FARMERS' PERCEIVED AND EXPECTED ROLE OF MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS IN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF OYO STATE, NIGERIA (a)

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Abstract

The study investigated farmers' perceived and expected role of media organizations in agricultural development of south-western Nigeria. One hundred completed interview schedule from farmers in five local government areas of Oyo State, Nigeria were analysed using statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, frequency distribution, correlation coefficient and ANOVA. It was found that radio is readily available to all the farmers while newspapers and television are only available to 30% and 41% of the farmers, respectively. Farmers perceived media organizations as agent and agency of mobilization for government programmes and sources of information on marketing, credit/loan, fertilizer procurement and application and information on agriculture. Media organizations are expected to play other roles such as on-the-farm programme broadcast, organising agricultural show, exhibitions and seminars/conferences on agriculture; and reaching policy makers about the problems of farmers. It was found that media use potential is positively and significantly correlated with farmers' literacy level (r = 0.652). Also there is a significant difference between perceived and expected role of mediia organizations (F = 3.56).

1.0 Introduction

Communication is the transfer of ideas, intentions, thoughts, conceptions, sensations and experiences from one person (who is regarded as the source) to the other (receiver(s) individuals and or groups) for a desired purpose. The success of any agricultural development programme and the attainment of set objectives in planning and accomplishments depend to a large extent on the communication system viz-a-viz, information dissemination and management technique adopted. It is the communication system that makes news, facts, figures and opinion available to the farming population and the public at large. This of course, where it is efficiently and effectively managed, is a necessary pre-condition for agricultural development.

With technological advancement, agricultural extension agencies have come to embrace the use of mass media organizations for effective information dissemination of improved agricultural technology from research centres to the farmers for sustainable productivity. Mass media organizations as vehicles of communication are establishments that transmit, disseminate and manage information from the source through respective media of transmission to the receivers and ensuring a feedback process. In line with the national policy on agriculture in Nigeria, various communication media are being used to transmit agricultural information to the farmers, e.g. radio, television, newspapers, farm magazine, newsletters, folders, leaflets and pamphlets (Dare, 1990).

These communication media are broadly divided into two-print media and electronic media. The print media employes those communication techniques that rely principally on combinations of printed words and pictures. To use them efectively, however, the educational level and literacy rate of the audience must be considered. Electronic media (audio-visual media) are communication channels that rely on the audio and or the visual senses, either alone or in combination. Radio is employed when communication channel requires only sound signal to be transmitted while, television is employed when both audio and visual signals are to be transmitted. Based on this notion, however, the choice of communication channels is a function of many circumstances, e.g. farmers' circumstances. According to Rogers (1963) the choice usually lies with the source of the message to be transmitted. The source of the agricultural message must be knowledgeable about a particular channel of communication before employing it. The undisputable fact, is that different channels, perform different functions in the transmission of information on farm matters (agricultural development), depending on the stage of adoption process, the characteristics of innovation, the socio-economic and personal characteristics of the audience (Farinde, 1991; Njoku, 1990; Osuji, 1983; Mason, 1964). Farinde (1991) and Farinde and Jibowo (1994) have established that the effectiveness of any communication channel depends most in particular on its selection as an appropriate channel or medium of communication. The selection depends on the size and type of audience, the characteristics of methods, e.g. cost of procurement, complexity, availability, and feedback potential (Farinde, 1991).

Of great concern to both agricultural development practitioners and agricultural extension specialists is the choice of the sources of information on improved agricultural technology and how the information is disseminated to the target users using appropriate and relevant mass media organizations. Making communication system a vehicle of change in the knowledge, attitude and behaviour of the farmers for agricultural development and sufficiency in food production in Nigeria has been an institutionalised problem and perennial in nature. This mass media in a significant way are also educational media. That means that they can be used to: impart ideas, teach new skill, reinforce desirable attitudes and discourage undersirable ones (Dare, 1990). They can also be used to focus attention on a given goal and thus mobilise the populace for the attainment of that goal. With these enormous roles of mass media highlighted, what are their roles as perceived by the farmers (target audience) in agriculture and what are the roles expected of them to be playing in agriculture by the farmers?

1.1 Objective of the study

The main object of the study was to identify the perceived and expected roles of media organizations in agricultural development of Oyo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

- i. identify the personal, socio-economic and media related characteristics of farmers;
- ii. identify through the farmers the perceived and expected roles of media organization in agriculture;
- iii. investigate change(s) in farmers' situations due to media use or performance in the study area;
- iv. establish relationship between media use potentials and farmers' characteristics.

2.0 Methodology of the Study

This study was carried out in the Oyo State, Nigeria. Data were collected from 120 farmers in five local government areas (L.G.As.) such as Ibarapa, Akinyele, Ido, Egbeda and Afijio Local Government Areas) in Oyo State, Nigeria. Twelve farmers were selected and interviewed from two villages per local government areas using simple random sampling technique and interview schedule, respectively. Every 5th household-head (male/female) of the farm household were interviewed. Oyo State was purposively selected for the study because it is a state with six old media organisations, i.e., the seat

of both the print media (e.g., Nigerian Tribune, Sketch, Daily Times and Punch) and electronic media (e.g., Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (B.C.O.S. - Radio Oyo and Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (F.R.C.N./Radio Nigeria).

Four major variables operationalised for this study include perceived role of media organization, expected role of media organization, media use potential, and number of agricultural information received and adopted. Perceived role of media is the role of media organization(s) as seen and experienced by a farmer. Each of the roles identified was scored one point. Maximum score is 5. Expected role of media organization is the role which a farmer expects any media organization to perform in relation to agricultural development. Each of the roles listed was scored one point. Maximum score is 10. Media use potential is the ability of a farmer to source for and read a newspaper and make use of the information got from it. Two points each was given the ability to source/procure newspaper; ability to read newspaper(s) and capacity to use the information got from the paper(s). Maximum media use potential index is 6. Number of agricultural information received and adopted is the number of new agricultural information or ideas that a farmer is aware of and which he/she has been using.

Only 100 completed interview schedule were analysed using statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, frequency distribution, correlation co-efficient and anova (F-test).

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Personal, socio-economic characteristics of farmers

Data in Table 1 show the frequency distribution of farmers according to their personal and socio-economic characteristics.

Table 1

Distribution of Farmers According to their Selected Characteristics

Farmer's Characteristics		Farmers	
		0/0	
Age (Years) 21 - 30		5.00	
31 - 40	15	15.00	
41 - 50	56	56.00	
51 - 60	20	20.00	
60 years and above	4	4.0	
Total	100	100.00	
Educational level No formal education	57	57.00	
Primary School	25	25.00	
Secondary School	11	11.00	
Adult Education Programme	5	5.00	
Above Secondary School	2	2.00	
Total	100	100.00	
Membership of Cooperative Society			
Member	89	89.00	
Non-member	11	11.00	
Total	100	100.00	
Type of Farming			
Livestock Production	9	9.00	
Mixed Farming	5	5.00	
Tree Cropping	4	4.00	
Arable Farming	82	82.00	
Fotal	100	100.00	

The mean age of the farmers is 45.5 years with 24.25 standard deviation. Majority (56%) of farmers are 41 and 50 years followed by 24% between 51.60 years. This means that majority (80%) of the farmers are in their middle age and above. Majority of the farmers (57%) have no formal education while, 43% have one form of formal education or the other. There is no doubt, the illiteracy level is still high among the peasant farmers which may be an inhibiting factor to mass mediated communication. Detailed analysis shows that 81% of the farmers understand and speak Yoruba language fluently but majority cannot read and write it while, 19% understand both oral and written English. With this situation, Yoruba language can only be a good medium of mass communication if it is going to make an impact on the target farmers. Majority of the farmers (89%) are members of cooperative societies while 11% do not belong to any group. This means that group methods could be employed by the extension or change agents to reinforce the mass media methods such as television and radio. Farmers in the study area engage in different types of farming system such as livestock production (9%), mixed farming (5%), arable farming (82%) and tree cropping (4%).

3.2 Farmers' mass media related characteristics

Data in Table 2 show the frequency distributions of farmers' mass media related characteristics. Out of the three sources of media information presented to the farmers, e.g. newspapers, radio and television, radio is readily available to and frequently used by all the farmers (100%). While television is available and used by 41% of the farmers, newspapers is only available and read by 30% of the farmers everyday.

Table 2

Distribution of Farmers According to their Mass media Related Characteristics

Mass Media Characteristics	Farmer	Farmers (14 = 100)	
		%	
Sources of Media Information(*)			
Newspaper	30	30.00	
Radio	100	100.00	
Television	41	41.00	
51 - 60	20	20.00	
Type of Medla Agricultural Information (*)			
Advertisement of Agricultural Products	45	45.00	
Modern Techniques of Farming	9	9.00	
Fertilizer Procurement and Application	40	40.00	
Disease and Pest Control	56	56.00	
ollow-up to media Agricultural Information			
requently	15	15.00	
Occasionally	75	75.00	
lot at all	10	10.00	
otal	100	100.00	
= Multiple Responses			

The findings support those of Alao (1971) and Clark and Akinbode (1968) that radio plays an important and significant role in the dissemination of information to large percentage of farmers in southern Nigeria. Detailed analysis reveals that majority (60%) of the farmers receive consciously agricultural information from radio while, 21% receive from television and 19% from the newspapers. This is an indication that radio receives wide acceptance by the farmers as source of agricultural information than others as claimed by Clark and Akinbode (1968). However, the findings also support the claims of Bradfield (1968) that newspapers' effectiveness is very limited for the purpose of reaching the rural people many of whom cannot read or understand or access them.

Data in Table 2 also show that farmers receive many and different types of agricultural information from mass media such as disease and pest control (56%) advertisement on agricultural products (45%), fertilizer procurement and application (40%); and various modern techniques of farming (40%). Further analysis shows that nearly all the farmers (93%) usually discuss information received or observed from the media with their colleagues afterwards while, 7% do not discuss the information with others. Discussion of any agricultural information among farmers is necessary because, it is a predisposing factor to diffusion of such agricultural information. On the issue of follow-up from the extension agent, 75% of the farmers indicated that only occasional follow-up to agricultural information from the media is done by the extension agent, while, 15% follow-up is always frequent and 10% have no follow-up from the extension workers. This is an indication that majority of the farmers (90%) ever had contact with change/extension workers.

3.3 Farmers perceived roles of media organization

Data in Table 3 show the roles of media as perceived by the farmers in order of frequency distribution. Sources of information on pest and diseases control (62%) is ranked first, followed by agency of mobilization for government new agricultural programme (61%); agent for enlightenment on weather (45%), sources of information on storage and preservation of farm produce (31%) while, sources of information on agricultural marketing, credit and loan (25%) is the least ranked.

Table 3

Distribution of Farmers According to their Perceived and Expected Roles of Media

Organisation

Roles of Media	Farmers # = 100)	
		0/0
Perceived Roles of Media (*)		
Sources of Information on Pest and Disease Control	62	62.00
Agency for Mobilization of Government new Agricultural Programme	61	61.00
Agent for Enlightenment on Weather	45	45.00
Sources of Information on Storage and Preservation of Farm Produce	31	31.00
Sources of Information on Agricultural Marketing, Credit and Loan	25	25.00
Expected Roles of Media (*)		
Facilitate Credit Procurement by Timely Information Dissemination	90	90.00
Organise Farmers show, forum, Seminars/Conference	85	85.00
Serve as Agent of Training on new methods		75.00
Broadcast specialised agric. Programme	75	75.00
Help to reach policy makers (feedback) about problems of the farmers	70	70.00
Encourage people to go into agriculture	61	61.00
Publicise farming activities	55	55.00
Assist Government in policy propagation	53	53.00
Organise Seminars/Conferences on Agriculture	35	35.00
Carry out on-the-farm programme broadcast		31.00

^{(*) =} Multiple Responses

3.4 Farmers expected roles of media

Data in Table 3 also show the roles of media organization as ranked in order of frequency distribution. Media organization is expected to perform many and different roles in this order: facilitating credit procurement by timely information dissemination (90%), organising farmers' show forum (etc) (85%): serving as agent of training on new methods (75%); broadcasting specialized agricultural programme (75%); helping to reach the policy makers (feedback) about the problems of the farmers (70%). encouraging people to go into agriculture (61%): publicising farming activities (55%): assisting government in policy propagation (53%); organising seminar/conferences on agriculture (35%), and carrying out on-the-farm programme broadcast (31%).

3.5 Changes in farmers' situation

Data in Table 4 show that there are many changes in farmers' situations. These are: improved quality and high rate of output in agricultural products (71%), increased average yield per unit land and revenue (57%), increased sale of agricultural products (40%), maximum profits on agricultural products (39%) while just 3% of the farmers have no appreciable improvement as a result of using media

Table 4 Distribution of Farmers According to the Changes in their Situations Due to Media Performance

Changes in Farmers' Situation	Farmers (N = 100)	
	M	0/0
Increase in sales of agricultural products	40	40.00
Improved quality and high rate of output in Agricultural Product	71	71.00
Average increase in yield per unit land and revenue accrued	57	57.00
Maximum profit on agric. products	39	39.00
No appreciable improvement	3	3.00
Suggestions for Media Improvement (*)		
Agricultural information should be broadcast in local language	100	100.00
Information channels should be cheap and accessible to	97	97.00
More media time and space should be allocated to agriculture	100	100.00
Agricultural information should be timely, relevant and clear	90	90.00
armers viewing and reading centres should be established at strategic locations in the rural communities = Multiple Responses	63	63.00

3.6 Farmers' suggestion for media improvement

Data in Table 4 also show that farmers made many suggestions for improving media used. The farmers (100%) suggested that more media time and space should be allocated to agriculture, and that agricultural information should be broadcast in local language. Information channels should be cheap and accessible to farmers (87%) and agricultural information should be timely, relevant and clear (90%). A little above the average (60%) of the farmers suggested that farmers viewing and reading centres should be established at strategic locations in the rural communities.

3.7 Relationship between perceived and expected role of media organisation

There is a significant difference between the perceived and expected roles of media organizations in the dissemination of agricultural information to farmers (F = 3.48, p < 0.05).

3.8 Relationship between media use potential and farmers' characteristics

There is a significant relationship between literacy level and farmers' media use potentials such as reading of newspapers (r = 0.65, p = 0.05). While there is no significant relationships between mass media use and farmers' age (r = 0.11); farm size (r = 0.05); and type of farming (r = 0.05), there is a significant relationship between media used and number of agricultural information received and adopted (r = 0.41). This finding is in support of Alao (1980) who claimed that media use exposure was positively and significantly correlated to adoption.

4.0 Conclusion

Based on the major findings of the study the following conclusions are made:

- Majority of the farmers (80%) are in their middle-age and above. The mean age is 45.50 years with a standard deviation of 24.25 years. While majority of the farmers (82%) are crops farmers (tree and food) with occasional contact with extension agents. Illiteracy level is very high with only 43% having formal education making it difficult for the majority to read newspapers as source of information. The predominant language of the farmers is Yoruba.
- 2. Majority of the farmers (89%) are members of cooperative societies which made group discussion of agricultural information received from the media a regular practice.
- All the farmers (100%) have access to radio as source of agricultural information while, only 41% and 30% have access to televisions and newspaper, respectively.
- The media organizations are perceived by majority of the farmers not to have given adequate agricultural information on weather, storage and preservation of agricultural products, marketing and credit facilities.
- Majority of the farmers expect the media organizations not to limit their role to only information dissemination, but to be practically involved in other agro-media functions like organising farmers' show, agricultural exhibition, seminars/conferences on agriculture, carrying out onthe-farm programme broadcast, assist government in policy propagation and encourage people to go into agriculture by serving as agent of training on new methods of farming while, at the same time helping farmers to reach out (feedback) to policy makers and research institutes.
- There is a significant difference between perceived and expected role of media organizations in Oyo State, Nigeria.

There is a significant relationship between media use potential and literacy level of farmers such as reading of newspapers. Likewise there is a significant relationship between media use and adoption of agricultural information.

5.0 Recommendations

Arising from the major findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- More agricultural information relating to crop production should be programmed and broadcast to the farmers in Yoruba which is the local language.
- Since most farmers and rural dwellers are poor who could not afford the "luxury" of radio and newspapers or television set, government should establish community viewing centres for the farmers to get adequate and timely agricultural information broadcast in local languages.
- In order to enhance the farmers' positive attitude to the mass media, government should pursue vigorously the adult literacy programme so that the beneficiaries can at least know how to read and write. William I with the second of t
- Extension agents should be encouraged to do a follow-up work on the farmers on agricultural information received from the media. This is necessary so that the unexplained complexities in the messages can be broken down by the extension agents and farmers' feedbackresponse could be obtainable for possible readjustment in subsequent broadcast.
- Conscious efforts should be made to establish media-farmers forum at every local government areas (L.G.As.) where discussion and enlightenment campaign can be carried out with the extension agents in attendance.
- The media organizations should be encouraged by government to be involved not only in information dissemination, but also physical participation in agriculture, like organising agricultural-show, exhibition, agriculture seminars and talk-shop among many others.

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