
Strategic Communication and Maintenance Culture in Developing Economies: Evidence from Nigerian Media Campaigns

Review Article | Volume 1 | Issue 5 | 2026 | Article Number: 048

Accepted: 31 August 2026 | Published: 10 October 2026 | ISSN: 2979-8582 (Online)



Crossref : <https://doi.org/10.67693/BJCR-VFZH53J7>



Ayodele Folakemi V

Wesley University Ondo, Mass Communication Department, Nigeria

 **AFV** [0009-0008-3416-4552](https://orcid.org/0009-0008-3416-4552)

Correspondence: Ayodele Folakemi V, folakemivayodele@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigates the influence of strategic communication on the development of maintenance culture in developing economies, with a focus on Nigeria. Despite substantial investment in public infrastructure, the persistent deterioration of facilities suggests underlying behavioural and institutional deficiencies. Using a mixed-methods approach, this research explores how media campaigns shape public awareness, attitudes, and maintenance-related behaviours. Anchored on Development Communication, Agenda-Setting, and Framing theories, the study finds that although media campaigns significantly enhance awareness, their capacity to drive sustained behavioural change is limited by structural and socio-cultural constraints. Empirical evidence indicates that communication strategies are most effective when supported by institutional enforcement and participatory engagement (Effiong & Ekpo, 2022; Salau, 2021). The study concludes that a multi-dimensional approach integrating communication, governance, and public participation is essential for strengthening maintenance culture in Nigeria.

Keywords: Strategic Communication, Maintenance Culture, Media Campaigns, Behavioural Change, Infrastructure Sustainability, Development Communication

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The challenge of poor maintenance culture remains a persistent issue in many developing countries, particularly Nigeria, where infrastructural decay continues despite increased government expenditure. Public facilities such as roads, schools, and healthcare centres often deteriorate prematurely due to neglect, misuse, and absence of systematic maintenance practices (Odunlami, 2021). This situation reflects not only technical deficiencies but also behavioural and institutional shortcomings.

Although strategic communication has been deployed through media campaigns to promote awareness and behavioural change, its effectiveness has been inconsistent. Many campaigns succeed in informing the public but fail to translate awareness into sustained maintenance practices. Scholars argue that this gap is largely due to weak institutional frameworks and lack of enforcement mechanisms (Okoro & Nwafor, 2020).

Furthermore, there is limited empirical evidence directly linking strategic communication efforts to improvements in maintenance culture within the Nigerian context. This creates a gap in both theory and practice, necessitating further investigation into how communication strategies can be optimised to produce measurable behavioural outcomes.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the role of strategic communication in promoting maintenance culture in developing economies, with specific reference to Nigerian media campaigns. The specific objectives are to:

1. Assess the extent to which media campaigns influence public awareness of maintenance culture in Nigeria.
2. Examine the impact of strategic communication on attitudes and behavioural change towards maintenance practices among Nigerians.
3. Analyse the communication strategies and message framing techniques used in Nigerian media campaigns on maintenance culture.
4. Identify the structural, institutional, and socio-cultural factors that hinder the effectiveness of media campaigns in promoting maintenance culture.
5. Evaluate the relationship between strategic communication and sustainable infrastructure maintenance in Nigeria.
6. Propose an integrated communication framework that can enhance maintenance culture in developing economies.

1.3 Research Questions

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent do media campaigns influence public awareness of maintenance culture in Nigeria?
2. How does strategic communication affect attitudes and behavioural change towards maintenance practices?
3. What communication strategies and message framing techniques are employed in Nigerian media campaigns on maintenance culture?
4. What structural, institutional, and socio-cultural factors limit the effectiveness of these media campaigns?
5. What is the relationship between strategic communication and sustainable infrastructure

maintenance in Nigeria?

6. How can strategic communication be improved to effectively promote maintenance culture in developing economies?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant in several respects:

First, it contributes to the growing body of knowledge on strategic communication in developing contexts, particularly Nigeria, where scholarly attention remains limited. Second, it provides insights into how communication strategies can be leveraged to address behavioural and cultural barriers associated with maintenance practices. Third, the study offers practical implications for policymakers, media practitioners, and development agencies by proposing integrated communication-policy frameworks that enhance sustainability. Finally, it bridges interdisciplinary gaps between communication studies, development studies, and infrastructure management, thereby enriching academic discourse and practice.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Strategic Communication

Strategic communication refers to the deliberate and coordinated use of communication processes to achieve specific organisational or societal objectives. It involves aligning messages, media channels, and audience needs in a way that influences perception and behaviour (Folarin, 2020). In development contexts, it serves as a tool for social change by shaping public discourse and encouraging civic responsibility. In Nigeria, strategic communication has evolved significantly, incorporating both traditional media and digital platforms to reach diverse audiences. Its relevance lies in its ability to bridge the gap between policy intentions and public understanding (Okoro & Nwafor, 2020).

2.1.2 Maintenance Culture

Maintenance culture can be understood as the collective disposition of individuals and institutions towards preserving and sustaining physical infrastructure. It encompasses attitudes, values, and habitual practices that prioritise upkeep and longevity of assets (Obasanjo, 2020). In many developing economies, weak maintenance culture is linked to poor governance, lack of accountability, and inadequate public awareness. This often results in avoidable infrastructure failure and increased economic costs (World Bank, 2020).

2.1.3 Media Campaigns

Media campaigns are structured communication efforts designed to influence public awareness, attitudes, and behaviours over a specific period. They utilise multiple platforms such as television, radio, print, and digital media to disseminate targeted messages (Asemah et al., 2017). The effectiveness of media campaigns largely depends on message clarity, audience relevance, and cultural context. In Nigeria, campaigns addressing public health and civic responsibility have shown measurable success, suggesting similar potential for maintenance advocacy (Orewere & Oyakilome, 2022).

2.2 Theoretical Review Development Communication Theory

Development Communication Theory emphasises the use of communication as a tool for facilitating social transformation and improving quality of life. It advocates participatory approaches where communication is not merely top-down but interactive and inclusive (Udoakah, 2018). This theory is particularly relevant as it highlights the importance of engaging citizens in maintenance practices rather than simply informing them.

2.2.1 Agenda-Setting Theory

Agenda-Setting Theory posits that the media shape public priorities by determining which issues receive prominence. When maintenance-related issues are consistently highlighted, they become part of public discourse and policy focus (McCombs, 2018).

2.2.2 Framing Theory

Framing Theory explains how the presentation of information influences interpretation. The way maintenance issues are framed—whether as a civic duty, economic necessity, or moral responsibility—affects how individuals respond (Uwakwe, 2021).

2.3 Empirical Review

Empirical studies provide evidence that strategic communication contributes significantly to awareness creation but has varying effects on behavioural change. Effiong and Ekpo (2022) found that media campaigns in Nigeria improved public knowledge of infrastructure maintenance but had limited impact on actual practices.

Similarly, Salau (2021) observed that communication strategies are more effective when combined with policy enforcement and institutional support. Without these, awareness campaigns tend to produce only short-term attitudinal changes.

Research on digital media usage also indicates that social media platforms have enhanced audience engagement and message dissemination, making them valuable tools for development communication (Orewere & Oyakilome, 2022). However, structural challenges such as weak governance and lack of accountability continue to undermine the effectiveness of these campaigns (World Bank, 2020).

Empirical studies on strategic communication and maintenance culture reveal mixed outcomes. A recent study on strategic corporate communication in Nigeria found that effective communication significantly improves organisational performance, stakeholder trust, and crisis management. The study emphasised the importance of transparency and integration of digital communication tools in achieving desired outcomes. Similarly, research on strategic communication in conflict zones in Nigeria demonstrates its ability to influence attitudes, promote dialogue, and foster behavioural change. Strategic communication has been used successfully in counter-insurgency and peace-building efforts, highlighting its potential for broader social transformation. However, studies on maintenance culture indicate persistent challenges. Research on public buildings in developing countries shows that lack of maintenance culture is a major factor contributing to infrastructure decay, despite awareness efforts. Behavioural change remains limited due to weak institutional frameworks and cultural attitudes. Additionally, studies on organisational culture in Nigeria suggest that culture significantly influences strategy implementation and performance. Without supportive cultural frameworks, strategic initiatives including communication campaigns are unlikely to achieve long-term impact. Overall, empirical evidence suggests that while strategic communication is effective in raising awareness and shaping attitudes, its impact on actual maintenance behaviour is constrained by structural, institutional, and cultural factors. Overall, existing studies suggest that while strategic communication is necessary, it is not sufficient on its own to transform maintenance culture.

2.3.1 Appraisal of Reviewed Literatures

The reviewed literature indicates that strategic communication holds significant potential for promoting maintenance culture in developing economies. However, its effectiveness depends on integration with institutional reforms, cultural transformation, and stakeholder engagement. Bridging the gap between awareness and action remains a key challenge that requires a multidisciplinary approach.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a **mixed-methods research design**, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative component enables the measurement of public awareness, attitudes, and behavioural responses to media campaigns on maintenance culture, while the qualitative component provides deeper insights into the strategies, framing techniques, and contextual factors influencing communication effectiveness.

The choice of a mixed-methods approach is justified by its ability to provide a comprehensive understanding of complex social phenomena such as maintenance culture, which involves both measurable behaviours and subjective perceptions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

3.2 Study Area

The study is conducted in Nigeria, a developing economy characterised by significant infrastructural challenges and weak maintenance culture. The research focuses on selected urban centres where media exposure is relatively high, such as Lagos, Abuja, and Ibadan, to ensure respondents have adequate exposure to media campaigns.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises:

- Members of the general public exposed to media campaigns
- Media practitioners (journalists, broadcasters, and communication strategists)
- Policy makers and stakeholders in infrastructure and public service sectors
- This diverse population ensures a holistic perspective on both the production and reception of strategic communication messages.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample size of **400 respondents** is selected for the quantitative survey using **Taro Yamane's formula** for sample determination.

A **multi-stage sampling technique** is employed:

- **Stage 1:** Purposive selection of urban centres (Lagos, Abuja, Ibadan)
- **Stage 2:** Stratified sampling to ensure representation across age, gender, and occupation
- **Stage 3:** Simple random sampling for respondent selection

For the qualitative component, **15–20 key informants** are selected using purposive sampling, including media professionals and policymakers.

3.5 Sources of Data

The study utilises both **primary and secondary data sources**:

Primary Data

- Structured questionnaires administered to the public
- In-depth interviews with media practitioners and policymakers

Secondary Data

- Academic journals
- Policy documents

- Media campaign materials
- Relevant books and online resources

3.6 Instrument for Data Collection

Two main instruments are used:

1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire is structured into sections:

- Demographic information
- Awareness of media campaigns
- Attitudes towards maintenance culture
- Behavioural practices
- Perception of communication effectiveness

The questionnaire uses a **Likert scale format** (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) to measure responses.

2. Interview Guide

A semi-structured interview guide is developed to explore:

- Communication strategies used in campaigns
- Message framing techniques
- Challenges in promoting maintenance culture
- Recommendations for improvement

3.7 Validity of the Instrument

Validity refers to the extent to which the instrument measures what it is intended to measure. The instruments are subjected to:

- **Content validity**, through expert review by scholars in mass communication and development studies
- **Face validity**, by ensuring clarity and relevance of questions

3.8 Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability is ensured through a **pilot study** conducted with 30 respondents outside the study area. The data collected are analysed using **Cronbach's Alpha**, with a reliability coefficient of **0.70 or above** considered acceptable (Nunnally, 1978).

3.9 Method of Data Collection

Data collection is conducted through physical and online distribution of questionnaire, face-to-face and virtual interviews. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation are strictly observed.

3.10 Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data are analysed using:

- **Descriptive statistics** (frequency, percentages, mean scores)
- **Inferential statistics** (Chi-square and regression analysis where necessary)

Qualitative data from interviews are analysed using **thematic analysis**, identifying recurring patterns and themes related to strategic communication and maintenance culture.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to standard research ethics:

- Informed consent is obtained from all participants
- Participants’ anonymity and confidentiality are ensured
- Data are used strictly for academic purposes

3.12 Limitations of the Methodology

Potential limitations include:

- Response bias from participants
- Limited generalisability due to focus on urban areas
- Possible difficulty in accessing key informants

Efforts are made to minimise these limitations through careful sampling and data triangulation.

4. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected from respondents on the role of strategic communication in promoting maintenance culture in Nigeria. A total of **400 questionnaires** were distributed, out of which **372 were successfully retrieved**, representing a **93% response rate**. The data are presented using tables, simple percentages, and interpretive discussion.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1: Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	198	53%
Female	174	47%
Total	372	100%

Interpretation:The data show a fairly balanced gender distribution, ensuring that the findings reflect diverse perspectives.

Table 4.2: Age Distribution

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–25	96	26%
26–35	142	38%
36–45	78	21%
46 and above	56	15%
Total	372	100%

Interpretation:

The majority of respondents fall within the **26–35 age bracket**, indicating a youthful and active population with high media exposure.

Table 4.3: Educational Qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Secondary	82	22%
Tertiary	238	64%
Postgraduate	52	14%
Total	372	100%

Interpretation:

Most respondents are educated, which strengthens the reliability of responses regarding media exposure and communication effectiveness.

4.3 Analysis of Research Questions**Research Question 1:**

To what extent do media campaigns influence public awareness of maintenance culture in Nigeria?

Table 4.4: Awareness of Media Campaigns

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly Aware	168	45%
Moderately Aware	132	35%
Slightly Aware	48	13%
Not Aware	24	7%
Total	372	100%

Interpretation:

A combined **80% (highly + moderately aware)** indicates that media campaigns are effective in creating awareness about maintenance culture.

Research Question 2:

How does strategic communication affect attitudes and behavioural change?

Table 4.5: Influence on Behaviour

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strong Influence	122	33%

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Moderate Influence	148	40%
Weak Influence	72	19%
No Influence	30	8%
Total	372	100%

Interpretation:

While **73% acknowledge influence**, the relatively lower “strong influence” percentage suggests that awareness does not always translate into consistent behavioural change.

Research Question 3:

What communication strategies are used in media campaigns?

Table 4.6: Preferred Communication Channels

Channel	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Television	104	28%
Radio	82	22%
Social Media	142	38%
Print Media	44	12%
Total	372	100%

Interpretation:

Social media (38%) emerges as the most effective platform, reflecting the growing importance of digital communication in Nigeria.

Research Question 4:

What factors hinder the effectiveness of media campaigns?

Table 4.7: Barriers to Effectiveness

Factor	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poor Government Policies	118	32%
Lack of Enforcement	102	27%
Cultural Attitudes	86	23%
Inadequate Media Coverage	66	18%
Total	372	100%

Interpretation:

The findings show that **structural and institutional factors (59%)** are the major barriers, outweighing communication-related issues.

Research Question 5:

What is the relationship between strategic communication and sustainable maintenance?

Table 4.8: Perceived Relationship

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strong Relationship	154	41%
Moderate Relationship	138	37%
Weak Relationship	56	15%
No Relationship	24	7%
Total	372	100%

Interpretation:

A strong majority (**78%**) agree that strategic communication is essential for sustainable maintenance practices.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

The findings reveal that strategic communication plays a significant role in promoting maintenance culture in Nigeria, particularly in raising awareness. This aligns with **Agenda-Setting Theory**, which posits that the media influence public perception by highlighting important issues.

However, the study also shows that awareness does not necessarily translate into sustained behavioural change. This supports existing research which argues that behavioural change is influenced not only by communication but also by structural and institutional factors.

The prominence of social media as a communication channel highlights the evolving nature of media consumption in Nigeria. This finding is consistent with recent studies emphasising the role of digital platforms in shaping public discourse.

Furthermore, the identification of barriers such as poor governance and weak enforcement underscores the limitations of communication-only approaches. This validates **Development Communication Theory**, which emphasises the need for participatory and systemic interventions.

Overall, the study demonstrates that while strategic communication is necessary, it is not sufficient on its own. Effective promotion of maintenance culture requires an integrated approach combining communication, policy enforcement, and cultural reorientation.

4.5 Summary of Findings

- Media campaigns significantly increase awareness of maintenance culture
- Strategic communication moderately influences behaviour but is not wholly effective
- Social media is the most impactful communication channel
- Structural and institutional barriers limit effectiveness

- Strategic communication is strongly linked to sustainable maintenance practices

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the Study

This study examined the role of strategic communication in promoting maintenance culture in developing economies, with particular focus on Nigerian media campaigns. The study was motivated by the persistent deterioration of public infrastructure in Nigeria despite substantial investments, indicating a weak maintenance culture.

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. assess the extent to which media campaigns influence public awareness of maintenance culture;
2. examine the effect of strategic communication on attitudes and behavioural change;
3. analyse the communication strategies used in promoting maintenance culture;
4. identify factors limiting the effectiveness of media campaigns;
5. evaluate the relationship between strategic communication and sustainable maintenance culture.

To achieve these objectives, the study adopted a **mixed-methods research design**, combining survey and interview methods. Data were collected from **372 respondents**, including members of the public, media practitioners, and stakeholders, and analysed using **frequency tables, percentages, and thematic interpretation**.

The findings showed that media campaigns significantly improve public awareness of maintenance culture, with a majority of respondents acknowledging exposure to maintenance-related media messages. The study also found that strategic communication positively influences public attitudes, although the degree of actual behavioural change remains moderate.

The analysis further revealed that **social media** is the most effective communication platform for maintenance campaigns in Nigeria, surpassing traditional media such as radio and print. However, the effectiveness of media campaigns is hindered by structural and institutional barriers such as weak policy implementation, poor government commitment, inadequate enforcement mechanisms, and entrenched negative attitudes toward maintenance. Overall findings indicate that while strategic communication is essential in fostering maintenance culture, it cannot independently achieve lasting behavioural change without supportive institutional frameworks.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that **strategic communication is a critical tool for promoting maintenance culture in developing economies**, especially in Nigeria. Through awareness creation, message framing, and agenda-setting, media campaigns shape public discourse and encourage positive attitudes toward infrastructure maintenance. However, awareness alone is insufficient to ensure behavioural transformation. The persistence of infrastructural decay in Nigeria demonstrates that communication efforts must be reinforced by effective governance structures, enforcement policies, and public accountability systems.

The study therefore concludes that sustainable maintenance culture requires an integrated approach that combines:

- effective strategic communication,
- institutional support,
- stakeholder participation,
- behavioural reinforcement mechanisms.

Without this integrated framework, media campaigns may raise awareness but fail to generate long-term sustainable maintenance behaviour.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government Should Institutionalise Maintenance Communication Campaigns

The government should develop and sustain nationwide strategic communication campaigns specifically targeted at promoting maintenance culture. These campaigns should be continuous rather than occasional.

2. Greater Use of Digital and Social Media Platforms

Since the study found social media to be the most effective medium, government agencies and development institutions should intensify the use of digital platforms to engage citizens, especially young people, in maintenance advocacy.

3. Integration of Communication with Policy Enforcement

Communication campaigns should be complemented with strong policy enforcement mechanisms. Public awareness without sanctions for negligence may not result in behavioural change.

4. Community Participation Should Be Encouraged

Citizens should be actively involved in maintenance decision-making and infrastructure monitoring. Participatory communication strategies can improve ownership and responsibility.

5. Maintenance Education Should Be Introduced in Schools

Educational institutions should incorporate maintenance culture into civic and social education curricula to instill maintenance consciousness from an early age.

6. Public Institutions Should Adopt Strategic Communication Units

Government ministries and public institutions should establish dedicated strategic communication units to promote awareness and coordinate maintenance advocacy.

7. Periodic Evaluation of Campaign Effectiveness

Media campaigns on maintenance culture should be regularly evaluated to measure their effectiveness and improve messaging strategies.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge by demonstrating that **strategic communication has significant potential in promoting maintenance culture**, but its success depends on institutional and cultural support systems. It also contributes to scholarship by integrating **communication theories with infrastructure sustainability discourse**, thereby expanding the application of strategic communication within development studies.

References

Asemah, E. S. (2020). *Selected mass media themes*. Jos University Press.

Asemah, E. S., Nwammuo, A. N., & Nkwam-Uwaoma, A. O. A. (2017). *Theories and models of*

- communication*. Jos University Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Daramola, I. (2019). *Mass media and society*. Rothan Press.
- Edegoh, L. O. N., Asemah, E. S., & Nwammuo, A. N. (2021). Strategic communication and public behavioural change in Nigeria. *International Journal of Communication Studies*, 14(2), 45–60.
- Effiong, J., & Ekpo, M. (2022). Media campaigns and public infrastructure maintenance awareness in Nigeria. *Journal of Development Communication*, 33(1), 67–81.
- Federal Ministry of Works and Housing. (2021). *National maintenance policy framework*. Government Press.
- Folarin, B. (2020). *Theories of mass communication: An introductory text* (2nd ed.). Stirling-Horden Publishers.
- McCombs, M. (2018). *Setting the agenda: Mass media and public opinion* (3rd ed.). Polity Press.
- Nunnally, J. C. (1978). *Psychometric theory* (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Nwosu, I. E. (2019). *Public relations management: Principles, issues and applications*. Dominican Publishers.
- Obasanjo, O. (2020). Maintenance culture and sustainable development in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Public Administration*, 8(3), 22–37.
- Odunlami, T. (2021). Infrastructure decay and maintenance challenges in Nigeria. *African Development Review*, 13(4), 71–85.
- Okoro, N., & Nwafor, K. A. (2020). Strategic communication as a tool for national development. *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, 12(5), 102–118.
- Orewere, B., & Oyakilome, F. (2022). Digital media and public engagement in development campaigns in Nigeria. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 14(1), 50–66.
- Salau, T. A. (2021). Public communication strategies and infrastructure sustainability in developing economies. *International Journal of Sustainable Development*, 16(2), 88–103.
- Udoakah, N. (2018). *Development communication and national transformation*. University of Uyo Press.
- Uwakwe, O. (2021). Media framing and social responsibility in Nigeria's public campaigns. *Journal of African Communication Research*, 9(2), 112–129.
- World Bank. (2020). *Infrastructure governance in developing economies*. World Bank Publications.
- Yamane, T. (1967). *Statistics: An introductory analysis* (2nd ed.). Harper and Row.



© 2026 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)