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Perception of constraints to print media utilization for community development among extension workers and arable crop farmers in Edo state, Nigeria

Osabuohien JI, Okoedo-Okojie DU and Uwaifo OP

Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria

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Corresponding Author: Osabuohien JI

Email: julius.osabuohien@uniben.edu

Mobile: +08058814256

Abstract

The study examined the perception of constraints to print media utilization for community development among extension workers and arable crop farmers in Edo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study identified the constraints that the respondents faced in using print media for information delivering and sourcing and assessed differences in means. A total of 384 respondents were used with of questionnaire and analysed with mean, standard deviation, and hypothesis tested with F-test. The study showed that the most serious constraints in print media use for sourcing information among farmers was inadequate finance ($m=3.26$), why the most serious constraint encountered by extension workers was also inadequate was finance ($m=3.26$) why the most serious constraints encountered by extension workers was also indicate finance that extension workers were more constrained by this factor. There was a significant difference in mean constraint of farmers and that of extension workers at 0.01level. The study recommended increased awareness and education on print media use in disseminating and sourcing agricultural information among extension workers and farmers. Also, they encourage financial support for farmers to be achieved through provision of low interest loan, grants, and subsidies targeted at small-scale farmers. Financial institutions and government agencies should develop farmers' friendly financial products to enable them invest in necessary resources like seeds, equipment, and technology.

Keywords: Perception, constraints, print media, extension workers, arable workers

Introduction

Agriculture extension primarily deals with human resource development and the transfer of technology and knowledge from agricultural research centers to rural farmers. Extension agents are professionals in the extension system responsible for developing individuals in the community (Oladele 2015) [25]. Adikari (2019) [4] stated that agricultural extension is a service which helps or assists people, particularly farm families through educational procedures in promoting their farming practices and techniques, increasing their production efficiency and income, buffering their standard of living and lifting their social, economic and educational standard of rural life. Agricultural extension or advisory services comprises the entire set of organizations that support people engaging in agricultural production and facilitate their efforts to solve problems; create link to markets and other players in the agricultural value chain; and obtain information, skills, and technologies to improve their livelihoods (Memon *et al*, 2014) [22].

Key challenges facing extension workers in Nigeria include extremely low extension agent to-farmers ratios; a lack of essential technical and communication skills for efficient functioning; a lack of a definite plan of work; too few qualified and trained extension staff using outdated information; under resourced transport and logistics; poor, weak and deteriorated infrastructure; extension organization and management problems; unclear extension mandates;

lack of job descriptions for staff; poor remuneration of the personnel; and a high rate of absenteeism among staff (Sennuga, *et al*. 2020) [27]. In addition, other limitations contributing to extension workers' access to agricultural information in Nigeria include low financial remuneration which originated from governments' inconsistency in meeting the extension workers financial obligations; poor technical know-how of extension agents, lack of adequate exposure to internal and external training, as well as remote location of information and communication facilities for extension agents' use (World Bank, 2017) [29]. These constraints pose serious threat to extension workers' gaining of access to agricultural information in their disseminating activities.

Information is an essential ingredient in agricultural development programmes but Nigerian farmers seldom feel the impact of agricultural innovations either because they have no access to such vital information or because it is poorly disseminated. Often, agricultural information is not integrated with other development programmes to address the numerous related problems that face farmers. There are some limiting factors and apparent constraints to agricultural information dissemination in Nigeria, including status differences between extension agents and their clients; agents' inadequate knowledge of how communication works; lack of interagency cooperation both in programme planning and implementation. (Mgbenka *et al* 2016) [23].

The ineffectiveness of smallholder farmers in the use of information in Nigeria can also be attributed to the treatment of information delivery (Mgbenka *et al* 2016) [23]. The non-provision of agricultural information is a key factor that has greatly limited agricultural development in developing countries. (Ozowa 1995 cited by Mgbeka and Mbah 2016) observed that the agricultural information provided is exclusively focused on policy makers, researchers, and those who manage policy decisions with less attention paid to the information needs of the targeted beneficiaries of the policy decisions. The general lack of awareness among smallholder farmers could be attributed to their high level of illiteracy. This contributes to the low level of adoption of agricultural production technology and the use of information. Extension is a type of education which is functional rather than formal. It is better provided by extension workers whose main task is to convey information in a meaningful form to farmers. Another major constraint to agricultural information usage is the inadequacy of existing extension programmes. Some of these programmes are conceived without well thought out plans and are prepared in a hurry without the farmers whose attitudes are to be changed making any input. Such agricultural information packages can neither sustain the farmers' interest nor affect the desired attitudinal change (Dambatta, 2012) [8].

Community development is a process where community members take collective action on issues that are important to them. This might be done with or without the support of a community development professional or agency. Community development is intended to empower community members and create stronger and more connected communities. Community development is a holistic approach grounded in principles of empowerment, human rights, inclusion, social justice, self-determination and collective action (Kenny and Connors, 2017) [20]. As community members are empowered and develop as leaders, they can begin to challenge and improve conditions that are resulting in their disempowerment or negatively impacting their wellbeing (Ife, 2016) [19]. At a community level, community development initiatives are likely to achieve long-term outcomes such as stronger and more cohesive communities, evidenced by changes in social capital, civic engagement, social cohesion, community safety and improved health (Haldane *et al.*, 2019; Ife, 2016; Kenny and Connors, 2017) [19, 20]. It operates with four major principles which include: emphasis on community self-help, attention to communities' felt needs; the development of community as an integrated whole and technical assistance. In the past, the rural people (males and females) were involved mainly in traditional projects such as sweeping of community markets, hunting group, farming among others activities can be carried out in relation to gender difference and participation.

It has been documented that the print media widen the scope of communication. It is cheap and people can afford to buy and read them at their conveniences. It is a medium in that the messages are imprinted permanently with high storage value, which makes them suitable for reference and research (Adejo, Adejo, and Edoka, 2015) [1]. Print medium is a key tool to disseminate agricultural information to educate and motivate farmers to accept and transfer new innovations in

the agricultural sector by the agricultural extension workers (Ravichamy, Siva and Subramanian 2019) [26]. The print media (newspapers and magazines, newsletters notices, posters and banners) remains an important instrument to act as a vehicle for transferring agricultural technologies from basic adaptive research in agricultural advance countries like France, Russia, Germany, China, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, Australia, and Malaysia including Africa (Ravichamy *et al.*, 2019) [26]. In Edo state, print media has been used by extension workers to achieve their mandate of delivering agricultural information to farmers.

Hence, the broad objective of this study is to ascertain the perception to constraints to print media utilization among extension workers and arable farmers for community development in Edo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to: identify the constraints respondents faced in using print media delivering and sourcing; and assess difference in means of perceived constraints.

Methodology

The study was carried out in Edo State, Nigeria. Edo State is located in the SOUTH-SOUTH geopolitical of Nigeria with a total population 4.7million people. It was split out of the defund Bendel State in 1991. It has a landmass of 19,749km square with a population density of 121 people per squared kilometre (Edo State ADP, 2007). The 49 Agricultural Extension workers in Edo state Agricultural development programme (EDADP) and 384 out of the 585 arable farmers under the FADAMA N-cares project were selected with simple random technique using Krejcie and Morgan 1970 [21] formula. Constraints to the use of print media by respondents were measured in a 4point rating scale of very serious (score 4), serious (score 3), not serious (score 2) and not a problem (score 1). A mean score of 2.5 and above were taken to mean that the respondents encounter serious problem on the print media usage and a mean score of less than 2.5 shows that less exist. A null hypothesis formulated for the study was there is no significant in means of constraints in perceived use of print media by agricultural extension workers and arable farmers, this was achieved using F-test, while means and standard deviation were used for data analysis.

Results and Discussion

1. Constraints to the use of Print Media for Information Delivery among Farmers

In Table 1. a comprehensive overview of various constraints faced by crops farmers in the use of print media, each evaluated based on the mean and standard deviation values. The interpretation of these constraints provides insights into the challenges within the agricultural sector, allowing for targeted interventions. It was discovered from the study that inadequate finance (Mean = 3.26), awareness about the use of print media (Mean=3.04), inadequate infrastructural facilities (M=3.17), constraints due to marital status (M=2.90), inadequate access to farm input (M=2.88), constrain due to civilization and development (M=2.88), constraints due to farmers illiteracy/poor educational background (M=2.86), constraints due to distance and location problem (M=2.82) and constraints due to scattered farmland (M=2.52) were serious constraints to the use of print media among arable crop farmers. It was revealed that

financial constraints were the most significant barrier, with a high mean score indicating widespread financial difficulties among farmers. This can limit their ability to invest in necessary resources such as seeds, equipment, and technology, ultimately affecting productivity. Studies have shown that financial support and subsidies are crucial in mitigating these challenges (World Bank, 2022) ^[30]. Furthermore, inadequate infrastructural facilities indicated lack of proper infrastructure, such as roads, storage facilities, and irrigation systems, severely hampers agricultural productivity. Poor infrastructure increases post-harvest losses and limits market access, emphasizing the need for government and private sector investment in rural infrastructure (FAO, 2021) ^[10]. Also, inadequate awareness of print media with a mean of 3.04 implies that many farmers are unaware of how print media can aid in disseminating important agricultural information, such as best practices and market trends. Educational programs and extension services can play a vital role in bridging this gap (IFPRI, 2020) ^[17].

In addition, development/civilization problems with a mean of 2.88 indicates that the encroachment of development projects and urbanization poses challenges to traditional farming practices and land availability. Sustainable development policies need to be integrated to balance agricultural needs with urban expansion (UNDP, 2021). In the same vein, inadequate access to farm inputs with a mean of 2.88 means that limited access to essential farm inputs such as fertilizers and seeds significantly impacts crop yields. Improving supply chains and subsidizing inputs can

help alleviate this constraint (World Bank, 2022) ^[29]. Farmers' illiteracy/poor educational background had a mean of 2.86 means that educational barriers prevent farmers from adopting new technologies and practices. Investment in adult education and training programs is critical for improving farming outcomes (FAO, 2021) ^[10]. Certain constraints were due to marital status with a mean of 2.90 implies that marital status can influence labour availability and decision-making on farms. Understanding the socio-cultural dynamics can help tailor interventions that address these specific needs (IFPRI, 2020) ^[17]. Other serious constraints identified were distance/location problems (Mean = 2.82), and scattered farmland (Mean 2.52). This implies that proximity to markets and services is a significant factor in agricultural success. Remote locations face higher transportation costs and limited access to support services, necessitating infrastructure improvements (UNDP, 2021). Also, fragmented land holdings make efficient farming practices difficult. Land consolidation and cooperative farming can help mitigate this issue (World Bank, 2022) ^[30].

All the identified serious constraints highlighted in this finding underscore the multifaceted challenges faced by farmers. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach involving financial support, infrastructural development, educational programs, and policy reforms. By focusing on these high-impact areas, stakeholders can significantly enhance the productivity and sustainability of the agricultural sector.

Table 1: Constraints to the use of Print Media for Information Delivery among Farmers

Constraints	Mean	Std. Dev.
Inadequate Finance	3.26*	1.06
Inadequate awareness about the use of print media	3.04*	1.10
Inadequate infrastructural facilities	3.17*	1.14
Government negative attitude towards it	1.83	0.82
Not presented in the farmers dialect	1.97	0.86
Inadequate co-operation from the farmers	2.01	0.75
Transportation problem	2.17	0.15
The cultural practices of the farmers	1.61	0.99
Development /civilization of the problem	2.88*	0.33
Inadequate access to farm input e.g fertilizers, seedlings e.t.c	2.88*	0.43
Farmers illiteracy/ poor educational background	2.86*	0.39
Constraints due to marital status	2.90*	0.30
Distance/location problem	2.82*	0.47
Problem due to scatter farmland	2.52*	0.75
Inadequate power supply	2.39	0.79
Delay in accessing information	1.92	0.90
Inadequate access to preferred information	2.46	0.76

Source: Computed from Field Survey, 2026.

*Mean $\geq$ 2.5 = High constraints

2. Constraints faced in using print media in agricultural information delivery and sourcing among Extension Workers

Results in table 2. show that inadequate finance (Mean = 3.61), inadequate awareness (Mean = 3.04), inadequate infrastructural facilities (Mean = 3.21), government negative attitude (Mean= 2.89), not presented in farmers' dialect (Mean= 3.14), transportation problem (Mean = 2.63), cultural practices of the farmers (Mean= 2.74), development/civilization of the problem (Mean = 2.63),

constraints due to marital status (Mean= 3.46), delay in accessing information (Mean= 3.11), and inadequate access to preferred information (Mean= 3.11) were the significant constraints categorized as serious with respect to the use of print media for information dissemination.

Financial constraints significantly hinder the use of print media for disseminating agricultural information. Limited financial resources can affect both the production and distribution of printed materials. Also, there is a notable lack of awareness among farmers regarding the benefits and

usage of print media for agricultural information. This may be due to insufficient training or outreach programs. Furthermore, poor infrastructure, such as lack of proper printing facilities and distribution networks, poses a serious challenge to effective information dissemination via print media. A perceived lack of support or negative stance from the government can demotivate stakeholders from investing in and utilizing print media for agricultural purposes.

In addition, language barriers, particularly the use of non-local dialects in printed materials, limit the accessibility and comprehension of agricultural information for many farmers. Transportation issues, including the distribution of printed materials to remote areas, severely affect the reach and effectiveness of print media. Certain cultural practices may impede the adoption and utilization of print media for information dissemination, as traditional methods might be preferred. The stage of development or level of civilization in certain regions can impact the effectiveness of print media, with less developed areas facing greater challenges. The marital status can influence access to agricultural information, with married individuals possibly facing more constraints due to additional family responsibilities (Adeogun and Akinbile, 2024) ^[2] and National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NAERLS), 2024) ^[24]. Therefore, constraints faced in using print media for agricultural information delivery, with inadequate finance, lack of awareness, and infrastructural deficiencies being the most significant barriers. Addressing these issues through increased funding, awareness campaigns, and infrastructural development could enhance the effectiveness of print media in agriculture.

Table 2: Constraints faced in using print media in agricultural information delivery and Sourcing among Extension Workers

Constraints	Mean	Std. Dev.
Inadequate finance	3.61*	0.50
farmers do not share problems with each other	2.48	1.01
Inadequate awareness about the use of print media	3.04*	0.74
Inadequate infrastructural facilities	3.21*	0.69
Government negative attitude towards it	2.89*	0.69
Not presented in the farmers dialect	3.14*	0.71
Inadequate co-operation from the farmers	2.18	1.02
Transportation problem	2.63*	1.11
The cultural practices of the farmers	2.74*	0.76
Development /civilization of the problem	2.63*	0.74
Inadequate access to farm input e.g fertilizers, seedlings e.t.c	2.54*	1.07
Farmers illiteracy/ poor educational background	2.36	1.06
Constraints due to marital status	3.46*	0.58
Distance/location problem	1.75	0.93
Problem due to scatter farmland	2.07	1.05
Inadequate power supply	2.11	1.17
Delay in accessing information	3.11*	0.69
Inadequate access to preferred information	3.11*	0.64

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

*Mean ≥ 2.5 = Serious constraints

3. Difference in perceived constraints in use of print media by the agricultural extension workers and farmers in information dissemination

Results in Table 3 present the t-test analysis showing the difference in the use of print media between agricultural extension workers and arable crop farmers. It was revealed

that the mean usage of print media among farmers was 29.37 while that of agricultural extension workers was 49.63. This indicates that extension workers used print media more frequently than farmers. Also, the t-statistic is -20.38 with 115 degrees of freedom, and the associated p-value is 0.000, which is highly significant at the 0.01 level. The large degree of freedom of 115, suggests a relatively large sample size which increases the reliability of the test and reduces the margin of errors. This strongly suggests that there is a significant difference in the mean usage of print media between farmers and extension workers. The mean difference of -320.26, indicates that extension workers use print media much more extensively than farmers.

The implication of this findings is that given the higher mean usage of print media among extension workers, it is evident that they are more likely to access and utilize printed materials. Therefore, extension services should consider developing more targeted print media content for extension workers, who can then relay this information to farmers through more accessible means. This corroborates the earlier findings of Oladele (2006) ^[25] and Aina (2007) ^[5], who at different times reported the significance of print media in information dissemination to farmers.

Table 3: Difference in mean of constraints to usage of print media among farmers and extension workers

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sig	t-stat	Df	Sig	Mean Diff
Farmers	29.37	7.53	0.000	-20.38**	115	0.000	-320.26
Extension	49.63	106.24					

Source: Computed from field Survey, 2026

**Sig. at 0.01 level of significance

Conclusion and Recommendations

Farmers extension workers with constraints such as inadequate finance, poor infrastructures, lack of awareness and illiteracy and were considered serious, there was significant mean difference in perception of constraints to print media utilization among extension workers and farmers for community development. Based on findings, the following recommendations were put forward:

1. increased awareness and education on print media use in dissemination and sourcing agricultural information among extension workers and farmers.
2. Enhance Financial Support for Farmers: Given that inadequate finance was identified as a significant barrier to the use of print media among farmers, it is crucial to enhance financial support mechanisms. This can be achieved through the provision of low-interest loans, grants, and subsidies targeted specifically at small-scale farmers. Financial institutions and government agencies should develop farmer-friendly financial products to enable them to invest in necessary resources such as seeds, equipment, and technology.

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