

Impact of Public Relations Strategies on the Management of Mass Transit Business in South East, Nigeria

Nwachukwu, Samuel Obinna¹ & Prof. Adonai Okechukwu Okonkwo²

Abstract

The paper investigated the impact of public relations strategies on management of mass transit business in South East, Nigeria. Specifically, the study aimed to pursue the following sub-objectives: to examine the impact of media relations on management of mass transit business in South East, Nigeria; to ascertain the impact of community relations on management of mass transit business in South, East, Nigeria; and to determine the impact of employee relations on management of mass transit business in South East, Nigeria. The population comprised of the commuters and management staff of the three selected mass transit companies in South East, Nigeria. A sample size of (384) was determined using Zigmund formula for infinite population. Data was collected from both primary and secondary source. Hypotheses were tested using T-test associated with simple regression and findings revealed among others that media relations as a public relations strategy have a positive significant impact on the management of mass transit business; that community relations have a positive significant impact on management of mass transit business and that employee relations have a positive significant impact on the management.

Keywords: Public Relations Strategies, Media Relations, Community Relations, Employee Relations, Mass Transit Business Management

Cite: Nwachukwu, S., & Adonai, O. O. (2026). Impact of Public Relations Strategies on the Management of Mass Transit Business in South East, Nigeria. *International Journal of Contemporary Marketing and Management*, 4 (3), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21974807>

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Authors	Affiliation
1	Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu, Nigeria
2	Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu, Nigeria

Introduction

The desire for mobility is not an invention of the modern age. However, as the technological aptitude of the human race evolved, mobility likewise transformed from the naturally gifted self-mobility of walking or running to the various modern, technologically advanced mobility modes provided by road, rail, sea, and air transit (Omirin and Olaniyan, 2024). Mobility is an indispensable condition and basic prerequisite of life, as there can be no life without mobility. In most urban and suburban areas around the world, including South East Nigeria, road transportation remains largely the major medium for the transit of people. Among intra-urban and inter-urban mobility modes in Nigeria, road transport is by far the most extensive, as other modes of transportation are relatively underdeveloped. Public transportation has, in recent times, become the most commonly used mode of transportation in Nigeria (Ben, Emezue and Ngwoke, 2021).

Mobility is an essential feature of urban life, for it defines the ability to participate in modern society (Schofer, 2025). Ben et al. (2021) assert that mass transit is a means by which commuters, goods, and services are conveyed from one destination to another. Mass transit, also seen as public transportation, involves the movement of large numbers of people in vehicles such as buses, trains, and subways. Mass transit businesses are often used in cities, suburbs, and metropolitan areas. The movement of passengers, goods, and services is an essential part of human activities and the basis of all socio-economic interactions.

In South East Nigeria, mass transit services are delivered by private transport operators and public transport operators. Just like every other business, the management of mass transit business has never been easy. To achieve maximum satisfaction of the consumers of mass transit services and make a profit, there should be concerted efforts aimed at having well-planned, organized, and coordinated programmes of activities by mass transit operators. According to Akpala, in Eboh (2008), management is a process of procuring, combining, allocating, and utilizing an organisation's inputs (men, materials, and money) through actions or functions such as planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. Management is the coordination of an organization's resources aimed at achieving predetermined goals or objectives (Eboh, 2008).

Uduji (2012) maintained that the practice of public relations in Africa can be traced to around 1700 BC in ancient Egypt. Public relations is the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends (Cutlip, Center and Broom, 2006). The 1978 Mexican Statement states that public relations practice is the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organization leaders, and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve both the organizations and the public interest (Jefkins and Yadin, 1998). The purpose of public relations practice is to establish two-way communication, seeking common ground or areas of mutual interest, and to establish understanding based on truth, knowledge, and full information. Public relations can be employed in every aspect of human endeavor.

Therefore, for effective management of mass transit business, there is a need to find out the impact of adopting public relations strategies in the running of the organization. According to Tench and Yeomans (2006), the key characteristics of the target audience play a big part in defining and shaping the strategy and tactics that are deployed in a campaign. Public relations strategy is defined as techniques, tools, or instruments used by practitioners to create awareness and promote a brand's reputation (Touitou, 2021). Tench and Yeomans (2006) identified the following public relations strategic planning tools: fit for purpose, media relations, events, sponsorship, employee relations, and community relations. These tools are very useful and instrumental to an organization that seeks to build a favourable relationship amongst its internal and external publics.

Statement of the Problem

Commuters are perceived to act as rational beings, choosing travel modes most likely to offer them maximum utility (Ben et al., 2021). The choice to commute with public transit is invariably determined by the attitude and perception of commuters towards public transport services, which is typically determined by their satisfaction with public transport service delivery (Omirin and Olaniyan, 2024). Perceptions of safety, as well as travel experience with a particular mode of transport, are likely to influence travel decisions and preferences for one mode over another (Ankomah, Crompton, and Baker, 2016).

Koppelman and Lyon (2011) assert that people's perceptions about convenience and comfort, as well as their normative beliefs, correlate positively with preference and, hence, the choice of a given mode of transportation. Travel time has been seen as one of the major factors that influence both the choice and use of one public transport mode over another (Ben et al., 2021). Many commuters seem not to be satisfied with the services being provided by both government and private investors in the mass transit business, which might have contributed to the decline of many public transport companies.

Extant literature that examined issues relating to the mass transit business focused on other aspects of management. For instance, Lee (2022) conducted a study on the impacts of public relations on corporate reputations; Chukwuemeka and Nwobi (2014) conducted a study on the political economy of mass transit programmes in Nigeria; Bishar and Kamoni (2025) carried out a study on transport management practices and safety performance of public transport organizations in Nairobi; Yuyang (2023) studied the relationship and impact of public transportation and media; Nwankwo, Fawohunre, and Obasanjo (2016) examined the impact of Abuja Urban Mass Transit Company on passenger movement; and Aworemi and Amoo (2024) investigated the transport marketing strategies adopted by commercial transport companies in Nigeria and the challenges encountered in their implementation. A gap exists in most of the literature reviewed, as they do not seem to highlight the impact of public relations strategies of mass transit organizations that could improve management performance. Thus, there is a need to investigate the impact of public relations strategies in the management of mass transit business in South East, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the impact of public relations strategies on the management of mass transit business in South East, Nigeria. However, the specific objectives include:

- i. Analyze the impact of media relations on the management of mass transit business in South East, Nigeria.
- ii. Ascertain the impact of community relations on the management of mass transit business in South East, Nigeria.
- iii. Determine the impact of employee relations on the management of mass transit business in South East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following questions:

- i. How do media relations impact the management of mass transit business in South East, Nigeria?
- ii. How do community relations impact the management of mass transit business in South East, Nigeria?

- iii. How do employee relations impact the management of mass transit business in South East, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

- i. Ho₁: Media relations have no significant impact on the management of mass transit business in South East, Nigeria.
- ii. Ho₂: Community relations have no significant impact on the management of mass transit business in South East, Nigeria.
- iii. Ho₃: Employee relations have no significant impact on the management of mass transit business in South East, Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

The study will add to the body of knowledge in management. It would form a solution to some issues challenging the management of mass transit business in South East, Nigeria. The result of the study would benefit mass transit operators, scholars, public relations practitioners, policymakers, and a host of other publics in the transport industry in South East, Nigeria.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is hinged on three levels: geographical, content, and unit of analysis scope. Geographically, this work is restricted to the selected major cities in the selected states of South East, Nigeria, namely Aba in Abia State, Onitsha in Anambra State, and 9th Mile in Enugu State. The choice of the selected cities was mainly because of the presence of mass transit companies. The selected mass transit companies are Peace Mass Transit, Onitsha South Mass Transit, and Abia Mass Transit.

The content scope emphasizes public relations strategies in the management of mass transit business in South East, Nigeria. The unit of analysis is the mass transit operators and commuters of mass transit buses in South East, Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

This section looks at the explanation of various concepts that have significant relationships with the dependent and independent variables of the study to understand their meanings and applications in the study. The researchers tried to anchor this work on Transfer Process Model and others. Obeteru (2004) emphasizes that in any scientific research, there are always variables: the independent and dependent variables. The dependent variable in this research is the management of mass transit business, and the independent variables are public relations strategies. A look at these variables indicates that a relationship exists (positive or negative) if there is a manipulation of the independent variables.

Concept of Public Relations

According to Tench and Yeomans (2006), there is no one universally agreed definition of public relations. According to Uduji (2012), the Institute of Public Relations (IPR) defines public relations as the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. Public relations are a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and its public (Harlow, 1976).

Nwosu and Uffoh (2005) submit that the functions of public relations include the following: corporate and other communications, persuasion, attitude and opinion management, information management, counseling, corporate strategy and policy formation, corporate image and reputation management, event management or event marketing, protocol functions, community relations, corporate social responsibility, employee relations, marketing support, financial public relations, research and evaluation, international public relations, planning, publications, corporate advertising, publicity, audio-visual productions, public enlightenment, corporate identity, issues management, crisis management, and a host of others. Pride and Ferrell (2007) assert that public relations can be used to promote people, places, ideas, activities, and even countries. A mass transit firm's stakeholders can include passengers, mechanics, employees, government, media, community, and suppliers.

Public Relations Strategies

Public relations strategy is a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim, or a method or plan chosen to bring about a desired future, such as the achievement of a goal or solution to a problem (Touitou, 2021). Public relations work best as a strategic management function. Strategic public relations is focused on achieving objectives and goals that contribute to the overall purpose and mission of an organization. Public relations is a major tool in building good relations with an organization's various publics by obtaining favourable publicity, building up a good corporate image, and handling or heading off unfavourable rumours, stories, and events (Kotler and Armstrong, 2006). The purpose of public relations practice is to establish two-way communication, seeking common ground or areas of mutual interest, and to establish understanding based on truth, knowledge, and full information (Uduji, 2007). According to Touitou (2021), below are some of the effective public relations strategies that will help guide one to success: know the audience, get organized, think like a reporter, research, work with a team, enhance online presence, know competition, create compelling content, think like an audience, and define goals and objectives, etc.

Public Relations Strategy Tactics

According to Tench and Yeomans (2006) and Touitou (2021), these are some of the public relations strategic tactics or tools: fit for purpose, business and consumer communication, events, community relations, crisis management, media relations, sponsorship, employee relations, among others.

Fit for Purpose

Before discussing the individual tools and techniques that can make up a public relations programme, it is important to stress that the key characteristics of the target audience play a big part in defining and shaping the strategy and tactics that are deployed in a campaign (Tench and Yeomans, 2006). Who do we need to talk to? How can we reach them? What are they interested in? What do we want them to do?

By posing a series of simple questions, it is possible to refine and sharpen the scope of the planned activity.

Media Relations

Media relations involves liaising with the media in order to inform the public of the client's practices, achievements, mission, policies, and sometimes even their very existence (Touitou, 2021). Utibe (2024) states that media relations are a vital component of public relations that can significantly enhance an organization's reputation and credibility. Understanding the role of media relations and incorporating it into a comprehensive public relations strategy can lead to increased visibility, credibility, and overall success for an organization. During times of crisis, media relations become even more critical. Effective media relations can help organizations navigate crises by providing transparent and timely information to the media. By maintaining open lines of communication, organizations can mitigate

reputational damage and rebuild trust with stakeholders (Utibe, 2024). It is a strong factor in building brand awareness, increasing credibility and authenticity, establishing relationships with the media, and crisis control. The primary aim of media relations is to get good and positive coverage for the client without paying anything. By engaging with the media, organizations can secure placements in reputable publications, websites, and broadcast outlets (Utibe, 2024).

Various Forms of Media Relations

- i. News Releases
- ii. News Conference
- iii. Interviews
- iv. Press Reception
- v. The Facility Visit
- vi. Company Blog
- vii. Social Media

Benefits of Media Relations as a Tool for Public Relations

- (a) Build Awareness: A strong media relations campaign can help the brand grow its visibility among the target audiences. They will look to collect stories about the brand on a variety of media platforms, including newspapers, websites, blogs, television channels, radio shows, etc.
- (b) Increase Visibility: Consumers tend to be loyal to brands and products they have confidence in. Most consumers use the same product, company, organization, etc. for years because they have developed brand loyalty, and it can be hard to convert them to something new. Media coverage can help achieve this by promoting authenticity, trust, transparency, and credibility.
- (c) Control a Crisis: When a crisis happens, it is important to be transparent and send out a statement to the media as soon as possible (news release, news conference, interviews). Rumours and misunderstandings spread very quickly in the event of a crisis, and they can be detrimental to the brand. However, when the brand/company has an existing relationship with the media, it also has a better chance of controlling the message that is being relayed.

Employee Relations

According to Touitou (2021), employee relations deal with an organization managing its relationship with its members of staff. Employee relations are also referred to as internal public. It builds mutual understanding between an organization and its employees and encourages them to fully participate in fulfilling its goals and objectives, which includes providing excellence in products, services, and customer relations. Employee relations can also be seen as an organization's efforts to create and maintain a positive relationship with its employees. By maintaining positive, constructive employee relations, organizations hope to keep employees loyal and more engaged in their work. To maintain positive employee relations, an organization must first view employees as stakeholders and contributors in the company rather than simply as paid labourers. This perspective encourages those in

management and executive roles to seek employee feedback, to value their input more highly, and to consider the employee experience when making decisions (Touitou, 2021).

Community Relations

Community relations are an imperative aspect of public relations (Udoudo, 2007). Community relations can mean different things to different people or organizations. In some cases, it may simply be a question of giving back to the community through charitable donations or local sponsorship, or can be a desire for recognition or the need to create a favourable climate ready for operation (Wragg, 1992). Community relations refers to the various methods companies use to establish and maintain a mutually beneficial relationship with the communities in which they operate (Touitou, 2021). Canfield (1968) sees a good community relation as making an organization a corporate citizen of the community, which must do everything to enable the society to be well governed and provide socio-economic activities in the community. To build and maintain cordial relationships with members of the community where business operates helps build customer loyalty. Engaging in corporate social responsibility is one of the ways to build cordial relationships with the community.

Corporate Reputation Management

Reputation is the accumulation or aggregation of positive identity values, character, qualities, attributes, and goodwill over time in the life of somebody, a corporate organization, or government (Nkwocha, 2017). Reputation is a highly prized possession or asset that makes an individual, organization, or government stand out, shine, or excel in the public eye; and is usually earned, not bought with money or grabbed with propaganda or sloganeering. Nkwocha (2017) further argued that there are three very important elements of reputation: integrity, character, and trust. Integrity revolves around honesty, truthfulness, consistency, and straight dealing with everyone. Integrity builds trust, which is the soul of every business and leadership success, while character is the totality of a person from within. Any time any of the three elements is lost, reputation is lost also.

Corporate reputation is defined as the totality of how internal and external publics or stakeholders see and perceive an organization based on various observations, impressions, knowledge, information, and, most importantly, its products and services, performance in the marketplace, corporate identity, corporate communications, and corporate governance over a period of time (Nkwocha, 2017). Corporate reputation is the overall perception held by an organization's key stakeholders, such as employees, customers, media, host community, bankers or creditors, suppliers, government, and even competitors (Kumar, 1999).

Corporate reputation management is seen as an emerging concept in public relations practice which deploys various PR strategies, tools, and techniques to build, sustain, protect, rebuild, and relaunch positive image, perceptions, impressions, knowledge, and information about the organization through excellent relationships with both internal and external stakeholders such as employees, shareholders, customers, community, government, media, etc. (Nkwocha, 2010). Reputation management refers to the practice and strategic efforts undertaken by an organization to shape and control the perceptions of its stakeholders, including customers, employees, investors, and the general public. Maintaining positive relationships with the media is essential for reputation management (Smith, 2024). According to Lee (2022), the benefits of a positive corporate reputation include: acquiring favourable media attention for the organization; attracting more stakeholders, including potential suppliers and employees; acquiring more developed customers; increasing the confidence of stakeholders in the organization's capabilities; and reducing regulations imposed by the government.

Management

Akpala (1999) sees management as an organizational concept involved in effective and efficient planning, organizing, controlling, directing, leading, coordinating, and allocating scarce human, financial, and material resources to achieve organizational goals and objectives. Imaga (2001) opines that management is working with and through individuals and groups to accomplish organizational goals. Management is the coordination of an organization's resources aimed at achieving a predetermined goal or objective (Eboh, 2008). Management is a very important discipline that galvanizes all human endeavours (Nkwocha, 2017).

Functions of Management

According to Imaga (2001) and Eboh (2008), the managerial functions include, but are not limited to, the following: planning, organizing, directing, controlling, staffing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting.

Commuter's Patronage

Nwankwo, Fawohunre, and Obasanjo (2022) state that passengers have high regard for transport companies that offer them cost-effective, convenient, and quality services. Customers are more likely to purchase well-known brand products with a positive brand image as a way to lower purchase risk (Gabbott and Hogg, 1998). It is important to note that transport services, like other service products, are intangible and heterogeneous and are judged by the performance and experience of those who use them. Commuter's patronage is the number of people who use a transportation service, such as a bus, train, or boat. Factors that affect patronage are safety, cost, comfort, travel time, and service quality.

Safety Movement

This involves a widespread effort to prevent accidents and injuries. The benefits of safety movement are enormous, ranging from reduced risk of accidents and injuries, improved productivity, and improved quality of life for passengers. Effective workplace safety training helps to prevent accidents, injuries, and illnesses by increasing employees' awareness of potential hazards and how to avoid them. It also ensures that employees have the knowledge and skills to respond appropriately to emergencies and to use necessary safety equipment (Bliech, 2024).

Mass Transit

According to Schofer (2025), mass transit is the movement of people within urban areas using group travel technologies such as buses and trains. The essential feature of mass transportation is that many people are carried in the same vehicle (e.g., buses) or collection of attached vehicles (trains). This makes it possible to move people in the same travel corridor with greater efficiency, which can lead to lower costs to carry each person. Mass transit can also be referred to as city transportation, mass transportation, public transit, or public transportation.

Mass transit systems may be owned by private, profit-making companies or by governments or quasi-government agencies that may not operate for profit (Schofer, 2025). According to Wikipedia (2025), mass transit is a system of transport for passengers by group travel systems available for use by the general public, unlike private transport, typically managed on a schedule, operated on established routes, and that may charge a posted fee for each trip. In South East Nigeria, there exist both government and private mass transit services, for instance, Enugu State Transport Company (ENTRACO), Imo Transport Company (ITC), Transport Company of Anambra State, Ebonyi State Transport Service (Ebotrans), Abia Line Transport, Enugu South Mass Transit, Onitsha South Mass Transport, Peace Mass Transit Ltd, Romchi Mass Transit, Royal Mass Transit, Ekwulobia Urban Mass Transit Service, Aguata Mass

Transit, among others. Improved public transport services in urban areas would reduce the tendency for public passengers to upgrade to private transport (Nwankwo et al., 2016).

Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on the Transfer Process Model. According to Nwosu and Uffoh (2005), the Transfer Process Model is one of the leading, widely known, and widely applied models of public relations, which was propounded by Frank Jefkins in 1982. Its major message is that public relations strategies can and should be used in any attempt to change or convert people's attitudes from negative states to positive states. According to the model, public relations strategies can be used to change hostility to sympathy, prejudice to acceptance, apathy to interest, and ignorance to knowledge. The Transfer Process Model can be applied at the entire corporate/organizational image and reputation management level and at the specific project/programme management level.

Also reviewed is the RACE Model. This model is the classical John Marston's RACE Model, which he created in 1963. The acronym RACE stands for Research, Action, Communication, and Evaluation. Research is the discovery stage of a problem-solving process to gather information that would help take the right decisions. Research would help the public relations executive to discover the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the client's image. It would also help to discover the make-up of the client's publics, as well as the perception of the client. Blind decision-making in public relations can have unsavoury consequences. Information gathered through research would help to take appropriate actions. The public relations executive directs messages to specific publics in support of specific goals. The communication strategy must come in two-way formats: the organization speaks for its publics and equally listens to those publics when they speak. Evaluation asks the question, "How effective have the strategies been?" No single public relations approach is a sure-fire method for success; hence, the need for evaluation.

Empirical Reviews

Lee (2020) conducted a study on the impacts of public relations on corporate reputations. The study reviewed the impact of public relations on corporate reputation in the contemporary corporate environment. This report used real-world examples to illustrate how effective communication aids in reputation management. Again, this study was dependent on conjectures and an interview with an experienced public relations practitioner. The study revealed further that, to create a stronger relationship with stakeholders, it is essential to identify and comprehend the main stakeholders and employ proper communication tactics. The outcome of the interview was that the consulting firm improved its stakeholder communication and engagement, thereby enhancing its corporate reputation and maintaining its industry competitiveness.

Chukwuemeka and Nwobi (2014) did a study on the political economy of mass transit programme in Nigeria: an evaluation of government post-petroleum subsidy intervention. This paper investigated the political economy of mass transit programme in Nigeria, using federal government post-petroleum subsidy removal intervention as a case study. With the aid of secondary and primary sources of data collection, the paper observed that, contrary to its original aim, the mass transit programme now pursues elites' economic interest. It further observed that the programme became an instrument of political settlement and a capitalist programme for profit maximization because all the government-owned mass transit companies have been commercialized. It also observed that the intervention has no positive impact on the socio-economic and mobility hardship of the people.

Bishar and Kamoni (2025) carried out a study on transport management practices and safety performance of public transport organizations in Nairobi. The study collected data from the 64 public transport organizations in the County of Nairobi. Data was analyzed by applying descriptive and inferential statistics, which were used to test the hypothesis of the study. The study established that transport management practices have a significant and

substantial effect on the safety performance of public transport organizations. The study further discovered that public transport organizations in the county of Nairobi have a significantly low level of adoption of e-transport, fleet maintenance mechanisms, and very low crew qualification requirements.

Yuyang (2023) studied the relationship and impact of public transportation and the media. This paper connected the public transportation system with the field of media and communication.

Nwankwo, Fawohunre, and Obasanjo (2016) examined the impact of Abuja Urban Mass Transit Company on passenger movement. The study adopted primary and secondary sources of data collection. Data collected were on the commuters' waiting time at the bus stops, their level of satisfaction, reasons for patronizing the mass transit, as well as records from Abuja Urban Mass Transit. The research reveals that the bus stops were not adequate, the buses were inadequate, and the few available ones were overloaded, resulting in commuters standing and thereby leading to poor services rendered. Also, the study discovered that there were no dedicated lanes for buses, long waiting times, poor reliability, discomfort while in the vehicle, low efficiency, and long downtime of vehicles due to lack of proper maintenance.

Aworemi and Amoo (2024) investigated the transport marketing strategies adopted by commercial transport companies in Nigeria and the challenges encountered in their implementation. A descriptive cross-sectional survey was conducted on 181 employees of the selected transport company. Simple random sampling was used to select participants from the company terminals across Lagos State. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data, which was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results show that the selected transport company uses different strategies, including digital marketing and partnerships, but it faces problems like high competition, financial limitations, and seasonal demand fluctuations.

Nwosu, Okebaram, and Emerole (2023) carried out research on the effects of strategic management on organizational growth of selected transport firms in Nigeria. The descriptive research design was adopted for this study, in which a structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from the target respondents, who were management staff of the companies selected. The study hypotheses were analyzed using simple regression and correlation models. Equally, SPSS was adopted. Findings show that the strategic management of the selected companies has a strong effect on their profitability, as the results show positive and statistically significant effects at the 1% level.

Gap in Literature

Extant literature examines some of the issues related to mass transit businesses. For instance, the impacts of public relations on corporate reputation (Lee, 2022); the political economy of mass transit programme in Nigeria: an evaluation of government post-petroleum subsidy intervention (Chukwuemeka and Nwobi, 2014); a study of transport management practices and safety performance of public transport organizations in Nairobi (Bishar and Kamoni, 2025); the relationship and impact of public transportation and the media (Yuyang, 2023); the impact of Abuja Urban Mass Transit Company on passenger movement (Nwankwo et al., 2016); the transport marketing strategies adopted by commercial transport companies in Nigeria and the challenges encountered in their implementation (Aworemi and Amoo, 2024); and the effect of strategic management on organizational growth of selected transport firms in Nigeria (Nwosu et al., 2023).

Extant literature seems not to highlight the impact of public relations strategies that mass transit operators could adopt to improve management performance. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the impact of public relations strategies on the management of mass transit business in South East Nigeria.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted the survey research design. This method of research is normally applied in management and social sciences because of the complex relationships that exist between the variables.

Sources of Data Collection

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources; however, the primary source was the main source of data.

Area of the Study

The study area is South East, Nigeria, comprising five states: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States. Three cities were selected from three states of South East, Nigeria, which include Enugu State, Abia State, and Anambra State. These states were chosen due to the easy accessibility of information to the researchers. Furthermore, the following cities were chosen: 9th Mile in Enugu State, Aba in Abia State, and Onitsha in Anambra State. These cities are known for the mass movement of commuters.

Population of the Study

The population chosen for a particular study is the theoretical aggregation of study elements (Malhotra, 2007). For this study, the population chosen is the operators of mass transit and commuters of mass transit services in South East, Nigeria. Due to the nature of the population, it is described as an infinite population.

Table 3.1

S/N	State	City	Selected Mass Transit
1	Enugu	9th Mile Corner	Peace Mass Transit
2	Abia	Aba	Abia Mass Transit
3	Anambra	Onitsha	Onitsha South Mass Transit

Sampling Size Determination

A key factor in determining the size of sampling error is the sample size relative to the entire population (Onodugu et al., 2010). This, in turn, is determined by the estimated prevalence of the variable of interest, the desired level of confidence, and the acceptable margin of error. Factoring in these, the sample size in this study is determined using the Zigmund formula (1979, p. 66), which is suitable for an unknown population (infinite).

The mathematical formula is given as follows:

$$n = Z^2Pq / e^2$$

Where:

z = Statistic to be used at 5% level of significance at two-tail test = 1.96

e = Allowable sampling error taken at 5% = 0.05

p = Proportion of success in the population from pilot survey = 0.50

q = Proportion of failure in the population from pilot survey = 0.50

n = Sample size required

$$n = (1.96 \times 1.96 \times 0.50 \times 0.50) / (0.05 \times 0.05)$$

$$= 384.16 \approx 384$$

Based on the computation above, a sample of 384 operators and consumers of mass transit services was required for this study.

Sampling Procedure

To have proper representation of the sample, a multi-stage sampling technique is used to select the respondents. This involves both cluster and simple random sampling. To ensure that the population is adequately represented, the study area is divided into five major clusters represented by the states. From the listing, Enugu, 9th Mile, Obollo Afor, Awka, Nnewi, Onitsha, Umuahia, and Aba are purposefully selected from Abia, Enugu, and Anambra States, respectively. To ensure proper representation, out of the eight cities selected, a stratified random sampling technique is used. It is stratified into eight cities, after which the sample size is randomly selected.

Method of Data Presentation and Analysis

Data collected from the respondents was analyzed using the T-test associated with simple regression analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Data Presentation

A total of three hundred and eighty-four (384) copies of questionnaires were distributed to the operators and consumers of mass transit services in the selected cities in Enugu, Abia, and Anambra States, respectively. Out of the three hundred and eighty-four (384) copies of questionnaires distributed in this study, three hundred and fifty-six (356) were returned. This represents a 92.71% rate of return. The researchers found that all the questionnaires returned were correctly filled.

Table 4.1: Allocation and Presentation

Organization	No. Distributed	%	No. Returned	%	Not Returned	%
ENUGU STATE	128	33.3%	118	92.19	10	7.81
ABIA STATE	128	33.3%	120	93.75	8	6.25
ANAMBRA STATE	128	33.3%	118	92.19	10	7.81
Total	384		356		28	

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Test of Hypothesis

H₀₁: Media relations have no significant impact on the management of mass transit business in South East, Nigeria.

Table 4.1: T-Test Associated with Simple Regression on the Impact of Media Relations on Management of Mass Transit Business in South East, Nigeria

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficient Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	3.008	.968		3.109	.002
Media Relations	.798	.062	.797	12.934	.000

Table 4.1 revealed that media relations significantly impact the market share of the operators of mass transit business by 0.797. The T-test value of 12.934 associated with linear regression was statistically significant at 0.000 when subjected to 0.05 alpha level of significance.

By implication, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, media relations as a public relations strategy have a significant positive impact on the market share of mass transit business operators in South East, Nigeria.

H₀₂: Community relations have no significant impact on the management of mass transit business in South East, Nigeria.

Table 4.2: T-Test Associated with Simple Regression on the Impact of Community Relations on Management of Mass Transit Business in South East, Nigeria

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficient Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	5.737	1.062		5.401	.000
Community Relations	.653	.071	.762	9.165	.000

Table 4.2 revealed that the use of community relations strategy significantly impacts consumer patronage of mass transit businesses in South East Nigeria by 0.762. The T-test value of 9.165 associated with linear regression was statistically significant at 0.00 when subjected to 0.05 alpha level of significance.

By implication, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, community relations as a public relations strategy have a significant positive impact on consumers' patronage of mass transit business in South East Nigeria.

H0₃: Employee relations have no significant impact on the management of mass transit business in South East, Nigeria.

Table 4.3: T-Test Associated with Simple Regression on the Impact of Employee Relations on Management of Mass Transit Business in South East, Nigeria

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficient Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	3.581	.663		5.403	.000
Employee Relations	.777	.043	.804	18.224	.000

Table 4.3 revealed that adopting employee relations significantly impacts performance and outputs by 0.804. The T-test value of 18.224 associated with linear regression was statistically significant at 0.00 when subjected to 0.05 alpha level of significance.

By implication, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, employee relations as a public relations strategy have a significant positive impact on the performance of staff and production outputs.

Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendation

Summary of Findings

Based on the analysis of data collected, the following major findings were made:

1. It was revealed from the findings that media relations as a public relations strategy have a positive significant impact on the mass transit companies' market share in South-East Nigeria.
2. It was also revealed from the findings that community relations as a public relations strategy have a positive significant impact on the consumer's patronage of mass transit businesses in South-East Nigeria.
3. The findings from the study revealed that employee relations as a public relations strategy have a positive significant impact on the performance of staff and production output of the mass transit companies.

Conclusion

The findings of this study showed a substantial impact of public relations strategies on the management of mass transit businesses in South-East Nigeria.

The results demonstrated that public relations strategies significantly influence mass transit companies' market share, consumer patronage of mass transit businesses, and the performance of employees and production output.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Given the positive impact of public relations strategies on companies' market share, it is recommended that mass transit operators should continue to strategically invest in and use public relations strategies, which can contribute to stronger brand-consumer relationships, fostering loyalty and repeat patronage.

2. To promote understanding, industrial harmony, and business patronage, firms should engage in community events, which can provide new avenues to connect with potential customers of mass transit services.
3. Building on the positive perceptions of public relations strategies, mass transit companies should focus on maintaining continuous engagement and interactions with employees, which will promote industrial harmony, job satisfaction, optimum performance, and the role of employees as good ambassadors of the companies.

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