

Evaluating the role of Strategic Communication Channels in facilitating tax compliance among the informal sector in Lagos State.

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Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of strategic communication channels in promoting tax compliance within Lagos State's informal sector, focusing on the role of communication strategies, taxpayer attitudes, and communication channels. Despite the sector's significant contribution to Nigeria's economy, tax compliance remains low, often due to distrust, limited awareness, and inadequate engagement mechanisms. Using a cross-sectional survey of 1,308 informal business operators, data were analyzed through one-sample t-tests and correlation techniques. The findings reveal that the communication strategies adopted by the Lagos State Internal Revenue Service (LIRS) are effective in encouraging compliance, with a statistically significant mean score ($M = 3.55$, $p < 0.05$). Strategic communication was strongly correlated with positive taxpayer attitudes ($r = 0.814$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that persuasion and trust-building significantly enhance willingness to comply. Similarly, communication channels were positively correlated with compliance ($r = 0.767$, $p < 0.01$), demonstrating the importance of tailoring channels to diverse audience needs. The results align with Attitude Change Theory, the Theory of Planned Behaviour, Social Norms Theory, Communication Accommodation Theory, and Trust Theory, confirming that compliance behaviour is influenced by attitudes, norms, and institutional trust. The study concludes that multi-channel, audience-sensitive communication is essential for improving voluntary compliance and recommends a blend of traditional, digital, and face-to-face strategies to optimize effectiveness.

Keywords: Strategic communication, Tax compliance, Informal sector, Communication channels, Attitude.

Introduction

Taxation, defined as the compulsory levy imposed by government on individuals and corporations, is a cornerstone of economic development and fiscal sustainability. In Nigeria, however, the tax-to-GDP ratio has fluctuated widely over the years, reflecting challenges in revenue mobilization. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN, 2020) reported that tax-to-GDP stood at 6.1 percent in 2016, increased to 7.04 percent in the fourth quarter of 2017, and later rose to 25.16 percent in 2020. Despite these increases, Nigeria's tax performance remains

below global and regional averages, raising questions about structural weaknesses in tax collection and compliance.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2022) highlights that the formal sector contributes about 70 percent of Nigeria's GDP, with significant inputs from manufacturing, finance, oil and gas, and services. However, the informal sector continues to drive a large proportion of economic activity without adequate regulation or taxation. Although informal businesses are critical to livelihoods and employment, they are often excluded from tax frameworks, leaving their contributions largely unrecorded. This underutilization of the informal economy weakens government capacity to diversify revenue, limits service delivery, and exacerbates dependence on volatile oil receipts. It also highlights the urgent need for innovative tax compliance strategies.

Tax compliance in Nigeria has historically been stronger in the formal sector due to easier documentation and monitoring. In contrast, the informal sector presents persistent challenges, including lack of record-keeping, low financial literacy, weak enforcement, and limited trust in government institutions (Adeyemi, 2019; Olawale & Aina, 2020). Informal businesses often perceive taxation as burdensome without commensurate benefits, leading to widespread evasion and a shrinking fiscal base. This has intensified the fiscal gap between potential and actual tax revenue, particularly at state level where internally generated revenue is vital. Consequently, expanding compliance within the informal economy is not merely a technical challenge but also a governance issue.

The informal sector is particularly significant in Lagos State, which represents Nigeria's largest commercial hub. It includes activities ranging from small-scale street vending and artisan trades to private schools and healthcare services. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that around 5.5 million people, or nearly three-quarters of the 7.5 million labour force in Lagos, are employed in the informal sector. The NBS (2022) further reports

that the informal economy contributes about 65 percent to Nigeria's GDP, while in Lagos it accounts for roughly one-third of total output (Ajayi, 2018). Such figures underscore both the scale of untapped tax potential and the developmental risks of weak integration of this sector.

Lagos State's revenue profile reflects these dynamics. In 2020, the state generated ₦278.89 billion from Pay As You Earn (PAYE), ₦17.07 billion from direct assessments, and ₦12.14 billion from road taxes (NBS, 2022). While these figures do not exclusively capture informal contributions, they illustrate the significance of diverse revenue sources. For example, commercial drivers alone generated approximately ₦123.08 billion annually. Yet, despite these gains, non-compliance remains common among informal operators. This is often attributed to lack of formalization, perceived corruption among tax officials, weak accountability, and limited incentives to comply (Fagbemi et al., 2020). These structural barriers constrain the government's capacity to mobilize adequate revenue for social and economic development.

To address this persistent challenge, the Lagos State Internal Revenue Service (LIRS) has increasingly employed strategic communication to influence compliance behaviour among informal sector operators. Strategic communication is a deliberate approach that seeks to create awareness, correct misconceptions, and encourage voluntary compliance through well-crafted messages and targeted channels (Wilcox et al., 2019). In tax administration, this approach shifts focus from coercion to persuasion, recognising that compliance is linked to citizens' trust, perceptions of fairness, and understanding of tax benefits. According to Akinwale (2020), communication strategies must be context-specific, addressing the knowledge gaps and attitudinal barriers that undermine compliance in developing economies.

Successful strategic communication requires knowledge of the audience's values, concerns, and motivations, as well as careful selection of credible messengers and communication platforms (Broom et al., 2019). In line with this, LIRS has adopted a multi-pronged strategy, including radio and television broadcasts, billboards, workshops, social

media campaigns, and celebrity endorsements. For example, its programme *Tax Talks* on Radio Lagos and LTV Channel 8 aims to educate residents on their obligations and dispel myths surrounding taxation. LIRS also engages religious leaders such as Pastor Enoch Adeboye to lend credibility to campaigns, recognising the influence of faith-based communities in shaping compliance attitudes (Akinyemi & Bello, 2021).

Celebrity endorsements and entertainment figures including Funke Akindele, Mr. Macaroni, and Rema have been used to appeal to younger audiences and reluctant taxpayers. Radio programmes such as *How Tax Affects Business Growth* on WFM 91.7 and *Filing of Annual Tax Returns* on Lagos Traffic Radio provide practical guidance and relatable examples to encourage compliance. Billboards placed in high-traffic areas of Lagos reinforce awareness by consistently reminding citizens of their obligations and deadlines. Social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, further extend the reach of these campaigns, allowing interactive engagement and quick responses to public inquiries. Together, these efforts reflect a modernized approach to public revenue mobilization.

Through these initiatives, LIRS aims to foster a culture of voluntary compliance by linking taxation to visible public benefits such as improved infrastructure, business growth, and social welfare. By framing taxation as a partnership rather than a penalty, LIRS seeks to bridge the trust gap between government and informal sector operators. Although challenges remain in ensuring accountability and sustaining behavioural change, strategic communication offers a pragmatic pathway for integrating the informal sector into the tax system. This approach not only enhances revenue mobilization but also strengthens the social contract by demonstrating that taxation directly supports economic growth and community development.

Therefore, this study critically assessed the strategic communication efforts of the LIRS, aiming to understand if these efforts align with the preferences and socio-cultural contexts of the informal sector in Lagos State. The study explored how these strategies can be

refined to boost compliance rates and enhance government revenue collection. By analyzing the alignment between LIR's communication strategies and the characteristics of the informal sector, this study provided actionable insights that could lead to more effective tax compliance approaches, contributing to sustainable revenue generation for the state.

Research Objectives

1. To assess the impact of strategic communication on the attitudes of operators toward tax compliance in Lagos State.
2. To examine the effectiveness of communication channels employed by LIRS in facilitating tax compliance among informal sector operators in Lagos State.
3. To evaluate the relationship between strategic communication strategies and the improvement of tax compliance attitudes among operators in Lagos State's informal sector.

Research Hypotheses

1. Strategic communication does not significantly influence attitudes toward tax compliance
2. The communication channels used by LIRS do not significantly facilitate tax compliance among operators in the informal sector
3. Strategic communication does not significantly influence attitudes toward tax compliance

Literature Review

The effectiveness of strategic communication in promoting tax compliance among registered Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) reflects the degree to which communication

initiatives achieve their objectives of encouraging voluntary adherence to tax obligations. Effectiveness is often assessed through indicators such as increased awareness and knowledge of tax responsibilities, improved attitudes toward taxation, and greater perceptions of fairness and legitimacy in the tax system (Boll et al., 2019). Beyond these perceptual indicators, behavioural outcomes such as timely filing of returns, consistent payment of taxes, adoption of proper documentation practices, and voluntary participation in compliance initiatives are critical measures of success (Dobija&Iyer, 2018). International research further validates these measures. For instance, Wenzel (2019) demonstrated that messages emphasizing the social norm of tax compliance significantly improved compliance rates, underscoring the behavioural impact of well-crafted communication strategies.

In the Nigerian context, a growing body of scholarship stresses the importance of evaluating the efficacy of strategic communication in strengthening compliance among registered SMEs. Adegbite et al. (2020) examined the role of trust-building and transparent communication in shaping taxpayers' willingness to comply, highlighting the necessity of credible communication channels in promoting compliance behaviour. Similarly, Adejuwon and Akintola (2020) and Adelakun et al. (2021) emphasized the role of trust, transparency, and audience-specific strategies in shaping taxpayer engagement. Evaluation of these strategies requires both quantitative and qualitative methods, including surveys, focus groups, interviews, and analysis of compliance records (Okoye et al., 2021). Feedback mechanisms such as taxpayer helplines and evaluation forms further provide valuable insights into satisfaction levels and communication gaps. In addition, cost-effectiveness is a vital dimension of evaluation. As Hite and Feasel (2017) argue, strategic communication must be judged not only by compliance outcomes but also by the efficiency of resource use, making return-on-investment analyses crucial for policymaking.

Evidence from international research highlights the relevance of cost-effectiveness assessments to the Nigerian case. Hallsworth et al. (2017) found that personalized communication methods, such as tailored letters, produced higher compliance at lower costs than generic messaging. Similar findings by Chen et al. (2023) and Cummings et al. (2019) affirm that well-targeted interventions maximize behavioural outcomes while minimizing expenditure. In Nigeria, Adegbite et al. (2019) documented the compliance burden faced by SMEs and called for cost-efficient communication strategies to reduce barriers and improve support. To optimize impact in Lagos State, messages must be tailored to SMEs' unique needs and delivered through accessible channels such as mobile applications, digital platforms, and social media (Ajayi&Oladeji, 2019). Continuous assessment and adaptation remain essential. As Okoye et al. (2021) note, periodic evaluations allow tax authorities to refine ineffective techniques, integrate stakeholder feedback, and ensure that communication strategies evolve in line with the realities of SMEs. This iterative process enhances compliance outcomes and ensures sustainability of strategic communication efforts.

Adegboye and Ajibade (2021) investigated the influence of television advertisements on tax compliance among informal business owners in Lagos State. Using a survey-based methodology combined with content analysis of selected adverts, their study found that television campaigns, particularly those aired during prime-time slots and featuring dramatizations or case studies, increased awareness of tax obligations and available relief programs. However, the researchers observed that television was primarily a passive medium, effective for initial sensitization but less interactive, and thus recommended its use as a supplementary channel alongside outreach programs and customer hotlines.

Bassey and Ibeh (2023) examined the effectiveness of community radio in promoting compliance within Lagos's informal sector. Employing mixed methods, including surveys and focus group discussions, the study revealed that radio campaigns in local languages

significantly improved awareness and voluntary compliance, particularly among business owners with limited formal education. The authors highlighted that interviews with LIRS officials broadcast on community radio built trust and credibility, but also noted that radio lacked the interactivity needed for more detailed inquiries, recommending the integration of phone-in or live Q&A programs.

Dike and Osuji (2021) explored the role of printed materials such as brochures and posters in improving compliance among informal sector operators. Using field observation and questionnaires distributed across major markets, their study showed that printed materials were effective for reaching business owners with low digital literacy. Materials written in simple, clear language and widely distributed in business areas significantly raised awareness and compliance rates. Nonetheless, the authors cautioned that the effectiveness of print communication depended on proper distribution and should be complemented with direct face-to-face explanations.

Obi and Adeola (2022) assessed the role of SMS communication in enhancing tax compliance among informal business operators in Lagos. Relying on a quasi-experimental design that compared compliance rates before and after SMS campaigns, the researchers found that SMS messages written in simple language and containing deadline reminders substantially improved filing and payment behaviour. The findings indicated that SMS was an efficient tool due to its brevity and reach. However, the study also noted its limitations in providing detailed information, recommending that SMS be integrated with customer service hotlines or links to online resources.

Adeyemi and Shittu (2024) conducted a comprehensive study on the combined effects of SMS and social media campaigns on tax compliance among Lagos business owners. Using survey data from informal operators and statistical analysis of compliance records, they found that SMS reminders significantly improved timely tax submissions, while social media

platforms such as Instagram and Facebook were more effective in engaging younger taxpayers and delivering interactive content. The study concluded that while SMS was practical for reminders, social media worked best for awareness creation, suggesting the need for a blended approach.

Afolabi and Olusegun (2023) analyzed the impact of LIRS community outreach programs on compliance. Their research employed interviews and participant observation of outreach sessions in local markets. Findings showed that face-to-face communication between tax officials and business owners effectively clarified complex procedures and built trust, especially among less educated operators. The study underscored the importance of professionalism and approachability of tax officials, recommending continued expansion of outreach activities to underserved communities.

Olaniyan and Ibrahim (2022) evaluated the role of market visits by LIRS officials in strengthening compliance. Using a field survey approach, they found that on-the-spot assistance with registration and payment during visits significantly increased compliance rates. The study further noted that market visits dispelled misconceptions about tax rates and penalties, providing business owners with immediate support. The authors recommended increasing the frequency of visits and introducing mobile tax clinics for broader accessibility.

Torgler and Schaltegger (2023) investigated personalized communication strategies in the informal sectors of Switzerland and Germany. Through a comparative survey experiment, they established that tailored SMS and email campaigns addressing business owners by name and outlining specific tax obligations improved compliance levels. The findings indicated that personalization reduced the psychological distance between taxpayers and authorities, but the researchers advised maintaining alternative communication channels for less digitally literate groups.

Schneider and Williams (2022) studied tax compliance strategies in the United Kingdom and Australia, focusing on the mix of digital and traditional channels. Using secondary data analysis and interviews with tax officials, the study revealed that while social media and email worked well for tech-savvy operators, traditional methods such as direct mail and phone calls remained critical for older or less digitally inclined business owners. The researchers concluded that a multi-channel approach, tailored to different segments, was the most effective strategy.

Martinez and Lopez (2021) examined the effectiveness of email campaigns by tax authorities in Mexico. Conducting a randomized field experiment, they found that email reminders improved compliance among business owners who regularly checked emails. However, the overall impact was limited due to low email usage among informal operators. The study recommended that email be used selectively for more formalized businesses and supplemented with SMS and direct outreach to ensure broader coverage.

Zhang and Liu (2023) carried out a mixed-methods study in China, combining surveys with interviews, to evaluate the effects of SMS and social media on tax compliance. Their findings showed that SMS reminders were highly effective, with about 70% of respondents reporting timely action after receiving them. Social media platforms such as WeChat improved awareness but were less effective in prompting immediate compliance. The authors concluded that SMS remained the most effective channel, while social media served as a complementary awareness tool.

Theoretical Review

Attitude Change Theory

Attitude Change Theory, pioneered by Carl Hovland and colleagues in the 1950s, explains how individuals' attitudes and beliefs can be altered through persuasive

communication and social influence (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). The theory posits that attitudes are flexible and can shift when individuals are exposed to new information that resonates with their values or challenges existing beliefs. Critical elements in this process include the credibility of the source, the clarity of the message, and the receptiveness of the audience. Later developments such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) introduced central and peripheral processing routes, showing that some individuals engage in deep evaluation of persuasive messages, while others rely on superficial cues like source reputation or emotional appeal. In tax compliance, this framework highlights how taxpayers can be persuaded to adopt new attitudes when communication is tailored to their level of awareness and cognitive engagement.

Applied to tax compliance in Lagos State, Attitude Change Theory offers practical insights for the Lagos Internal Revenue Service (LIRS). Informal business owners often resist compliance due to entrenched mistrust or indifference toward government taxation. By applying persuasive strategies, LIRS can gradually shift these attitudes. For instance, addressing cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) is effective when highlighting contradictions between using public services and avoiding tax contributions. Likewise, promoting compliance as a socially valued norm can leverage social influence to motivate behaviour change (Ajzen, 1991). By tailoring messages to audience needs using detailed explanations for informed taxpayers and simplified cues for disengaged ones LIRS can foster a cultural shift where compliance is framed as both a rational and socially desirable action.

Social Norms Theory

Social Norms Theory, advanced by scholars such as Cialdini (1993), Granovetter (1985), and Goffman (1959), argues that individual behaviour is influenced by perceptions of what is socially acceptable. Norms may be descriptive, reflecting what people believe others

are doing, or prescriptive, indicating what others think should be done (Cialdini et al., 1990). Applied to taxation, individuals are more likely to comply if they perceive compliance as common and socially valued, but less likely if non-compliance appears widespread or tolerated. Research shows that perceptions of fairness and belonging strongly shape compliance behaviour (Braithwaite & Reinhart, 2019).

For tax authorities, understanding and shaping social norms is critical in designing effective communication strategies. LIRS, for example, can emphasize high compliance rates, showcase respected community leaders who advocate tax responsibility, and highlight the social benefits of compliance. Campaigns that portray taxpaying as a collective commitment can create pressure to conform to positive norms. Nevertheless, critics note that social norms theory underestimates the role of individual motivations, structural constraints, and perceptions of fairness (Murphy et al., 2019). Despite these limitations, leveraging social norms through community-driven campaigns and peer influence provides a powerful means of promoting compliance in Nigeria's informal sector.

Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT)

Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), developed by Giles in the 1970s, explains how individuals adjust their communication styles to either converge with or diverge from their interlocutors (Giles, 1973). Convergence occurs when communicators adapt language, tone, or style to reduce social distance and build rapport, while divergence emphasizes differences to assert identity or power. CAT suggests that effective communication depends on appropriately adjusting to audience needs, perceptions, and cultural context. In tax compliance, convergence strategies such as using familiar language, local dialects, and culturally relevant examples can make messages more relatable and persuasive for informal business owners.

Applied to LIRS's strategies, CAT highlights the importance of tailoring tax messages to the diverse linguistic and cultural realities of Lagos. Using vernacular languages on radio programs, adopting humour or storytelling through comedians and influencers, and engaging community leaders as messengers are practical ways to enhance convergence. This approach not only reduces psychological distance but also strengthens message credibility. However, CAT has been critiqued for focusing more on interpersonal dynamics than structural barriers like corruption or institutional inefficiency. Even so, it remains a useful framework for showing how communication styles influence the reception of tax campaigns and taxpayers' willingness to comply.

Materials and Methods

This study adopted a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, underpinned by a pragmatic research philosophy and an abductive reasoning approach. This design enabled the simultaneous collection of both quantitative and qualitative data to explore the effectiveness of LIRS's strategic communication in enhancing tax compliance among informal sector operators in Lagos State. Quantitative data were gathered through a structured questionnaire administered to informal business owners, while qualitative insights were obtained via semi-structured interviews with three senior LIRS officials. The abductive approach allowed the study to test predefined hypotheses while also generating emergent insights from qualitative data, aligning empirical patterns with theoretical expectations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Bryman & Bell, 2015).

The study population included 28,361 informal business operators registered on the IBILE-HUB platform across seven regional markets in Lagos. Using Cochran's formula, a representative sample size of 1,308 respondents was derived at a 97% confidence level. Stratified random sampling ensured proportional representation from each region. For the

qualitative component, purposive sampling was employed to select three LIRS officials responsible for informal sector strategy, corporate affairs, and accounts. Data collection involved physical administration of questionnaires and in-person interviews. The questionnaire included closed-ended Likert-scale items structured into thematic sections, while interviews were conducted using a semi-structured guide to capture deep insights into LIRS's strategic communication implementation.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential methods, particularly a one-sample t-test, to assess the statistical significance of tax compliance behaviours. Qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed thematically using NVivo software, enabling iterative coding and thematic mapping to uncover recurring patterns. Instrument reliability was confirmed through a pilot test yielding a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.83, indicating high internal consistency. Validity was established using expert review and construct validity measures, including KMO and AVE scores. Ethical clearance was secured from the Babcock University Health Research Ethics Committee, with informed consent obtained from all participants. Confidentiality, voluntary participation, and data protection protocols were rigorously maintained throughout the research process.

Result

H₀₁: The communication strategies adopted by LIRS are not effective in promoting tax compliance in the informal sector.

Table 1: One-Sample T-Test for Effectiveness of LIRS's Communication Strategies in Promoting Tax Compliance

Test Variable	N	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (Std. D)	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval (Lower - Upper)
Effectiveness of LIRS Communication Strategies	1308	3.55	1.08	118.69	1307	0.00	3.55	3.49 - 3.61

Source: Field Survey 2025

The results reveal that the mean score for the effectiveness of LIRS's communication strategies in promoting tax compliance is 3.55, with a standard deviation of 1.08. This indicates that respondents generally perceive the strategies as somewhat effective. The t-test value of 118.69 is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$, suggesting that the mean significantly differs from zero. Since the p-value (0.00) is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (H_{03}) and conclude that the communication strategies adopted by LIRS are effective in promoting tax compliance in the informal sector. This suggests that LIRS's engagement efforts, such as public awareness campaigns, digital outreach, and direct communication, contribute positively to compliance behavior among informal sector operators. However, opportunities for further improvements may still exist to enhance their impact.

H₀₂: Strategic communication does not significantly influence attitudes toward tax compliance.

Table 2: Correlation between Strategic Communication and Attitudes Towards Tax Compliance

Variables	Strategic Communication	Attitude Toward Tax Compliance
Strategic Communication	1.000	0.814 (**)
Attitude Toward Tax Compliance	0.814 (**)	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	—	0.000
N	1308	1308

Source: Field Survey 2025

The results indicate a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.814$, $p < 0.01$) between strategic communication and attitudes toward tax compliance. This suggests that effective strategic communication by LIRS significantly influences taxpayers' attitudes, making them more positive about fulfilling their tax obligations. Since the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (H_{02}) and conclude that strategic communication significantly influences attitudes toward tax compliance. This implies that improved communication efforts by LIRS can enhance taxpayers' perceptions and willingness to comply with tax regulations.

H_{03} : The communication channels used by LIRS do not significantly facilitate tax compliance among operators in the informal sector

Table 3: Correlation between Communication Channels and Tax Compliance

Variables	Communication Channels	Tax Compliance
Communication Channels	1.000	0.767 (**)
Tax Compliance	0.767 (**)	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	—	0.000
N	1308	1308

Source: Field Survey 2025

The results reveal a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.767$, $p < 0.01$) between the communication channels used by LIRS and tax compliance. This suggests that the effectiveness of LIRS's communication channels plays a significant role in fostering trust in tax information and encouraging compliance. Since the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (H_{03}) and conclude that the communication channels used by LIRS significantly facilitate tax compliance among operators in the informal sector. This underscores the importance of maintaining and improving effective communication channels to enhance compliance rates.

Discussion of Findings

The impact of strategic communication on the attitudes of operators toward tax compliance in Lagos State.

The results from the one-sample t-test ($M = 3.55$, $t = 118.69$, $p < 0.05$) reveal that respondents perceive LIRS communication strategies as effective in promoting tax compliance. This indicates that initiatives such as awareness campaigns, digital outreach, and direct engagement positively shape compliance behaviour in the informal sector. The rejection of the

null hypothesis demonstrates that communication efforts contribute meaningfully to tax compliance, though opportunities for improvement remain. These findings align with Attitude Change Theory (Hovland et al., 1953; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), which posits that persuasive communication can shift attitudes and behaviours, especially when messages are credible and tailored to audience needs. Similarly, Trust Theory (Putnam, 1993; Gambetta, 1988) underscores the importance of transparency and fairness in building confidence in authorities, which LIRS has pursued through targeted outreach. Empirical evidence supports this. Adegboye and Ajibade (2021) found that television advertising raised awareness, while Bassey and Ibeh (2023) showed that community radio broadcasts improved voluntary compliance when delivered in local languages. In Lagos, Afolabi and Olusegun (2023) confirmed that community outreach built trust, while Olaniyan and Ibrahim (2022) reported that market visits facilitated on-the-spot compliance. International evidence echoes these patterns; Castro and Scartascini (2021) in Argentina and Müller and Schröder (2022) in Germany found that targeted campaigns significantly boosted compliance. Together, these findings demonstrate that multi-channel, strategically designed communication enhances compliance in the informal sector.

The relationship between strategic communication strategies and tax compliance attitudes among operators in Lagos State's informal sector.

The correlation analysis shows a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.814$, $p < 0.01$) between strategic communication and taxpayers' attitudes, indicating that effective communication substantially improves perceptions and willingness to comply. By rejecting the null hypothesis, the results suggest that taxpayers' attitudes are not fixed but can be reshaped through deliberate communication strategies that highlight benefits, obligations, and fairness. This outcome strongly reflects the assumptions of Attitude Change Theory and Cognitive

Dissonance Theory (Festinger, 1957). Exposure to persuasive and credible messages can reduce the psychological discomfort between benefiting from government services while evading taxes, thereby prompting attitudinal adjustment.

Furthermore, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) argues that attitudes, alongside subjective norms and perceived control, directly influence intentions to comply. Strategic communication addresses these attitudinal dimensions, increasing the likelihood of compliance. Empirical evidence reinforces this conclusion. Obi and Adeola (2022) found that SMS campaigns improved compliance by presenting concise, persuasive reminders, while Adeyemi and Shittu (2024) reported that social media shaped positive perceptions among younger operators. Studies beyond Nigeria confirm this relationship: Hallsworth et al. (2017) showed that messages emphasizing social norms significantly improved compliance in the UK, while Zhang and Liu (2023) found SMS reminders in China effectively changed compliance attitudes by providing timely prompts. These findings highlight the critical role of communication in fostering pro-compliance attitudes.

The effectiveness of communication channels employed by LIRS in facilitating tax compliance among informal sector operators in Lagos State

The results reveal a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.767$, $p < 0.01$) between communication channels and tax compliance, indicating that the choice and effectiveness of communication platforms significantly facilitate compliance among informal operators. The rejection of the null hypothesis demonstrates that communication channels, whether digital, traditional, or interpersonal, influence both trust in tax authorities and actual compliance behaviour.

This finding resonates with Communication Accommodation Theory (Giles, 1973), which emphasizes the importance of tailoring communication to the audience's linguistic and

cultural realities. For example, convergence strategies such as using local dialects or relatable messengers make tax messages more persuasive. Similarly, Social Norms Theory (Cialdini, 1993) explains how communication channels shape perceptions of acceptable behaviour within peer groups, reinforcing compliance as a norm. Empirical studies provide strong support. In Lagos, Adegboye and Ajibade (2021) found television ads effective for awareness, while Bassey and Ibeh (2023) demonstrated that radio broadcasts in local languages fostered compliance. Printed materials (Dike & Osuji, 2021), SMS reminders (Obi & Adeola, 2022), and community outreach (Afolabi & Olusegun, 2023) each worked effectively when aligned with audience needs. International findings mirror these outcomes: Schneider and Williams (2022) in the UK and Australia confirmed that multi-channel strategies were most effective, while Park and Kim (2022) in South Korea showed SMS was superior to email in driving compliance. These results affirm that effective communication channels are indispensable tools for fostering tax compliance in informal economies.

Conclusion and recommendations

This study examined the effectiveness of communication strategies, strategic communication, and communication channels employed by the Lagos State Internal Revenue Service (LIRS) in promoting tax compliance within the informal sector. The findings revealed that LIRS's communication strategies are significantly effective, with respondents perceiving them as valuable tools for improving compliance. Moreover, strategic communication was shown to strongly influence taxpayers' attitudes, fostering more positive perceptions toward taxation. Finally, communication channels were found to play a critical role in facilitating compliance, particularly when messages were tailored to the needs of diverse audiences.

The results are consistent with theoretical expectations from the Attitude Change Theory, the Theory of Planned Behaviour, Social Norms Theory, Communication

Accommodation Theory, and Trust Theory. These frameworks highlight the psychological, social, and relational dimensions of compliance, showing that behaviour is shaped not only by knowledge of tax obligations but also by attitudes, social norms, trust in institutions, and the relevance of communication. Empirical studies from Nigeria and beyond further reinforced the importance of multi-channel, audience-sensitive communication in driving compliance among informal business operators. Collectively, these findings underscore that voluntary compliance in Lagos's informal sector is attainable when communication strategies are credible, accessible, and responsive to taxpayer concerns.

Policy Recommendations

1. LIRS should continue employing a combination of traditional, digital, and interpersonal channels. While SMS and social media are effective for reminders and awareness among younger operators, radio, print, and community outreach remain essential for low-literacy and older taxpayers.
2. Transparent reporting on the use of tax revenue and responsive customer service should be prioritized. Publishing visible outcomes of tax contributions, such as infrastructure projects, can strengthen perceptions of fairness and build trust in line with Trust Theory. Campaigns should emphasize that compliance is the prevailing norm within communities. Partnering with respected community leaders, business associations, and social influencers can reinforce compliance as a socially expected behaviour.
3. Applying Communication Accommodation Theory, LIRS should use local languages, culturally resonant messages, and relatable messengers to reach different groups. This ensures convergence between tax authorities and business owners, reducing psychological distance.

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