

Diffusion of information framing and catchphrases of political communication for development among secondary students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Akpan Udo Usiere, Topfaith University, Nigeria, usiere2000@yahoo.com,
Brightfortune Udo, Grace City Academy, Eket, Nigeria

* Corresponding authors: Akpan Udo Usiere; usiere2000@yahoo.com

Abstract

Understanding how political communication shapes public perception and engagement is central to the theory and practice of development communication. This is particularly critical among youth populations, such as secondary school students, who are not only future stakeholders but also a present-day barometer for the credibility and efficacy of state-led development messaging. Their responses to political catchphrases reveal the gap between symbolic governance and tangible outcomes, offering vital insights into the processes of social mobilization, political socialization, and the diffusion of innovations. This study aimed to examine the intersection of communication, politics, and development programmes by evaluating the "Completion Agenda" slogan of development campaign in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Focusing on secondary school students, the research was to: determine the frequency of exposure to the campaign; examine the level of perception; and assess the level of participation in the development programmes. Using a descriptive quantitative survey method, a sample of 400 students was drawn from a population of 1,945,112. A structured questionnaire, derived from the study's objectives and research questions, served as the research instrument. Key findings indicated that the frequency of exposure to the development programmes was highly irregular; the students held a negative perception of the campaign, viewing it as a distraction from their studies and their participation was by compulsion rather than voluntary diffusion. The study recommended that the state government: Integrate mainstream media to strategically intensify awareness and understanding among students; engage information communication professionals and the leadership of private organized consultative bodies in designing and managing development catchphrase campaigns; and incentivize participation to foster voluntary involvement in development programmes

Keywords: agenda, campaign, completion, model, participation, slogan

Introduction

There appears to be very minor contentions that the human society has grown and evolved to the status of a global community due to the spate of development in technology and literacy. Equally, government and non-governmental institutions have been in competition to raise and protect the basic rights and lives of people across nations. Part of the basic rights of citizens largely advocated for promotion at most fora have been the opportunity to participate in decision making stages of projects and programmes. Many development projects are being initiated from the government. The desire to partake in taking decisions about projects implementation in communities arise from past experiences of failures of projects. Attempts to solely execute projects by government officials without the involvement of community leaders and stakeholders have not made projects accessible and acceptable.

In developing counties of Nigeria and others, the failing history of development has been ascribed to two major facts: lack of participation and ineffective communication. Even a project that apparently has hopes of wide consensus, may have hidden obstacles and oppositions that the development communication mitigate (Mefalopulos, 2018). Outside being an enablement instrument, communication is applied to encourage publics' involvement in growth events. Predominantly, people can depend on information and facts to answer to prospects and trials of communal, commercial, traditional, governmental and industrial fluctuations. Effective development appears difficult to happen in the lack of active communication. In addition, effective communication can be a clue that development activities are giving benefits.

Against absence of stated proposals and the attendant backdrops in development of states and nations, especially in the context of development communication and the Completion Agenda catchphrase campaign, questions here emerged about how participatory development communication ingredients are infused to reset the orientation, attitude and aspirations of the citizens. This is what propelled this work since government may seem to be doing nothing if the citizens do not know what the government is doing or are not stakeholders in the developmental plans or vice versa.

On the rationale for focusing on secondary school students and its significance for development communication theory, it is noted that while much of the discourse on participatory development communication centers on adults, community leaders, and policymakers, focusing this study on secondary school students is both timely and theoretically relevant. Secondary school students represent a critical social category whose orientation, attitudes, and aspirations are still being shaped. Their cognitive, social, and political consciousness is developing rapidly, making them highly responsive to communication interventions and civic education efforts (Omeje, 2019). Therefore, studying how development communication strategies influence this group offers rich insights into how early civic awareness and participatory culture can be cultivated.

From a development communication standpoint, secondary school students constitute an essential demographic because they are future decision makers, community influencers, and part of the emerging labour force. According to Servaes (2008), sustainable development requires nurturing communication competencies and participatory values across generations, not only among current adult stakeholders. By understanding how government communication particularly the Completion Agenda campaign shapes students' perceptions of governance and development, the study contributes to theoretical discussions on the long-term transmission of participatory norms and intergenerational engagement in development processes.

Furthermore, political socialization literature emphasizes that adolescence is a foundational period for the formation of political attitudes, trust in institutions, and willingness to participate in civic matters (McLeod & Shah, 2009). If development communication is absent, weak, or one-directional at this stage, young citizens may develop apathy or misinformation regarding governmental projects, thereby undermining participatory development goals. This heightens the relevance of examining how communication strategies engage students, who often receive political messages through school programmes, media exposure, and community narratives.

Theoretically, this study extends development communication scholarship by demonstrating how participatory communication principles dialogue, inclusion, empowerment, and feedback operate within a youth population. It shows whether these principles can foster civic readiness, enhance trust in government initiatives, and promote early participation in community development.

Thus, focusing on secondary school students is significant because it enables the research to: identify how early exposure to development communication shapes civic consciousness, evaluate whether young people understand, appreciate, and internalize participatory ideals promoted by government development frameworks; contribute to theory by highlighting youth as an emerging and underserved stakeholder group in development communication research; strengthen the argument that sustainable development requires communication strategies that target not only adults but also future community actors. By illuminating these dimensions, the study provides academic value to development communication theory and addresses a notable gap in existing research, which often overlooks the role of adolescents in participatory communication dynamics.

Statement of the Problem

The Akwa Ibom State government began the second term of administration on 29th May 2020 with a template for legacy projects under the broad theme, ‘The Completion Agenda’. The aim of ‘*The completion agenda*’ was to offer smooth-edged attitude to proposals of economic development ambition, safekeeping, infrastructure, air travel development, farming, human capability, and small and medium scale expansion as well as countryside improvement. It was also to facilitate the process of completion of the Maintenance Repairs and Overhaul (MRO) hanger, the coconut plant, the modular factory, the creation of a Free Trade Zone (FTZ) by way of more businesses for additional work chances.

In order to ease the acceptance of the agenda, the state government with the backing of the World Bank began the completion agenda expedition and catchphrase campaign. It was initiated as a learning platform for students in public schools to appreciate the development projects and communicate the message to their parents and guardians for innovative experiences. Starting from the education sector, in May 2021 government originated the inaugural ceremony of ventures to reflect the sixth birthday of the regime. Among the first set of projects commissioned related to education. Under the exposition campaign, at least 600 students in 10 public schools of each senatorial district had their students on excursion, and tours to have a reality of industrialization and be inspired to work in such industries.

In spite of the of the investments in the secondary schools and a huge budget of N26 million for advocacy programmes against cultism, examination malpractice, indecent dressing, HIV/AIDS some schools were indirectly converted to centers of hooliganism rather than training centers for vocations and business entrepreneurship starters. Between 2019 and 2020, after the commencement of the campaign, 111 students were rather placed on suspension and government was forced to shut some of the schools due to acts of cultism. Teachers, security agents and passerby were not spared from injuries while furniture and science equipment, farms were randomly damaged.

The diversion of attention from learning and utilizing the opportunities of the completion agenda expository campaign showed that the students were not in tune with the government programmes. It showed a disparity, perhaps out of some measures which may not have been put in place to ensure the acceptance of the programme on the part of the students. Participation in social programmes demand for sincerity, transparency, accountability and effective communication to involve the beneficiaries in the definition of an initiative, and innovations. From the above, the statement of the problem is whether there was any appropriate model of development communication in the Completion Agenda Expository campaigns catchphrases to integrate the students in the visions, implementation, and acceptance of innovations in education projects and programmes.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this work is on communication and information diffusion of development programmes by an appraisal of the completion agenda development campaigns catchphrases by students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:

1. find out the frequency of exposure to the completion agenda development campaign catchphrases among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria
2. examine the level of perception about the completion agenda development catchphrases campaign among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria
3. ascertain the level of participation by the diffusion of the completion agenda development campaign catchphrases among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom state, Nigeria.

The justification of this work is based on the assumption that it can aid the political class in planning the model of development catchphrases to the public especially by understanding the need of defining messages to suit different ages. In addition, this work was undertaken on the presumption that it can help school administrators to know the level of partnership with public officers in addressing development messages for the new generations. This work has the potential of helping to add literature scripts for research in communication and general social service.

Hypotheses

H_0 (Null hypothesis): There is no perfect relationship between the perception to development catchphrases and response to participation among students in Akwa Ibom State in Nigeria.

H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a perfect relationship between the perception to development catchphrases and response to participation among students in Akwa Ibom State in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Development Communication

Development communication has been considered to involve the planned practice of giving out messages for the elimination of community difficulties in budding cultures. Hence, it is about interrogating the contributions of media in heartening or preventing social transformation. This means that the exclusion of media can be tantamount to embarking on an endless development voyage. In addition, developmental strides would entirely be stagnated without the contributory roles of the media.

Development communication is the distribution of information intended to getting an agreement for deeds that justify the benefits, desires and capabilities entirely. Development communication is also the purposive and strategic use of interpersonal, participatory and mediated channels to support positive change among individuals and societies at the micro and macro levels (Sharma, 2017).

Development is a procedure that permits groups to express their ambitions and anxieties, and share in the decisions that transmit to their progress. Therefore, development communication can just be assumed an exploit of taking part in doings that stresses on the wants of the individuals at diverse stages, taking into reason their apprehensions, reception and efforts in the direction of attaining whole collaboration and backing for refining living.

Development communication as a social process based on dialogue using a broad range of tools and methods. It is similarly about looking for transformation at all levels by paying attention, raising confidence, sharing information and talents, constructing strategies and educating for persistent and significant change (Biski, 2018). Development is a widely participatory process of social change in a society, intended to bring about both social and material advancement, including greater equality, freedom, and other valued qualities for the majority of people through their gaining greater control over their environment (Dagron, 2009).

Development messaging is the practice of liberation in an orderly or tactical mode using the mass channels of newsprints, wireless, telephony, audiovisual, and the online, or educational models of adult training and literacy for the purpose of positive social change. The change could be economic, personal, social, cultural, or political (Gerxhani & Breemen, 2018).

This view reechoes the position that the obvious reason is that media as channels of communication are operated by human beings to serve social interest of people as development communication cannot be directed against those for whom development programme are initiated for, rather, it can be directed for the creation of understanding and awareness (Akpan & Aniema, 2025). Thus, the above emphasized that communication work for development of the people to conduct events, live and also create news. On building democracy development principles, as a system of government, whatever is regarded as the tenets are only made known to people through the media. Nobody would know anything about democracy from origin, concepts, founding fathers, operations, acceptance, rejection, achievements or failures where the media does not exist. Therefore, the existence of the media and the existence of democracy cannot be discussed at the exclusion of one another.

Models of development communication

Modernization, dependency, participation, social marketing and media advocacy are the dominant models of development communication.

Modernization Paradigm: Modernization theory equates development with economic growth. Communication in this paradigm is basically associated with the linear, mass media model aimed at transmitting information and messages from one point to another or many others, usually in a vertical or top-down fashion and aimed at modernizing backward countries and their people (Ukwandu, 2017).

The Dependency Model: is entrenched in the typical media-centric notion of messages and claims that the imbalances in the world 's state of affairs were mainly owing to the international division of labour and to the continuation of past patterns of domination. The proponents vigorously supported rethinking the communication agenda along the lines of a more balanced flow of communication at the international level (Hout, 2016).

Participatory Model to Development: this approach requires a shift in the way individuals are considered, from passive recipients to active agents of development efforts. This approach to development gives special attention to communication and underscores that no participation without communication, at least without a certain type of communication (Wilson, 2020).

Social Marketing Approach: focuses on behavior change, understanding of communication as persuasion (transmission of information), and top-down approach to instrument change suggested an affinity with modernization and diffusion of innovation theories. Media advocacy adopts a participatory approach and emphasizes the need of communities to gain control and power to transform their environments (Weinreich, 2006).

Communication and public participation

Public participation or citizens' participation is an activity or initiative led by public institutions for public good. The centrality of communication to the promotion of good governance and citizens' participation is an acceptable principle internationally. The contributions of communication are confirmed in nations that preserve the rule of law, which stretches the supremacy of the law over all other considerations (Baum, 2001).

Communication plays a serious part in improving citizen contributions; providing a podium for public discussion about the delivery, implementation and restraints of power. In other words, actions carried out by office holders are scrutinized and assessed through public communication opportunities.

Empirical Review

A study was carried on Personal factors and student's conformity to school rules in Akwa Ibom North-East senatorial district (Akarowhe & Effiong, 2020). Deciding on the effect of personal elements on student's acceptance of school rules it answered two enquiries and testing two null hypotheses at .05 level of significance on 19,272 students in Akwa Ibom North-East senatorial district with a sample of 213 students. The results shown that gender had low effect; and age had high influence on student's traditional respects to school instructions.

Another work is an alternative approaches to community participation beyond formal structures: an evidence from Langa within the municipality of Cape Town examined alternative approaches to participation based on research conducted in Langa – a township situated on the Cape Flats of Cape Town (Adana, 2017). The paper highlighted approaches to residents' participation in planning tested during the 'interregnum' – the period when ward committees are in abeyance due to elections. The study found that, while IDP participatory processes facilitated awareness of participation, ward councillors were crucial in operationalising participation that reflects the diversity of the community.

The gaps are that in the scope, the first and the second work were carried out within a specific zone of the North East and a municipality only whereas this particular work was spread to cover 31 local government areas of a state. In the objectives, the first work had only two enquiries while this present work has been expanded to three objectives. The target respondents of the second work were not person from the academic society whereas this particular work revolved around students only. The first work had variables of gender and age but this particular work centers on frequency of exposure, participation and perception of the students as target respondents.

Theoretical framework

Stakeholder Theory

The stakeholder theory by Edward Freeman in "strategic management: a stakeholder approach" came in 1984. The theory emphasizes the creation of shared understanding by a development organizer, such as the government, administrative establishments or non-governmental institutions with expected interested parties in the advocacy and execution of development plans. The theory contends that development objectives must be pursued with the development priorities of benefiting stakeholders in mind (Heath, 2014, Bhasin, 2020).

Agenda Setting Theory

This theory was propounded by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972. The theory is based on the rules that the media selects and forms what we see than just reproducing messages to the users. The next assumption is that the more attention the media gives to an issue, the more likely the public will consider that issue to be important (Zain, 2014).

Materials and Methods

This work took a descriptive assessment process through survey. The motivation for it was due to the position that it can give the value of investigation, the implication of outcome arising from the general populace and is a well-organized technique of collecting statistics to address a study question. Survey design is a method frequently adopted when conducting a study on a huge population particularly on a current matter that involve orderly collection of data by questionnaire (Bello & Ajayi, 2010).

The population of the study comprises all public secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State. In the 3 senatorial districts which stands at 1,945,112 from 260 public secondary schools and distributed in Uyo senatorial district at 583,534 students across 78 schools, in Eket senatorial district with 763,082 students across 102 schools, and in Ikot Ekpene senatorial district with 598,496 students across 80 schools (Premium Times; 2018, Akwa Ibom Socio economic Data 2020).

The sampling method of this research was adopted from the sample size Table of (Isreal, 1992) formula with 5% confidence level. The table shows that the ideal sample size of 400 persons or items can be taken in a population size from 100,000 persons and above. The sample size of this work was further determined using the formula of Yamane (1967) for calculation of sample size from a finite population at a 5% margin of error. The formula is $n = N / 1 + N(e)^2$.

n = sample size

N = total population 1,945,112

e = margin of error 5% or 0.05,

$n = 1,945,112/1 + 1,945,112(0.052)$

$n = 1,945,112/1 + 1,945,112(0.0025)$

$n = 1,945,112/1 + 4,862.78$

$n = 1,945,112/4,863.78 = 399.91$

$n = 400$

Instrument of Research and Distribution

The instrument of research was a simple questionnaire with 14 closed ended intentional questions to answer the research variables raised. The 400 copies of questionnaire were distributed proportionately to students in the 3 senatorial districts or local government councils. The questionnaires were distributed proportionately such that Uyo senatorial district had 120 copies, Eket had 157 copies, and Ikot Ekpene senatorial district had 123 copies. With the voluntary assistance of Heads of schools, the specific number of students per each of the senatorial districts were met at the senatorial headquarters the same day by 3 different research assistants. The retrieval was also done the same day. This method confirmed the implementation of the allocation across the 3 senatorial districts by convenience procedure which significantly justified fair distribution, objectivity in the response and a high rate of potential confidentiality of the respondents. Importantly, informed consents was made on the introductory part of the questionnaire which clearly stated the purpose of the research, and how the data was to be used only for academic purposes.

For purposes of clarity, the research instrument used for this study was a self-developed questionnaire, designed specifically to measure the key variables arising from the research questions and objectives. The items were generated after an extensive review of relevant literature on development communication, participatory development, civic orientation, and youth engagement. This literature review provided conceptual clarity and helped ensure that the instrument reflected commonly accepted constructs and indicators within the field.

Since the population consisted of secondary school students, the language of the instrument was simplified to prevent misinterpretation. Questions were arranged from general to specific to encourage participation and reduce respondent fatigue. Although the items were closed-ended, some responses were later coded into categories using frequency counts and percentages to identify the most recurring themes. This method ensured that the qualitative responses gave summaries quantitatively for ease of interpretation.

Validity of the Instrument

To ensure the robustness of the instrument, content validity was assessed using the Percentage Agreement Method, which is commonly used in instrument validation for educational and social research (Abubakar, 2016). Two experts in communication and measurement reviewed 40 copies of the draft instrument. They evaluated clarity, relevance, structure, and alignment with the research objectives. Out of the 40 items reviewed, they agreed on 36. The content validity score was therefore: $36/40 \times 100 = 90\%$. This agreement demonstrated strong content validity, indicating that the items were appropriate, clear, and adequately representative of the constructs being measured.

Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability was addressed through two approaches: The first was the use of Internal Consistency Check: After expert review, items were re-examined for duplication, ambiguity, or overlapping constructs. Although the instrument comprised mostly closed-ended items, internal consistency was ensured by removing confusing or repetitive items during the refinement process. Second, the reliability test was done through Expert Reliability Endorsement: The experts confirmed that the instrument was stable, context-appropriate, and likely to yield consistent responses under similar conditions. Given the clear structure, alignment with literature, expert review, and coding procedures, the instrument met acceptable standards of reliability, clarity, and applicability for a descriptive survey in social science research.

Ethical Considerations

Through the voluntary assistance of the heads of schools, the students were briefed in groups that the information to be received from them would only be used for academic purposes only. This was an aspect of consent for participation of the students from the respective schools. Additionally, since the study involved secondary school students who are minors, ethical compliance required obtaining formal permission from the appropriate authorities. Hence, prior to data collection, official approval was sought and obtained from the Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Education, which is the recognized regulatory body overseeing public secondary schools in the state. This approval granted the researchers access to the schools and authorized interactions with students strictly for academic research purposes.

Following the Ministry's approval, the heads of the participating schools provided institutional consent on behalf of the students and confirmed that the study posed no risk to normal school activities. Furthermore, students were informed orally and through the introductory section of the questionnaire that participation was voluntary, that no personal identifying information would be recorded, and that their responses would be used solely for academic purposes.

Results

The results are presented in frequency tables and bar charts using descriptive statistics and inferential analysis which helps to know the frequencies and consistencies of respondents to each of the questions in the questionnaire.

Table 1 Gender distribution of respondents (students)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Masculine	196	49%
Feminine	204	51%
Total	400	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

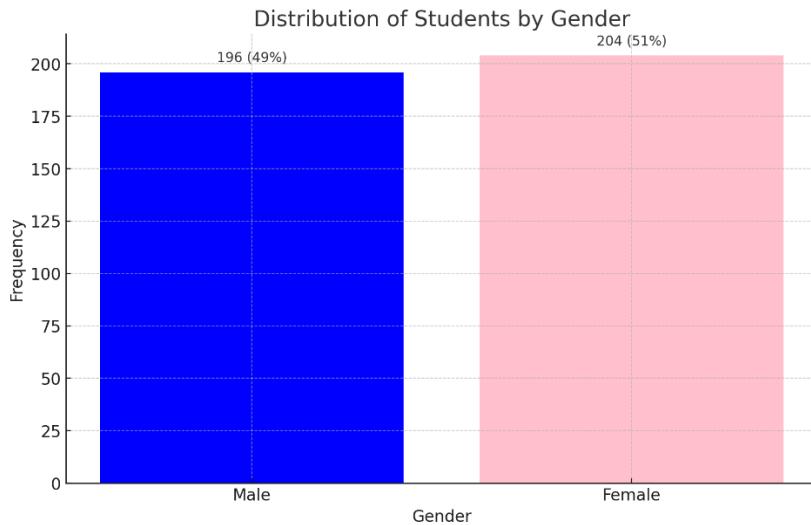


Figure 1 Distribution of Students by Gender

Table 1 above shows that 196 or 49% of students responded to the questionnaires were male while 204 of them representing 51% were female. The difference was minimal indicating that both genders engage in educational activities at close range.

Table 2 Frequency of Students exposure to completion agenda catchphrases

Frequency of Exposure	Students	Percentage
Very Very Regular	-	-%
Very Regular	40	10%
Regular	16	4%
Very Irregular	344	86%
Total	400	100

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

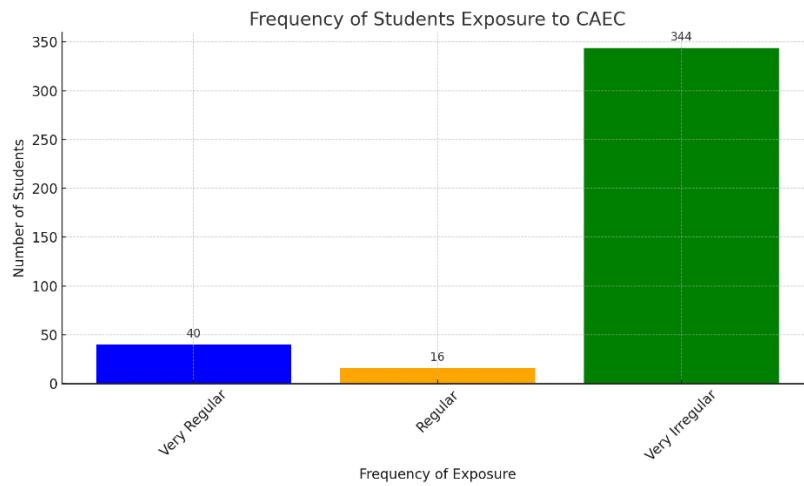


Figure 2 Frequency of Students Exposure to CAEC

Table 2 shows the responses of students to the frequency of exposure to the completion agenda expository campaign. From the table, 344 or 86% of students agreed that the campaign was very irregular against the least response of 40 or 10 % that it was very regular. The implication is that not many of the students were exposed or given opportunity of understanding the campaign.

Table 3 The perception of students to completion agenda expository campaign catchphrases

Perception	Students	%
Instructional	36	9%
Mental/Skill Development	13	3%
Distractions	351	88%
Total	400	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

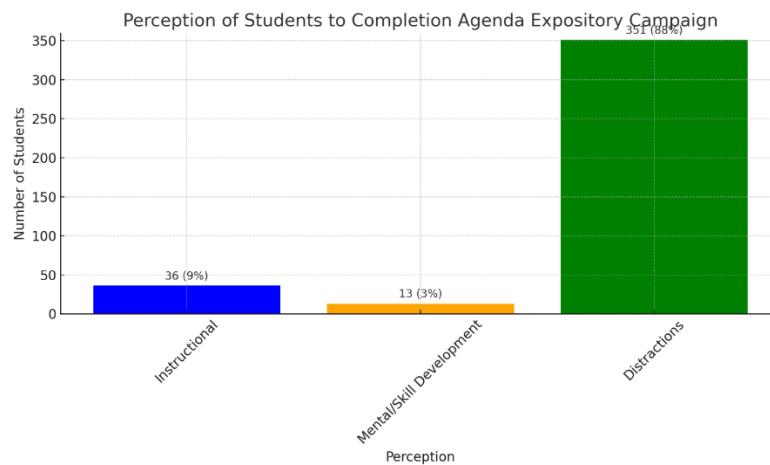


Figure 3 Perception of Students to Completion Agenda Expository Campaign

Table 3 displays that perception was that of distraction rather than mental and skill development or instructional. The responses of students showed that 351 or 88% of the students aligned with distractions against mental development at 13 students or 3%.

Table 4 The students' response to participation

Participation	Students	Percentage
Voluntary	21	5%
Parental Directive	74	19%
Compulsory	305	76%
Total	400	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

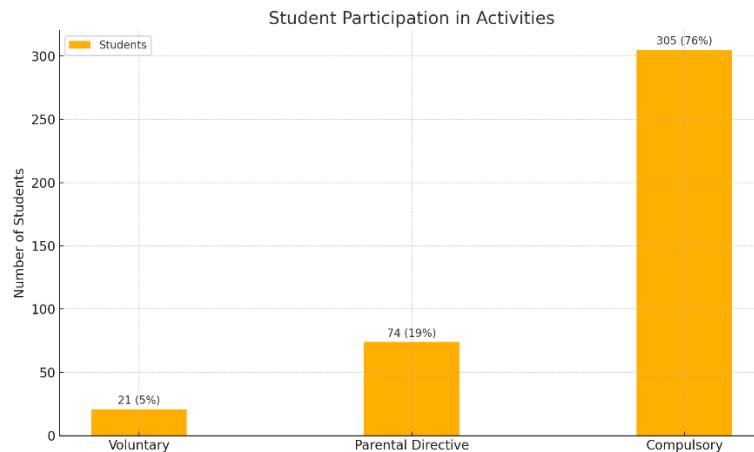


Figure 3 Perception of Students to Completion Agenda Expository Campaign

Table 4 shows data on the response of students to the completion agenda expository campaign. Of those who returned questionnaires, 305 or 76% of them hold that participation was out of compulsion rather than voluntary participation of 21 or 5% of the students. This shows that the students participated out of their will.

Discussion

Discussions were drawn from answers of respondents based on data collected from the students in the respective schools.

RQ1: What was the frequency of students' exposure to the completion agenda catch phrases?

To answer this question, three variables were isolated that is: awareness, observation and satisfaction. The table below shows the responses of respondents to these questions.

From table 2, the frequency was measured in terms of the students being given exposure often and often. Frequency was taken at being very very regular, regular, and very irregular. Data shows that the campaign was exposed to the students irregularly instead of being regular. This is from the responses of 344 or 86% of the students. The irregularity in exposure cannot grant the students adequate moments of understanding the campaign and adopt to the expected level of educating others. This is an affirmation of submissions that reaching the audience with pertinent information using active creativity can support realizing purposes as it is likewise vital to think about regularity, and if to initiate, set aside or stimulate a choice (Nosu 2016, Llewellyn 2021).

RQ2: What was the perception of students to the completion agenda expository campaign?

From the responses of students in Table 2 it was found out that 351 or 88% of the students had perception that the campaign was a distraction to their studies since it was not instructional neither was it for mental and skill development. The implication was that the students failed to pass on any of the positive messages of the campaign to their colleagues who did not partake or parents and the larger society. This acknowledges that when a plan turns out to be more multifaceted, communication has to be extra thorough to guarantee that all the targeted persons are touched positively (Abudi, 2013). He added that communication must be upfront, to keep individuals engaged on an initiative through open communications.

RQ3: What was the response to participation by students in the completion agenda?

In the level of participation, the research identified voluntary, parental directives and compulsion. In the three levels, it was noted that compulsion was rated higher than other variables at 305 or 76%. This means that fewer of the students participated voluntary in the programmes of the completion agenda as well as few students' participation by the directives of parents and guardians. The implication is that the programme was not participatory. Hence, it acted against the position that "participatory approaches in communication encourages discussions, debates and result in increased knowledge and awareness, and a higher level of critical thinking to understand the interplay of forces operating and helping in decisions (Baum, 2008).

In a summary, the findings of this research have that:

1. The frequency of exposure was very irregularly given to the students in the respective excursions to project sites in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.
2. Students had negative perception of completion agenda expository campaign as being a distraction in Akwa Ibom state, Nigeria.
3. The participation level of citizens in the completion agenda of development campaign was based on compulsion from the authorities of the government rather than voluntary acceptance.

Comparisons between the Present Study and Empirical Works Reviewed

The findings from the present study align with, differ from, and extend the earlier empirical studies reviewed in several important ways. First, the present study identified irregular exposure to the completion agenda campaign, with 344 students (86%) reporting that the campaign messages reached them very irregularly. This aligns with the broader communication scholarship that highlights the need for regular and creative audience engagement (Nosu, 2016; Llewellyn, 2021). Unlike the earlier studies reviewed, however, neither Akarowhe & Effiong (2020) nor Adana (2017) measured frequency of exposure to a communicative initiative. This makes the present study unique in focusing on exposure consistency as a variable influencing students' behaviour and perception.

Second, the present study found that students' perception of the campaign was largely negative, with 351 students (88%) describing the completion agenda campaign as a distraction rather than an instructive or developmental initiative. This is consistent with Abudi (2013), who stresses that when programmes become complex and lack clear instructional value, audiences are likely to disengage. Yet compared to Akarowhe & Effiong (2020), whose study examined student response based on personal factors such as gender and age, the present work differed by focusing on perception shaped by programme content and communication quality, not by demographic variables. Similarly, whereas Adana (2017) showed that community participation improves when communication is deliberate and inclusive, the present study reveals that poor content perception produced the opposite effect by disengagement and the failure of message diffusion among students.

Third, regarding students' participation in the Completion Agenda, the present study found that compulsion (76%) ranked higher than voluntary participation or parental directives. This sharply contrasts with Baum's (2008) assertion that participation should be voluntary, inclusive, and discussion-oriented for communication to be effective. Neither Akarowhe & Effiong (2020) nor Adana (2017) measured participation in terms of compulsion versus voluntarism. Akarowhe & Effiong focused on the influence of personal factors on conformity to school rules, while Adana assessed community involvement through alternative mechanisms in participatory planning. The present study, therefore, makes an important contribution by uncovering how non-participatory, compulsory involvement suppresses the communicative value of campaigns intended for students.

Fourth, the scope and sample coverage of the present study also differ significantly from the two reviewed works. Akarowhe & Effiong (2020) studied 213 students within one senatorial district, while Adana (2017) focused on a community within Cape Town Municipality. By contrast, the present study spanned 31 Local Government Areas, offering broader generalizability and a more heterogeneous set of respondents. This expanded the empirical literature by demonstrating how large-scale educational campaigns behave across diverse geographic and socio-cultural settings, not just within confined zones.

Fifth, the objectives and variables of the present study provide a stronger theoretical and practical contribution. Akarowhe & Effiong (2020) investigated only two questions tied to age and gender, while Adana (2017) evaluated participatory mechanisms without linking them to educational settings. The present study, however, introduced three core dimensions of frequency of exposure, perception, and participation, explaining how these interact to influence students' engagement with a public campaign. This multi-variable approach offered a richer understanding compared to previous works with narrower objectives.

Finally, while earlier research focused on either personal determinants (Akarowhe & Effiong, 2020) or structural community mechanisms (Adana, 2017), the present study integrates both communicative and behavioural elements. It revealed that irregular exposure, negative perception, and compulsory participation collectively weakened the effectiveness of the completion agenda campaign among secondary school students. This contributed new empirical insights into how communication strategies must be regular, meaningful, and participatory if the intended audience is expected to internalize and transmit campaign messages.

In summary, the present study builds upon prior literature by expanding scope, deepening objectives, focusing on communicative behaviour, and providing evidence that effective campaigns require regularity, clear instructional relevance, and voluntary participation. These comparisons demonstrate that while earlier research addressed important dimensions of participation and personal factors, the present study advances the discourse by showing how communication quality directly shapes educational campaign outcomes among students.

Test of Hypothesis

H_0 (Null hypothesis): There is no perfect relationship between the perception to development catchphrases and response to participation among students in Akwa Ibom State in Nigeria.

H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a perfect relationship between the perception to development catchphrases and response to participation among students in Akwa Ibom State in Nigeria.

The above was tested using the Spearman rank order. This method tests the degree of association between two ranked variables using this formula.

$$\rho = 1 - \frac{6 \sum d_i^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}$$

ρ = Spearman's rank correlation coefficient
 d_i = difference between the two ranks of each observation
 n = number of observations

Perception to development catchphrases (Instructional, mental development, distractions).
 Participation (Voluntary, parental, compulsory).

Table 5 Perception to development catchphrases

Perception	Students	Rank
Instructional	36	1
Mental/Skill Development	13	2
Distractions	351	3

Table 6 Participation

Participation	Students	Rank
Voluntary	21	3
Parental	74	2
Compulsory	305	1

Table7 Decision

Variables	Perception	Participation	Diff	+
Instructional/Voluntary	1	3	-2	4
Mental/Parental	2	2	0	0
Distraction/Compulsory	3	1	2	4

$$4+0+4 = 8$$

$$6 \times 8 = 48 / 3x (16-1)$$

$$1 - 1.06 = -0.06$$

Using Spearman's Rank Correlation, level of ($\rho = -0.05$) which is +10 the outcome of this testing at -0.06 indicates that there is a perfect negative relationship between perception and participation of students to development catchphrases in Akwa Ibom state. This means that as perception as distractions on students increased, the participation decreases. This was noticeable in the way students were embarking on negative behaviours of destroying some of facilities in the schools. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained and the alternate is rejected.

Conclusion

This study set out to investigate students' exposure, perception, and participation in the completion agenda expository campaign. To achieve this, a broad range of related literature was reviewed, covering key concepts in communication, models of development communication, approaches to development, and the theoretical foundations that explain how messages are received, interpreted, and acted upon by specific audiences. The literature further highlighted the significance of students' participation in public communication efforts and the factors that shape the success or failure of campaign messages. In addition, empirical studies relevant to participation, communication strategies, and behavioural outcomes were examined to situate the present research within existing scholarly discourse.

Methodologically, the study adopted a descriptive survey research design, utilizing a structured questionnaire as the primary research instrument. This tool provided the researcher with clear and measurable indicators that guided data collection and subsequent analysis. The questionnaire enabled the study to explore how frequently students were exposed to the campaign, how they perceived its purpose, and the extent to which they willingly or unwillingly participated in related activities.

The findings revealed several critical issues. Foremost, the participation of students in the completion agenda campaign was largely driven by compulsion rather than voluntary engagement. This lack of voluntary participation suggested that the campaign failed to resonate with students or align with their academic and developmental interests. The perception of the campaign as a distraction rather than a beneficial instructional initiative further contributed to low acceptance. Students did not internalize the campaign messages nor transmit them to peers, parents, or the wider society, indicating a breakdown in communicative intent. Overall, the results demonstrated that irregular exposure, poor message relevance, and compelled participation significantly undermined the objectives of the completion agenda expository campaign.

The scope of the study, however, presented inherent limitations. The research was restricted to students within a single state, thereby narrowing the demographic diversity of respondents. While this offered depth within the selected educational context, it limited the generalizability of findings across broader socio-political environments in Nigeria. Furthermore, focusing solely on students excluded other key stakeholders such as the political class, media actors, civil society groups, and general residents whose perceptions and responses could provide a more holistic understanding of the acceptance or rejection of political communication initiatives.

Given these limitations, the study presents opportunities for further research. Future investigations could extend beyond the student population to include individuals within the political class, as well as residents across multiple states, to uncover the broader sociocultural and political determinants that influence how campaign messages and political catchphrases are received. Such studies would be valuable in identifying whether acceptance or rejection of slogans and political communication strategies can drive by cultural alignment, trust in governance, frequency and clarity of message dissemination, or other contextual variables. Broadening the geographical scope and integrating diverse respondent categories would deepen insights and enhance the practical relevance of findings for policymakers and communication strategists.

In conclusion, while this study contributed significantly to understanding students' engagement with the completion agenda campaign, it also underscored the need for well-designed, participatory, and meaningful communication strategies in public initiatives. Development communication can only be effective when messages are regularly disseminated, clearly understood, and willingly embraced by the target audience. Future research must therefore continue to explore how political and social campaigns can be structured to foster inclusivity, voluntary participation, and positive behavioural outcomes across different segments of society.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. That the government should integrate the mainstream media to intensify students' awareness in the completion agenda campaign by organizing drama, symposium, lectures not only in the urban areas but also in rural communities.
2. That the government should rework the composition of the personnel handling the campaign to include leadership of student consultative bodies in the state.

3. That the government should make the participation of students in the completion agenda rewarding to draw voluntary participation of students.

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