

Innovations

Strategic Public Relations and Flood Control in Imo State -Nigeria

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Abstract: *In times past, public relations strategies have been successfully applied towards solving numerous problems confronting the society. However, the problem of flooding has remained unresolved in spite of several measures put in place to tackle the menace. This study focuses on utilising public relations in controlling flood control in an Eastern State in Nigeria. The research objectives specifically sought to ascertain the effects of communication, sponsorship and stakeholder engagement on flood control in Imo State. The study used the survey research method. The projected population of Imo state was 5,459,300, while a sample size of 385 was generated using the Stat Trek's Sample Planning Wizard tool. Face and content validity testing was carried out to assess the validity of the research instrument, while a test-retest reliability testing was done to assess the reliability of the research instrument. The T-test was used to test the hypotheses, and the results showed that communication, sponsorship, and stakeholder engagement had significant effects on flood control in Imo state, Nigeria. Thus, the problem of flooding lingers because public relations strategies have not been adequately deployed in solving the problem all the while. It is therefore recommended that continuous enlightenment, regular cleaning of catchment areas and drainages; strategic communication be deployed in engaging key stakeholders to sponsor construction of vital flood control infrastructure; and public relations driven advocacies should be deployed in the enactment of policy guidelines that attract sponsorships in order to achieve flood control in the state.*

Key words: *Public relations, Flood, Flooding, communication, sponsorship, stakeholder engagement, flood control, community relations*

Introduction

Public relations is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics (Bajaj, 2023). It is a deliberately planned effort through which organizations build,

nurture, and sustain a friendly and symbiotic relationship with its various and dependable publics (Okolo et al., 2018). This means that public relations is not firefighting, window dressing, flimflam, gimmick or hoodwink. It also means that it does not condone adversarial or lethargic relationship with its various constituencies. Nwosu (2001) emphasized that public relations is matching words with actions which aimed at creating a peaceful existence among engaging stakeholders.

The importance of public relations in relationship building and communication in this digital age cannot be overemphasised (Okocha & Monday, 2023). Strategic public relations refer to a set of planning, organizing, decisions, and actions, which if effectively formulated and implemented would enable the organizational managers and analysts to address priority issues, manage change, build competitive advantage and achieve sustainable growth and development (Adjin-Tetty et al., 2020). It involves the application of two-way communications aimed at achieving mutual understanding, trust, respect, relationship, and love. Consequently, public relations strategies have been used to deliberately plan and implement programmes that massively benefited the publics (Odeba& Osazuwa, 2021). The predictive capacity of public relations is pervasive and dispose it to numerous strategies, some of which include advocacy, communication, social media, community relations, and stakeholder engagement etc.

In addition, Okolo et al. (2015) highlighted that public relations is an effective tool for crisis management. However, the global flood record indicates that it is one of the most devastating natural disasters the world over (Jonkman et al., 2024). Flood is a natural phenomenon caused by heavy rainfall, intense snowmelt, ice, etc., leading to the overflow of water bodies, thus damaging human lives and other property (Simova et al., 2023). Flood according to Simova et al. (2023: 1) “can also be caused by huge waves (tsunamis) along the ocean coast due to earthquakes, volcanic activity, cyclones, tornadoes, storms, etc.” On the other hand, flooding is the accumulation of excess water after heavy rainfall on the earth’s surface over a long period of time (Njoku & Iro, 2024). Also, flood control refers to the measures taken to ameliorate the impact of the excess water. This implies that once water level rises above its normal level, it turns into flood. The recognition of this is crucial and thus brings about the need for flood management through structural measures like channels, canals, culverts, reservoirs, embankments, ecological infrastructure and non-structural proxies like climate predictions, awareness, and continuous participation in flood projects.

In retrospect, flood has led to a lot of human and socio-economic losses (Bouchard et al., 2023). For instance, in 2021, flood caused the death of 4, 143 people with Americas (43.2%), Europe (2.9%), Asia (48.7%), Oceania (0.1%), and

Africa (5.1%), having their respective losses (Bouchard et al., 2023). For them, out of 29.2 million people affected across the globe, Asia (65.5%) and Africa (29.4%) were most hit in terms of destruction of property aside the number of deaths reported. In addition, Bouchard et al. (2023) emphasised that the economic losses that resulted from flooding amounted to US\$ 74.4 billion. Similarly, Salami et al. (nd) noted that in Venezuela, 30,000 people allegedly died as a result of floods and landslides in 1999. Also, between 2000/2001 in Mozambique, 1,813 people died. Sadly too, in 2003 in China, 130 million people were overwhelmed by floods. Pitifully, floods devastated 100 million people on yearly basis between 1971 and 1995, which totaled 1.5 billion during that period (Salami et al., nd). In recent times, people affected with flood disaster have risen exponentially and with more than 81 million people left homeless, 318,000 people had died (Owolabi & Ekechi, 2014).

Furthermore, literature is replete with numerous investigations on the application of public relation strategies to various facets of human endeavours. The studies have been done from several dimensions due to the multi-pronged pervasive nature of the practice. Yet most of them focused on organizations in public and private sectors because of public relations value as a management function. Literature also recorded various studies conducted on public relations and flood control in Nigeria, such as Uzodinma, et. al. (2018) examined public awareness and perception of flood risks and control measures in South-east Nigeria. However, these studies did not include the structural flood control measures that deviated from the old channels while the engagement of stakeholders and sponsorship for the provision of control structures were not covered by those studies. Evans et al. (2017) analyzed the relative contributions of climatic elements and environmental variables to flood disasters in South-south Nigeria and found out that the sustainable maintenance of flood control infrastructure was poor and contributed to much of the flooding. Additionally, Nwachukwu et al. (2018) conducted a study that highlighted the causes of flooding in Imo State but did not capture the place of public relations in flood control.

In spite of all these efforts to control flood within the South-eastern region of Nigeria, the problem remains unresolved thereby leaving the residents to still grapple with the perennial persistence of flooding. Against this backdrop, this study seeks to proffer solution from a more pragmatic context and focuses on utilising public relations strategies to effectively control flood in Imo state, Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

Public Relations

Public relations is an organisation's strategic weapon for proactively building and maintaining a corporate image and reputation, through the establishment of a

purposely planned mutual understanding, acceptance, and relationship between an organization and the entire stakeholders, focused toward creating enduring benefits for both parties. In essence, the organization gains acceptance and operates freely and responsively by establishing certain community-endorsed projects. While the community gains access to good roads, pipe borne water, hospitals, scholarships, employment opportunities, etc., these community-based projects earn the organization positive publicity, good image, and competitive advantage.

According to Orakwue et al. (2006:30), the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) defined public relations as “the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics.” According to Okafor and Malizu (2014:983) The Mexican Statement defined public relations as “the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organizational leaders and implementing planned programs for the benefits of the organization and its publics.” Okolo et al. (2018) noted that public relations is the act of establishing a two-way symmetric relationship between an organisation and its various constituencies (stakeholders). This definition captures the essence of the profession, the benefits or interests of publics and organization as well as the communicative and management tenets of the practice. In more specific terms especially as it relates to crisis management such as flood control which is the focus of this study, public relations may be defined as an orchestrated set of thinking decisions and actions, which if effectively formulated, implanted, implemented and controlled would enable the strategist address strategic priority issues, manage change, build strategic advantage and achieve sustainable performance (Aja & Jonson 2010).

The predictive capacity of public relations is pervasive since public relations has the capacity of provide adequate information to leaders of organisations and different publics to create stability and unity which eventually breeds peace in the environment (Cortellazzo et al., 2019; Place, 2019). This corroborates Maiwada et al. (2025) who asserted that public relations is an essential tool for peace building.

Flood Control

The modern inundation is as a result of excessive carbon emissions from man's industrial activities that have destroyed the ozone layers and melted the ancient ice in the arctic regions thereby triggering climate change and excess rainfalls (Uzodinma et al., 2018). Throughout the history of mankind, flood has brought untold wealth and prosperity to civilizations, while at the same time causing tremendous losses and untold sufferings to millions of people (Okorofo, 2024; Ogbonna et al., 2011). Flooding is an ancient and modern phenomenon with a

global impact. As one of the most devastating natural disasters all over the world (Jonkman et al., 2024), the capacity of water to become disastrous when ignored becomes a detrimental risk. This implies that once water level rises above its normal level, it turns into flood. Sadly, the disastrous impacts of flooding on the communities where they occur places public and private interests at stake.

In Nigeria, the disastrous impact of floods necessitated the establishment of the Federal Emergency Relief Agency in 1976 which later metamorphosed into the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and was saddled with the responsibility of handling disasters, flood inclusive (Ude et al., 2024; Adefosoye & Agagu, 2020). Anecdotal evidence shows that external world bodies have made several efforts in a bid to control floods in this region. For instance, the World Bank erosion project at Urualla in Ideato LGA, dualisation of many roads and expansion of gutters down the Umuaka and Okwudor hills that bifurcates into Njaba River, and valuable relief materials donated to flood victims over the years are have been duly documented. Certainly, relief efforts seem not to be lacking, especially in view of evidence of efforts aimed at dealing with the menace in Imo State. Unfortunately, the inability of these agencies to contain the challenges of floods has become obvious as disasters have gone beyond relief packages (Shah et al., 2020).

Extant literature recorded several works and public efforts of world bodies and national/state governments, at assessing and mitigating flood in Nigeria and beyond at various times (Ogundolie et al., 2024; Iro, 2024; Umar & Gray, 2023; Kanu & Onyekwere, 2023; Anyadiegwu et al., 2021; Simonovic et al., 2020; Nwachukwu et al., 2018; Agbonkhese et al., 2014). In Nigeria specifically, some scholars agree that flooding in Nigeria is caused by weak implementation of policies, streams and channel obstruction due to indiscriminate waste disposal habits, and human activities in flood plains. Environmental mismanagement and poor enforcement of codes and plans in relation to flooding is occasioned by weak institutional and legislative framework in the development control process (Adeleye et al., 2019).

Public Relations Strategies in Flood Control Communication

The indispensability of communication to human existence is indubitable given that it has been very critical in conveying pertinent messages to people in flood disaster prone areas in Nigeria (Owolabi & Ekechi, 2014). Onyedi and Wogu (2023) asserted that communication has become an essential and integral aspect of creating awareness about risks associated with flooding. Communicating risks associated with flooding encompasses identifying areas prone to flood and creating adequate flood risk awareness to people living in those areas (Rollason et al., 2018). Indeed, the need to communicate arises since people need to

respond adequately by keeping themselves out of the harm's way during flood disaster (Pang et al., 2023). Unfortunately, Setiadi et al. (2023) remarked that no effective management of flood disaster can be fully executed without adequate policy implementation and communication. In their study, it was revealed that loss of lives and property can significantly be reduced during flood incidence sequel to effective and timely communication.

So, communication is a strategy for bringing vital information to the knowledge of the audience in order to influence desirable actions. The desired actions are expected to be in tangent with the intentions of the source of the information aimed at manifesting the outcomes of the process engaged in by the sender. Community awareness and understanding of flood risks play a crucial role in effective flood management and disaster preparedness. When communities are well-informed about the potential risks and impacts of floods, they are more likely to take proactive measures, cooperate with authorities, and adopt appropriate flood control measures. Regrettably, communication has been highly inadequate and has led to recurring deaths and loss of property each time flood disaster occurs (Owolabi & Ekechi, 2014). Corroborating this, Rollason et al. (2018) observed that people's disposition to develop flood resilience is typically masterminded by flood risk communication. However, research reveals that people's awareness and change in behaviour have remained the same despite flood risk communication. For Rollason et al. (2018), communication has become an aberration since it has proven to wield no significant impact.

Moreover, studies have shown that community awareness of flood risks is often influenced by various factors, including past flood experiences, access to information, education level, and communication efforts by government agencies and non-governmental organizations (Uzodinma et al., 2018). To improve community awareness and understanding of flood risks, public relations strategies play a vital role. Hence, government agencies and non-governmental organizations use various communication channels to disseminate accurate and timely information about flood risks, preparedness, and response measures. Against this exposition, the researchers propose that:

H1: Communication has a significant effect on flood control in Imo State.

Sponsorship

A business agreement and arrangement between those who support and those being supported to meet determined objectives, which is beneficial to both participants is referred to as sponsorship (Batu, 2010). It is a form of marketing communication (Nadube & Isenah, 2022) and one major aspect of public relations that can be deployed to create brand awareness and associations (Halim, 2023). It refers to a mutually beneficial partnership between an organization (sponsor) and an event, cause, or initiative (sponsee) related to flood control. The sponsor

provides financial, in-kind, or other support to the sponsee in exchange for visibility, branding opportunities, and a positive association with the cause (Uduji, 2012). Chebli and Gharbi (2014) assured that sponsorship solidifies a brand and lubricates a company's image. Underpinning this, Batu (2010) stated that "sponsorship empowers the prestige of a brand or company, improves and strengthens its size, financial activity and international status."

Through sponsorship, companies are offered the opportunity to showcase their association with social causes by supporting research, education, and arts (Batu, 2010), as well as relief packages in time of disaster like flooding. Study done by Kaleli et al. (2021) found that sensitisation of the people on government projects was positively and significantly influence by sponsorships. Indeed, when organisations sponsor projects that can reduce the danger associated with flood or even sponsor projects to provide relief for victims of flood disaster, it goes a long way to showcasing the level of the organisation's sensitivity to delivering corporate social responsibility. Kaleli et al. (2021) assented to this stating that "sponsorships improve the association with the community and is a sign that the company is socially responsible." Based on these contributions, the researchers propose that:

H2: Sponsorship has a significant effect on flood control in Imo State.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement entails any group or individual who is involved in the decision-making process and thus, affects or is affected by a phenomenon (Edelenbos et al., 2016). In their view, stakeholder engagement does not involve the entire public, rather a select and specific group who are affected or on their disposition, influence certain critical decision about an occurrence. Pradipta et al. (2023) simply defined stakeholder engagement as those who are affected by a particular event or phenomenon. In the context of flood, it means people who in one way or the other are affected by flood disaster. Underscoring this, Abdulmajid et al. (2021) stated that "stakeholders in this context are individuals and groups that have an interest in flood protection, flood safety and development." They include government and their various flood-related agencies, community members, business organisations, investors, suppliers, environmentalists, media organisations, farmers, market women, religious and academic groups, consumer-action groups, construction companies, transporters, etc. These and much more are the people who are affected by flood disaster and they are expected to work harmoniously through mutual understanding to mitigate the impact of flooding. In other words, when flood incident occurs, all these stakeholders must engage one another to provide resilience to it. Abdulmajid et al. (2021) ratified that various levels of stakeholders have worked hard to circumvent or tackle flooding in Nigeria. This engagement is directed towards projects, initiatives, and campaigns aimed at

preventing, mitigating, and managing flood-related risks and impacts. Nevertheless, stakeholder collaboration during flood crisis is germane though, the process of collaboration is often complicated due to differences in attitudes and operation existing among them (Mendis et al., 2024). With these convictions, we tentatively state that:

H3: Stakeholder engagement has a significant effect on flood control in Imo State.

Community Relations/Participation

In flood-related issues, there is a dire need for community-led government interaction given that it enhances effectiveness and efficiency. Community relations is the building and sustenance of mutual and beneficial relationship between an organization and the members of the local community where its business is domiciled. It builds and maintains harmony and love between the two groups. Community relations engenders community participation in community-endorsed programmes and projects. However, community participation is a community relations strategy and has been revealed to be very germane in carrying out any community-based project (Nmere et al., 2020). It is a heuristic approach of ensuring that members of the community participate in decision making process that relates to carrying out certain social tasks for them (Iyi & Ugwuanyi, 2014).

However, Wesli et al. (2013) stated that flood control cannot be effective without community engagement. In support of this, Adefisioye (2017) remarked that involving citizens in flood management will lead to tremendous positive outcome. According to him, handling flood issues has experienced inadequate control and management knowhow due to lack of adequate community relations via active participation. The relevance of community relations which can be achieved through community participation is that there are certain measures the government or other organisations might adopt that might have an adverse influence on the members of the locality. For instance, certain measures or approaches might contradict and contravene the culture of the community. moreover, it may even be harmful to their farmlands in the long run especially if flood is not channeled properly. Thus, Utsev et al. (2023:1) narrated that "community awareness and education are seen as essential for reducing flood impacts, while public-private partnerships offer opportunities for collaborative flood management initiatives." That is why the community must get active involvement. Underpinning this, Sediowati et al. (2021) found that knowledge of flood risk and the local community participation was significantly influenced by community effort. Similarly, Wesli et al. (2013) revealed that community involvement has a significant effect on flood control.

Methodology

Descriptive research design was adopted in this study, and the survey method was specifically used. To use the descriptive to achieve this effectively, the questionnaire survey method was used to generate data from respondents. This study was conducted in Imo state, Nigeria. With a total population of 5,459,300, a total of 385 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to respondents during the data collection process. The convenience sampling technique was used to select respondents, thereby only the people available at the time of fieldwork were surveyed. To ensure that the research instrument (the questionnaire) measures what it intended to measure, the face and content validity were adopted. The Cronbach's Alpha test was conducted to test for reliability of the research instrument, and yielded a value of 0.7. Data were presented using tables and percentages, and the t-test was used to analyze the data.

Data Presentation

This segment focuses on the presentation and analysis of quantitative data.

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Items	Frequency	Percent (100%)
Gender	Male	127	39.3
	Female	196	60.7
	Total	323	100.0
Marital status	Married	189	58.5
	Single	134	41.5
	Total	323	100
Age	18-35	111	34.30
	36-50	161	49.9
	51-Above	51	15.8
	Total	323	100.0
High level of education	O'Level	78	24.15
	OND/NCE	130	40.20
	HND/B.Sc	86	26.63
	MBA/M.Sc	23	7.12
	DBA/Ph.D	6	1.9
	Total	323	100
Note: OND = Ordinary National Diploma, NCE = National Certificate of Education, HND= Higher National Diploma.			

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 2: Effects of communication on community relations flood control in Imo State.

S/ N	Questionnaire items	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL
1	Government and politicians who represent us do not publicize risks of dangerous flood for people to be aware.	163 (50%)	148 (46%)	3 (1%)	5 (2%)	4 (1%)	323
2	When weather forecasters predict climate change, impending weather fluctuations and coming of heavy rains, many people do not understand nor care about the forecast, so they tend to overlook the information.	119 (37%)	162 (50%)	23 (7%)	10 (3%)	9 (3%)	323
3	Most of the information about flooding we get are by listening to social media platforms and radio rather than government publicity.	64 (19.8%)	70 (21.6%)	71 (21.9%)	75 (23.2%)	43 (13.3%)	323
4	Social media messages and interactions can furnish us with emergency flood information more than any other means.	102 (31.5%)	116 (35.9%)	23 (7.1%)	51 (15.7%)	31 (9.5%)	323
	Grand Total/ Percentage	944(73.0%)		120(9.2%)	228(17.6%)		1292

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 3: Effects of sponsorship on community relations flood control in Imo State.

S/N	Questionnaire items	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL
1	There are constructions of structures to control floods sponsored by companies that are working in my community.	130 (40.2%)	143 (44.2%)	20 (6.1%)	20 (6.1%)	10 (3.0%)	323
2	Companies and other stakeholders can sponsor events where speeches concerns support for proper building and other environmental practices to prevent blockage of waterways.	118 (36.5%)	155 (47.9%)	25 (7.7%)	15 (4.6%)	10 (3.0%)	323
3	During floods, governments, companies, and philanthropists announce donations of relief most of which do not get to the people who are meant to get them.	110 (34%)	163 (50.4%)	12 (3.7%)	20 (6.1%)	18 (5.5%)	323
4	Active participation in community flood control by organizations through financial sponsorship and	120 (37.1%)	153 (47.3%)	15 (4.6%)	20 (6.1%)	15 (4.6%)	323

	companies can make people like them and patronize them more and more.						
	Grand Total/ Percentage	1092(84.5%)	72(5.5%)	128(9.9%)	1292		

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 4: Effects of Stakeholder Engagement on community relations flood control in Imo State.

S/N	Questionnaire items	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL
1	If people build drainage tanks by themselves, in their vicinities, they will likely care for them like their town halls.	113 (34.9%)	160 (49.5%)	20 (6.1%)	15 (4.6%)	15 (4.6%)	323
2	As a landlord, if government or companies bring rod, cement and sand, I can gladly buy gravel, water and pay civil engineers to construct drainage and tanks around my house for eventual flood control.	128 (39.6%)	173 (53.5%)	12 (3.7%)	8 (2.4%)	2 (0.6%)	323
3	Flood disaster affects all in the environment. The public and communities can donate to construct drainage tanks to	120 (37.1%)	106 (32.6%)	40 (12.3%)	18 (5.5%)	12 (3.7%)	323

	control the excess water.						
4	After flood disasters, drainages may be filled with debris and mud which public and private sector usually clear collectively.	110 (34.0%)	156 (48.2%)	15 (4.6%)	5 (1.5%)	10 (3.0%)	323
	Grand Total/ Percentage	1066(82.5%)		87(6.7%)	85(6.5%)		1292

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of the Transformed Variables

Descriptive Statistics of the Transformed Variables									
	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.	Var.	Skewness	
	Stat.	Stat.	Stat	Stat	Stat.	Stat.	Stat.	Stat.	Std. Err.
Communication	323	2.50	2.33	4.83	3.8333	.51747	.268	.298	.136
Sponsorship	323	2.60	2.00	4.60	4.0409	.53085	.282	-.697	.136
Stakeholder Engagement	323	2.25	2.38	4.63	3.7345	.53475	.286	-.786	.136
Valid N (listwise)	323								

Source: Survey (2004)

The above depicts the descriptive statistic of the three transformed variables including communication, sponsorship, and stakeholder engagement on flood control.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: Communication has a significant effect on flood control in Imo State.

Table 6: Statistics effect on community relations flood control in Imo State

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
COMMUNICATION	323	3.8333	.51747	.02879

Table 7: T-test effect on community relations flood control in Imo State

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 0					
	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
COMMUNICATION	133.136	322	.000	3.83333	3.7767	3.8900

Interpretation of Result

Having analyzed the data from the questionnaire using t-test analysis to ascertain the effect of communication on flood control in Imo State, the Tables above revealed that the t-test result shows the existence of significant results on the variables ($T=133.136$; $P (.000)<0.05$; $CI=3.83333-3.7767$, $MD=3.83333$). The significant level was found to be 0.00, and due to this we accept the alternate hypothesis which states that communication has a significant effect on flood control in Imo State.

Hypothesis Two: Sponsorship has a significant effect on flood control in Imo State.

Table 8: Statistics of effects of Sponsorship on flood control in Imo State.

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
SPONSORSHIP	323	4.0409	.53085	.02954

Table 9: T-test result of effects of Sponsorship on flood control in Imo State.

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 0					
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
SPONSORSHIP	136.805	322	.000	4.04087	3.9828	4.0990

Interpretation of Result

Having analyzed the data from the questionnaire using t-test analysis to ascertain the effect of sponsorship on flood control in Imo State, Tables revealed that the t-test result shows the existence of significant results on the variables ($T=136.805$; $P(.000)<0.05$; $CI=3.9828-4.0990$, $MD=4.04087$). The significant level was found to be 0.00, and due to this we accept the alternate hypothesis which states that sponsorship has asignificant effects on flood control in Imo State.

Hypothesis Three: Stakeholder engagement has a significant effect on flood control in Imo State.

Table 10: Statistics of effects of Stakeholder Engagement on flood control in Imo State

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Stakeholder Engagement	323	3.7345	.53475	.02975

Table 11: T-test result of effects of Stakeholder Engagement on flood control in Imo State.

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 0					
	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Stakeholder Engagement	125.512	322	.000	3.73452	3.6760	3.7931

Interpretation of Results

Having analyzed the data from the questionnaire using t test analysis to ascertain the effect of stakeholder engagement on community relations flood control in Imo State, the **Tables 4.25 and 26** revealed that the t test result shows the existence of significant result on the variables ($T=125.512$; $P (.000) <0.05$; $CI=3.6760-3.7931$, $MD=3.73452$). The significant level was found to be 0.00, and due to this we accept the alternate hypothesis which states that stakeholder engagement hasa significant effects on community relations flood control in Imo State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from the above table highlight the significant effect of communication on community relations and flood control in Imo State. A majority of the respondents, totaling 944 (73%), indicated agreement with the statements

that communication plays a crucial role in flood control efforts. This demonstrates a broad consensus that effective communication, or the lack thereof, directly influences how communities respond to and manage flood risks.

For instance, 50% of respondents strongly agreed, and 46% agreed that government officials and politicians do not effectively publicize the risks associated with dangerous floods, leading to a lack of awareness among the populace. Similarly, when weather forecasters predict climate changes and impending heavy rains, 87% of the respondents (combining those who strongly agreed and agreed) noted that many people either do not understand or do not care about the forecast, which results in them overlooking critical information.

Furthermore, the data reveals that 41.4% of respondents rely on social media platforms and radio for information about flooding rather than government publicity. This underscores the crucial role that these platforms play in disseminating information in the community. Additionally, 67.4% of respondents agreed that social media messages and interactions are more effective in providing emergency flood information than any other means. Overall, 73% of the respondents fall into the agreement category, underscoring that communication is a vital tool in community relations and flood control. The data suggests that while there are various sources of information, the effectiveness of these communication channels in conveying crucial flood-related information needs improvement. Notably, 17.6% of respondents disagreed with the statements, indicating some level of dissatisfaction with current communication efforts, while 9.2% remained undecided.

The result thereby shows that communication has significant effects on flood control in Imo State ($T=133.136$; $P(.000)<0.05$; $CI=3.83333-3.7767$, $MD=3.83333$). This result was in line with the result of Cookey and Ukpong (2016) whose study was on "Adaptation Strategies and Benefits of Flooding in Rural Communities in River State". The study recommended that rural dwellers should be assisted to overcome mal-adaptation and there also be sensitized on the utilization of the benefits of flooding.

The results presented above reveal the substantial impact of sponsorship on community relations and flood control in Imo State. A significant majority of the respondents, 1,092 (84.5%), indicated agreement with the statements regarding the positive influence of sponsorship on flood control efforts in their communities. This high level of agreement suggests that sponsorship activities, particularly by companies and other stakeholders, play a critical role in mitigating flood risks and fostering stronger community relations. For example, 84.4% of respondents (combining those who strongly agreed and agreed) acknowledged that companies operating in their communities have undertaken the construction of flood control structures. This indicates that corporate interventions in

infrastructure development are both recognized and appreciated by the community members. Similarly, 84.4% of respondents also agreed that companies and other stakeholders can effectively organize events that promote proper building practices and environmental stewardship to prevent blockages of waterways. This underscores the community's recognition of the role that corporate entities and stakeholders can play in fostering sustainable environmental practices.

Moreover, a significant portion of the respondents, 84.4%, concurred that donations from governments, companies, and philanthropists during floods are often announced, although there is concern that these relief materials may not always reach the intended beneficiaries. This suggests a gap between the intentions of sponsors and the actual delivery of aid, highlighting an area for improvement in sponsorship efforts. Furthermore, 84.4% of respondents agreed that active participation in community flood control initiatives by organizations and companies can enhance their reputation and lead to increased patronage from community members. This points to the mutual benefits of corporate involvement in community-focused flood control efforts, where both the community and the sponsoring organizations stand to gain.

Overall, the data indicates that sponsorship activities are highly valued and have a positive impact on community relations and flood control in Imo State. The small percentage of respondents who disagreed (9.9%) or remained undecided (5.5%) suggests that while the impact of sponsorship is generally recognized, there may still be areas where the effectiveness of these efforts can be improved. The result therefore shows that sponsorship has significant effects on flood control in Imo State ($T=136.805$; $P(.000)<0.05$; $CI=3.9828-4.0990$, $MD=4.04087$). This result was in line with the result of Eze and Amangabara, (2019) who studied flood risk assessments using Geographic Information System (GIS) and Remote Sensing Techniques. The study recommended the government should be at the fore from of the promulgation of proper building codes and proper drainage construction in areas of high-risk flooding.

The findings from the table further highlight the significant impact of stakeholder engagement on community relations and flood control in Imo State. A substantial majority of respondents, 1,066 (82.5%), expressed agreement with the statements regarding the positive role of stakeholder involvement in flood control initiatives. This high level of agreement underscores the importance of collaborative efforts between various stakeholders, including the government, companies, and community members, in mitigating the risks and effects of flooding. For instance, 84.4% of respondents (combining those who strongly agreed and agreed) believed that if people build drainage systems in their vicinities themselves, they are more likely to care for these structures as they do with community assets like town halls. This indicates that local ownership and responsibility are critical

factors in maintaining effective flood control infrastructure. Similarly, 93.1% of respondents agreed that landlords would be willing to contribute to the construction of drainage systems if the government or companies provide essential materials such as rods, cement, and sand. This suggests that there is a strong willingness among community members to collaborate with stakeholders in flood control efforts, provided they receive adequate support.

Additionally, 69.7% of respondents agreed that flood disasters affect everyone in the community, and thus, public and community donations could be pooled to construct drainage systems that control excess water. This highlights the collective responsibility and potential for community-driven initiatives in flood management. Moreover, 82.2% of respondents agreed that after flood disasters, it is common for both public and private sectors to work together to clear debris and mud from drainages. This finding indicates that collaborative post-disaster efforts are recognized and valued by the community, further emphasizing the importance of stakeholder engagement in effective flood control.

Therefore, the study clearly demonstrates that strong stakeholder engagement are crucial for effective community relations and flood control in Imo State. The high level of agreement among respondents suggests that there is a strong foundation for collaborative efforts in flood management, with community members willing to contribute and participate actively in these initiatives. Moving forward, it is essential to continue fostering these relationships and ensuring that all stakeholders are adequately supported and engaged in flood control efforts. The result established that stakeholder engagement significantly impacted community relation flood control in Imo State ($T=125.512$; $P(.000)<0.05$; $CI=3.6760-3.7931$, $MD=3.73452$). This result was in line with the result of Erekpokeme (2017) whose studied flood disaster in Nigeria focusing on farmers and government mitigation efforts. The study recommended intensive farmer education, adequate relocation of farmers from flood prone areas and crop insurance.

Conclusion

The persistent devastation caused by floods in Nigeria, particularly in Imo State, has prompted the need for urgent and effective flood control measures. Despite previous statements suggesting a prolonged timeline for addressing this issue, this study reveals that viable solutions can be achieved within a much shorter time frame. Successful flood control strategies must encompass multifaceted communication strategies, policy guidelines, sponsorship initiatives, and active engagement of key stakeholders. By leveraging these elements, it is feasible to garner support, resources, and collaboration necessary for implementing actionable and innovative flood control measures.

In the light of the data encountered in the course of this study, it is recommended that continuous enlightenment is of paramount importance to ensure a flood free environment that can be achieved through cleaning of gutters or drainages. Also, a government waste/water management agency should embark on enlightenment campaigns. Good waste management culture should be promoted via enlightenment campaigns. Communication strategies should capture land use policies and implementation, more sensitive corporate social responsibility of corporate stakeholders, total change of practices of governments and landlords, as well as continuous maintenance culture of the society for the measures of flood prevention to be sustained to avoid repeat of the wrong management of the catchment pit built by the futuristic administration of Chief Sam Mbakwe. Government agency should be mandated to manage all that flood control entails. The team can organize various groups to execute promotions, constructions, marketing, sanitation, maintenance, etc.

Public relations driven strategic communication should be deployed to initiate robust synergy of key stakeholders, prominent one being the government, the autonomous communities that are worst hit by flooding, all the traditional rulers of communities in the state, all local government authorities, all companies operating in the state with headquarters within and outside the state, Nigerian Society of Engineers, politicians and philanthropists. Team can partner with international and national agencies such as United Nations, UNDP, NESREA, NIMET, FERMA, Ecological Trust Fund and other relevant organization to execute the projects especially local and international organisations notable for service to humanity, with the aim of continuous creation of awareness of the menace and securing adequate intervention to provide fund for them.

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