Igbo land and elsewhere is of a great concern to governments and development authorities. Young and youthful individuals are becoming burdens and problems to the society as result of the menace. Consequently, this study is asking can public relations approaches be of any help in the fight against the consumption of **Mkpuru-mmiri** among the youths in **Isi-Uzo LGA, Enugu State, Nigeria**? The broad objective of the study is to appraise public relations strategies in the fight against the consumption of **Mkpuru-Mmiri** youths in Isi-Uzo Local Government Area. Enugu state. However, the specific objectives include to determine how frequent the government use workshop to sensitize the youth about of **Mkpuru-Mmiri**, assess the frequency of the use of radio talk show to mobilize the youth of Isi-Uzo Local Government Area against the consumption of **Mkpuru-Mmiri** and to ascertain any other major public relation strategy that the government is using to mobilize against **Mkpuru-Mmiri**. Descriptive research design was adopted. As a result, copies of questionnaire were distributed to sampled respondents. The findings show that public relations techniques such as radio talk-show, town hall meeting and peer group influencing can really help tackle the menace of **Mkpuru-mmiri** consumption among the youths of **Isi-Uzo LGA, Enugu State, Nigeria**.

Keywords: *Methamphetamine, Enugu State, Nacroclepsy, Substance abuse, Amphetamine.*

Background to the Study

Methamphetamine also referred to as '*Mkpuru-Mmiri*' is a slang name coined from the Igbo language which is translated as 'seed of water'. In reality, it is a crystal narcotic hallucinogen medically known as methamphetamine hydrochloride. The said substance goes by different names such as ice in local parlance because it looks like an ice block, it is also called Guzoro because of the euphoria effect one gets after taking it. It also goes by other street names such as crystal meth, poor man's cocaine, Shabu, Ubas, Siopao, Sha etc., *Mkpuru-Mmiri* is colorless, odourless and bitter-tasting crystalline drug. It is an extremely addictive stimulant that affects the central nervous system and several other systems of the body. This substance has a molecular structure that is chemically comparable to Amphetamine, a medicine used to treat Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder, and Narcolepsy, a sleep disorder. It is a man-made drug developed during World War II, used by soldiers to stay awake or carry out dangerous suicidal missions (Nwokwu. 2013). The abuse and excessive consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri* by the youths today with its antecedent effects is alarming and worrisome.

The youths that consume *Mkpuru-Mmiri* are usually prone to violent behaviours, insomnia, unquenching urge for sex, anxiety and mood swings, loss of body weight, inability to sleep, loss of appetite for food etc. A person addicted to *Mkpuru-Mmiri* may also become paranoid and start hallucinating. They could also think of hurting themselves or others and may feel as though insects are crawling on or under their skin (Nweze, 2017). The danger of being addicted to *Mkpuru-Mmiri* is that the consumption of the least 0.1 grams may bring about most of the above-listed effects and it takes about 73hours to completely leave the body

system, hence those who consistently take it may suffer from more damages than anticipated (Elom, 2011).

Mkpuru-Mmiri is an addictive hard drug that is wasting the destiny of so many youths and has become a serious issue in the southeast with thousands of Igbo youths addicted to the drug. However, in Igbo communities, it has assumed a notorious dimension and is fast destroying the youths. This destructive substance has in fact become popular among Igbo youths that it is now nick-named *Mkpuru-Mmiri*, literally translated as blocked water or ice block. Its negative effect is such that after its consumption, the consumers tend to engage in criminal and immoral acts detrimental to the society at large. The notoriety of the abuse of *Mkpuru-Mmiri* is such that it has attracted the attention of the masses. Residents of Ebonyi metropolis have expressed concern about the growing consumption of Methamphetamine. This became necessary following a series of atrocities being perpetrated by consumers of this dangerous substance on the people. The practice has continued to generate wide condemnation with many arguing that the trend was a major factor fueling insecurity and criminality in the southeast communities.

Public relations according to Ardianto (2018), is to assess public attitudes, identify policies and procedures from individuals or agencies on the basis of public interests and implement work plans to gain public recognition. Public relations strategic communication from Ibrahim (2018), point of view is the skillful application of public relations strategies in addressing negative situations with the aim of converting such into positive essentials for the benefit of humanity. In establishing the functions of public relations, Black in Akinwumi (2014) classified them into thirteen. His classification suggests that public relations functions as a counselling tool in understanding human behaviour, analyzing future trends and predicting their consequences; research into public opinions, attitudes, and

expectations and advising on necessary actions; establishing and maintaining two-

way communication based on truth and full information, preventing and managing conflict and misunderstanding; promoting mutual respect and social responsibility, harmonizing the private and the public interest, promoting goodwill with staff, suppliers and customers, improving industrial relations, promotion of products and services; attracting good personnel and reducing labour turn over; maximizing profitability and projecting corporate identity (Nwosu, 2015).

One of the greatest discoveries of man is the therapeutic use of drugs (*Mkpuru-Mmiri*) to cure his ailment, to excite him when he is dull, to slim him when he is fat, to expand him when he is thin and to put him to sleep when he is awake. Thus, man is known to be using *Mkpuru-Mmiri* and learning to depend on their usage by various societies in the world to relieve pain, escape reality, to alter perception, provide pleasurable sensation and find the assumed meaning to life. Today *Mkpuru-Mmiri* remains a huge public health problem and is still one of the leading preventable causes of death worldwide (adeyeye, 2011).

Given the ever-increasing consumption *Mkpuru-Mmiri* by youths especially in Enugu State led to the need to adopt public relation strategies in the fight against the consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri* by the youths. There are many public relation strategies that have proven to be effective in managing the pandemic of *Mkpuru-Mmiri* consumption but in the course of this study, Mass media as a public relations strategy, public press conference as public relations strategy, and documentary films as public relations strategy will be employed in combating youth consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri* in Enugu State.

Statement of the Problem

Drug abuse has become rampant in our society and this has posed a problem because a society filled with drug addicts and drug dependents cannot move forward. A nation filled with people who misuse, abuse or are addicted to drugs will have a high rate of increase in crime, prostitution etc. it also makes way for drug traffic kicking in the society. It constitutes a major public health hazard and is a part of the general and social disorganization we see around us that is, breeds comatose patients, and various melody cases that constitute the urban eyesore that dent the image of a nation. It contributes significantly to the breakdown of law and order and the establishment of various circles of abuse, deficiency, criminality and further abuse.

The continuous abuse of these drugs has led to a situation of drug addiction and the addict developing bondage to the drug. The effects of drug abuse are detrimental not only to the individual but to the society as a whole. Yet this problem is on the increase, especially among those in higher institutions of learning, which is a serious threat to our national sanctity.

An increasing number of youths are insane, homeless, jobless, and school drop-out as a result of drug addiction. Review of related studies indicate that such factors as peer influence, lack of parental care, environmental influence and exposure among others are orchestrating drug abuse in many parts of Nigeria. The major negative effect of the consumption *Mkpuru-Mmiri* is exposure and explosion to crime and immorality unlike any other hard drugs *Mkpuru-Mmiri* is rated very highly addictive, very cost and easily exposes the victim to various levels of crimes and immoralities. Due to the numerous harmful effects of the said drug, the youth who could not bear the challenges took it upon their shoulders to seek out the consumers and punish them appropriately, despite the little success

the *Mkpuru-Mmiri* achieved the rate of *Mkpuru-Mmiri* consumption is still high

today. Given the above expositions, the study sought to appraise public relations strategies in the fight against the consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri* youths in Isi-Uzo Local Government Area. Enugu state as a case study.

Objectives of the study

The broad objective of the study is to appraise public relations strategies in the fight against the consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri* youths in Isi-Uzo Local Government Area. Enugu state. However, the specific objectives include:

- i. To determine how frequent the government use workshop to sensitize the youth about of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*.
- ii. To assess the frequency of the use of radio talk show to mobilize the youth of Isi-Uzo Local Government Area against the consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*
- iii. To ascertain any other major public relation strategy that the government is using to mobilize against *Mkpuru-Mmiri*.

Research questions

The researcher has come up with the following research questions to guide the work;

- i. How frequent does the government use workshop to sensitize the youth about of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*?
- ii. What is the frequency of the use of radio talk show to mobilize the youth of Isi-Uzo Local Government Area against the consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*?

- iii. What are the other major public relation strategy that the government is using to mobilize against *Mkpuru-Mmiri*?

Hypotheses

The hypotheses below have been formulated to guide the study.

Hypothesis One:

H₀₁: The government does not frequently use workshop to sensitize the youth about of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*.

H_{a1}: The government frequently use workshop to sensitize the youth about of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*.

Hypothesis Two:

H₀₂: There is no frequency of the use of radio talk show to mobilize the youth of Isi-Uzo Local Government Area against the consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*

H_{a2}: There is high frequency of the use of radio talk show to mobilize the youth of Isi-Uzo Local Government Area against the consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*

Hypothesis Three:

H₀₃: There is no other major public relation strategy that the government is using to mobilize against *Mkpuru-Mmiri*

H_{a3}: There are other major public relation strategy that the government is using to mobilize against *Mkpuru-Mmiri*

Significance of the Study

The study has both theoretical and empirical significance. Theoretically, this work will be significant because its findings will help to close the gap created by lack of existing literature on public relation strategies in the fight against *Mkpuru-Mmiri* consumption. It will also stimulate further research on public relation strategies in the fight against *Mkpuru-Mmiri* consumption in this part of sub-Sahara Africa and Nigeria in particular.

Empirically, the study will also draw the attention of the Enugu state government and Isi-Uzo Local Government to put effort into the fight against *Mkpuru-Mmiri* consumption among youths. Again, it will equally draw the attention of the government and agencies responsible for fighting against the intake of hard drugs to be alert in the fight to eradicate drug abuse in the society. The findings of this study will be of help to devise more efficient ways to fight the intake of the harmful *Mkpuru-Mmiri* among the youths. Finally, the outcome of the study will no doubt help in the prevention of high consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri* and other related hard drugs. This study will also be a useful material to research students in mass communication, sociology, psychology and other related fields.

Review of Related Literature

The Concept of Public Relations

Nwosu (2001) in his book “Marketing Communication Management and Media: An Integrated Approach” described the non-sensical, common-sensical, and the professional definitions of public relations. Odigbo (2000) equally recited the above definitions of public relations by Nwosu. Cutlip, Center and Broom (1985; Odigbo, 2000) defined public relations as “the management function that

identifies, establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various publics on whom its success or failure depends”. The British Institute of Public Relations definition, defines PR as “the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics” (Nwosu, 2001, Nwosu and Nkamnebe, 2006; Olumuyiwa, 2012).

The International Public Relations Association, IPRA, says that, “Public relations is the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organization leaders and implementing planned programmes of action which will benefit the organization and also serve public interests” (Nwosu, 2001). Public Relations is a distinctive management function, which helps to establish and maintain mutual and symbiotic ways of communication, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics. It involves the management of problems or issues, helps management to keep informed and be responsive to public opinion, defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest. It aids management to keep abreast of and effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends and deploys research and sound ethical communication techniques as its fundamental and principal tools.

Similarly, Nwosu (1996; Belch and Belch, 2001) quoted the definition offered by the Public Relations News which states that public relations is “the management function that evaluates people’s attitude, identifies the policies and procedures of organization with the public interest and executes a programme of action (and communication) to earn public understanding and acceptance”.

Public relations serve a wide variety of institutions in society such as businesses, trade unions, government agencies, voluntary associations,

foundations, hospitals, and educational and religious institutions. To achieve their goals, these institutions must develop effective relationship with many different audiences or publics such as employees, members, customers, local communities, shareholders, and other institutions with the society at large.

The managements of institutions need to understand the attitudes and values of their publics in order to achieve institutional goals. The goals themselves are shaped by the external environment. The public relations practitioner acts as a counselor to management and as a mediator, helping to translate policy and action (Osuji, 1990).

It is worthy to mention that before the paradigm shift to the current and contemporary public relations practice, a lot of challenges had taken place in developing or revolutionizing public relations. Public relation began with Press Agency or Publicity model, developed into Public Information model, moved to Two-way Asymmetrical model and then finally to Two-way Symmetrical model; which is the modern public relations. These journeys are what the duo professors: James Grunig and Todd Hunt called the four models of public relations (Olumuyiwa, 2012).

Methamphetamine (*Mkpuru Mmiri*)

According to the National Institute of Health, Methamphetamine is a powerful, highly addictive stimulant that affects the central nervous system of whoever takes it. It creates a feeling of massive happiness that is very addictive and makes the taker want to fly. A type of drug that lets people stay awake and do continuous activity with less need for sleep. Methamphetamine, which has been given so many baptismal names, such as speed, uppers, meth, crystal meth, chalk, ice, glass, Christmas tree, and crank, could be swallowed or snorted, and looks like ice block and can be blue in colour.

Methamphetamine is a highly addictive stimulant drug that affects the central nervous system. It is a synthetic substance that resembles amphetamine in structure and function. The drug can be made in labs using various chemicals and processes, including ingredients such as pseudoephedrine, which is found in some cold and allergy medications. However, the production of methamphetamine is illegal in most countries due to its harmful effects and potential for abuse. When taken, methamphetamine increases the release and blocks the reuptake of certain neurotransmitters such as dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin in the brain. This results in heightened feelings of euphoria, increased energy, alertness, and confidence. Users may experience a temporary sense of excitement and pleasure, often leading to a desire for repeated use. However, prolonged use of methamphetamine can lead to serious physical, psychological, and social consequences. Physically, it can cause weight loss, dental problems (commonly known as "meth mouth"), and skin issues. Psychologically, it can lead to agitation, irritability, anxiety, paranoia, hallucinations, and extreme mood swings. It also affects cognition and memory, leading to long-term cognitive impairment. Socially, methamphetamine abuse can strain relationships, lead to criminal

behavior, and result in a decline in work or academic performance.

Methamphetamine addiction is a severe problem, as it can quickly lead to a cycle of dependence and cravings. Quitting methamphetamine use can be challenging and often requires professional help, including therapy, counseling, and sometimes medication. Efforts have been made to educate the public about the risks associated with methamphetamine and to control its production and distribution. However, despite these efforts, the drug continues to be a significant problem in many parts of the world.

Public Relations Functions

Public relations activities are wide in scope as it plays colossal roles in an organization. It contributes to the development and success of the organization and the community within which it conducts business (Alom and Gbakihi, 2009). Although, a lot of functions may have been directly or indirectly monitored or alluded to in the above discussions, the essence of this section is to discuss the functions more pointedly, and for greater understanding. Edemod (2003) highlighting the management function of Public relations states that “PR utilizes communication skills and strategies in its practice in order to establish and maintain the several linkages among human beings in the behaviour that are innate or adopted to man’s nature.” Nwosu (1996), after examining the specialized areas of public relations (Media relations, corporate relations, government/political relations, employee relations, community relations, issues management, financial public relations (etc), list public relations functions to include – writing, placement, promotion, advertising, public speaking etc.

Nwosu (2001; Okolo, Nebo, Ugonna and Obikeze, 2017) also enumerate the following functions of PR:

- a. Corporate information and communication management
- b. Research and evaluation
- c. Planning
- d. Publication
- e. Writing
- f. Special event
- g. Protocol
- h. Employee relations and industrial relations
- i. Government relations and public affairs
- j. Media relations
- k. Marketing support
- l. Investor and financial relations
- m. Community relations and corporate social responsibility
- n. Issues and crises management

Perhaps the above functions by Professor Nwosu are more of regional, national and international nomenclature as Salu (1993) highlights the local government public relations function as follows:

- ☐ Publicising the Chairman's speeches through the relevant media channels.
- ☐ Arranging appropriate hospitality, good press relations, answering media enquiries on Reports and Accounts.
- ☐ Organising logistics and welfare for meetings.
- ☐ Acts as a spokesperson, especially during crisis, such as strike, oil spillage, gas flaring, nuclear disaster etc.
- ☐ Plays a major role in community relations bonds between the local government and its external publics.
- ☐ Ensuring a mutual understanding and goodwill between the local government and the organization within its area which in turn assists the local government in

its development through the provision of employment, electricity, pipe borne

water, health centres, good roads, schools etc thereby alleviating poverty in the localities.

Public Relations Strategies

An organization will be whatever the chief executive wants it to be. If the chief executive could make his organization visible to key publics, he too will be visible. The extent of visibility and credibility, however, depends on the synergy of techniques adopted, which will be influenced by the positioning of the institution. In terms of strategic choice, a company has four options. It can either be a defender, a prospector, an analyzer or a reactor. The public relations package of each strategic choice differs from the other, with attendant cost implications.

There are so many public relations strategies (Odigbo, 2000). However, the relevant public relations techniques will be discussed below briefly to underscore the fact that cost is no justifiable excuse for not making effective use of public relations. Once the strategic position of an organization is determined and agreed, it becomes easier to formulate appropriate strategies. The following are Public Relations strategies:

Mass Media

Mass media is an important element of communication through which large, heterogeneous, scattered or divergent audiences receive information through a channel. It is a mass marketing oriented approach as the messages being relayed are expected to reach a larger audience. Although in public relations, the mass media may be perceived as targeted mass public. They include the radio, television, newspapers, magazines etc.

Radio

Radio is an effective medium of reaching the largest majority of Nigerians. This is because it is a cheaper medium to penetrate with public relations messages

as radio is affordable to even the poorest man in the remotest village. “Its audio characteristics make it a more communication media as both the literate and illiterate can appreciate its means of transmitting news; news can be transmitted in many local languages. Almost all the 36 states in Nigeria have a local radio station” (Ugonna, Okolo, Obikeze, Ohanagorom, Nwodo and Oranusi, 2017). Because of its portability and affordability, it is an effective means of reaching the grassroots (Salu, 1993). It is a flexible medium as messages can be adjusted to suit a specific target audience. Preparation for it is similar to that of TV. It could be very useful when handling matters relating to community relations or students or social menace.

The public relations executive of the local government must capitalize on this strength that the radio possesses to communicate to the target audience about the dangers of drug trafficking. Through good media relations, the public relations executive or professional for the local government must relate with the radio news editor to organize and air a recorded commercial by way of public service advertisement warning the publics about the dangers of drug trafficking. The PR expert for the local government needs to liaise with the news editor to hold “phone-in-programme inform of “media chat or media link”, and or talk shows (Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman and Toth, 2009) to educate and also entertain a question and answer session with the members of the communities on the topic: “The Causes and Effects of Drug Trafficking on the Society”.

Television

This is an audio-visual medium of communications which the public relation executive of the local government must appreciate its efficacy and

robustness in delivering PR messages to the rural communities because of its impact (Salu, 1993). Belch and Belch (2001) remark that it is an ideal medium for

communicating Public relations messages as it mixes of sound, motion, colour and visual images to relay information to its audience. Recorded TV programmes such as seminars and workshops where the intricacies about drug trafficking is extensively discussed must be broadcast to give the audience especially the youth the opportunity to perceive the dangers associated with drug trafficking. TV shows such as media chat and phone-in programme (Odigbo, 2000) will chart a course in surmounting the menace of drug trafficking among the youth; and must be planned and executed by the PR executive of the local government in local TV stations to allow many people contribute their quota on drug trafficking issues.

The TV allows its audience to watch programmes and events and this lends credibility as it's often said that "seeing is believing". No doubt, television is a powerful medium of communication. Through it, one can impact knowledge and mobilize support. For a chief executive, thorough planning and rehearsal must precede a major television interview. Brevity and precision are the main requirements of effective speaking on television. Before accepting to appear on television, it must be ascertained that there is sufficient time to prepare adequately. During the programme, the chief executive should be brief, concise, precise and interesting (Nwosu, 1996). Aside from TV interviews, chief executives could participate in discussion programmes, or personality programmes or dialogue. All these are useful opportunities to speak truthfully on issues that concern the society and perhaps the organization.

Press Conferences

A press conference is an essential and effective public relations weaponry (Ioana and Bogdan, 2015). Press conferences though had been less deployed by

organizations and corporations, had been very familiar with politicians as a very effective method of delivering public relations messages to the target audience

(Belch and Belch, 2001). It is one of the most important weapons through which presidents communicate to the citizens through the media (Eshbaugh-Soha, 2003). The subject of discourse must be attractive and of great interest and importance for it to yield positive results. Press conferences are not often arranged for, but however, they are rather organised sporadically when there is a burning and salient issue that can easily attract the attention of the press. Salu (1993) notes that during press conferences, journalists are brought to a round table to make a press statement. "On a local level, community events, local developments and the like must receive coverage". Odigbo (2000) submits that press conferences are used to break "hard news" to members of the public through the press.

In time of crisis, it becomes germane that the public relations manager quickly arrange for a press conference to enlighten the target audience on time before false information begin to filter from the "rumour mill" (Salu, 1993). The public relations executive of the local government can use this avenue to disseminate information about drug trafficking to the members of the various communities making up the local government. At such august events, the PR executive must ensure that the local government chairman becomes the chief spokesperson to make the event more credible and attractive.

The chairman must be duly prepared by the PR expert (Nwosu, 1996) to deliver a breathtaking speech capable of changing the attitude of the myriads of youth towards drug trafficking. The chairman must be tactful in delivering his speech as well as providing answers to the journalists to avoid making blunder. This is because Eshbaugh-Soha (2003) points that the press conference concerns the press more than the spokesperson (chairman in this case). If a blunder occurs,

he gets roasted by the media. Eriksson (2011) stresses that it is an opportunity for the press to give the politicians a third degree and hold the responsible for their

wrong deeds.

Documentary Films

A documentary film is a film produced by an organization with a view to educating and enlightening and to some extent influencing an audience about an issue or company activities or sub-sector. It is very effective in changing people's attitude and behaviour (Mirana and Mirana, 2016). However, in their study: "Effects of Documentary Films on Students' Attitude towards Science: A Pre-test and Post-test Study", it was revealed that no significant difference on students' Pre-test and post-test. These films were considered as a mere entertainment, hard to understand and just a mere FYI". It has the power to dramatize a drug trafficking related event in such a pragmatic way that members of the audience will be transfixed and so become part and parcel of the communication and change realization effort (Gregg, 2011).

According to Gregg, documentary films can be very persuasive. The focus can either be historical or empirical. It is often most effective when the sponsor can resist the urge to use it as an advertising medium and restrict it to only unbiased information. "documentary film was viewed as a cultural genre well suited to their goal of addressing deep-seated global issues such as the AIDs pandemic, poverty, discrimination, lack of access to education and healthcare, and human rights abuses. Consequently, they made social issue filmmaking a priority" (Meg, 2012).

The main strengths are that it has movement, sound and colour. Odigbo (2000) in his study states thus: "A documentary film of some people whose lives have been ruined by drugs, would make a striking/lasting impressions on the minds of youths, than one million advertisements or radio jingles". When the youth watch

live images of a very rich and popular drug trafficker who has been incarcerated and even those executed by hanging or firing squad, they will be forced to change

their attitude. The documentary may even be on the arrest and re-arrest of the Mexican drug kingpin-Joaquin- “El Chapo” Guzman. Amma (2007) highlight three types of documentary:

Political Documentary: this highlight political issues mainly. It shows films relating to past political campaigns and elections that brought people to power, it might be the president of a country, the governor of a state, the Senators and members of the House of Representatives, the local government Chairman and the ward Councillors. Political documentaries will aid the electorates to make critical decisions and chose candidate based on the antecedents. According to Amma (2007), it moves people into a guided and guarded action.

Human Interest Documentary: this is the type that showcases events, places, lifestyle and culture that is uncommon to majority of people. It might be a documentary on wild life or even how man existed around one thousand years ago (man’s evolution). It might show how people lived in a natural world. A world where people were contented with the little they get. A world where the only means of survival was subsistence agriculture; where people depended on stream water to quench their thirst; a world where people eat organic food and wild game that were hunted with sticks, catapults, and bow and arrows. A world where there was no armed robbery, corruption and other social vices. It normally X-ray travelogue about journeys made to remote islands where people met fairies like the Shakespearean “The Tempest and Midsummer Night Dreams”.

Social change Documentary: this shows events that led to a social occurrence. It shows how people took action that brought light and life to the entire society. If the documentary on the revolution that took place in the Middle East is shown in

twenty years to come, people can use it to relate to their immediate situation and act rationally. This type underscore drug trafficking being discussed. If a

documentary is shown on how those who embark on this heinous practice are treated by the government, the entire youth in the local government will make a U-turn to drug trafficking.

Thus, the public relations message can be presented in a very realistic and dramatic manner. The audience will be a captive one for about 30 minutes which enhances greater memorability of the message.

Theoretical Framework

The Agenda Setting Theory

The radio, television, newspapers, magazines, the new social media all have a crucial role to play in communicating the ills of drug abuse and trafficking. They dish out information to the public about an object, event, disaster, etc. They expand people's cognitive horizon by equipping them with information they have not heard before. The media charts the course people think and view issues of public interest and discourse. It creates public awareness on issues of social, political, cultural, economic, technological and natural merit (Albalawi and Sixsmith, 2015). According to them, this theory is leans on two important principles- "media shapes and filters reality before presenting it to public and these channels determine the priority with which individuals regard salient issues". The media determines the salience of issue on public agenda (Luo, 2014). Luo (2014) observes that any issue that the media communicates to the target audience is perceived as relevant. It serves as the virile gatekeeper to individual, security agencies, government and corporate organization's anomalies.

Agenda setting theory holds that the media have a great influence on

audiences regarding their choice of which story to consider as news and the prominence, time and space given to them (McCombs, 2009). The agenda setting theory's main postulate is salience transfer.

The mass media has the capability to influence the decision of the masses on issues on public agenda (Nwokeafor and Okunloye, 2013). For them, the media dictates what the people can think about but not, what to think. . The agenda setting theory has become one of the most acknowledged theories of communication. The theory which was propounded in 1972 by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw was derived from their study that took place in Chapel Hill North Carolina, U.S.A., where the researchers surveyed undecided voters during the 1968 US presidential campaign on what they thought were key issues and measured these against the actual media contents (Nwokeafor and Okunloye, 2013).

The data or results they generated from the study helped them demonstrate empirical support for their main hypothesis. That hypothesis was that the mass media directed the agenda for public opinion by emphasizing specific issues and at the same time neglecting other issues. This clearly demonstrated that proper use of various mass media in communication campaigns to facilitate a positive behaviour change (negativity to positivity) would help the campaigns to be effective. One of the major approaches to the fight against drug trafficking is the aggressive use of the mass media to reach the youths in Enugu. Through the media, the dangers of drug abuse and trafficking will be exposed to aid in changing the attitude of the youths towards this socio-psychological menace. Perhaps the mass media would enforce attitudinal change regarding illicit drug production, intake, and trafficking among the youths. The agenda setting theory therefore shows that media institutions usually help to tell the public what issues they should bear in their mind. Furthermore, the essence of this theory is to show empirically that the

audience usually learns from mass media driven campaigns.

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Research Design

This study adopted descriptive survey design. This type of research design is used to extract information from the targeted population through the use of questionnaire and oral interview and subjecting the data obtained to statistical analysis for the purpose of drawing conclusion. In this regard, it is relevant to the study because it will help to get first-hand information from the residents of Isi-Uzo Local Government Area on public relations strategies in the fight against the consu

Area of the Study

The area of study is Isi-Uzo Local Government Area, Enugu State.

Population of the Study

According to National Population Census (using population projection for 2023) and Official Website of Nigeria Local Government system, the population of youths in Isi-Uzo Local Government Area is 18,000. Youths in this context are male and female within the bracket of 18-35 years.

Sample Size

The sample size for this study was determined based on the population of the study thus; total Population of the study area is 18, 000 youths. The Sample size for the study was determined using Taro Yamane sample size determination formula. The formula is stated as:

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

Where:

n = sample size;

N = given population;

e = margin of error = 5% = 0.05

1 = constant

Thus, the sample size for this study is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$
$$n = \frac{18,000}{1 + 18,000(0.05)^2}$$

$$\frac{18,000}{1 + 18,000 \times 0.0025}$$

$$= \frac{18,000}{1.45}$$
$$= \frac{18,000}{46}$$
$$= 391$$

Therefore, n = 391

Sampling Techniques

The sampling technique employed in this was simple random sampling which means researcher was at liberty to choose those he considered appropriate for the study. This was in order to give every youths of Isi-Uzo Local Government Area the equal chance of participating in the research.

Instrument for Data Collection

Questionnaire is the main instrument for data collection in this study. The questionnaire has two parts: part A and Part B. Part A contains the personal

information of the respondents whereas part B contains addressed research questions.

Method of Data Presentation and Analysis

The data collected in the course of this study were presented and analyzed using frequency table indicating the response categories, and the simple percentages. The tables effectively and orderly summarized the quantitative data.

Data Presentation and Analysis

In this section, data were presented and analyzed the data collected with tables of frequencies and percentages. Hypotheses were also tested using chi-square. 320 out of the 391 copies of questionnaire distributed were returned and used for the analysis.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Distribution on data rate of return

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage
Number Returned	320	81.8%
Number not Returned	71	18.2%
Total	391	100%

Interpretation: The table above indicates that out of the 391 questionnaires distributed by the researcher to the youths of Isi-Uzo Local Government Area, 320 questionnaires representing 81.8% were duly filled and returned while 71 questionnaires representing 18.2% were not returned due to damages, mutilation etc.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	214	53.7%
Female	106	46.3%
Total	320	100%

Interpretation: The table above indicates that out of 320 respondents, male constituted 53.7% of the population while female constituted 46.3%. That is to say that male constituted more of the questionnaires returned than the females as at the time of questionnaire collection.

Table 3: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	148	41.8%
Married	165	56.3%
Divorced	0	0%
Widowed	7	1.8%
Total	320	100%

Interpretation: From the respondents' response as highlighted in the table above, it was observed that the highest proportion of the respondents with total number of 165 representing 56.3% are married, followed by those who are single that are 148 in number representing 41.8% of the total population of the study. Those that are widowed are ranked third in the table with 1.8% while none of the respondents are divorced.

Table 4: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-25	91	27.1%
26-35	86	25.8%
36-45	74	22.6%
46-55	49	16%
56 and above	20	8.4%
Total	320	100%

Interpretation: From the table above, the highest number of respondents on age fall on 18-25years of the age bracket with 27.1%, 26-35year with 25.8% is the next, and also followed by those in age bracket of 36-45years with 22.6%, while

46-55 with 16% and the least is 56 and above with 8.4%. The reason why the respondents that fall within the age bracket of 18-25 years are more in number is that they are young graduates and youths who understand the questions and could respond to the questionnaire without much assistance.

Table 5: Educational Qualifications

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
FSLC	43	15.3%
SSCE	63	20.5%
OND/NCE	93	28.4%
HND/B.Sc.	117	34.7%
M.Sc. and others	4	1.1%
Total	320	100%

Interpretation: The above table shows the educational qualifications of the respondent in Isi-Uzo. The least from the table is 4 which represent 1.1% which is the number of the respondents with M.Sc. and other education qualification. Next on the table of educational qualification are the respondents with FSLC with 43 representing 15.3% of the total respondents, followed by those who had their SSCE with 63 representing 20.5%. The respondents who had their OND/NCE were 93 in number representing 28.4% of the total population and finally, the respondents who had their HND/B.Sc. were 117 in number representing 34.7% which is the highest in the table. This indicates that majority of the residents are HND/BSc holders.

Table 6: Religious Affiliations

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christianity	315	98.7%

African Tradition	0	0%
Islamic	0	0%
Others	5	1.3%
Total	320	100%

Interpretation: The religious affiliation of respondents on the table shows that Christianity dominated all other religious group with 91.3% of the total population of 100%. While other religious groups came second with attracts 3.1%. None of the respondent is either an Islam or traditionalist. The area of study is therefore basically a Christian community.

Test of Hypotheses

In this study, three hypotheses guiding the study were duly tested to establish if truly there is a significant relationship between the dependent variables with the independent variables on public relations strategies in the fight against the consumption of *Mpuru-Mmiri* youths.

Hypothesis one:

H₀₁: The government does not frequently use workshop to sensitize the youth about of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*.

H_{a1}: The government frequently use workshop to sensitize the youth about of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*.

Table 7: Does government frequently use workshop to sensitize the youth about of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*.

Response category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	115	37
Agree	94	29
Uncertain	22	6
Disagree	50	15

Strongly disagree	39	13
Total	320	100

Expected frequency (Ef) = $\frac{320}{5} = 64$

5

Degree of freedom = K-1

= 5-1

= 4

Formula:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Using the formula

S/N	O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
1	115	64	51	2,601	40.64
2	94	64	30	900	14.06
3	22	64	-42	-1,764	27.56
4	50	64	-14	-196	3.06
5	39	64	-25	-625	9.77

$\chi^2 =$

95.05

At a 0.05 level, 4 degree of freedom, the critical value (table value) is 9.49. Since the chi-square (χ^2) calculated value of 95.09 is greater than the critical value of 9.49, the null hypothesis H_0 : the government does not frequently use workshop to sensitize the youth about of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*. was rejected and the alternative hypothesis H_a : the government frequently use workshop to sensitize the youth about of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*., was accepted.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no frequency of the use of radio talk show to mobilize the youth of Isi-Uzo Local Government Area against the consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*

H_{a2}: There is frequency of the use of radio talk show to mobilize the youth of Isi-Uzo Local Government Area against the consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*

Table 8: Is there high frequency of the use of radio talk show to mobilize the youth of Isi-Uzo Local Government Area against the consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*

Response category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	98	33
Agree	74	24
Uncertain	26	8
Disagree	43	13
Strongly Disagree	79	22
Total	320	100

$$\text{Expected frequency } (Ef) = \frac{320}{5} = 64$$

$$\text{Degree of freedom} = K-1$$

$$= 5-1$$

$$= 4$$

Formula:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - Ef)^2}{Ef}$$

Using the formula

S/N	O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²
-----	---	---	-----	--------------------

$(O-E)^2/E$				
1	98	64	34	1,156
	18.06			
2	74	64	10	100
	1.56			
3	26	64	-38	-1,444
	22.56			
4	43	64	-21	-441
	1.78			
5	79	64	15	225
	3.51			

$$\chi^2 = 47.47$$

Since the chi-square χ^2 calculated value of 47.47 is greater than the critical value of 9.49, the null hypothesis H_0 : there is no frequency of the use of radio talk show to mobilize the youth of Isi-Uzo Local Government Area against the consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*, was rejected and the alternative hypothesis H_a : there is high frequency of the use of radio talk show to mobilize the youth of Isi-Uzo Local Government Area against the consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*, was accepted.

Hypothesis Three:

H_0 : There is no other major public relation strategy that the government is using to mobilize against *Mkpuru-Mmiri*

H_a : There are other major public relation strategy that the government is using to mobilize against *Mkpuru-Mmiri*

Table 9: Are they other major public relation strategy that the government is using to mobilize against *Mkpuru-Mmiri*

Response category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	90	31
Agree	89	28
Uncertain	20	5
Disagree	76	22
Strongly Disagree	45	14
Total	320	100

Expected frequency (Ef) = $\frac{320}{5} = 64$

5

Degree of freedom = $K-1$

= $5-1$

= 4

Formula:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - Ef)^2}{Ef}$$

Using the formula

S/N	O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
1	90	64	26	676	10.56
2	89	64	25	625	9.76
3	20	64	-44	-1,936	30.25
4	76	64	12	144	2.25
5	45	64	-19	-361	5.64

$\chi^2 =$

58.46

Since the chi-square χ^2 calculated value of 58.46 is greater than the critical value of 9.49, the null hypothesis H_{03} : there is no other major public relation strategy that the government is using to mobilize against *Mkpuru-Mmiri*, was rejected and the alternative hypothesis H_{a3} : there are other major public relation strategy that the government is using to mobilize against *Mkpuru-Mmiri*, was accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The researcher found that the government frequently use workshop to sensitize the youth about of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*. This implies that the government involvement through the use of workshop to sensitize the youths about *Mkpuru-Mmiri* is effective. This finding was deduced from the result of the testing of hypothesis one which sought to know whether government frequently use workshop to sensitize the youth about of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*. The study also revealed that the government frequently use workshop to sensitize the youth about of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*, as shown in table 7 above.

It was also discovered that there is high frequency of the use of radio talk show to mobilize the youth of Isi-Uzo Local Government Area against the consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*. As shown by the testing of hypothesis two, since the chi-square, χ^2 calculated value of 74.74 is greater than the critical value of 9.49, the null hypothesis H_0 : there is no high frequency of the use of radio talk show to mobilize the youth of Isi-Uzo Local Government Area against the consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*, was rejected and the alternative hypothesis H_i : there is high frequency of the use of radio talk show to mobilize the youth of Isi-Uzo Local Government Area against the consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*, was accepted.

However, it was observed that there are other major public relation strategy that the government is using to mobilize against *Mkpuru-Mmiri* as contained in

table 9, which indicates that 166 respondents representing 43% strongly agreed that There are other major public relation strategy that the government is using to mobilize against Mkpuru-Mmiri and 106 respondents representing 27% also agreed.

Conclusion

Based on the findings above, the study concludes thus: Public relations is essential in the fight against the consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri* among Isi-Uzo youths in Enugu State. Effective and efficient public relations practices can aid in establishing and promoting co-operation among the various stakeholders in fighting the consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri* among Isi-Uzo youths in Nigeria

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended that:

1. The government of Enugu State should put more effort in sensitizing Enugu youths especially youths of Isi-uzo Local Government Area by introducing more effective workshops geared towards controlling the intake of *Mkpuru-Mmiri* by youths in the society.
2. Secondly, effort should be made to introduce more radio programmes and talk shows to help mobilize the youths of Isi-Uzo against the consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri*
4. Lastly, effort should be made by the government and other interested bodies to other public relation strategies that capable of preventing the consumption of *Mkpuru-Mmiri* among youths.

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