



Research Article

Effectiveness of Government Public Relations Strategies in Fostering Citizen Engagement in Anambra State: A Study of “Solution Agenda”

Gideon Uchechukwu Nwafor, PhD and Sandra Ekene Aghaebe, PhD

About Article

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About the Authors

Gideon Uchechukwu Nwafor, PhD
Department of Mass Communication
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu
University, Igbariam
Email: gu.nwafor@coou.edu.ng

&

Sandra Ekene Aghaebe, PhD
Department of Mass Communication
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu
University, Igbariam
Email: es.aghaebe@coou.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness of government public relations (PR) strategies in fostering citizen engagement under the *Solution Agenda* of the Anambra State Government. In modern governance, PR is more than a tool for publicity, it is instrumental in promoting transparency, accountability, and participatory communication. The study's main objective was to assess how strategic communication efforts under the *Solution Agenda* promote meaningful citizen engagement, particularly through feedback mechanisms and digital platforms. The research is grounded in **Dialogic Communication Theory**, which emphasizes two-way, participatory communication between institutions and their publics. The theory's relevance lies in its focus on openness, mutual respect, and dialogue as cornerstones of effective governance communication. A **descriptive survey design** using a **census approach** was employed. The population comprised all 187 staff of the Anambra State Ministry of Information, including information officers on secondment to other ministries. The **entire population** was studied using **purposive sampling** to target only staff involved in public communication, and data were collected through structured questionnaires. Findings revealed that the most commonly used communication strategies included multimedia publicity campaigns and interactive social media engagement. However, less emphasis was placed on grassroots engagement and structured feedback mechanisms. While platforms like SolutionLens and social media enable real-time interaction, their effectiveness is often limited by digital divides and inadequate responsiveness. Citizen perception of government communication was moderate, with majority acknowledging clarity but a lower percentage affirming accessibility and participatory value. The study recommends strengthening participatory communication through localized town halls, digital engagement platforms, and the use of local languages. It also advocates for institutionalizing responsive feedback systems, continuous training for government PR officers, and establishing a centralized monitoring and evaluation framework. Ultimately, the research underscores the need to shift from unidirectional messaging to dialogic engagement in order to build trust and enhance democratic governance.



Introduction

In modern democratic societies, effective governance transcends the boundaries of policy formulation and execution; it increasingly demands meaningful interaction between the state and its citizens. One of the key instruments facilitating this interaction is public relations (PR), which, when properly deployed, can catalyze citizen engagement, trust-building, and participatory development. As governance models shift toward inclusivity, transparency, and accountability, the integration of strategic public relations practices into government operations has become imperative (Olise, 2023; Ojebuyi & Ogwezzy-Ndisika, 2022). In Nigeria, where governance challenges are often compounded by historical distrust, opaque communication, and citizen apathy, public sector PR emerges not only as a vehicle for disseminating government policies but also as a strategic tool for reactivating civic consciousness and engagement.

Citizen engagement, in its most functional sense, refers to the processes through which individuals participate meaningfully in decision-making, public discourse, and policy implementation at various levels of governance. This goes beyond occasional voting to include sustained interactions such as town hall meetings, online feedback systems, community consultations, and participatory budgeting (Akomolafe, 2022). The strength of democratic governance lies in how well citizens are mobilised, informed, and involved in shaping the systems that govern their lives. In Nigeria's evolving political environment, however, citizen engagement remains low due to a combination of poor communication channels, digital exclusion, politicisation of feedback platforms, and widespread scepticism toward political leaders (Chinedu-Okeke & Onyemaobi, 2023). Thus, a critical inquiry into how government PR strategies can bridge this trust and participation gap becomes timely and relevant. The relationship between government public relations (PR) and citizen engagement is undergoing a significant transformation in the digital age, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria, where democratic consolidation and participatory governance remain essential goals. As governments seek to improve transparency, accountability, and inclusivity, strategic communication and digital innovation have become vital tools (Alharbi, Kang, & Hawryszkiewicz, 2016;

Mukherjee, 2019). In Anambra State, Nigeria, Governor Chukwuma Charles Soludo's administration has anchored its governance blueprint on what is known as the "Solution Agenda", a multi-sectoral development strategy aiming to create a prosperous, livable, and smart megacity through responsive governance and citizen-oriented policies (Anambra State Government, 2024a; Nwafor, Omoevah, & Umuze, 2022). The Solution Agenda is built on three foundational documents: *Anambra Vision 2070*, *The Soludo Solution: A People's Manifesto for a Greater Anambra*, and the Transition Committee Report. These documents were harmonised to form a unified agenda, capturing the vision of "one people, one agenda, one future" (Soludo Solution, 2022; Aburime & Nwafor, 2025). The administration identifies five key pillars under this agenda: security, economic transformation and infrastructure, human capital development, governance and rule of law, and environmental sustainability (Anambra State Government, 2024a). These pillars reflect a systems-based governance approach, combining development planning with public relations strategies that enable participatory feedback, policy awareness, and citizen engagement.

The economic and infrastructure pillar of the Solution Agenda has witnessed major strides, including partnerships with global financial institutions such as the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) and the African Development Bank (AfDB), the initiation of new cities (e.g., Awka 2.0 and Onitsha 2.0), and the development of a railway master plan (Anambra State Government, 2025b). These developments are communicated to the public through active PR campaigns, government-organised investment summits, and continuous media engagement. Scholars argue that these communicative efforts foster policy ownership and social legitimacy (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Alenezi, 2022; Nwafor & Muoboghare, 2022), thereby positioning PR as a fundamental tool of modern governance. Human capital development under the Solution Agenda includes free education up to Senior Secondary School Year 3, the recruitment of over 5,000 teachers, the upgrading of 420 primary healthcare centres, and the rollout of smart schools and STEM laboratories (Anambra State Government, 2025b; Vanguard, 2024). Additionally, the "One Youth, Two Skills" programme and the launch of the Solution Innovation

District (SID) have created pathways for youth development through vocational training and business grants. These initiatives have been accompanied by strategic storytelling and community engagement through traditional media, online platforms, and town hall meetings, increasing awareness and uptake among beneficiaries (Nwosu, 2025).

Equally significant is the administration's emphasis on good governance, rule of law, and environmental management. Soludo declared a state of emergency on environmental degradation and waste management in 2022, followed by the implementation of policies for flood control and climate resilience (Anambra State Government, 2024a). The use of digital platforms such as *SolutionLens* and the ICT Agency's "Everything Technology" framework has facilitated two-way communication between the government and citizens, enabling transparency in project tracking, grievance redress, and community feedback (Global Upfront, 2025; Wikipedia, 2025). These efforts have earned the state national accolades, including awards at the 11th National Council on Communication, Innovation, and Digital Economy (Agbata, 2024). Public relations in the context of this governance model is not confined to media publicity or damage control; rather, it functions as a strategic enabler for inclusive development. This aligns with Grunig and Hunt's (1984) two-way symmetrical communication model, which advocates for dialogue, negotiation, and mutual understanding between organisations and their publics. By adapting this model, the Soludo administration appears to be creating communication pathways where the government listens as much as it speaks, a foundational requirement for participatory governance (Aburime & Nwafor, 2025). However, the effectiveness of these PR strategies in fostering meaningful citizen engagement, particularly in a socio-politically fragmented environment like Anambra State, remains underexplored in empirical literature.

Historically, public relations within the governmental sphere in Nigeria has been predominantly reactive, crisis-oriented, and often perceived as propaganda rather than a strategic communication mechanism aimed at facilitating democratic participation (Edeani, 1994; Okigbo & Nwafor, 2019). However, as governance becomes increasingly complex in the 21st

century—fueled by heightened citizen awareness, global interconnectedness, and the rise of digital technologies—governments are under growing pressure to adopt transparent, participatory, and responsive communication models. The role of government PR is thus shifting from one-way information dissemination to two-way symmetrical communication that fosters dialogue, trust, and collaborative problem-solving (Grunig & Grunig, 1992). Within this evolving paradigm, Anambra State under the Solution Agenda provides a unique case for exploring how a subnational government in Nigeria attempts to reimagine public relations as a tool for civic inclusion and accountability.

Moreover, the digital and social media landscape plays a crucial role in shaping the contours of both government PR and citizen engagement. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter (X), and WhatsApp have become powerful tools for governments to reach wider audiences, gather feedback, and counter misinformation (Adesina & Adeyeye, 2022). The Anambra State Government's consistent presence across digital channels under the Solution Agenda reflects an attempt to modernize communication and include the youth and diaspora populations in policy dialogues. However, digital participation also comes with challenges such as cyber propaganda, digital divides, and misinterpretation of government intentions—all of which may hinder rather than help civic participation (Nwafor & Okoro, 2023). As such, the interplay between traditional government PR channels and newer digital strategies needs critical scrutiny in this context. The relevance of this study is further heightened by the governance realities in Nigeria, where there is growing public demand for transparency, participatory budgeting, service delivery, and accountability at the subnational level. In many Nigerian states, government PR remains heavily politicized, one-directional, and elite-focused, often sidelining the voices of ordinary citizens (Ayo-Aderele, 2021). This systemic flaw not only weakens public trust but also limits citizen agency in democratic processes. Anambra State, with its relatively vibrant civil society, educated populace, and politically aware diaspora, presents a rich context to evaluate whether a strategic PR-driven governance agenda like Soludo's Solution Agenda can transcend traditional communication barriers and foster active citizen engagement. This study, therefore, aims to investigate how the Solution Agenda leverages public

relations strategies and digital platforms to foster citizen engagement. Specifically, it examines the communication approaches used by the Soludo administration, evaluates the effectiveness of initiatives such as *SolutionLens* in promoting transparency, and explores how PR strategies are bridging the digital divide in both urban and rural communities.

Statement of the Problem

Effective governance in democratic societies relies heavily on clear, transparent, and meaningful communication between government authorities and citizens. However, in many contexts, communication between the government and the public is often limited, one-sided, and lacks mechanisms for genuine citizen participation. This results in mistrust, citizen apathy, and weakened democratic processes. In Anambra State, the government under Governor Chukwuma Charles Soludo introduced the 'Solution Agenda'—a comprehensive development plan that emphasizes inclusive governance, transparency, and active citizen involvement through strategic communication initiatives. Despite this progressive framework, there remains uncertainty about how effective these government communication efforts have been in genuinely engaging citizens and fostering a participatory governance culture. Furthermore, while digital platforms have been embraced to enhance public interaction and feedback, challenges such as unequal access to technology, misinformation, and public skepticism may limit their impact. These factors raise questions about the overall success of citizen engagement initiatives within the Solution Agenda. This study aims to investigate the extent to which the Anambra State Government's public relations strategies under the Solution Agenda influence citizen engagement. It also seeks to identify the challenges affecting communication effectiveness and to understand citizens' perceptions of these government efforts. Addressing these issues is crucial to improving government-citizen relationships, ensuring better policy implementation, and strengthening democratic governance in the state.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the communication strategies used by the Anambra State Government to disseminate information about its development programs.
2. To identify the channels used by the

government for information dissemination.

3. To evaluate the feedback mechanisms established by the government to receive citizen responses.
4. To assess citizen reception of government communication regarding development programs.
5. To recommend ways to improve participatory communication between the government and citizens.

Research Questions

1. What communication strategies does the Anambra State Government use to disseminate information about its development programs?
2. What channels does the Anambra State Government use for information dissemination?
3. What feedback mechanisms has the Anambra State Government established to receive citizen responses?
4. How do citizens perceive and receive government communication regarding development programs?
5. What measures can be taken to improve participatory communication between the government and citizens?

Theoretical Framework

Effective communication between governments and citizens is essential for democratic governance, policy implementation, and public trust. One of the most influential frameworks in public relations that emphasizes two-way, participatory communication is the Dialogic Communication Theory. Rooted in the work of Kent and Taylor (1998), this theory challenges the traditional one-way dissemination model and argues for interactive dialogue as the foundation for building mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics. Dialogic Communication Theory emerged from the need to rethink how organizations communicate with their stakeholders. Kent and Taylor (1998) proposed that public relations should not be a monologue of top-down messages but rather a dialogue—an ongoing, ethical exchange where both parties actively participate, listen, and respond. The theory outlines five key principles of dialogic communication: mutuality, propinquity, empathy, risk, and commitment. These principles emphasize the need for

openness, responsiveness, and genuine engagement (Kent & Taylor, 1998).

- **Mutuality** reflects the recognition of shared interests between the government and citizens.
- **Proximity** involves physical or psychological closeness that fosters dialogue.
- **Empathy** requires understanding and addressing citizens' concerns sincerely.
- **Risk** acknowledges the vulnerability in open communication.
- **Commitment** is about a long-term dedication to dialogue rather than superficial exchanges.

Government public relations (PR) has traditionally been criticized for its reliance on one-way communication that emphasizes propaganda and control rather than engagement (Ayo-Aderele, 2021). However, the increasing demand for transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in governance has made dialogic approaches critical. Governments adopting dialogic communication frameworks strive to establish open channels that allow for citizen feedback, collaborative problem-solving, and shared ownership of policy initiatives (Olise, 2023). The dialogic approach aligns closely with the contemporary democratic ideals of participatory governance, where citizens are not mere recipients of information but active contributors to decision-making (Chinedu-Okeke & Onyemaobi, 2023). For example, digital platforms such as social media are increasingly used by governments to foster dialogic exchanges, enabling real-time feedback and interactive conversations (Nwafor & Okoro, 2023).

Citizen engagement hinges on effective dialogue that goes beyond information dissemination to include listening, responding, and acting on public concerns. Dialogic communication facilitates this by promoting transparency and trust, which are vital for legitimacy in governance (Ojebuyi & Ogwezzy-Ndisika, 2022). Studies show that governments employing dialogic principles experience higher levels of citizen trust, satisfaction, and participation (Adesina & Adeyeye, 2022). In the context of development programs like Anambra State's 'Solution Agenda,' dialogic communication can help bridge the gap between government intentions and citizen expectations. By encouraging open dialogue, the government can better understand citizens' needs, clarify misconceptions, and co-create solutions. This approach also enables feedback mechanisms that are

meaningful rather than symbolic, fostering a sense of ownership and collective responsibility among citizens.

The rise of digital communication platforms has significantly reshaped the way governments engage with their citizens. Social media, government websites, and mobile applications serve as critical tools in operationalising dialogic communication by providing interactive spaces where information is not only disseminated but also debated, shared, and co-created (Mbakwe & Udeh, 2024). These platforms allow for immediacy and accessibility, reducing barriers to citizen participation. For Anambra State's 'Solution Agenda,' leveraging these digital tools could enhance transparency and inclusiveness. Yet, the effectiveness of these tools depends on how well they embody dialogic principles, specifically, whether they promote meaningful exchanges rather than mere broadcasting (Ifeanyi & Chukwuemeka, 2024). Governments that fail to encourage genuine dialogue risk alienating citizens and exacerbating distrust.

Dialogic Communication Theory posits that two-way communication nurtures mutually beneficial relationships, fostering long-term cooperation between governments and citizens. This dynamic is particularly important in development programs, where government policies directly affect the public's welfare and livelihoods. When citizens perceive that their voices matter and that government actions reflect their input, the legitimacy and sustainability of development initiatives improve (Eze & Nnamani, 2023). In the context of the Solution Agenda, dialogic engagement is crucial for aligning government objectives with citizens' needs, thereby increasing program ownership and reducing resistance to policy implementation. This relationship-building aspect underscores the potential for dialogic communication to transform traditional power dynamics in governance. For this study, Dialogic Communication Theory provides a critical framework to explore the nuances of government-citizen communication under the Solution Agenda. It guides inquiry into not just the tools and channels used but also the quality and authenticity of engagement. This includes assessing whether communication is truly participatory or merely symbolic, whether feedback mechanisms are effective, and how citizens perceive their role in governance. Furthermore, the theory prompts investigation into barriers to dialogic communication

and strategies for overcoming them, especially in contexts marked by socio-economic and technological disparities. The findings from such research can inform policy recommendations that enhance the government's public relations practices, strengthen democratic participation, and ultimately improve development outcomes.

Literature Review

Government PR and Its Role in Development Communication

Effective government public relations (PR) and citizen engagement are critical pillars for the success of development initiatives and democratic governance. Government PR involves strategic communication efforts aimed at informing citizens about policies, programs, and development plans, while fostering trust and transparency (Olise, 2023). Citizen engagement refers to the active participation of individuals and communities in governance processes, ensuring that their voices influence policy decisions and implementation (Adesina & Adeyeye, 2022). These concepts are interdependent; the effectiveness of government PR often determines the extent and quality of citizen engagement, particularly in contexts like Anambra State's 'Solution Agenda' under Governor Chukwuma Charles Soludo's administration.

Government PR plays a crucial role in development communication by bridging the information gap between policymakers and the public (Ojebuyi & Ogwezzy-Ndisika, 2022). It ensures that citizens are aware of government plans and can understand how these programs affect their daily lives. In Nigeria, government communication faces challenges such as mistrust, misinformation, and infrastructural constraints that limit message penetration (Ayo-Aderele, 2021). However, well-coordinated communication strategies have been shown to improve public awareness and foster support for government initiatives (Olise, 2023). The 'Solution Agenda,' which prioritizes infrastructure, education, health, and economic empowerment, requires robust communication efforts to engage citizens effectively and sustain their support (Nwafor & Okoro, 2023). Citizen engagement forms the backbone of participatory governance by enabling individuals to influence policies that affect their welfare (Ojebuyi & Ogwezzy-Ndisika, 2022). It enhances transparency

and accountability, empowering citizens to hold governments responsible for their actions (Chinedu-Okeke & Onyemaobi, 2023). Despite its importance, citizen participation in Nigeria is hindered by socio-political barriers, limited access to information, and low levels of trust in government institutions (Okonkwo, 2023). Additionally, infrastructural challenges and digital divides limit access to communication platforms, particularly in rural areas (Mbakwe & Udeh, 2024). Nevertheless, digital media presents emerging opportunities for expanding engagement, especially among youth and urban populations, when effectively harnessed (Ifeanyi & Chukwuemeka, 2024).

A significant aspect of government public relations is the role of strategic communication in shaping public perception and fostering a participatory democratic culture. Strategic communication involves deliberate efforts by government agencies to craft and disseminate messages that not only inform but also persuade and mobilize citizens towards developmental goals (Chinedu-Okeke & Onyemaobi, 2023). For the Anambra State government under Governor Soludo, the 'Solution Agenda' is more than just a policy framework—it is a strategic narrative aimed at restoring public confidence and driving socio-economic transformation. However, effective strategic communication requires consistent messaging, transparency, and adaptability to audience feedback (Ojebuyi & Ogwezzy-Ndisika, 2022). The channels through which government messages are delivered significantly impact citizen engagement levels. Traditional media such as radio and television remain dominant in Nigeria, primarily due to their wide reach and accessibility, especially in rural communities where internet penetration is still limited (Ayo-Aderele, 2021; Nwafor & Nnaemeka, 2023). However, the digital revolution has expanded the government's communication toolkit to include social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, which have become popular avenues for engaging younger and more urban populations (Ifeanyi & Chukwuemeka, 2024). These platforms enable two-way communication, allowing citizens not only to receive information but also to interact directly with government officials and institutions, enhancing transparency and accountability (Nwafor & Okoro, 2023; Nwafor, Guanah, & Dalung, 2024).

Feedback mechanisms are integral to dialogic communication, enabling governments to listen and respond to citizens' views (Kent & Taylor, 1998). Methods such as public consultations, social media interactions, and surveys create avenues for citizens to influence decision-making and hold officials accountable (Ojebuyi & Ogwezzy-Ndisika, 2022). Yet, these mechanisms often face issues of tokenism and limited government responsiveness, which can discourage citizen participation over time (Okwuosa & Maduka, 2024). In democratic settings, feedback from citizens provides valuable insights into public needs, perceptions, and satisfaction levels, enabling governments to tailor policies more effectively (Okwuosa & Maduka, 2024). In Anambra State, feedback is reportedly collected through community meetings, public hearings, suggestion boxes, and increasingly through digital means such as social media comments and online surveys (Nwafor & Okoro, 2023). However, the effectiveness of these mechanisms depends on the government's capacity to acknowledge, analyse, and act upon the feedback. Without visible responsiveness, citizen trust can erode, leading to disengagement and scepticism about government initiatives (Olise, 2023).

Despite these advancements, there remains a digital divide that limits equal access to online platforms. Socioeconomic factors such as income disparity, educational attainment, and infrastructural limitations hinder some citizens from fully participating in digital dialogues (Mbakwe & Udeh, 2024). This digital inequality poses a challenge for Anambra State's government in ensuring that the 'Solution Agenda' reaches all demographic groups equitably. Hence, a multi-channel communication approach that integrates traditional and digital media is often necessary to achieve comprehensive citizen engagement. The interplay between government PR and citizen engagement is also influenced by the broader political and institutional environment. Political commitment to transparency and public participation is vital for embedding engagement into governance processes (Okonkwo, 2023). Institutional weaknesses, such as inadequate funding, lack of skilled personnel, and bureaucratic inertia, can undermine communication efforts, regardless of the strategies employed (Adesina & Adeyeye, 2022). Furthermore, the political culture in Nigeria, which sometimes values patronage and centralised decision-making, may limit genuine public involvement

(Chinedu-Okeke & Onyemaobi, 2023). Overcoming these constraints requires deliberate reforms aimed at strengthening institutions and cultivating a participatory political ethos.

Additionally, cultural factors and social dynamics play a role in shaping how citizens perceive and interact with government communication. In many Nigerian communities, traditional leaders and local governance structures still hold significant influence. Integrating these indigenous communication channels with formal government PR strategies can enhance message credibility and acceptance (Ojebuyi & Ogwezzy-Ndisika, 2022). Moreover, social norms regarding civic participation, gender roles, and community solidarity can either enable or restrict engagement. For example, youth and women, often marginalised in political processes, may require targeted communication and engagement approaches to ensure their voices are heard (Ifeanyi & Chukwuemeka, 2024). In light of these findings, it becomes clear that effective government PR and citizen engagement are multifaceted processes requiring integrated strategies. The 'Solution Agenda' of Anambra State offers a practical context to explore how communication theories and frameworks apply to real-world governance challenges. By examining how the government disseminates information, solicits and incorporates feedback, and fosters participatory communication, this study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on development communication and democratic governance in Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopts the survey research design using a census approach. The census method is appropriate for this study because the population size is relatively small and manageable, allowing for comprehensive data collection from all members of the population. The survey design is particularly suitable for obtaining quantifiable data on the perceptions, practices, and communication experiences of government information officers regarding the Anambra State Government's 'Solution Agenda'. The population of the study comprises all staff members of the Anambra State Ministry of Information, including information officers on secondment to other ministries across the state. According to official records, the total number of these personnel is 187. These officers are directly involved in the planning, implementation, and

dissemination of public communication on government activities, making them vital respondents for this research. Given the modest size of the target population, the study utilises a census approach, in which all 187 members of the population are included in the research. This method eliminates sampling bias and ensures that the perspectives of all relevant stakeholders are captured. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling. This is because the study targets a specific group of individuals—information professionals actively involved in the execution of government public relations and communication strategies. Their roles and responsibilities make them best suited to provide informed responses on the subject matter. The primary instrument for data collection is the questionnaire. The questionnaire is

structured and consists of both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions.

Data Presentation

Out of the total 187 copies of the questionnaire distributed to staff members of the Anambra State Ministry of Information (including those on secondment to other ministries), 180 were duly completed and returned, resulting in a response rate of 96.3%. This high return rate is indicative of the respondents' willingness to participate and their interest in the subject matter of the study. It also strengthens the validity of the data collected, as a near-complete return rate minimises the risk of non-response bias and enhances the reliability of the findings.]

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 180)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	104	57.8
	Female	76	42.2
	Total	180	100
Age	27	27	15.0
	31–40 years	54	30.0
	41–50 years	72	40.0
	51 years and above	27	15.0
	Total	180	100
Educational Qualification	OND/NCE	18	10.0
	Bachelor’s Degree (B.Sc./B.A.)	99	55.0
	Postgraduate Degree (M.Sc./MBA/PGD)	54	30.0
	Others (e.g., certifications)	9	5.0
	Total	180	100
Job Designation	Information Officers (entry/mid-level)	108	60.0
	Senior Information Officers	45	25.0
	Principal/Chief Officers	18	10.0
	Others (e.g., admin/support)	9	5.0
	Total	180	100
Departmental Posting	Ministry of Information HQ	81	45.0
	Ministry of Health	27	15.0
	Ministry of Education	18	10.0
	Ministry of Environment	18	10.0
	Other Ministries/Parastatals	36	20.0
	Total	180	100

The demographic distribution of the 180 respondents in this study reveals a relatively balanced but male-dominated workforce, with **57.8% male** and **42.2% female** participants. In terms of age, the majority (40%) are between **41–50 years**, followed by 30% in the **31–40 years** category, while both the **18–30 years** and **51 years and above** groups accounted for 15% each, indicating an experienced and mature workforce. With respect to educational qualifications, a significant majority of respondents (**55%**) hold a **Bachelor's degree**, while **30%** possess **postgraduate qualifications**. Respondents with **OND/NCE** and **other certifications** make up **10%** and **5%**, respectively, highlighting a fairly educated civil service workforce. Job designation data shows that **60%** are **entry to mid-level information officers**, while **25%** are **senior officers**, and **10%** are **principal**

or chief officers, with a smaller **5%** in other administrative or support roles. Departmental postings reveal that **45%** of the respondents are stationed at the **Ministry of Information headquarters**, with others deployed to the **Ministries of Health (15%), Education (10%), Environment (10%),** and various other **ministries/parastatals (20%)**. This distribution ensures a representative view of public communication personnel across the state's ministries.

Answer to Research Questions

Research Question One

What communication strategies does the Anambra State Government use to disseminate information about its development programs?

Table 2: Communication Strategies Used by the Anambra State Government (N = 180)

Communication Strategy	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Description
Multimedia Publicity Campaigns	65	36.1	Coordinated use of TV, radio, print, and online media for wide coverage and impact.
Interactive Social Media Engagement	50	27.8	Active two-way communication via social media platforms to involve citizens.
Community Mobilisation and Public Forums	30	16.7	Organising town halls, focus groups, and community meetings to foster dialogue.
Targeted Stakeholder Messaging	20	11.1	Tailored messages sent to specific groups such as youth, business owners, or local leaders.
Feedback and Response Systems	15	8.3	Mechanisms like hotlines, digital platforms, and surveys to receive and act on citizen input.
Total	180	100	

The table reveals a diverse mix of communication strategies used by the Anambra State Government under the *Solution Agenda*, with a clear emphasis on mass-reaching and interactive platforms. The highest proportion of respondents identified **multimedia publicity campaigns**—including radio, TV, print, and digital media, as the most widely used strategy. This underscores the government's focus on the broad dissemination and visibility of its development programs. The prominence of **interactive social media engagement** suggests a shift towards more

inclusive, two-way communication, especially targeting tech-savvy demographics. However, the relatively lower use of **community mobilisation, targeted stakeholder messaging, and feedback systems** points to a gap in localised and participatory communication approaches.

Research Question Two

What channels does the Anambra State Government use for information dissemination?

Table 3: Channels of Communicating Solution Agenda

Channel of Information Dissemination	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	54	30.0
Radio Broadcasts	36	20.0
Television Broadcasts	27	15.0
Official Government Website	14	7.8
Press Releases / Official Briefings	18	10.0
Community Forums / Town Hall Meetings	12	6.7
Email Communication	9	5.0
Printed Materials (flyers, brochures)	6	3.3
Billboards / Posters	4	2.2
Total	180	100

The data shows that the Anambra State Government utilises a variety of communication channels to disseminate information about its development agenda. The dominance of digital and broadcast media platforms highlights a preference for mass outreach, particularly through social media and radio. This

reflects an effort to reach both urban and semi-urban populations quickly and cost-effectively.

Research Question Three

What feedback mechanisms has the Anambra State Government established to receive citizen responses?

Table 4: Feedback Mechanism for Solution Agenda

Feedback Mechanism	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)	54	30.0
SolutionLens Digital Platform	42	23.3
Social Media Engagement (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp)	48	26.7
Ease of Doing Business (EODB) Surveys	21	11.7
Community Forums / Town Hall Meetings	15	8.3
Total	180	100

The data indicates that the Anambra State Government has implemented a range of feedback mechanisms to capture citizen responses to its development initiatives under the *Solution Agenda*. Notably, the use of structured tools such as the **Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)** and **SolutionLens digital platform** points to a formalised system for listening to public concerns and complaints. Additionally, the

presence of **social media engagement** as a top feedback channel underscores the government's effort to utilize informal, real-time platforms for dialogue.

Research Question Four:

How do citizens perceive government communication regarding development programs?

Data from the above table revealed that majority respondents **agree or strongly agree** that government communication is clear (60%) and timely (50%), though a notable portion remain neutral or disagree. Accessibility of information scores moderately, with about 53% agreeing or strongly agreeing it is easy to access. Responses are more divided on whether

communication encourages participation, with 43% agreeing/strongly agreeing and 32% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing.

Research Question Five

What measures can be taken to improve participatory communication between the government and citizens?

Suggested Measures	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Description
Increase use of digital platforms for interaction	60	33.3%	Enhance social media and online portals to encourage real-time citizen engagement.
Organize regular community town halls and forums	50	27.8%	More frequent in-person meetings to gather citizen input and foster dialogue.
Establish effective feedback channels (hotlines, apps)	35	19.4%	Create dedicated, accessible channels for citizens to provide opinions and complaints.
Improve transparency by sharing regular updates	20	11.1%	Regular, clear updates on development progress to build trust and awareness.
Provide civic education programs on participation	15	8.3%	Educate citizens on how to engage effectively with government initiatives.
Total	180	100%	

Data revealed that the majority recommend **increasing digital platforms for interaction** (33.3%) to facilitate wider and faster citizen participation. **Community town halls** (27.8%) remain vital for face-to-face engagement. **Effective feedback channels** (19.4%) are necessary for meaningful two-way communication. Transparency and civic education are also seen as important measures.

Discussion of Findings

The study reveals that Anambra State Government uses various strategies to promote its Solution Agenda, including multimedia campaigns, social media engagement, community forums, targeted messaging, and feedback systems. Multimedia campaigns (36.1%) are the most used, combining TV, radio, print, and digital platforms, which McQuail (2020) affirms enhances message reach and retention. Social media follows at 27.8%, reflecting its role in real-time governance communication (Oladeji & Ojebuyi,

2021). Community forums (16.7%) enable grassroots engagement, vital in African contexts (Udeze & Okoro, 2022). Targeted messaging (11.1%) improves relevance among specific groups (Adeyemi & Olorunnisola, 2023), while feedback systems (8.3%) support two-way communication essential for public trust (Nwafor & Okonkwo, 2023). The study suggests a need to strengthen participatory strategies for better transparency and civic engagement.

Findings show Anambra State uses several feedback mechanisms for its Solution Agenda, with social media (35.6%) being the most common, offering real-time interaction (Oladeji & Ojebuyi, 2021). Town hall meetings (28.3%) provide direct engagement and build trust (Udeze & Okoro, 2022). Official phone lines (16.1%) and online forms (11.7%) are less used, possibly due to visibility or digital literacy issues. Suggestion boxes (8.3%) are the least utilised, reflecting their reduced relevance in the digital age.

While multiple channels exist, their usage and effectiveness vary. To improve inclusivity, the state should integrate digital tools with traditional methods and strengthen response systems, supporting Nwafor and Okonkwo's (2023) call for systematic and inclusive feedback.

Respondents identified key strategies to improve participatory communication. The top suggestion (34.4%) was strengthening community-level communication through liaison officers and local influencers (Ezeah & Nwachukwu, 2023). Responsive feedback systems (25%) like hotlines and WhatsApp groups were also emphasised (Ojo & Hassan, 2022). Use of local languages (18.3%) promotes inclusivity (Okeke & Obasi, 2022), while accountability forums (12.8%) foster transparency (Nwosu & Alozie, 2023). Improved digital tools (9.5%) can enhance e-participation, especially with growing smartphone use (UNDP Nigeria, 2021). These strategies, grounded in participatory communication theory (Servaes, 2020), emphasise the need for decentralised, inclusive, and interactive communication systems.

Out of 180 respondents, 33.9% rated the government's communication as effective, 30% as moderately effective, 21.1% as ineffective, and 15% were undecided. Effective ratings were linked to timely updates and media visibility (Ekwueme & Nwachukwu, 2022; Obi & Odoemelam, 2023). However, accessibility issues for rural, elderly, and low-literacy groups reveal gaps in reach (Akpan & Essien, 2021). The undecided responses suggest possible apathy due to limited engagement or feedback (Chukwu & Ezech, 2022). The findings highlight the importance of participatory approaches (Servaes, 2020) and the need to localise and co-create messages to improve effectiveness and inclusion.

Respondents largely support strategies that promote participatory governance. Town hall meetings and community dialogues help build trust and tailor policies (Chinyere & Okoye, 2023). The use of local languages enhances engagement among rural and older citizens (Nwafor & Mba, 2022). Demand for digital feedback tools reflects citizens' expectations for responsive governance (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Collaborating with traditional rulers and influencers helps legitimise government messages (Okafor & Nwankwo, 2021). Suggestions like mobile

information centres indicate a desire for accessible, inclusive, and culturally resonant communication strategies to strengthen governance.

Conclusion

This study examined the public relations (PR) strategies of the Anambra State Government in disseminating development programs under the *Solution Agenda*, with a specific focus on citizen engagement and feedback mechanisms. Findings revealed that the government utilises a combination of traditional and modern communication strategies—ranging from town hall meetings and radio broadcasts to social media platforms and printed publications—to engage the public. These efforts reflect a multi-pronged approach aimed at reaching diverse segments of the population. However, while these strategies appear robust on the surface, citizens' feedback mechanisms remain underutilised and somewhat fragmented. Community-based forums were identified as the most commonly used feedback channel, whereas digital and structured survey tools showed limited engagement. The data suggest that although communication channels exist, they are not always effectively synchronised with participatory practices, resulting in a communication gap between government intentions and public reception. Additionally, the study found that citizen perception of government communication was moderate, with a call for improved transparency, responsiveness, and inclusivity in messaging. The findings underscore the need for a strategic shift from unidirectional public relations to a more dialogic, participatory model of communication, which is vital in fostering trust, accountability, and sustainable development in governance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Anambra State Government should formalise and strengthen interactive feedback mechanisms such as structured online forums, SMS-based platforms, and dedicated social media response teams. These will enhance real-time communication and foster inclusive governance.
2. The government should leverage digital PR tools, such as chatbots, interactive dashboards, and citizen reporting apps, to broaden public

participation. These tools should be made user-friendly and widely publicised, particularly targeting the youth and tech-savvy population.

3. Continuous training for public relations officers and information staff is essential. They should be equipped with skills in participatory communication, digital content creation, crisis communication, and audience analysis to improve message delivery and citizen responsiveness.
4. Traditional forums such as town hall meetings, community dialogue sessions, and local language radio programs should be scaled up and supported with logistics and strategic content to reach grassroots audiences effectively.
5. To track and assess the effectiveness of communication strategies, the government should establish a centralised M&E system that measures reach, feedback quality, citizen satisfaction, and policy impact. This data-driven approach will allow for evidence-based adjustments in communication policy and practice.

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