



Assessment of Communication Strategies of Fadama User Groups in Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author ASA designed the study, performed the statistical analyses, wrote the protocol, first draft of the manuscript and edited the final manuscript. Author AOF edited the first draft, managed the analyses of the study and wrote the final draft. Author AWD administered the questionnaire and searched for the literatures. All authors read and approved the final draft.

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ABSTRACT

The success or otherwise of any development project partly depend on the effectiveness of communication strategies used in such project. The study assessed the communication strategies utilised by Fadama User Groups (FUGs) for fadama programme. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 120 members of the Fadama User Groups randomly selected from 10 villages in Ido Local Government which was purposively selected based on the preponderance of Fadama User Groups in the Local Government. The data collected were subjected to descriptive (percentage and frequency) and inferential (Chi square). Result shows that majority of respondents were male (75.0%), married (95.0%) between the age of 36-40 (30.8%) with 66.6% having household size of 1-3 persons and (75.0%) had access to extension services. Majority preferred group discussion (66.7%) and radio (62.5%) as medium of communication. Larger percentage of the respondents (69.2%) had high access to different communication strategies in the study area.

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Language barrier ($\bar{x}=2.00$) and irregular power supply ($\bar{x}=1.50$) were the major constraints against effective utilisation of communication strategies used by members of Fadama User Groups. Significant relationship existed between occupation ($\chi^2=14.106$, $p=0.001$) and communication strategies of Fadama User Groups in the study area. It is recommended that members of FUG should be encouraged on the need to sustain the use of different communication strategies to enable them get timely information on modern system of farming.

Keywords: Fadama user group; communication strategies; group discussion; extension service.

1. INTRODUCTION

Almost every aspect of human life communicates, and all their activities and interactions involved communication [1]. Posits that all humans, regardless of their age or capacity, send and receive communicative messages and such means of communication could be through law, poetry, mathematics, history, conversation, music, art and social media, linking humans across time, generations and continents. The primary purpose of communication is to inform educate, persuade and to entertain. For effective communication to take place, ideas, information, opinion, feeling or experience must share without any cultural bias. [2,3], opined that communication is used to identify problems and solution, manages programs and regulates the attitudes within the specific contexts.

Communication is the medium through which education achieved its goals and is an indispensable partner in development. Communication is the process by which individual transmit stimuli to modify the behavior of the other individual [4].

According to [5], effective communication is an important tool for the achievement of good and working relationship and it enables people to exercise control over their environment. Also effective communication is a prerequisite to every aspect of group functioning.

Fadama is an intervention to achieve an effective communication and many more in agricultural production. Fadama is a Hausa name for irrigable land usually low-lying plain. The National Fadama Development Project (NFDP) is sponsored by the World Bank, Federal Government of Nigeria and the government of beneficiary states [6]. The First Fadama project (NFDPI) was implemented in 25 states from 1993 – 1997 [7]. While the Fadama II established in 2004 and aimed at alleviating poverty of beneficiary, was implemented in 11 states. It

aimed to support communities to acquire infrastructure and productive assets, providing demand driven advisory services, increasing the capacity of communities to manage economic activities and reducing conflicts among resource users [8].

The project adopted the Community – Driven Development (CDD) approach, which is a way of empowering local communities to shape their future. Fadama has been acclaimed to provide income for practitioners and marketers while supporting nation's security since it was able to provide all year agricultural production [9]. Fadama III project was established in the year 2008 as follow-up to the Fadama II that elapsed. According to Matanmi et al. [10], Fadama III was a follow up to Fadama I and II and aimed at boosting agricultural production and improve the welfare of participating farmers. Significant achievements have been made in the area of improvement of rural infrastructure but a lot still need to be done. The project is implemented in all thirty six states of Nigeria. The components of objective of the project include; capacity building, communication and information support, small scaled community owned infrastructure, advisory service and input support, agricultural development programme, asset acquisition for individual FUGs and Project management support.

The rural farmers who should be given adequate attention and support in terms of input supply (e.g. fertilizers, seeds, chemicals etc), and indeed information on relevant agricultural technologies are not adequately assisted and informed and could not adopt the up-to-date technologies. Even when informed, they are beset with confusion and late information [11,12]. Hence, the expected performance level of the rural farmers has not been realized making the nation's goal desire to achieve agricultural transformation a mirage. Consequently, the nation's goal in providing food security and self-sufficiency have not been attained. Farmers need to keep abreast of necessary information

that will enhance cultivation and be well aware of issues and developments surrounding any crop before every farming season. This is because they are actively involved in feeding the nation and sustaining industries as major suppliers of raw materials for industrial production through investors. Therefore, farmers need to be in charge of information and communication to meet investors need, and be aware of strategies used in information and communication to reduce spoilage, increase food production and marketing strategies in packaging and storage to enhance food security all year round. Although there are lots of information and communication flows in the agricultural sector, the need to provide right and adequate information for Fadama User Groups cannot be over emphasized as the provision of effective communication and channels can make or mar the project. The need to ascertain whether the right communication strategies were put in place under the Fadama Project II necessitated this study.

1.1 Objectives

The study had the following objectives:

- i. Describe the personal characteristics of respondents.
- ii. Identify the communication strategies of Fadama user groups in the study area.
- iii. Determine the most effective of communication strategies among Fadama user groups.
- iv. Assess the constraints militating against Fadama user groups.

1.2 Hypothesis of the Study

Hol: There is no significant relationship between the personal characteristics of the respondents and the communication strategies among Fadama user groups.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted among Fadama User Groups (FUGs) of Ido Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. Ido Local Government has an area of 986 km² and a total population of 103,261 based on 2006 National Population Census. The basic occupation of the people in the Local Government Area is farming. Ido Local Government Area was purposively selected because of the high number of the Fadama User Groups in the area. Ten villages were randomly selected out of twenty five villages in the Local Government where the Fadama User groups

were domicile. Twelve respondents were also randomly selected from ten villages making a total of one hundred and twenty respondents used in this study. A Fadama user group consists of twenty five members. Data was collected with a structured questionnaire and subjected to descriptive statistics namely percentages and frequency counts while Chi square was used for inferential statistic. Variable such as Communication strategies used, respondents' preferred communication strategies and factors militating against communication strategies were measured. For communication strategies used, a list of strategies were provided and respondents were asked to pick either yes or no to indicate the channels from which they obtained information on Fadama. The respondents further indicated the strategies preferred and not preferred from the list and scores of 1 and 0 were assigned. A list of constraints militating against members of the user groups were listed and they were asked to rate each constraint as serious (2), mild (1) and not a constraint (0). Mean of the scores was obtained and used to rank the constraints.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Personal Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1 shows that most of the respondents (51.6%) were between the ages of 36-45. This suggests that most of the respondents were young, active and energetic enough to perform their respective farm activities. This contradicts the belief that most of the farmers in Nigeria are old as affirmed by Fasina [13].

The Table also reveals that majority of the respondents (77.5%) were males, while 22.5% were females. This means that agriculture is a male-dominated enterprise because of the rigour associated with it. The result almost met the Fadama Project's affirmative action of 30% women involvement in Fadama Project. Majority of the respondents (95.0%) were married, this implies that they are responsible adults who have family to cater for and may likely be serious in their farming activities so as to generate enough money to cater for their family.

Most of the respondents (49.2%) had secondary school certificate, while the least category (13.3%) had no formal education, which means most of them would be able to read and write, and also be able to understand guides on

Fadama project and other good agricultural practices that would equip them with improved knowledge of agricultural practices. The attainment of secondary education by the majority of the respondents would enable them source technical information from other channels. The table reveals that not all members of Fadama User Groups (FUGs) had farming as primary occupation though majority (65.0%) were involved in farming. Since majority of them had farming as their primary occupation, the group would focus more on different farming activities. This implies that the group will meet the objective of contributing to the food security of the community.

Most of the respondents (66.6%) had household size of between 1-3 individuals. Household size is an important variable in rural household

agricultural production system as it serve as a source of family labour for the farming activities especially for farmers who operate at subsistence level. The proportion of the family with small household size (1-3) is instructive in understanding that most of the respondents were in their active age.

Furthermore, majority of the respondents (75%) had access to extension services. This may be due to the fact that Fadama project in the study area has become an integral part of State Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) which has the mandate for agricultural extension service in the state. This would enhance the knowledge of improved practices of members of the Fadama User Groups in the study area on agricultural production and consequently increase their income.

Table 1. Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
25-30	11	9.2
31-35	14	11.7
36-40	37	30.8
41-45	25	20.8
46 and above	33	27.5
Sex		
Male	93	77.5
Female	27	22.5
Marital status		
Single	5	4.2
Married	114	95.0
Widowed	1	0.8
Education		
No formal education	16	13.3
Primary education	22	18.3
Secondary	59	49.2
Tertiary	23	19.2
Household size		
1-3	80	60.6
4-6	31	25.8
7-10	9	7.5
Occupation		
Farming	78	65.0
Trading	26	21.7
Civil service/wage	16	13.3
Years in Fadama group		
1-3	28	23.3
4-6	72	60.0
7 and above	20	16.7
Access to extension services		
Yes	90	75.0
No	30	25.0

3.2 Fadama Communication Strategies

Table 2(a) shows that the communication strategies mostly used by members of the FUGs to receive information were group discussions (94.7%), radio (91.7%) and posters (80.0%). Group discussion is a form of group communication which offers the advantage of immediate feedback to all the parties involved in the communication process. This is important in communication and can actually help the communicator to gauge the acceptance or the otherwise of his message. The high use of strategies like radio could be linked to the characteristics of radio which include access to radio, easy to operate, relatively low cost and the need for no special skill in its operation. This result is in line with the findings of [14] who reported high access to radio by members of Fadama User Groups in Oyo state to access information. The inability of members to use the modern ICT for communication could be associated with the need for a technical know-how and literacy required in the use. [15] posited that lack of adequate skill in operating modern ICT, non-availability of ICT tools and cost of its operations were major constraints to using the modern ICT among rural farmers. This position is in tandem with [16] who reported that internet was costly and not available coupled with lack of relevant skills to explore its usefulness.

The categorization of respondents based on the extent of utilisation of communication strategies for Fadama information in Table 2(b) shows that majority (69.2%) were high utilisers of communication strategies. This is due to the fact that fadama operators employed the use of different communication strategies for general programme awareness, and support community mobilization for ownership of the project at community level as it concerned Fadama project.

3.3 Respondents' Preference of Communication Strategies Use for Fadama

Table 3 shows that group discussion (66.7%) and radio (62.5%) were the most preferred communication strategies by members of the Fadama user groups. This may be due to the inherent advantages of immediate feedback for group discussion and ability of radio to instantly disseminate information and high access to radio by members of the public including operators of Fadama Project II. There are several positions in the literature on the reasons why farmers prefer

radio for agricultural information. Group discussions is a forum where opinions are expressed and weighed on the scale of the general opinion. Respondents would be more comfortable discussing the achievements and fears with other farmers than with non-member. On the other hand, Television (77.5%) and modern ICTs such as internets, social media, e – messages (66.4%) were not preferred by members of the Fadama User Groups in the study area. There are many associated challenges to the use of modern ICT which are also related to the challenges of using television. Some include high dependence on electricity, high technical knowhow requirement and high cost of internet subscription.

3.4 Constraints to Effective Use of Communication Strategies by FUG

Table 4 contains various constraints militating against the various communication strategies used by Fadama User groups in the study area .The result reveals that language barrier and irregular power supply were ranked first and second respectively by the respondents. The use of appropriate language and medium of communication have been found to influence effective understanding in a communication process. According to Olajide and Oyedele (2012), the inability to disseminate information in a local local language was a serious constraint to accessing information from Fadama information channels. Other factors such as literary inability could pose a threat to understanding the language of dissemination. Although, majority of the respondents in this study (Table 1) had up to secondary education and therefore should be able to communicate in English and Yoruba fairly well, and decode messages in the communication process, ambiguous words and unclear expression of intent is a major threat to effective communication.

3.5 Relationship between the Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents and Communication Strategies Used

The result in Table 5 shows the Chi-square relationship of the respondents' personal characteristics and level of utilisation of communication strategies. The result shows that occupation (χ^2 14.106, $p=0.001$) had significant relationships with communication strategies utilised. However, the relationships between,

marital status, sex and education were not significant with communication strategies used. This shows that occupation is a determinant as regards communication strategies used in the study area; furthermore the type of occupation that members of a particular group engage in will dictate the type of strategies that will be used to communicate within such group. This implies that the communication strategies employed in this study should be able to promote and enhance farming business which majority of the respondents engaged in.

Table 2a. Distribution of respondents by communication strategies used in Fadama project

S/No	Communication Tools	Yes	No
1.	Demonstration method	90 (75.0%)	30 (25.0%)
2.	Farm/Home visit	90 (75.0%)	30 (25.0%)
3.	Radio	110 (91.7%)	10 (8.3%)
4.	Posters	96 (80%)	24 (20%)
5.	Mobile phones	20 (16.7%)	100 (83.3)
6.	Television	85 (70.8)	35 (29.2)
7.	Modern ICTs	8 (6.7)	112 (93.3)
8.	Group Discussions	113 (94.2)	7 (5.8)
9.	Lecture/teaching	10 (8.3)	110 (91.7)
10.	Hand bill	95 (79.2)	25 (20.8)

Source: Field survey, 2018. Note: Figures in parenthesis are in percentage

Table 2b. Categorisation of FUG based on the extent of utilisation of communication strategies

Communication strategies level	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Standard dev
Low	37	30.8	21.50	1.04
High	83	69.2		

Source: Field survey, 2018

Table 3. Distribution of respondents according to their preference for Fadama communication strategies

S/No	Communication strategies	Most Preferred	Less preferred
1.	Practical demonstration	40(33.3)	74(62.2)
2.	Farm/Home visit	46(38.7)	73(61.3)
3.	Radio	75(62.5)	25(37.5)
4.	Posters	48(40.3)	71(59.7)
5.	Mobile Phone	43(36.1)	76(63.9)
6.	Television	26(21.8)	93(77.5)
7.	Modern ICTs	45(37.8)	79(66.4)
8.	Group Discussions	80(66.7)	40(33.3)
9.	Formal lectures/teachings	41(42.0)	69(58.0)
10	Hand bills	43(36.1)	76(63.9)

Source: Field survey, 2018. Note: Figures in parenthesis are in percentage

Table 4. Distribution of respondents' constraints against Fadama communication strategies

S/No	Constraints	Mean	Rank
1.	Irregular power supply	1.50	2 nd
2.	Time of meeting	1.43	3 rd
3.	Low level of education	1.40	5 th
4.	Inability to connect to source of Fadama information	1.41	4 th
5.	Language barrier	2.00	1 st

Source: Field survey, 2018

Table 5. Chi-square test between the socio-economic characteristics of respondents and use of communication media tools

Variable	χ^2 value	df	p-value	Decision
Sex	12.024	1	0.007	NS
Marital Status	2.815	2	0.245	NS
Education	6.639	3	0.084	NS
Occupation	14.106	2	0001	S

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concludes that Fadama User Groups preferred group discussions and radio to communicate any information regarding Fadama. The respondents also used different communication strategies to a very high level and language barrier was identified as the most severe constraints to the effectiveness of the communication strategies used for Fadama project. It is recommended that members of FUG should be encouraged on the need to sustain the use of different communication strategies to enable them get timely information on modern system of farming that would equip them with technologies to boost agricultural production and productivity. The use of farm /home visit need to be encouraged to complement group discussion and radio which have been embraced by the respondents in the study area . Farm/ home visit is an interpersonal communication strategy which offers the advantage of feedback mechanism which enables the communicators to gauge acceptance or otherwise of his messages.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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