The Influence of Radio Agricultural Programmes on Farmers' Productivity in Benue State

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Abstract

This study assessed Radio Benue agricultural programmes and their influence on farmers' productivity in Benue State. The study used the survey research method and was anchored on the Diffusion of Innovations Theory. The questionnaire served as instrument for data collection. The population of this study was 413,160 registered farmers in Benue State. The sample of 384 was used for this study. The study found that Radio Benue agricultural programmes have addressed farmers' needs to an average extent. The study also found that the programmes have a positive influence on the productivity of farmers in the state as the programmes have provided farmers with information which enable them have access to better seedlings, and adopt the use of better storage facilities for their produce. The study concludes that Radio Benue Agricultural Programmes have influence on farmers' productivity in Benue State. The study recommends among others that, development information providers should always apply more than one channel in delivering information to the target farmers. This information should be provided in the right format and the right language especially where the mass media are used.

Keywords: Radio; Agriculture; Programmes, Farmers; Productivity

Introduction

The absence of a functional agricultural delivery system is a major constraint to agricultural development in Nigeria at large and Benue in particular. According to Youdeowei (2015) lack of access to relevant agricultural information to farmers in developing countries cuts across all sub sectors of agricultural production processes. Farmers need to be informed and educated about improved agricultural practices to enable them increase their productivity and income.

Radio agricultural programmes are deliberate and aimed at a specific audience irrespective of its source. Communication of an agricultural nature seeks to persuade, inform, educate, and demonstrate. It serves as a platform for interaction. According to Kuponiyi (2019) radio is mostly used for agricultural programmes because it is one of the broadcast medium which almost all experts identify to be the most appropriate for rural emancipation programmes. It beats distance, and this has immediate effects. As such, it has been identified as the only medium of mass communication the rural population is familiar with.

A thorough understanding of the communication process is absolutely essential for effective agricultural programmes dissemination. Nwanwene (2001) notes that the objective of agricultural programmes is to introduce farmers to modern means of farming, and to broaden countries' agricultural base and accelerate the rate of production to meet food needs as well as increase export.

One of these agricultural programmes that is produced and aired on radio Benue is '*Farming world*'. This programme brings various ways of producing crops and rearing of animals, ranging from poultry farms, aqua-culture (fish farming). Benue state of Nigeria has abundant agricultural land of which 3.8 million hectares is arable (Benue Agricultural and Rural Development Authority, 1999). The state is referred to as the food-basket of the Nation because of its endowed agricultural potentials but it is one of the poorest states in Nigeria. It is in the light of this that radio Benue was established in 1978 by the government of Benue state and empowered to disseminate information aimed at informing, educating and entertaining the people of the state. It was in attempt to achieve abortive objective in the area of agriculture that some agricultural programmes such as "profitable Agriculture" sponsored by Cooperative Extension Centre (CEC) of University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Nigeria and "*Farming World*" sponsored by Benue Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (BENARDA) were designed. These programmes are aired in both Idoma and Tiv languages.

Statement of the Research Problem

The Benue State Agricultural Development Authority (BANARDA) was launched in 1986 with the basic function to liaise with research institutions and universities to acquire technologies and hand them over to farmers in the state. This can only be through the process of communication. And the process of communication is complete when there is an effect by way of feedback. There is no doubt that some form of communication must be taking place between the agency and the farmers but the problem here is 'does it have any influence on the farmer's productivity? What communication channels are available and which ones are being used to disseminate farm innovation message to farmers? To what extent has agricultural radio programmes increase farmer's productivity in the state? This study therefore investigates the influence of agricultural radio programmes on the productivity of farmers in Benue State.

Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to investigate the influence of agricultural radio programmes on the productivity of farmers in Benue State. The study ported into the following objectives.

- i To investigate the agricultural programmes that Radio Benue airs;
- ii To examine the extent to which those agricultural programmes have addressed the needs of farmers in Benue State;
- iii To assess the impact of the programmes on the farmers' productivity;
- iv To investigate the factors that militate against the production of these programmes.

Research Questions

The following research questions are used as guild to this study.

- i What agricultural programmes does radio Benue disseminate?
- ii To what extent has these agricultural programmes address the agricultural needs of farmers in the state?
- iii What is the impact of agricultural radio programmes on productivity of farmers in the state?
- iv What factors militate against radio Benue's production of these agricultural programmes?

Scope of the Study

The research focuses on Radio Benue agricultural programmes and their influence on farmer's productivity in Benue state. The research also focuses on the relationship between the farmer and the mass media i.e the radio. It is for a time frame of six months. **Review of concepts**

Agricultural programmes

A programme, according to the American Heritage Dictionary of English Language, fourth edition, is a system of projects or services intended to meet a public need. Ajayi (2008) defined

agricultural programmes as a planned and systematic effort to modify or develop knowledge, skills or attitude through learning experience to achieve effective performance in an agricultural activity. The success of agricultural programmes in developing countries largely depends on the nature and extent of mass media used in mobilizing farmers towards agricultural development. Communication has been acknowledged for playing a prominent role in the success of agricultural production and adoption of innovations. The planners in developing countries realized that the development of agriculture could be hastened with the effective use of mass media.

The objective of agricultural programmes according to Buren (2000, p. 20) is to bring about policy intervention programmes such as:

- i. National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP)
- ii. Operation Feed the Nation (OFN)

Agriculture programmes are aired through the radio because it is cheap and easily affordable medium through which agricultural information is delivered to the farmers (Okwu, Kuku & Aba, 2007). Similarly, Okwu and Daudu (2011) asserts that agricultural radio programmes cover various aspects of agriculture including crop production, livestock, fisheries, as well as harvesting, storage, processing, marketing strategies and information about credit and loan. According to Israel and Wilson (2006), developing and understanding of the target audience and channel used by producers to obtain information is a pre-requisite for efficient agricultural programmes because programmes that go unheard cannot bring about change hence, radio is the most efficient and ideal channel for rural emancipation programme.

Farmers' productivity

Bentell (1983) defined farmer's productivity as the total output of an individual group or organization divided by the input needed by the individual, group or organization for the creation of outputs. In the light of this, farmer's productivity requires a proper knowledge and skills needed for the cultivation of crops in a farmland in order to boost productivity or output in a state.

Polak (2000) affirmed that the productivity of farmlands in small scale is the key to practical sustainable solution to the growing problem of food security in the world. The adoption of high yielding seeds and fertilizer combined with access to irrigation has tripled the global grain harvest in the past thirty (30) years. But the harvest of the micro farmers of the world has failed to keep up. The main constraint to tripling the harvest of small farmers like their larger neighbours is lack of access to affordable and divisible irrigation.

Farmers' productivity can be enhanced through different means. Shadara (1999) observed that education may enhance farm productivity directly through improving the quality, increasing the ability to adjust to disequilibria, and through its effect upon the propensity to successfully adapt to innovation.

Harper (1983) explained that the efficient production of crops requires an appreciation of the fact that a wild range of skills and aptitudes are involved. The use of simple terms such as farmers' productivity can over simplify the fact that anyone involved in growing crops requires an understanding of biological, chemical and physical science which can influence growth and productivity.

Wier (1999) also opined that education may have both cognitive and non-cognitive effects of farmers' productivity. Cognitive outputs of schooling include the transmission of specific information as well as the formation of general skills and proficiencies. Education also produces non-cognitive changes in attitudes, beliefs and habits. Increasing literacy and numeracy may help farmers to acquire and understand information and calculate appropriate input qualities in modernizing or rapidly changing environment. Improved attitudes, beliefs and habits may lead to greater willingness to accept risk, adopt innovations, save for investment and generally to embrace productive practices, thereby improving farmers' productivity.

Influence of radio on farmers' productivity

Advancement in science and technology created a demand for teaching and for learning. Famuyima (2012) maintained that radio programmes on agriculture are designed to develop farmers so as to make them better entrepreneurs and decision makers as well as help them organize themselves into effective associations and institutions. Therefore, in order to keep abreast with new innovations, there is need for new agricultural programmes to be aired to assist farmers understand new concepts and apply new knowledge in farming.

Chuan (1998) opined that a number of farmers within the state have full access to a radio and therefore listens to the agricultural programmes aired on it. He stated that 101 people representing 72% of the sampled population answered in affirmative that radio signals are received in their area. Among the various channels of communication, it was reported that the sampled population preferred radio because of its affordability, portability and effectiveness. Chia (2004) in his work on the effectiveness of broadcasting in the dissemination of agricultural information, found that farmers have access to radio and profitable agricultural programmes that educates and trains them than any other.

Before now, farmers mainly relied on the use of crude tools in carrying out their farming activities. The agricultural programmes aired on the radio have made it possible for farmers to learn and adopt modern farming techniques. Alibaygi and Zarafshani (2008) asserts that training enable people to obtain skills, knowledge and attitude to run progressive and flexible entrepreneur.

In his findings, Ayu (2002) stated that farmers in the state have full access to media information. It was also found out that people who do not own radio sets still listen to agricultural programmes on their friends' radio and through that of family members.

Khamak (2011) noted that the radio plays an important role in contributing to agricultural development and the farmers' level of productivity. The regular transmission of agricultural programmes on the radio gives farmers who have access to it valuable information on new farming methods. As the farmers receive useful information on the radio it gradually brings changes in their farming methods and begins applying new techniques. This act therefore brings about a boost in the farmers' level of productivity.

Farmers in time past depended on crude tools and ancient methods for their farming activities but not so in recent times. Nagazi and Hassan (2010) affirm that nowadays, access to radio and the agricultural programmes aired help in educating the local farmer. Access to education, information and communication play an important role in the individual and the social life as well as human development and inclination towards growth.

Otokpa (2007) is of the opinion that radio broadcasting to a large extent could cause change in not just the farming practices of a people but other facets of their lives. It was also discovered that the provision of information on the radio was not enough. It is in the light of this that Sharada (1999) observed that education may enhance farm productivity directly through improving quality, increasing the ability to adjust to disequilibria and through its effect upon the propensity to successfully adapt to new innovation. Educational agricultural programmes are most important to farm production in a rapidly changing technological or economic environment.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Diffusion of Innovations Theory. Diffusion of Innovations theory was propounded by Everett M. Rogers in 1962. The theory seeks to explain how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread through cultures (Robinson, 2009:1).

Everett Rogers, a professor of Rural Sociology published his work "Diffusion of Innovation". In this seminar piece, Rogers synthesized research from over 508 diffusion studies and produced a theory applied to the adoption of innovations among individuals and organization.

The stages of innovation adoption process include the following:

Knowledge: In this stage, the individual is first exposed to an innovation but lacks information about the innovation. During this stage of the process, the individual is not yet inspired to find

more information about the innovation.

Persuasion: This stage, the individual is interested in the innovation and actively seeks information/detail about the innovation.

Decision: In this stage, the individual takes the concept of the change and weighs the advantages and disadvantages of using the innovation and decides whether to adopt or reject the innovation, due to the individualistic nature of this stage to acquire empirical evidence.

Implementation: In this stage, the individual employs the innovation to a varying degree depending on the situation. During this stage, the individual determines the usefulness of the innovation and searches for further information about it.

Confirmation: In this stage, the individual finalizes his decision to continue using the innovation. This stage is both interpersonal (may cause cognitive dissonance) and interpersonal, confirmation the group has made the right decision.

Diffusion of innovations is a theory that seeks to explain how, why and what rate new ideas and technology spread through culture. He said diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels overtime among the members of a social system. The origins of the diffusion of innovations theory are varied and span multiple disciplines.

Diffusion occurs when the innovation is channeled to a place where it did not exist before. Diffusion research goes one step further than the two step flow theory. Due to the influence agricultural programmes have on farmers' productivity and output. Ryen and Gross (1940) studied the adoption of hybrid corn by farmers. It is as a result of this that the five adopters' categories come into play.

Innovators: These are the first group of farmers who adopted the innovation (in this case, it was the hybrid seeds).

Early Adopters: After the innovators, early adopters accepted the innovation and use it. This group of adopters is social; they serve as opinion leaders, as role model, is noted for the following characteristics: social system, opinion leaders, role model, and they are respected and successful.

Early Majority: - The early majorities adopt the innovation after the early adopters, these people have constant interaction with peers, serve as opinion leaders, and they are large in number and take a deliberate action.

Late Majority: - The late Majorities are very careful about the decision they make concerning the innovation. They are careful to adoption, they are always skeptical, cautious, they receive pressure from peers, economic resources and they are as large as the early majority.

Laggards: - These are the last group to adopt the innovation. This group is reluctant to accept the innovation. However, they finally adopt innovation after other people have accepted and implemented it. These people serve as opinion leaders, they are isolated, suspicious, they refer to the past, have lengthy decision process, and they have limited resources.

The theory is relevance to the study in that it prescribed the processes and stages it takes people in accepting and adopting new invention heard on radio despite the enormous power the radio has on the people in the society. The diffusion of innovations theory can help in understanding why some farmers adopt new agricultural technologies while others do not. By identifying the factors that influence the adoption process, farmers can be encouraged to adopt new technologies that can improve their productivity. Also, the diffusion of innovations theory can help in sharing knowledge about new agricultural technologies among farmers. It can help in identifying the most effective channels for sharing knowledge, such as farmer-to-farmer extension programs, and can also help in identifying the most effective message for promoting the adoption of new technologies, just as the diffusion of innovations theory can help in developing new agricultural technologies that are more likely to be adopted by farmers. By understanding the factors that influence the adoption process, innovators can design technologies that are more compatible with the needs and values of farmers. Overall, the diffusion of innovations theory can help in improving agricultural productivity by promoting the adoption of new technologies that are more efficient, sustainable, and profitable.

Method

The survey research design was adopted for this study. The rationale for the use of survey method is to elicit responses from the sampled respondents. To successfully carry out the survey, a questionnaire was designed and distributed to respondents through one on one contact by the researcher and four (4) research assistants. The survey design is adopted for this research because the issue under study seeks to obtain the feelings, attitudes, opinions and behaviours of farmers. Besides as Frey et al (1991, p. 179), note "survey research is particularly useful for gathering descriptive information about populations too large for every member to be studied".

The population of this study is that of farmers in the 23 Local Government Areas of Benue State which according to National Bureau of Statistics (2022) is 4,253,641. Thus, the 4,253,641 farmers form the population of this study.

The sample size for the study is statistically determined using the formula: $n = \underline{Z^2 Pq} n = 384$

$$ll = \frac{2}{d^2} ll = 1$$

Therefore the sample size for the study was statistically determined to be three hundred and eighty four (384).

To allocate the sample for this study, a multi stage sampling technique was employed. Firstly, Benue State was clustered into three agriculture regions. These groups include Benue North East, Benue North West; and Benue South respectively. Osuala (2007, p. 130) notes that this involves dividing the population into separate strata on a sample technique assumed to be closely associated with the variables under study. Asika (1991:47) states, "a researcher who may be interested in precision and thoroughness may find that none of the methods of probability or non-probability can alone, give him the exact sample size he requires". Having found that the distribution of the questionnaire is so complex, the researcher had to resort to sampling in stages.

Purposive sampling was used in selecting the local governments. One local government was selected from each zone bringing the total number of selected local governments to three (3). The local governments selected are as follows: Benue North East comprises of seven (7) local governments namely Katina-Ala, Ukum, Logo, Kwande, Ushongo, Vandeikya, Konshisha, consequently Kastina-Ala and was purposively selected. The researcher made the selection based on the fact that Kastina-Ala is the capital of the local government and densely populated with the target respondents, who are literate enough to understand core issues in the study.

Benue North West comprises of seven (7) local governments namely: Gboko, Makurdi, Buruku, Tarka, Guma, Gwer West and Gwer East. Purposive sampling technique was used to select Makurdi Local Government. The reason for this selection was based on the fact that the local government is the most populated in the zone, and it doubles as the state headquarter and have access to radio programmes.

Benue South comprises of nine (9) local governments which include: Otukpo, Oju, Obi, Ohimini, Okpokwu, Ado, Agatu, Apa, and Ogbadibo. Purposive sampling technique was used to select Otukpo Local Government Area. The essence of using the purposive sampling techniques in selecting the local government was to determine local governments that have the viability to the reception of radio programmes. Also, based on the fact that Otukpo is densely populated, being a cosmopolitan town in the geopolitical zone with radio station and has more civilized farmers who will provide useful information for the research. The selected local governments are tabulated below.

S/NO	Zone	Local Government Area	
1	Benue North East	Kastina-Ala	
2	Benue North West	Makurdi	
3	Benue South	Otukpo	

Table	3.1	Selected	local	government	council
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The second stage was the selection of the council wards from each of the selected local governments. Here, simple random sampling techniques was employed. Having this in mind therefore, four (4) council wards were selected in Otukpo, four (4) council wards in Kastina-Ala and four (4) council wards were selected in Makurdi Local Government Area. In each of the local governments selected, names of council wards were written and dropped into a basket and after shuffling, the research assistant was asked to pick for each local government. Council wards were selected through this process because the researcher was unable to cover all the council wards due to lack of time and resources to facilitate the process. This was repeatedly conducted according to the number of local government totaled at three. The selected council wards are tabulated below.

Zones	Local Government	Council Wards	
Benue North East:	Kastina-Ala	Yoyoyo, Ikurav I,Ikurav II, Utange	
Benue North West:	Makurdi	Agan, Mbalagh, Fiidi, Bar	
Benue South	Otukpo	Ewulo, Ogbogolo, Ugboju, Ogbojule	
0 1:110	2022		

Table 3.2 Selected c	council v	wards
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Source: Field Survey, 2023

The third stage was the selection of the villages in each council ward. Purposive sampling was used in selecting the villages; because the researcher aimed at selecting villages that form catchment area and have higher number of educated farmers in each selected councils. Four (4) villages were selected in each council ward in Kastina-Ala, Otukpo and Makurdi bringing the total number of selected villages to forty eight (48).

The fourth stage was the selection of households. Here the haphazard sampling technique was used to select 4 compounds from each of the selected villages. A total of four (4) houses were selected from each village bringing the total number of houses selected to one hundred and ninety two (192). Two respondents were purposively selected in each house bringing the total number of respondents to three hundred and eight four (384). This selection was based on their level of literacy and ability to understand Radio Benue agricultural programmes without interpretation. And judging by that it was not easy to identify each respondent by name because of the large number of household selected, more households were selected in the villages because there is higher probability of getting the real farmers; the number of household selected was based on the relative size of each local government.

The researcher employed the use of questionnaire to elicit the relevant information for the study.

This instrument contained eleven (11) questions to elicit information from respondents to help answer the questions raised in this work. A total of three hundred and eighty four (384) copies of questionnaire were administered through face to face contact with respondents. Six (6) days after administration, the questionnaire were collected, collated and analyzed.

The method for data analysis used for this study is the descriptive simple percentage method, which analyses and interprets the results presented in tabular form. The analysis was based on the responses to the questions in the questionnaire.

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Options	Frequency	Percentage
Farming Today	160	46
Farming World	173	49
Interviews and Discussions on agriculture	17	5
Total	350	100

Data Presentation Table 1: Agricultural programmes broadcast by Radio Benue

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Data in Table 1 sought to know the agricultural programmes respondents listened to on Radio Benue. In the Table, 173 (49%) of the respondents listened to Farming World, 160 (46%) of the respondents listened to Farming Today, while 17 (5%) of the respondents listened to interviews and discussions on agriculture. This implies that Radio Benue broadcasts agricultural programmes and respondents listened to the programmes, thus, understand the core issues in the study.

Table 2: Ways Radio Benue agricultural programmes have contributed to farmers' productivity in Benue State

Options	Frequency	Percentage
The programmes provide relevant information/		
education on new and improved seedlings	97	28
The programmes expose farmers to new		
improved farming techniques	94	27
The programmes provide farmers with knowledge		
on advanced farming equipment and tools	76	21
The programmes expose farmers to better storage		
facilities for their farm produce	83	24
Total	350	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Data in Table 2 sought to know the ways Radio Benue agricultural programmes have contributed to farmers' productivity in Benue State. In the Table, 28 (97%) of the respondents agreed that the programmes provide relevant information/education on new and improved seedlings, 94 (27%) of the respondents agreed that the programmes expose farmers to new improved farming techniques, 83 (24%) of the respondents agreed that the programmes expose farmers to better storage facilities for their farm produce, while 76 (21%) of the respondents agreed that the programmes provide farmers with knowledge on advanced farming equipment and tools. This implies that the programmes have contributed to farmers' productivity in Benue State.

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Very large extent	74	21
Large extent	101	29
Average	175	50
Difficult to say	-	-
Total	350	100

Table 3: The extent Radio Benue agricultural programmes have addressed farmers' needs

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Data in Table 3 sought to know the extent Radio Benue agricultural programmes have addressed farmers' needs in Benue State. In the Table, 175 (50%) of the respondents agreed that programmes have addressed farmers' need to an average extent, 101 (29%) of the respondents agreed that the programmes have addressed farmers to a large extent, while 74 (21%) of the respondents agreed that the programmes have addressed farmers needs to a very large extent. This means that the programmes have addressed farmers' need to an average extent.

Options	Frequency	Percentage
They provide farmers with information which		
enable them have access to better seedlings	101	29
The information then enabled farmers to have		
bumper harvest	83	24
The information from the programmes have		
brought about an increase in the number of		
farmers in Benue State	75	21
The information from the programmes have		
enabled farmers to adopt the use better storage		
facilities for their produce	91	26
Total	350	100

Table 4: Imp	act of agricultural	radio programmes	on productivit	y of farmers	in Benue Sta	te
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Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Data in Table 4 sought to know impact of Radio Benue agricultural programmes on productivity of farmers in Benue State. In the Table, 101 (29%) of the respondents agreed that the programmes provide farmers with information which enable them have access to better seedlings, 91 (26%) of the respondents agreed that the information from the programmes have enabled farmers to adopt the use better storage facilities for their produce, 83 (24%) of the respondents agreed that the information from the programmes have brought about an increase in the number of farmers in Benue State. This implies that the programmes have impact on farmers' productivity in Benue State.

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Challenge of acquiring ICTs	38	11
Lack of constant training required of a producer	55	16
Attitudes of radio listeners	30	9
Delay in the release of funds meant for production	60	17
Lack of finances to carry out detailed research	50	14
Un-cooperative attitudes of colleagues	18	5
Lack of programme sponsorship	35	10
Problem of programme evaluation	24	7
Obsolete production equipment	36	10
Others	4	1
Total	350	100

Table 5: Specific challenges faced by agricultural programme producers at Radio Benue

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 5 sought to know the specific challenges faced by radio agricultural programme producers at Radio Benue. The Table shows that 60 (17%) of the respondents agreed with lack of constant training required of a producer, 55 (16%) of the respondents agreed with delay in the release of funds meant for production, 50 (14%) of the respondents agreed with lack of finances to carry out detailed research, 38 (11%) of the respondents agreed with challenge of acquiring ICTs, 36 (10%) of the respondents agreed that they face the challenge of obsolete equipment, 35 (10%) of the respondents agreed with attitudes of radio listeners, 24 (7%) of the respondents agreed with un-cooperative attitudes of colleagues, while 4 (1%) of the respondents agreed with declining demand for radio offerings due to lifestyle changes. This means that radio producers at Radio Benue face many challenges.

Discussion of Findings

This study assessed the influence of radio agricultural programmes on farmers' productivity in Benue State. Specifically, the study sought to: To investigate the agricultural programmes that Radio Benue airs; examine the extent to which those agricultural programmes have addressed the needs of farmers in Benue State; assess the impact of the programmes on the farmers' productivity; investigate the factors that militate against the production of these programmes.

Findings on the types of agricultural programmes disseminated by Radio Benue show that the programmes are Farming World, Farming Today and interviews and discussions on agriculture. This is attested to by (49%) of the respondents who listened to Farming World, (46%) of the respondents who listened to Farming Today, and (5%) of the respondents who listened to interviews and discussions on agriculture.

These findings are supported by Chuan's (1998) study which found that a number of farmers within the state have full access to a radio and therefore listens to the agricultural programmes aired on it. According to the study, 101 people representing 72% of the sampled population answered in affirmative that radio signals are received in their area. Among the various channels of communication, it was reported that the sampled population preferred radio because of its affordability, portability and effectiveness.

To find out the extent Radio Benue agricultural programmes have addressed the agricultural needs of farmers in the state, findings show that the programmes have addressed farmers' needs to an average extent. This is supported by (50%) of the respondents who agreed that the programmes have addressed farmers' need to an average extent, (29%) of the respondents who agreed that the programmes have addressed farmers' needs to a large extent, and (21%) of the respondents who agreed that the programmes have addressed farmers have addressed farmers' needs to a large extent, and (21%) of the respondents who agreed that the programmes have addressed farmers needs to a very large extent.

These findings corroborates those of Otokpa's (2007) study which found that radio broadcasting to a large extent has cause change in not just the farming practices of a people but other facets of their lives. This is also supported by Sharada's (1999) study which found that radio enhance farm productivity directly through improving quality, increasing the ability to adjust to disequilibria and through its effect upon the propensity to successfully adapt to new innovation. Educational agricultural programmes are most important to farm production in a rapidly changing technological or economic environment.

To identify the impact of agricultural radio programmes on productivity of farmers in the state, findings show that the programmes have a positive impact on the productivity of farmers in the state. This supported by (29%) of the respondents who agreed that the programmes provide farmers with information which enable them have access to better seedlings, (26%) of the respondents who agreed that the information from the programmes have enabled farmers to adopt the use better storage facilities for their produce, (24%) of the respondents who agreed that the information enabled farmers to have bumper harvest, and (21%) of the respondents who agreed that the information from the programmes have brought about an increase in the number of farmers in Benue State.

This is also attested to by Khamak's (2011) study which noted that radio plays an important role in contributing to agricultural development and the farmers' level of productivity. According to the study, the regular transmission of agricultural programmes on the radio gives farmers who have access to it valuable information on new farming methods. As the farmers receive useful information on the radio it gradually brings changes in their farming methods and begins applying new techniques. This act therefore brings about a boost in the farmers' level of productivity.

To identify the factors militate against Radio Benue's production of agricultural programmes, findings show that the factors militate against Radio Benue's production of agricultural programmes are: lack of constant training required of a producer; delay in the release of funds meant for production; lack of finances to carry out detailed research; challenge of acquiring ICTs; challenge of obsolete equipment; lack of sponsorship of programmes; attitudes of radio listeners; problem of programme evaluation; un-cooperative attitudes of colleagues; and declining

demand for radio offerings due to lifestyle changes. This corroborated by (17%) of the respondents who agreed with lack of constant training required of a producer, (16%) of the respondents who agreed with delay in the release of funds meant for production, (14%) of the respondents who agreed with lack of finances to carry out detailed research, (11%) of the respondents who agreed with challenge of acquiring ICTs, (10%) of the respondents who agreed that they face the challenge of obsolete equipment, (10%) of the respondents who agreed with lack of sponsorship of programmes, (9%) of the respondents who agreed with attitudes of radio listeners, (7%) of the respondents who agreed with un-cooperative attitudes of colleagues, and (1%) of the respondents who agreed with declining demand for radio offerings due to lifestyle changes.

This is supported by Atero's (2014) study which found that producers at Radio Benue are faced with challenges which include: declining demand for radio offerings due to lifestyle changes; challenge of acquiring ICTs; lack of constant training required of a radio producer; attitudes of radio listeners; delay in the release of funds meant for production; lack of finances to carry out detailed research; uncooperative attitudes of colleagues; lack of programme sponsorship; problem of programme evaluation; and obsolete productive equipment.

Conclusion

The importance of radio agricultural programmes in influencing farmers' productivity in Benue State cannot be over-emphasized. This study therefore concludes that Radio Benue Agricultural Programmes have minimal influence on farmers' productivity in Benue State. This may be as a result of the many factors militating against Radio Benue's production of agricultural programmes, such as lack of constant training required of a producer; delay in the release of funds meant for production; lack of finances to carry out detailed research; challenge of acquiring ICTs; challenge of obsolete equipment; lack of sponsorship of programmes; attitudes of radio listeners; problem of programme evaluation; un-cooperative attitudes of colleagues; and declining demand for radio offerings due to lifestyle changes.

Recommendations

The recommendations this study makes result from the evidence in the findings and other empirical studies reviewed in this study which amply demonstrate the importance of radio agricultural programmes in influencing farmers' agricultural productivity. These agricultural programmes will not only help farmers in increasing their yield but will further enhance their production output. Considering the importance of radio agricultural programmes is to farmers, this study therefore recommends that:

- i. Development information providers should always apply more than one channel in delivering information to the target farmers. This information should be provided in the right format and the right language especially where the mass media are used.
- ii. More efforts should be geared towards information dissemination to farmers especially on fertilizers availability, cost, procurement and methods of application as it will be of immense benefits to the farmers and as such should be taken serious by all stakeholders in the agricultural business.
- iii. Interpersonal sources should also be employed because they have been found to be more effective as they allow much interaction with the information users.
- iv. Efforts should be made to ensure that broadcast times on radio are appropriate and the area of coverage should be as wide as possible. Similarly, the time of broadcast, format and the language used should be conversant with the people.

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