
**Perceived Effectiveness of Traditional Media of Communication used by Farmers in Ini
Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria**

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to assess the perceived effectiveness of traditional media of communication used by crop farmers in Ini Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. The research was carried out in Ini Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The population of the study comprised all crop farmers in the study area. Simple random sampling technique was adopted in choosing villages and respondents, to give a total of 120 crop farmers (respondents), constituting the sample size for the study. The main instrument used in this study was a questionnaire titled "Perceived Effectiveness of Traditional Media of Communication Questionnaire (PETMCQ)". Oral interview was also used to complement questionnaire where respondents were illiterate. Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness, completeness and the language of the study under consideration. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the level of reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.84 and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical technique such as descriptive statistics. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels. The study concluded that the most common and utilized media of communicating agricultural information in Ini Local Government Area are Town Crier, Beating of special drums, Signs & Symbolic Displays and Traditional Institutions. Also, the socioeconomic characteristics of the farmers in Ini Local Government Area have significant influence on the level of usage of the above channels of traditional media. The study therefore recommended that male persons should be actively involved in farming as their women counterparts in order to increase the output of goods in Ini local government. Also, Government and international agencies should also pay attention to the interests of the local farmers and to processes of technological change.

**KEYWORDS: Perceived Effectiveness, Traditional Media, Communication, Farmers,
Agricultural Information**

Introduction

According to Ottah and Umar (2017), no people ever survived without communication; though the process and technicalities involved might differ, but every group of people that lived had a mode of communication and had continued to improve upon it. Furthermore, Bittner (1989) cited in Ottah and Umar (2017), aptly described the things that ensured society's survival and the central role of communication among all the elements thus: Society's survival depended on a number of things, among them a system of communication through which people could exchange symbols and thus propagate learning at an accelerated rate.

African communities devised means to carry out their daily businesses through their own unique communication media—Traditional Media. The traditional media system is principally an oral process that makes effective use of the human auditory system (Ukonu and Wogu, 2008). The devices ranged from man-made equipment to those converted to use from peculiar to the Black nation (Ottah, 2016). The role of traditional media has also been very significant in rural development since the turn of the century. Ekere and Ufot (2017), affirming this, note that with the advent of new media, the forms and ways of communication had become more specialized with every human society developing its traditional modes and channels of communication which characterized its existence, organization and development.

The survival of the traditional media in spite for the glamour of the new media, Nwachukwu (2014) notes 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 according to him is so because the town crier is a widely acceptable source of news and information within a community. More so, the town crier also serves as a major social and cultural facilitator helping to form attitudes, values and develop a climate of change.

Statement of the Problem

In communicating agricultural information to farmers, traditional communication methods are still very relevant since the average Nigerian farmer is still grappling with educational and financial constraint. Often it is difficult for them to access information through modern ways of information delivery in print and electronic media. Adopting of agricultural innovations has been limited because of inappropriate selection of communication methods by extension workers resulting in low agricultural productivity. It is on this background that this study is raised to assess perceived effectiveness of traditional media of communication used by farmers in Ini L.G.A, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the study was to assess perceived effectiveness of traditional media of communication used by farmers in Ini L.G.A, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify the socio-economic characteristics of crop farmers in Ini L.G.A.
2. Identify the types of traditional media used in Ini L.G.A.

Research Questions

1. What are the socio-economic characteristics of crop farmers in Ini L.G.A?
2. What types of traditional communication channels are still in use in Ini L.G.A?

Hypotheses of the Study

The following null hypothesis guided this study:

H₀₁: There is no significant influence of socioeconomic characteristic of respondents on the level of usage of traditional media in Ini L.G.A.

Conceptual Review

Traditional Communication

Traditional communication as defined by Nwosu (1990) in Ottah and Umar (2017) is the process of disseminating information, ideas, and attitudes by certain specialized institutions set up for that purpose. It focuses on the exchange of information or messages that have traditional undertones. Thus, traditional modes of communication therefore means the ways Africans communicated among themselves, their societal *modus operandi*, the benefits of their cultural communication and how the process evolved to the present age from years back. Every nation in Africa had and still has communication patterns to suit their terrains. Wilson (1997) in Ottah and Umar (2017) believes that traditional modes of communication are employed in predominantly traditional and rural societies. Although the modern media of mass communication appear to have replaced the traditional media, the fact remains that, different parts of Africa still employ various aspects of the traditional media in their daily living (Ottah, 2016).

Ansu-Kyeremeh (1998) in Akpabio (2003) defines it as any form of indigenous communication system which by virtue of its origin form and integrate into a specific culture, serves as a channel for message in a way that requires the utilization of the values, symbolism, institution and ethos of the host culture through its unique qualities and attributes. Traditional communication was an important activity which touched every sphere of human life, bringing people, cultures, communities and races closer for meaningful development and peaceful co-existence. It is also seen as the process of social interaction that helps people to understand themselves and live harmoniously as organized people of a given state, country, or nation.

Taxonomy of Traditional Media

The town crier, a popular misnomer for the traditional emissary newsman, is perhaps the most Ubiquitous and electric in terms of its role in the traditional society and so-called modern society (Wilson 1987). The persons who function under this umbrella term perform various other mutually dependent and self-defining roles. They are news reporters, correspondents, news agents, messengers (emissaries), spokesmen (or women), envoys (ambassadors), contact men, couriers, postmen, broadcasters, heralds and also perform other related roles. There are numerous traditional forms of communication in Nigeria's old Calabar province. These are the various forms which the fabled town crier employs in his different communication roles.

Wilson (1987) broadly divides them into eleven classes, namely: Idiophones, Membranophone, Aerophone, Symbolography, Signals, Signs, Objectifics, Colour Schemes, Music, Extra-mundane communication, and Symbolic displays.

- a. **Idiophones:** These are self-sounding instruments or technical wares which produce sound without the addition or use of an intermediary medium. In this group we have the gong, woodlock, wooden drum, bell and rattle.
- b. **Membranophones:** These are media on which sound is produced through the vibration of membranes. They include all varieties of skin or leather drum. These drums are beaten or struck with well-carved sticks.
- c. **Aerophones:** These are media which produce sound as a result of the vibration of a column of air. They comprise media of the flute family, whistle reed pipes, horns and trumpets.
- d. **Symbolography:** This simply means symbolic writing or representation. Communication takes place when an encoder uses graphic representations to convey a message which is understood within the context of a known social event and an accompanying verbal message.
- e. **Signals:** These are the physical embodiments of a message. Many ancient signals are still being used for modern communication today. Some of the signals include fire, gunshots, canon shots, drum (wooden or skin).
- f. **Signs:** Marks which are meaningful, or objects or symbols used to represent something are sign. It is a construct by which organism affect the behavior or state of another in a communication context. Natural signs require an interpreter who knows a theory, or general law, in terms of which the sign is an index of the existence of something else.
- g. **Objectifics:** Media presented in concrete forms which may have significance for a specific society only or may be universal through their traditional association with specific contextual meanings. These include: kola nut, the young unopened bud of the palm frond, charcoal, white pigeon or fowl, white egg, feather, cowries, mimosa, flowers, sculptures, pictures, drawing, the flag etc.
- h. **Colour Schemes:** This is the general conception and use of combination of colours in a design to convey some meanings. Colour uses the advantages of pictorial communication by combining the speed of its impact and freedom from linguistic boundaries to achieve instant and effective communication. Combinations of these colours produce certain significant meanings for the society.
- i. **Music:** Itinerant musical entertainment groups sing satirical songs, praise songs, and generally criticize wrong doings of individuals in society. Names of those being satirized or praised may be mentioned or descriptions of their physical or personality attributes, where they live, or what they do may form part of such songs
- j. **Extra-mundane Communication:** This is the mode of communication between the living and the dead, the supernatural or Supreme Being. This is usually done through incantation, spiritual chants, ritual, prayers, sacrifice, invocation, séance, trance, hysterics or liberation. Modern forms of extramundane communication are found in obituary and in memorial notices published in newspapers, magazines or on radio and television.

k. Symbolic Displays: These would be cultural-specific or may have universal significance and some of their characteristics are shared even with primates e.g smiling, sticking out the tongue, expression of anger, disgust, happiness, and fear, the way we walk or sit, gestures we use, voice qualities and other facial expressions.

Functions of Traditional Media

The traditional communication system is a complex one whose functions transcend the ordinary oracular postulations of western theorists. Since the system functions as part of the larger socio-political organization, reporting on and criticizing organs within the system, issuing directives from the legitimate, or in some cases titular, head, and providing education in the areas of the norms and mores of the society, stimulating the emotions and generally providing the light to innovations and helping their fusion, its functions are more diverse and far-reaching than is often admitted (Wilson 1987). Some key functions and characteristics of the system as enumerated by Wilson (1987) include:

a. Mobilization of the People

The traditional media mobilizes the people at the grassroots level towards community development and national consciousness. No serious mass-oriented programme ever succeeds without the active involvement of the practitioners within the traditional system. Much of the failure that attends government mass-oriented programmes is traceable to the fact that policy makers at the national level fail to utilize this powerful and credible system.

b. National Development

It is a source of cultural, political, health and other educational and enlightenment programmes for the masses leading them towards self-actualization and national development. As has been pointed out above, no real success visits such programme without the system being involved. Policy makers make some vague pronouncement on this source but they never really see to the execution of their decision.

c. Entertainment

It is a source of entertainment through arts and cultural festivals, musical and dramatic performances by choral and masquerade groups and other music and drama-oriented groups. For example, the Ekpo masquerade group which provides entertainment musically and in the area of dance drama also thrills even in its re-enactment of spiritual ceremonies. The shrines and oracles are places where the educational function is also performed along with entertainment.

d. Intra and Intercultural Communication Purposes

It is used for intra-cultural and inter-cultural and other communication purposes leading to group and national unity. The yam festival in various parts of southern Nigeria, the Oshun Festival in Oshogbo and the Argungu Fishing Festival in Sokoto are all examples of large traditional communication set-ups which bring about inter-cultural and even mass communication.

e. Cultural Expression

It gives expression to cultural and other activities of the different parts of a nation. Through festivals, for example, wide aspects of a cultural system are exposed to other cultures and

greater understanding and appreciation of differences take place. Through this, cross-cultural fertilization takes place and the society and mankind in general becomes better off.

Information Need of the Rural Farmer

According to Naveed (2014), farmers have an inevitable need for information to perform their daily activities efficiently and effectively. The information concerning improved agrotechnologies created by agricultural scientists should be disseminated in a way that is compatible with, and results in the farmers' satisfaction. Naveed (2014) however noted that agricultural production in Pakistan was quite lower than its potential spite of the hectic struggle by agriculture departments and other allied agencies. It may have various reasons some of which are farmers' lack of awareness of current agricultural information and technologies. For consistent growth in agric-production, it is indispensable to equip farmers with need-based, focused, accurate, reliable and timely information. The dream of advancement in agric-production cannot come true until timely access to the information that farmers need is assured.

Furthermore, Naveed (2014) noted that the consideration of farmers' information needs and information seeking behavior was an important element while designing need-based, focused and user-oriented information delivery system that can provide more relevant, accurate and timely information to its users. According to Naveed, Anwar and Bano, (2012), effective information communication is known to be the key to optimal agricultural productivity. The consideration of users information need is very vital element in the provision of need-based and relevant information to them. The understanding of users' information needs is an important first step in designing focused, need-based and user-oriented information structure. Information seeking plays a critical role in farmers' efforts to cope with the day to day concerns associated with farming activities. Therefore, understanding what farmers need to know, when during the crop care continuum, and how they acquire needed information becomes vital to ensure the delivery of quality and need-based information.

Information Dissemination via Traditional Media and Rural Development

Information has been highlighted as a key ingredient to aid rural development. This needs which according to Anaeto and Anaeto (2010) are varied and multi-dimensional. Breaking them down, Anaeto and Anaeto (2010) identifies agricultural information as one of the basic need of the rural dweller. This is because farming is the major occupation of rural dwellers. Thus, they need information that can help them boost production and make profit. The farmers require information on various aspects of improving farming such as availability of planting materials, fertilizer application, and farm management practices, sources of funding, marketing techniques, prevention and control of plant and animal diseases, storage of farm products.

To rural community members, the mass media proved to be glamorous, impersonal and unbelievable in comparison with the familiar performance of traditional artist whom the villagers could not only see and hear but even touch emotionally. Traditional media system is the most important vehicle of social change. While a lot of modification may be needed to convey social change as well as agricultural messages, traditional media will easily carry social issues related to the rural development (Ottah and Umar, 2017). These traditional media will not only help in the development activities, but will also help in preventing and transmitting the people's culture, tradition and values to the next generation.

According to Jerry (1989) in Okonkwo (1990) cited in Ottah and Umar (2017), in a country that has a large population size such as Nigeria, it is impossible to mobilize the entire population through centralized directive. There can be no progress unless beneficial change occurs at the local level. Traditional media were and have always been major channel of information which was used to communicate mobilization ideas to the grassroots. Wilson (1991) stating the function of traditional media in grass roots mobilization said ‘the mass media is a vital tool for the development of rural Nigeria because it serves as a potent source of socio-cultural, health and political transmission and adaptation thereby helping the masses to attain point of self actualization and national development through songs, instructions, theatre performances and general surveillance. Essentially, traditional media provide education on the norms and mores of the society.

Method

Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Ini Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Population of the study comprised crop farmers in the study area. Simple random sampling technique was adopted in choosing 120 respondents, which constituted the sample size for the study. The Main Instrument used in this study was a questionnaire titled ‘‘Perceived Effectiveness of Traditional Media of Communication Used by Crop Farmers Questionnaire’’ (PETMCCFQ). Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness, completeness and the language of the study under consideration. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the level of reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.84 and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics and simple regression. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels.

Results and Discussion

Research Question One: The research question sought to find out the socio-economic characteristics of farmers in Ini Local Government Area. To answer the research question, percentage analysis was performed as can be seen in table 1.

Table 1: Percentage analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of farmers in Ini Local Government Area

Socio-economic characteristics of farmers in Ini Local Government Area	Freq	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	46	38.3
Female	72	60.0
No response	2	1.7
Total	120	100%
Age		
18-25	25	20.8
26-35	27	22.5
36-45	32	26.7
45 and above	32	26.7

No response	2	1.7
Total	120	100%
Marital Status		
Married	39	32.5
Divorced	54	45.0
Widow	4	3.3
Widower	14	11.7
No response	2	1.7
Total	120	100%
Farmer		
Yes	1	0.8
No	117	97.5
No response	2	1.7
Total	120	100%
Farming Experience		
1-5 years	60	50.0
6-10years	26	21.7
11-15years	8	6.7
16 and above	23	19.2
No response	3	2.5
Total	120	100%
Family Size		
1	1	0.8
2	3	2.5
3	3	2.5
4	7	5.8
5	19	15.8
6	14	11.7
7	13	10.8
8	7	5.8
9	7	5.8
10	4	3.3
11	4	3.3
12	1	0.8
No response	37	30.8
Total	120	100%
How the farmland was acquired		
Null	3	2.5

Inheritance	51	42.5
Inheritance and Lease	1	0.8
Inheritance and Community farm	3	2.5
Inheritance and Purchase	1	0.8
Lease	13	10.8
Co-operative	12	10.0
Community farm	17	14.2
Purchase	11	9.2
Husband Land	8	6.6
Total	120	100%
Farmland Description		
Plot	82	68.3
Hectare	31	25.8
Acre	3	2.5
No response	4	3.3
Total	120	100%
Additional Occupation		
Nil	6	5.0
Civil Servant	14	11.7
Trader	74	61.7
Trader and Student	2	1.7
Pensioner and	2	1.7
Driver	1	0.8
Student	11	9.2
Palm Wine Tapper	5	4.2
Hairdresser	1	0.8
Teacher	4	3.3
Total	120	100%
Are you a member of any co-operative society?		
Yes	34	28.3
No	82	68.3
No response	4	3.3
Total	120	100%
Extension Agent Visit		
Yes	51	42.5
No	66	55.0
No response	3	2.5

Total	120	100%
Extension Agent Services Rating		
Very Beneficial	6	5.0
Beneficial	26	21.7
Not beneficial	40	33.3
No response	48	40.0
TOTAL	120	100

SOURCE: Field survey

The above table 1 presents the percentage analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of farmers in Ini Local Government Area. From the result, it was observed that for gender, the highest percentage of the respondent 72(60.0%) were female while the least were male 46(38.3%), however, 2(1.7%) of the respondent failed to respond. For Age, the highest percentage of the respondent 32(26.7%) were of the age range of 36 and above while the least were of the age range of 18-25 25(20.8%). However, this percentage of the respondent failed to respond 2(1.7%). For marital status, the highest percentage of the respondent 54(45.0%) were those divorced while the least were widows 4(3.3%). However, this percentage of the respondent failed to respond 2(1.7%). For respondent who were farmer, the highest percentage of the respondent 117(97.5%) were non farmers while the least 1(0.8%) were farmer. However, this percentage of the respondent failed to respond 2(1.7%).

For educational attainment, the highest percentage of the respondent 52(43.3%) had SSCE while the least 9(7.5%) were HND/B.Sc/B.Agric holder. However, this percentage of the respondent failed to respond 3(2.5%). For farming experience, the highest percentage of the respondent 60(50.0%) were those with 1-5 farming experience while the least 8(6.7%) were those with 11-15 years farming experience. However, this percentage of the respondent failed to respond 3(2.5%).

Research Question Two: The research question sought to find out the types of traditional communication channels that are still in use in Ini Local Government Area. To answer the research question, percentage analysis was performed as can be seen in table 2.

Table 2: Percentage analysis of the types of traditional communication channels that are still in use in Ini Local Government Area.

Types of traditional communication channels	Freq	Percentage (%)
Town Crier	20	16.7
Town Crier, Beating of special drums, Music & Dance and Signs & Symbolic Displays	1	0.8
Town Crier, Beating of special drums, Signs & Symbolic Displays and Proverbs & Riddles	6	5.0
Town Crier, Beating of special drums, Signs & Symbolic Displays and Folk Tales	1	0.8
Town Crier, Beating of special drums, Signs & Symbolic Displays and Traditional Institutions	5	4.2
Town Crier, Beating of special drums and Traditional Institutions	3	2.5

Town Crier, Music & Dance and Folk Tales	1	0.8
Town Crier, Music & Dance and Traditional Institutions	4	3.3
Town Crier and Signs & Symbolic Displays	1	0.8
Town Crier, Signs & Symbolic Displays, Proverbs & Riddles and Traditional Institutions	4	3.3
Town Crier, Signs & Symbolic Displays and Traditional Institutions	36	30.0
Town Crier, Proverbs & Riddles and Traditional Institutions	3	2.5
Town Crier and Traditional Institutions	26	21.7
Beating of special drums	4	3.3
Signs & Symbolic Displays	1	0.8
Traditional Institutions	4	3.3
Total	120	100%

SOURCE: Field survey

The above table 2 presents the percentage analysis of the types of traditional communication channels that are still in use in Ini Local Government Area. From the result, it was observed that the highest percentage of the respondent 36(30.0%) who said the traditional communication channels still in use in Ini Local Government Area are combination of town Crier, Signs & Symbolic Displays and Traditional Institutions, while the least number of respondents were 1(0.8%) who affirmed a combination of town Crier, Beating of special drums, Music & Dance, Signs & Symbolic Displays and Folk Tales.

Hypothesis 1: The null hypothesis states that there is no significant joint influence of socioeconomic characteristic of respondents on their level of usage of traditional media. In order to test the hypothesis, simple regression was used to analyze the data, (see table 3).

Table 3: Simple regression of the joint influence of socio-economic characteristic on the level of usage of traditional media.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	0.41a	0.168	0.83	4.82426	0.17

*Significant at 0.05 level; df =118; N =120; critical r-value = 0.197

The table shows that the calculated R-value 0.41 was greater than the critical R-value of 0.197 at 0.5 alpha levels with 118 degree of freedom. The R-square value of 0.168 predicts 16.8% of relationship between socio-economic characteristic and level of usage of traditional media. This rate of percentage is lowly positive and therefore means that there is significant joint influence of socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents and level of usage of traditional media. It was also deemed necessary to find out the extent of the variance of each class of independent variable as responded by each respondent (see table 4).

Table 4: Analysis of variance of the difference in the influence of socioeconomic characteristic on level of usage of traditional media

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	507.93	11	46.18	1.98	.037 ^b
Residual	2513.54	108	23.27		
Total	3021.47	119			

- a. Dependent Variable: Traditional media usage
- b. Predictors: (Constant), service rating, age, gender, family size, coop membership, farmer or, marital status, farmland description, extension agent visit, duration farming, education attainment

The above table presents the calculated F-value as (1.98) and the critical F-value as (.037). Being that the critical F-value (.037) is below the probability level of 0.05, the result means that there is significant difference in the influence exerted by the independent variables (service rating, age, gender, family size, coop membership, farmer or, marital status, farmland description, extension agent visit, duration farming, education attainment) on the dependent variable which is traditional media usage.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the data analysis in table 3 which sought to find the influence of socio economic characteristics of the people of Ini Local Government Area on the level of usage of the traditional media was significant due to the fact that the obtained R-value (0.41) was greater than the critical r-value (0.197) at 0.05 level with 118 degree of freedom. This result implies that there is significant influence of socio economic characteristics of the people of Ini Local Government Area on the level of usage of the traditional media. The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternate was retained.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were deemed necessary: it is very obvious that in Ini Local Government Area, various communication media are still in use. They use these media often to pass messages to their fellow indigenes and other people that reside the local government area. Also the most common and utilized media of communication in Ini Local Government Area are Town Crier, Beating of special drums, Signs & Symbolic Displays and Traditional Institutions. Socio economic characteristics of the people of Ini Local Government Area have significant influence on their level of usage of the above channels of traditional media.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. Traditional media as well as its frequent use to convey social change and agricultural messages to rural farmers should be encouraged as the study area rarely have access to modern media of communication due to high level of poverty and illiteracy.
2. Traditional Media makes communication among the rural people more effective and authentic when employed for development activities of the society, therefore the Government should encourage the development of traditional communications in all ramifications.
3. 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.

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