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MAJOR MASS MEDIA SOURCES FOR AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION AMONG FARMERS IN IMO STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study in aimed at identifying the major mass media source for agricultural information adopted by farmers. The study was carried out in Imo State Nigeria with 27 local government areas of which the entire farmers in the state make up the population of the study. 100 farmers from Orlu Local Government area that are registered active members of the farmers' cooperative society was selected for samples. The data for the study was obtained through the structured interview methods and data analysed by the percentage method. It was discovered that the farmers mostly adopt radio and television broadcast as the mass media means and a handful of them make use of films. The study recommended among other public awareness campaign should be organized to the farmers on the various mass media

Introduction

Agriculture is viewed as a vital means through which food insecurity, poverty and unemployment can be addressed and one of the long-term strategies conceived so far for its development is to improve on the availability and access to qualitative and quantitative agricultural education on which is transmitted to the form of agricultural information.

Obiora, (2016) noted that in other to achieve the goals of sustainable agriculture productivity in Nigeria, it is imperative to ensure adequate provision of agriculture information. Agricultural information according to Tadesse, (2008) is defined as the various sets of information and messages that are relevant to agricultural production activities of farmers, such as crop production and protection, animal production and management and natural resources protection and conservation of Agricultural Information therefore, refers to agriculture related data which are transformed into meaningful and useful contexts or forms for effective decision making in agriculture or farming related activities. Emmanuel, Yussffu, Sheriff and Shehu (2016), observed that agricultural information services contribute significantly to agricultural production.

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Through agricultural information, farmers can adopt new technologies or farming system, know how and when to plant and harvest which crop to produce and which animal to rear and where to sell. It is also through agricultural information that farmers can know where and how to acquire loans and other farming inputs, as well as how to control pests and diseases. Such information will consequently increase agricultural production and improve the standard of living of farmers. Ekoja (2000) defined agricultural information as published and unpublished knowledge on all aspects of agriculture which are inter-disciplinary, in nature and have universal application. Aina, (1990) stated that agricultural information is inter-disciplinary, and therefore classified them under these sets;
Technical/scientific agricultural information which arises from research and development work carried out in various agricultural research institutions including universities. Commercial Agricultural Information: which refers to the set of agricultural information that gives enlightenment to farmers on the marketing of agricultural produce in other to maximize profits. Social-cultural agricultural information which encompasses traditional information on agricultural practices, local cultures, background information on farming communities, labour availability etc. This type of information will be useful to agricultural policy makers and programme planners.

Legal agricultural information which deals with all legislations that affect agriculture such as land use and tenure, the production distribution and sales of agricultural products. Aspect information and communication are essential ingredients needed for effective transition of or transfer of new knowledge/technologies that are designed to boost agricultural production and for farmers to benefit from them they must first have qualitative access to them and learn how to effectively utilize them in their farming operations and practice (Obiora, 2018). However, the most important and effective approach to transmitted agricultural information to the great population for farmers irrespective of their location and time is through the mass means.

Mass-media refers to a diverse array of media technology that reach a large audience via mass communication. It is a medium which can be used to large group, often simultaneously. (Nerone, 2006), encyclopedia.com (2020) defined mass-media as tools for the transfer of information concepts and ideas to both general and specific audience. It is also viewed as the means of communication that reach large numbers of people in a short time.

Kris (2018), refers to mass media as the technologies used as channels for a small group of people to communication with a larger number of people. They are the transport forms of mass communication, which can be defined as the dissemination of messages widely, rapidly and continuously to large and diverse audience it, an attempt to influence them in some way. Mass media means technology that is intended to reach a mass audience. It is the primary means of communication used to reach the vast majority of the general public. Mass-

media plays significant roles in agricultural development have a major influence on the public opinion on certain topics.

The nature and extent of the use of mass media in the mobilization of people for agriculture determines the degree of success of agriculture. The agricultural program planners in developing countries realize that the development of agricultural technology could be hastened with the effective use of Mass media. Radio and televisions have been acclaimed to be the most effective media for diffusing the scientific knowledge to the masses (Shelly and Coster, 2000). Mass media helps to enlighten farmers on the use of various technologies to boost agricultural productivity. With the mainstream of the population of Nigeria engaged in agriculture actively, television could as a suitable medium of dissemination farm information and latest technical knowhow. Farmers easily understand the operations, technology and instruction through television.

Arokoyo, (2003) proved that Video, TV and radio are the major sources of information to farmers. Information sources for farmer are TV, radio publications, practical education newspaper agricultural exhibitions and extension workers Ekoja, 2003 stated that Newspaper and farm magazines play vital role in the communication of agricultural information among the literature farmers. The increasing rate of literacy in Nigeria offers new promises and prospects for utilizing print medium for agricultural information. The print media widens the scope of communication, cheap, to afford and can be read at the farmers convince. It is permanent medium in that the message is imprinted permanently with high storage value which makes them suitable for reference and research (Perushothan, Kavaskar and Reddy, 2003). Radio plays a vital role in disseminating agricultural information (Muhammad, 2006). But radio is more powerful instrument for liberation of fast information due to its vast coverage in local areas. Rasak, (2012) disclosed that radio agriculture broadcasting is effective for farmers and must be undertaken on long duration for agricultural extension. Knan (2010) revealed that the adoption of available technologies by farmers according to the recommendations, can enhance agricultural production. Effective communication of innovation on agriculture to farmers remains a promising strategy for increasing success in agricultural productivity endeavors. Moreover, for the farmers to adopt innovations and continue to put them into use, the new ideas must reach their farms and homes through effective communication medium (Undiandndeye and Vosanka, 2008). Some of the mass media sources of farmer's information among other include: **Broadcast:** The sequencing of content in a broadcast is called a schedule. Radio and television programmes are distributed over frequency bands which are highly regulated. Such regulations includes determination of the width of the bands, range, licensing, types of receivers and transmitters, relevance and acceptability of the broadcasting content. Meanwhile, a cable television programme are often broadcasting simultaneously with radio and television programme, but have a more limited audience.

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By coding signals and requiring a cable converter box at individual recipient's locations, cable also enables subscription-based channels and pay-per-view services. A broadcasting organization may broadcast several programmes simultaneously, several channels (frequencies). Agricultural information can be meant to reach target farmers through these means. **Film:** This encompass motion pictures as individual projects, as well as the field in general. Films are produced by recording people and objects with cameras, or creating them using animation techniques or special effects. Films comprise a series of individual frames, but when these images are shown in rapid succession, an illusion of motion is created. Film is considered by many to be an important art form. Films entertain, educate, enlighten, and inspire audiences. Any film can become a worldwide attraction, especially with the addition of dubbing or subtitles that translate the film message films are also artifacts created films by specific cultures, which reflect those cultures, and in turn affect them. **Internet:** The internet is a more interactive medium of mass media, and can be briefly described as a network of networks: specifically, it is the worldwide, publicity accessible network of interconnected computer networks that transmit data by packet switching using the standard internet protocol (IP). The internet is quickly becoming the center of mass media. Everything is becoming accessible via internet. Rather than picking up a newspaper, or watching the television or radio programme at a particular time, people can log on to the internet to get the news they want, when they want it. **Podcast:** A podcast is a series of digital-media files which are distributed over the internet using syndication feeds for playback on portable media players and computers. The term broadcast, like broadcast, can refer either to the series of content itself or to the method by which it is syndicated. The letter is also called broadcasting. The host or author of a podcast is often called a podcaster. **Video Games:** A video game is a computer – controlled games in which a video display, such as a monitor or television, is the primary feedback device. **Audio recording and reproduction:** This is the electrical or mechanical recreation or amplification of sound, often as music and loudspeakers, compact cassettes, and digital audio players are typical examples. An album is a collection of related audio-recordings, released together to the public, usually commercially. **Magazines:** A magazine is a periodical publication containing a variety of articles, generally finamed by advertising or purchased by readers. Magazines are typically published weekly, biweekly. Monthly bimonthly or quarterly, with a date on the cover that is in advance of the date it is actually published. They are often printed in colour on coated paper, and are bound with a soft cover. **Newspaper:** A newspaper is a publication containing news and information and advertising, usually printed on low – cost paper called newsprint. It may be general or special interest most often published daily or weekly. The most important function of newspapers is to inform the public of significant events (Pavik and Mcintosh, 2017). **Outdoor Media:** Outdoor media is a form of mass media which comprises bull boards, signs, placards, placed

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outside and inside commercial building/ objects like shops/buses, flying billboard. Many commercial advertisers use this mass media when advertising in public facilities such as sport stadiums the study is aim at identifying the major mass media sources of agricultural information adopted by the farmers and ways to increase access to other mass media sources.

Objective of the study

- To identify the major mass media sources of agricultural information adopted by the farmers.

Research question

- What are the major mass media sources of agricultural information adopted by the farmers?

Area of the study

The areas of the study in Imo State of Nigeria with 27 Local Government Areas of which all of them engage in agricultural to farming.

Population of the study

All the farmers in Imo State make up the population of the study.

Sample size

For convince, 100 farmers were randomly selected as sample size.

Method of data collection

The data was collected through structured interview technique which ideals border on mass media sources of agricultural information.

Method of data analysis

The data obtained was analysis using the percentage method.

Mass Media Sources Responses	Agree	Disagree	%agree	%disagree
Radio and television broadcast	86	14	86%	14%
Films	40	60	40%	60%
Internet	29	71	39%	61%
Podcast	10	90	10%	90%
Video games	22	78	22%	78%
Audio recording and reproduction	31	69	31%	69%
Magazines	20	80	20	80%
Newspapers	24	76	24%	76%
Outdoor media	2	98	2%	98%

Result Discussion

The table of data analysis above shows that 86% of the farmers sources mass media agricultural information through the radio and television broadcast while 14% do not. 40% of the farmers obtain mass media information through films while 60% do not. Only 29% source information through the internet while 71% do not. 10% of them get it through podcast while 90% do not. 22% through video games while 78% do not. 39% through audio recording and reproduction while 61% do not. 20% from magazines while 80% do not. 24% of them source it through newspapers while 76% do not. Finally, 2% through the outdoor media while 98% do not.

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Conclusion

The study reveals that the farmers adopt radio and television broadcast as their major source of mass media agricultural information followed by films. This could be the to the fact that these are more readily accessible and understandable. The adoption of only radio and television will not provide a wide range of information to the farmers hence, the problem of inadequate agricultural information and education will persist. There is need to encourage the farmers to embrace other mass media means in order to embroaden the knowledge base/scope.

Recommendation

- Public awareness campaign should be organized to the farmers on the various mass media sources of agricultural information other than radio and television.
- Farmers should be encouraged to enroll into the mass literacy and adult education programme in order to boost their literacy which will help to read other print media on agricultural information.
- The agricultural extension delivery should extension it transmission mean to include the adult education programme.
- The government and the relevant stakeholder in agriculture should encourage the electricity/power stations to ensure power supply regularly.

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