

**IMPACT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES ON COMBATING DRUG TRAFFICKING
AMONG YOUTHS IN ENUGU STATE (A STUDY OF ENUGU NORTH AND ENUGU SOUTH
LGAs)**

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Abstract

Drugs have torn apart many families, corrupted the nation's values, and devastated countless communities. No corner of the land has been spared – no social class, no region, no neighbourhood, and no school. The objectives of the study include to investigate the extent to which mass media as public relations strategy aid in combating drug trafficking among youths in Enugu state, to determine the relationship between public press conference as public relations strategy and combating of drug trafficking among youths in Enugu state and to assess the extent to which documentary films as public relations strategy aid in combating drug trafficking among youths in Enugu state. The population of the study was indefinite and Freund and William's formula for sample size was used in determining a sample of 215. The questionnaire was vetted by research lecturers of both public relations and marketing research experts based on face validity in terms of relevance to the subject matter, objective of the study and coverage of the content area to ascertain the validity of the instrument. The value of the test of reliability is 0.87 which was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha. Using primary data and secondary sources of information, the study revealed that mass media as public relations strategy to a large extent aid combating drug trafficking among youths in Enugu State. It also revealed that press conferences as public relations strategy aid in combating drug trafficking among youths in Enugu State. And finally, the study revealed that documentary films as public relations strategy to a large extent aid combating drug trafficking among youths in Enugu State. The researcher recommends that an aggressive but persuasive radio and television programmes must be heightened to instill fear in the minds of the youths about the dangers of drug trafficking, also, press conferences must be judiciously organized to avert negative information from filtering out from the rumour mill and finally the adoption of documentary films should be used frequently in communicating to the youths about attitudinal change towards drug abuse and trafficking.

Keywords: Public relations, drug trafficking, Agenda setting theory, Press conferences, Documentary films and Mass media.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria has become the melting pot for trafficking in narcotics and money laundering activities (Luong, 2015). Nigerian drug trafficking networks have been growing since the 80s. Nigerians had been involved in drug trafficking in Thailand since then. Their location is Thailand where they package their wares to the United States of America. Obot (2004) observes that in the 70s and early 80s, thousands of Nigerian youths who travelled to the United States were involved in drug trafficking. Obot (2004; Ekpenyong, 2016) remark that between 1979 and 1988, 14, 833 and 4574 Nigerians had been arrested, prosecuted and convicted in foreign countries.

Within the last decade, trafficking and consumption of hard drugs has risen drastically in Nigeria. A drug refers to a substance that could bring about a change in the biological function through its chemical actions (Okoye, 2001). It is also considered as a substance that modifies perceptions, cognition, mood, behavior, and general body functions (Balogun, 2006). They could thus, be considered as chemical modifiers of the living tissues that could bring about physiological and behavioural changes (Nnachi, 2007). According to Fawa (2003), "drug is defined as any substance, which is used for treatment or prevention of a disease in man and animals. Drug alters the body functions either positively or otherwise depending on the body composition of the user, the type of drug used, the amount used and whether used singly or with other drugs at the same time.

Substances such as Cocaine, Heroin, Opium, Nicotine, Marijuana, etc are all classified drugs. Adolescents and youths of between 15 and 35 constitute the high risk groups with females getting more involved (Uzoh, 1999). The chronic use of tolerance producing drugs increases the risky behavior of the abusers, the risk of drug abuse as well as the likelihood of impaired physiological damage to the body. Higher doses (drug abuse) usually produce visual or auditory hallucinations or both. Drug production, abuse and trafficking affects the individuals' health and welfare, which interfere with the educational and social well-being or productivity that have an adverse effect in some institutions leading to examination malpractices, bribery and corruption, anti-social tendencies including assassinations, cultism and rape.

Furthermore, it was an oversight for most scholars to circumvent the role public relations; especially the media can play to initiate attitudinal change on the youths. Almost all the study failed to investigate this aspect of communication, and this gap is what this research hopes to fill.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria's image seems to be under pressure and receiving knocks from all quarters. The effects of this are palpable, easily observable, manifesting in loss of grants and aids, isolation in international associations, embarrassment of Nigerians on overseas visits and declining foreign investments. Not so much can be achieved in national development if the situation remains unaddressed.

The factors seemingly accountable for these sad states of affairs include "advance fee fraud" popularly known as '419' which Nigerians are now associated with both at home and abroad, drug trafficking and similar other vices. Okolo, Nwodo, Obikeze, Okafor, Nebo and Nwankwo (2015) agree with the above statement by lamenting that they have become a global pandemic just like HIV/AIDS. On the strength of certain foreign campaigns, the image of the average Nigerian is of a drug peddling, uniformly dishonest character out to dupe in any business dealings. What this translates into is incessant and unjustifiable harassment of Nigerians around the airports and sea ports around the world. It has been reported that more than 90 percent of

about 1000 Nigerians are in foreign prisons Obot (2004) especially in Europe and the United States, held for drugs and drug related offences.

The above situation is not only unfortunate but regrettably lugubrious for any government. There is therefore the serious and urgent need for adoption of effective public relations strategies to combat drug trafficking among youths in Enugu State so as to resuscitate their image (Nwosu, 2001).

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to investigate:

1. The extent to which mass media as public relations strategy aid in combating drug trafficking among youths in Enugu state.
2. The relationship between public press conference as public relations strategy and combating of drug trafficking among youths in Enugu state.
3. To determine the extent to which documentary films as public relations strategy aid in combating drug trafficking among youths in Enugu state.

Research Hypotheses

The following are the research hypotheses:

1. Mass media as a public relations strategy to a large extent aid in combating drug trafficking among youths in Enugu state.
2. There is a significant positive relationship between public press conference as public relations strategies and combating of drug trafficking among youths in Enugu state
3. Documentary films as public relations strategy to a large extent aid in combating drug trafficking among youths in Enugu state.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Overview 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).

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 Gbakihir, 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. Edemode (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 a 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 receives 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 organisation.

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 may 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

Drug Trafficking

A hard drug is any chemical substance that hurts or harms the body physically and psychologically affects the behaviour of an individual in a negative manner. It makes an

individual feel stimulated and makes him act in a way that he neither would ordinarily act if he is not under the influence of such drug.

Odigbo (2000) notes thus: “they stimulate or depress the central nervous system and produce sedative, stimulative, hallucinogenic, exhilarative, brain dysfunctional, and physical cum psychological disorder in an individual. Odigbo went ahead to highlight the classification of drugs as follows:

- ❖ ***Psychoactive and psychosocial drugs or narcotics:*** These include opiate derivatives, fantanyl and methadone. Examples are opium, morphine, heroin, codeine and synthetic drugs. They are usually taken into the body through smoking, snuffing or injection.
- ❖ ***Stimulants:*** These include cocaine, Pemoline, and Amphetamines. The set mostly comes from coca leaves and are popularly referred by street names like, coke, snow, rock, crack, pemoline tablets, uppers etc. They are taken through smoking, snuffing and injection.
- ❖ ***Sedatives/Depressants:*** These include- barbitorates, benzodiazepines, depressants and chloralhdas. They come in medical names like secobarbital, amorbabitol, pentobarbitol, diazepam, chlordiazep-oxide, lorazepam etc. Their street names include: valium, 1ibrium loxatan, sleeping tablet etc.
- ❖ ***Cannabis:*** We have in this family- marijuana, hashish, tetrahydro cannabinol etc. Their common street names are: Indian hemp, grass, weed, weewee, Igbo, Kaya, pot, ganja, hash etc. They are taken through smoking or injection or in foods.
- ❖ ***Designer Drugs:*** These include amphetamine variants-dexamphetamine. They are synthetic stimulants with Street names like Black tar, China white, MPP, ecstasy etc. They are taken orally or through injection.
- ❖ ***Hallucino Gens:*** Examples are lysergic acid, diathylamide, phencydine, mescaline, etc. Their common street names include: LSD, PCP, Angel dust, cactus etc. They are taken orally or by injection.
- ❖ ***Tobacco/Cigarette:*** These falls in the group of Nicotine. Their common street names are: snuff, cigar, taba etc. They are taken through smoking, pipes or by chewing.
- ❖ ***Alcohol:*** These are anxiolytic drugs which also wreck the same havoc like hard-drugs when abused. Their common street names include: beer, shakis, booze, sapele water, red wine, whisky, ogoro or kai-kai, palm wine or palmy or nkwu ocha, etc. They are usually taken orally”.

Drug trafficking has graduated to a national security issue from a mere criminal justice issue (Ekpenyong (2016). It is the most dangerous aspect of the illicit drug market (Jenner, 2011). According to him, “thousands of kilograms of illegal drugs cross international borders daily, leaving the hands of violent traffickers and entering the lives of drug dealers and addicts”. It is

the defiant and illegal peddling, selling, distribution and advertising of banned drugs. Certain categories of drugs are banned because their consumption or use had been identified and certified to be highly debilitating and detrimental to the body. Despite the harmful effect of those drugs in the body, its socio-psychological effect on an individual and the society in its entirety abound.

Akyeampong (2005) laments that mobility; migration and travel are the architect of drug trafficking. Heroin, cannabis, cocaine, marijuana etc, are produced in substantial quantities in South America and the Caribbean because of the high intake or consumption of those illegal drugs by drug addicts and users in the United States of America (Bagley, 2012). According to her, increased drug consumption has led to increased organized crime in the world. Dell (2012) supports this statement when he noted that since 2007, drug related violence has increased in Mexico having taken more than fifty thousand lives (50,000) and consequently, Mexico conservative PAN party has expedited action towards the eradication of drug trafficking and drug related crime. Robles, Calderon and Magaloni (n.d.) underscore this assertion when they confirmed that the 50,000 drug related deaths were reported in 2011.

Although governments have deployed many different approaches to crush the drug trade, it only yielded marginal result (Jenner, 2011). Jenner (2011) also, agrees with the two previous statements as he asserts that the war against drug had started for over forty years, nevertheless, the inability to win the war has led to yet another graver war that need to be faced squarely and defeated; violent and “criminal infested drug traffickers”, who can stop at nothing in the quest to acquire wealth illegally. Jenner calls the trade on drugs “the illicit industry or black market”. For him, it is of the largest and most profitable industries in the world. The figure below shows the movement and trafficking routes of only cocaine in the world.

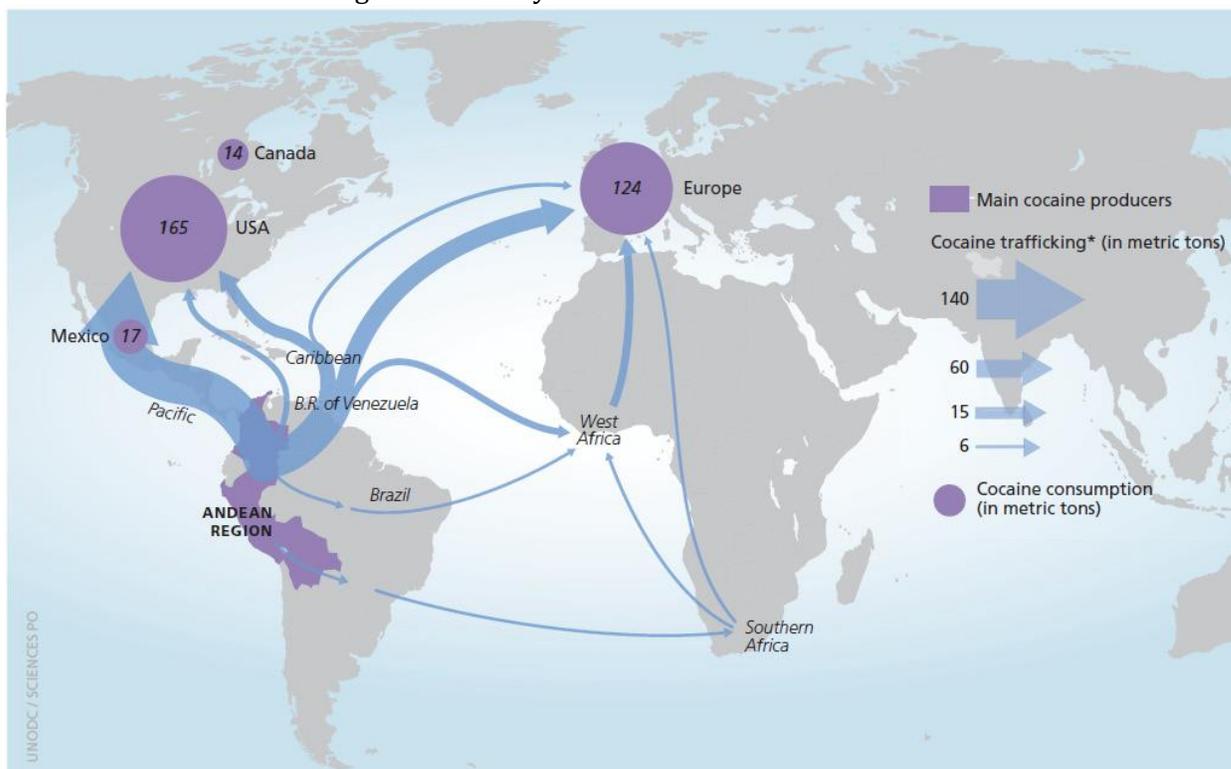


Fig 1: Map of Major Global Cocaine Flows, 2008

Source: UNODC, *World Drug Report* (New York: UNODC, 2010).

Despite the many draconian laws that the Nigerian government had made to reduce or totally eradicate drug trafficking, Nigerian youth still subsist in the illicit trade. Take for instance the Indian Hemp (Cannabis) decree of 1966 in which farmers caught are punishable by death penalty or twenty one years imprisonment, while the punishment for exportation was ten years. Also, those caught smoking or in possession of Indian Hemp were sentenced to ten years imprisonment. The president Mohammed Buhari led administration after taking over government in a coup in 1983, declared war on corruption and enacted a decree to prosecute and punish drug smugglers. And in order to fulfill his promise to the nation, as early as 1984 a good number of culprits had been condemned to death by firing squad (Ellis, 2009).

Nigeria has become the melting pot for trafficking in narcotics and money laundering activities (Luong, 2015). Nigerian drug trafficking networks have been growing since the 80s. Nigerians had been involved in drug trafficking in Thailand since then. Their location is Thailand where they package their wares to the United States of America. Obot (2004) observes that in the 70s and early 80s, thousands of Nigerian youths who travelled to the United States were involved in drug trafficking. Obot (2004; Ekpenyong, 2016) remark that between 1979 and 1988, 14, 833 and 4574 Nigerians had been arrested, prosecuted and convicted in foreign countries.

Luong states that “in particular, with respect to Nigerian drug trafficking networks, their illicit amphetamine, ecstasy, and cocaine’ operations run up with the cohesive structure between hosted countries and other overseas’ dotes”. “Drugs became a public issue in Nigeria by the 1960s with discoveries of cannabis farms in the country, arrests of Nigerian cannabis traffickers abroad, and reports of psychological disorders suspected to be associated with cannabis use. However, it was not until the early 1980s that the problem of drug trafficking had become a major social issue with the potential of disrupting international relations and social stability” (Obot, 2004).

However, the effort to combat drug trafficking by different governments had not yielded resounding victory so far. Perhaps, security agents and organizations and politicians have failed woefully in the bout against drug trafficking as a result of corruption and complacency (Lansana, n.d; Luong, 2015). He iterates that the number of government officials in West Africa or many other places around the world convicted for supporting or being directly connected to drug trafficking is not encouraging. This is often because those whose responsibility it is to adjudicate justice collude with government officials who have interest in most of those drug related cases by collecting bribe and this leads to perversion of justice.

Drug trafficking has led to both domestic and global violence. In Nigeria, South Africa and other African (“the most prominent West African countries affected by international drug trafficking include, Cape-Verde, Guinea Conakry, Guinea-Bissau, Benin, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria” (Udama, 2014)and developing world, US, Mexico, South America, Europe, Asia and Oceania, have been witnessing the wave of crime resulting from drug trafficking. And this has led to sexual harassment, kidnapping, xenophobia, armed robbery, homicide, suicide, terrorism, gangsterism, abortion, ritual killing, advanced fee fraud (419), corruption, money laundering, racial discrimination, rape, homosexuality and lesbianism etc.

Robles et al. (n.d.) observe that due to the structural changes in the illicit drug trade, the level of violence has astronomically changed in Mexico.

Beittel (2017) "the notorious drug trafficking kingpin Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán is now imprisoned in the United States awaiting trial, following the Mexican government's decision to extradite him to the United States on January 19, 2017, the day before President Trump took office. Guzmán is charged with operating a continuing criminal enterprise and conducting drug-related crimes as the purported leader of the Mexican criminal syndicate commonly known as the Sinaloa cartel".

Aning and Pokoo (2014) assert that drug trafficking poses enormous high security challenge. However, the regime of the past Mexican president- Filipe Calderon took the bull by the horn by deploying his military to extirpate drug trafficking organizations (Masucci, 2013). They pointed out that the degree of homicide and suicide has skyrocketed as a result of the struggle to take control of the drug territory, market and trafficking routes. Phil and Vanda (2012) lament thus: "as Mexican drug trafficking organizations have come to dominate wholesale markets in the United States, so the drug trafficking organizations in Mexico have become increasingly powerful and increasingly ruthless in their competition with one another".

Drug trafficking is a very serious and insurmountable global issue (Ekpenyong, 2016). In Nigeria, the production, consumption and distribution otherwise known as trafficking of narcotics drugs had been a mirage for all stakeholders (NDLEA, 2000). In Africa, drug trafficking undoubtedly has become a continental cankerworm (USAID, 2013). In West Africa, a lot of challenges have led to making it a drug trafficking hub (Udama, 2014). According to him, they include continuous demand for the hard drugs, geographical location, poor economies, government officials and other prominent persona involved in the illicit business, corruption, inadequate logistics support to fight traffickers, amorphous and anonymous drug traffickers structure, weak state and rule of law, unemployment, perception of drug trafficking as a good business, double standard and hypocritical attitude in drug war. Referring to unemployment Maysam and Mohsen (2014) argue that because drug trafficking yields huge amount of income, though illegally, such crime increases with increase in unemployment. They hypothesise that a positive relationship does exist between unemployment and drug trafficking. Though in their study, they used the word "drug smuggling" instead of drug trafficking.

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (NDLEA) was formed by a Decree No 48 of January 1989 (Otu, 2013) to wage an unending war against drug trafficking in Nigeria. This body was formed because while many were consuming these drugs at home, some were busy distributing it within and across national boundaries (NDLEA, 1992; Otu, 2013). Its major responsibility was to ensure the elimination of the growing, processing, manufacturing, selling, promoting, exporting, and distributing of or trafficking of hard drugs.

NDLEA is the most important specialised drug squad in Nigeria (Gernot, 2015). And since its formation, it had diligently made a landmark achievement in the control and eradication of drug trafficking (Gyong and Tanimu, 2010). Otu observed that "agency noted that young Nigerians in the nation's urban secondary schools were already familiar with, and were using substances such as alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, cannabis, amphetamines, a little of heroin, cocaine and other stimulants and depressants". Otu reminisces that in 2009, a total of 38 suspects were arrested in Murtala Mohammed International Airport Lagos. The war against drug trafficking had taken a different toll as most of the law enforcement agencies in Nigeria had got involved. The Nigeria police, the Nigeria army, Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corp conduct surveillance both aerial, water and land patrol to fish out farmland and farmers suspected to be involved in the unlawful business (Otu, 2013).

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 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 organisation'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 (Nwokefor 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 (Nwokefor 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.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher employed survey method by administering structured questionnaire to gather primary data from the youths of both Enugu North and South Local Government Area. The scope of the study is on impact of public relations strategies on combating drug trafficking among

youths in Enugu state (a study of Enugu North and Enugu South LGAs). The population of the study includes youths in both local governments where Freund and William's formula was used to determine a sample size of 215. Content validity was used to determine the validity of the instrument by giving allowing marketing research experts and lecturers of public relations and marketing departments to adjust the instrument to measure what it ought to. The value of the test of reliability is 0.87 which was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha. The result indicated that there is internal consistency of the instrument. Tables and percentages were used to analyse and interpret the data.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: The Extent to which Mass Media as a Public Relations Strategy Aid in Combating Drug Trafficking Among Youths in Enugu State

Mass media as a public relations strategy to a large extent aid in combating drug trafficking among youths in Enugu State		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	170	79%
Agree	30	14%
Undecided	5	2%
Disagree	8	4%
Strongly Disagree	2	1%
Total	215	100%

From the table above, it is obvious that mass media as public relations tools/strategy to a large extent aid in combating drug trafficking among youths in Enugu state. This can be substantiated by 79% and 14% of respondents who Strongly Agreed and Agreed respectively to the above assertion. The implication of this finding is that mass media as public relations strategy to a large extent aid in combating drug trafficking among youths in Enugu state.

Table 2: Nature of Relationship between Press Conferences as Public Relations Strategies and Combating Drug Trafficking Among Youths in Enugu State

There is significant positive relationship between press conferences as public relations strategies and combating drug trafficking among youths in Enugu State		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	180	84%
Agree	20	9%
Undecided	0	0%
Disagree	10	5%
Strongly Disagree	5	2%
Total	215	100%

The table above indicates that there is a significant positive relationship between public speaking and seminars as public relations strategies and combating drug trafficking among youths in Enugu State. This can be buttressed by the 84% and 9% of the respondents who strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the above submission. From the response, it can be seen that a larger percentage of the respondents believe that there is a significant positive relationship between press conferences and combating drug trafficking among youths in Enugu State.

Table 3: To determine the extent to which documentary films as a public relations strategy aid in combating drug trafficking in Enugu State

Documentary films as a public relations strategy to a large extent aid in combating drug trafficking among youths in Enugu State		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	200	93%
Agree	10	5%
Undecided	0	0%
Disagree	5	2%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	215	100%

This table shows that documentary films as a public relations strategy to a large extent aid in combating drug trafficking among youths in Enugu State. This is supported by 93% and 5% of respondents who Strongly Agreed and Agreed respectively to the above claim. The implication

of this finding is that documentary films as a public relations strategy to a large extent aid in combating drug trafficking in Enugu State.

Summary of Findings

The following are the findings from the study carried out:

The study revealed that mass media as public relations strategy to a large extent aid combating drug trafficking among youths in Enugu state. Also, the study revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between press conferences as public relations strategies and combating drug trafficking among youths in Enugu state. Lastly, the study revealed that documentary films as a PR strategy to a large extent aid in combating drug trafficking among youths in Enugu state.

Conclusion

Based on the findings above, the study concludes thus:

Public relations is essential in combating drug trafficking among youths in Enugu State. Effective and efficient public relations practices can aid in establishing and promoting co-operation among the various stakeholders in combating drug trafficking in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. Aggressive but persuasive radio and television programmes must be heightened to instill fear in the minds of the youths about the dangers of drug trafficking.
2. Press conferences must be judiciously organized to avert negative information from filtering out from the rumour mill.
4. the adoption of documentary films should be used frequently in communicating to the youths about attitudinal change towards drug abuse and trafficking.

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