

ACCESSIBILITY OF CASSAVA PROCESSORS TO MASS MEDIA CHANNELS' INFORMATION ON CASSAVA PROCESSING INNOVATIONS IN SAKI AGRICULTURAL ZONE OF OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on the accessibility of cassava processors to mass media channels' information on cassava processing innovations in the Saki Agricultural Zone of Oyo State, Nigeria. A multistage sampling technique was used to select 190 cassava processors in the zone. Structured and validated interview schedule and participant observation technique were used to obtain primary data from cassava processors in the study area. Data collected were analyzed using frequency distributions, percentages and means as descriptive statistical tools. Inferential statistics used was paired t- test analysis. Findings from the study revealed that the majority of the cassava processors were female and married. The mean age and years of experience of cassava processors were 43.9years and 11.3years respectively. Radio was the most accessible mass media channel followed by television while extension publications were less accessible in the study area. Finally, the study recommended that bridging information gap between the source and clientele should be through relating simple, short, repeated, useful and timely extension information and encouraging feedback on mass media channels.

KEYWORDS: Accessibility, Mass Media Channels, Information, Cassava Processing, Innovations

INTRODUCTION

Information is a resource that must be acquired and used in order to make an informed decision. Those who possess appropriate and timely information will make more rational decisions than those without it (Aina, 1995). According to Stanley (1990), information is one of the basic human needs after air, water, food and shelter. So it is one of the basic necessities of life. This assertion was validated by cable (1994) who stated that man requires information to be able to manipulate factors of production such as land, labor and capital resources into meaningful and productive use. Therefore, how far people progress in whatever they are doing depends largely upon the availability and access to accurate and reliable information. Agricultural information is targeted at improving the knowledge, skills and ability of the farmers to produce more than enough for themselves. Extensionists make use of three teaching methods to disseminate information to the clienteles which include: individual/face-to-face method, group method and mass media method.

Mass media are those channels of communication which can expose large numbers of people with the same information at the same time.

They include media, which convey information by sound (radio); moving pictures (television, video); and prints (posters, newspapers, leaflets). The attraction of mass media to extension services is the high speed and low cost with which information can be communicated to people over a wide area. Although the cost of producing and transmitting a radio program may seem high, when that cost is divided between the millions of people who may hear the program, it is in fact a very cheap way of providing information (FAO, 2005). Meanwhile, from the listener's point of view, radio is an inflexible medium. A program is transmitted at a specific time of day and if a farmer does not switch on the radio /TV on time, there may be no opportunity to hear it again. Usually there is no individual recording of messages. A farmer cannot stop the program and go back to a point that was not quite understood or heard properly and after the broadcast there is nothing to remind the farmers of the information heard (Oakely and Garforth, 1997). In addition, people often listen to mass media, especially radio while they are doing something else, such as eating, preparing food, or working in the field, all these constitute problems which affect the comprehensibility of the information being disseminated through the mass media channels inclusive of cassava processing innovations.

Success recorded in several development programs has positive correlation with communication strategies (Yahaya, 2003). Based on this report, cassava industry needs to be developed through appropriate communication of agricultural information especially on mass media channels. This is because of the usefulness of cassava in Nigeria and the world in general. Ezedinma *et al* (2006) reported that, the wide scale adoption of high- yielding varieties and the resulting increase in yields have shifted the problem of the cassava sector from the supply (production) to demand issues, such as finding new uses and markets for cassava. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, 2005) reported that apart from general marketing and price policies, there have been poor information on improved cassava processing technologies, marketing and price policies on cassava. So, generally, policy thrusts in some aspects were not consistent. For some years, cassava products have enjoyed a trade liberation while in other years, it would be included among prohibited exportable commodities and this inconsistency does not encourage sustainable development of the crop.

Furthermore, with the extension service experiencing a continuous reduction in work force, more emphasis is being placed on the use of mass media for agricultural information dissemination (Azogwu, 2004). This study is essential to encourage/motivate broadcasting stations, mass media houses to give more priority to dissemination of agricultural information. Therefore the specific objectives of the study are to:

- Ascertain socio- economic characteristics of respondents,
- Identify information on cassava processing innovations disseminated (available) through mass media channels and the ones accepted for utilization,
- Examine different types of mass media channels accessible to respondents.

METHODOLOGY

The research work was carried out in the Saki Agricultural Zone in Oyo State. The vegetation of the area is predominately-derived savannah. Traditionally, the people are tuber growers. Yam and cassava constitute the king crop cultivated in the area. They also grow cowpea, maize, groundnut, Cajanus Cajan sorghum and so on. The zone consists of 8 blocks which include: Atisbo, Olorunsogo, Iwajowa, Kajola, Oorelope, Saki East and Saki West is having 8 cells each. Only Irepo has 7 cells. A multistage sampling technique was employed for the study. The first stage involves random

sampling of three blocks out of eight. They were: Atisbo, Saki West and Kajola. The second stage involved simple random selection of 2 cells in each of the three blocks selected to make up 6 cells for data collection. The third stage involved random selection of (20%) cassava processors from each of the 6 cells. Thus, sample size was 190 respondents.

There are two major variables for this study, the dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable is the accessibility of cassava processors to mass media channels' information on cassava processing innovations. It was measured by listing mass media channels and information available on cassava processing innovations through mass media was scored as: accessible = 1, not accessible = 0. Paired t-test analysis was used to test for significant difference between disseminated information through mass media channels and accepted information for utilization by cassava processors.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Data presented in table 1 showed the distribution of respondents according to their selected socioeconomic characteristics. The mean age of respondents was 43.9years. This result agreed with Agnes *et al* (2006) which stated that cassava processors were in their active age, which makes them more agile to cope with the rigorous activities involved in cassava processing activities. This implies that the majority of the respondents were within their productive age, hence it would be expected to contribute positively to modern cassava processing for improved standard of living. Tables 1 also revealed that most of the respondents (66.8%) were females while (33.2%) were male. This result was in support of FAO (2005) findings, which stated that women are primary processors of cassava and they dominated cassava processing industry in Nigeria.

Data presented in table 1 also showed that 42.6% of the respondents were married while 20.0%, 3.2%, 10.5% and 23.7% were single, separated, divorced and widowed respectively. High percentage recorded for the married respondents implies that family would provide more labor to assist in cassava processing. It could also be observed from table 1 that the mean family size was 7 persons. This implies that respondents had appreciable numbers of people in their family which would supply labour during the processing activities. The data shown in table 1 also revealed that 26.8% of the respondents interviewed have no formal education, 13.7% were having access to adult literacy education. Others had one form of education or the other as shown in the table. It was observed that some of the respondents claimed to have received some education, but were not literate because they cannot decode extension messages especially from printed media (posters). This could affect the utilization of extension messages obtained through mass media. Furthermore, mean years of experience in cassava processing was 11.3years. This implies that all the respondents in the study area had vast experience in cassava process. This experience could be tapped to formulate a research agenda for improved cassava processing technologies for cassava processors.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Respondents According to Their Selected Socio Economic Characteristics n=190

Socio Economic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentages	Mean
Age (years)			
< 31	18	9.5	
31-40	58	30.5	
41-50	60	31.6	43.9
51-60	27	14.2	
61-70	27	14.2	
Sex			
Male	63	33.2	
Female	127	66.8	
Marital status			
Married	81	42.6	
Single	38	20.0	
Separated	06	3.2	
Divorced	20	10.5	
Family size (people)			
< 5	64	33.7	
5-9	43	22.6	7.0
10-14	83	43.7	
Education qualification			
No formal education	51	26.8	
Primary education	44	23.2	
Secondary education	36	18.9	
Adult literacy	26	13.7	
Tertiary education	33	17.4	
Cassava processing experience (years)			
< 11	96	50.5	
11-20	75	39.5	11.3
21-30	13	6.8	
31-40	06	3.2	

Source: field survey, 2016

Information Disseminated (Available Information) on Cassava Processing Innovations Through Mass Media Channels

Data in table 2 showed that 70.5% of the respondents indicated that information on peeler was disseminated through mass media channels, 66.8% indicated that information relating to washer was disseminated through the mass media channels. However, all the respondents interviewed (100%) indicated that information on grater and presser was disseminated through mass media channels. Also, 93.7% claimed that they obtained information through mass media on the fryer. This implies that information on improved cassava processing technologies was disseminated to the respondents via mass media channels which make it readily available to them. This result corroborates the report of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (1997) that cassava processors in Nigeria indicated a high level of awareness of semi- mechanized equipment such as craters, pressers, and fryers for processing to many cassava products.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Respondents According to Information Disseminated (Available Information) on Cassava Processing Innovations through Mass Media Channels

Disseminated Information	Frequency	Percentage
Peeler	134	70.5
Washer	127	66.8
Grater	190	100.0
Presser	190	100.0
Fryer	178	93.7

Source: field survey, 2016

*Multiple responses

Information Accepted For Utilization on Cassava Processing Innovations through Mass Media Channels

Data presented in table 3 revealed that only 6.8% of the respondent's utilized information obtained through the mass media on peeler while 16.3% were those that utilized information obtained on the washer. This result agreed with FAO (2005) which stated that not much success has been recorded towards mechanizing cassava peeling and *Gari* frying at household levels. Equal number of respondents (100%) utilized information obtained on grater and presser while 23.2% utilized information obtained on the fryer. This result indicated an information gap between information availability and information utilization which could be caused by failure of mass media to adequately provide the respondents with the needed technical information on those technologies especially peeler and washer.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Respondents According to Information Accepted For Utilization on Cassava Processing Innovations through Mass Media Channels

Accepted Technology	Frequency	Percentage
Peeler	13	6.8
Washer	31	16.3
Grater	190	100.0
Presser	190	100.0
Fryer	82	43.2

Source: field survey, 2016

*Multiple responses

Accessibility of Respondents to Different Types of Mass Media Channels

It could be observed from table 4 that a larger percentage (93.7%) have access to radio, 60.5% have access to television while 51.6% have access to posters and 44.7% accessed extension publication. This result supported the works of Adams (1982), Oladosu (2004) and Akinola (2006) and which stated that radio is the most accessible mass media in rural areas. This implies that most of cassava processors could be reached through radio and television.

Table 4: Frequency Distribution of Respondents According to Accessibility of Respondents to Different Types of Mass Media Channels

Mass Media Channels*	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	178	93.7
Television	115	60.5
Posters	98	51.6
Extension publication	85	44.7

Source: field survey, 2016

*Multiple responses

Significant Difference between Disseminated Information through Mass Media Channels and Accepted Information for Utilization by Cassava Processors

Table 5 revealed paired t- test analysis showing significant differences between disseminated information and accepted information for utilization by cassava processors through mass media channels ($t=10.31$). This implies that there is an information gap between the scores of disseminated information through mass media channels and score of accepted information for utilization by cassava processors. This information gap can be linked to communication deficit (Azogwu, 2004).

Table 5: Paired T-Test Analysis Showing Significant Difference between Disseminated Information Through Mass Media Channels and Accepted Information for Utilization by Cassava Processors

Variables	T value	Significance	Decision
Scores of Disseminated information and accepted information for utilization	10.31	0.000	Significant

Source: field survey, 2016

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that respondents utilized mass media channels such as Radio and Television. Also, there is an information gap between the score of disseminated information through mass media channels and score of accepted information for utilization of improved cassava processing technologies. The study, therefore recommends that:

- Bridging information gap between the source and clientele could be through relating simple, short, repeated, useful and timely extension information and encouraging feedback on mass media channels.
- Despite the awareness of improved cassava processing technologies, by respondents through mass media, pieces of information were not accepted for use due to their smallness in scale of operation. It is therefore recommended affordable loan should be disbursed to cassava processors by lending agencies to increase their capacity of operation.

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