

Nigerian Oil and Gas Content Communication Campaigns and Awareness and Attitude of Selected Oil Companies

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Abstract

The Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development (NOGICD) Act was enacted in April 2010 to increase the participation of Nigerians in the nation's oil and gas industry and domesticate the industry's activities in the country. Although the objectives of the Act have been communicated extensively to oil and gas stakeholders, it was observed that many oil and gas companies still have adverse attitudes towards the Act. This study investigated whether communication campaigns on the Nigerian Content Act have created adequate awareness and influenced positive attitude towards the Act among four selected oil and gas companies. The study was anchored on the Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory. The descriptive survey research design was used to study a population of 1,522 staff working in Nigerian Content and Projects Development departments in the four companies. The findings showed there was sufficient awareness about the Nigerian oil and gas content communication campaigns among the study group and the companies have mixed attitudes towards the communication campaigns. The study recommended regular Nigerian content sensitization programmes for key staff of the companies to sustain the Nigerian content awareness levels and create positive attitudes towards the Act by oil and gas companies.

Keywords: Nigerian Content, Oil and Gas, Communication, Campaigns, Awareness, Attitude

Introduction

The Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development (NOGICD) Act was enacted on April 22, 2010. The key objectives of the legislation are to increase the participation of citizens in the Nigerian oil and gas industry, domicile activities of the industry in the country and create job opportunities for the natives from the operations of the oil and gas industry (Wabote, 2021; Ayoola, 2017; Atsegbua, 2012).

The Nigerian Content Act created the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) with the responsibility to develop, monitor, coordinate, and implement the provisions of the Act. A key part of the agency's mandate, especially in sections 67 and 70 (n) of the NOGICD Act is to deploy communication and public engagement programmes to promote Nigerian content policies and practices and create goodwill about the Act among industry stakeholders. In pursuit of its promotional responsibilities, the NCDMB carries out intensive communication campaigns using different strategies, including events, conferences, and multiple media platforms (Nwakanma, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

Despite the communication campaigns that have been carried out on the Nigerian Content Act among oil and gas stakeholders and the huge impact Nigerian Content implementation has made on the oil sector and the wider economy (Okoro & Ndukwe, 2022), emerging developments suggest that many oil and gas companies continue to flout the local content law (Abdulrauf, 2023; Izuora, 2023).

The implication seems to be that Nigerian Content communication campaigns may not have created sufficient awareness among oil and gas companies and persuaded them to have positive attitudes towards the Nigerian Content Act. This study seeks to examine whether communication campaigns on the Nigerian Content Act have created sufficient awareness and influenced positive dispositions by the four selected oil and gas companies in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Ascertain the extent of awareness of the Nigerian oil and gas content communication campaigns among the selected oil and gas companies
2. Find out the attitude of selected oil and gas companies towards Nigerian oil and gas content communication campaigns

Literature Review

Oil and Gas Industry, Local/Nigerian Content

The oil and gas sector is the lifeblood of Nigeria's economy, even though the actual impact of the sector on the local economy is somewhat disappointing. The sector accounted for about 90% of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings in the fourth quarter of 2021, yet it contributed barely 9% of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Esiedesa, 2022; Sasu, 2022; Walubengo & Simwa, 2022).

Typically, the entire process of prospecting, extracting, refining, and transporting oil and natural gas require significant investments in capital, technology, and expertise and these are often beyond the capacity of many oil producing nations, especially those starting to develop their petroleum resources, thereby forcing them to rely on support from foreign or international companies (Pereira et al., 2019).

Nigerian Content and Local Content are used interchangeably to mean the same thing. Arizona-Ogwu (2008) cited in Okafor and Aniche (2014) describes Nigerian Content as the policy that promotes the utilisation of Nigerian human and material resources in the exploitation and exploration of Nigerian hydrocarbons to ensure that the percentage of locally produced materials, personnel, goods, and services rendered to the oil and gas industry are increased, thereby generating more employment without compromising standards.

Attitude and awareness of oil and gas companies to Nigerian content communications

The attitude of oil and gas companies to Nigerian content communications is a factor when considering compliance with local content regulations. Altmann (2008) compiled some of the descriptions of attitude and they are as follows: attitude is a mental state—conscious or unconscious; a predisposition to behaviour; a disposition towards or against a specified phenomenon, person or thing; an attitude is bipolar, it can be positive or negative, favourable or unfavourable.

Since attitude can be positive or negative, Hordos (2018) notes that it can affect the reception and treatment of communications. This means that if the selected oil and gas companies or their personnel have negative or positive dispositions towards Nigerian content development, that predisposition would likely affect how they perceive or receive any form of communication on the subject and how they act towards it. Several research works have posited that people generally seek consistency between their attitude and behaviour. This is the main thrust of the Cognitive Dissonance Theory developed by Leon Festinger, which holds that humans sometimes feel and experience incongruence between beliefs and behaviour and they resolve such dissonance by either their changing beliefs, actions, or perception of actions (Teng et al., 2015).

Awareness can be described as the state of being conscious of an idea, event, development, or policy. When someone is aware, he has some level of information on an issue, but might not know enough to correctly choose a course of action. The concept of awareness is often synonymous with consciousness. However, Harrison (2022) canvasses a different view regarding awareness. He argues that awareness gives knowledge, and guides one on the direction to go, changes to make, to improve, and be successful. He suggests that when one is aware, the individual already has the necessary information to decide on a course of action.

Communication Campaigns

Rogers and Storey (1987) laid out what they considered the minimal descriptions of communication campaigns. They posited that communication campaigns must be purposive and have specific individual cognitive effects or societal structural changes, must be targeted at a large audience, have a defined time limit, and involve a set of organised communication activities and be designed to reach an audience for which current channels and institutions are believed to be insufficient for meeting desired goals (Rogers & Storey, 1987).

Similarly, Snyder (2003) cited in Ekweonu and Umeh (2020) defined communication campaign as an organised communication activity directed at an identified audience, for a period, to achieve a particular goal. Anaeto and Solo-Anaeto (2010) echo the same thoughts but add that the process will entail the sharing of development-oriented information as well as

fostering necessary collaborations to help people move from unacceptable levels of development to improved quality of life.

The Intersection Between Development and Communications

One of the popular definitions of development was espoused by Rogers (1976) and referenced in Melkote (2006) who describes it as “a widely participatory process of social change in society, intended to bring out social and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom and other valued qualities) for the majority of the people” (p.1). In a similar vein, Oladipo (1996) cited in Soola (2003) describes development as a process of economic and social advancement, which enables people to realise their potential, build self-confidence and lead lives of dignity and fulfilment.

Communication and Development play complementary roles in facilitating the process of social change. Some scholars (Udoudo & Nwosu, 2019; Nwodu, 2007; Nwosu, 1990) posit that no human activity or development can succeed without effective and appropriate communication strategies. Nwodu (2007) contends that communication is at the core of any development process and any realistic development action must take place in a communication milieu, right from the point of conception to the final stage of execution and evaluation.

Empirical Review

Femi (2014) carried out a study on the “Impact of communication on workers’ performance in selected organisations in Lagos State.” The study adopted the descriptive survey method and focussed on four organisations in Lagos and used the stratified sampling technique and random sampling technique to select a sample size of 120 staff from the organizations. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data and it found that effective communication has a huge impact on workers’ performance and helps in achieving maximum productivity within the organizations. The study recommended that organizations should regularly articulate their policies, goals, and objectives to their workers in order to improve work performance.

Another related study was conducted by Adhiambo and Theuri (2019) who sought to investigate the “Effect of taxpayer awareness and compliance costs on tax compliance among small scale traders in Nakuru town, Kenya.” The study used descriptive research design and a sample size of 302 was drawn from the target population of 1416 licensed small-scale traders by the County Government of Nakuru. Data for the research was collected using structured questionnaire. Findings revealed that tax awareness and education have a positive and significant effect on tax compliance and cost of compliance has a significant effect on the level of tax compliance. The study recommended enhanced training and sensitization to create awareness and reduce compliance cost and simplify online technology for the overall positive impact on compliance among the SMEs.

Theoretical framework

This study is anchored partly on the Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory. The choice of this theory is based on the suitability to the topic. Singhal (2016) quotes a renowned communication scholar, Everett Rogers, who propounded the Diffusion of Innovation theory as the process by which an innovation or idea is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system. He adds that innovation is an idea, practice, or object perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption.

The underlying feature of adoption is that the individual receiving the information must perceive the idea, behaviour, or product as new or innovative and decides to take it up.

The diffusion of innovation theory relates closely to this study because the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development (NOGICD) Act was recently introduced to the Nigerian oil and gas industry. The Nigerian Content Act, the communications, and the NCDMB represent the innovation in this study. The Act provides new operational guidelines and processes for executing oil industry activities and dictates the domestication of oil and gas projects and programmes, and the use of local resources.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study because it enabled the gathering, analysis of data and examination of the correlation between them. The population for this study was 1,522 persons and they comprised all staff working in Nigerian Content and Projects Development departments in the four selected oil and gas companies – *Total Energies Exploration Nigeria Limited, Seplat Nigeria Limited, Saipem Contracting Nigeria Limited (SCNL), and OilServ Nigeria Ltd.*

Given that 1,522 persons were the population of the study, the Krejcie and Morgan Sampling Table was used to draw the sample, and 321 persons were selected, which represented 21% of the population. The quota sampling technique was used to apportion the sample proportionately to the four oil and gas companies selected for the study. The convenience sampling method was used to select the respondents who were administered the questionnaire and those interviewed.

Nature/Sources of Primary Data

The primary data for the study was obtained using questionnaire and interview schedule. The questionnaire contained seven items, which were linked to the two research questions. They were administered using a Google form distributed to the identified sample. Tables were used to present data obtained from the questionnaire using weighted mean score (WMS). Similarly, two interview questions were developed from the two research questions. The responses were analyzed qualitatively, using the explanation-building technique.

Research Question 1: What is the extent of awareness of the Nigerian oil and gas content communication campaigns among the selected oil and gas companies?

Table 1: Awareness of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development Act

Awareness of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Content Communications	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Sum	Mean
I am aware of the Nigerian oil and gas content communications	872	288	10	2	1172.00	3.65
I have attended Nigerian content meetings, events, workshops or been exposed to Nigerian oil and gas content media programmes on compliance.	796	294	26	11	1127.00	3.51
I understand how the Nigerian Content Act, its regulations, and guidelines apply to my company's operations.	776	342	22	2	1142.00	3.55

I understand my company's activities that qualify to be classified as Nigerian content compliant or non-compliant	744	327	48	2	1117.00	3.49
Overall Mean						3.55

Data in Table 1 were drawn from items 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the questionnaire developed for the study. The outcome showed a high level of awareness by the respondents regarding Nigerian oil and gas content communications. This was based on the weighted mean score of 3.65, which was greater than the 2.50 cut-off mean score. Data presented in the table indicated that the respondents agreed to have attended workshops, meetings, events and media programmes on compliance to the Nigerian oil and gas content communications. This was based on the mean score of 3.51 on a four-point Likert scale. In addition, the respondents agreed that they understood how the regulations and guidelines of the Nigerian Content Act applied to the operations of their companies. This conclusion was based on the weighted mean of 3.55, which was above the 2.50 cut-off score. On whether respondents had a good understanding of their companies' activities that could be classified as Nigerian content complaint, or non-compliant, the mean of 3.49, which was above the 2.50 cut-off score indicated that the respondents understood their companies' activities that could be classified as Nigerian content complaint, or non-compliant.

With an overall mean response of 3.55, there was sufficient evidence of a high level of awareness of the Nigerian oil and gas content communications among the selected oil and gas companies.

Research Question 2: What is the attitude of selected oil and gas companies towards Nigerian oil and gas content communication campaigns?

Table 2: Selected Oil and Gas Companies' Attitude Towards Nigerian Oil and Gas Content Communications

Attitude of Companies Towards Nigerian Oil and Gas Content Communications	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Sum	Mean
My company's attitude towards Nigerian oil and gas content communications is positive.	668	414	32	0	1114.00	3.47
My company believes that Nigerian oil and gas content communications make oil and gas projects more expensive and slower.	132	189	342	54	717.00	2.23
My company believes that Nigerian oil and gas content communications are important, and they help to improve projects execution.	616	447	36	0	1099.00	3.42
Overall Mean						3.04

Data in Table 2 data were drawn from items 5, 6, and 7 of the questionnaire. On whether the selected oil and gas companies had a positive attitude towards Nigerian oil and gas content communication, the weighted mean score of 3.47 indicated that the companies involved in the study had a positive attitude towards Nigerian oil and gas content communication. On whether Nigerian oil and gas content communications made oil and gas projects more expensive and slower, data in Table 2 indicated that the respondents rejected the notion that Nigerian oil and

gas content communications made oil and gas projects expensive and slower. This was based on the mean score of 2.23, which was lower than the 2.50 mean cut-off mark. Data from the table also affirmed that Nigerian oil and gas content communications were important and improved the execution of projects. This was deduced from the mean score of 3.42, which confirmed that respondents overwhelmingly agreed that Nigerian oil and gas content communications were important and improved the execution of projects.

The overall mean score of 3.04 clearly revealed that respondents had a positive attitude toward Nigerian oil and gas content communications.

Interview Report

In a bid to get additional views, in-depth interview was conducted with 8 officials from the four selected companies and two officials from the regulatory body, the NCDMB.

Extent of companies' awareness of Nigerian oil and gas content communications

Most of the interviewees affirmed that there was high awareness of Nigerian oil and gas content communications in their organisations, but the awareness level depended on the job functions of the personnel, while some of the interviewees admitted that their companies' understanding of Nigerian oil and gas content communications were limited to the businesses they were engaged in. However, a few interviewees stated that their organisations were not well-informed about Nigerian oil and gas content communications.

Attitude of selected oil companies towards Nigerian oil and gas content communications

Most of the interviewees confessed that their perception was that Nigerian Content communications disturb their company's activities and create challenges for operations. In their view, their companies complied with Nigerian Content only because they were mandatory and not because they saw the need or the benefits. They added that Nigerian Content communications were often seen from a negative perspective and as something that drives costs, while another noted that his company's attitude towards Nigerian Content communications were ambivalent because the management was primarily concerned with growing their business. Another notable feedback was that indigenous oil-producing companies would prefer to be exempted from complying with the provisions of the Nigerian Content Act. In their view, Nigerian content regulations should be restricted to international upstream operations and should not be extended to midstream and downstream operations.

Discussion of Findings

The basis for this discussion was provided by the data analysed in Tables 3 and 4, and the presentation of interview reports.

Research Question 1: What is the extent of awareness of the Nigerian oil and gas content communications among the selected oil and gas companies?

The answer to Research Question One revealed that personnel working in Nigerian content and project development and implementation departments in the four selected companies were fully aware of Nigerian oil and gas content communications and its implementation in their companies. Four items in the questionnaire (1, 2, 3, and 4) were derived from Research Question One (RQ1) and the weights of their various responses were aggregated, and the

weighted mean score was 3.55, hence the decision was accepted. It was obvious that Nigerian oil and gas content communications have diffused significantly among the selected oil companies, probably following the five processes of the Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory (Singhal, 2016).

It was further revealed from the interview segment that the depth of awareness depended on the job functions of the personnel and the activities of the respective firms. Organisations and their staff tend to focus on the aspects of Nigerian content communications that relate to their operations.

Research question 2: What is the attitude of the selected oil and gas companies towards Nigerian oil and gas content communications?

The response to Research Question Two (RQ2) indicated that the selected oil and gas companies had a positive disposition towards Nigerian oil and gas content communications, and they believed that the communications are important, and improve the execution of oil and gas projects. The weighted mean score from the three items (5, 6, and 7) derived from the questionnaire was 3.04, hence the decision was accepted. The high level of awareness on Nigerian oil and gas content communications was believed to have contributed significantly to the positive attitude.

Notwithstanding, a different perspective emerged in the interview segment where 60% of the interviewees indicated that the selected oil and gas companies view Nigerian content communications as an irritation and a cost driver. The concern that local content leads to cost escalation was raised by (Silva, 2014) who hinted that oil companies that implement local content are likely to pass the cost of compliance to their consumers, further driving up the cost of essential services. Similarly, Asu (2017) expressed concern that local vendors in the Nigerian oil and gas industry often demand unreasonable rates when bidding for industry projects, believing that they would win the jobs because of the Nigerian Content Act, irrespective of the uncompetitive quotations they submit.

Although 40 percent of the interviewees acknowledged their companies' positive disposition toward Nigerian content communications, the dominant feedback in the interview segment was that local content communications often delay projects and lead to cost escalations in oil and gas operations. Notably, it was deduced from the interview feedback that most oil companies accepted and implemented Nigerian content communications because they are mandatory, and the companies want to avert being penalized for violation, and not because they voluntarily wish to do so. This finding reconfirmed the postulation of Ingalls (2022) who states that complying with regulations could induce added expenses on the part of an individual or an organisation, but not complying could be even more costly, especially when the consequences are financial penalties, court costs, suspension of services, and more. Another outcome of the interview was that indigenous oil and gas producing companies believed that the Local Content Law was conceived to protect them from foreign domination, and they (local producing companies) should be excluded from the strictures of compliance and be allowed to procure cheaper, available and reliable assets and services from outside the country, to enable them produce oil quickly at reduced costs. Similarly, the interview revealed that midstream and downstream operators in the Nigerian oil and gas industry would prefer that Nigerian content regulations be restricted to upstream activities, while they get excluded from compliance requirements.

In the final analysis, the outcome of Research Question Two was that the selected oil and gas companies had mixed attitudes towards Nigerian oil and gas content communications. Most indigenous service companies had a positive attitude towards Nigerian oil and gas content communications because of the contracts and job opportunities that Nigerian content implementation provides for them and other positives for the national economy. Nonetheless, the international operating and service companies perceived Nigerian oil and gas content communications as causing additional cost burden, being a clog in project delivery schedule, and threat to the quality of delivery. Similarly, the indigenous oil-producing companies and their midstream and downstream counterparts preferred that they be excluded from the implementation of Nigerian oil and gas content communications. One could state that these categories of oil and gas companies had sufficient awareness about Nigerian content communications, however, they were primarily concerned about optimising profits and ease of doing business and dislike any policy that would get in their way, no matter how such policies are projected or well intentioned.

Despite their negative attitude, the findings indicated that all the oil and gas firms endeavour to accepted Nigerian content communications because they are backed by the Nigerian Content Act of 2010, hence mandatory for the companies' operations and business continuity in the Nigerian oil and gas industry.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Findings from the study revealed that personnel working in Nigerian Content and Project Development departments in the four selected companies were fully aware of Nigerian oil and gas content communications and its implementation in their companies. However, the level of awareness was usually determined by the job functions of the personnel, and activities of the firms. The study also revealed that selected oil and gas companies had mixed or different attitudes or dispositions towards Nigerian oil and gas content communications, and this was often determined by their underlying business interests. Most indigenous oil and gas service companies had a positive attitude towards Nigerian oil and gas content communications. Conversely, most international operating and service firms had an ambivalent attitude towards Nigerian oil and gas content communications because it caused them additional costs, delays their delivery of projects, and posed a threat to the quality of their projects. Likewise, indigenous oil-producing companies and their midstream and downstream counterparts supported the Nigerian content philosophy, but they wanted to be excused from the Nigerian content implementation requirements and conditions, to enable them produce crude oil quickly at the least possible costs and start to recover their costs.

Recommendations

Based on the result of the study, the following recommendations were put forward to make Nigerian oil and gas content communications more effective and get to the companies to have positive attitude on the subject matter.

- i. Holding regular Nigerian content sensitization programmes for key stakeholders, staff of oil and gas companies and Nigerian content managers of oil and gas companies to explain new regulations and compliance processes.
- ii. Intensifying targeted media programmes and utilizing the NOGICJQS platform to regularly send out Nigerian content communications through phone contacts and emails that are already registered on the platform.

- iii. Using targeted correspondence to communicate Nigerian content issues to senior management of companies and retaining the use of newspapers and magazines for communicating detailed and specific Nigerian content messages because of the permanent value of such publications.

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