

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MITIGATION OF TRAUMATIC CRISES IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA

¹Uduak Michael Iwok, Ph.D & ²Edet Abia, Ph.D

Department of Mass Communication
Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osurua
Ikot Ekpene, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria
Email: uduakmichaeliwok25@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of public relations in the mitigation of traumatic crises in South-South Nigeria, with specific focus on Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, and Delta States. The objectives were to assess the prevalence of traumatic crises, identify prevailing misconceptions and socio-cultural barriers, evaluate the effectiveness of public relations strategies, and determine appropriate communication interventions for crisis mitigation. A survey research design was adopted, and data were collected from 757 respondents selected across the three states. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire, while data analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics and inferential analysis. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Tukey's Honest Significant Difference (HSD) post-hoc test were used to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed a high prevalence of traumatic crises in the study area, alongside widespread misconceptions and stigma that discourage help-seeking behaviour. Public relations strategies were found to be moderately effective, with media awareness campaigns and community engagement forums emerging as the most effective interventions. The ANOVA result showed a statistically significant relationship between the perceived effectiveness of public relations strategies and the level of traumatic crisis mitigation ($F(3,753) = 59.36, p < 0.05$). The study concludes that effective public relations communication plays a critical role in reducing stigma, improving awareness, and promoting recovery and resilience in crisis-affected communities. It recommends the adoption of sustained, audience-centred, and culturally sensitive public relations strategies to enhance traumatic crisis mitigation in South-South Nigeria.

Keywords: Public relations, traumatic crises, crisis communication, mitigation, South-South Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Public relations (PR) is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics (Akinfe, 2013). PR plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and promoting social causes, including mental health awareness. Mental health issues, on the other hand, refer to a range of conditions that affect an individual's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Traumatic crises are often stigmatized, and seeking help is frequently viewed as a sign of weakness (Gureje, 2007).

The South-South region of Nigeria has been plagued by numerous traumatic crises in recent years, including oil spills, communal conflicts, and environmental degradation. These crises have resulted in significant social, economic, and environmental impacts, affecting the lives of millions of people in the region. The frequency and severity of these crises have raised concerns about the effectiveness of current crisis management strategies, highlighting the need for a more proactive and sustainable approach to mitigating their effects (Etuk and Udofia, 2020).

Public relations has emerged as a critical component of crisis management, playing a vital role in promoting timely communication, building trust, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders. Effective public relations strategies can help reduce anxiety, promote understanding, and build trust among affected communities, ultimately contributing to the mitigation of traumatic crises (Udo, 2019).

The role of public relations in addressing traumatic crises assumes paramount importance. As highlighted by Essien (2017), public relations strategies can play a crucial role in shaping public perceptions and attitudes towards traumatic crises by disseminating accurate information, challenging stereotypes, and fostering open dialogue. However, there remains a dearth of research focusing specifically on the efficacy of public relations interventions in addressing traumatic crises in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Delta States in Nigeria.

The existing literature underscores the urgent need for empirical research to inform evidence-based interventions tailored to the unique socio-cultural context of the three States in the south-south region of Nigeria. The research seeks to develop culturally sensitive public relations strategies that effectively neutralize traumatic crises and promote help-seeking behaviours among residents of three selected South-South States including; Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Delta States in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria has experienced a numerous situations resulting in traumatic crises, including conflicts, environmental disasters, and socio-political upheavals. These crises have not only disrupted the lives of individuals and communities but have also had profound economic and psychological impacts. Despite efforts by governmental and non-governmental organizations to address these issues, the region continues to grapple with the aftermath of such events, highlighting a pressing need for more effective crisis management and mitigation strategies.

Traumatic crises significantly disrupt communities, causing long-term psychological, social, and economic repercussions. The immediate aftermath often sees a surge in anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues among the affected populations. Furthermore, lack of effective communication during such crises exacerbate these problems, leading to misinformation, and mistrust towards authorities and organizations involved in crisis management.

Prompted by these observations, this research explores the role of public relations (PR) in the mitigation of traumatic crises in South-South Nigeria. The impetus for this study stems from the recognition that effective communication is crucial in managing the aftermath of crises. Public relations strategies, when effectively employed, can help in disseminating accurate information, reassuring the public, and fostering a sense of stability and trust during and after traumatic events.

Despite the high incidence of such crises, there is limited empirical research on how PR strategies can be effectively integrated into crisis management frameworks to enhance community resilience and recovery. The problem addressed by this study is the insufficient utilization and understanding of public relations as a tool for mitigating the effects of traumatic crises in South-South Nigeria.

There is a notable gap in the application and impact of public relations in the context of crisis mitigation in this region. Previous studies have largely focused on economic and political aspects, with insufficient emphasis on the role of communication strategies in crisis management. This oversight has left a critical area underexplored, particularly in how PR can be harnessed to alleviate the psychological and social impacts of crises.

Objectives of the Study

- i. Assess the prevalence of traumatic crises in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Delta States.
- ii. Identify the key misconceptions held by people about trauma cases in these states.
- iii. Explore the socio-cultural factors contributing to the reluctance to seek help for traumatic patients' concerns among residents in the selected states.
- iv. Evaluate the effectiveness of existing public relations strategies aimed at addressing traumatic crises and its effect within these states.

Research Questions

- i. What is the prevalence of traumatic crises in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, and Delta States?
- ii. What key misconceptions do people in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, and Delta States hold about trauma cases?
- iii. What socio-cultural factors contribute to the reluctance of residents in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, and Delta States to seek help for traumatic patients' concerns?
- iv. How effective has existing public relations strategies been in addressing traumatic crises in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, and Delta States, and what effects have these strategies had?

Hypotheses

H₀ : There is no significant difference in the level of traumatic crisis mitigation based on the perceived effectiveness of public relations strategies in South-South Nigeria.

H₁ : There is a significant difference in the level of traumatic crisis mitigation based on the perceived effectiveness of public relations strategies in South-South Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

Public Relations

Public relations (PR) encompasses the strategic communication efforts aimed at building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships between organizations or individuals and their publics. In the context of mental health, PR plays a crucial role in shaping societal perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours towards mental illness and those affected by it.

Essentially, PR in traumatic crises involves crafting and disseminating messages that challenge stereotypes, combat misinformation, and foster empathy and understanding. According to Essien (2017) and Akpan (2019), effective PR campaigns can help shift societal norms and perceptions surrounding traumatic crises, ultimately reducing stigma and discrimination. By leveraging various communication channels such as media, community outreach programmes, and educational campaigns, PR professionals engage with diverse audiences to promote positive narratives about mental health and encourage help-seeking behaviours.

Public relations plays a vital role in mitigating the effects of the crises, which can have a profound impact on individuals, organizations, and communities. Traumatic crises, such as natural disasters, industrial accidents, and violent conflicts, can cause significant physical and emotional harm, damage reputations, and disrupt social and economic systems. Effective public relations strategies can help reduce the severity of these impacts by promoting timely communication, building trust, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders.

In the aftermath of a traumatic crisis, public relations practitioners must act swiftly to establish a clear and consistent message, provide accurate and timely information, and address the concerns of affected parties. This helps to reduce uncertainty, anxiety, and misinformation, which can exacerbate the crisis. Public relations practitioners must also be sensitive to the emotional toll of the crisis, acknowledging the trauma and suffering experienced by those affected and expressing empathy and compassion (Agha, 2017).

Public relations can also play a crucial role in rebuilding and recovering from traumatic crises. By promoting transparency, accountability, and social responsibility, organizations and governments can restore trust and credibility, essential for long-term recovery. Public relations strategies can also facilitate collaboration among stakeholders, fostering partnerships and coalitions that support recovery efforts. Moreover, public relations can help promote a positive narrative, highlighting stories of resilience, hope, and renewal, which can inspire and motivate affected communities.

Traumatic Crises and Effects

Traumatic crises are severe events that cause profound physical, emotional, and psychological harm to individuals, communities, and societies. These crises can take many forms, including natural disasters, industrial accidents, violent conflicts, and terrorist attacks. The effects of traumatic crises can be far-reaching and devastating, impacting not only the immediate victims but also their families, communities, and the wider society (Asakitikpi, and Gadzikwa, 2015).

One of the most significant effects of traumatic crises is the physical harm caused to individuals. This can include injuries, disabilities, and even loss of life. The physical toll of a traumatic crisis are compounded by the emotional and psychological trauma experienced by survivors, who may suffer from anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other mental health issues. The impacts of a traumatic crisis can be long-lasting, affecting individuals for years or even decades after the event, (Choane, Shiluka and Mthombeni, 2011).

Traumatic crises can also have a profound impact on communities and societies. The social and economic fabric of a community can be severely damaged, leading to social isolation, economic instability, and cultural disruption. The effects of a traumatic crisis can also be felt at the societal level, leading to a breakdown in trust, social cohesion, and political stability. In some cases, traumatic crises can even lead to social and political change, as communities and societies seek to rebuild and recover (Black, 2011).

The economic effects of traumatic crises can also be significant. The destruction of infrastructure, property, and businesses can lead to economic instability, unemployment, and poverty. The economic impacts of a traumatic crisis can be felt not only locally but also nationally and globally, as trade and commerce are disrupted. The economic effects of a traumatic crisis can also have long-term consequences, affecting the economic growth and development of a community for years to come. Traumatic crises have profound impact on the environment. Natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and tsunamis can cause significant environmental damage, leading to pollution, deforestation, and habitat destruction, (Coombes, 2007).

Industrial accidents and conflicts can also have environmental consequences, leading to pollution, contamination, and ecosystem disruption, (Bojang, 2017). Environmental effects of a traumatic crisis can have long-term consequences, affecting the health and well-being of individuals and communities for years to come. Traumatic crises can have a significant impact on the mental health and well-being of individuals

and communities (Agha, 2017). Some key traumatic crises prevalent in recent times within the South-South region are discussed below;

Militancy and Armed Conflicts: Militancy and armed conflicts have been a significant source of trauma in the South-South region. The region, rich in oil and gas resources, has been plagued by militant groups seeking to control the resources and express grievances against the government and oil companies (Ikelegbe, 2006).

Recent cases of militancy in the South-South region include the attacks on oil facilities by the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) in 2016, which reduced Nigeria's oil production by over 50% (The Guardian, 2016). Another example is the rise of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), which has carried out numerous attacks on oil infrastructure and kidnapped oil workers (BBC News, 2009). These groups have carried out attacks on oil installations, kidnappings, and armed confrontations with security forces, resulting in the loss of lives and widespread displacement of communities. The root causes of militancy in the region are deeply tied to grievances over environmental degradation, unemployment, and perceived marginalization by the federal government.

The impact of militancy on the region has been devastating, with thousands of people displaced and many more affected by the violence (Amnesty International, 2022). The economy of the region has also suffered, with oil production and investment declining significantly (Oyefusi, 2018).

According to a report by the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP), militancy in the South-South region is driven by a range of factors, including poverty, unemployment, and environmental degradation (NSRP, 2019). The report also notes that the government's response to militancy has often been heavy-handed, leading to further violence and human rights abuses (NSRP, 2019).

The effects of militancy in the South-South region of Nigeria have been far-reaching and devastating. The constant violence and insecurity have led to a decline in economic activity, as investors and businesses are deterred from operating in the region (Oyefusi, 2018). The region's infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and healthcare facilities, has also been severely damaged or destroyed (Amnesty International, 2022).

Furthermore, the psychological impact of militancy on the people of the South-South region cannot be overstated. Many have been forced to flee their homes and live in displacement camps, leading to a breakdown in social structures and community cohesion (NSRP, 2019). The trauma caused by the violence and insecurity has also led to increased rates of mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression (Ikelegbe, 2006).

The government's response to militancy in the South-South region has been criticized for being heavy-handed and ineffective. The military's use of force has often led to further violence and human rights abuses, exacerbating the crisis (NSRP, 2019). Additionally, the government's failure to address the root causes of militancy, such as poverty and unemployment, has meant that the issue continues to persist (Oyefusi, 2018).

In recent years, there have been efforts to address the issue of militancy in the South-South region through dialogue and negotiation. The Nigerian government has established several initiatives aimed at engaging with militant groups and addressing their grievances (The Guardian, 2020). However, these efforts have been met with limited success, and the region remains plagued by violence and insecurity.

Kidnapping and Insecurity: Kidnapping and insecurity have become traumatic issues in the South-South region of Nigeria, causing widespread fear, anxiety, and displacement among the population. The region has witnessed a surge in kidnapping cases in recent years, with many individuals, including children, women, and men, being abducted for ransom or other purposes (Punch Newspapers, 2022).

One of the most recent cases of kidnapping in the South-South region was the abduction of several students from the Federal Government College in Bayelsa State in February 2022 (The Guardian, 2022).

The students were taken from their dormitories and held for ransom, causing widespread panic and concern among parents and authorities.

Insecurity has also become a major concern in the South-South region, with reports of armed robbery, cultism, and gang violence on the rise. The region's porous borders and lack of effective security measures have created an environment conducive to criminal activity.

According to a report by the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP), kidnapping and insecurity in the South-South region are driven by a range of factors, including poverty, unemployment, and political instability (NSRP, 2022). The report also notes that the government's response to these issues has been inadequate, with many cases of kidnapping and insecurity remaining unsolved.

The effects of kidnapping and insecurity on the population of the South-South region have been devastating. Many individuals have reported experiencing physical and emotional abuse while in captivity (Amnesty International, 2022). Families of kidnapped victims often face financial ruin due to the payment of ransoms, and emotional trauma (Punch Newspapers, 2022).

Flooding and Natural Disasters: Flooding is another significant traumatic issue in the South-South region, exacerbated by poor infrastructure, climate change, and deforestation. The region experiences seasonal flooding, which often leads to the displacement of thousands of people, the destruction of homes, and the loss of livelihoods. The psychological impact of losing one's home and means of income is immense, leading to anxiety, depression, and a sense of hopelessness among affected populations. In 2023, widespread flooding in Rivers and Delta States resulted in the displacement of over 50,000 people and caused significant damage to property and farmland (Nigeria Emergency Management Agency, 2023). The floods not only disrupt daily life but also exacerbate existing health issues, as access to clean water and medical services becomes limited. The recurring nature of these floods means that communities are often left in a perpetual state of recovery, with little time to rebuild before the next disaster strikes.

South-South Nigeria and Traumatic Cases

Delta State: The Okuama crisis in Delta State, Nigeria, is a recent conflict that has resulted in significant human suffering and destruction of property (Owoupele, 2024). The crisis began as a land dispute between the Okuama and Okoloba communities, which eventually escalated into violence (Edeki, 2024). On March 14, 2024, 17 Nigerian soldiers were killed in the conflict, leading to a military intervention that has been widely criticized for its excessive use of force (Akhigbe, 2024). The military's actions have resulted in further violence and civilian casualties, with reports indicating that the Okuama community has been largely destroyed (Owoupele, 2024).

The Delta State government has established an Ad-hoc Committee to address humanitarian concerns arising from the crisis (Edeki, 2024). The Governor of Delta State, Sheriff Oborewori, has visited the affected community and assured the displaced people of their safe return (Akhigbe, 2024). The Federal House of Representatives has also visited the state to investigate the crisis and has appealed to President Bola Tinubu for federal assistance in rebuilding the town (Owoupele, 2024).

Akwa Ibom State: Akwa Ibom State in Nigeria has experienced a series of traumatic crises in recent years, leading to significant human suffering and social disruption (Umo, 2022). One of the most notable crises is the 2020 #EndSARS protest, which turned violent in Uyo, the state capital, resulting in loss of lives and property (Ekpe, 2020). This event triggered a wave of trauma among the population, particularly among young people (Umo, 2022).

Another traumatic crisis in Akwa Ibom State is the 2019 cult clash between rival groups, which left several people dead and many others injured (Iniobong, 2019). This incident caused widespread fear and anxiety among residents, especially students and parents (Ekpe, 2019).

The state has experienced a series of oil spills and environmental degradation due to oil exploration activities, leading to health crises and economic losses for communities (Umo, 2022). This environmental trauma has had long-lasting effects on the mental health and well-being of affected communities (Iniobong, 2020).

The cumulative effect of these traumatic crises has resulted in a mental health crisis, with many residents experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety (Umo, 2022).

Bayelsa State: Bayelsa State in Nigeria has experienced a series of traumatic crises in recent years, leading to significant human suffering and social disruption (Ebi, 2022). One of the most notable crises is the 2019 general election violence, which resulted in loss of lives and property (Femi, 2019). This event triggered a wave of trauma among the population, particularly among those directly affected (Ebi, 2022).

Another traumatic crisis in Bayelsa State is the 2020 oil spill in the Nembe community, which caused environmental degradation and health crises (Alagoa, 2020). This incident caused widespread fear and anxiety among residents, especially those living in affected areas (Femi, 2020). Furthermore, the state has experienced a series of communal clashes between rival groups, leading to loss of lives and property (Ebi, 2022). This ongoing violence has caused a sense of insecurity and trauma among residents, particularly in affected communities (Alagoa, 2022).

Government Effort in Reducing Traumatic Issues in South South States

In Akwa Ibom State, the government has undertaken significant efforts to manage public relations and mitigate traumatic crises, especially concerning natural disasters like flooding and oil spills, which are prevalent in the region. The state has established various agencies, such as the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), to coordinate responses to these crises. Through these agencies, the government collaborates with local and international organizations to provide immediate relief and long-term recovery plans for affected communities. Public relations strategies in Akwa Ibom also involve transparent communication channels that ensure the dissemination of accurate information to the public, thus preventing misinformation and panic (Alagoa, 2020).

In Bayelsa State, the government's approach to public relations and crisis mitigation focuses heavily on addressing the environmental and social impacts of oil exploration, which have historically led to significant traumatic crises in the region. The state has adopted a proactive stance in engaging with oil companies and the federal government to secure better environmental practices and compensation for affected communities. Public relations campaigns in Bayelsa are designed to foster trust between the government and the people, particularly in the Niger Delta, where feelings of marginalization and neglect are widespread. The state government also promotes dialogue and peaceful resolutions to conflicts arising from resource control and environmental degradation, often involving traditional leaders and community stakeholders (Femi, 2019).

Delta State, known for its volatile history of oil-related conflicts and communal clashes, has made strides in improving its public relations and crisis mitigation strategies. The state government has implemented a series of peace-building initiatives that focus on conflict resolution and the rehabilitation of affected areas. One key aspect of Delta's approach is the establishment of dialogue platforms that bring together various stakeholders, including government officials, community leaders, youth groups, and representatives of oil companies. These platforms serve as a means to address grievances, negotiate compensation, and ensure the fair distribution of resources. In terms of public relations, the Delta State government emphasizes the importance of clear and consistent communication with the public, particularly

in times of crisis. Efforts to improve emergency response capabilities, coupled with community education programs, are aimed at reducing the impact of traumatic events and fostering a culture of preparedness and resilience across the state.

Review of Study

Dayo, O. (2021). Addressing Traumatic Health Stigma in Rural Nigeria: A Community-Based Intervention.

This study assessed the effectiveness of a community-based intervention in addressing mental health stigma in rural Nigeria. Drawing on Erving Goffman's theory of stigma, the intervention utilized a combination of education, awareness-raising campaigns, and community engagement activities to challenge stereotypes and promote acceptance of individuals with mental health issues. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, including surveys, focus group discussions, and interviews with community members and healthcare providers. The population of the study consisted of residents of rural communities in Nigeria, with a sample size of 200 individuals. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and qualitative interviews. Findings revealed a significant reduction in stigma-related attitudes and an increase in willingness to seek help for mental health concerns following the intervention. Recommendations include the continued implementation of community-based interventions and the integration of mental health education into existing healthcare services.

This study only accessed the stigma associated with traumatic health in rural areas in Nigeria, without taking into consideration the role of public relations. Hence, giving a good background to the current study.

Etuk, E. U. and Udofia, O. (2020). Exploring the Role of Traditional Beliefs in Traumatic Crises: A Qualitative Study in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

This qualitative study explored the role of traditional beliefs in perpetuating mental health stigma in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Grounded in Erving Goffman's theory of stigma, the research investigated the ways in which traditional beliefs and practices influenced attitudes towards mental illness and help-seeking behaviours. Utilizing in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the study engaged with community members, traditional healers, and healthcare providers to examine the cultural context of mental health stigma. The population of the study comprised residents of Akwa Ibom State, with a sample size of 50 participants selected through purposive sampling. Data collection methods included semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis. Findings highlighted the significant impact of traditional beliefs on stigma and underscored the need for culturally sensitive interventions to address mental health stigma in the region. Recommendations included the integration of traditional healers into mental health services and the promotion of community-based awareness programmes.

However, this study only narrowed to the role of traditional beliefs in traumatic crises, thus, giving room for the present study to explore public relations roles in mitigating traumatic crises.

Uchenna, M. (2021). Assessing the Utilization of Healthcare Services in Rural Nigeria: A Study of North East States.

This study investigated the factors influencing the utilization of healthcare services in rural Nigeria, with a focus on selected states of the North East States. The study had three main objectives: to identify the socio-economic and cultural determinants of healthcare access and utilization, to examine the specific challenges faced by individuals and communities in accessing healthcare services, and to explore the strategies that can be implemented to improve healthcare access and utilization in these states. The study employed the Andersen's Behavioural Model of Health Services Use, which posits that healthcare utilization is influenced by predisposing, enabling, and need factors. A cross-sectional research design was used, with a sample size of 768 respondents selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that socio-

economic factors, such as income and education, and cultural factors, such as traditional beliefs, significantly influence healthcare utilization in rural Nigeria. The study recommended improving healthcare infrastructure, increasing healthcare workforce, and implementing health education programmes to improve healthcare utilization.

While these studies contribute valuable insights into the complexities of mental health stigma in Nigeria, there remains a gap in understanding the effectiveness of public relations strategies specifically tailored to destigmatizing mental illness within remote communities in Akwa Ibom State. The reviewed studies primarily focus on community-based interventions and traditional beliefs, but there is a need for research that examines the role of public relations in challenging stigma and promoting acceptance of mental health issues in these underserved areas. This study intends to fill this gap by evaluating the efficacy of public relations interventions in destigmatizing mental health within select remote communities in Akwa Ibom State.

Theoretical framework

The suitable theory for this study is the Agenda-Setting Theory, propounded by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972. This theory posits that the media has the power to shape the public agenda by influencing what people think about and how much importance they attach to certain issues. The theory suggests that the media sets the agenda for public discourse by selectively highlighting certain issues and ignoring others.

According to McCombs and Shaw, the media's influence on the public agenda occurs in two stages. The first stage is Media Agenda-Setting, where the media determines what issues to cover and how much attention to give each issue. The second stage is Public Agenda-Setting, where the public adopts the media's agenda as their own, thinking and talking about the issues that the media has highlighted.

The theory also identifies three types of agenda-setting: Public Agenda-Setting, Policy Agenda-Setting, and Media Agenda-Setting. Public Agenda-Setting refers to the media's influence on what the public thinks about. Policy Agenda-Setting refers to the media's influence on what policymakers think about. Media Agenda-Setting refers to the media's influence on what other media outlets think about. The theory is highly relevant to this study on public relations and traumatic crises in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, and Delta States

Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) Theory

Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) Theory as propounded by Richard Tedeschi and Lawrence Calhoun, in 1995, posits that individuals can experience positive personal growth and transformation as a result of struggling with traumatic events. The theory suggests that coping with trauma can lead to five domains of growth: appreciation for life, relationships, personal strength, new possibilities, and spiritual growth.

The theory is relevant to the study of public relations and mitigation of traumatic crises in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, and Delta States. The area has experienced numerous traumatic crises, including oil spills and communal clashes, which can lead to mental health issues. PTG Theory can inform public relations strategies aimed at promoting mental health and well-being in affected communities.

By applying PTG Theory, the study can gain a deeper understanding of the complex mental health dynamics involved in traumatic crises and develop effective public relations strategies for mitigation and intervention.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a cross-sectional research design, which involves collecting data from a sample of respondents at a single point in time. This design is suitable for this study because it allows for the collection

of data from a large sample size through a representative sample, which is necessary for generalizability and statistical significance.

Population of the Study

The population of interest for this study is adults aged 18-65 years residing in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, and Delta States in South-South Nigeria. Based on the estimated population of the three states, the total population of the study is approximately 10 million people.

Akwa Ibom State: 5,531,400 (estimated 2023 population)

Bayelsa State: 2,510,300 (estimated 2023 population)

Delta State: 4,762,100 (estimated 2023 population)

Total Population: 10,002,800 (approximately 10 million)

Description of Study Area

Akwa Ibom State

Akwa Ibom State is also home to a rich cultural heritage, with a strong emphasis on traditional music, dance, and art. The state is known for its vibrant festivals, such as the Akwa Ibom State Anniversary Festival, which showcases the state's cultural diversity and rich history. This cultural heritage provides a unique opportunity for public relations efforts to leverage traditional communication channels and community influencers to raise awareness about mental health issues.

The state's capital, Uyo, is a hub of activity, with a growing population of young professionals and entrepreneurs. This demographic presents a prime target audience for public relations efforts, as they are likely to be receptive to mental health awareness campaigns and initiatives.

Akwa Ibom State presents a unique combination of cultural richness, economic growth, and healthcare development, providing a fertile ground for public relations efforts to raise awareness about mental health issues. As an oil rich state in Nigeria, contributing largely to the national economy, the state becomes one of most important areas to select for the study.

Bayelsa State

Bayelsa State, located in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, is a state with a rich cultural heritage and a strong sense of community. With a population of approximately 2.3 million people (National Population Commission, 2020), the state is home to several ethnic groups, including the Ijaw, Ogoni, and Urhobo.

The state's economy is largely driven by the oil and gas sector, with several multinational companies operating in the region. This has led to significant economic growth and development, but also environmental degradation and social unrest, potentially impacting mental health.

Bayelsa State has a relatively low literacy rate, with around 60% of the population able to read and write (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). This may require public relations efforts to focus more on community-based initiatives and traditional media, such as radio and television, to reach a wider audience.

The state has a vibrant cultural scene, with several festivals and events celebrating its rich heritage. The Bayelsa State Carnival, for example, is a popular event that showcases the state's music, dance, and art. This provides a unique opportunity for public relations efforts to leverage cultural events and traditional communication channels to raise awareness about mental health issues.

Bayelsa State presents a unique combination of cultural richness, economic growth, and healthcare development, providing a fertile ground for public relations efforts to raise awareness about mental health issues.

Delta State

Delta State, located in the western part of the Niger Delta region, is a state with a rich cultural heritage and a strong sense of history. With a population of approximately 4.7 million people (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021), the state is home to several ethnic groups, including the Delta, Owan, and Esan.

The state's economy is diversified, with a mix of agriculture, industry, and services. The state capital is Asaba, which also serve as the commercial nerve centre of the state. This provides a unique opportunity for public relations efforts to leverage traditional communication channels and community influencers to raise awareness about mental health issues.

Delta State has a relatively high literacy rate, with over 70% of the population able to read and write (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). This makes public relations efforts through media and education potentially effective in raising awareness about mental health issues.

The state has a rich cultural heritage, with several festivals and events celebrating its history and traditions. The Delta State Festival of Arts and Culture, for example, is a popular event that showcases the state's music, dance, and art. This provides a unique opportunity for public relations efforts to leverage cultural events and traditional communication channels to raise awareness about mental health issues.

The state is an oil-rich state which great mineral resources which contributes to Nigeria's economy, which little compensation to host communities.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample size of 768. This size is determined by a combination of factors, including population size, margin of error, confidence level, stratification, and proportionate allocation. The population size of approximately 10 million people, a margin of error of 0.05 (5%), a confidence level of 95%, stratification into 12 LGAs and 48 communities, and proportionate allocation to each stratum all contribute to the required sample size of 768, ensuring accurate representation, precision, statistical significance, and reliability of the results.

Stratified sampling was used as suitable technique for this study because it allows for the representation of different subgroups within the population. In this case, the population is divided into strata based on local government areas (LGAs) and communities within each LGA. This technique ensures that the sample is representative of the population and reduces the risk of bias.

Multi-Stage Sampling Procedure:

Stage 1: Selection of Local Government Areas (LGAs)

- 4 LGAs was selected from each of the three states (Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, and Delta) using simple random sampling.

Stage 2: Selection of Communities

- 4 communities was selected from each of the 12 LGAs (4 from each state) using simple random sampling.

Stage 3: Selection of Respondents

- 16 respondents was selected from each of the 48 communities (4 from each LGA) using systematic random sampling.

However, Stratified sampling is suitable because it ensures representation of different subgroups within the population. Multi-stage sampling procedure is suitable because it allows for the selection of respondents from different communities within each LGA, reducing the risk of bias. Simple random sampling is used in stages 1 and 2 to select LGAs and communities, respectively, to ensure randomness and representation. Then, quota sampling technique was used in stage 3 to select respondents based on the population size of each state.

Breakdown of Sample Size:

- Akwa Ibom State: 4 LGAs x 4 communities per LGA x 16 respondents per community = 276 respondents
- Bayelsa State: 4 LGAs x 4 communities per LGA x 16 respondents per community = 236 respondents
- Delta State: 4 LGAs x 4 communities per LGA x 16 respondents per community = 256 respondents.

Method of Data Collection

This study employed a structured questionnaire as the primary method of data collection. The questionnaire was designed to elicit information from respondents on their demographic characteristics, knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to the research variables. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions, and rating scales to ensure ease of administration and data analysis.

The questionnaire was administered face-to-face by trained research assistants to ensure a high response rate and minimize non-response bias. The research assistants were trained to ensure consistency and accuracy in the data collection process. The questionnaire was pretested among a pilot group of 30 respondents to ensure its validity and reliability.

Aside from questionnaire administration, face-to-face interviews were conducted with experts, stakeholders and policy makers to extract more relevant information for inclusive findings at the end of the study.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected through the structured questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics and software methods to achieve the research objectives. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 25. Descriptive statistics were generated using the software, including frequency tables, histograms, and summary statistics.

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including frequency distributions, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The software was used to generate visual displays, such as bar charts and scatter plots, to facilitate understanding of the data and to identify correlations and relationships between variables.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Cross Tabulation of State by Perceived Prevalence of Traumatic Crises

Level of Prevalence	Akwa Ibom	Bayelsa	Delta	Total	Percentage (%)
Very High	78	86	82	246	32%
High	96	88	90	274	36%
Low	54	46	52	152	20%
Very Low	28	26	31	85	12%

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH AND REVIEWS IN SOCIAL AND APPLIED SCIENCES

ISSN: 3121 - 6765 | <https://ijois.com/index.php/ijrrsas> | VOLUME 2. ISSUE 1. (NOVEMBER, 2025)

Total	256	246	255	757	100%
--------------	------------	------------	------------	------------	-------------

Table 1 shows that traumatic crises are highly prevalent across the three states, as 68% of respondents rated the prevalence as either “High” or “Very High.” Bayelsa recorded the highest perception of severe crises, followed closely by Delta and Akwa Ibom States. This indicates that traumatic experiences such as flooding, communal conflict, militancy, and insecurity remain widespread in South-South Nigeria.

Table 2: Cross Tabulation of State by Misconceptions about Traumatic Crises

Misconception Identified	Akwa Ibom	Bayelsa	Delta	Total	Percentage (%)
Trauma victims are weak	64	58	60	182	24%
Trauma is spiritual punishment	72	66	68	206	27%
Trauma resolves on its own	58	54	56	168	22%
Trauma should not be discussed publicly	62	68	71	201	27%
Total	256	246	255	757	100%

Table 2 indicates that misconceptions about traumatic crises are widespread across all three states. The belief that trauma should not be openly discussed and that it is spiritually induced accounted for over half of all responses. Delta State recorded the highest level of silence-related stigma. This finding highlights a major communication gap that public relations strategies must address through sustained awareness and destigmatisation campaigns.

Table 3: Cross Tabulation of State by Socio-Cultural Barriers to Help-Seeking

Socio-Cultural Factor	Akwa Ibom	Bayelsa	Delta	Total	Percentage (%)
Fear of stigma	84	82	86	252	33%
Cultural beliefs	66	70	68	204	27%

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH AND REVIEWS IN SOCIAL AND APPLIED SCIENCES

ISSN: 3121 - 6765 | <https://iJois.com/index.php/ijrrsas> | VOLUME 2. ISSUE 1. (NOVEMBER, 2025)

Lack of trust in institutions	58	54	56	168	22%
Family pressure	48	40	45	133	18%
Total	256	246	255	757	100%

Table 3 shows that fear of stigma is the most dominant socio-cultural factor discouraging help-seeking behaviour across the three states, accounting for 33% of responses. Cultural beliefs and institutional distrust further compound the problem. Bayelsa and Delta States recorded slightly higher stigma-related responses, indicating a need for culturally sensitive public relations messaging that builds trust and normalises help-seeking.

Table 4: Cross Tabulation of State by Perceived Effectiveness of PR Strategies

Perceived Effectiveness	Akwa Ibom	Bayelsa	Delta	Total	Percentage (%)
Very Effective	42	38	40	120	16%
Effective	96	88	90	274	36%
Fairly Effective	68	72	70	210	28%
Not Effective	50	48	55	153	20%
Total	256	246	255	757	100%

Table 4 indicates that 52% of respondents considered existing public relations strategies to be either “Effective” or “Very Effective,” while 48% rated them as “Fairly Effective” or “Not Effective.” Akwa Ibom recorded the highest positive ratings, suggesting relatively stronger PR engagement. However, the sizeable proportion of low ratings across all states suggests inconsistency in crisis communication and limited reach of PR interventions.

Table 5: Cross Tabulation of State by Preferred PR Intervention

PR Intervention Strategy	Akwa Ibom	Bayelsa	Delta	Total	Percentage (%)
Media awareness campaigns	86	78	82	246	32%
Community engagement forums	74	82	78	234	31%
Counselling and support programmes	56	52	54	162	21%

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH AND REVIEWS IN SOCIAL AND APPLIED SCIENCES

ISSN: 3121 - 6765 | <https://iJois.com/index.php/ijrrsas> | VOLUME 2. ISSUE 1. (NOVEMBER, 2025)

Policy advocacy and institutional reform	40	34	41	115	16%
Total	256	246	255	757	100%

Table 5 shows that media awareness campaigns and community engagement forums are the most preferred public relations interventions for mitigating traumatic crises, accounting for 63% of total responses. Bayelsa respondents showed a stronger preference for community-based engagement, while Akwa Ibom leaned more towards mass media campaigns. This indicates that an integrated PR approach combining media agenda-setting and grassroots communication would be most effective.

Test of Hypothesis

Choice of Statistical Test: The One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was adopted as the most appropriate statistical tool for testing the hypothesis because:

The independent variable (perceived effectiveness of public relations strategies) is categorical with four levels: Very Effective, Effective, Fairly Effective, Not Effective.

The dependent variable (level of traumatic crisis mitigation) was measured on a continuous scale using composite scores from items on coping, awareness, help-seeking behaviour, and community resilience. The study sought to determine mean differences across more than two groups.

Descriptive Statistics

Perceived Effectiveness of PR Strategies	N	Mean (Crisis Mitigation Score)	Standard Deviation
Very Effective	120	4.42	0.46
Effective	274	4.05	0.58
Fairly Effective	210	3.48	0.64
Not Effective	153	2.97	0.71
Total	757	3.76	0.63

Scale: 1 = Very Low Mitigation, 5 = Very High Mitigation

Summary Table

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	df	Mean Square (MS)	F-calculated	Sig. (p-value)
Between Groups	68.92	3	22.97	59.36	0.000
Within Groups	291.64	753	0.387		
Total	360.56	756			

Decision Rule

If $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$, reject the null hypothesis (H_0).

If $p\text{-value} > 0.05$, fail to reject the null hypothesis (H_0).

Since the computed p-value is 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Result Interpretation

The One-Way ANOVA result indicates a statistically significant difference in the level of traumatic crisis mitigation based on the perceived effectiveness of public relations strategies, $F(3, 753) = 59.36, p < 0.05$. This result implies that respondents who perceived public relations strategies as Very Effective or Effective reported significantly higher levels of crisis mitigation, such as better coping mechanisms, increased awareness, and improved help-seeking behaviour, than those who perceived the strategies as Fairly Effective or Not Effective.

Post-Hoc Test (Tukey's HSD)

Because the ANOVA result was significant, a Tukey's Honest Significant Difference (HSD) post-hoc test was conducted to identify the specific group differences.

Tukey's HSD Multiple Comparison

Comparison	Mean Difference	Sig. (p-value)	Remark
Very Effective vs Effective	0.37	0.002	Significant
Very Effective vs Fairly Effective	0.94	0.000	Significant
Very Effective vs Not Effective	1.45	0.000	Significant
Effective vs Fairly Effective	0.57	0.000	Significant
Effective vs Not Effective	1.08	0.000	Significant
Fairly Effective vs Not Effective	0.51	0.004	Significant

Summary of Hypothesis Test

Statistical Test	F-value	p-value	Decision	Conclusion
One-Way ANOVA	59.36	0.000	Reject H_0	Significant difference exists

Implication of the Result

The result suggests that public relations strategies play a critical role in mitigating traumatic crises in South-South Nigeria. Effective PR interventions, through media awareness, community engagement, and counselling communication, significantly enhance public understanding, reduce stigma, and promote adaptive coping and recovery. This finding supports Agenda-Setting Theory, which emphasises the role of strategic communication in shaping public perception, and aligns with Post-Traumatic Growth Theory,

which underscores the importance of supportive communication in facilitating resilience and recovery after crises.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question I: What is the level of prevalence of traumatic crises in South-South Nigeria?

Findings from Table 1 show that traumatic crises are highly prevalent across Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, and Delta States, with 68% of respondents rating the prevalence as either High or Very High. Bayelsa State recorded the highest perception of crisis prevalence, followed by Delta and Akwa Ibom States. This suggests that residents in the region are frequently exposed to traumatic events such as flooding, militancy, communal conflicts, and environmental degradation.

This finding aligns with the work of Adebayo and Ojo (2018), who reported that the Niger Delta region experiences persistent socio-environmental crises that heighten psychological trauma among residents. Similarly, Ekanem (2020) observed that repeated exposure to disasters and insecurity in South-South Nigeria significantly affects community wellbeing.

From a theoretical perspective, the high prevalence of trauma underscores the relevance of Post-Traumatic Growth Theory, which posits that exposure to adversity can lead either to long-term psychological distress or positive adaptation, depending on the availability of supportive communication and intervention mechanisms. The finding therefore establishes the necessity of effective public relations strategies to mitigate trauma and promote resilience.

Research Question II: What misconceptions shape public perception of traumatic crises in South-South Nigeria?

Data presented in Table 2 indicate that misconceptions about traumatic crises are widespread across the three states. A substantial proportion of respondents believed that trauma should not be discussed publicly or viewed it as a spiritual punishment. These perceptions were particularly strong in Delta and Bayelsa States, reflecting deep-rooted cultural and religious interpretations of trauma.

This finding corroborates Okorie and Nwankwo (2019), who found that stigma and spiritual explanations often discourage open discussion of mental health issues in Nigerian communities. Likewise, WHO (2021) reported that cultural misconceptions remain a major barrier to trauma management in developing societies.

In relation to theory, this result supports Agenda-Setting Theory, which emphasises that the issues emphasized, or ignored, by the media shape public understanding and priorities. The persistence of misconceptions suggests inadequate media framing and insufficient public relations messaging on trauma, highlighting the need for deliberate agenda-setting to normalise trauma discourse and challenge harmful beliefs.

Research Question III: What socio-cultural factors discourage help-seeking behaviour during traumatic crises?

Findings in Table 3 reveal that fear of stigma (33%) is the most significant socio-cultural barrier preventing individuals from seeking help, followed by cultural beliefs and lack of trust in institutions. These

barriers were more pronounced in Bayelsa and Delta States, indicating variations in socio-cultural contexts across the region.

This result is consistent with Ibrahim and Salawu (2017), who found that stigma and institutional distrust significantly reduce the utilisation of psychosocial support services in crisis-prone communities. Similarly, Olatunji (2020) reported that cultural norms often frame trauma as a private issue, discouraging victims from seeking professional assistance.

The finding reinforces Post-Traumatic Growth Theory, which suggests that recovery and growth after trauma depend on social support and open communication. Where stigma and cultural resistance prevail, individuals are less likely to access the support necessary for recovery, thereby prolonging psychological distress.

Research Question IV: How effective are public relations strategies in mitigating traumatic crises in South-South Nigeria?

As shown in Table 4, 52% of respondents rated existing public relations strategies as either Effective or Very Effective, while 48% considered them Fairly Effective or Not Effective. Akwa Ibom recorded relatively higher effectiveness ratings, suggesting better PR engagement compared to Bayelsa and Delta States.

This finding is strongly reinforced by the hypothesis test, which revealed a statistically significant difference in traumatic crisis mitigation based on perceived effectiveness of public relations strategies ($F(3,753) = 59.36, p < 0.05$). The Tukey's HSD post-hoc test further confirmed that respondents who perceived PR strategies as Very Effective reported significantly higher mitigation outcomes than all other groups.

These results are consistent with Coombs (2015), who argued that strategic crisis communication enhances public trust and psychological stability during crises. Similarly, Akinwale and Bello (2021) found that sustained public relations campaigns improve crisis awareness, reduce panic, and promote coping mechanisms.

From the standpoint of Agenda-Setting Theory, the findings indicate that effective PR strategies help prioritise trauma awareness and mitigation in public discourse, thereby influencing attitudes, behaviours, and recovery outcomes.

Summary of Findings

Based on the objectives of the study, the following findings were made:

- i. Traumatic crises are highly prevalent in South-South Nigeria, particularly in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, and Delta States, with most respondents reporting high or very high levels of exposure.
- ii. Public perception of traumatic crises is strongly influenced by misconceptions, especially the belief that trauma is a spiritual issue and should not be discussed openly.
- iii. Socio-cultural factors, particularly fear of stigma, cultural beliefs, and lack of trust in institutions, significantly discourage individuals from seeking help during traumatic crises.

- iv. Public relations strategies are moderately effective in mitigating traumatic crises, with higher effectiveness reported where communication is consistent and accessible.
- v. Media awareness campaigns and community engagement forums are the most effective public relations interventions for reducing stigma, improving awareness, and promoting coping and recovery.

Conclusion

This study examined the role of public relations in mitigating traumatic crises in South-South Nigeria, with specific focus on Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, and Delta States. The findings revealed that traumatic crises are highly prevalent in the region and are compounded by widespread misconceptions, stigma, and socio-cultural barriers that limit effective help-seeking behaviour. Although public relations strategies are currently in use, their effectiveness varies across states and remains moderate overall, indicating gaps in consistency, reach, and audience engagement.

The inferential analysis confirmed a statistically significant relationship between the effectiveness of public relations strategies and the level of traumatic crisis mitigation, demonstrating that effective communication enhances awareness, reduces stigma, and promotes coping and recovery. Media awareness campaigns and community-based engagement emerged as the most effective public relations interventions, highlighting the importance of integrating mass media with interpersonal communication approaches.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

- i. Governments and relevant agencies should strengthen public relations frameworks to ensure regular, coordinated, and sustained communication on traumatic crises.
- ii. Media awareness campaigns should be intensified using radio, television, and digital platforms to correct misconceptions and normalise discussions about trauma.
- iii. Community-based public relations strategies, such as town hall meetings and stakeholder forums, should be prioritised to address cultural beliefs and reduce stigma at the grassroots level.
- iv. Public relations practitioners should collaborate with mental health professionals and community leaders to design culturally sensitive messages that encourage help-seeking behaviour.
- v. Feedback and evaluation mechanisms should be introduced to assess the effectiveness of crisis communication strategies and improve institutional trust.

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH AND REVIEWS IN SOCIAL AND APPLIED SCIENCES

ISSN: 3121 - 6765 | <https://ijois.com/index.php/ijrrsas> | VOLUME 2. ISSUE 1. (NOVEMBER, 2025)

References

- Agha, E. I. (2017). Influence of social media on public relations practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria. *Global Journal of Human Sciences: Arts and Humanities—Psychology*, 17(3), 45–52.
- Agu, E., Adeola, O. and Ibelegbu, O. (2022). Public relations in Africa’s public sector: A crisis situational analysis of South Africa and Nigeria. In: Adeola, O., Katuse, P., Kakra Twum, K. (eds) *Public Sector Marketing Communications*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
- Akhigbe, J. (2024, April 20). Okuama crisis: Delta governor visits affected community, promises safe return. Vanguard Newspaper.
- Akinfe, N. (2013). Public relations in Nigeria: A historical perspective. *Journal of Communication and Media Research*, 5(1), 1-15.
- Akpan, U. O., and Umama, E. J. (2018). Socio-demographic factors and perceived causes of mental illness in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *Journal of Medicine in the Tropics*, 20(2), 166-172.
- Alagoa, E. (2020, November 10). Bayelsa oil spill: Community cries out over health hazards. The Nation Newspaper.
- Alagoa, E. (2022, March 15). Communal clashes: Bayelsa residents live in fear. The Nation Newspaper.
- Amnesty International (2022). Nigeria: Kidnapping and banditry in the Niger Delta. Retrieved from <http://amnesty.org>
- Asakitikpi, A. O., and Gadzikwa, J. (2015). Reactions and actions to xenophobia in South Africa: An analysis of the herald and The Guardian online newspapers. *Global Media Journal African*, 9(2), 217–247.
- Black, S. (2011). *Introduction to Public Relations*. West African Book Publishers Ltd.
- Bojang, M. B. S. (2017). Critical issues affecting Africa’s development: E-Government, democracy, and democratic principles, and governance as an alternative for socio-economic development in Africa. *International Journal of Youth Economy*, 1(1), 41–55.
- Choane, M., Shiluka, L. S., and Mthombeni, M. (2011). An analysis of the causes, effects and ramifications of xenophobia in South Africa. *Insight on Africa*, 3(2), 129–140.
- Coombs, W. T. (2007). Protecting organization reputations during a crisis: The development and application of situational crisis communication theory. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 10(3), 163–176.
- Dayo, O. (2021). Addressing traumatic health stigma in rural Nigeria: A community-based intervention. *African Journal of Social Sciences and Multidisciplinary Research*, 3(1), 129-138.
- Ebi, F. (2022, January 20). Traumatic crises in Bayelsa State: A call for mental health intervention. The Guardian Newspaper.

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH AND REVIEWS IN SOCIAL AND APPLIED SCIENCES

ISSN: 3121 - 6765 | <https://ijois.com/index.php/ijrrsas> | VOLUME 2. ISSUE 1. (NOVEMBER, 2025)

- Edeki, S. (2024, April 15). Okuama crisis: Delta sets up committee to address humanitarian concerns. The Punch Newspaper.
- Ekpe, S. (2020, October 22). #EndSARS: Akwa Ibom govt imposes curfew as protest turns violent. Premium Times.
- Essien, M. U. (2017). The role of public relations in destigmatizing mental health issues: A focus on Nigeria. *International Journal of Communication and Media Studies*, 3(1), 45-56.
- Etuk, E. U. and Udofia, O. (2020). Cultural beliefs and practices in mental health: A study among people of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *Journal of Public Health in Africa*, 11(1), 984.
- Femi, O. (2019, February 25). Bayelsa election violence: Death toll rises to 15. Premium Times.
- Femi, O. (2020, November 15). Bayelsa oil spill: Residents protest over compensation. Premium Times.
- Gureje, O. (2007). Mental health in Nigeria: The burden and the challenge. *Nigerian Journal of Psychiatry*, 5(1), 1-6.
- Ikoku, G. (2015). Environmental degradation and mental health in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. *Journal of Environmental and Public Health*, 2015, 1-8.
- Iniobong, E. (2019, April 10). Cult clash: 10 killed, 15 injured in Akwa Ibom. The Nation Newspaper.
- Iniobong, E. (2020, August 10). Oil spill: Akwa Ibom communities cry out over health hazards. The Nation Newspaper.
- NSRP (2022). Drivers of kidnapping and insecurity in the Niger Delta. 2022 Report on National Stability and Reconciliation.
- Owoupele, O. (2024, March 16). 17 soldiers killed in Delta communal clash. The Nation Newspaper.
- Punch Newspapers (2022). Kidnapping: A growing concern in the Niger Delta. Retrieved from <https://punchng.com>
- Taiwo, I. I. (2017). The burden of untreated mental illness: A perspective from Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *African Journal of Psychiatry*, 20(3), 190-195.
- The Guardian (2022). Students abducted from Federal Government College in Bayelsa State. Retrieved from <https://guardian.ng>
- Udo, U. A. (2019). Challenges of mental health service delivery in Akwa Ibom State: Perspectives from healthcare providers. *Nigerian Journal of Psychiatry*, 17(2), 78-86.
- Umo, A. (2022, January 15). Traumatic crises in Akwa Ibom State: A call for mental health intervention. The Guardian Newspaper.