

**MASS MEDIA AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT: PERCEPTION OF
YOUTH IN UGHELLI SOUTH L.G.A. OF DELTA STATE.**

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Abstract

*Mass media are crucial to the development of modern society. They communicate the relevant information that engenders holistic development which includes agricultural development. Nigeria is facing hardship because of low price of crude oil which is the main stay of its economy. The need to diversify the economy using agriculture has become a necessity. This problem necessitated this study: “**Mass Media and Agricultural Development: Perception of Youth Farmers in Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta State**”. The study is anchored on both Development Media and Agenda Setting Theories. Using multistage and purposive sampling techniques, a sample of 384 respondents was selected from the population of study and questionnaire used as instrument to collect data. The study found that youth farmers of Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta state perceive that the mass media have not done enough to develop agriculture in the area. The study also found that youth farmers of Ughelli South Local Government Area have roles to play in developing agriculture in the area. The study therefore recommends that the mass media, through various programming, should give adequate attention to agricultural activities of Ughelli South Local Government Area in addition to setting up of a community radio in the area to meet the agricultural information needs of the people of the Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta state.*

Keywords: Mass Media; Agricultural Development; Youth Farmers; Communication; Agenda Setting

Introduction

The mass media are the modern media of communication that make possible the sharing of ideas, information, and symbols from source to a heterogeneous audience at the same time. Information is essential in human communication and development, as the lack of it leads to information gap, chaos, and underdevelopment. Mass media provide information to their audience which helps to better their lives. Mass media are also necessary tools for information dissemination in actualizing agricultural development. Ekwueme and Akpan (2011) assert that mass media will doubtlessly be of immense benefit to the rural people who are mostly peasant farmers. They further argue that mass media could be used to teach rural farmers how to obtain modern farming techniques which includes improved species and extension services. They contend that mass media will not only assist rural farmers in obtaining the above information, but they will also educate the farmers on how to use these new and better species and tools.

In the same vein, Ariyo, Ariyo, Okelola, Aasa, Awotide, Aaron and Oni (2013) state that information and communication are essential ingredients for effective transfer of technologies that are designed to boost agricultural production. To them, mass media are useful sources of disseminating agricultural information to farmers. They also state that mass media constitute methods of notifying farmers of new development and emergencies. To them, information is key to the success of the operation and management process of agricultural activities (Ariyo et al, 2013). In like manner, Lwanga (2010) opines that the mass media are important in providing information or enabling members of a community to make

informed decisions regarding their farming activities, especially in rural areas of developing countries.

Agriculture is an important sector of any nation and Nigeria is not an exemption. It guarantees both present and future food security, provides employment, and generates foreign exchange through exportation of agricultural produce and their by-products. World Bank Report (2008) states that agriculture remains fundamental to poverty reduction and economic growth in the 21st century. The World Bank Report further states that 75% of the world's poor are from rural areas and most are involved in farming, an activity which requires sustenance especially by the youths who are leaders of tomorrow. Afande, Maina and Maina (2015) contend that experts have identified challenges facing agriculture on the African continent, which includes Nigeria. These challenges are lack of market access, low productivity, adoption of crude farming methods, climate change, low fertilizer usage, inadequate storage and processing facilities which is the most crucial.

Chukwu (2015) posits that the benefits of development communication programmes and policies in agricultural development in Nigeria are enormous. She further argues that television and radio programmes can only be successful if they are professionally designed, packaged and executed by media experts and communication specialists. These programmes should attract governments' attention to provide rural farmers with credit facilities, markets, and other resources. With the above, there will be better rural development and by extension national development. Egbule (2009) contends that the mass media have performed poorly in disseminating the requisite agricultural information to farmers. But the effective communication of new research findings and technologies in agriculture to rural farmers has remained a promising strategy for increasing agricultural development.

The need to return to agriculture in Nigeria is receiving urgent attention. The continuous fluctuating and low price of crude oil, the persistent rise in food prices and the present economic situation have increased the call to go back to agriculture. However, it is sad that despite the promises by governments at various levels to return to agriculture, investments in the sector are also not seen as a major priority. Also, the role of the mass media as active players in agricultural development and indeed rural development is both underestimated and under-utilized. Oluchukwu (2004) says that reporting agriculture is largely restricted to natural disasters, food shortages and rising food prices. Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), a Netherland based inter-continental institution, whose main focus is to attain 'sustainable food security' through information and development, stressed the role of the mass media in agricultural and rural development in its 2009 annual seminar. With over 150 journalists, communication specialists and development practitioners in attendance in Brussel, Germany, the gathering discussed the constraints, challenges and opportunities for the mass media to promote more effective agricultural development. Oluchukwu (2004) speaking further in the seminar contended that the idea is to pass information or communication to a very large number of people living in different locations at the same time. The distances between the various people are never any barrier; neither do they affect the content and structure of the message. Rural development receives

poor media coverage. Many reporters consider the issue to be of little interest and therefore relegate items on them to the furthest corner of the news. The reason is partly due to inadequate training facilities for agricultural journalism since collecting and diffusing this kind of information require experience and a variety of skills. Knowledge of agronomy, economics, nutrition and the environment are pre-requisites for journalists who want to understand agricultural issues. Afande et al (2015) added that the non-engagement of youths in agriculture aggravated the woes of agriculture on the African continent, of which Nigeria is a victim. They lamented that African farmers are ageing and the non-engagement of youths in agriculture has dire consequences, such as food insecurity and non-transference of necessary agricultural knowledge, skills, expertise and techniques.

Nigeria before the discovery of crude oil in commercial quantities was a successful agrarian nation. It was able to feed itself and export the excess to needy countries. Agriculture then was well organized that each region was known for its unique agricultural product of comparative advantage. The North was known for groundnut, the East was known for palm oil, the West was known for cocoa, the Mid-West was known for rubber, among others. All of these changed with the discovery and exportation of crude oil, also known as, *the black gold*. The Nigerian mass media also shifted attention of reportage from agriculture to crude oil. The slogan became “oil money” and no longer “farm money”. That became the bane of the nation’s economy and had remained so. The worse now is the low price of crude oil at the international market. Experts and patriots have called for a return to Nigeria’s first love, which is agriculture, as it does not fail. At the 2016 Cabinet Retreat on the economy at the Presidential Villa in Abuja, President Muhammadu Buhari said “out-of-the-box thinking” was what the country needs at the moment. This means that Nigeria and Nigerians should stop the over-dependence on crude oil. Also corroborating the president’s speech, Mailafia Obadiah, one of the speakers at the 2016 Cabinet Retreat suggested that “agro-based mass industrialization strategy” is a panacea to weaning Nigeria’s economy out of the current oil dependence and its attendant quagmire. The fallout of the Cabinet Retreat is a pointer that the way to go for the nation now is agriculture.

Statement of the Problem

Several studies have been carried out on mass media and agricultural development. Ali (2011) argued that the mass media played important role in information delivery to vegetable growers farming community in Uttar Pradesh region in India. Tadesse (2008) stated that farmers in Amhara Region of Ethiopia received agricultural information from the mass media, which brought about the needed behavioural change, leading to agricultural development in that area. Chukwu (2015) asserted that most rural agriculturists in South-Eastern Nigeria do not access Nigerian Television Authority’s (NTA) stations and programmes. Ariyo, Ariyo, Okelola, Aasa, Awotide, Aaron (2013) agreed that the mass media were effective in the dissemination of agricultural technologies in Kaduna North Local Government Area of Kaduna state. Okwu, Kuku and Aba (2007) contend that Benue farmers have benefited from agricultural programmes aired on Radio Benue in Benue state. However, no study has been carried out on mass media and agricultural development in Ughelli South

Local Government Area of Delta state. Hence, this research which will generally look at perception of youth farmers of Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta state on mass media and agricultural development. The study will equally find out whether the mass media have helped in developing agriculture in the area. Specifically, this study is driven by three objectives. Firstly, the study will find out the perception of the youth farmers of Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta state on mass media and agricultural development. Secondly, the study will ascertain whether the youth farmers of Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta state have any role to play in the agricultural development of the area. Lastly, the research will identify the most suitable mass medium for agricultural development in Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta State.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

1. What is the perception of the youth of Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta state on mass media and agricultural development?
2. Is there any role the youth of Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta State can play in agricultural development of the area?
3. Which is the most suitable mass medium for agricultural development in Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta State?

In the light of the above, this study hypothesizes thus:

Hi: There is relationship between mass media and agricultural development in Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta State.

Ho: There is no relationship between mass media and agricultural development in Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta State.

Significance of the Study

Findings from this study will point to the perception of youth on mass media and agricultural development in the study area. This will assist governments at all levels and other development partners to plan mass media strategy in agricultural development in the study area especially at this period of the call to diversify the nation's economy through agriculture. Secondly, findings from the study will also reveal the role rural youth can play to achieve agricultural development in the study area. This will assist in giving rural youth the right motivation to go into agriculture. Thirdly, findings from the study will yet reveal the most effective mass medium for agricultural development in the study area. This will be useful to mass media stakeholders in the journey towards diversification of the Nigerian economy through agriculture. Fourthly and lastly, findings from this study will add to existing literature on mass media and agricultural development, provoking further researches into its perspectives, themes, findings and limitations.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review of Youth

Youths are very important component of any society. This is because of their energy, passion, zeal and innovation. The Nigerian National Youth Development Policy (2007) classifies youth as young persons of ages 18 to 35 who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN). This group is the most active but volatile and vulnerable segment of the Nigerian population. Afande, Maina and Maina (2015) defined youth as “a period of adolescence during which young people make transition for childhood to adulthood, becoming sexually mature and experience increasing social and economic autonomy”. Thorsen (2007) as cited in Afande, Maina and Maina (2015) sees youth “as a social category that is historically and culturally constructed. As such, Afande et al (2015) further believe that there may be social or cultural events that are understood to define the transition from childhood to youth hood and then to adulthood. They defined youth with reference to age brackets such as ages 15 to 29 in Ethiopia; ages 15 to 35 in Ghana; ages 15 to 35 in Kenya; ages 14 to 25 in Malawi; and ages 15 to 35 in Senegal.

In this study, youth are categorised as persons between ages 15 and 35 years old. This class of citizens is very vital because of their strength, passion, zeal and inquisitiveness. The Nigerian population is dominated by youth and these youths reside more in rural areas. National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in Nigeria revealed that the rate of youth unemployment is as much half of the country’s 167 million population. Adebawale (2015) asserts that youth are the greatest assets any nation can have and therefore need to be developed and empowered. The National Youth Development Policy (2001) opines that the youth are the foundation of a society; their energies, inventiveness, character and orientation define pattern of development and security of a nation. Anasi (2010) sees the youth as most volatile and yet the most vulnerable segment of the population in terms of socio-economic, emotional and other characteristics. Given the huge population of youth, their predominantly rural location and the fact that most of them are either unemployed or underemployed, the necessity of sustainably engaging them in agriculture becomes an imperative (Afande et al, 2015). This is due to the fact that agriculture will meaningfully employ them, ensure food security for the nation, reduce the current inflation on food commodities, and diversify the nation’s economy from crude oil which has been suffering low pricing at the international market.

Afande et al (2015) emphasized that the youth are not called to go back to farming methods of their parents and their forebears which produces small yield. The emphasis is on modern farming methods, harnessing the agricultural value chains, making farming a real business. This emphasis is multi-dimensional which covers the whole plethora of agribusiness from farm inputs to production and finally to consumption. This new approach to agriculture by the youth has given rise to the term “agropreneurship”, which is a hybrid term for agriculture and entrepreneurship covering the innovation, creativity, residence and market-orientation in the concept of entrepreneurship.

Mass Media and Agricultural Development

Ali (2013) in his study “Adoption of Mass Media Information for Decision-Making among Vegetable Growers in Uttar Pradesh”, revealed that the mass media played important role in information delivery to the vegetable farming community in Uttar Pradesh, a Northern Region of India. The study further revealed that information from the mass media helped vegetable farmers in Uttar Pradesh in decision-making on best practices to increase agricultural production. The study also found out that radio is the most effective mass medium for the dissemination of modern agricultural technology in Uttar Pradesh region of India. The study identified factors militating against the mass media and agricultural development in the study area as the one-way communication of the mass media as well as the lack of customization of mass media information to individual farmer’s requirement. The research thereafter recommended the training of agricultural programme presenters and extension workers to be able to create the right programmes for the community of vegetable growers in Uttar Pradesh region in India.

Tadesse (2008) in his research “Access and Utilization of Agricultural Information by Resettler Farming Households: The Case of Metema Woreda, North Gondar, Ethiopia”, found that more of the Resettler Farming Households in Metema Woreda, North Gondar in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia, received agricultural information from the mass media. This exposure created the required awareness which brought about behavioural change. The study further revealed that the knowledge gained via the mass media improved farmers’ skills and encouraged the utilization of the information which resulted in agricultural development in the region. The study yet found that the agricultural information received via the mass media in that region of Ethiopia was gender biased because male farmers have more access than their female counterparts. The research thereafter recommended among others that agricultural information should be available and accessible equally to both male and female farmers in Metema Woreda, North Gondar in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia.

Karembu, Nguthi Nabusoba, Oriare, Nyangaga, Schaeffer and Myers (2011) in their work “Dimensions of Radio Coverage and Content Generation of Agricultural Biotechnology News in Kenya”, revealed that the mass media in Kenya did not adequately cover programmes of agricultural biotechnology. The inadequate mass media coverage resulted in inappropriate public intervention and participation in the biotechnology development process in Kenya. The minimal mass media coverage was demonstrated by the inadequate treatment given to three of the four variables of effective news reporting, such as number of items, space allocation, and placement of story, used in the study. The study then recommended that steps should be taken to improve both the quantity and quality of coverage of biotechnology issues in Kenya by improving relationship between journalists and scientists.

Ariyo, Ariyo, Okelola, Aasa, Awotide, Aaron and Oni (2013) in their study “Assessment of the Role of the Mass Media in the Dissemination of Agricultural Technologies among Farmers in Kaduna North Local Government Area of Kaduna state, Nigeria”, found out that the mass media are effectively disseminating agricultural

technologies in the study area. Their study also revealed that radio is the most effective mass medium for the dissemination of agricultural technologies to farmers in Kaduna North Local Government Area of Kaduna state. The study yet revealed impediments to the effective utilisation of the mass media for agricultural development which are illiteracy, low income level, lack of credit facilities and erratic power supply. The study thereafter recommended the strengthening of the use of radio and television for the propagation of agricultural technologies as well as the use of competent presenters who are knowledgeable in agricultural programmes.

Chukwu (2015) in her research “The Dynamics of Communication in Agricultural Development: The Case of the South-Eastern States of Nigeria”, found out that most rural agriculturists do not have access to Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) stations and programmes. The study also found out that subsistent farmers in South-Eastern states of Nigeria were at the lowest rung of development and so were cut off from modern information that could better their agricultural yields. The study as well adduced the factors that caused the lack of access to NTA, as poverty and lack of rural infrastructures. The researcher then recommended the upgrade of NTA to be responsive and grassroot-oriented by using local content features like language, time, message and scene to transmit agricultural development programmes in the study area. The researcher also recommended that government should be proactive in the development of infrastructural facilities like electricity in villages, good road networks, as well as the establishment of weekend viewing centres for watching agricultural development news, commentaries and programmes transmitted in the form of drama and discussion.

Okwu, Kuku and Aba (2007) in their work “An Assessment of Use of Radio in Agricultural Information Dissemination: A Case Study of Radio Benue in Nigeria”, revealed that Benue farmers have benefited from agricultural programmes aired on Radio Benue in Benue state. The study also revealed that Benue farmers admitted that agricultural programmes of Radio Benue have helped in their farm practice. Benue farmers identified non possession of radio sets and unsuitable time of programme broadcast as constraints to agricultural development in their area. The study thereafter recommended the sustenance of the agricultural programmes of Radio Benue but with modifications in time of presentation and encouragement of group listenership.

Mgbakor, Iyobor and Okezie (2013) in their study “Contributions of Mass Media to the Development of Agricultural Extension in Ika North East L.G.A. of Delta State”, revealed that the mass media are useful to farmers in Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta state in providing relevant agricultural information to them. The study also showed that radio is the most available mass medium to farmers in the study area. It also suggested that lack of electricity, language and radio frequency are the problems hindering agricultural development through the mass media in Ika North East L.G.A. of Delta state. The study then recommended that government should provide rural infrastructures in Ika North East L.G.A. of Delta state. Also, the mass media should consider the peculiarity of farmers of Ika North East L.G.A. of Delta state in programme creation and presentation.

Youth's Perception of/Participation in Agriculture

Tahir, Muhammed, Shahbaz, Muhammed, Abdual, Irfanm, Muhammed and Wasif (2011) in their study “Role of Rural Youth in Agricultural and Rural Development: A Self Perceived Case Study of Okara district, Punjab, Pakistan”, indicated that majority of the rural youths (35%) in Okara district of Punjab in Pakistan are engaged in farming and farm labour, thus engaging extensively in agriculture leading to development of their rural community. Another 35% representing the majority of the respondents in the study area perceive that the Pakistani government is not doing enough to develop agriculture. They therefore want the government to develop the agricultural industry in villages for better employment chances. The study then recommended that since youth are great national assets, the Pakistani government should make deliberate efforts to initiate various agricultural programmes for the betterment of rural youth in order to stop rural-urban migration in Pakistan.

Afande, Maina and Maina (2015) in their research “Youth Engagement in Agriculture in Kenya: Challenges and Prospects”, showed that only a few rural youths in the Busia region of Kenya engage in agriculture, even when they know that they can play vital role in agricultural development of the region. This is because majority of the Busia rural youths perceive agriculture as a poor man's job and thus, activity meant for the illiterates. The study also showed that the few rural youths who engaged in agricultural activities was by co-operation with extension service through supply of agricultural labour, donation of agricultural materials, initiating agricultural projects, giving financial supports as well as use of initiative to gain outside help. The study further showed the constraints to participation in agriculture by youths of Busia region, which are inadequate publicity, inadequate finance, poor government commitment and lack of technical skills among others. The study thereafter recommended that for youth to be gainfully employed in the agricultural sector, they should be targeted depending on their aspirations and resource accessibility. Another recommendation was that relevant policy and investment intervention be focused explicitly on rural youth and on youth employment opportunities in agriculture and agrobusiness sectors.

Future Agriculture Consortium (2011) in its study “Future Farmers: Exploring Youth Aspirations of African Agriculture”, as cited in Afande, Maina and Maina (2015), revealed that attitude of Kenya rural youths towards agriculture is negative. In fact, they are uninterested in agriculture as they consider it as not delivering the type of lifestyle and status that young people desire. They perceive agriculture as unable to give the 21st century life of pride and self-respect. Kenyan youths see agriculture as a poor person's activity and therefore do not want to go into it. Rather, Kenya rural youths prefer industrial and services job, especially in cities, thus, resulting in rural-urban migration. They also have doubt that agriculture can be a lifelong career choice which is able to provide their needs and wants. Thus, they stay aloof and are not involved even when they are well poised by education and

experience to make a living out of it. To them, agriculture is a back-breaking, low input, 365 days a year job for little or low return.

Ahaibwe, Mbowa and Lwanga (2013) in their work “Youth Engagement in Agriculture in Uganda: Challenges and Prospects”, found out that 66.60% of Uganda rural youth engage in agriculture but unfortunately concentrated more on the production stage of the agricultural chain. The research also revealed that Ugandan rural youth farmers exhibit high inclination to take up high value agricultural ventures like horticulture, which explains the need to refocus their energies in enterprises of their interest, thus making them take agriculture as business.

Naamwintome and Bagson (2013) in their study “Youth in Agriculture: Prospects and Challenges in the Sissala Area of Ghana”, revealed that youth in Sissala Area comprising Sissala East and Sissala West districts of Ghana are moving away from farming because of their perception on agriculture in the area. They feel that they have limited control over the farming resources and products, even though farming is profitable in Sissala area of Ghana. The study thereafter recommended that an enabling environment be created for youth of Sissala area of Ghana to participate in agriculture. For instance, resources such as capital and land as well as products from farming should be controlled by the youth since that will motivate and attract them to participate in farming,

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on both Development Media and Agenda Setting theories.

Development Media Theory: This theory seeks to unravel the behaviour of the press in a developing or third world country. McQuail (1987), as cited in Folarin (2002) summarised the tenets of the theory thus:

- i. Media must accept and carry out positive development task in line with nationally established policy.
- ii. Freedom of the media should be open to economic priorities and development needs of the society.
- iii. Media should give priority in their content to national culture and language(s).
- iv. Media should give priority in news and information to links with other developing countries which are close geographically, culturally or politically.
- v. Journalists and other media workers have responsibilities as well as freedom in their information gathering and dissemination tasks.
- vi. In the interest of development ends, the state has a right to intervene in, or restrict media operation; and devices of censorship, subsidy and direct control can be justified.

In recapping the tenets, Folarin (2002) concluded that development media theory has already provided a bearing for the concepts of development communication and

development journalism which is using journalism or print media to bring about development in the “developing or third world”.

Agenda Setting Theory: This theory was propounded by Donald Shaw and Maxwell McCombs who posited that the media establish salient issues or images in the minds of the public. Explaining further, Littlejohn and Foss (2008) said the agenda-setting function of the media is a three-part process. Firstly, the priority of issues to be discussed in the media or media agenda must be set. Secondly, the media agenda in some way affect or interact with what the public think, creating the public agenda. Thirdly and finally, the public agenda affect or interact in some way with what policy makers consider important, called the policy agenda. In the theory’s simplest and most direct version, the media agenda affect the public agenda and the public agenda affect the policy agenda.

Relating these theories to the study, the Nigerian mass media ought to engender development in the course of performing their functions. They as well need to disseminate the rightful and needed information which will bring about agricultural development. Also, the Nigerian mass media are expected to set the agenda for agricultural discourse and development, thus, diversifying the nation’s economy, especially in this hard time of low crude oil price at the international market.

Research Method

The study adopted survey research method. The study used multi-stage and purposive sampling methods. The first stage of the sampling method was identifying residents of the selected rural communities in Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta state. The second and next stage was identifying farmers from among the residents of the study area. The third and final stage was identifying youth farmers from among the identified farmers in the study area who are the population of the study. It was from the youth farming population that the sample size was drawn. The study chose the following rural communities in Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta state: Imode, Eyara, Owhawha, Oginibo, and Okwagbe. These rural communities were purposively selected because they are a cluster of rural agrarian communities in the Jeremi axis of Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta state. Though the selected communities are predominantly agrarian, activities such as trading, teaching and others also take place there minimally. According to the 2006 national population census, the population of Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta state is 212,638. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) through its “2012 National Baseline Youth Survey Report” put the population of the youth at 39% of the total population. From the above, the population of youth in Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta State is 82,929 which is the population of the study. Using the Australian calculator, the sample size of the study was 384. The study as well used the 5-point Likert scale to draw up the questionnaire administered on respondents of the study.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Demographics of the Respondents who are Youth Farmers

From the 384 copies of questionnaire administered, 380 were returned and found usable for the study. Out of this figure, 151 respondents representing 39.7% are males while the remaining 229 respondents representing 60.3% are females. This showed that females are more engaged in agriculture than males in Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta state.

Data also revealed the age brackets of the respondents. Youth farmers within ages 26-30 engage most in agriculture in Ughelli South Local Government Area with 135 representing 35.5%. This was followed by those within ages 21-25 who are 128 representing 33.7%. Youth farmers within ages 15-20 are the least who engage in agriculture with 51 respondents representing 13.4%.

On the educational status, data showed that 169 respondents representing 44.5% have no formal education meaning they are illiterates; 98 respondents representing 25.8% have only primary education; while 83 respondents representing 21.8% have up to secondary education. Mere 30 respondents representing 7.9% have higher education. This means that most of the respondents (youth farmers) in Ughelli South Local Government Area are illiterates. This may be the reason for labeling agriculture as poor man's affairs or illiterate's job.

Table 1: Respondents' (Youth Farmers) Responses to Statements on a 5-point Likert Scale

S/N	Statements/items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1	Mass Media Have Role to Play in Agricultural Development in Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta State.	100 (26.3%)	128 (33.7%)	38 (10.0%)	60 (15.8%)	54 (14.2%)	380 (100%)
2	Mass Media Have Contributed to Agricultural Development in Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta State.	32 (8.4%)	49 (12.9%)	25 (6.6%)	106 (27.9%)	168 (44.2%)	380 (100%)

3	Youth Have Role to Play in Agricultural Development in Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta State.	134 (35.3%)	116 (30.5%)	51 (13.4%)	40 (10.5%)	39 (10.3%)	380 (100%)
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Source: Field Work, 2018.

Data from Table 1 revealed responses from the youth farmers of Ughelli South Local Government Area on various issues. On the statement of the mass media having role to play in agricultural development in Ughelli South L.G.A., 100 youth farmers representing 26.3% strongly agreed to the statement; 128 respondents representing 33.7% agreed to the statement; 38 respondents representing 10.0% were neutral to the statement; 60 respondents representing 15.8% disagreed to the statement; while 54 respondents representing 14.2% strongly disagreed to the statement. This means that youth farmers in Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta state perceive that the mass media have role to play in agricultural development of the local government area.

Further inquiry on contributions of the mass media towards agricultural development in the study area revealed that 32 youth farmers representing 8.4% strongly agreed to the statement; 49 youth farmers representing 12.9% agreed to the statement; while 25 youth farmers representing 6.6% were neutral on the issue; 106 youth farmers representing 27.9% disagreed to the statement; and another 168 youth farmers strongly disagreed to the statement. Aggregately, 274 youth farmers representing 72.1% have negative perception of the mass media's contribution towards agricultural development in Ughelli South L.G.A. This means that most youth farmers in the study area perceived that the mass media have not contributed to the development of agriculture in the local government area.

Inquiry into whether youths of Ughelli South L.G.A. have role to play towards agricultural development in the locality revealed that 134 youth farmers representing 35.3% strongly agreed to the statement; 116 youth farmers representing 30.5% agreed that they have roles to play towards agricultural development of the area; 51 youth farmers representing 13.4% were neutral on the issue; 40 youth farmers representing 10.5% disagreed with the statement; while 39 youth farmers representing 10.3% strongly disagreed with the statement. Aggregately, 250 youth farmers representing 65.8% agreed that they have roles to play in agricultural development of Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta state.

S/N	Roles of Mass Media in Agricultural Development	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Mobilize Youth back to farming	105	27.6
2	Disseminate Agric. Information	76	20.0
3	Inform the Youth of Good Agric. Programme(s)/Plan	101	26.6
4	Pass Agric. Needs of the Youth to	98	25.8

	Government/Other Partners		
	Total	380	100

Table 2: Role of Mass Media in the Development of Agriculture in Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta state.

Source: Field Work, 2018.

Data from Table 2 above revealed the different roles the mass media can play towards agricultural development in Ughelli South L.G.A. 105 youth farmers representing 27.6% said that the mass media can mobilize youth of Ughelli South L.G.A. back to farming; 76 youth farmers representing 20.0% said the mass media can disseminate the right agricultural information to them; 101 youth farmers representing 26.6% said the mass media can inform them of agricultural programmes and plans of government and other development partners; while 98 youth farmers said the mass media can pass their agricultural needs to government and other partners for intervention.

Table 3: Roles of Youth Farmers in the Development of Agriculture in Ughelli South L.G.A.

S/N	Roles Youth Farmers Can Play to Develop Agriculture in the Area	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Engage in Crop Production	83	21.8
2	Engage in Animal Husbandry	69	18.2
3	Engage in Agric. Extension Service	52	13.7
4	Form Agricultural Club	65	17.1
5	Form Agricultural Co-operative Society	111	29.2
	Total	380	100

Source: Field Work, 2018.

Data from Table 3 revealed the specific roles that youth farmers in Ughelli South L.G.A. can play in agricultural development. 83 respondents representing 21.8% said they can engage in crop production. The crops they can produce are cassava, maize, plantain, potato among others commonly found in the study area. 69 respondents representing 18.2% are willing to engage in animal husbandry. This includes snail rearing, poultry, rabbit rearing among others. 52 respondents representing 13.7% are willing to serve as agricultural extension officers/workers if given the appropriate training; 65 respondents representing 17.1% are willing to form agricultural club for information sharing purposes to better their agricultural lots; while the remaining 111 respondents (29.2%) affirmed that they can form agricultural cooperative society to access credit for agricultural purpose.

Table 4: Hindrances to the Development of Agriculture in Ughelli South L.G.A.

S/N	Hindrances to Agricultural Development	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Lack of Encouragement from Government	97	25.5
2	Lack of Finance/Credit	82	21.6

3	Lack of Equipment	31	8.2
4	Lack of Enough Land	54	14.2
5	Lack of Fertilizer	56	14.7
6	Invasion of Farmland by Pest and Crop Diseases	60	15.8
	Total	380	100

Source: Field Work, 2018.

Data from Table 4 revealed hindrances to agricultural development in Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta state. 97 youth farmers representing 25.5% said lack of encouragement from government is hindering the betterment of their agricultural activities; 82 youth farmers representing 21.6% said lack of finance or credit facilities is hindering their agricultural development; 31 youth farmers representing 8.3% said lack of agricultural equipment is their problem to better their agricultural practice; 54 youth farmers representing 14.2% said lack of enough farmland is hindering their agricultural prospects; 56 youth farmers representing 14.7% said lack of fertilizer is the bane of their agricultural success; while the remaining 60 youth farmers representing 15.8% said invasion of their farms by pests and crop diseases is hindering their agricultural progress.

Table 5: Most Appropriate Mass Media to Develop Agriculture

S/N	Mass Medium	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Community Radio	205	54.0
2	Community Television	100	26.3
3	Community Newspaper	52	13.7
4	Community Magazine	23	6.0
	Total	380	100

Source: Field Work, 2018.

Data from Table 5 revealed the mass media preference of youth farmers of Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta state. 205 respondents representing 54.0% prefer community radio in the area; 100 youth farmers representing 26.3% prefer community television; 52 youth farmers representing 13.7% prefer community newspaper; while the remaining 23 youth farmers representing 6.0% prefer community magazine in Ughelli South L.G.A. Majority of the youth farmers in the study area therefore prefer community radio.

Research Question 1: What is the perception of the youth of Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta state on mass media and agricultural development?

Answer to Research Question 1 is found in data from Statements 1 and 2 of Table 1. Data from Statement 1 indicated that 100 youth farmers representing 26.3% strongly agreed that the mass media have roles to play in agricultural development of Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta state; 128 respondents representing 33.7% agreed to the statement; 38 respondents representing 10.0% were neutral on the statement; 60 youth farmers representing 15.8% disagreed to the statement; while 54 respondents representing 14.2% strongly disagreed to the statement. Aggregately, 228 respondents representing 60% agreed and perceived that the

mass media have role to play in developing agriculture in the area. Also, data from Statement 2 showed that 32 youth farmers representing 8.4% strongly agreed that the mass media have engendered agricultural development in Ughelli South L.G.A.; 49 youth farmers representing 12.9% agreed in the same order; while 25 youth farmers representing 6.6% were neutral on the issue. 106 youth farmers representing 27.9% disagreed to the statement; while 168 youth farmers strongly disagreed to the statement. Aggregately, 274 youth farmers representing 72.1% have negative perception of the mass media towards agricultural development in the study area. This means that most youth farmers in the study area perceived that the mass media have not contributed to the development of agriculture in Ughelli South Local government Area of Delta state. This finding corroborates the finding of Chukwu (2015) who in her study found that Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) has not contributed towards the agricultural development of South-Eastern States of Nigeria.

Research Question 2: Is there any role the youth of Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta State can play in agricultural development of the area?

Answer to Research Question 2 is found in data from Statement 3 of Table 1. 134 youth farmers representing 35.3% strongly agreed to the statement that the youth have role to play in agricultural development of the area; 116 youth farmers representing 30.5% agreed that they have roles to play towards agricultural development in the study area. 51 youth farmers representing 13.4% were neutral on the issue; 40 youth farmers representing 10.5% disagreed with the statement; while 39 youth farmers representing 10.3% strongly disagreed with the statement. Aggregately, 250 youth farmers representing 65.8% agreed that they have roles to play in agricultural development in Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta state. Further inquiry into the specific role that youth of Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta state can play towards agricultural development provided data in Table 3. Table 3 showed that 83 respondents representing 21.8% are willing to engage in production of crops such as cassava, maize, plantain, potato among others commonly found in the locality. 69 respondents representing 18.2% are willing to engage in animal husbandry which includes snail rearing, poultry, rabbit rearing among others. 52 respondents representing 13.7% are willing to serve as agricultural extension officers/workers if given the appropriate training. 65 respondents representing 17.1% are willing to form agricultural club for information sharing to better their agricultural lots; while the remaining 111 respondents (29.2%) are willing to form agricultural cooperative society/ies to access credit for agricultural purpose. This finding is in line with Afande, Maina and Maina (2015) who in their study found out that youth of Busia region in Kenya, a rural environment, played various roles towards agricultural development of the region.

Research Question 3: Which is the most suitable mass medium for agricultural development in Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta State?

Answer to Research Question 3 is found in data from Table 5. 205 youth farmers representing 54.0% prefer community radio in Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta state; 100 youth farmers representing 26.3% prefer community television; 52 youth

farmers representing 13.7% prefer community newspaper; while the remaining 23 youth farmers representing 6.0% prefer community magazine in the study area. This means that majority of the youth farmers in Ughelli South Local Government Area prefer community radio, to serve their mass media needs. This finding is in tandem with the finding of Ali (2013) who in his study found out that radio is the most effective mass medium for the dissemination of modern agricultural technology to farmers in Uttar Pradesh region of India.

Testing Research Hypothesis

In testing this hypothesis, the Chi-Square (X^2) was used with the aid of SPSS V22 Statistical Software.

Decision Rule

If the calculated X^2 value is higher than the critical (table) X^2 value or the P-value of the result is lesser than the significant level (0.05), reject the Null Hypothesis (H_0) and accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H_1). On the other hand if the calculated X^2 value is lesser than the critical (table) X^2 value or the P-value of the result is higher than the significant level (0.05), accept the Null Hypothesis (H_0) and reject the Alternative Hypothesis (H_1).

Degree of Freedom (DF)

Non-Parametric statistics of chi-square degree of freedom is:

$$DF = (C-1)(R-1)$$

Where C= Number of Column

R= Number of Row

Note: The DF for each hypothesis varies with the number of questions combine to test the hypothesis. This implies that there may be no uniform DF in this study as is seen below.

Critical (Table) X^2 Value

The critical X^2 value was obtained from the statistical table (see appendix) and the following criteria were used to obtain the value.

$$\text{Critical } X^2 \text{ value} = DF \alpha 0.05 \text{ (2-tailed)}$$

Also, the critical X^2 value for each hypothesis varies with their DF for each hypothesis.

Therefore, data considered appropriate for the test of this hypothesis were derived from Table 2 (Role of Mass Media in the Development of Agriculture in Ughelli South L.G.A.) and Table 5 (Most Appropriate Mass Media to Develop Agriculture)

Table 6: Chi-square result on mass media and agricultural development in selected communities of Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta State

Comparison	DF	Cal X^2	Crit X^2	P-Value	Significance
mass media and agricultural development	15	193.586	24.9	0.002*	Highly Significant

($P < 0.05$) Significant Level ($P < 0.01$ *)

The result showed that there is a highly significant relationship between mass media and agricultural development in the selected communities of Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta State. The above result explains why it is significant (Cal X^2 193.586, $P < 0.01$). By

implication, the test suggested that mass media can be veritable tools for enhancing the development of agriculture in the selected communities of Ughelli South L.G.A of Delta State. The highly significant value of the test implies that when the appropriate mass media channels available for disseminating information in rural communities are adequately used, factor empowering agricultural development such as mobilization of youths, information on good agricultural programme, etc. will get to reach the people of the communities hence agricultural development will be promoted.

Discussion of Findings

This study focused on perception of youth farmers of selected communities of Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta state on mass media and agricultural development; the role of rural youths in agricultural development in the selected communities of Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta state; and the most suitable mass medium for agricultural development in the selected communities in Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta state. Finding showed that majority of the youth of the selected communities in Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta state, do not perceive that the mass media have contributed to the development of agriculture in the area. They perceive that the mass media have not lived up to expectation of disseminating information that will engender agricultural development in the area. This means that the mass media are not focusing on agricultural activities in Ughelli South Local Government Area.

Another finding indicated that youth farmers of the selected communities in Ughelli South L.G.A. of Delta state agreed that they have roles to play in ensuring agricultural development of the area. The youth farmers of Ughelli South Local Government Area are willing to play their roles in developing agriculture in the area, if given the necessary and appropriate support and motivation. Further finding suggested that majority of the youths in Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta state choose community radio as the most appropriate mass medium that will help achieve agricultural development through dissemination of the right agricultural information. They also want the setting up of community radio in the area.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study considered the perception of youth farmers of Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta state on mass media and agricultural development. The research showed that youth farmers have a negative perception of the mass media on the development of agriculture in the area. The youths admit that they have roles to play in order to develop agriculture in the area, and they are willing to play those roles if motivated rightly. The youths prefer community radio and want it set up in the area to meet their agricultural information needs.

From the above, it is therefore recommended as follows:

1. The mass media in Delta state should focus attention on agricultural activities of communities in Ughelli South Local Government Area of the state. By this, youths in

that area will see the mass media as playing their roles and it will also change the negative perception of the youth farmers about the mass media.

2. Governments at all levels should encourage and motivate the youths of Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta state, to participate in agriculture, through various incentives. This will diversify the nation's economy from the over-dependence on the dwindling fortunes of crude oil. It will also guarantee food security as well as provide employment for her teeming youth population.
3. Governments and other development partners should set up community radio in Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta state. This will cater for the agricultural information needs of the youth farmers of that area of Delta state.

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