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Assessment of Public Relations Strategies for Sensitisation on the Prevention of COVID-19 by Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)

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Abstract

Public relations is a critical tool for guiding national affairs and addressing public health challenges. This study evaluates the public relations strategies employed by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) for sensitization on COVID-19 prevention during the 2020 pandemic. The primary objective was to assess the extent, effectiveness, and scope of NCDC's public relations efforts in raising awareness and influencing preventive behavior. Adopting a cross-sectional survey research design, the study utilized questionnaires administered to a sample of 317 respondents selected through both random and purposive sampling techniques. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, and the Extended Parallel Processing Model (EPPM) was employed as the theoretical framework. Findings revealed that 35.3% and 24% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that the NCDC deployed its public relations and sensitization strategies to a significant extent and in a comprehensive manner. Additionally, 62.1% of respondents affirmed the effectiveness of these strategies in enhancing public awareness and behavior change, contributing to the flattening of the COVID-19 curve, particularly in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT)—a high-risk area due to its exposure to

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travel-related transmission. The study concludes that public relations played a pivotal role in mitigating the spread of COVID-19 and recommends the continuous engagement of an active and well-trained public relations department at both national and state levels of the NCDC. Sustained communication efforts beyond health crises are essential to maintaining public trust and preparedness.

Keywords: Public Relations; Sensitisation; Strategies; Nigeria Centre for Disease Control; COVID-19 Prevention

INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of COVID-19 has accentuated the role of Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in managing pandemics and epidemics. Since its establishment, the NCDC has been foremost in managing disease outbreaks such as Ebola, zika virus, and bird flu among others. In 2019, the NCDC regained popularity amongst Nigerians due to its mandate of responding to the pandemic and keeping Nigerians abreast on the developments surrounding the pandemic. Periodically, the centre supports the training of field epidemiologists in primary, intermediate, and advanced field epidemiology and laboratory training programmes (NCDC, 2020). They were also instrumental in providing strategic direction to the Presidential Steering Committee on COVID-19 and collaborating with other multilateral partners in emergency response operations, case management, risk communication and vaccine deployment.

Human life revolves around relationships and communication to attain life's expectations as well as achieving set goals in any field of human endeavour. This has been the crux of public relations; establishing and maintaining good relationship between an organization and its publics (Asemah, 2022). The role of PR in managing global issues cannot be overemphasized however stated. The impact of PR is felt in virtually every facet of societal life. This was evidently seen during the outbreak of Ebola virus, Bird Flu and of a recent Covid-19 pandemic and how it was managed globally via Public Relations. This has greatly ameliorated the spread of the virus and has helped even developing nations that are not having the sound health system and economic resources to contain the virus.

Several public relations strategies have been deployed in risk communication and control of COVID-19 in Nigeria. Between the first and third quarter of 2020, the NCDC

conducted risk communication and community awareness campaigns across 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory in Nigeria (NCDC, 2020). Likewise, religious leaders were engaged in risk communication and case reporting by funding the implementation of the "Messages of Hope" project. To encourage COVID-19 preventive and protective measures in Nigeria, the NCDC supported the training of media personnel, religious leaders and celebrities to disseminate COVID-19 messages. Since public relations has become indispensable in the fight against COVID-19, different public relations strategies, programmes and campaigns were deployed for sensitizing the public about the virus.

However, the strategic used of public relations as a functional tool of combating covid-19 was neglected and much emphasis laid on roles and efforts of mass media. The simplicity of public relations is to be able to relate convincingly with the general public at levels. Baron (2012) further stated that, public relations can sensitize and informed literates and illiterates in languages they can understand. He reiterated it is far relevant such that, passing the information can be face to face and sometimes demonstrated practically for the consumption and awareness of the public, considering how the society is structured in terms of status and settlement, which can define vulnerability at some instance.

During a crisis, such as the COVID-19, effective communication strategy is essential. In other words, public relations practitioners in organizations need to communicate with transparency and empathy consistently (Hogg &Belavadi, 2017). Effective communication helps build trust and hope in organizations and their efforts to adapt to the challenges they face. However, seeing how the world has never seen a crisis quite like this pandemic in the past, communicators are struggling to design a crisis communication plan that connects with employees, communities, and other stakeholders. Hence, the need for a concerted effort that will harnesses the important role of public relations to stem the tide.

Statement of the Problem

The impact of public relations is felt in virtually every field of human endeavor. This is because man is a social being and cannot therefore live as an island or in isolation of other people in the society. Hence, the indispensability of public relations in managing human relationships at all levels. Public Relations is concerned with the management of the relationship between and among publics towards curbing the various challenges bedeviling mankind globally. This expedient role was evidently manifest during the Covid-19

pandemic when nations of the world were forced to close down, economies crashed and millions of lives and property were lost. PR played a leading role in resuscitating countries from the effect of the pandemic to a new normal lifestyle as well as reducing the damages incurred.

In developed and organized societies of the world, anything that limits freedom and leads to death is fear. Information and sensitization of all kinds geared towards the benefit of the public is speedily achieved via the functional tools of the media and various form of public relations due to their advancement in technology, literacy levels and functional platforms of information dissemination. With the surge of covid-19, the public relations unit of NCDC was very active on social media platforms during the pandemic. They harnessed both social media and the mainstream media to create awareness to Nigerian citizens on precautionary measures like use of alcoholic base sanitizers, wearing of face mask, frequent washing of hands, avoiding crowded gathering as well as observing social distance in the public (Maikomo et al., 2021).

For instance, the public relations department in the Ministry of Health in the UAE has played an active role in spreading awareness and accurate news about preparing for infections from the coronavirus, as the Ministry of Health holds a press conference every day through which announcements on injuries, deaths, and recovery are made. The public relations department has also worked by conducting many questionnaires to determining the reaction of the community to the precautionary and preventive measures taken by the bodies affiliated with the Ministry of Health. In addition, the department publishes all indicative and awareness data on social media and through the mainstream media in the country to deliver the right and accurate messages to the public (Kamil, 2020). But the pertinent question is "how well did this information got to the public and how well was it structured to sensitized the public at all levels"?

In all the effort of the NCDC, federal ministry of health with other concerned agencies and organization putting up the fight against the spread of COVID-19, how well was it related to the public and how well did the strategies employed yielded? Churches and mosques were other means for sensitization on the pandemic, even though the law at that point in time prohibits the gathering of more than forty persons without permission, and movement was also restricted to prevent the spread. The NCDC used the media adequately (television, text messages, bill boards, word of mouth, house to house sensitization by

health workers, street jingles, and check points regulations). In spite of the several studies conducted on this subject, there is limited empirical evidence on the role of public relations in sensitizing the public on epidemics and its spread hence, the imperativeness of the study.

Objectives of the Study

The study seeks to assess the public relations and sensitisation strategies deployed by the NCDC towards the prevention of COVID-19. In order to achieve this broad aim, the study seeks to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To ascertain the nature of public relations and sensitisation strategies on the prevention of COVID-19 by the NCDC.
2. To determine the extent of the deployment of public relations and sensitisation strategies on the prevention of COVID-19 by the NCDC.
3. To find out the effect of public relations and sensitisation strategies on the prevention of COVID-19 by the NCDC

Review of Concepts

The major concepts that constitute the study were reviewed to provide a better understanding of the topic under investigation in light of extant literature.

Public Relations

Cutlip, Centre and Broom (1994) cited in Shem, (2023), define public relations as "the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends". This definition underlines the fact that public relations is a two-way process between an organization and its identified public that is meant to benefit both parties. In other words, mutual understanding requires by definition, two-way communication.

The British Institute of Public Relations (BPR) defines public relations as "the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its public". This definition suggests that public relations is not a haphazard endeavor. It is a process that is deliberately planned to achieve a given goal or objective, which is mutual understanding between an organization and its public and must be planned. "Sustained effort" means that a process does not end until it has achieved its objectives. This means that as a public relations officer, you must always endeavor to carry out plans to a logical end, despite any difficulty you may encounter in the process.

Wilcox and Cameron (2009, p.5) explain that people often define public relations by some of its visible techniques and tactics, such as publicity in a newspaper, a television interview with an organization's spokesperson, or the appearance of a celebrity at a special event. What people fail to understand is that public relations is a process involving many subtle and far-reaching aspects. Public relations include research and analysis, policy formation, programming, communication, and feedback from numerous publics. Its practitioners operate on two distinct levels as advisers to their clients or to an organization's top management and as technicians who produce and disseminate messages in multiple media channels. Public relations is, therefore, a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilise change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and sound ethical communication techniques as its principal tool.

Review of Related Literature

Related literatures were reviewed to uncover nuanced perspectives on the current research towards building new insights.

Public Relations Tools, Strategies and Programmes

Normally, every organisation strives to build a good image so that all organisations or individuals who deal with it, will do so with positive impression. Thus, "public relations is concerned with how and what others think about you as either a person or an organization", (Onah 1996, p. 5, Nworgu 2002, p.4). Onah argues that one of the objectives of any modern organisation is to generate public view and these views are either favourable or unfavourable. The British Institute of public relations (cited in Nworgu 2002, p.5) sees public relations "as a deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics". The public comprises the various individuals who are affected by or can affect the operations of a particular organisation or ink2stitution. The public is bound together by a common interest in the institution. The analysis of this definition is that public relations is organised as a campaign or programme and is not haphazard. The definition further emphasizes that the

purpose of public relations is to make the organisation or any institution understood by others.

While defining public relations practice in higher educational system, Keen and Greenhall (1987) in Okpoko's work (2004, p.196) stated that public relations practice is the process of organised two-way communication between an institution and it's audiences, its objective is to build a level of mutual understanding and respect which allows the institution's goals to be more readily achieved.

The emphasis on public relations practice in educational institutions, according to Okpoko (2004) shows that public relations is affected in some ways by the activities of the institution; every letter that goes out unanswered, each public speech made, actions of the management officials, staff and students. All these add or detract from the goodwill that exists between the institution and its public. The Mexican Statement (1978) defined public relations as the art and social science of analysing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organization leaders and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve both the organisation and the public interest. This definition is very practical oriented in the sense that it emphasizes the need for research to assess the situation and the implication of what is discovered. It equally indicates that public relations programmes must not be done in a haphazard manner but must be properly planned. This explanation brings to light the cardinal points in the public relations practice. The process involves research, planning, programming, action, communication and evaluation.

Public Relations and Sensitisation Strategies for Effective Health Communication

To a great extent, the success or failure of every health campaign in a multicultural setting like Nigeria lies in the approach and utilization of existing cultural platforms. Several health campaigns that were unsuccessful in some parts of Nigeria due to certain cultural barriers eventually became successful when cultural platforms like traditional rulers, religious leaders, and celebrities known by the people were utilized. This demonstrates the indispensable role of culture and diversity consideration in a multicultural society. Any form of communication that ignores cultural beliefs and existing traditional institutions of the people is seen as an attempt to imperialize them into adopting foreign cultures. More so, most cultures in Nigeria are conservative and are not swift to adopt innovations, hence, the resistance to change and campaigns that are anti-orthodoxy.

This cultural barrier in health communication has necessitated communication experts to develop different communication campaigns, theories, and models in a bid to proffer solutions in obliterating the existing barriers in health communication. These health messages are onward communicated via traditional rulers, religious leaders, and celebrities identified by the targeted population through blogs, social media platforms, and websites for wider reach and accessibility. In 2003 and 2004 for instance, the fight against the eradication of poliomyelitis suffered a serious setback in the Northern part of Nigeria owing substantially to widespread rumors and misconceptions among Muslims over the safety of the vaccine. The federal government had to engage the media in conjunction with the traditional rulers to allay these fears through health communication on the polio virus and the safety of the vaccine (Odorume, 2015).

Due to the pervasive influence of the new media, it has served and remained a veritable tool in reaching a large heterogeneous population. With the limitless potentials of the new media which allow for multimedia format messages, wider reach and accessibility, instantaneous delivery of messages, interactivity, and media convergence among others; it has become an effective means of information dissemination to society due to the large number of people who subscribe to different social media platforms.

Theoretical Framework

Extended Parallel Processing Model was used as theoretical framework for the study.

Extended Parallel Processing Model (EPPM)

The Extended Parallel Processing Model (EPPM) for behaviour change (also commonly known as Threat Management or Fear Management). The EPPM predicts that when perceptions of a threat are strong, and perceived levels of efficacy are high, individuals will adopt self-protective behaviors. Conversely, when perceptions of a threat are strong, but perceived levels of efficacy are low, the model predicts denial or rejection are protective behaviors (Samane et al., 2020).

In applying the EPPM model, message development and campaign implementation will take into consideration audience segments and strategies to address issues of efficacy and threat. For example, for audiences that have high threat and efficacy, messages will provide a clear call to action encouraging them to adopt protective behaviours. Audiences at low thresholds of threat and efficacy will be informed about the risk and provided with solutions to build their confidence. For audiences with high threat and low efficacy,

messages will focus on protective behaviors as solutions to the threat. While messages for audiences with low threat and high efficacy will center on providing information about the risk thus empowering them to adopt recommended behaviors. In response to evidence-based findings, the campaign will seek to build self-efficacy for individuals to protect themselves, families, and communities while creating a realistic and balanced sense of the threat posed by COVID-19. Findings from the NOI polls in April and May 2020 showed that some Nigerians still consider themselves immune to COVID-19 and some have challenges practicing protective behaviors.

By working towards creating a balance between a realistic understanding of the threat of COVID- 19 infection and the belief that the spread of infection can be managed, the campaign seeks to mobilize all Nigerians and relevant institutions to take responsibility for the sake of themselves, their loved ones, their communities and the country. Individuals are influenced at the community level to practice protective behaviors if they see community leaders promote the behaviors and the community believes the behaviors are important and support is easily accessible. In like manner, influences at the social and structural level increases the likelihood of individuals practicing protective behaviors, when there are facilities in place to support the behaviors, such as laws and policies that promote norms around the protective behaviors.

METHODS

Being and explorative research, the "cross sectional survey research design" was adopted for the study. This is because a targeted population of an institution NCDC (internal and external) participated in the research. The population of this study, were the NCDC Staff, managerial and public relations unit and staff deployed to other public health facilities within the scope of the study. `According to a published report by the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), there are 327 staff in the National Centre for Disease Control (*source: NCDC, 2022*). These 327 staff form the population for this study.

Census sampling technique was used where all the staff members were constitute the sample size owing to their low population. The researcher administered 327 copies of the instrument to respondents to both the internal and the external staffs so as to have a comprehensive response. However, only 317 copies were completed and returned useable.

RESULTS

The research data were presented for onward discussion and analysis.

Table 1: Showing the Effective Communication and Sensitization Measures were Utilized to Prevent Covid-19 by NCDC in FCT- Abuja.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	74	23.3%
Agree	162	51.1%
Neutral	12	3.7%
Disagree	41	12.9%
Strongly Disagree	28	8.8%
Total	**317**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Data in Table 1 Shows the Effective Communication and Sensitization Measures were Utilized to Prevent Covid-19 by NCDC in FCT- Abuja. The implies that most of the respondents agree to the effective communication and sensitization measures used to prevent Covid-19 by NCDC in FCT- Abuja as revealed by 162 respondents representing (51.1%) of the entire respondents.

Table 2: Showing the public relations and sensitization strategies applied on the prevention of Covid-19 were proactive.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	180	56.7%
Agree	63	19.8%
Neutral	13	4.1%
Disagree	28	8.8%
Strongly Disagree	33	10.4%
Total	**317**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Data in Table 2 shows the public relations and sensitization strategies applied on the prevention of Covid-19 were proactive. This implies that most of the respondents strongly agree that the public relations and sensitization strategies applied on the prevention of Covid-19 were proactive, as revealed by 180 respondents representing (56.7%) of the entire respondents.

Table 3: Showing the Public relations and sensitization strategies were deployed consistently for the prevention of COVID-19 by the NCDC.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	77	24.2%
Agree	141	44.4%
Neutral	15	4.7%
Disagree	53	16.7%
Strongly Disagree	46	14.5%
Total	**317**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Data in Table 3 shows the public relations and sensitization strategies were deployed consistently for the prevention of COVID-19 by the NCDC. This implies that most respondents receive regular information about COVID-19 as revealed 141 respondents representing (44.4%) of the entire respondents.

Table 4: Showing the Public relations and sensitization strategies that were deployed to the best possible means for the prevention of COVID-19 by the NCDC.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	49	15.4%
Agree	151	47.6%
Neutral	21	6.6%
Disagree	53	16.7%
Strongly Disagree	43	13.5%
Total	**317**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Data in Table 4 Shows the Public relations and sensitization strategies that were deployed to the best possible means for the prevention of COVID-19 by the NCDC. This implies that majority of the respondents agreed that public relations and sensitization strategies were deployed to the best possible means for the prevention of COVID-19 by the NCDC as revealed by 151 respondents representing (47.6%) of the entire respondents.

Table 5: The Public Relations and Sensitization Strategies Applied on the Prevention of Covid-19 was Successful/Effective.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	197	62.1%
Agree	52	16.4%
Neutral	9	2.8%
Disagree	22	6.9%
Strongly Disagree	37	11.6%
Total	**317**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Data in Table 5: Shows the Public Relations and Sensitization Strategies Applied on the Prevention of Covid-19 was Successful/Effective. This implies that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that public relations and sensitization strategies applied on the prevention of Covid-19 was successful and effective as revealed by 197 respondents representing (62.1%) of the entire respondents

Table 6: The Public Relations and Sensitization Strategies Applied on the prevention of Covid-19 were satisfactory.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	132	41.6%
Agree	47	14.8%
Neutral	11	3.4%
Disagree	83	26.1%
Strongly Disagree	44	13.8%
Total	**317**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Data in Table 6: Shows the Public Relations and Sensitization Strategies Applied on the prevention of Covid-19 were satisfactory. This implies that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the public relations and sensitization strategies applied on the prevention of Covid-19 were satisfactory as revealed by 132 respondents representing (41.6%) of the entire respondents

DISCUSSION

Findings of this study were discussed under the subheading, research questions below:

What is the nature of public relations and sensitization strategies on the prevention of COVID-19 by the NCDC?

To answer this research question, some questions were drafted in the research instrument to ascertain whether professional approaches to public relations were deployed in sensitization strategies on the prevention of COVID-19 by the NCDC. The study showed that most of the respondents have admitted that Professional approach to public relations was deployed on the prevention of COVID-19 by the NCDC in FCT-Abuja. The findings also showed that the public relations and sensitization strategies applied on the prevention of Covid-19 were proactive. More so, majority of the respondents agree to the statement that effective communication and sensitization measures were used to prevent Covid-19 by NCDC in FCT- Abuja. This is to say that the nature of the public relations and sensitisation strategies used on the prevention of Covid-19 by the NCDC in FCT was professional as evidenced in the effective communication strategies and the proactive approach to the sensitisation.

The findings of this study are in consonance with the findings of Nwafor, Omoevah and Umuze (2022) who found out that the Anambra State Government used public relations strategies in a professional approach by deploying public relations strategies like press releases, press conferences, announcements, town hall meetings with critical stakeholders like the market unions, transport unions, town unions etc. in disseminating appropriate information and behavior that helped in managing the various COVID-19 related crises in Anambra State. This shows that effective communication strategies were deployed to sensitise the people of Anambra state about the Covid-19 virus. Similarly, Asemah, David and Akpabio (2022) conducted research on public sensitization and prevention of Corona virus outbreak in selected Local Government Areas in Edo state. They found out that majority of the respondents have knowledge of corona virus outbreak in Nigeria and that the respondents mostly prevented COVID-19 through sensitization strategies. This is to say that sensitization campaign on the prevention of COVID-19 by the NCDC was successful courtesy of public relations strategies deployed.

To what extent was the public relations and sensitization strategies deployed in the prevention of COVID-19 by the NCDC?

Findings from the study revealed that public relations and sensitization strategies used in the prevention of COVID-19 by the NCDC was deployed to a very large extent and it was holistic in coverage. An overwhelming number of respondents also affirmed that public relations and sensitization strategies were been deployed consistently and to the best possible means for the prevention of COVID-19 by the NCDC in FCT. The findings of this study corroborates Anyim(2021) who discovered that effective public awareness and sensitization through the provision of health information by the library and other information Centre about coronavirus is a vital strategy for checkmating coronavirus and the associated challenges. Educating people about covid-19 symptoms, causes and experiences of victims through health information materials such as fliers, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, journals, books, social media, blogs, and websites could help people become more aware, enlightened and assist in self-management to some extent (Ilogho et al, 2020). It is glaring from the submission of the various scholars that the fight against Covid-19 virus via public relations sensitisation was all-round in that the library, social media platforms and other formal and informal means of communication were deployed. The sensitisation effectiveness also extended to not just convincing the residents about the need for safety protocol/vaccination but also counteracted conspiracy theories the residents were previously exposed to from informal sources about Covid-19 sensitisation. This finding also upholds the submission of Nwanguma&Anorue (2015) and Asemah et al.(2022) that repeated exposure to sensitisation strategies increases knowledge about the virus and results to behavioral change towards the disease. Health Belief Model (HBM) may have also offered justification for this high level of adoption in view of its position that people's action compliance with messages on disease prevention and control is dependent on their perceived health threat, susceptibility, severity, benefits and efficacy of the media to address their health information needs.

What is the outcome of public relations and sensitization strategies on the prevention of COVID-19 by the NCDC in FCT Abuja?

The study discover that the outcome of public relations and sensitisation strategies on prevention of COVID-19 awareness was successful and effective in that the sensitisation yielded good results as affirmed by most of the respondents. More so, from

the findings of this study, majority of the respondents affirmed that the sensitisation on the prevention of Covid-19 by the NCDC in FCT was suitable and satisfactory. This is evidenced in the success recorded in nipping the spread of the virus in the bud. In spite of the fact that FCT Abuja is one of the most travelled places in the country being the nation's federal capital territory, the Covid-19 curve was kept at bay as a result of the various strategies including public relations strategies that were deployed to sensitise the public by the NCDC in Abuja. This finding corroborates the findings of Asemah et al. who also found out in their study that majority (237 or 64%) of respondents in select LGAs of Edo State said the television coverage of Covid-19 awareness has positive influence on them, especially their health behaviour. Anyim (2021) also averred that the application of the Public Relations strategies by Anambra State Government was effectively done, hence the low rate of COVID-19 indexed cases in the state compared to other states of the federation. This shows that there was a positive outcome after the application of public relations strategies for sensitisation on the prevention of Covid-19. The campaign influenced the outcome and reaction of the respondents to adhere to precautionary measures given through the media by health experts in order to avoid falling victims to the deadly virus. Osasume(2021) also added that the level of success made thus far by the government through some of its policies and responses in curbing the spread of the pandemic – especially through the effective management of COVID-19 patients, leading to a high number of discharged cases and low death rate. These findings imply that individual perception of infectious illnesses such as COVID-19 may not be sufficient to influence the adoption of protective practices. This explains the need for the regular public relations sensitization of community members on COVID-19 safety measures regardless of their perception concerning the illness in order to sustain the success recorded.

CONCLUSION

It is apposite to note that the application of Public Relations and sensitisation strategies on the prevention of Covid-19 by the NCDC in FCT Abuja has greatly contributed to the success recorded as evidenced in the findings of the study. The study found out that the nature of Public Relations and sensitisation strategies applied for the prevention of Covid-19 by the NCDC was effective, professional and proactively done.

Consequently, the public relations strategies and sensitisation helped to flatten the curve of Covid-19 in the FCT despite being one of the most travelled places and exposed to higher vulnerability. More so, the study also found out that the sensitisation was done consistently and holistically and as a result, mortality rate was reduced to the barest minimum in less than 12 months. It was also discovered that the suitability of the public relations strategies and sensitisation on the prevention of Covid-19 by the NCDC in the FCT was another reason for the feat recorded in its effectiveness to encourage practicing of safety protocols. Be that as it may, external publics' acceptance and cooperation posed a serious challenge to the sensitisationat the onset of the pandemicbut the public relations used to sensitise the audience obliterated their doubts thereby promoting compliance to Covid-19 protocols.

Recommendations

This study has noted the applicability of the Public Relationsstrategies by NCDC and has concluded that these strategies were effectively applied hence the low rate of COVID-19 mortality cases in the FCT despite its vulnerable state compared to other nations' capitals across the globe. Therefore, the study recommends the following measures;

1. There is the need to train and maintain a robust Public Relations department at the NCDC national and state headquarters.
2. Regular health sensitisations should be encouraged on different media platforms to encourage positive health habits and proactiveness in response to health emergencies.
3. Public relations department of the NCDC should be active all through the year and not just during pandemics so as to keep their platforms active and engaging.

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