

APPRAISING ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS OF LAGOS STATE MINISTRY OF PHYSICAL PLANNING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Hassan Biodun SULEIMAN, Ph.D

Department of Journalism/Media Studies, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos.
hassan.suleiman@lasu.edu.ng

&

SANUSI Mukaila Olabamiji,

Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos.
olabamijisanusi@gmail.com

Abstract

The study appraised stakeholders' perception of the organisational communication channels of the Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development. The study comprised three research questions. Being a case study, the study is qualitative in nature and in-depth interview guide instruments served to 14 key stakeholders (who are mostly informants) of the ministry who have a grasp knowledge of the workings of the ministry. The researcher collated data based on the perceptions of the selected informants through a process of deep attentiveness, empathy and suspending preconceptions about the issue under study. The finding of the study revealed that the ministry had been able to effectively deploy face-to-face meetings; social media, and traditional media as communication channels with its stakeholders. Stakeholders also explained that the noted channels of communication have been effective and rank WhatsApp platform top above the ministry's novel Mobile App (Lagos State MPP&UD). The paucity of funds constituted a major hindrance to its effective communication channels. The study established that the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development was able to effectively utilize the communication channels available to it to maintain good relationships with its stakeholders.

Keywords: Communication, Organisation, Planning, Development, Nigeria

Introduction

Communication is an indispensable part of the human experience, and it constitutes the basis for human relationships (Ajilore & Adekoya, 2012). In every aspect of society, communication plays a major part in informing, educating and engaging society. Thus, the government, and its ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), being a structure in the society, has a communication responsibility towards the society and persons within its parastatals. In other words, the government has a responsibility toward the society to inform and engage them in matters of interest to the public and the government itself (Oso, 2006).

The communication of the government can be seen as an important mechanism in building good governance (Livingstone, 2010). Yannoukakou and Araka (2014) assert that openness of public information enhances knowledge about the activities of government agencies and improves transparency and democratisation. The obligation to disclose

information encourages the government, both central and local, to build communication channels to reach out to the public. In present times, the challenges confronting societies, communities and organisations are complex, and there is a need for leadership in communication from the government. Government communications have a critical role to play in harnessing goodwill for productive purposes; in helping to shape the national mood and nation-building (Brian, 2021).

Therefore, the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development is charged with the responsibility of physical development planning and control as well as the formulation of urban development and urban renewal policies in Lagos State. The ministry ensures adequate development planning by preparing physical development plans for the development of Lagos State communities, while it subjects all physical development activities in the state to its approval in line with the Operative Development Plans.

The ministry sets up a communication unit to achieve the desired goals. As a result, the ministry through its communication unit issues press releases, carries out media relations, organises stakeholders' meetings and maintains social media presence (Lagos State MPP&UD google play or apple store App, 2022). The communication objectives of the ministry are: to give up-to-date information about the plans and programmes of the ministry to all stakeholders; to maintain the goodwill of the ministry amongst its stakeholders and; enlist the support of stakeholders for the ministry's activities (Discussion with public affairs officer of the ministry (Kehinde-Akinsanya, 2022).

Statement of the Problem

Lagos as a cosmopolitan State requires consistent and effective communication with its diverse audience to achieve sustainable development. A review of available literature indicated that communication by public institutions to stakeholders is essential to enhance transparency and deepen democracy but little is known about the channels or the effectiveness of channels employed by the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development. The focus of research works in this regards has been the influence of the media in creating awareness for government development projects in Lagos State (Sanni and Ojewale, 2013) and the influence of the media in shaping public perception (Idakwo, 2018) There are also studies focusing on the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in emergency situations and public administration in the state (Oyetinuoye & Ogunsola, 2017; Ogunsakin, 2015) Indeed, governments, particularly Lagos State Governments address their plans, goals and aspirations through sectoral ministries departments and agencies.

The Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development is saddled with the mandate of regulating the physical environment, which can be best achieved by communicating policies, plans and programmes to stakeholders. However, there is seemingly paucity of studies on the communication channels employed by the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development. Therefore, this study attempted to explore the communication methods of the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban

Development that is charged with regulating the building construction (physical or built environment) sector of Lagos State, which is facing untold pressure from population and planning requests. There is seemingly paucity of research material on the communication channels of various ministries, agencies and units of Lagos State Government. This study attempted to provide a research gap on the perception of various key stakeholders on the organizational communication channels of the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development. Again, past administrations in Lagos State have tried to upgrade communication gadgets and tools used in various Lagos State parastatal with a view to provide quality services. It therefore becomes imperative to study the Organisational Communication Channels of Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development

Research Questions

In appraising the communication strategies of the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development, the researcher considered the following research questions:

1. What are the communication channels adopted by the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development in communicating with the publics?
2. What are the stakeholders' perceptions of communication channels adopted by the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development?
3. What are the challenges faced by the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development in the deployment of communication channels to its publics?

Conceptual Review

Stakeholders of the Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development

Harrison & Andrew (2019, pg4) define a stakeholder as a group or individual that has a legitimate interest in the activities and outcome of an organisation and upon which the organisation depends to achieve its own objectives. The scholars therefore identify inter-dependent relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders. Beach, Brown and Keast (2008) identified stakeholders of Government parastatals or agencies to be Government departments, Peak

bodies and lobby groups, Staff, Community and citizens, other levels of government and politicians. This indicates that there is a high level of stakeholder identification with groups who could potentially exert significant power over the agencies. It is also possible to view stakeholders in terms of interests and activities (Mariolina & Matteo, 2008).

From the foregoing, one can deduce that the stakeholders of the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development are the various groups and individuals whose interests are in one way or the other tied to the activities of the ministry and they include staff of the ministry, agencies of government, community of professionals engaged in the building construction or real estate development and interest/lobby groups.

Different professionals such as Architects, Town Planners, Surveyors, Builders and Engineers who are engaged in the building construction sector constitute major internal (skilled staff) and external (in private practice) audience of the ministry whose understanding and compliance with standard regulations is germane to the success of the ministry. They are involved in processing and granting building approvals and monitoring physical developments as staff of government, while as private practitioners they are responsible for various aspects of building construction. Other stakeholders are Agencies under the Ministry and other related Ministries, Departments and Agencies of government (Discussion with T. Lateef Oladeinde, Director, Regional and Master Plan Department of the ministry (2022).

Communication Channel

Communication channel is the type of media used to transfer a message from one person to another. It is the medium through which communication will be delivered to an organisation's audiences. Appropriateness of the channel can affect how efficient the flow of communication is. Communication refers to the process by which information is transmitted and understood between two or more people (McShane & Von Glinow, 2005). It helps the organisation to communicate effectively and achieve its goals. It is an integral part of the organisational process which impacts on efficiency, decision-making

and morale of organisation through its flow within the organisational hierarchy. Thus, effective communication is regarded as the foundation of organisations today (Witherspoon, 1997; Von Krogh, George, Kazuo et al., 2000).

Asemah (2011) explains that communication channels are essentially the vehicles that are used for conveying message from a source to a large destination. He explains that these sources could also be devices for moving messages across distance or time to accomplish mass communication. These channels are as well media of communication. Indeed, Asemah (2011) says that the media or channel of communication are classified into two. The electronic media which comprised the radio, television, cinema, motion pictures or films, books newspapers and magazines. However, the emergence of technology in media led to the introduction of social platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Zoom, Tik-Tok, Telegram, Instagram and others. Whereas communication is used to transfer information to the audience about the organisation's mission and vision, policies, and procedures, tasks and duties, and various activities within the company (Farmer, Slater, & Wright, 1998). Communicating effectively through the right channel is essential for a business to survive; because as simple as it may look, communication can make or mar an organisation.

Looking at the environment in which communication activities are planned, Heron (1942) identified certain elements necessary for effective communication. He outlined goals, attitudes, and criteria for effective communication. Credit is attributed to him for outlining two-way communications between employees and management in the existing organisational communication literature. He suggested that "communication is a line function, a two-way sharing of information. This demands the freedom and opportunity to ask questions, get answers and exchange ideas". Communication, when done well by agencies, can facilitate public trust, confidence, and, importantly, compliance with the behaviours needed from individuals, communities, organisations, and nations (Carter, 2011; Siegrist & Zingg, 2014).

Since a coherence of values is conducive to trust, civic engagement (or community engagement) is necessary to identify shared

values and enable communities and social networks to be involved in the decisions that will affect them (Adler & Goggin, 2005; Miranti & Evans, 2019). Meaningful stakeholder engagement can improve containment measures' effectiveness (Renn, 2008; Renn & Walker, 2008) and encourage greater ownership of decisions and more chance of public cooperation (Head, 2004).

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Stakeholder theory, a management theory which views an organisations as a collection of various individual groups with different interests, and posits that business decisions should, as much as possible, consider the interests of this collective group and advance overall cooperation. Stakeholder theory was first described in 1983 by Dr. F. Edward Freeman, a professor at the University of Virginia, in his landmark book, *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach* (Aaltonen, Jaako & Tuomas, 2008).

The theory views shareholders as just one of many stakeholders of an organisation. According to the theory, the stakeholder network is extensive and it includes investors, operators and others affected by the company. Examples are employees, environmentalists, vendors, governmental agencies among others. Freeman suggests that a company's real success lies in satisfying all its stakeholders, not just those who might profit from its stock.

The Stakeholder theory seeks to harmonise the interest of all as a factor for organisational success. Freeman identified stakeholder groups within an establishment and recommended ways of managing their interests and determining the level of importance of every stakeholder to the company. He argued that increasing value for stakeholders would improve the business in all aspects. According to Freeman a company's stakeholders are "those groups without whose support the organization would cease to exist." (Aaltonen, Jaako & Tuomas, 2008).

These groups include customers, employees, suppliers, political action groups, environmental groups, local communities, the media, financial institutions, governmental groups among others. Thus the corporate environment is viewed as a network of related groups which must be considered and satisfied to ultimately keep the organisation healthy and successful.

Research Design

Being qualitative in nature, the study made use of the qualitative method involving key informant interviews of selected main stakeholders of the Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development. Population for this study were all the stakeholders, both internal and external stakeholders of the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Using the purposive sampling technique, the researcher selected 14 informants among the different stakeholders of the ministry. The key informants, which include professional staff members, members of other related government agencies in Lagos State and building construction professionals, were selected based on their knowledge of the Ministry, derived from their associations and close affinity with the ministry. They have day-to-day interaction with the ministry and engage its services. The familiarity of the researcher with the sector aided him in the selection of participants who cut across the different categories of the ministry's stakeholders .

S/ N	Name	Profession/ Profile	Organisation	Place of Interview	Time of Interview	Date
1.	Engr. OES Ajani	Civil Engineer	Former General Manager, Lagos State Materials Testing Laboratory)	Lagos State Ministry of Environment and Water Resources.	12noon.- 12.40pm	18/2/ 22
2.	Tpl. Bola Aliu	Town Planner/ Civil Servant	Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning &Urban Development(MPP&U D)	HOD Technical Services Department's Office, MPP&UD	12.52- 1.30pm	18/2/ 22
3.	Tpl.Femi Adejumo	Town Planner/ Civil Servant	Secretary, Nigerian Institute of Town Planners(NITP)	MPP&UD	1.50- 2.20pm	18/2/ 22
4.	Tpl. Lekan Odujebe	Town Planner/ Civil Servant	Special Assistant to Hon. Commissioner for Physical Planning & UD	MPP&UD	3.25- 4.00pm	18/2/ 22
5.	Mr.HT. Mamud	Dealer in Building Materi als	Populace	His Residence, Abesan Estate, Lagos	5.02- 5.30pm	20/2/ 22
6.	Arc T.A Lawal	Architect	Private Practice	Phone call	4.00- 4.20pm	21/2/ 22
7.	Bldr. Alani Adegoke	Builder	Member, Nigerian Institute of Builders(NIOB)	Phone call	12.18- 12.30pm	21/2/ 22
8.	Mrs.M.A Akinsanya	Chief Public Affairs Officer	MPP&UD	Public Affairs Office	4.15- 4.35pm	21/2/ 22
9.	Tpl. Ayo Adediran	Town Planner/ former Permanent Secretary, Lagos State	Chairman, Lagos State Physical Planning and Building Control Appeals Committee	MPP&UD	3.40- 4.10pm	21/2/ 22
10.	Bldr. Kunle Awobodu	A renown Builder	Convener, Building Collapse Prevention Guild(BCPG)	Phone call	12.35 – 1.00 pm	23/2/ 22

S/N	Name	Profession/Profile	Organisation	Place of Interview	Time of Interview	Date
11.	Nike Popoola	Journalist	The Punch Newspaper	Phone call	1.20-2.00pm	24/2/22
12.	Mr. Bamidele Onalaja	Property Developer	Chairman, Real Estate Developers Association of Nigeria (REDAN), Lagos State Chapter	Phone call	4.15-4.38pm	24/2/22
13.	Dada Jackson	Journalist	Daily Independent Newspaper	Phone call	6.32- 7pm	24/2/22
14.	Tpl. K.Osinaik e	Town Planning Officer in the Lagos State Public Service	General Manager, Lagos State Physical Planning Permit Authority (LASPPPA)	Phone call	3.30-4.01pm	28/2/22

Selected key stakeholders interviewed for the study

Data Gathering Instrument

The instrument used for data collection for this study was an in-depth interview, using an interview guide. Interviews constitute one of the strategies for gathering data either in quantitative or qualitative research. The researcher collated the data through engaging the informants by a process of deep attentiveness, empathy and suspending preconceptions about the issue under study. The researcher interviewed 14 informants within two weeks and recorded their responses as shown in the table below:

Method of Data Collection

Data collection was done through the administration of a structured interview guide to informants who were key stakeholders of the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development. The informants were subjected to one-on-one interview and on face-to-face

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected from the key informants was analysed using thematic analysis to identify themes or patterns of meaning in the data that are

important for addressing the research and aiding flexibility in interpretation. Findings were drawn from the results gathered from the thematic analysis of the interview which was conducted by the researcher. The analysis was done manually.

Thematic Analysis of the Study

The interviews were recorded and transcribed on a transcript from which the researcher carefully picked the key themes in line with the research questions fielded by informants who showed a handful knowledge of the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development.

Types of Communication Methods Adopted By the Ministry with Its Publics over the Years

All the informants displayed good knowledge of the communication methods of the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development as they identified various communication channels employed to include the stakeholders meeting, print and electronic media, social media and internet mobile App. It is observed that the multichannel approach of the ministry allowed it to take advantage of the richness of these media.

The informants mentioned and appreciated stakeholders' meeting more often than other communication channels employed by the ministry. For example, informants 4, a Town

Planner and Special Assistant to the Commissioner for Physical Planning and Urban Development explained that:

...the stakeholders meeting has been very helpful because it involves both the literate and the illiterate. So, apart from communicating in English, there is also the use of local dialects as medium of communication exchanges and there is room for direct questions and answers during the stakeholders meeting, thereby making it very effective.

Accordingly, the informant explained that the stakeholders' meeting brought all relevant stakeholders of the ministry from all angles together to address matters of concern to both the stakeholders and the ministry. His view was corroborated by other informants such as informant 1, an Engineer and former General Manager of the Lagos State Materials Testing Laboratory thus:

The ministry has adopted various strategies; they meet directly with the stakeholders... In meeting with the stakeholders, they share information about plans, actions, constraints, areas that they can improve, how the two agencies (sic) can collaborate to make sure that there's positivity and success in the building industry in Lagos, especially in the area of construction, monitoring, and management of sites during construction as well as compliance with the building laws of the state.

And informant 11, a journalist: Out of the severally available ones, I notice about three and the three communication strategies I want to consider are verbal communication...talking about the verbal communication I'm talking about physical communication with stakeholders in form of stakeholder's meetings.

Furthermore, another informant (informant 2, an internal stakeholder) viewed the stakeholders' meetings as follows:

"...it is a medium where everybody can express their opinion in a way that the guidelines, the information from the Ministry is being passed across and we are able to react, everybody can relate our experience and understanding, and where we need to have better information."

Reasons adduced by informants for their preference of the stakeholders meeting as a communication strategy of the ministry included that of immediacy in communication and feedbacks. The channel was reckoned by participants as giving room for more open communication between the ministry and the stakeholders. This was succinctly put as follows:

The stakeholders meeting is very effective because the meeting is where we can look eyeball-to-eyeball to discuss some of the obstacles or challenges, the existing law and how best government can implement it. - Informant 11

From my point of view, the communication channel that has been most effective is the verbal communication and it is the most reliable communication strategy because it is one-on-one, they have contact and they have a discussion."- Informant 7, a Builder (Member, NIOB).

It can be deduced from the above statements that the stakeholders enjoy the fact that having the stakeholders' meeting helps them to have a broader discussion about different issues and activities of the ministry. Also, the informants believe that the meetings help them address issues better than every other channel and as well, give them the room to express themselves better in words.

Physical and face-to-face methods gained prominence among the stakeholders of the ministry because of the richness of the medium and immediacy that it offers in terms of exchange of information and feedback. Stakeholders' meetings organised by the ministry allowed it to thoroughly iron out issues with the audience, while both parties could measure or assess the level of communication through verbal and non-verbal indicators like tone, voice pitches, facial expression and eye contacts among others. This explains the preference for this direct communication method. According to Nkwocha (2016), employees as internal stakeholders are very important and should be communicated with effectively, prompt and relevant information can be passed to employees through regular sectional or departmental meetings, staff town hall meetings whenever necessary with the CEO, circulars through staff emails, website, intranet or notice boards; suggestion boxes and portals,

dedicated telephone lines for staff enquiries. This reinforces the fact that an organisation's most important relationship is with employees and key stakeholders, in line with Smith's (1992) position that organisations miss out on a sizeable share of their stakeholders when they lower their priority on effective two-way communication as the foundation of management and overall job performance.

Informants also identified print and electronic media as effective methods used by the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development to communicate with its stakeholders. Nine of the 14 informants, representing 64.3% mentioned the use of the mass media as a communication method by the Ministry. In this case, the following responses are instructive:

Informant 2, an internal stakeholder:

"...the print and electronic media have been one of the sources of our communications to the public, they are as well very effective in reaching large numbers of stakeholders and we are getting very good response from them as regards that."

Informant 3, a Town Planner (Secretary NITP):

"... We have the print media, where we issue requests for expression of interest and also for the preparation of our master plans or our development plans and it has been very effective for the wide reach of information."

Talking about how the channel is being utilised, the informants mentioned that the ministry utilised the media through press releases and press conferences. According to informant 11 who is a journalist:

"Furthermore, I know that from time to time the ministry involves the press and engages the press. When it is doing a lot of things like having activities, coming up with initiatives, carrying out some duties like going for inspection amongst others."

Another internal stakeholder, informant 4 said:

"The ministry has been carrying along the press in everything the ministry does and makes the press aware while the press also gives information on them."

This explains how important the media is for the ministry as a medium to reach the stakeholders. Moreover, it is evident that the media has been useful to the ministry as a channel for issuing

requests for expression of interests and passing information about specific projects to specific audiences.

The above statement shows that the use of the media, print media especially, is seen as being much more effective when it comes to reaching a wide audience for informing them about certain activities of the ministry.

Another platform considered to be a strong and effective communication channel of the ministry is the social media. According to the informants, the use of social media handles like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter has been one of the methods employed by the ministry to ensure effective and wide reach of the ministry to the public and stakeholders. One of the informants, a builder and promoter of the BCPG has this to say about social media as a communication channel of the ministry:

...when social media came, WhatsApp communication became prominent and that is where the commissioner, on the platform of Building Collapse Prevention Guild (BCPG), posts reports of the ministry activities. It was wonderful that professionals were having a direct link with the commissioner."

According to this informant, using WhatsApp to communicate with the stakeholders is very advantageous to the ministry and the stakeholders as it allows stakeholders to have access to the Commissioner of the ministry.

In furtherance, the informants agree that social media is one of the most effective ways of reaching stakeholders in the aspect of informing them. However, they single out the WhatsApp groups of the ministry as being the most effective social media platform for receiving information about the ministry. For instance, informant 7 said: "The WhatsApp group has been very effective. I know the ministry is also on Facebook, Instagram and I think Twitter too but the WhatsApp group has been very effective"

Informant 12, who is the Chairman of the Lagos State Chapter of the Real Estate Development Association of Nigeria (REDAN), said while talking about the effectiveness of WhatsApp that:

...the movement to Oko Baba is being broadcast through the WhatsApp groups. So, the progress report was coming through the WhatsApp groups and there is a question some of our members have

been asking. So, that is one function that the platform has been carrying out. So, that kind of progress report will inform them of the people they are to meet.

This implies that reports of projects and works of the ministry are always sent to the ministry's WhatsApp groups where the stakeholders who are believed to be from the external agencies are. Also, this response implies that the stakeholders are well and duly informed of the ministry's works. Thereby, giving room for accountability.

However, little mention is made by informants of the ministry's mobile App (MPP&UD APP) as only one informant, representing 7.1% mentioned the Ministry's mobile App ahead of other communication channels of the ministry known to him.

Stakeholders' Perception of Communication Methods Adopted by the Lagos State Ministry of physical Planning and Urban Development

A common agreement among all informants is that the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development has good communication with her stakeholders. This analysis is drawn from the informants' replies to the question asked about what they think of the ministry's communication with the public. In his view, one of informant 3, a Town Planner said:

“As far as I'm concerned, the communication with the ministry, for now, it's okay.”

In the vein, informant 6, an Architect similarly mentioned that:

“From my own experience and engagement with the ministry, there is no way there will not be communication because when a document is submitted for approval, there has to be feedback.”

Thus, the effectiveness of the communication channels of the ministry was perceived by her stakeholders as being linked with response of the ministry to queries of stakeholders on one hand and the feedback from stakeholders to the ministry on the other. This view is buttressed by other informants as follows:

According to Informant 1:

“The communication has been very good, because we are seeing a good response from the public and in communicating with the public we have various ways of doing that. We have the stakeholders

meeting that we normally have occasionally, then through the print and electronic media, these have been the source of our communications to the public, and then we are getting very good response from them as regards that.”

According to informant 11:

“One thing I've discovered is that the ministry has a tradition in the area of communication by having a unit for public relations. So, officers in the unit usually broadcast the activities of the ministry.”

Another reason that can be adduced for the existence of effective communication between the ministry and its stakeholders is the segmentation of its messages and audiences. For instance, one of the informants, the Public Affairs Officer of the ministry captured this fact when she explained thus:

“I cannot say that a particular channel is effective, because we have a couple of channels that are effective for different segments of stakeholders. However, I shall agree that the stakeholders' meeting is very much effective when it comes to a physical discussion between the ministry and the stakeholders.”

The ministry employs and utilizes different communication channels for engaging its different stakeholders. This is in line with audience segmentation through which the ministry was able to deliver specific messages to the different groups of stakeholders. “Division of audiences into different segments and study of variations in their characteristics can lead to insights into attitudes, knowledge, and behavior of social sub-groups and even into social change” (Sondra & Rubenstein, 1995, pp.352-357).

Challenges Facing the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development in Communicating With Its Stakeholders

Different challenges were mentioned by the informants. While some challenges were mentioned prominently by the informants, some were only observed by one or two participants in the study.

One of the major challenges of the ministry which the informants agree is that the ministry lacks proper communication funding which does not help the communications and public relations system of the ministry. In other

words, stakeholders believed that due to lack of funding, the ministry was unable to adequately budget for the communication and Public Relations segment of the ministry which could hamper the frequency of information from the ministry to its publics. Informant 2 said that:

“We don't have enough funds to keep our advocacy going on and even our stakeholders' engagement meetings, we need to engage our stakeholders from time to time but because of lack of funds we couldn't just do that...”

Another challenge agreed upon by some of the stakeholders is that of inadequate feedback as a challenge in the ministry's communication strategy as they believed that not all stakeholders relayed their feedback to the ministry after they had received messages regarding certain issues.

Informant 11 explained that: The dissemination of information, generally, has a little challenge, because of the way and manner it's being conducted... feedback.

This response shows that the ministry does well to pass information to the stakeholders but how all the stakeholders use the information and whether all of them get and understand the message is to some extent unknown to the ministry due to a lack of adequate feedback from the stakeholders who received the information.

Informants also identified language barrier as a challenge during stakeholders' meetings where English was used as the medium of communication, because the stakeholders present are in the categories of learned and unlearned. Informant 3 explained thus about language as a barrier:

“The challenges are not too numerous, but when they engage the stakeholders, they should also know that some of these interest groups that comprise the stakeholders may not be able to communicate in English. So, I think they should include local language in order to further get the communication understood by those that are not so learned.”

First of all, the above statement shows that the stakeholders of the ministry are not limited to those who are educated alone. Rather, it comprises both the educated and uneducated. Secondly, the statement shows that due to the presence of learned and uneducated among the stakeholders, communicating in the English

Language alone could be noise in communication with the uneducated people.

Findings

1. The study revealed that the ministry had been able to effectively deploy face-to-face meeting; social media, and the traditional media as communication channel with its stakeholders.

2. Stakeholders also explained that the noted channels of communication have been effective and rank WhatsApp platform above the ministry's novel Mobile App (Lagos State MPP&UD).

3. Paucity of fund constituted the major hindrance in its effective communication channels.

Conclusion

This study established that the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development was able to maintain a good relationship with its stakeholders through effective utilisation of communication channels available to it. The stakeholders of the ministry opined that the communication methods of the ministry are in order. These stakeholders include government officers, private professionals, different interest groups and members of the public who interact with the ministry and require information and services of it. The study indicated that despite the success it recorded in the use of communication channels, the ministry experienced low funding and non-usage of indigenous language in communication and its daily operation.

Recommendations

Communication chain is not complete without feedback. The ministry, therefore, requires a lot to develop its feedback mechanism to enhance the effectiveness of its utilisation of communication strategies. Also, the ministry should ensure that adequate fund is allocated to the Public Affairs Unit to ensure seamless communication activities of the ministry. This will allow the ministry to frequently engage the public through frequent use of newspapers, television and radio and allow the segment of the stakeholders who are not familiar with social media to be on the same level with the educated in the area of receiving adequate and useful information.

The ministry needs to understand that her stakeholders, especially those who understand

English and those who do not. They should ensure that the language used during their meetings is not restricted to English alone. Since the uneducated are also part of the stakeholders of the ministry, then it is incumbent upon the ministry to ensure that information is passed in a language that they can understand.

There is also the need to enhance the segmentation of audience and messages, communication materials from the ministry should be produced in the languages that relate to the various stakeholders and these should be made available for use during stakeholders' meetings and through other mediums. It is by so doing that the ministry can best create reciprocity of comprehension between her and her publics.

The ministry should ensure that the ministry's mobile App is given more awareness to the public. Undoubtedly, the mobile App will serve to benefit the ministry and the general public. However, its low recognition among the stakeholders only reduces the App's relevance but if the ministry can ensure that nearly everyone knows about the mobile App, communication would be easier.

References

- Aaltonen, K., Jaako, K. & Tuomas, O. (2008). Stakeholder's salience in global projects. *International Journal of project Management* .26: 509-516
- Adler, R.P., & Goggins (2005) What do we mean by “civic engagement”? *J Transform Educ.*3 (3): 236 – 253 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1541344605276792>
- Asemah, E.S .(2011). *Mass Media in the Contemporary Society* Jos: University Press Limited, 2011.
- Beaches, Brown, K. & Keast, R, (2008). Together Now: Stakeholders in Government Agencies. Third sector panel track. International Research Society for Public Management, 2008 conference, Brisbane, Australia.
- Brian O'Keefe (2021). What comes next: How leaders can cope with America's 'new normal', *Fortune*, February 4, 2021
- Carter, R.C. (2011). Drawing the Threads Together- achieving sustainable services and behavior changes. Closing plenary keynote, WASH Conference 16th- 20th May, Brisbane. Farmer , B, Slater, J, & Wright, K, (1998). The role of communication in achieving shared vision under new organizational leadership, *Journal of Public Relations Research* 10:4, 219 – 235, DOI: 10.1207/s1532.754xjpr100401
- Harrison, J.S & Andrew, C.W,(2019). “Stakeholders Management: A Managerial Perspectives” in *Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility: Psychological and Organisational Perspectives*. In (ED's) McWilliams, A., Deborah E, Rupp, Donald S.Seige, Gunter, K. Stahl and David A. Waldman, 433-451. Oxford University Press.
- Head, B.W. (2004). Marketing in the Public Sector'. Address to Australian Marketing Institute Conference, Gold Coast. Views expressed in this chapter are personal and do not reflect on the author's association with public officials in many diverse agencies and jurisdictions.
- Heron, A. R. (1942). *Sharing information with employees*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Idakwo, E.P. (2018). Influence of radio in shaping Public perception of Lagos State's Mega City project: A study of residents of Ikeja and Surulere Local governments. *Journal of African studies* 10(1), 87 - 104, 2018.
- Kehinde-Akinsanya, M. A. (2022). Effects of Communication Strategies on Organizational, Chief Public Affairs Officer, Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development. Lagos.
- Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development (2022). LSMPP&UD Mobile App. website: physicalplanning@lagosstate.gov.ng
- Livingston, S. (2010). The Contribution of Government Communication Capacity to Achieving Good Governance Outcomes Commun. Gov. Account. Progr. (World Bank) 1–12.
- Mariolina, L & Matteo, M. (2008). Stakeholder management and human resources: development and implementation of a performance measurement system Corp. Govern: *The international Journal of Business in Society* 8(2): 191-213. DOI:10.1108, 2008. /14720700810810863814.

- McShane, S. & Von Glinow, M.A. (2005). *Organisational Behavior: Emerging Realities for Workplace Revolution* (ed.). pp 1-688, McGraw-Hill, Burr Ridge, Illinois, 2005.
- Miranti, R., & Evans, M. (2019). Trust, sense of community, and civic engagement: lessons from Australia. *J Community Psychol* 47(2): 254–271. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.22119>
- Ogunsakin, F. (2015). Information and communication technology (ict) and local government administration in Lagos State (2007 - 2015). Published by projectstore July 5, 2019.
- Oso, L. (2006). A Political Economy of Indigenous Language. In I. Salawu, a (Ed.), *Indigenous Language Media in Africa. Lagos: Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC)*.
- Oyetinuoye, R. & Ogunsola K. (2017). "Information and Communication Technology Development, policies and use in Emergency Management among Lagos State Government Agencies" [Doi:10.36108/IIJSA/7102/51\(0130\)](https://doi.org/10.36108/IIJSA/7102/51(0130))
- Renn, O. (2008). *Risk Governance: coping with uncertainty in a complex world*. London. Earthscan.
- Ren, O., & Walker, K.D. (eds.) (2008). *Global risk governance: concept and practice using the large framework*. Springer, Netherlands.
- Sanni, O.O. and Ojewale, C.O (2013). "Media influence in awareness creation for government development projects in Lagos State, Nigeria", *International Journal of Development and Sustainability*. (2)2, pp.1280 - 1299.
- Siegerist, M., & Zingg, A. (2014). "The Role of Public Trust during pandemics: implications for crisis communication ". *European psychologist* 19 (1): 23 – 32. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1016-9040/avv0169> .
- Smith, C.A. (1992). *Political communication*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Sondra, M & Rubenstein, L.Z. (1995). "Segmentation Research and Theories of Media Audiences" in *Surveying Public Opinion: Introduction to Public Opinion Research* (pp.352-357). Wadsworth Publishing
- Von Krogh, George, Kazuo, Ichijo & Ikujiro Vonaca . (2000). *Enabling Knowledge Creation: How to unlock the mystery of tacit knowledge and release the power of innovation*. Oxford University Press.
- Witherspoon, P. (1997). *Communicating leadership: an organizational perspective*. University of Texas at Austin. Pearson.
- Yannoukakou, A. & Araka, I. (2014). Access to government information: right to information and open government data synergy *procedia Soc. Behav. Sci.* 147 332–40.
- Nkwocha, J. (2016). *Reputation Management & Branding with Nigerian Case Studies: Lagos Zoom lens*.