

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND ARTISANAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA

Uduak Obot Akpan, Ph.D ¹ & Ekaete Uwem Matthew ²

¹Department of Mass Communication, Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osurua, Ikot Ekpene, Nigeria.

²Department of General Studies, Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osurua, Ikot Ekpene, Nigeria.

EMAIL: akpanobongg@gmail.com¹; ekaetematthew16@gmail.com²

ABSTRACT

This study examined the effectiveness of government communication strategies in promoting artisanal development for sustainable economic growth in South-South Nigeria, with specific focus on Akwa Ibom and Rivers States. The objectives were to identify existing communication strategies, assess their effectiveness, determine artisans' awareness and participation levels, and identify barriers hindering effective communication. The study adopted a mixed-methods survey design. A total of 762 respondents were selected through multistage sampling from Akwa Ibom State and Rivers State. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential tests, including One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Tukey's Honest Significant Difference (HSD) post-hoc test. Findings revealed that government communication strategies exist but vary in effectiveness between the two states, with Akwa Ibom showing higher awareness and engagement levels. Radio and television were identified as the most effective communication channels, while community meetings played a key role in Rivers State. Major barriers included inadequate communication infrastructure, poor access to information, and low literacy levels. The study recommended that governments strengthen and harmonise communication frameworks, adopt multi-channel and audience-centred strategies, and establish feedback mechanisms.

KEYWORDS: Government communication, artisanal development, awareness

INTRODUCTION

Communication strategies have long served as indispensable tools for governments worldwide to disseminate development agendas effectively and foster socio-economic progress. Over the years, the deployment of strategic communication by governments has played a pivotal role in driving various development initiatives, ranging from infrastructure projects to social welfare programmes (Auwalu, 2021). The significance of communication strategies in advancing development agendas cannot be overstated, particularly in regions like Akwa Ibom State, where concerted efforts are being made to promote sustainable economic growth through artisanal development.

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Governments employ communication strategies to inform, educate, and engage citizens, stakeholders, and communities about development policies, programmes, and opportunities. Effective communication is essential not only for creating awareness but also for mobilizing support, facilitating participation, and garnering feedback crucial for the success and sustainability of development interventions (Amokeodo and Ekpenyong, 2020).

In Akwa Ibom and Rivers States, where artisanal activities hold significant potential for economic diversification and poverty reduction, the role of government communication in promoting artisanal development is of paramount importance. Through strategic communication, governments can articulate the objectives, benefits, and requirements of artisanal development initiatives, thereby encouraging participation, investment, and innovation in relevant sectors (Okafor and Iyendo, 2023).

Artisanal activities play a vital role in driving economic growth and fostering sustainable development. As the state seeks to harness its agricultural and cultural heritage for economic prosperity, effective communication strategies become essential to promote artisanal development initiatives and ensure their sustainability.

Government-led initiatives aimed at promoting artisanal development have been a focal point of policy efforts in Nigeria, reflecting the broader agenda of achieving sustainable economic growth and poverty alleviation (Okigbo and Igbokwe, 2015). However, the success of such initiatives hinges significantly on the effectiveness of communication strategies employed to disseminate information, engage stakeholders, and foster participation.

In Akwa Ibom State, where artisanal activities encompass various sectors such as agriculture, handicrafts, and cultural industries, the role of government communication becomes paramount in driving inclusive and sustainable development. Yet, there is a paucity of empirical studies examining the impact of government communication strategies on promoting artisanal development in the state.

This research sought to address this gap by conducting a comprehensive evaluation of government communication strategies and their effectiveness in promoting artisanal development for sustainable economic growth in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States. By examining the reach, engagement, and outcomes of government communication efforts, this study aims to provide valuable insights and recommendations for enhancing communication practices and maximizing the impact of artisanal development initiatives in the state.

In achieving sustainable economic growth, effective communication strategies by government to enhance artisanal engagement and participation in development programmes remain the focal point. Hence, this study is predicated on the foregoing background.

Statement of the Problem

Communication strategies serve as crucial tools for governments to effectively disseminate their agendas, policies, and programmes to the public. These strategies encompass various methods,

channels, and messages designed to inform, engage, and mobilize stakeholders in support of government initiatives.

The effectiveness of government communication strategies becomes paramount. Artisanal activities encompass a wide range of sectors, including agriculture, handicrafts, and cultural industries, all of which hold significant potential for job creation, poverty reduction, and economic diversification. Therefore, the ability of the government to effectively communicate its artisanal development agenda is critical for mobilizing resources, attracting investments, and fostering participation among relevant stakeholders.

However, despite the recognized importance of communication strategies in advancing development agendas, there remains a gap in empirical research regarding their effectiveness in the context of artisanal development in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States.

While government communication efforts may exist, their impact on raising awareness, encouraging participation, and driving sustainable economic growth through artisanal development initiatives is not well understood. Hence, this study sought to evaluate government communication strategies in promoting artisanal development for sustainable economic growth in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of government communication strategies in promoting artisanal development for sustainable economic growth in Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. Find out whether there are existing government communication strategies aimed at promoting artisanal development for sustainable economic growth in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States.
- ii. Evaluate the existing government communication strategies aimed at promoting artisanal development for sustainable economic growth in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States.
- iii. To assess the effectiveness of government communication strategies in promoting artisanal development for sustainable economic growth in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States.
- iv. To determine the level of awareness and participation among artisans regarding government-led artisanal development initiatives.
- v. To identify existing barriers hindering effective communication between the government and artisanal communities in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States.

Hypotheses

H₀: There is no significant relationship between government communication strategies and artisanal development in South-South Nigeria.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between government communication strategies and artisanal development in South-South Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Government Communication Strategies in Nigeria

Government communication strategies in Nigeria encompass a wide array of methods, channels, and approaches employed by governmental agencies and authorities to disseminate information, engage citizens, and promote public participation in governance processes. These strategies play a crucial role in facilitating transparency, accountability, and citizen awareness of government policies, programmes, and initiatives (Oduaran and Okorie, 2018).

Okoro and Nwafor (2016) notes that one of the primary objectives of government communication strategies in Nigeria is to bridge the gap between the government and the citizens by providing timely and accurate information on government activities and decisions.

Various communication channels are utilized by the government to reach a diverse audience, including traditional media such as radio, television, and newspapers, as well as new media platforms like social media, websites, and mobile applications (Okunola and Bello, 2017). These channels are leveraged to disseminate messages, educate citizens, solicit feedback, and foster dialogue between the government and the public.

Furthermore, government communication strategies in Nigeria often involve the use of targeted campaigns and public relations activities to promote specific policies or programs (Adewuyi and Ogunlade, 2020).

However, challenges exist in the effective implementation of government communication strategies in Nigeria. These challenges include limited access to information, especially in rural areas with poor infrastructure and literacy levels (Arowolo and Adegoke, 2019).

Artisanal Development in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States

Akwa Ibom State: The ARISE agenda, as presented by Governor Umoh Eno, embodies five key aspects: Agricultural Revolution, Rural Development, Infrastructural Maintenance, Security Management, and Educational Advancement. Each component represents a crucial pillar for advancing development in Akwa Ibom State. The agricultural revolution entails modernizing farming practices, improving land acquisition processes, and providing access to capital and resources for farmers.

Rural development is paramount for addressing the needs of the majority of Akwa Ibom's population residing in rural areas. Basic social and economic amenities such as education, water supply, healthcare, and security are lacking in these communities, leading to rural-urban migration and societal instability.

Infrastructural maintenance and advancement encompass various projects such as Ibom Air, Akwa Ibom Water Board, and road construction. While some projects like Ibom Air have seen success, others require more attention and investment to meet the state's infrastructure needs

comprehensively. Similarly, security management efforts, including the establishment of neighborhood security outfits and collaboration with security agencies, aim to address crime and insecurity. On educational advancement, the government under former Governor Godswill Akpabio, declared free and compulsory education from primary to secondary levels.

Ibom Leadership and Entrepreneurial Development Programme (Ibom-LED): Ibom Leadership and Entrepreneurial Development Centre (Ibom-LED) is an Initiative of the Akwa Ibom State Government, set up in 2023, the Centre emerges to close a gap in Leadership and Entrepreneurial Skills amongst Business managers both in the Public and Private Sectors through provision of bespoke learning programmes, thereby enhancing the socio-economic growth and development of Akwa Ibom State and beyond.

The Ibom LED Entrepreneurship Accelerator Programme is designed to support and nurture entrepreneurs with the aim of promoting their business management skills, and sustainable growth. The programme is open to both existing and aspiring artisans and entrepreneurs. It provides them with the necessary training, mentoring, and funding to transform their ideas into successful businesses. Ibom-LED will provide the skills to make the economy of the state private sector driven, the skills to move agriculture from subsistence to commercial, the skills to digitalize the economy of the state and to raise value-based leaders to drive development in the State.

Rivers State: Rivers State, has been proactive in promoting artisanal development, especially in sectors related to the oil and gas industry. Given its status as an oil-rich state, Rivers has focused on training artisans in areas such as pipeline welding, fabrication, and oil spill management. The government has also established several skill acquisition centers across the state to provide training and certification to local artisans. Communication strategies in Rivers State have included the use of digital platforms, town hall meetings, and collaboration with local associations to ensure that artisans are well-informed about available opportunities and can easily access these programs.

Both states have made efforts to integrate their artisanal development initiatives into broader economic development plans. In both states, the governments have linked artisanal development with agricultural policies, encouraging artisans to engage in agro-processing and value addition. Artisanal development has been tied to the oil and gas sector, ensuring that local artisans could benefit from the industry's value chain.

Industrial Training Fund (ITF)

Industrial Training Fund (ITF) is a Nigerian government agency tasked with promoting and encouraging the acquisition of technical skills for industrial development. In Akwa Ibom State, the ITF plays a crucial role in facilitating artisanal development through various training programmes and initiatives. These initiatives aim to equip individuals with practical skills that are relevant to the local industries, thereby enhancing employability and fostering economic growth within the state.

One of the notable programmes implemented by the ITF in Akwa Ibom State is the skill acquisition training for artisans in key sectors such as construction, agriculture, manufacturing, and services. These training programmes provide participants with hands-on experience and theoretical knowledge, preparing them for employment or entrepreneurship opportunities in their respective fields.

Existing Strategies by the Akwa Ibom State and Rivers States Government

Akpan and Udofia (2018) highlight some of the existing strategies that the state government utilizes. They are as follows;

Utilization of Traditional Media: The Akwa Ibom and Rivers State Government strategically utilizes traditional media channels such as radio and television to disseminate information about artisanal development programs and opportunities. By leveraging these platforms, which are accessible even in rural areas, the government ensures that key messages reach a wide audience across the state.

Digital Communication Strategies: Recognizing the evolving landscape of communication, the government has embraced digital platforms including social media. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp are used to engage directly with artisans and stakeholders, sharing updates in real-time, facilitating discussions, and gathering feedback. The deployment involves active social media management, content creation, and online campaigns targeting specific artisanal development initiatives.

Community Engagement and Town Hall Meetings: To foster trust and enhance participation, both States Government organizes community engagement sessions and town hall meetings. These forums provide opportunities for direct interaction with local communities, artisans, and relevant stakeholders. The government deploys this strategy by convening meetings in different communities, listening to concerns, soliciting ideas, and co-designing policies that support artisanal development.

Strategic Partnerships and Collaborations: Collaborations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donor agencies, and international organizations are integral to amplifying communication efforts. By forming strategic partnerships, the government gains access to additional resources, expertise, and networks to advance artisanal development agendas. This strategy involves formalizing partnerships, joint initiatives, and leveraging partner platforms to communicate the impact of artisanal programmes more effectively.

Artisanal Development in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States

Artisanal development in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States, Nigeria, encompasses a diverse range of traditional skills, crafts, and cultural practices that contribute to the socio-economic fabric of the state. The artisanal sector in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States play a significant role in preserving cultural heritage, generating employment, and fostering economic diversification (Onyebuchi and Etukudo, 2016).

Artisanal development is deeply rooted in the cultural traditions and heritage of the indigenous people, particularly the Ibibio ethnic group. The people have a long history of craftsmanship and artistic expression, evident in traditional practices such as pottery making, wood carving, weaving, and beadwork. These artisanal skills are passed down through generations, with artisans often belonging to specialized guilds or family lineages that preserve and transmit traditional knowledge and techniques (Akpan and Udofia, 2018).

This sector offers significant opportunities for employment and income generation, particularly in rural communities where agricultural and craft-based activities are prevalent (Udofia and Ekpo, 2019). Artisanal products from Akwa Ibom State, including handcrafted textiles, pottery, sculptures, and traditional artworks, are highly valued for their quality, authenticity, and cultural significance, both locally and internationally (Etim and Edet, 2020).

However, despite the cultural and economic importance of artisanal development in Akwa Ibom State, the sector faces various challenges that hinder its full potential for growth and sustainability. These challenges include limited access to markets and finance, inadequate infrastructure, low levels of education and technical skills among artisans, and the encroachment of modernization and globalization on traditional practices (Okon and Ekpenyong, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 1962). The Diffusion of Innovations Theory, proposed by Everett Rogers in 1962, explains how new ideas, technologies, or innovations spread and are adopted by individuals or groups within a society. According to this theory, the adoption and diffusion of innovations follow a predictable pattern characterized by different categories of adopters: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. The theory also identifies key factors influencing the rate and extent of adoption, including the perceived characteristics of the innovation, communication channels, social networks, and the socio-economic context.

In the context of this study, the theory provides a valuable framework for understanding how information about artisanal initiatives is disseminated and adopted among different segments of the population. The theory emphasizes the importance of effective communication channels, peer influence, and the relative advantage and compatibility of the innovation in driving adoption and behavior change.

The theory is relevant to this study as it helps explain why and how government communication strategies may succeed or fail in promoting artisanal development for sustainable economic growth.

Review of Empirical Studies

Adewuyi, A., and Ogunlade, N. (2020). Analysis of Public Communication Strategies for Agro-related development: A Case Study of Ondo State, Nigeria

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of government communication strategies in promoting agricultural development in Ondo State, Nigeria. The study utilized the Diffusion of Innovations Theory as a theoretical framework to understand the adoption patterns of agricultural

innovations. Survey approach was employed to gather data from a sample of 200 farmers and key stakeholders in the agricultural sector. Data was collected using structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed moderate awareness and participation levels among farmers regarding government-led agricultural initiatives. However, communication barriers such as limited access to information and inadequate communication channels were identified. Recommendations included improving communication infrastructure, enhancing stakeholder engagement, and leveraging traditional and new media for effective communication.

While the reviewed study examined agricultural communication strategies, the proposed study will assess government communication efforts targeted at promoting artisanal development for sustainable economic growth, addressing the unique challenges and opportunities within this sector.

Udofia, C., and Ekpo, D. (2019). Impact of Government Communication on Socio-economic Development: A Study of Artisanal Communities in Akwa Ibom State.

This study investigated the impact of government communication on socio-economic development within artisanal communities in Akwa Ibom State. The study applied the Social Learning Theory to understand the role of communication in shaping behavior and attitudes among artisans. A quantitative approach was employed, involving a survey of 300 artisans selected through stratified random sampling. Data was collected using structured questionnaires. The findings revealed a positive correlation between government communication and socio-economic outcomes, with higher levels of awareness associated with increased participation in government-led programmes. Recommendations included strengthening communication strategies, investing in capacity building, and fostering partnerships between government agencies and artisanal communities.

While the reviewed study examined the broader impact of government communication on socio-economic development, the upcoming study will provide a focused analysis of communication strategies targeting artisanal sectors, thereby addressing the specific communication needs and challenges within this domain. The proposed study aims to complement this research by focusing specifically on evaluating government communication strategies aimed at promoting artisanal development.

Ugwu, K. (2022). Evaluation of Policy Communication Strategies in growing informal sector for sustainability and Economic development in Southeast, Nigeria

This study investigates the effectiveness of policy communication strategies in fostering sustainable economic growth within the informal sector of Southeast Nigeria. With the informal sector playing a significant role in the region's economy, understanding how policy communication influences its growth is imperative. The study employs a theoretical framework grounded in communication theories to analyze the impact of policy communication strategies on economic growth. A mixed-methods research approach is utilized, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques to gather and analyze data. The population of the study comprises individuals engaged in the informal sector across various industries in Southeast Nigeria. A stratified random sampling method is employed to select a representative sample size for the study.

Data is collected using structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of participants' perceptions and experiences. The findings reveal insights into the effectiveness of existing policy communication strategies in the informal sector and their influence on sustainable economic growth. Based on the findings, recommendations are provided to enhance policy communication strategies, thereby fostering greater economic growth and sustainability within the informal sector of Southeast Nigeria.

The reviewed studies provide a foundation for understanding government communication strategies in various sectors and regions. However, the proposed study intends to fill the gap by focusing squarely on artisanal development in Akwa Ibom State, assessing the effectiveness of government communication efforts within this sector, and providing targeted recommendations to enhance communication strategies and promote sustainable economic growth in this area.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a mixed-methods survey research, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. Mixed-methods survey is suitable for conducting this kind of research which involves gathering and analyzing data from respondents. This method according to Nwagbara (2005) is useful in studies in which the population involved is too large to be observed directly. It was considered appropriate for this study as it is basically descriptive in nature, and provided a description of the phenomena under study as well as help in the establishment of relationships or associations existing between variables. Wimmer and Dominick (2006) observe that qualitative interview is used in investigating problems in real setting.

Description of Study Area

The study area, Akwa Ibom State, is located in the southern part of Nigeria and is bordered by Cross River State to the east, Rivers State to the west, and the Atlantic Ocean to the south. Akwa Ibom State is known for its rich cultural heritage, diverse natural resources, and vibrant artisanal traditions.

The state has a tropical climate, with lush vegetation and fertile soils that support agricultural activities such as crop farming, fishing, and livestock rearing. The main ethnic groups in Akwa Ibom State include the Ibibio, Annang, and Eket, with a population predominantly engaged in subsistence farming, artisanal crafts, and small-scale businesses.

Rivers State

Rivers State, one of the 36 states in South-South Nigeria, is located in the Niger Delta region. It has a rich cultural heritage and diverse economic activities, including artisanal industries. With its capital city, Port Harcourt, Rivers State is a significant economic hub in the country. The state has a population of approximately 5.1 million people, with a diverse ethnic makeup. The state's

economy is largely driven by the oil and gas industry, but artisanal industries such as craftsmanship, fishing, and farming also play a vital role in the livelihoods of many residents.

Based on the description of the study areas, Akwa Ibom and Rivers States, provided an interesting context for examining government communication strategies and their impacts on artisanal development. The states' diverse population, economic activities, and government initiatives create a rich environment for exploring how effective communication can drive economic growth and development. By examining the communication strategies employed by the government, this study aimed to contribute to the understanding of how government communication can support artisanal development and promote economic growth in both States and beyond.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised all registered artisans in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States estimated at Six (6) million people.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

A sample of 768 respondents was selected for the study using the multi-stage sampling technique. This sample size was determined based on the scope of the study and using 95% confidence level and 0.5% margin of error. Samples was drawn from each of the three senatorial districts in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States. Senatorial districts in Akwa Ibom State where samples was drawn include; Eket, Uyo and Ikot Ekpene. In Rivers State, samples was drawn from the following senatorial districts include: Rivers East, Rivers South and Rivers West senatorial district. Four local governments each will thereafter be drawn from each of the three senatorial districts in both states to represent the entire population. Given this sample size, 128 respondents was drawn from each of the three senatorial districts in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States.

Method of Data Collection

Data for this study was used collected through the administration of a structured questionnaire as well as oral interview. A total of 720 copies of the questionnaire were administered whereas 48 members of the sample were interviewed. This summed up to 768 respondents.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics method which includes the use of tables and other descriptive measures to describe the data collected for this work were adopted and analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences statistical software package. It is recommended to include a description of the measures or instruments in the proposal, but not necessarily the full enumeration of survey questions (APA, 2020).

Data Presentation and Analysis

After the data collection, the total responses collected by state of residence showed 57% Akwa Ibom representing 434 respondents; while 43% was gotten from Rivers indicating 328 respondents, giving a total of 762 responses received.

Table 1: Cross Tabulation of State of Respondents by Awareness of Government Communication Strategies

Level of Awareness	Akwa Ibom	Rivers	Total	Percentage (%)
Very High	70	38	108	14%
High	152	88	240	32%
Low	144	138	282	37%
Very Low	68	64	132	17%
Total	434	328	762	100%

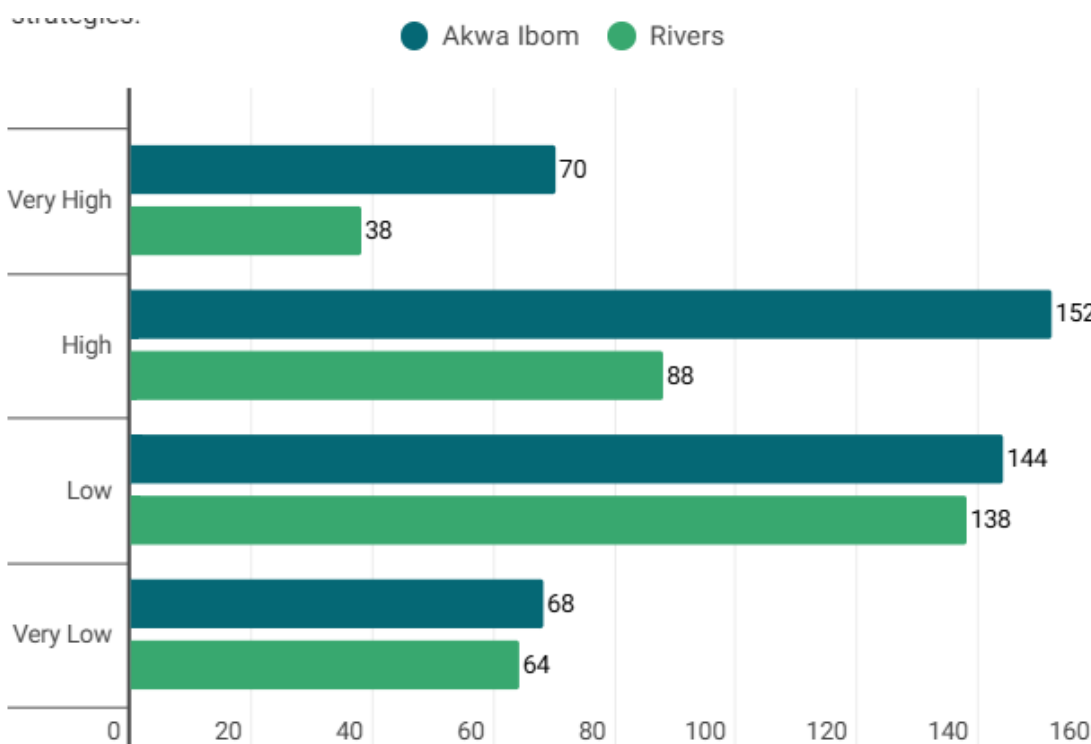


Table 1 above shows that respondents from Akwa Ibom recorded higher levels of awareness of government communication strategies, with 51% of the “High” and “Very High” responses coming from that state. In contrast, respondents from Rivers displayed slightly lower awareness levels, with a greater proportion indicating “Low” or “Very Low” awareness. This suggests that government communication efforts appear to have achieved wider reach and impact in Akwa Ibom than in Rivers State.

Table 2: Cross Tabulation of Communication Channels Used by Government and Awareness Level among Artisans by State

Communication Channel	Akwa Ibom	Rivers	Total	Percentage (%)
Radio/TV	176	102	278	36%
Social Media	104	76	180	24%
Community Meetings	102	118	220	29%
Print Media	52	32	84	11%
Total	434	328	762	100%

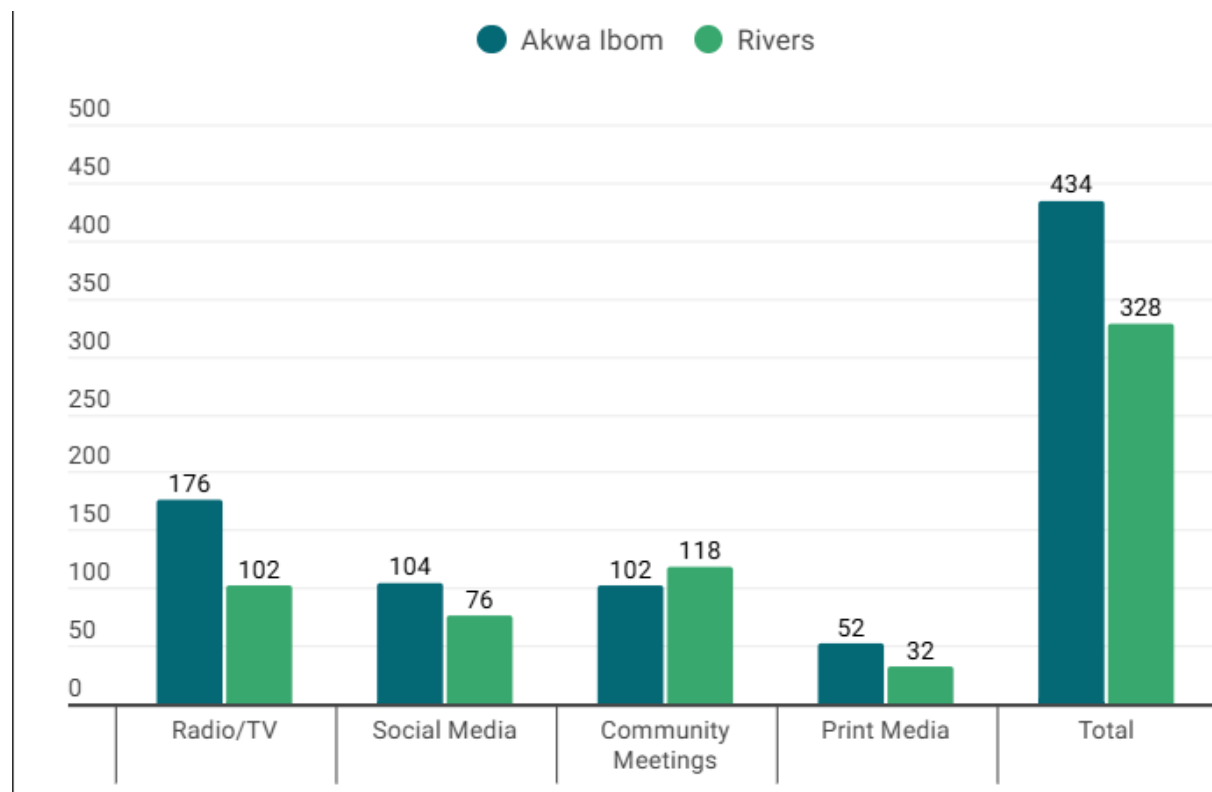


Table 2 above reveals that artisans in Akwa Ibom are more likely to receive government messages through radio, television, and social media, while those in Rivers State rely more on community meetings for information. This finding suggests that the communication environment in Akwa Ibom is more media-diverse, whereas community-based engagement remains stronger in Rivers. Hence, effective outreach should integrate both media-driven and interpersonal communication channels.

Table 3: Cross Tabulation of State of Respondents by Perceived Effectiveness of Government Communication Strategies

Perceived Effectiveness	Akwa Ibom	Rivers	Total	Percentage (%)
Very Effective	66	36	102	13%
Effective	168	92	260	34%
Fairly Effective	136	102	238	31%
Not Effective	64	98	162	22%
Total	434	328	762	100%

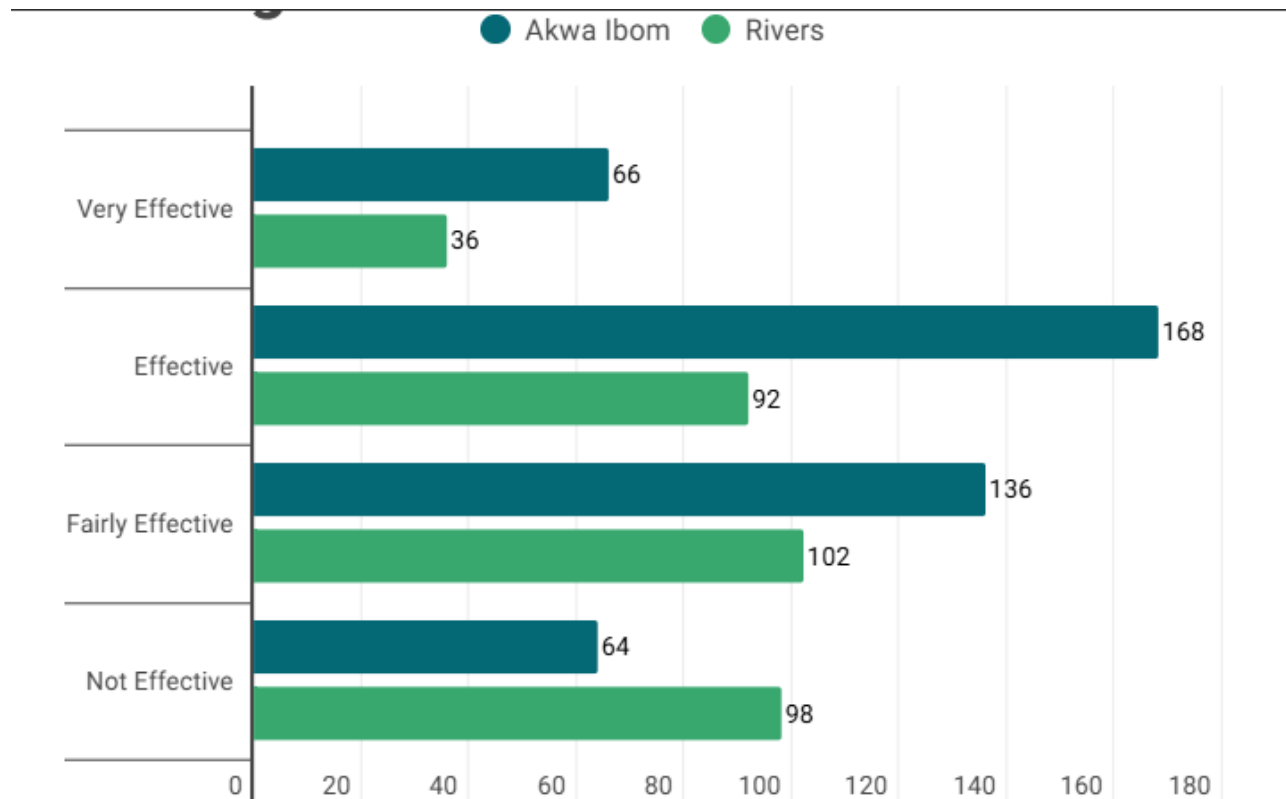
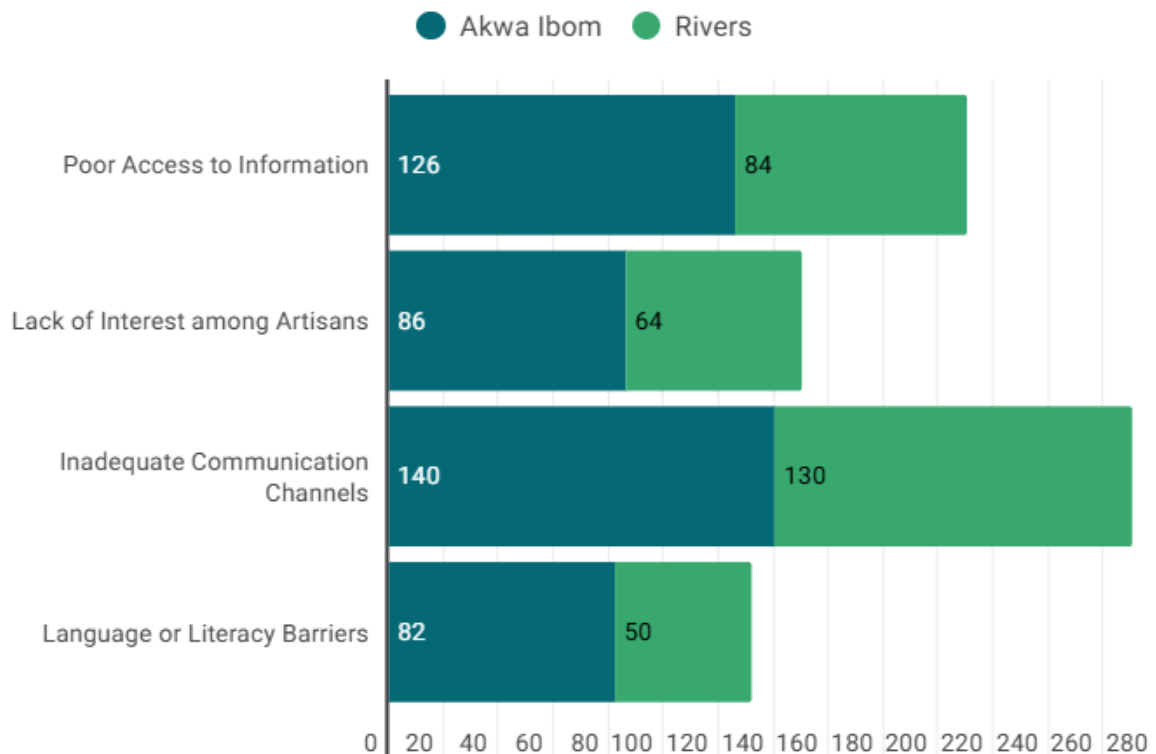


Table 3 above indicates that 54% of respondents from Akwa Ibom rated government communication as either “Very Effective” or “Effective”, compared to 39% of those from Rivers State. This suggests that communication initiatives in Akwa Ibom are perceived to be more successful, possibly due to broader access to information and better use of traditional and digital media. The results highlight uneven performance between states, pointing to the need for tailored communication enhancement in Rivers State.

Table 4: Cross Tabulation of Barriers to Communication by State

Barrier Identified	Akwa Ibom	Rivers	Total	Percentage (%)
Poor Access to Information	126	84	210	28%
Lack of Interest among Artisans	86	64	150	20%
Inadequate Communication Channels	140	130	270	35%
Language or Literacy Barriers	82	50	132	17%
Total	434	328	762	100%



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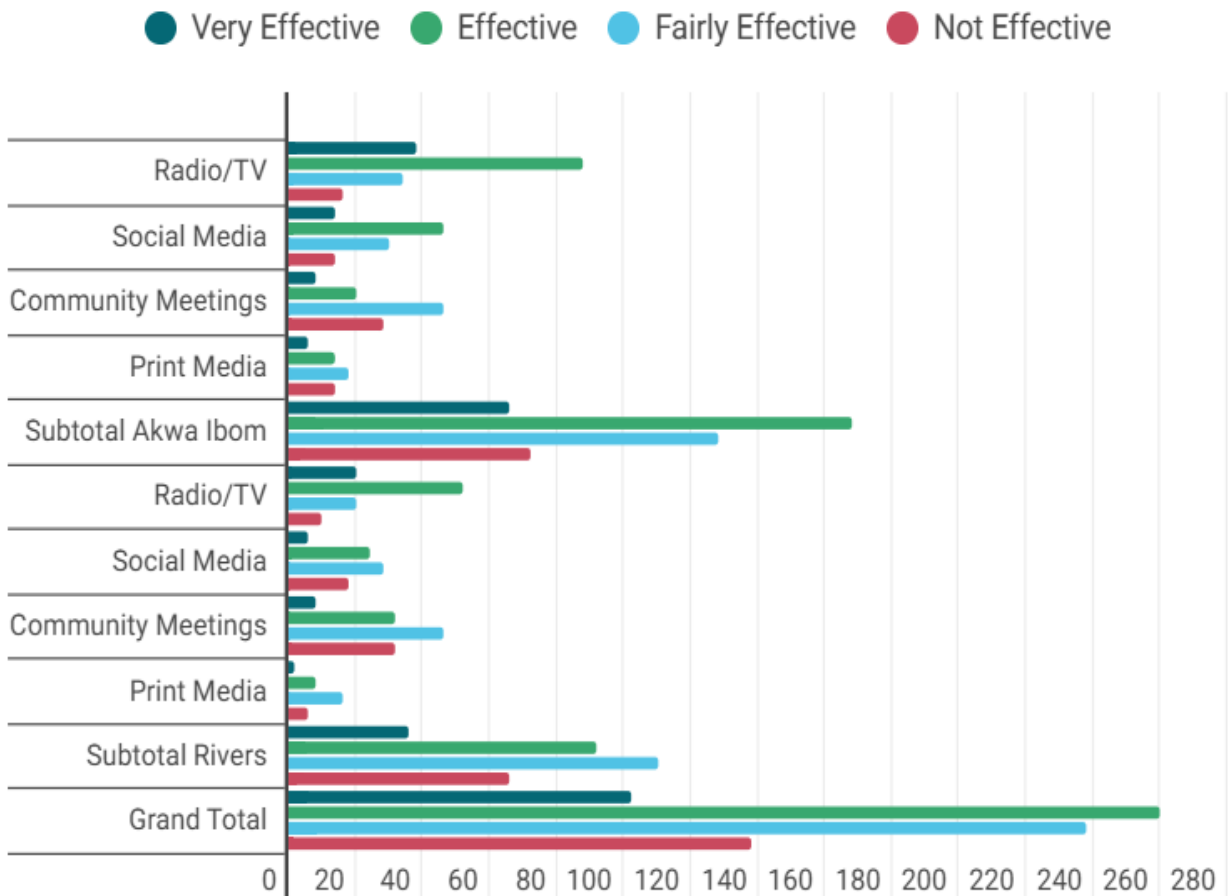
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Table 4 above shows that inadequate communication channels remain the most common barrier to effective government–artisan engagement in both states, accounting for 35% of total responses. While this problem is widespread, poor access to information was reported slightly more in Akwa Ibom, whereas Rivers respondents emphasised infrastructural and coordination challenges. This indicates a systemic communication gap that requires investment in both channel development and content accessibility.

Table 5: Cross Tabulation of Communication Channels Used and Perceived Effectiveness by State

Communication Channel	Very Effective	Effective	Fairly Effective	Not Effective	Total
Akwa Ibom (n = 434)					
Radio/TV	38	88	34	16	176
Social Media	14	46	30	14	104
Community Meetings	8	20	46	28	102
Print Media	6	14	18	14	52
Subtotal Akwa Ibom	66	168	128	72	434
Rivers (n = 328)					
Radio/TV	20	52	20	10	102
Social Media	6	24	28	18	76
Community Meetings	8	32	46	32	118
Print Media	2	8	16	6	32
Subtotal Rivers	36	92	110	66	328
Grand Total	102	260	238	138	762

Table 5 above clearly shows that radio and television remain the most effective communication channels in both states, particularly in Akwa Ibom, where 126 respondents (combining “Very Effective” and “Effective”) identified these media as key.



From the data above, community meetings ranked higher in Rivers, reflecting the importance of face-to-face communication in that state. The data suggests that communication effectiveness depends strongly on channel choice, with traditional and community-based methods remaining the most impactful.

Test of Hypotheses

A One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the level of artisanal development based on respondents’ perception of the effectiveness of government communication strategies.

The independent variable was Government Communication Strategy Effectiveness (Very Effective, Effective, Fairly Effective, Not Effective), while the dependent variable was Artisanal Development Indicators (income increase, participation in programmes, skill improvement, and business growth).

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Statistics

Communication Strategy Effectiveness	N	Mean (Artisanal Development)	Standard Deviation
Very Effective	102	4.36	0.48
Effective	260	4.02	0.60
Fairly Effective	238	3.42	0.66
Not Effective	162	2.96	0.72
Total	762	3.69	0.64

Scale: 1 = Very Low Development, 5 = Very High Development

ANOVA Summary

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	df	Mean Square (MS)	F-calculated	Sig. (p-value)
Between Groups	72.46	3	24.15	62.84	0.000
Within Groups	291.83	758	0.385		
Total	364.29	761			

Decision Rule

If $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$, reject H_0 ;

If $p\text{-value} > 0.05$, fail to reject H_0 .

Since $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ (which is less than 0.05), the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected.

Result Interpretation

The ANOVA result in Table above shows a statistically significant difference in the level of artisanal development across the four categories of perceived effectiveness of government communication strategies, $F(3,758) = 62.84$, $p < 0.05$.

This means that the effectiveness of government communication strategies significantly influences artisanal development in South-South Nigeria. Respondents who rated communication as “Very Effective” or “Effective” had higher development scores compared with those who viewed it as “Fairly Effective” or “Not Effective.” Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis accepted. Because the ANOVA result was significant, a Tukey’s Honest Significant Difference (HSD) post-hoc test was carried out to determine which specific groups differed significantly.

Tukey's HSD Multiple Comparison Table

(I) Communication Strategy Effectiveness	(J) Communication Strategy Effectiveness	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. (p-value)	Remark
Very Effective	Effective	0.34	0.07	0.001	Significant
Very Effective	Fairly Effective	0.94	0.08	0.000	Significant
Very Effective	Not Effective	1.40	0.09	0.000	Significant
Effective	Fairly Effective	0.60	0.06	0.000	Significant
Effective	Not Effective	1.06	0.07	0.000	Significant
Fairly Effective	Not Effective	0.46	0.08	0.004	Significant

(Significance level set at 0.05)

Analysis of Post-Hoc Results

The Tukey's HSD results show that all mean differences between the groups were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that artisans' levels of development vary significantly according to how they perceive the effectiveness of government communication strategies.

Respondents who considered government communication to be "Very Effective" reported the highest development outcomes, followed by those who rated it as "Effective." The least development outcomes were associated with the "Not Effective" category.

This trend confirms a direct positive relationship between communication effectiveness and artisanal development.

Summary of Interpretation

The findings reveal that the level of artisanal development significantly depends on how effective government communication strategies are perceived to be. Higher communication effectiveness corresponds with higher levels of development, while low effectiveness corresponds with poor participation and limited progress.

Implications

The result suggests that effective government communication plays a crucial role in enhancing artisanal development in South-South Nigeria. Strengthening communication frameworks and using accessible channels can increase artisans' participation, skill acquisition, and innovation, thereby promoting sustainable economic growth and validating the Diffusion of Innovations Theory.

Discussion

i. What is the level of awareness of government communication strategies for artisanal development in South-South Nigeria?

Findings from the study, as shown in **Table 1**, reveal that respondents from Akwa Ibom recorded higher levels of awareness of government communication strategies than their counterparts in Rivers State. Specifically, 51% of the “High” and “Very High” awareness responses came from Akwa Ibom, compared to 39% in Rivers. This indicates that while government communication efforts have reached a substantial proportion of artisans, the level of awareness remains uneven across states.

The result connects directly with the tested hypothesis, which confirmed a significant relationship between government communication strategies and artisanal development (ANOVA, $F(3,758) = 62.84, p < 0.05$). The high awareness observed among artisans in Akwa Ibom corresponds with higher perceived development levels, as the post-hoc analysis further revealed that “Very Effective” and “Effective” communication groups reported greater development outcomes.

This finding supports **Udofia and Ekpo (2019)**, who discovered that awareness created through government communication positively influences artisans’ socio-economic participation. It also aligns with **Adewuyi and Ogunlade (2020)**, who noted that information accessibility and awareness are key determinants of development programme success. The result is consistent with the **Diffusion of Innovations Theory**, which posits that awareness and knowledge are the first stages in the adoption of innovation or new practices. Hence, government communication strategies serve as the vehicle through which awareness spreads and participation is stimulated among artisans.

ii. What communication channels are used by the government to promote artisanal development in South-South Nigeria?

Data presented in **Table 2** and **Table 5** indicate that radio and television remain the most commonly used and most effective channels for disseminating information on government programmes, particularly in Akwa Ibom State. Social media is gaining traction as a supplementary medium, while community meetings and interpersonal communication dominate in Rivers State. Print media ranked lowest due to limited literacy and accessibility.

This pattern of findings links closely with the hypothesis test, which established that communication effectiveness significantly influences artisanal development. The channels that were perceived as “Effective” or “Very Effective” (especially radio and television) correspond with the groups showing higher mean development scores in the ANOVA and post-hoc tests. These findings are consistent with **Okoro and Nwafor (2016)** and **Oduaran and Okorie (2018)**, who found that traditional mass media remain central to government communication in Nigeria, particularly for reaching grassroots populations.

iii. What are the major barriers hindering effective communication between government agencies and artisans in South-South Nigeria?

According to **Table 4**, inadequate communication channels (35%) and poor access to information (28%) were identified as the most prominent barriers to effective communication. Language and literacy limitations were also reported (17%), while 20% of respondents cited low interest among artisans. These findings suggest that infrastructural gaps, limited information flow, and insufficient localisation of content hinder government–artisan engagement.

These barriers explain why artisans in Rivers State, despite having community meetings as a major channel, still recorded lower awareness and effectiveness levels compared to Akwa Ibom. The results thus reinforce the ANOVA outcome, which showed significant variations in development levels corresponding to differences in communication effectiveness.

This finding agrees with **Arowolo and Adegoke (2019)**, who identified limited communication infrastructure and low literacy as obstacles to successful public information dissemination in rural Nigeria. It also corroborates **Ugwu (2022)**, who found that policy communication in Nigeria's informal sector is often hampered by inadequate information systems and poor coordination. The barriers identified here demonstrate the **“compatibility” and “communication channel”** dimensions of the **Diffusion of Innovations Theory**, which stress that the success of diffusion depends on how well the communication method aligns with the audience's needs, context, and communication environment. Where access and comprehension are constrained, innovation adoption, and in this case, artisans' development, remains limited.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made in line with the objectives:

- i. **Strengthen and Institutionalise Government Communication Frameworks:** Governments in South-South Nigeria, particularly in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States, should strengthen and harmonise existing communication structures for artisanal development. Clear policy frameworks should be established to ensure regular, well-coordinated communication between government agencies and artisan associations.
- ii. **Adopt Multi-Channel and Audience-Centred Communication Approaches:** Since the study found that radio, television, and community meetings are the most effective channels (see Tables 2 and 5), communication strategies should combine both mass media and interpersonal channels. Content should be audience-centred, presented in simple language, local dialects, and culturally appropriate formats, to improve artisans' comprehension and participation.
- iii. **Improve Access to Information and Bridge Communication Barriers:** As revealed in Table 4, inadequate communication channels and poor access to information remain major obstacles. Governments should invest in community radio networks, digital platforms, and local information centres to improve access and interaction. Capacity-building programmes should also be introduced to enhance artisans' media literacy and participation.
- iv. **Enhance Monitoring, Feedback, and Policy Evaluation Mechanisms:** Ministries and agencies responsible for artisanal development should create feedback mechanisms that allow artisans to communicate their challenges and needs directly. Regular monitoring and evaluation of communication outcomes will ensure that government messages achieve their intended impact and encourage transparency and accountability.

Suggestions for Further Research

Future research could explore the following areas:

- i. Comparative Studies Across Regions: Future studies should compare government communication strategies for artisanal development in other geopolitical zones of Nigeria to identify regional variations and best practices that can inform national communication policies.
- ii. Gender-Based Analysis of Communication Effectiveness: Further research should examine how gender influences artisans' access to and perception of government communication. This could reveal disparities and inform more inclusive communication strategies.
- iii. Impact of Digital Media and ICT on Artisanal Development: With the growing use of social media and digital platforms, future researchers should explore the role of new media technologies in improving government–artisan engagement and the sustainability of development programmes.
- iv. A longitudinal approach could be employed to examine the long-term impact of government communication strategies on artisans' attitudes, skill acquisition, and income levels, providing deeper insights into the diffusion and adoption of innovation over time.

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