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Evaluation of Public Relations Strategies of Imo State Housing Corporation: A Survey of Residents in Owerri Metropolis

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Abstract

This study examined the public relations strategies adopted by Imo State Housing Corporation in performing their functions. This study was anchored on Social construction theory. The study adopted mixed method research design utilising survey and in-depth interview to enable the collection of quantitative and qualitative data. A sample size of 400 respondents was drawn from residents of Owerri Metropolis in Imo state using Taro Yameni sample size formula from a population of 1,023,000. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The data obtained were analysed using percentage method. It was revealed that 100% of the respondents indicated that Imo State Housing Corporation public relations strategies have not achieved the maximum or much needed positive influence in fulfilling its core mandates to the people of the state. The researchers recommend that the corporation should prioritise building reciprocal relationships with stakeholders, including residents, customers, and employees, to improve public perception of its services.

Keynote: Public Relations, Public Relations Strategies, Imo State Housing Corporation



Introduction

In recent years, organisations have continued to adopt a variety of strategies that can sustain their growth, profitability, market expansion, environmental peace and harmony as well as organisational high performance. One of such strategies for organisational growth is effective public relations. Nworgu (2011) asserts that the business of public relations can be achieved when there is understanding relationship between an organisation and the people it serves. According to Ibekwe (2022, p.56), public relations are the business of getting and maintaining public understanding and support. It is a marketing function which attempts to create goodwill for an organisation and its products with groups who can affect its present or future welfare.

In off service organisations such as Imo State Housing Corporation, the effort to build public goodwill and trust is the ultimate goal. Therefore, for the corporation to gain importance, recognition and public acceptance, there is need for effective public relations. That is why Oliver (2018) asserts that public relations is the key to business effectiveness, public trust and organisational viability. Good public relations enhances public acceptance and improves the institutions overall competitiveness. This is because of the low level of public perception and poor image of most public sector organisations in Nigeria. According to Ukah (2020), the public do not have trust and total recognition of public institutions, and Imo state Housing Corporation is not an exception to the above.

Public relations adopts a wide range of activities to deliver corporate brand image. In his discussion on the role which public relations play in service organisation or institution, Hutchison (2024) and Macari (2025) identifies the following tasks: working to improve mutual understanding between the organisation and its publics; moulding and presenting organisational image to the public; discovering and eliminating sources of misunderstanding and broadening the sphere of the firm by engaging in appropriate advertising, publicity, exhibitions and others; engaging in public education, orientation and enlightenment on the goals of the organisation, its limitation to achieve some of its goals, and its strategies to succeed; improving positive relations and trust with its stakeholders, especially the government, and the people of Imo State.

The extent of performance of public institution normally determines the extent of public support (Ubah, 2020). It is observed that many people in Imo State do not have proper information about the housing scheme in the state. This is because of low level of public knowledge about the programmes and activities of the Corporation. According to Ojoma and Bello (2017p.34), there is high level of irregularity in government business transaction and such have led to high level of corruption and have reduced public trust. If the Imo State Housing Corporation do not effectively perform their functions in a transparent and accountable manner, the image of the organisation will be nothing to write home about within the public domain.

Most times, there seems to be public outcries on payment without proper allocation, parcellation of land, illegal allocation of lands, improper development plans, low level of publicity before sales/allocation of lands and other issues surrounding the services of Imo State Housing Corporation. The above challenges may affect the image of Imo State Housing Corporation, and may lead to low level of public trust, patronage, and good relationship between the Imo State Housing Corporation and the public. The above issues/problems necessitated this work, as the



researcher wish to evaluate the public relations strategies of Imo State Housing Corporation using the residents of Owerri Metropolis.

Theoretical Framework

This work is anchored on Social Construction Theory, it stipulates that the extent of effectiveness of government policy and action determine the level of public perception and criticisms. This theory was propounded by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman in 1966 (Baran, 2014). This theory stipulates that social construction (criticism) of government policies by the people depends on the performance of such government policy and government institution. If the government ministries, agencies and institutions (like Imo State Housing Corporation) are effective, proactive and productive, they will attract praise, recognition and public support. However, the social construction could be negative when such institutions perform below public expectations. The central proposition of this theory is that the social system enables individuals and organisations to interact and construct mental representations of each other which eventually informs and controls their actions in relation to one another.

The relevance of the theory is that it provides the basis of understanding why people react either positively or negatively to government policies especially as it has to do with housing in line with the context of this study.

Method

The study adopted survey research approach. The population consists of residents of Owerri Metropolis. According to Macrotrend statistics (2024), Owerri metropolis has a total population of 1,023,000. Through the use of Taro Yamane sample size formula, a sample size of 400 was arrived at for the study. Multistage sampling technique was adopted for the study. First stage, the researchers divided Owerri Metropolis into 3 local governments (Owerri Municipal, Owerri North and Owerri West). Second stage, the researchers randomly selected 3 communities from each local government which are; Owerri Municipal (Umuororonjo, Amawom, Umuonyeche), Owerri North (Emekuku, Amakohia, Uratta) and Owerri West (Umuguma, Ihiagwa, Nekede). Third stage, the researchers divided the 400 copies of questionnaire into the 9 randomly selected communities. Fourth stage, the researchers distributed 44 copies of questionnaire to respondents in each of the communities.. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. Face validity was used for the validity of the instrument. Test re-test was adopted by the researchers to test the reliability of the instrument. Responses were subjected to Cronbach alpha test to ascertain the level of reliability. The reliability test result showed 0.71 meaning the instrument was reliable. Through the aid of research assistants, the researchers distributed the copies of questionnaire on a face-to-face basis. Frequency and percentage were used as the method of data analysis. Informed consents were gotten from respondents regarding data collection and use. Data retrieved were analyses using descriptive statistics.

Findings

A total of Four hundred (400) copies of questionnaire were distributed to the residents of Owerri Metropolis after which, 368 were returned and found usable whereas 32 were not returned and was not



used. The percentage of the returned and usable was 92.0% while 8% amounting to questionnaire copies which as such do not affect the quantitative data analysis.

RQ 1: What are the public relations strategies adopted by Imo State Housing Corporation in performing their functions?

Table 1: Respondents' responses to do you know about the public relations strategies of Imo State Housing Corporation?

	Option	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	368	100
	No	-	-
	Total	368	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The above shows that all the respondents in the study exposure to public relations strategies by Imo State Housing Corporation was quite high.

Table 2: Respondents' responses to which of these can you say is the major public relations strategies of Imo State Housing Corporation

	Options	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Communication	291	79.1
	Commitment to public	73	19.8
	Conflict handling	4	1.1
	Total	368	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The above shows that majority of respondents in the study agreed that the major public relations strategies applied by Imo State Housing Corporation was Communication via many media outlets such as radio, townhall meetings, conferences and so on.

Table 3: Respondents' responses to what extent will you rate the effectiveness of public relations strategies of Imo State Housing Corporation?

	Options	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Very effective	0	0
	Effective	21	5.7
	Not effective	186	50.5
	Very low	161	43.8
	Total	368	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The above shows that large chunk of respondents in the valid sample agreed the rating of the effectiveness level of public relations strategies of Imo State Housing Corporation in its operations was not yielding much positive account as the residents were weary of empty promises made by the agencies in time past.

RQ2: What is the extent of public awareness on the services of Imo State Housing Corporation?

Table 4: Respondents' responses to awareness of the services of Imo State Housing Corporation

	Option	Frequency	Percent
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Valid	Yes	368	100
	No	-	-
	Total	368	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The above shows that all the respondents (100%) in the study agreed that they are quite aware of the services of Imo State Housing Corporation over the years in the state capital and its environs.

Table 5: Respondents' responses on the extent of awareness of the services of Imo State Housing Corporation

	Options	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Very high extent	101	27.4
	High extent	193	52.4
	Low extent	42	11.4
	Very low extent	32	8.6
	Total	368	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The above shows that a greater number of the respondents in the study are to a high extent aware of the services of Imo State Housing Corporation in the state. This means that a greater number of the respondents indicated that to a high extent they are aware of the services of Imo State Housing Corporation in the state.

Table 6: Respondents' responses to information sources about the services of Imo State Housing Corporation

	Option	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Radio	81	22.1
	Television	213	56.8
	Newspaper	32	8.6
	Social media	18	4.8
	Friends and family	23	6.3
	Total	368	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The above shows that a greater number of the respondents in the study are often exposed to information about the services of Imo State Housing Corporation through television especially government owned and controlled channels who broadcast and cover major government incentives and projects.

RQ3: What is the public perception on the services of Imo State Housing Corporation?

Table 7: Respondents' responses on the perception of the services of Imo State Housing Corporation

	Options	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Very Positive	11	0
	Positive	61	5.7
	Negative	176	50.5
	Very Negative	120	43.8
	Total	368	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026



The above shows that a greater number of the respondents 50.5% in the study have negative perception about the services of Imo State Housing Corporation.

Table 8: Respondents' view on the perception of the image of Imo State Housing Corporation

	Options	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Very good	0	0
	Good	21	5.7
	Bad	186	50.5
	Very bad	161	43.8
	Total	368	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The above shows that a greater number of the respondents in the study see the perception of the image of Imo State Housing Corporation as bad as many promises have been made over the years by the body few have been fulfilled to a selected publics.

Table 9: Respondents' responses to which of these informed your positive/negative perception of the services of Imo State Housing Corporation

	Options	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Public relations	241	66.4
	Management	101	26.6
	Effective service	16	4.4
	Total	368	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The above shows that majority of respondents in the study believes that their perception either positive/negative perception towards activities and services of Imo State Housing Corporation were basically informed or created based on the application of different media tools public relations strategies inclusive.

Research Question 4: What is the major influence of Imo State Housing Corporation in achieving its core mandate of affordable housing?

Table 10: Respondents' responses on Imo State Housing Corporation public relations strategies have any influence on its core mandates?

	Option	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	-	-
	No	368	100
	Total	368	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The above shows that all the respondents in the study were of the view that Imo State Housing Corporation public relations strategies have not achieved the maximum or much needed positive impact in fulfilling its core mandates to the people of the state.



Table 11: Respondents' responses to which of these is the major influence of Imo State Housing Corporation in achieving its core mandate

	Option	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Public awareness	11	0
	Access to land	61	5.7
	Affordable housing	176	50.5
	Estate development	120	43.8
	Total	368	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The above shows that a greater number of the respondents indicated that affordable housing stands tall as one of the major influence of Imo State Housing Corporation in achieving its core mandate to the people of Imo State.

Table 12: Respondents' responses on how they rate the influence of Imo State Housing Corporation on its core mandate?

	Option	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Very good	0	0
	Good	21	5.7
	Bad	186	50.5
	Very Bad	161	43.8
	Total	368	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The above shows that majority of the respondents in the valid sample rated the influence of Imo State Housing Corporation on its core mandate bad.

RQ5: What are the challenges affecting Imo State Housing Corporation in its efforts for service delivery?

Table 13: Respondents' view on any challenges of public relations by Imo State Housing Corporation?

	Option	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	281	76.4
	No	87	23.7
	Total	368	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The above shows that majority of respondents in the study are quite aware of the different challenges of public relations by Imo State Housing Corporation and are no quest to the challenge of propaganda and image recycling in maintaining a font in the public.

Table 14: Respondents' view on the major challenge of public relations strategies by Imo State Housing Corporation

	Option	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Inadequate finance	36	9.8
	Lack of public relations/Indian expert	131	35.6
	Ineffective leadership	178	48.4
	Poor attitude of workers	23	6.3
	Total	368	100



Source: Field Survey, 2026

The above shows that majority of the respondents in the valid sample agreed that amongst all the challenge of public relations strategies by Imo State Housing Corporation, Ineffective leadership stands tall as an organisation can only function if the leadership work effectively and efficiently.

Table 15: Respondents' view on to what extent you think the challenges of public relations strategies have hindered Imo State Housing Corporation from achieving its poor mandate?

	Option	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Very high extent	68	18.5
	High extent	189	51.4
	Low extent	78	21.2
	Very Low extent	33	8.9
	Total	368	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The above shows that majority of the respondents in the valid sample agreed that the different challenges of public relations strategies have hindered Imo State Housing Corporation from achieving its proper mandate and executing its constitutional duties to the publics of Imo State.

Discussion

Data analysed indicated that the Imo State Housing Corporation needs to prioritise adaptability and flexibility to improve public perception of its services. This may involve investing in research and development to identify new and innovative ways to deliver services, as well as being responsive to the changing needs of stakeholders. Furthermore, the corporation may need to prioritize building a culture of innovation and experimentation, to encourage creativity and risk-taking among employees. The study's results indicate that the Imo State Housing Corporation needs to prioritize building reciprocal relationships with its stakeholders, including residents, customers, and employees, to improve public perception of its services. This may involve investing in stakeholder engagement

Finding from the study revealed that residents of Owerri Metropolis are aware of the services of Imo State Housing Corporation over the years in the state capital and its environs. Also, a large percentage of the respondents 52.4% were quite aware of the services of Imo State Housing Corporation in the state hinged on the fact that majority of the respondents worked or works with different agencies within the government establishments either at the local or federal level. 56.8% of respondents agreed that they are often exposed to information about the services of Imo State Housing Corporation through television especially government owned and controlled channels who broadcast and cover major government incentives and projects. These findings are consistent with previous research studies that have identified a lack of public awareness as a major challenge facing housing corporations in Nigeria (Akpan & Udoh, 2023). Therefore, the Imo State Housing Corporation needs to prioritize media relations and publicity to increase public awareness. Therefore, the corporation needs to develop persuasive communication and messaging strategies to increase public awareness and utilization of its services.

Majority of the respondents are unimpressed with too activities and services of Imo State Housing Corporation giving it a negative rating which means that Imo State Housing Corporation have its work cut out for them in the quest to fulfil its mandate of affordable and quality housing for all. The respondents in the valid sample perception of the image of Imo State Housing Corporation was quite bad as many promises have been made over the years by the body few have been fulfilled to a selected publics. Majority of respondents in the study believes that their perception either positive/negative



perception towards activities and services of Imo State Housing Corporation were basically informed or created based on the application of different media tools public relations strategies inclusive. It can be said therefore that Imo State Housing Corporation have done little or nothing to ensure that Imo residents view their activities in a positive light. These findings are consistent with past research studies that have identified similar challenges facing housing corporations in Nigeria. For example, a study by Afolabi et al. (2025) found that the quality of housing in Nigeria is generally poor, with many houses lacking basic amenities such as water and electricity. This studies suggest that the challenges facing the Imo State Housing Corporation are not unique to the corporation, but rather are systemic issues facing the housing sector in Nigeria. The findings of this study also relate to public relations theories and models, such as the Excellence Theory, which emphasizes the importance of achieving excellence in public relations to achieve organisational goals (Grunig, 2012). The study's results indicate that the Imo State Housing Corporation needs to prioritize excellence in public relations to improve public perception of its services.

Majority of respondents in the study was of the view that Imo State Housing Corporation public relations strategies have not achieved the maximum or much needed positive impact in fulfilling its core mandates to the people of the state. Also, majority of the respondents in the valid sample believes that affordable housing stands tall as one of the major impacts of Imo State Housing Corporation in achieving its core mandate to the people of Imo State. In same vein, majority of the respondents in the valid sample rated the impact of Imo State Housing Corporation on its core mandate poor based on poor results and outcomes all the years so Imo State Housing Corporation have its work cut out for them towards fulfilling its core mandates to the people of Imo residents. This study's findings underscore the imperative for the Imo State Housing Corporation to prioritize effective communication, stakeholder engagement, and customer service to enhance the perception of its services. Consistent with extant literature (Aluko et al., 2020; Oyeyipo et al., 2022), effective communication and stakeholder engagement are crucial in fostering trust, credibility, and satisfaction among stakeholders. Moreover, investing in research and development (Emerson, 2020; Grunig, 2012) and prioritizing customer service (Huang, 2020) are essential for improving service quality and meeting stakeholders' needs.

Majority of the respondents in the valid sample agreed that amongst all the challenge of public relations strategies by Imo State Housing Corporation, Ineffective leadership stands tall as an organisation can only function if the leadership work effectively and efficiently. Also, the respondents in the valid sample agreed that amongst all the challenge of public relations strategies by Imo State Housing Corporation, Ineffective leadership stands tall as an organisation can only function if the leadership work effectively and efficiently. To crown it all, majority of the respondents in the valid sample agreed that the different challenges of public relations strategies have hindered Imo State Housing Corporation from achieving its proper mandate and executing its constitutional duties to the publics of Imo State, therefore there is need for urgency to redeem these issues for effective and efficient operations of the agency. From the qualitative analysis aspect, in the interview session, 8 of the interviewees was in agreement that the corporation must prioritise strategies such as public-private partnerships, community engagement and participation, capacity building and training, research and development, and advocacy and policy influence. Additionally, the corporation must work closely with other government agencies, stakeholders, and development partners to ensure that affordable housing is prioritized in the state's development agenda. These findings are consistent with past research studies that have identified similar challenges facing housing corporations in Nigeria and other developing countries. For example, Oladapo (2017) found that the Nigerian housing sector faces significant challenges, including funding, land acquisition, and bureaucratic red tape. Similarly, UN-Habitat (2015) found that many housing projects in Africa fail due to lack of political will, inadequate funding, and poor planning. The study's results indicate that the



Imo State Housing Corporation faces challenges in engaging with its stakeholders, including the community, government agencies, and development partners. This lack of engagement and collaboration may contribute to the corporation's difficulties in delivering affordable housing.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study's results indicate that the Imo State Housing Corporation needs to prioritise building reciprocal relationships with its stakeholders, including residents, customers, and employees, to improve public perception of its services. This may involve investing in stakeholder engagement strategies such as surveys, focus groups, and town hall meetings. Additionally, the corporation may need to prioritize building trust and credibility with stakeholders, by being transparent and accountable in its operations. In addition, the study's findings suggest that the Imo State Housing Corporation needs to prioritize community engagement and participation in its services. This may involve investing in community outreach and education programs, to raise awareness of the corporation's services and encourage community involvement. Furthermore, the corporation may need to prioritize building partnerships with community organisations and stakeholders, to leverage resources and expertise. The study therefore recommends that:

1. Imo Housing Corporation should institutionalise a modernisation task force.
2. Imo Housing Corporation should transition to Two Way Symmetrical communication
3. Imo Housing Corporation should implement a stakeholder management framework
4. There should be leadership reform and strategic alignment
5. Aggressive collaboration and policy advocacy should be implemented by the government.

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