

PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA OF INFORMATION DISSEMINATION BY FARMERS IN IKOT ABASI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined the Perceived Effectiveness of Traditional Media of Information Dissemination by Farmers in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The study was carried out in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. From the multi-stage sampling technique employed, one hundred and forty respondents were randomly selected. Primary data were collected through the use of interview schedule. Descriptive statistics and 4-points likert scale was used to analyze the socio-economics features of the farmers. The result reveals that the mean age of the respondents was 41 years while majority (80.7%) of the respondents were female. Most of them were widowed (58.6%) and their mean household size of 6 persons. They had ₦ 24,428 as their average monthly income and their mean years of farming experiences were 22 years. The town crier was indicated as the most popular medium (84.29%) of communicating messages to farmers. The study therefore concludes that all facets of traditional media enhances high inclination to the farmers except that emphasis on the use of local trees, animals, landscape and weather as means of information delivery have tremendously reduced due to environmental factors such as deforestation, excessive land use, bush burning and hunting activities in the area.

Keywords: *Perceived Effectiveness, Traditional Media, Akwa Ibom State.*

1. INTRODUCTION

What is traditional media? Traditional media is the indigenous and local ways of communicating in our rural communities. Folk media, local or traditional communication systems refers to all organized processes of production and exchange of information managed by rural communities. These also include traditional theatre or drama, masks and puppet performances, tales, proverbs, riddles and songs. They are cultural and endogenous responses to different community needs for information, education, social protest and

entertainment (CHIOVOLONI, 2004). "Local media according to Aldridge (2007) may lack glamour but their importance is beyond doubt". The author further observed that in the rural Nigeria, most people, most of the time, had their everyday information needs met by the traditional media and the strength of this media lies in the fact that they are accessible, reliable, and culturally rooted as there is nothing like negative portrayal of the people. Traditional media are the most important vehicle of social change. It is used for educational purposes and as a tool to reform society. In African context, sensitive information is never passed in a straight forward manner but through songs, dances, drum, town crier, emissaries, festivals, bush or wood fire, smoke ashes, color of clothing, tales and proverbs, gunshots, animals, birds and insects, grass knots, fresh leaves knots, hair looks, tribal marks, wood carvings, legends and myths (AKINBILE, 2010; DES WILSON, 2005).

The role of traditional media has been very significant in rural development since the turn of this century, and with the advent of new media, the forms and ways of communications have become more specialized. Every human society has developed its traditional modes and channels of communication which characterized its existence, organization and development. Communication, that is, transmission of information from a point called origin or source to another called destination or receiver (audience) is the life wire of every society.

With the information revolution through ICTs in form of the electronic mass media and the internet, there is the tendency to neglect the old age traditional communication pattern

(represented by towncriers) that have been in use before the coming of the new media (NWACHUKWU, 2014). The survival of the traditional media in spite of the glamour of the new media is as a result of its various uses by the broad spectrum of the society. For example, in spite of availability of radio and TV, town criers are still being used to disseminate information within our rural and urban communities. This is so because the town crier is a widely acceptable source of news and information within a community. It is a major social and cultural facilitator helping to form attitudes, values and develop a climate of change.

New and old media should complement each other for effective communication since no one media is good enough to disseminate agricultural information. The pertinent questions however are: what are the socio-economic characteristics of the farmers? What are the various traditional media in the study area? How are messages packaged and presented? How effective are these channels? These questions among others have necessitated the need for an assessment of the perceived effectiveness of traditional media of information dissemination by farmers in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area.

2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceived effectiveness of traditional media of information dissemination by farmers in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area. Specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. Examine the socio-economic characteristics of the Respondents
- ii. Identify the types of traditional media
- iii. Ascertain the perceived effectiveness of traditional media
- iv. Determine the challenges to the usage of this media.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Ikot Abasi local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

A multi-stage sampling technique using Akwa Ibom State Agricultural Development Programme (AKADEP) structure was used for the selection of respondent for the study. Ikot Abasi, a block under Eket zone was stratified base on the five cells namely: Ikpa Nnung Assang with 14 villages, Ukpum Ete with 19 villages, Edemaya with 23 villages, Ukpum Okon with 5 villages and Ikpa Ibekwe with 10 villages. Using proportionate sampling technique 10% of 20 villages was selected from the cells and simple random sampling technique was used to select seven respondents from each of the selected villages, making a total of 140 respondents which constitutes the sample for this study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Age of the Respondents

Table 1 shows that most of the respondents fall within the 36-45 age groups (51.4%) while only 2.9% of them were between the age group of 66-75. The mean age of the farmers were 41 years old. The implication of this is that the farmers are in their active age and are likely to be receptive of information regarding agricultural activities. This agrees with the findings of Esu (2009) that reported similar age bracket of (31-40 years) in Abak L.G.A as their active age.

Sex of the Respondents

Table 1 reveals that the majority of the respondents were females (80.7%) whereas the male were (19.3%). This agrees with the findings of Ekong, (2005) which reported that farming is left in the hands of the women.

Marital Status of the Respondents

Data from Table 1 indicates that most of the respondents were widowed (58.6%) while only 14.3% of them were married. It could be inferred from the result that dominantly widowed farmers were the majority of the respondents in the study area. This finding does not agree with the result gotten from the research work by Esu (2009) where they observed that most of their respondents were married (51.5%).

Table 1. Socio-economic characteristics of respondents in the study area

ITEM	VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	MEAN
A	Age			
	16-25 years	15	10.7	
	26-35 years	17	12.1	
	36-45 years	72	51.4	
	46-55years	18	12.9	41
	56-65 years	14	10	
	66-75 years	4	2.9	
	Total	140	100	
B	Sex			
	Male	27	19.3	
	Female	113	80.7	
	Total	140	100	
C	Marital status			
	Single	24	17.1	
	Married	20	14.3	
	Divorced/ separated	14	10.0	
	Widowed	82	58.6	
	Total	140	100	
D	Household size			
	1-4	35	25.0	
	5-8	81	57.9	
	9-12	24	17.1	6
	Total	140	100	
E	Level of Education			
	No formal Education	35	25.0	
	Primary Education	17	12.1	
	Secondary Education	65	46.4	
	Tertiary Education	15	10.7	
	Others	8	5.7	
	Total	140	100	
F	Monthly income level (₦)			
	1,000- 10,000	20	14.3	
	11,000- 20,000	30	21.4	
	21,000- 30,000	50	35.7	
	31,000- 40,000	25	17.9	₦ 24,428
	41,000- 50,000	15	10.7	
	Total	140	100	
G	Religion			
	Christians	125	89.3	
	Non-Christians	15	10.7	
	Total	140	100	
H	Years of farming experience			
	1-10	25	17.9	
	11-20	35	25	
	21-30	49	35	
	31-40	31	22.1	22
	Total	140	100	

Source: Field survey, 2015

Household Size of the Respondents

As shown in Table 1 most of the respondents (57.9%) have household sizes of 5-8 persons with the mean average of 6 persons. This result suggests that most of the respondents' household size in the study area were large compare to the federal government approved size. Bassey, Akpaeti & Udo (2012) also reported that the average household size of rural farmers in Akwa Ibom State comprised of six persons.

Educational Status of the Respondents

As regards educational level Table 1 indicates that most of the respondent 46.4% had Secondary School certificates. This relates with the findings of Essien (2014) which reported that majority of the respondents (50%) in their study were Secondary school holders.

Monthly Income of the Respondents

Item F, depicts that most of respondents (35.7%) earned between ₦ 21,000-₦30, 000 monthly. The average monthly income of the respondents was ₦24,428.00, above the minimum wage of ₦18, 000.00 for the state workers. But this is lower if compared with the findings of Asa & Archibong, 2016, their results revealed an average monthly income of 40,933.83.

Item G shows that majority of the respondents were Christians (89.3%), since the research was carried out in a Christian

dominated area, while non-Christians constitute only 10.7% of the population. The value of the traditional practitioners may be this low due to the fact that majority, though professing Christianity was also into traditional practices but will like to be identified as Christian.

Item H shows that most of the respondent (35%) had been farming for 21-30years. The mean year of farming experience was 22 years. This is a situation that is very common in rural area since farming has been identified as their major occupation. This relates with the findings of Essien (2014) which reported that farming is common occupation in rural areas.

As revealed below, town Crier is considered as the most popular medium (27.3%) of communicating messages to farmers in the study area and closely followed by beating of special drum (25.5%), 24.1% went for folk tales, proverbs and riddles, while 23.1% of them choose communicating through songs. The relative efficiency of traditional communication channels can be determined by how frequently the media are used and the types of audience and the place at which the media are used. It was also reveal that through this media information is passed from generation to generation. This relates to Essien (2014) which also considered town crier as a popular medium for information dissemination to farmers.

Table 2. Types of traditional communication channel available in the study area

Channels	Frequency	Percentage
Messages are communicated through beating of special drums	110	25.5
Messages are communicated through songs (dance, work songs)	100	23.1
Messages are communicated through town Criers	118	27.3
Messages are communicated through folk tales, proverbs and riddles	104	24.1
Total	432*	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

Multiple Responses:*

Table 3 reveals that respondents strongly agree to the following statement; traditional media is effective in disseminating information as well as a medium used to explain extension programmes to the farmers. On the other hand,

also majority of the respondents (52.9%) disagree to the fact that traditional media facilitate or compliment government and extension agents' forms of information dissemination. Rank 1 is considered the most

significant use of Traditional Media while Rank 4 is the least significant use.

This implies that even though traditional media is still effective, it cannot do much again

especially in this computer age. The usefulness of modern media outweigh that of the traditional media (OKORO & ESU, 2013).

Table 3. Uses of traditional media in your area

Uses	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Rank
Traditional media is effective in disseminating information in rural Areas	60* (42.9)**	67*(47.9)**	6*(4.3)**	7*(5.0)**	3.29	1
Traditional Media facilitate Communication among the rural people	5*(39.3)**	31* (22.1)**	26*(18.6)**	28*(20.0)**	2.81	3
Traditional media supports/ compliments the government and extension Programmes to rural people	21*(15.0)**	26*(18.6)**	74*(52.9)**	19*(13.6)**	2.35	4
Traditional media is used as a mode of communication to explain extension Programmes to rural people	51*(36.4)**	60*(42.9)**	11*(7.9)**	18*(12.9)**	3.03	2

Source: Field survey, 2015

Note: *= Frequencies; **= Percentages;

Table 4 shows that majority of the respondent make use of town crier 105(17.7%), community elders showed appreciably high number of respondents 100(16.8%), neighbor and friends was about 99(16.6%), work songs\ dance was about 90(15.1%), beating of special drums was about 79(13.3%), folk tales, proverbs and

riddles was about 72(12.1%), and festivals was 50(8.4%). However, this shows that low percentage of respondents use festivals as channel for disseminating information. This relate with the study of Agbamu (2006) that Festivals constitute only 8% source of information dissemination.

Table 4. Traditional media used by respondents

Traditional media	Frequency	Percentage
Festivals	50	8.4
Community Elders	100	16.8
Work songs/ dance	90	15.1
Beating of special drums	79	13.3
Folk tales, proverbs and riddles	72	12.1
Town Crier	105	17.7
Neighbours and friends	99	16.6
Total	595*	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

Multiple Responses:*

Table 5, indicates that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that these channels (town crier, beating of special drum, songs and functions of proverbs, folktales and riddles) are effective in disseminating information to

farmers. Rank 1 is considered the most effective channel while Rank 4 is the least effective channel. This conforms to Meyer, (2005) who generally recognized traditional media as being effective in disseminating information to farmers.

Table 5. Perception of effectiveness of traditional media of information dissemination in the study area

How effective are these channels	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Rank
The function of town crier in disseminating information is still in use	79*(56.4)**	50*(35.7)**	1*(0.7)**	10*(7.1)**	3.41	1
Beating of special drum is still effective means of communicating messages	66*(47.1)**	39*(27.9)**	9*(6.4)**	26*(18.6)**	3.04	3
Songs(Dance, Work songs) constitute effective means of communication for farmers	61*(43.6)**	54*(38.6)**	10*(7.1)**	15*(10.7)**	3.15	2
Functions of folktales, proverbs and riddles cannot be underestimated as a tool for farmers	55*(39.3)**	49*(35.0)**	21*(15.0)**	15*(10.7)**	3.03	4

Source: Field survey, 2015

Note: *= Frequencies; **= Percentage;

Table 6 shows that the most significant challenge which is large population coverage is Rank first due to the fact that the means of transportation of the messenger is by foot making it not possible to reach large population at the same time with the information to be disseminated

while the least rank (significant) is fidelity (trustworthy) that is they adopt the information given to them. This relate to the finding of Essien (2014) which reported that the most significant challenge is covering of large population in the study area.

Table 6. Challenges to use of traditional communication media of information dissemination in the study area

Challenges	Not a challenge	Minor Challenge	Major Challenge	Mean	Rank
Fidelity	67*(47.9)**	55*(39.3)**	18*(12.9)**	0.65	7
Expensive to Organize	45*(32.1)**	50*(35.7)**	45*(32.1)**	1.00	5
Clarity in use	76*(54.3)**	36*(25.7)**	28*(20.0)	0.66	6
Covers large Population	-	39*(27.9)**	101*(72.1)**	1.72	1
At convenience	97*(69.3)**	29*(20.7)**	14*(10.0)**	0.41	3
Traditional Restriction	16*(11.4)**	66*(47.1)**	58*(41.4)**	1.30	4
Farmers give feedback	19*(13.6)**	40*(28.6)**	81*(57.9)**	1.44	2

Source: Field survey, 2015

Note: *= Frequencies, **=Percentages;

Result of Hypothesis Testing

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between socio economic characteristics of the

respondents and their level of usage. Chi-square was used to test this hypothesis.

Table 7. Chi-square analysis of socio-economic characteristics of the respondents in the study area.

Variables	X ²	Df	P	Cc	Decision
Age	79.778	5	0.000	0.602	Significant
Gender	7.629	1	0.006	0.227	Significant
Marital Status	24.249	3	0.000	0.384	Significant
Household Size	16.196	2	0.000	0.322	Significant
Educational Status	25.927	4	0.000	0.395	Significant
Monthly Income	0.556	1	0.456	0.063	Not significant
Religion	3.832	1	0.050	0.163	Significant
Farming Experience	40.170	1	0.000	0.472	Significant

Source: Field survey, 2015.

Where p= Significant level
 X²= Chi-square
 df= Degree of Freedom
 cc=Contingency Coefficient

The chi-square analyses from the table above shows that level of perceived effectiveness of information dissemination is dependent on age of respondents (x²=79.778, p<0.005), gender of respondent (x²=7.629, p<0.05), marital status of the respondents (x²=24.249, p<0.05), household size of the respondents (x²=16.196, p<0.05), educational level of respondents (x²=25.927, p<0.05), religion of the respondents (x²=3.832,

p=0.05), and farming experience of respondents (x²=40.170, p<0.05). This indicate that perceived effectiveness of traditional media of information dissemination used by farmers are determined by their socio- economic characteristics while those not significant are not determined by the socio- economic characteristics of the respondents. These also agree with Opeke & Ifukor (2000).

H_1 : There is significant relationship between the level usage of Traditional Communication and Perceived Effectiveness of traditional Communication. Spearman’s rho correlation coefficient was used to test this hypothesis.

Table 8. Spearman rho’s Analysis of the level usage of traditional communication and perceived effectiveness of traditional communication.

		Level of Significance
Level of usage of Traditional media	Spearman’s rho Correlation coefficient	1.000
	Significant (2-tailed)	-
	N	140
Effectiveness of Traditional Media	Spearman’s rho Correlation Coefficient	0.014*
	Significant (2-tailed)	0.068
	N	140

Source: Field survey, 2015.

Key: *= Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The table above shows that there is a high positive relationship between the level of usage and Perceived effectiveness of traditional Communication Media per respondent in the study area ($r=0.014$). The result corroborates CTA, (2003) ICTs- Transforming Agricultural Extension which reported that engagement in the level of usage of traditional media can lead to increase in rural development.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concludes that the perception of traditional media among farmers is highly inclined to their medium of information dissemination.

It was also observed that all facets of traditional media enhances rural development except that emphasis on the use of local trees, animal, landscape and weather as means of information delivery have tremendously reduced due to environmental factor such as deforestation, excessive land use, bush burning and hunting activities in the area. Therefore, the use of traditional folk media for information dissemination is still viable and an effective way of communicating development Programmes. The communication potentials of traditional media have been proven time and time in the history of development in various communities.

The Government through the Ministry of Information and Culture should encourage and improve the use of Traditional Communication by organizing regular workshops and seminar for training of stakeholder in Indigenous Media operations. Also the family should also help in promoting indigenous communication by creating awareness at home to their immediate household.

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