

Full Length Research Paper

Potentials of indigenous communication media for agricultural information dissemination in south-western Nigeria

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This study was carried out to assess the potentials of indigenous communication media in disseminating agricultural information in South-Western Nigeria. A multi stage random sampling technique was employed to select 120 respondents from 24 villages drawn at equal proportions from the two selected states within the southwestern geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Data were collected with the aid of an interview schedule. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse and categorize personal and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, while 5 points-like rating scale was used to evaluate the respondents' perception of indigenous communication media, and Chi-square was used to evaluate the significant relationship between socio-economic characteristics of respondents and their perception of indigenous communication media effectiveness. The result revealed that the mostly used indigenous media is town crier (60.0%), followed by traditional music (18.3%), folk songs (12.5%) and drama (9.2%). Also, 19.2% of respondents believed that indigenous media was cheaper than other media, 25.0% believed it was energy saving, 39.2% believed it gives prompt feedback, while 16.7% believed it was timely. Reasons for not using indigenous media often as indicated by the respondents were modernization (63.4%) and lack of interest (36.6%). Most of the respondents perceived that indigenous media were effective in disseminating agricultural information, simple to understand and effective in introducing new innovations, but that it was geographically restricted. Chi-square analysis showed a significant relationship between age ($\chi^2 = 50.500$, $p = 0.006$), marital status ($\chi^2 = 39.025$, $p = 0.000$), educational qualification ($\chi^2 = 13.900$, $p = 0.001$), primary occupation ($\chi^2 = 20.197$, $p = 0.001$), religion ($\chi^2 = 20.278$, $p = 0.000$), sex ($\chi^2 = 41.200$, $p = 0.0001$) and perception of the respondents.

Key words: Indigenous communication, agricultural information, dissemination media.

INTRODUCTION

The role of information in any society, community, or organization cannot be over emphasized. Communication is the transfer of information from one person to another through a medium. Such medium could be oral, written,

or electronic. According to Ugboajah (1985) who described information as the knowledge communicated for useful purpose. Information is very useful in decision making; its availability enables the individuals, groups, or

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organization to take rational decisions and to reduce their level of uncertainty. Onwubiko (1991) asserted that communication is peculiar to specific societies because they are borne out of people's culture, religious convictions and experiences, hence their interpretation may vary from one society to the other, since they do reveal the ethics of each society.

Popoola (2007) categorized information into hard and soft information. The former is obtained from research while the latter is casual and so not too serious. For both cases, information is of great value to any society. Modern day agricultural information sources available in the country include the internet, libraries and publications by national, regional and international research institutions and organizations such as FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization), Agricultural Development Banks, radio and television programmes and newspapers, are available but are yet to be fully exploited unlike traditional media. Although, this information sources exist, most of them especially in books, journals and other printed forms are either not accessible or available for rural farmers. However, the traditional methods of information dissemination include folk media, village debates, town crier, traditional music, exchanged visits and local radio. Ansah (1989) concluded that the most effective (and most used) tool is the village debates, in so far as this approach reflects the communication habit of rural communities.

Communication tools commonly used in traditional Societies

Traditional methods of information dissemination include folk media, village debates, town crier, traditional musician, exchanged visits and local radio. Folk Media are the vehicles the common people or rural farmers employ for delivery of their messages such as fold scripture, folk music, folk dance or folk painting (Ngombe and Van Der stichele 2000). There is a need to describe some of these folk media:

(1) Village Debates: This normally takes place under the shade of the a tree, around the market place, under the village leader's learn-to, around the well. The visit is used to provide concrete answers to the questions that prove difficult for a facilitator to respond to. It is however an effective tool because it pays attention to cost.

(2) Town Crier: Is similar to that of radio, television or postal, in so far as he is the person who responsible for providing information to the public and moderating in the context, illiteracy that characterize our villages, the town crier and his tam-tam play a leading role in meetings. The town crier announces visits and meetings as well as to facilitate debates. This is on other hand can be used for agricultural information dissemination.

(3) Traditional Musician: The traditional musician was favoured over other communication tools such as video,

demonstration booklet and the GRAAP series. It was necessary to find an inexpensive, easily accepted and popular method for promoting an activity and organizing the community. They sang about theories related to the forest, its importance for the community and the benefit it can provide. The musician also sang about advantages of becoming organized and the strength to be found in unity (Toumousseni and Linia 1993). The song made the rounds of cabarets, weddings and other festivities. The traditional musician as a communication tool produced good result. However, when using this approach, it is a good idea to take the precaution of following up with field visits to support the initiatives by ensuring the words are converted into actions.

(4) Exchange Visits: This is a communication tool that allows villagers to visit a well managed forest to see what it looks like, to learn cutting techniques and to understand how to manage a cutting site. In cases where exchange visits are not possible or where budgets are limited, videos of experiment under way are good tool for comparison and for stimulating debates; however, this tool is subject to certain constraints due to lack of equipment and electricity in some villages (Toumousseni and Linia, 1993).

Agricultural innovations that are capable of boosting farmers' productivity hardly get to the farmers as a result of defective agricultural information dissemination machinery (Ozowa 1995 and CTA 2003). Therefore, the search for appropriate media for agricultural information dissemination for agricultural development has been the receiving attention of researchers. Many scholars have suggested that indigenous media should be used effectively to reach farmers (Van dan Ban and Hawkins 1996). According to Van Dan Ban and Harkins (1996) interest in the use of folk media is increasing in less developed countries because the so called modern mass media have been less successful in agricultural information dissemination. The Food and Agricultural Organization reported that there is a definite potential in applying folk media for rural development. This was therefore designed to:

(a) Identify the socio economic characteristics of farmers.

(b) Assess farmers' preference for indigenous communication media

(c) Determine reasons for the usage of these media types in south-western Nigeria.

(d) Ascertain perception of traditional media utilization for agricultural information dissemination.

(e) Determine relationship that exists between socio-economic characteristics of farmers and their perception of indigenous communication media for agricultural information dissemination.

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between socio-

economic characteristics of respondents and perception of indigenous communication media for agricultural information dissemination.

Methodology

The study was carried out in south-western, Nigeria. The region is made up of six states which are Ogun, Osun, Ekiti, Ondo, Oyo and Lagos states. The south western region has two distinct seasons. These are the rainy season (April-October) and the dry season (November -March). Temperature ranges between 21 °C and 28 °C with high humidity. The south-western and the north-east trade wind blows in the rainy and dry (Harmattan) seasons respectively. They predominantly speak Yoruba language and farming is their major occupation.

A multi stage random sampling techniques was used to select respondents for the study. Firstly, 2 states were selected from the region. Secondly, 4 Local Government Areas were selected from each of the States; thirdly, 3 villages were selected from each of the Local Government Areas. Lastly, 5 respondents were selected from each of the villages. A total of 120 respondents were selected for interview.

Data was collected with the aid of interview schedule containing closed and open-ended questions. This was augmented with personal observation on the respondents' environment. Data were collected on personal and socio-economic characteristics such as age, sex, marital status, household size e.t.c, and also on the perception and use of indigenous communication media among the respondents. Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency count and percentage were used to describe the personal and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. A 5 points-like rating scale was used to evaluate the perception of the respondents towards the use of indigenous communication media. Chi-square was used to evaluate the significant relationship between the socio-economic characteristics of respondents and their perception of indigenous communication media effectiveness for agricultural dissemination.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Economic characteristics of respondents

The summary statistics of the socio-economic variables involved in the study is presented in Table 1. The mean age of the respondents was 46.8 with a standard derivation of 12.3. The table revealed that 12.5% of the respondents were within the age bracket 20-30 years; while only 25% of the respondents were above 60 years of age. The gender distribution of respondents revealed that 65% were male while 35% were female. This depicts that both male and female sexes were appreciably involved in the study. The marital status of the respondents' shows that 59.2% of them were married and only 30% were single revealing that most of them have family responsibilities. The household size of respondents indicated that 45.8% had household size between 1-4, while 44.2% had household size of 5-8 and 10% had household size of 9-12. This also supports the earlier assertion of their family responsibility.

The distribution of respondents based on religion

reveals that 70% were Christians and only 8.3% were traditional worshipers. The primary occupation of respondents shows that 46.6% were farmers, 16.7% artisans and 4.2% were civil servants. This revealed that farming is the most practiced occupation among the respondents. The respondent's distributions based on the level of education shows that most of the respondents (45%) had primary education and 1.7% had no formal education. This implies that due to low level of education of the respondents they might not have access to sophisticated channel of agricultural information hence indigenous media will be most suitable for them.

The distribution of the respondents based on their annual income (Table 2) revealed that 15.8% earned income between ₦ 228,000 and ₦ 360,000 while 22.5% earned income of ₦ 1,200,000 - ₦ 3,000,000 annually. This annual income depends on the occupation and level of involvement of the respondents. This implies that the respondents can generate income that is able to sustain their families.

The distribution of respondents based on the type of indigenous communication media available and used in their area, revealed that 15% of the respondents used folks song media in their area, 66.7% used town crier, 14.2% used traditional music and 4.2% used drama as channel of information in the studied area. The distribution of respondents based on communication type preference showed that 47.5% prefer folk song, 31.7% prefer town crier, and 10% prefer traditional music while 10.8% gave preference to drama. The indigenous communication media used mostly by the respondents shows that 12.5% of the respondents used folk media, 60.0% used town crier, 18.3% used traditional musician and 9.2% used drama. The choice of indigenous communication media revealed that 19.17% make their choices based on the fact that it is expensive, 39.67% because of prompt feedback, 16.67% because of its time consciousness and 25.0% because it is energy saving.

The reasons why indigenous communication media are no longer patronized shows that 63.6% blamed it on modernization while 36.4% blamed it on lack of interest. This implies that the interest of the people in the use of traditional media can be improved upon by using modern technology for these indigenous media so that they can be used for agricultural information dissemination.

Attitude of respondents towards use of indigenous media

Table 3 shows the attitude of respondents towards use of indigenous communication media in the studied area. Majority (78.7%) strongly agreed that indigenous media are cheap, 56.5% strongly agreed that they are energy saving, only 28.7% perceived they are effective for dissemination of agricultural innovation. Also, 11.4 and 65.5% strongly agreed and agreed respectively, that indigenous communication media are used to introduce

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents according to their Socio-Economic Characteristics.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age (years)		
Less than 30	15	12.5
31-40	22	18.3
41-50	40	33.3
51-60	25	20.8
61-70	15	12.5
Above 70	3	2.5
Gender		
Male	78	65.0
Female	42	35.0
Marital Status		
Single	36	30.0
Married	71	59.2
Divorced	8	6.7
Widowed	5	4.2
Household Size		
Less than 4	55	45.8
5-8	53	44.2
9-12	12	10.0
Religion		
Christian	84	70.0
Muslim	26	21.7
{African Traditional Religion}	10	8.3
Primary Occupation		
Civil Servant	5	4.2
Trading	34	28.3
Artisan	20	16.7
Farming	56	46.7
Others	5	4.2
Level of Education		
No Education	2	1.7
No Formal Education	30	25.0
Primary Education	54	45.0
Secondary Education	29	24.2
Tertiary Education	5	4.2
Annual Income (₦)		
228,000 - 360,000	19	15.8
384,000 - 456,000	21	17.5
600,000 - 720,000	28	23.3
720,000 - 1,080,000	25	20.8
1,200,000 – 3,000,000	27	22.5

Source: Field Survey, 2011.

new technology for effective extension work. About 46.9% strongly agreed, and 28.7% agreed that information dissemination is simple to understand. On the other hand, 53.3% strongly agreed that there is delay in feedback, 46.9 and 42.0% strongly agreed, and

agreed they are geographically located and 42.7% agreed that they might not be timely. Most of the respondents (68.9%) disagreed that they enhance practical demonstration of innovations. Table 4 revealed that Age ($\chi^2 = 50.500$, $p = 0.006$), Marital status ($\chi^2 =$

Table 2. Communication Media Employed by the Respondents.

Communication Media Employed	Frequency	Percentage
Type of communication media available in the area		
Folk songs	18	15.0
Town crier	80	66.7
Traditional musician	17	14.2
Drama	5	4.2
Facility used mostly		
Folk songs	15	12.5
Town crier	72	60.0
Traditional musician	22	18.3
Drama	11	9.2
Reasons for choice of communication media		
Less expensive	23	19.2
Prompt feed back	47	39.2
Timely	20	16.6
Energy saving	30	25.0
Reasons for not using indigenous communications again		
Modernization	77	63.6
Lack of interest	43	36.4

Source: Field Survey, 2011.

Table 3. Attitudinal Response to Indigenous Media in the Studied Area.

Statement	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagreed	Total
I.C.M are cheaper than other media	96(78.7)	20(18.1)	2(1.6)	1(0.8)	1(0.8)	120(100.0)
I.M use are energy saving	68(56.5)	45(36.9)	4(4.2)	2(1.6)	1(0.8)	120(100.0)
There is delay feedback in I.C.M	65(53.3)	32(27.8)	6(4.9)	9(7.4)	8(6.6)	120(100.0)
I.C.M are restricted geographically	56(46.9)	51(42.0)	8(6.7)	2(1.6)	3(2.8)	120(100.0)
I.C.M are effective in disseminating agricultural innovations	35(28.7)	1(0.8)	82(68.9)	1(0.8)	1(0.8)	120(100.0)
I. C.M might not be timely southwestern Nigeria	14(13.3)	52(42.7)	48(38.2)	4(4.2)	2(1.6)	120(100.0)
I.C.M can be used to introduce new technology	12(11.4)	80(65.5)	8(6.7)	9(7.4)	11(9.0)	120(100.0)
Information disseminated through I.C.M can be simple to understand	56(46.9)	35(28.7)	16(13.2)	8(6.7)	5(4.5)	120(100.0)
I.C.M enhances practical demonstrations of innovation	4(4.2)	7(6.0)	8(6.7)	82(68.9)	19(13.2)	120(100.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2011.

39.025, $p = 0.000$), Level of education ($\chi^2 = 22.917$, $p = 0.001$), Religion ($\chi^2 = 40.278$, $p = 0.000$), Sex ($\chi^2 = 41.200$, $p = 0.001$) and primary occupation ($\chi^2 = 20.917$, $p = 0.000$) of the respondents have significant effects on the perception of indigenous communication media for disseminating agricultural information in the studied area. On the other hand, annual income does not have effect on the perceptions of indigenous communication media

for agricultural information dissemination in the study area.

Conclusion

As result of the major findings of the study, the following conclusion was drawn: The types of folk media identified

Table 4. Relationship between Socio-economic Characteristics and Perception of Indigenous Media for Agricultural Information.

Socio Economic Characteristics	Chi-Square Value	Df	P-Value	Decision
Primary Occupation	20.917	4	0.000	Significant
Annual Income	5.000	4	0.999	Not Significant
Age	50.500	5	.006	Significant
Marital Status	39.025	2	.000	Significant
Level of Education	22.917	2	.001	Significant
Religion	40.278	2	.000	Significant
Sex	41.200	2	0.001	Significant

Source: Field Survey, 2011.

in the study area in order of usefulness were town crier, traditional music, folk songs and drama. The most commonly mentioned problems associated with the use of folk media were modernization, infidelity and poor knowledge of the advantages of folk media which had led to the lack of interest by the indigenes. Most of the respondents strongly agreed that indigenous media are cheaper than other channels of information while many of the respondents feel indifferent that indigenous media is effective for agricultural information dissemination. Among the socio-economic characteristics tested, marital status, age, level of education, religion and sex can be used to determine the readiness of individuals in receive agricultural information through indigenous media.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consequently, in order to use folk media effectively among farmers in the study area, these problems must be considered. In view of this, the following recommendations were made:

- (1) In disseminating agricultural information to farmers using folk media, policy makers and practitioners may choose the appropriate media considering the level of usefulness and frequency of use to ensure adequate impact.
- (2) Folk media usage should be incorporated in to the programmes of rural development agencies especially agricultural information dissemination for extension service delivery in south-western Nigeria.
- (3) Traditional communication media should form part of the innovation package to encourage adoption of innovations.

Conflict of Interests

The author(s) have not declared any conflict of interests.

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