

ASSESSMENT OF BROADCAST MEDIA AS A TOOL FOR THE PROMOTION OF DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS IN RIVERS

Flora Kemi Duke-Sunny

Department of Mass Communication, Edo University Iyahmo

Abstract

This study investigates the Assessment of Broadcast media as a tool for the promotion of developmental projects in Rivers State. The objectives of the study are to identify the extent to which broadcast media promote developmental projects in Rivers State, the extent to which broadcast media are relevant in propagating projects in Rivers State and the extent to which broadcast media help in promoting projects in Rivers State. The agenda-setting theory was used for the study. The study used a survey research design with the questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The modified four-point Likert rating scale of VHE, HE, LE and VLE was used for data presentation and analysis. Thus, the population of the study was 150 radio and television broadcasters in Rivers State (120 from 22 radio stations and 30 from 4 television stations). A census technique was applied to the sample size. The data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation and presented in tables. The findings showed that broadcast media help to provide insight into the progress of the projects, and it is an effective tool for promoting projects in Rivers State. The study concluded that broadcast media play a crucial role in fostering developmental projects in Rivers State. Through their functions, the media help to inform, mobilise support, and promote tourism in the state. It was recommended, among others, that Radio and television programs should be scheduled during peak periods when the audience is most likely to tune in, and regular updates on the progress of the project should be provided to help maintain the interest of the community. These updates can be given via both broadcast media and social media platforms, and professionals who are well-versed in the project area will help to provide additional insights and answers to questions that the public may have.

Keywords: Assessment, Broadcast Media, Promotion, Developmental Projects

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Introduction

In today's digital age, broadcast media continues to play a crucial role in promoting and disseminating information about various projects in Nigeria. It has been a long-standing tool for communicating information to the public in Rivers State and across Nigeria, significantly contributing to the promotion of development initiatives and projects. With its broad reach and ability to engage audiences, broadcast media has proven to be an effective tool for promoting projects and driving their success (Jenifer, 2015). Broadcast media is a powerful tool for promoting projects in Rivers State, encompassing various forms of media such as TV and radio, which provide a vast platform for project promotion. Utilising broadcast media for project promotion has numerous benefits, such as increased audience reach, cost-

effectiveness, and enhanced project visibility.

Broadcast media is a more accessible tool for promoting projects in Rivers State because it reaches a broader audience and can be easily accessed by low-income earners in the State. According to the NCC survey, 76% of residents of Rivers State have radio access, and 56% have access to television. Other media, such as newspapers and online platforms, only constitute a smaller percentage. The large number of people that the broadcast media channel can reach gives it a significant advantage over other media, as it can target audiences across the state (Okpanachi, 2018).

One significant way in which broadcast media helps promote projects in Rivers State is by increasing audience reach. The primary objective of project promotion is to raise awareness and generate interest

in the project. Broadcast media provides an avenue for project enthusiasts to showcase their projects to a wide range of audiences simultaneously. The reach of radio and television in Rivers State is incredible, with various radio stations, TV channels, and cable networks broadcasting to millions of people daily. Therefore, this gives project promoters extensive reach to showcase their ideas. Moreover, broadcast media provides an excellent avenue for promoting projects in Rivers state at a cost-effective rate. Broadcast media is cheaper compared to other forms of advertising, such as billboards, newspaper ads, and posters. A radio or television campaign can be launched with minimal investment and reach a large audience for an extended period. This means that promotional campaigns can be executed for a more extended period to create better project awareness (Ogbuehi, 2019).

By presenting projects in a visually appealing and persuasive way, broadcast media helps to create awareness and generate interest among the target audience. Broadcast media provide a platform for project promoters to engage with the public and receive feedback. Through call-in shows, social media interactions, and live broadcasts, project promoters can address concerns, clarify misconceptions, and gather valuable insights from the audience. This interactive nature of broadcast media fosters transparency and accountability, enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the projects (Okoli, 2014). The broadcast media have been successful in raising public awareness about ongoing development projects in Rivers State. According to a 2018 survey carried out by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), television and radio were the most prominent channels for disseminating information about government projects in the state. The survey further revealed that residents of Rivers State are more likely to obtain information about ongoing projects from the broadcast media than from any other medium. Agbada et al. (2020) assert that the use of broadcast media for promoting projects has also helped to educate, increase public interest, and garner support from residents in the State. The promotion of projects in the State is typically run simultaneously on radio and television. Regular features, such as interviews, documentaries, and talk shows, which are aired on these channels, serve to inform, enlighten, and convince people about the needs and benefits of the projects. A notable example is the Rivers State Cassava Processing Company and its associated infrastructural projects, which have been in the news recently.

Furthermore, broadcast media enhances the visibility of projects in Rivers State. There are several examples of projects that have been featured in media reports and public broadcasts, gaining significant attention and support. For instance, the Rivers State government's project on the construction of a new

flyover bridge was heavily publicised on radio and television, enhancing the project's visibility and garnering support from communities and stakeholders (Nwanosike, 2020). The promotion of the company and its benefits to the State has been carried out on the radio and television as a means of keeping citizens informed and increasing their level of interest in the project. The assessment of broadcast media as a tool for promoting projects in Rivers State is that it is a powerful tool with vast potential to increase project awareness, reduce costs, and enhance visibility. The benefits of broadcast media in project promotion in Rivers state cannot be overstated, and it should be utilised effectively to project-boost and ensure our development.

Statement of the Problem

Broadcast media are a valuable medium for distributing information. Radio and television play a significant role in the growth of society. Due to their informative and surveillance role, they are often referred to as the fourth estate of the realm and the watchdog of society. Broadcast media are a tool designed to disseminate information to the public, serving as an apparatus for change and shaping the national conscience. The fact is that broadcast media play a crucial role in reforming, revamping, and shaping society. The statutory function of the broadcast media is to inform, educate, and entertain. Educational programs have a significant impact on viewers and listeners. Projects such as cassava processing and the construction of new flyover bridges are advocated and implemented in the State through the use of broadcast media to avoid extinction.

However, there is no doubt that the broadcast media educate and enlighten the public through news analysis, documentaries, commentaries, drama, talk shows, and many other programmes. The question is, do broadcast media often broadcast project programmes? If they do, how often do they broadcast? Moreover, how effective are these programmes in terms of outreach? These and many more are some of the problems this study attempts to address, hence the need for this study on the assessment of broadcast media as a tool for promoting projects in Rivers State.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to investigate the assessment of broadcast media as a tool for the promotion of projects in Rivers State. The objectives are specifically to:

1. To examine the extent to which broadcast media promote projects in Rivers State.
2. To ascertain the extent to which broadcast media are relevant in propagating projects in Rivers State.
3. To find out the extent to which broadcast media

have been promoting projects in Rivers State.

Research Questions

These research questions were formulated to guide this study:

1. To what extent do broadcast media promote projects in Rivers State?
2. To what extent is broadcast media relevant in propagating projects in Rivers State?
3. To what extent have the broadcast media helped in promoting projects in Rivers State?

Conceptual Review

Broadcast media refers to the transmission of audio or video content through radio or television channels to a broad audience. It is a mass communication medium that allows for the dissemination of information, entertainment, and advertising to a large number of people simultaneously (Dominick, 2012). Broadcast media utilise technology, which may be in an analogue or digital form, to share information with a large, scattered audience. Primarily, broadcast media involve broadcasting and communicating with the public by informing them of global events, relying on a triad of informing, educating, and entertaining the public. Broadcast media is seen as “the electronic transmission of audio and video signals to a dispersed audience, such as through radio and television” (Baran, 2018).

Broadcasting entails the distribution of audio and/or video programs or content to a large group of recipients who fall into one or more of the following categories: listeners, viewers, or both. This group may be the public or a relatively large audience within the public. Broadcasting may involve auditory information only, as in radio, or visual information, or a combination of both, as in television. As technology has advanced, so too have the forms of broadcasting. Olalekan, Onjefu, and Mikaila (2013) explained that broadcasting is the dissemination of information through mechanical means to a broad, diverse, and heterogeneous audience, comprising individuals within and outside a society. Broadcasting is indispensable in any society, permeating and fulfilling all individual, social, political, and hedonic needs of people, pivoted on the transfer of meaning through communication. The societal importance of broadcasting is underscored by Folarin (2010), who defines the endeavour as “the planned provision of information, education, and entertainment to large and heterogeneous audiences through the medium of radio or television,” as noted by Folarin, involving both radio and television broadcasting.

This implies that, within a society, broadcasting operates not in a vacuum but as an element within a system comprising mutually interactive, interdependent constituent parts or elements. This

suggests that broadcasting, as an institution within a society, derives its functional relevance from its interaction or relationship with other societal elements, both within its organisational structure (i.e. operational managers, owners, etc.) and outside (i.e. sources, audiences, advertisers, government, etc.). Hence, logically, it can be posited that broadcasting, in any society, operates within an environment made up of dynamic, interactive internal and external forces.

One of the key advantages of broadcast media is its ability to reach a large and diverse audience. Television and radio stations have a wide coverage across the country, allowing project promoters to reach people in both urban and rural areas. This broad reach ensures that project information reaches a wide range of stakeholders, including potential beneficiaries, investors, and government officials. Broadcast media offers a dynamic platform for promoting projects through various formats such as interviews, documentaries, and talk shows. These formats provide an opportunity for project promoters to showcase the objectives, benefits, and progress of their projects in an engaging and informative manner.

The broadcast media are a vital part of a nation's production machinery and serve as a lubricant for the economy and development. This lubrication function is achieved through entertainment, information, and education, which they provide through news and movies, among other forms, via radio and television. Broadcast media consist of radio and television. It is believed that between 1887 and 1888, a German scientist, Heinrich Hertz (1857-1894), made a significant scientific breakthrough by demonstrating the transmission of vibration through electric current in space, creating a wave-like beam of light that carries sound from one place to another. Through this effort, he laid the foundation for radio waves (Sterling & Kitrose, 2019, p. 20). According to Nwanza (2013, p. 20), broadcast media comprise radio and television, and they are primarily used to deliver information to the public. The colonial Master used radio broadcasting to disseminate cultural norms, values and philosophies. Akpan (2016, p. 5) stated that broadcast media comprise radio and television. They differ from print media in that both radio and television are mouth-to-ear and face-to-face media; on the other hand, being a face-to-face medium, they utilise person-to-person communication with the audience.

Broadcast media is an audiovisual communication medium that reaches a broad audience through radio and television platforms. In Rivers State, it is an effective tool for promoting projects aimed at improving the standard of living of the people. This is because it simultaneously reaches a large number of people and provides an opportunity for in-depth discussion of the project and its goals.

Broadcast Media as Tools for Propagating Projects in Rivers State

The broadcast media play a sacrosanct role in shaping Rivers State through its content that is disseminated to the State. Radio and television have been very instrumental in development. Utor (2015, p.57) posited that broadcast media objectives and functions are interrelated. Broadcasting serves a variety of functions depending on individual interest and societal means; the main functions are informing, educating, enlightening, entertaining and persuading. Nwanze (2013, p.3) opined that the functions of broadcast media, radio broadcasting, are the most effective medium of mass communication as it transcends geographical, linguistic and other traditional barriers. One of the functions of radio is that it disseminates information to the masses, primarily the grassroots. The broadcast media perform an existing function or role of entertaining the public with programmes that appeal to the interest of the public, such as movies, music, cartoons, illustrations and drama.

Broadcast media is a vehicle that conveys information to the public, and they can put up campaigns to promote various projects that are going on in the State through project service units by showcasing the projects that will make people interested. Broadcast media play a crucial role in propagating projects in Rivers State. As one of the most populated states in Nigeria, Rivers State requires practical communication tools to disseminate information about various government projects and programs to its citizens. Broadcast media, which include television, radio, and online platforms, are an essential tool for communicating with the public and creating awareness about government projects in Rivers state. Television is one of the most effective media tools for propagating projects in Rivers State. The Rivers state government can use local television stations such as RSTV to broadcast its projects to a broader audience. The state government can air documentaries, interviews, and live programs that focus on various projects across the state. These programs will provide insight into the progress of the projects, the impact on communities, and the benefits to citizens (Gbenga, 2014).

Radio is another essential tool for disseminating information about projects in Rivers State. The state government can utilise local radio stations, such as Radio Rivers, to communicate information about government projects to remote communities that lack access to television. These stations can broadcast live interviews with government officials and project beneficiaries, creating awareness and ownership of the project among the people. Online media platforms, such as social media, websites, and

blogs, are also instrumental in promoting projects in Rivers state. The state government can use its website and social media accounts to share information about its projects. These platforms can provide updates, images, and videos of project activities, attracting more people to support and monitor the project's progress (Gbenga, 2014).

The Functions of Broadcast Media in Promoting Developmental Projects in Rivers State

Broadcast media functions according to Ogbechie and Idemudia (2013) include.

1. Creating awareness: The broadcast media plays a crucial role in raising awareness about developmental projects in Rivers State. Through news updates, interviews, and special features, the media informs the public about ongoing projects, their benefits, and the impact on the community.
2. Mobilising support: Broadcast media also helps to mobilise support and participation from the public towards developmental projects. By airing messages that encourage citizens to get involved in community development initiatives, the media helps to create a sense of ownership and commitment amongst the people.
3. Advocacy: By using their platform to advocate for specific developmental projects, the broadcast media helps to influence public opinion and decision-making. Through editorials and opinion pieces, the media can serve as a watchdog, holding government officials accountable for delivering on their promises.
4. Promotion of tourism: Broadcast media also promote tourism in the state by showcasing the various tourist attractions as well as government initiatives aimed at developing the tourism industry. This helps to boost the state's economy while creating employment opportunities for citizens.

Relevance of Broadcast Media in Propagating Projects in Rivers State

Broadcast media play a pivotal role in promoting projects in Rivers State, as noted by Gbenga (2014). Here are a few reasons why:

1. Wide Reach: Broadcast media have a broad reach and can cover a large geographic area, making it an effective tool for disseminating information about projects to a large audience. According to a report by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Rivers State has a population of over 7 million people. With the reach of broadcast media, information about projects can be disseminated to a significant proportion

of this population.

2. **Credibility:** Broadcast media are often regarded as credible sources of information. People tend to trust information they hear on the radio or see on television, which helps build trust and credibility for projects being promoted through these media.
3. **Cost-Effective:** Compared to other forms of media, such as print media and outdoor advertising, broadcast media is relatively cost-effective. This makes it an excellent choice for reaching a large audience, especially in areas where people may not have access to other forms of media.
4. **Local Language:** In Rivers State, over 30 different indigenous languages are spoken. Broadcast media in local languages can effectively reach people in their preferred language. This helps to ensure that the message about projects is well-received and understood.
5. **Engagement:** Broadcast media offers an opportunity for engagement between project owners and the public. For instance, radio phone-ins and talk shows provide a platform for people to ask questions and seek clarification about ongoing projects. This engagement helps to build a sense of ownership and commitment to the project.

Theoretical Framework

Agenda-setting theory

Agenda setting describes the potent influence of the media – the ability to inform us about what issues are important. As far back as 1922, the newspaper columnist Walter Lippmann was concerned that the media had the power to present images to the public. McCombs and Shaw investigated presidential campaigns in 1968, 1972 and 1976. In their 1968 research, they focused on two elements: awareness and information. By investigating the agenda-setting function of the mass media, they attempted to assess the relationship between what voters in one community identified as important issues and the actual content of the media messages used during the campaign.

McCombs and Shaw concluded that the mass media exerted a significant influence on what voters considered to be the major issues of the campaign. The core assumption of Agenda-setting is the creation of public awareness and concern about salient issues by the news media. Two basic assumptions underlie most research on agenda setting: (1) the press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it; (2) media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues. One of the most critical aspects of the concept of an agenda-setting role of mass communication is the time frame for this phenomenon.

In addition, different media have different agenda-setting potential. Agenda-setting theory seems quite appropriate to help us understand the pervasive role of the broadcast media.

Agenda-setting theory rests on two fundamental assumptions. The first one states that the media filters and shapes reality instead of simply reflecting it. For example, news stories are not presented chronologically or according to the number of people affected by them, but rather in an order that a producer or editor determines to be the most “sensational, or most appealing to audiences. The second assumption states that the more attention the media gives to specific issues, the more likely the public will be to label those issues as vital ones. In other words, agenda setting doesn't necessarily tell people how they should think or feel about specific issues, but rather what issues they should think about.

Methodology

The study used the survey research design. The population consisted of 150 radio and television broadcasters in Rivers State, comprising 120 from 22 radio stations and 30 from 4 television stations. A census technique was used to determine the sample size. The data collection instrument was a questionnaire, which utilised a modified four-point Likert rating scale with response modes of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), and Very Low Extent (VLE). The instrument was validated through face and content validity, based on suggestions and comments from experts in communication studies, to ensure the study achieved its desired results. The data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation, and presented in tables.

Presentation of Data and Data Analysis

Research Question 1: To what extent do broadcast media roles promote projects in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation analysis on the extent to which broadcast media promote projects in Rivers State.

S/N	ITEMS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	N	CUM. RATING	X	SD	RMK
1	Broadcast media play a significant role in promoting projects in Rivers State regularly.	99	40	9	1	150	534	3.5	0.94	VHE
2	The broadcast media plays a critical role in creating awareness about developmental projects taking place in Rivers state. Through news updates, interviews, and special features, often	100	39	8	3	150	536	3.5	0.95	VHE
3	Broadcast media help to mobilise support and participation from the public towards developmental projects .	49	77	24	20	150	495	3.3	0.91	VHE

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation analysis of the extent to which broadcast media

promote projects in Rivers State. The data revealed that the respondent accepted in a very high extent that broadcast media plays a significant roles in promoting projects in Rivers State, the broadcast media plays a critical role in creating awareness about developmental projects taking place in Rivers state, through news updates, interviews, and special features often regularly broadcast media helps to mobilise support and participation from the public towards developmental projects with the mean scores of 3.5, and 3.3, with standard deviation ratings of 0.94 and 0.91 respectively which is above the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates that broadcast media promote projects in Rivers State.

Research Question Two: To what extent is broadcast media relevant in propagating projects in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation analysis on the extent to which broadcast media are relevant in propagating projects in Rivers State.

S/N	ITEMS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	N	CUM. RATING	X	SD	RMK
1	Broadcast media are often viewed as a credible source of information .	58	70	18	4	150	482	3.2	0.89	HE
2	Broadcast media offer an opportunity for engagement between project owners and the public.	57	69	20	4	150	479	3.2	0.89	HE
3	Broadcast media have a broad reach and can cover a large geographic area.	65	77	7	1	150	506	3.3	0.91	HE

Table 2 reveals the Mean and standard deviation analysis on the extent to which broadcast media are relevant in propagating projects in Rivers State. The data reveal that respondents accepted that broadcast media is often viewed as a credible source of information, offers an opportunity for engagement between project owners and the public, and has a broad reach that can cover a large geographic area, with mean scores of 3.2 and 3.3, and standard deviation ratings of 0.89 and 0.91, respectively, which exceed the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates that broadcast media is relevant in propagating projects in Rivers State to a high extent.

Research Question Three: To what extent have the broadcast media helped in promoting projects in Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation analysis of the broadcast media's role in promoting projects in Rivers State

S/N	ITEMS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	N	CUM. RATING	X	SD	RMK
1	Broadcast media through the campaign help to promote various projects that are going on in the State through project service units by showcasing the projects .	99	40	9	1	150	534	3.5	0.94	VHE
2	The broadcast media help to provide insight into the progress of the projects, the impact on communities, and the benefits to citizens.	57	69	20	4	150	479	3.2	0.89	HE
3	Broadcast media broadcast live interviews with government officials and project beneficiaries, creating awareness and ownership of the project among the people .	49	77	24	20	150	495	3.3	0.91	VHE

Table 3 presents the mean and standard deviation analysis of the extent to which broadcast media help promote projects in Rivers State. The data revealed that the respondent accepted in a high extent that broadcast media through campaign promote various projects that is going on in the State through project service units by showcasing the projects, broadcast media help to provides insight into the progress of the projects, the impact on communities, and broadcast live interviews with government officials and project beneficiaries, creating awareness and ownership of the project among the people with mean scores of 3.5, 3.2 and 3.3, with standard deviation ratings of 0.94, 0.89 and 0.91 each which is above the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates that broadcast media help promote projects in Rivers State to a high extent.

Discussion of Findings

The extent to which broadcast media promote projects in Rivers State.

Research question one focused on the extent to which broadcast media promote projects in Rivers State. The results revealed that the respondent accepted in a very high extent that broadcast media plays a significant roles in promoting projects in Rivers State, the broadcast media plays a critical role in creating awareness about developmental projects taking place in Rivers state, through news updates, interviews, and special features often regularly broadcast media helps to mobilise support and participation from the public towards developmental projects with the mean scores of 3.5, and 3.3, with standard deviation ratings of 0.94 and 0.91 respectively which is above the criterion mean of 2.50. The result indicates that broadcast media promote projects in Rivers State.

This finding aligns with Ogbechie and Idemudia (2013), who assert that the broadcast media play a crucial role in creating awareness about developmental projects in Rivers State. The broadcast media also helps mobilise support and participation from the public towards developmental projects. By airing messages that encourage citizens to get involved in community development initiatives, the media fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among the people.

The extent to which broadcast media is relevant in propagating projects in Rivers State.

Research question two focused on the extent to which broadcast media are relevant in propagating projects in Rivers State. The results revealed that the respondents accepted that broadcast media are often viewed as a credible source of information, offer an opportunity for engagement between project owners and the public, and have a broad reach, covering a large geographic area, with mean scores of 3.2 and 3.3, and

standard deviation ratings of 0.89 and 0.91, respectively, which are above the criterion mean of 2.50. This result indicates that broadcast media is relevant in propagating projects in Rivers State to a high extent. This finding is in line with Gbenga (2014), who opined that broadcast media have a broad reach and can cover a large geographic area and are often viewed as a credible source of information. People tend to trust information they hear on the radio or see on television, which helps build trust and credibility for projects being propagated through these media.

The extent to which broadcast media help in promoting projects in Rivers State.

Research question three sought answers on the extent to which broadcast media help in promoting projects in Rivers State. The result revealed that the respondent accepted in a high extent that broadcast media through campaign promote various projects that is going on in the State through project service units by showcasing the projects, broadcast media help to provides insight into the progress of the projects, the impact on communities, and broadcast live interviews with government officials and project beneficiaries, creating awareness and ownership of the project among the people with mean scores of 3.5, 3.2 and 3.3, with standard deviation ratings of 0.94, 0.89 and 0.91 each which is above the criterion mean of 2.50. This shows that broadcast media help in promoting projects in Rivers State to a great extent.

This finding aligns with Gbenga's (2014) assertion that broadcast media campaigns promote various projects in the State through project service units by showcasing them. The broadcast media provide insight into the progress of these projects, their impact on communities, and the benefits to citizens.

Conclusion

The broadcast media play a crucial role in promoting developmental projects in Rivers State. Through their functions, the media help to inform, mobilise support, advocate, and promote tourism in the state. The use of television, radio, and online platforms creates awareness and ownership of the projects among citizens. In Rivers State, these platforms are an effective tool for promoting projects aimed at improving the standard of living of the people. This is because they reach a large number of people simultaneously and provide an opportunity for in-depth discussion of the project and its goals.

The state government should embrace these tools to enhance communication and ensure that information on its projects is easily accessible to the public.

Recommendations

Consequent upon the foregoing, and for this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Radio and television programs should be scheduled during peak viewing periods when the audience is most likely to tune in. A well-timed broadcast will ensure that the masses receive the message.
2. Regular updates on the project's progress should be provided to maintain community interest. These updates can be given via both broadcast media and social media platforms.
3. Professionals well-versed in the project area will provide additional insights and answers to any questions the public may have. Effectively positioning the project as well-informed and planned is excellent to increase credibility, and the project should be invited
4. The use of social media platforms, such as live streaming, Twitter chats, and Instagram stories, can help supplement traditional broadcast media. This approach will enable greater engagement and interaction between the project managers and the target audiences.

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