

Using Public Relations Strategies and Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Drug Abuse Prevention

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Abstract

Campaigns directed at artificial intelligence and drug abuse prevention often have relied on the use of public relations strategies as the primary vehicle for disseminating such messages. This study investigated the use of public relations strategies and artificial intelligence (AI) for drug abuse prevention. The study became necessary to find out how drug abuse prevention can be achieved using public relations strategies. The study also ascertained the extent to which public relations help to prevent drug abuse with the aid of AI by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA). The study was anchored on Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)/theory and Media Dependency theory. Survey design was employed with the aid of 09-table questionnaire. The data obtained from questionnaire administered were analysed and presented using simple percentage and frequency table. Sample size of 400 was derived using Taro Yamane formula through sample random and purposive sampling techniques to reflect and represent all the residents in 12 wards of OREDO Local government area of Edo State. The result shows that the NDLEA public relation strategies have not yielded positive result in the fight against drug abuse as expected. Despite being aware of the national drug law enforcement agency, the commands public relation strategies is yet to actualize its aim as more youths still engage in drug abuse. Therefore more effort should be put in place especially for people from broken home, bad parenting and Peer group influence and caused by life style which has been identified as the major cause of drug abuse. Finding also shows that Continues wide range media campaign using new technologies organising orientation and symposiums for the masses on regular bases on the danger of drug abuse will help NDLEAs public relation strategies to yield positive result in the fight against drug abuse in Nigeria. Also it was revealed from the findings that artificial intelligence [AI] can be use by (NDLEA). Through training and education of officers on the use of new technologies, the data collected revealed that there must be adequate government funding and purchase of AI because they consider its useful timely and fast in solving problems. This study concluded that designing messages that are effective with targeted audience and choosing the right media to use in order to get the target audience is vital. The researcher recommended that creating a public relations department in NDLEA, thus employing and engaging qualified public relation practitioners as part of top management in NDLEA, officers should do compulsory course on public relations.

Keywords: *Artificial intelligence, Drug abuse, Prevention, Public relations and Strategies.*

Introduction

The intersection of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and drug abuse prevention using public relations strategies in essence represents a critical juncture where technological advancement and societal challenges like drug abuse converge. The need to use public relations strategies to tackle drug abuse which is one of the serious issues affecting our society today and to achieve drug abuse prevention is sine-qua-non to maintaining healthy environment in Nigeria. Public relations is a planned, deliberate and sustained effort by an organisation like National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) to establish and maintain good, cordial, mutually beneficial relationship and goodwill between an organization and its public (Nigerians). According to the Mexican Declaration (1978), public relations is the art and science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, and counseling organizations' leadership and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve both an organization and the public's interest. The publics in this context are Nigerian citizens who are drug users and drug abusers, so the war against drug abuse needs public relations strategies.

Substance abuse is a complex and pervasive issue that affects not only individuals, but also their families and communities. Communication plays pivotal roles in shaping perception, disseminating information about drug abuse prevention and persuasion of drug abusers to desist from such acts. Persuasion through dialogue has always been the best means of conflict resolution instituting societal change. Hence, drug abuse prevention and treatment entails the act of persuasion which is a tool in public relations. One of the ways through which this issue can be addressed is effective communication. Communication which is the sharing of ideas between two or more people has a crucial role to play in the fight against this menace; thus, it becomes pertinent to examine how public relations strategies and artificial intelligence can be used to achieve drug abuse prevention in our contemporary society. By delving into this multifaceted approach, the paper has the potential to contribute valuable insights and recommendations for more effective and innovative drug abuse interventions

The importance of public relations campaign about drug abuse prevention cannot be over emphasized. It offers innovating solutions for understanding pattern of drug abuse, identifying the individuals at risk and optimizing intervention strategies using RACE model of public relations. Fusing public relations strategies with artificial intelligence can entice outreach efforts in intervention to specific needs. Aliede (2014) posits that it's a professional obligation of the public relations practitioner to periodically undertake a critical assessment of performance, feelings, views and opinions of the masses about organization and to juxtapose it with the performance and activities of the organization. This means that the NDLEA through her public relations practitioners must do periodic critical assessment of performance and evaluate public opinion towards NDLEA performance and activities.

Ogbemi (2024) asserts that the role of public relations in an organization really depend on the importance that the management attach to the public relations in the organization. Centre and Broom (2005, pp 64-66) citing Cutlip, posits that public relations' credibility starts with the management integrity and socially responsible actions. There is need for the NDLEA to have a well structured and effectively organized public relations department. An in house public relations department that is functional with function well defined is a plus to the NDLEA; however, the command can also hire the services of a consultancy firm (external) thereby having a combination of both the in-house and the external public relations department to carry out effective campaign against drug abuse.

United Nations Office on Drug and Crimes (UNODC) reports that 14.4% of Nigerians are currently engaged in drug abuse. Mr. Oliver Stolpe, UNODC country representative said in the Vanguard newspaper that 27.7% of the 14.4% of Nigerians who are engaged in drug abuse were youths. The rise of drug abuse in Nigeria, particularly, among Nigerian youths, portends great danger in society because most crimes that happen are usually associated with drug abuse. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in 2022 expressed concerns over the high rate of drug abuse among youths in Nigeria. The nature of drugs as an addictive substance which when abused has adverse effect calls for attention.

It is quite nauseating that the NDLEA have not been able tackle the challenges in the country effectively due to structural constraints aided partly by some institutional inadequacies. This has led to the poor public image and perception of the NDLEA. In spite of the creation of public relations department of the NDLEA, it's still practiced by non-professionals because the NDLEA classifies public relations as a general duty and it's subsumed under administrative department. As such, less public relations efforts are felt in NDLEA activities. This anomaly must not be encouraged as good public relations practitioner must be able to advise the management and contribute effectively towards management decisions. The NDLEA is expected to utilize the opportunities presented by artificial intelligence and public relations strategies to tackle this menace of drug abuse that has eaten deep into the fabric of our society. It is against this backdrop that this study became imperative.

Research Questions

It is not certain whether artificial intelligence (AI) and public relations strategies are effectively utilized in drug abuse prevention by NDLEA. The question this study seeks to answer is:

1. How can drug abuse prevention be achieved using public relations strategies?
2. To what extent can the use of AI and public relations strategies help in preventing drug abuse?
3. What is the contribution of public relations principles, strategies and practice by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA)?

Conceptual Clarification

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence is the ability of a digital computer or computer-controlled robot to perform tasks commonly associated with intelligent beings. The term is frequently applied to the project of developing systems endowed with the intellectual processes characteristic of humans, such as the ability to reason, discover meaning, generalise or learn from past experience. Since the development of the digital computer in the 1940s, it has been demonstrated that computers can be programmed to carry out very complex tasks (Britannica, 2024).

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to the development of computer systems and software that can perform tasks and exhibit capabilities that are typically associated with human intelligence. The goal of AI is to create machines that can think, learn and solve problems in ways that emulate or even surpass human cognitive abilities. The key aspects of AI as identified by Asemah (2024) are:

- a. **Machine Learning:** The ability of computer systems to learn and improve from experience without being explicitly programmed. This involves the use of algorithms and statistical models to enable systems to perform specific tasks effectively.
- b. **Natural Language Processing (NLP):** The ability of computers to analyse, understand and generate human language, including processing, interpreting and producing speech and text.

- c. **Computer Vision:** The ability of computer systems to identify and process digital images and videos, similar to how human vision works.
- d. **Reasoning and Problem-Solving:** The development of algorithms and systems that can reason, make inferences and solve complex problems, often by mimicking human decision-making processes.
- e. **Robotics:** The integration of AI technologies with physical robots, enabling them to perform tasks autonomously and interact with their environment.
- f. **Adaptive and Autonomous Systems:** The creation of systems that can adapt to changing conditions, make decisions independently and take actions without direct human control.

AI technologies have a wide range of applications across various industries, including healthcare, finance, transportation, education and entertainment. They are being used to automate tasks, enhance decision-making, personalise experiences and unlock new possibilities that were previously limited by human cognitive capabilities. Thus, the rapid advancements in AI have raised both excitement and concerns, as they have the potential to transform industries, disrupt traditional job markets and raise ethical considerations around the responsible development and deployment of these technologies.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Public Relations

As opined by Ekhatu E.Z (2024) AI is a fast-paced and ever-changing technology. In public relations, with the aid of the internet artificial intelligence continues to find new uses as its ability to analyze vast amounts of data in seconds makes it a perfect fit. Analyzing data that would have taken a team of humans days to complete can be done by AI in seconds, and provide insights that are very accurate and up-to-date. Using spell check, asking a voice assistant to play a song, or navigating with GPS is artificial intelligence (AI).

These types of tools have been around for years, but for modern AI it goes far way beyond spell check: AI can be used to gather and synthesize information to improve its own decision making and functionality. Using AI in public relations is specifically an exciting and interesting technological outlook with tools ranging from traditional chat bots to cutting-edge, comprehensive platforms. Using AI tools for public relations is excellent for automating manual tasks. Scheduling and managing social media posts, drafting press releases, responding to customer comments, emails, and messages, building media lists, and taking notes. As their capability grows, it becomes more essential to understand how to use AI for public relations for the purpose of drug abuse prevention.

Furthermore, Ekhatu (2024) stated that tools in AI are Chatbots. Chatbots are interactive AI that emulates a human by answering questions, and they've grown beyond handling customer complaints. Businesses today use them to answer frequently asked questions and make personalized product recommendations, and internally to respond to messages and automate tasks. Chatbots can improve customer satisfaction and increase efficiency, making them an essential link between public relations and AI.

Speech-to-Text Tools

Many different industries and professions use speech-to-text tools, which have been around for years. The most common use is to take notes in meetings, but today's tools are smarter than ever. With this type of AI, public relations professionals can automatically transcribe press conferences, media interviews, and conference presentations, as well as write speeches.

Social Media Automation

Managing multiple social media platforms can be time-consuming. AI can simplify these processes and save time by automating things like creating content calendars, posting content, and replying to comments. It can also help you improve collaboration with your team and schedule and deliver messages at the right time, to the right audience.

Content Creation

Generative AI, which generates new content based on a prompt and includes tools like ChatGPT from OpenAI, has catapulted into the spotlight. This type of AI in public relations can create press releases, social media posts, headlines, interview questions, and outlines, and quickly customize it for different target audiences. With text-to-video and other visual capabilities, it can also make quickly, high-quality images and videos for social media, blog articles, and more. However, generative AI does have limitations, so make sure you have a process and optimized workflows with human oversight in place.

Media Outreach

AI for public relations can streamline and automate media outreach and relationship management by helping you identify and connect with the right people. AI generated signals can identify changes in journalists' home mastheads, beats, and contact information, provide insights on their engagement, and more. It can even recommend new contacts based on your past searches. That means you spend less time building outreach lists and more time building valuable relationships.

Media Monitoring

The amount of data on the internet is forecast to reach 181 zettabytes by 2025 – and AI for public relations can sift through all that data in seconds. Cutting-edge AI algorithms can not only provide accurate, real-time media analytics, but also sift through the noise to surface the stories that matter most to your brand. Here, it's important to remember that AI is only as strong as the data it's built on, so the more comprehensive your media data set, the better results you'll get.

Sentiment Analysis

Brand sentiment analysis goes even further than media monitoring or social listening, providing you with a picture of how people feel about your brand. The best AI tools for public relations take traditional social listening and sentiment analysis to the next level, using AI to contextualize words, account for nuances and multiple opinions in a single post, and uncover the true intent behind conversations. AI has always been a recurring theme among the journalists and communicators, because all work or assignments done with AI is done right. Therefore employing AI in the fight against drug abuse using public relation strategy would tendencies to boost NDLEA Organizational Efficiency and put an end to manual tasks. AI can take care of easy, day-to-day tasks accurately and consistently, freeing up your team to focus on the big picture: campaign strategy and optimization. It saves time and resources up-front, but run more efficient campaigns that boost your return on investment ROI.

Customer Engagement

AI can provide real-time insights into what's working in your campaigns – and what isn't. It can even give you accurate predictions. That helps you tailor your strategies, refine your messaging, and deliver the right content to the right people, at the right time. When your campaign resonates with your audience, they'll click, read, and convert.

Reputation Management

One of the biggest benefits of AI in public relations is the ability to proactively manage your brand reputation. AI tools can constantly monitor public sentiment, identifying both positive and negative patterns. You can then take action to magnify the good and manage the bad, safeguarding your reputation and creating happier customers.

Crisis Management

AI and public relations also go hand-in-hand when it comes to crisis management, helping to bring certainty to an uncertain landscape. These tools can predict how and when negative sentiment may turn into a crisis, so you can create strategies to mitigate those risks. And if a crisis does happen, you'll be able to respond quickly and keep it from escalating.

Proven ROI

Ultimately, all of the above benefits of AI in public relations ladder up to one thing: growing the bottom line by improving the ROI of your campaigns. Not only that, they allow you to connect your PR activities to KPIs like click-through rate, conversions, and revenue, proving your team's positive impact on the business.

Embracing AI in Public Relations

As technology advances and becomes more accessible, we're sure to see even more partnerships between public relations and artificial intelligence. Yet communications will remain a very human art, one that depends on relationships, creativity, and innovation.

Cision One brings together the best of technology and human expertise to uncover the stories that impact your brand, understand the true intent behind conversations, and simplify media outreach.

The Concept of Drug Abuse

Drug abuse according to Alexandre et al (2023) can be defined as the excessive, maladaptive, or addictive use of drugs for nonmedical purposes. In other words it is the use of a drug in amounts or by methods that are harmful to the individual or others. Succinctly it can lead to physical and psychological dependence, negatively impacting health, relationships, and daily life. Despite harmful consequences, it involves the consumption of substances that can lead to social, psychological, and physical problems. Abused substances include:

1. **Anabolic steroids:** These are used by some athletes to accelerate muscular development and increase strength, but they can cause heart disease, liver damage, and other physical issues.
2. **Psychotropic agents:** These substances affect the user's mental state and are used to produce changes in mood, feeling, and perception. Examples include: Opium (and its derivatives like heroin), Hallucinogens, Barbiturates, Cocaine, Amphetamines, Tranquilizers, Various forms of cannabis.

Alcohol

The major problem that arises from the consumption of psychotropic drugs is **dependence**, which can be physical or psychological. When drug intake is decreased or stopped is called Physical dependence, and this leads to an involuntary illness called **withdrawal syndrome**.

Drug abuse prevention is crucial, especially among youths and adolescence individuals who are more vulnerable to experimentation and peer pressure. Here are some strategies towards drug abuse prevention:

- a. **Early Education and Awareness:** This is to educate children and teens about the risks associated with drug use and provide accurate information about the effects of drugs on the brain and overall health. There is also the need to encourage open communication between parents, educators, and young people and discuss the dangers of substance abuse and address any misconceptions.
- b. **Research-Based Programs:** Evidence-based programs have been designed and tested to reduce the risk of drug use. These programs focus on altering risk and protective factors in families, schools, and communities.
- c. **Risk and Protective Factors:** Understand the factors that influence drug use. Protective factors include strong family bonds, positive peer relationships, and community support. Address risk factors such as family conflict, academic stress, and exposure to drugs within the community.
- d. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implement prevention programs that incorporate monitoring and evaluation components. Regularly assess the effectiveness of these programs. Strong monitoring ensures that interventions are on track and can be adjusted if needed.
- e. **Promote Healthy Coping Mechanisms:** Teach coping skills to manage stress, anxiety, and other emotions without resorting to substance use. Encourage participation in extracurricular activities, hobbies, and sports as positive outlets.
- f. **Parental Involvement:** Parents play a crucial role in preventing drug misuse. Stay informed about your child's activities, friends, and school life. Set clear rules and consequences regarding substance use. Be a positive role model. Remember, adolescence is a critical time for preventing drug addiction.

Public relation strategies are the tactics an organization or company chooses for the purpose of visibility and credibility of their public relations campaign, however, it depends on the synergy of techniques to be adopted, which will be influenced by the positioning of the institution. There are four strategic choices of public relations as listed by Okolo, Nebo, Obikeze, and Okolo (2017) and they are the choice of being a defender, a prospector, an analyzer or a reactor. However, it is in the best interest of every organisation and best practices to be proactive in order to build and sustain good image between an organisation and its publics. Identifying the targeted publics is important and using the necessary media to reach out to the targeted publics is key to the success of every public relation campaign.

Historical Development of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA)

According to www.ndlea.gov.ng, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) was established by decree no, 48 of 1989. The purpose of the establishment is to respond to the negative image and impact of drug abuse and trafficking on the cooperative image of Nigeria. The NDLEA operates all over Nigeria and its headquarters are in Ikoyi, Lagos.

The NDLEA is a federal law enforcement agency that tackles and leads the fight against the trafficking and demand for narcotics psychotropic substance and drugs. The international image of Nigerians and Nigeria in the 1980s was drastically affected and the NDLEA was a public relation strategy and action plan to build good image for the country. Since then the trafficking of illicit substances has become an organised criminal activity that undermines the security and development of the country and therefore demands urgent attention and priority from the government.

In fulfilling the mandate of the Agency, thousands of expert narcotic operatives and well-trained support staff of NDLEA work across Nigeria with a visible presence at international airports, seaports, border crossing and major highways. Committed to keeping society safe from the dangers of illicit substances and their purveyors, NDLEA operatives are actively engaged in the tracking, arrest and prosecution of traffickers of dangerous substances under the various relevant drug laws of Nigeria. The NDLEA is structured into 14 directorates, and has 14 zonal commands, 111 state area commands and 10 Special (airports & seaports) commands.

The mission of NDLEA is to become the most proactive and leading Drug Law Enforcement Agency in Africa and one of the best in the world and contribute to the creation and maintenance of a positive image for Nigeria. The vision of the agency includes; to deploy all resources at our disposal for the total eradication of illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, by cutting off the supply of illicit drugs and bringing

suppliers to book, reducing the demand for illicit drugs and other substances of abuse and tracing and recovering drug-related proceeds, through effective drug law enforcement.

The current chairman is Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (Retd), CON, OFR, and was appointed as **the 10th Chairman/Chief Executive Officer** of NDLEA on 15th January 2021. Over the years the command has recorded tremendous success and it is still a work in progress

Empirical Review of Related Studies

A number of researchers have conducted empirical researches on the appraisal of Artificial intelligence (AI) and drug abuse prevention using public relations strategies. This section reviews works of such scholars as they relate to this current study.

Okoye, Agbim, Ohaji, Etumnu, Peggy and Chimeremeze (2022) conducted a study on the effectiveness of mass media in the fight against drug abuse among undergraduates of tertiary institutions in Imo State. This study investigated the effectiveness of mass media in the fight against drug abuse among undergraduates of tertiary institutions in Imo State. The study was anchored on the theory of reasoned action and the research design adopted for this study is the survey method. The population consists of 81,000 undergraduates of the select higher institutions in Imo State. A sample size of 382 arrived after the application of the Wimmer and Dominick online sample size calculator. The systematic sampling technique was employed in this study. The percentage method and bar chart were used for analysing the data.

The findings revealed that the level of awareness among respondents towards mass media campaigns against drug abuse is moderate. Further findings showed that respondents agreed that mass media efforts have not been effective in reducing the threat of drug abuse among undergraduates in Imo State's tertiary institutions. As a result, it was concluded that mass media campaigns are ineffective in the fight against drug abuse among undergraduates of higher institutions in Imo State, because the campaigns have not succeeded in curbing the menace, as students continue to engage in it, which could be linked to a lack of awareness among these undergraduates. It was recommended that the media intensify their publicity and commitment to drug abuse in order to raise public awareness of the dangers of drug abuse in society. The mass media should be more creative in their content and in some cases, they should employ persuasive communication to be able to influence a good number of youths positively and make them shun drug abuse.

In another study, Alexandre, Alfonso, Alejandro, Daniel, Paula, Angel and Rebeca (2023) tried to investigate the role of AI in drug discovery: challenges, opportunities, and strategies. This study investigated Artificial intelligence (AI) and the potential to revolutionize the drug discovery process, offering improved efficiency, accuracy, and speed. However, the successful application of AI is dependent on the availability of high-quality data, the addressing of ethical concerns, and the recognition of the limitations of AI-based approaches. In this article, the benefits, challenges, and drawbacks of AI in this field are reviewed, and possible strategies and approaches for overcoming the present obstacles are proposed. The use of data augmentation, explainable AI, and the integration of AI with traditional experimental methods, as well as the potential advantages of AI in pharmaceutical research, is also discussed. Overall, this review highlights the potential of AI in drug discovery and provides insights into the challenges and opportunities for realizing its potential in this field.

Theoretical Framework

Theories are crucial to any empirical research, they provide the landscape of analysis and hypothesis testing, which are aimed at predicting phenomena relevant to any research work. This study is anchored on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)/theory and Media Dependency theory

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)/Theory: The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is a theory that is relevant to this study. The theory was propounded by Fred Davies and Richard Bagozzi in 1989. According to Bagozzi and Warsaw (1992) cited in Olise (2013), the theory borders on the ease of use and usefulness of new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) to combat drug abuse. The principles behind this theory is that people use new technologies such as mobile phones, smart phones, Ipad and computers among others to explore artificial intelligence AI because they consider its useful timely and fast in solving problems. The relationship of this theory to the study therefore lies on the ease at which artificial intelligence is utilized by governments, scientists and scholars and its usefulness is based on the cognitive attitude of the users towards it. Just as this theory advocates, this study, which bothered on the artificial intelligence [AI] and drug abuse prevention using public relations strategies, promotes the usefulness and ease of using new technologies to explore for drug abuse prevention using public relations strategies depending on the NDLEA cognitive attitude towards AI. The basic proposition is that an individual's attitude towards a new technology design system is a function of the perception

of the degree of advantages that accrues from using the A I technology without stress, or its “ease of uses” (Davis, 1993 cited in Shittu, 2013).

Furthermore, it postulates that perceives usefulness AI and ease of use directly determine whether the individual will use AI for drug abuse prevention as a new the technology (Shittu, 2013). The popularity and increased usage of public relations strategies shows the extent to which new technologies has be accepted greatly by NDLEA and other users. This has been made possible and easy with the proliferation of mobile phones especially smart phones, which has made browsing the internet easy and fast.

Media Dependency Theory

Another theory that relates to this work is the Media Dependency Theory propounded by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin Defleur in 1976. The import of this theory is that audience depend on media information to meet their needs and goals and that, social institutions and media systems interact with audience to create needs, interests and motives in persons (Asemah, 2011).

Furthermore, Baran and Davies (2009) note that Media Systems Dependency Theory assumes that the more a person depends on having his or her needs met by media use, the more important will be the role that the media play in the person’s life, and therefore, the more influence the media will have on the person. NDLEA should use the power of the media through its intensified public relation campaign and strategies to prevent drug abuse. People turn to the media to communicate or make sense of what is happening, as the world becomes complex. Little-John (2002) cited in Omekwu, Eke, and Odoh (2014) also explain that people will become more dependent on the media that meet a number of their needs than on the media that touch only a few needs. The more an individual relies on the media for the expression of thought and sharing of ideas like saying no to drug abuse, the more that individual is influenced by the media (Omekwu et al, 2014).

Similarly, Asemah (2011) opines that the more dependent an individual is on the media for having his or her needs fulfilled, the more important the media will be to that person. This, in relation to this study explains the high rate of dependency and usage of artificial intelligence to meet individual needs. The import of this theory suggests the way and manner NDLEA can use public relations strategies and campaigns aired through the relevant media to ensure drug abuse prevention and to achieve quite a number of goals and objectives. This is due to the fact that new technology like AI offers quite a number of opportunities and benefits to people at large. These benefits range from social, psychological, entertainment and educational benefits and NDLEA can make use of AI for varied reasons, which depends on what each command wants to achieve and in this case, drug abuse prevention.

Research Methodology

The survey design was used for this study. The population of the study is drawn from residents of Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. According to Population Density (2016), the population of Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State is 374,515. The sample size for this study is 400, which were drawn from the population of residents in Oredo Local Government Areas. This figure was derived using Taro Yamane Formula. The sampling technique employed in the study was the simple random sampling technique. The simple random technique was adopted to allow the researcher give all respondents in the defined population equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample. The research instrument for collecting data for this study is the questionnaire. The instrument for this study was administered to 400 (four hundred) residents of Oredo Local Government Area in Edo State. The method used by the researcher in analyzing data which were collected from respondents was the simple percentage method.

Results

A total of 400 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents and all copies were correctly filled and returned. It is therefore based on the returned questionnaire that the following presentation and analysis were done.

Table 1: Showing the Extent to Which Respondents are aware of NDLEA

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Large Extent	384	96%
Low Extent	10	2.5%
Not Exposed	06	2.5%
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Survey; 2024

The data above shows that majority of the residents in Oredo LGA of Edo State are aware of NDLEA to a large extent.

Table 2: Showing the Extent to Which NDLEA public relation strategies has yielded positive result in the fight against drug abuse

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Large Extent	16	4%
Low Extent	364	91%
Not Exposed	20	5%
Total `	400	100%

Source: Field Survey; 2024

The above implies that NDLEA public relations strategies has yielded positive results in fighting against drug abuse in Oredo LGA of Edo State to a low extent.

Table 3: Showing the cause of drug abuse

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Life style	16	4%
Broken home/ bad parenting and Peer group influence	384	96%
None of the above	0	0%
Total `	400	100%

Source: Field Survey; 2024

The above data shows that majority of the respondents believe that broken homes/bad parenting and peer group influence is a major cause of drug abuse in Oredo LGA of Edo State.

Table 4: Showing how NDLEAs public relation strategies can yield positive result in the fight against drug abuse in Nigeria

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Organising orientation and symposiums for the mass on the danger of drug abuse	190	47.5%
Continues wide range mediacampaign using new technologies	200	50%
Sending drug abusers to jail	10	2.5%
Total `	400	100%

Source: Field Survey; 2024

The table above shows Majority of the respondents surveyed suggest and affirm that Continues wide range media campaign using new technologies and Organising orientation and symposiums for the masses on regular bases on the danger of drug abuse will help NDLEAs public relation strategies to yield positive result in the fight against drug abuse in Nigeria.

Table 5: Showing: How can artificial intelligence [AI] be use by NDLEA

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Through training and education of officer on the use of new technologies	200	50%
Adequate government funding and purchase of AI	200	50%
None of the above	0	0%
Total `	400	100%

Source: Field Survey; 2024

The table above shows Majority of the respondents surveyed believe that artificial intelligence [AI] can be used by NDLEA. Through training and education of officers on the use of new technologies, the data collected revealed that there must be adequate government funding and purchase of AI.

Table 6: Showing how can public relations strategies be effectively utilized in drug abuse prevention by NDLEA

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Through training and education of officer on the importance OF public relations	199	49.8%
Creating a public relations department in NDLEA and employing and engaging public relation practitioners as part of top management in NDLEA	201	50.2%
Nome of the above	0	0%
Total `	400	100%

Source: Field Survey; 2024

From the data collected as indicated above in table 6, respondents are of the view that public relations strategies can be effectively utilized in drug abuse prevention by Creating a public relations department in NDLEA, employing and engaging public relation practitioners as part of top management in NDLEA and Through training and education of officers on the importance of public relations

Table 7: Showing how drug abuse prevention can be achieved using public relations strategies?

Items	Frequency	Percentage
By identifying the at risk audience and allocating sufficient time to the programme	200	50%
designing messages that are effective with targeted audience and choosing media used by target audience	200	50%
None of the above	0	0%
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Survey; 2024

Table 7 above shows that drug abuse prevention can be achieved using public relations strategies to identifying at risk audience and allocating sufficient time to the programme. More so by designing messages that are effective with targeted audience and choosing media used by target audience

Table 8: Showing: what are the public relations tool available to NDLEA?.

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Broadcast programmes advertorial/sponsorship, SPA, feature article, news reports on newspaper and magazine	198	49%
Press releases, press conference, community/ media relations	202	51%
	0	0%
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Survey; 2024

Table 8 above reveal that Press releases, press conference, community/ media relations, Broadcast programmes, advertorial/sponsorship, SPA, feature article, news reports on television, newspaper and magazine are the public relations tool available to NDLEA

Table 9: Public relations principles, strategies and practice has continued to contribute towards the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) drug abuse prevention crusade in Nigeria

RESPONSE	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	400	100%
Agree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Survey; 2024

Table 9 above reveal that Public relations principles, strategies and practice has continued to contribute towards the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) drug abuse prevention crusade in Nigeria.

The study reveals that NDLEA's public relations strategies have not been effective in combating drug abuse among Oredo local government area youths. Despite being aware of the agency, more youths continue to engage in drug abuse. The study also found that broken homes, bad parenting, and peer group influence are the major causes of drug abuse, while few attribute it to lifestyle factors. Thus, mass media campaigns are ineffective in curbing drug abuse among Imo State undergraduates, possibly due to a lack of awareness.

The study suggests that using new technologies and media campaigns to raise awareness about drug abuse in Nigeria can help improve public relations strategies. AI, which can analyze vast amounts of data in seconds, can provide accurate and up-to-date insights. AI tools, such as chatbots, can automate tasks like scheduling social media posts, drafting press releases, and responding to customer comments. However, adequate government funding and AI purchase are needed. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) suggests that people use new technologies like mobile phones, smart phones, and computers to explore AI for its usefulness in solving problems. To effectively use AI in drug abuse prevention, NDLEA should create a public relations department, engage public relations practitioners in top management, and provide training and education for officers.

The study demonstrates that drug abuse prevention can be achieved through effective public relations strategies, targeting at-risk audiences and utilizing data augmentation to aid human authors in writing review articles and public relations messages. Public relations tools include press releases, press conferences, community relations, broadcast programs, and advertisements. The study highlights the continued contributions of public relations principles and practices to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency's drug abuse prevention efforts in Nigeria, as per the Mexican Declaration (1978).

Conclusion

Drug abuse prevention can be achieved through effective public relations strategies, targeting at-risk audiences and allocating time for prevention programs. However, NDLEA's public relations strategies have not yielded positive results, as more youths continue to engage in drug abuse. To improve, the agency should intensify efforts, especially targeting young people from broken homes, bad parentage, and peer group influence. Using new technologies and organizing regular orientations on drug abuse dangers can help. Artificial intelligence can be used to aid in problem-solving, but adequate government funding and training are needed. Public relations tools include press releases, press conferences, community relations, broadcast programs, and feature articles.

Recommendations

Based on findings of this study, the researcher recommended as follows that public relations strategies can be effectively utilized in drug abuse prevention through upgrading to an effective public relations department in NDLEA, thus employing and engaging qualified public relation practitioners as part of top management in NDLEA, officers should do compulsory course on public relations. Relevant stakeholders and drug law enforcement officers need be put in more effort to reduce the menace to the barest minimum. More so adequate government funding of artificial intelligence equipment and training on the use of Artificial intelligence in problem-solving is highly needed. It was recommended that the NDLEA should intensify their publicity and commitment to drug abuse in order to raise considerable public awareness, using new technologies and organizing regular orientations on drug abuse dangers.

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