

ADOPTION AND UTILIZATION OF PROGRAMME COMMUNICATION VARIABLES IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN SOUTH-WEST, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the adoption and utilization of programme communication variables in community development projects. The low participation in community development has been attributed to the ineffective dissemination of specific community development information to community members. Descriptive survey research design was adopted and multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select 300 respondents. Self-structured questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was used to collect data for the study. Data from demographic were analysed using percentages while Pearson Product Correlation Moment were used to analyse the hypotheses. The findings revealed that there was a positive significant relationship between adoption of communication and usage of programme communication. The result also established that there was a positive significant relationship between adoption of programme communication and citizen participation in community development projects. The study concluded that social and community mobilisation is a potent factor in ensuring citizen participation in the life cycle of community development programmes. The study therefore, recommended that change agents should pay attention to these communication variables at every stage of a project's life cycle in mobilizing and disseminating development information.

KEY TERMS: Adoption, utilization, programme, communication, variables, community development projects

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INTRODUCTION

A decisive role can be played by communication in promoting human development in today's new climate of social change. As the world moves towards deepened democracy, decentralization and the market economy, conditions are becoming more favourable for people to start steering their own course of change. But, it is vital to stimulate their awareness, participation and capabilities. Communication skills and technology are central to this task, but at present are often underutilized. Policies are needed that encourage effective planning and implementation of communication programmes.

Major changes and new emphases have appeared on the development scene. Societies are opening to debate and markets to individual initiative; privatization and entrepreneurship are being encouraged; new technologies are becoming widely available; management of

government services is gradually being relocated closer to the users, if not handed over directly to users themselves, in order to cut costs and seek partners more committed to effective implementation. Indeed, a host of structural adjustments are profoundly affecting most aspects of production and human interaction. These structural adjustments make demands, and have direct economic and social effects on people.

Community development is a movement designed to promote better living with active participation and/or the initiative of the community people (Anyanwu, 1999). It is a practice, as well as a process of cooperation between the citizens and/or external bodies to satisfy communal felt-needs (Egenti, 2001 & Osuji, 2004). Community development practice is also a recognised way of making basic amenities as well as services available and accessible to the beneficiaries (Anyanwu, 1999). Olaleye (2004), corroborating this, avers that community projects, which have been playing significant roles in the alleviation of poverty at the grassroots level, will continue to provide amenities which the government,

with all its resources tapped, is unable to provide as quickly as they are needed by the people.

Communication is a central and fundamental aspect of human interaction. It takes place to effect and influence other people either through persuasion or argument, to inform and entertain others as well. According to Herper (2005), communication sustains the society; it is very essence of a social system or an organisation. Without communication, there can be no culture, no society, no science and technology, and no shared experience of the world of reality. Focusing on the social importance of communication, Osho (1988) maintains that:

Communication is the life-blood of any organization, without communication, it is impossible to run any activities of an organization. No government can meet the needs of its people without a proper system of communication; an educational system would collapse without communication (p. 29).

The importance of community development, given its potential to change the condition of a community for the better, literature has shown that different problems such as poor orientation, low mobilisation, apathy, ineffective communication, low funding, poor planning and coordination had seriously inhibited the involvement of citizens in the dire need to participate in solving problems affecting their welfare (Egenti, 2001). This perhaps explains why successive governments in Nigeria have been encouraging the participation and contributions of their citizens either as groups or individuals in community development practice. Though the government has been trying to encourage mass participation in community development, the general apathy and lukewarm attitude among the citizenry still persisted. Most scholars and observers of community development practice in Nigeria have specifically blamed this tepid attitude of the people on the communication process adopted for the mobilisation of people over the years (Anyanwu, 2002; Olaleye, 2004; Dauda, 2009).

In Neil, 2002's opinion, mobilising people to participate in actions that positively affect their life is achieved through a combination of motivational and information-giving activities complemented with built – in educational components. More often than not, the language used by the development planners and communicators is highly specialized and technical; hence, vital issues and concepts may be misunderstood or misinterpreted by the citizens and policy implementors. Thus, creating a gap between the communicators of the development information and the meaning derived by the target audience; hence, a communication break-down results. According to Dauda (2009), over the last 34 years, communication has accentuated the pace of development in most Nigerian communities. When properly put into use, it brings about positive behaviour change, and when this occurs, development evolves.

The use of positive information for development purposes, also known as development communication, involves the process by which information and understanding of developmental issues are transferred

from one citizen to another (Piostrow, Kincaid & Rinehart, 1997). It forms the basis for all human interaction and functioning in the development process. Every inhabitant relies on development information, just as the existence of every human community depends on communication. Anyanwu (2002) submits that every cooperative action (development) is contingent upon effective communication; while peoples' daily life is filled with communication experiences. It is through communication that community members can reach some understanding of one another. Through it, they can build trust, coordinate actions, plan strategies for the accomplishment of goals and reach agreement on development issues.

According to Anyanwu (2002) most traditional societies do not have the means to develop good communication systems yet their survival depends on their ability to induce some forms of development for their members to enjoy some continuity in social living. Part of this development is creating some meaningful communication networks, internally and externally. It

was the lack of internal communication networks in those traditional communities that formed the major weakness of their developmental processes.

Obviously, every community development programme has a specific communication procedure through which information on every stage of the programme/project's life cycle is disseminated to the community members. This implies programme-based communication (that is, programme communication) strategies such as policy advocacy, social and community mobilisation, social marketing, media mobilisation, development support communication and interpersonal communication among others, through which messages are disseminated to target audiences with the intention of bringing about the desired behaviour change. We have the opportunity to make the most of our communications skills and knowledge at a time when strong external communications can give practical support to our implementation and outputs. To do this, we need to think strategically (ERDF, 2012). European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) has observed that every

development oriented project stands a better chance of success if it grows out of knowledge of available communication alternatives. Every development project/programme may have specific information needs and medium, therefore, the existence of observed varieties in development communication across different communities and programmes. Succinctly, development communication that is programme-based (Programme Communication) has different communication strategies such as policy advocacy, interpersonal communication, social and community mobilisation as well as media mobilisation.

UNICEF has a long tradition in communication for development, and applies an array of communication approaches, ranging from policy advocacy, social and community mobilisation to interpersonal communication and media mobilisation. The modern development paradigm advances results-oriented communication to support the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and requires greater use of different communication approaches and synergies among the various components

of development programmes. Communication interventions are grounded in research and based on sound documentation, participatory approaches, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation.

Kolucki (2006) explains how principles of programme communication are part of a holistic approach to early child development (ECD). It is designed for programme planners, designers, artists, and communicators to improve their ability to use programme communication for holistic ECD. According to Kolucki (2006) the term "holistic approach to early child development" refers to policies and programming that ensure that child rights to health, nutrition, cognitive and psychosocial development, and protection are all met. As submitted by Kolucki, all interventions should reach all children, including the most marginalized.

According to Kolucki (2006), governments of developing countries can no longer fulfil all social and regulatory services by themselves, especially in rural areas. Many economies are overwhelmed by the cost of servicing

their foreign debt, and governments are under stringent requirement from international financial institutions to reduce spending. In their quest for enhanced cost-effectiveness in all their operations, governments must have the active support of, and more contribution from the people. Governments are, thus, obliged to seek new and perhaps unfamiliar partners, ranging from local leaders to people in a variety of non-governmental organisations. These people are accordingly obliged to shoulder new and perhaps unfamiliar responsibilities. Hence, the use of programme communication strategies in community development efforts in developing economies of the world.

One major constraint to effective planning and implementation of community development programmes at the grass-roots level is due to non-application of effective communication strategy. The trend of poor planning and implementation rate in community development in Nigeria has been attributed, by most observers, to ineffective mobilization of the citizenry arising from improper use of communication strategies

for social mobilization and participation. This is so because, in the past, most of Nigeria's rural communities relied on the old tradition of indigenous communication strategies. Even now, the excessive dependence on the use of mass media in urban communities to disseminate community development messages does not induce proper planning and implementation.

Due to this, social mobilization efforts are weakly put together, planned programmes have been poorly coordinated, community education has not been thoroughly institutionalized and delivered, adequate publicity has been lacking, and required internal resource mobilization has been elusive. These are the reasons why community involvement and participation have been taken for granted, and are not included in the life cycle of most community development projects. This therefore, raise the salient question of whether the appropriate use and adoption of programme communication strategies (CPS) such as policy, advocacy, media mobilization, social and community mobilization and interpersonal communication will help get the desired level of

involvement and participation of the community people in developmental projects. Would a better understanding of these strategies assist policy planners and change agents to effectively adopt and use them in ensuring improved citizen participation? It is on this basis that this study investigated the extent to which adoption of utilization of programme communication strategies influences the planning and implementation of community development projects.

The broad objective of this study is to examine adoption and utilization of programme communication variables in community development projects and to determine the citizen's perception about the effectiveness of programme communication in the planning and implementation of community development projects.

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁ There is no significant relationship between adoption of programme and usage of programme communication.

Ho2 There is no significant relationship between adoption of programme communication and citizen participation in community projects.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study employed descriptive survey research design of the ex post facto. The design was used because it aims at describing systematically the facts, qualities or characteristics of a given population, event or area of interest as factually and accurately as possible to answer the research questions. It was also expedient to explore the design because the independent variable is already in existence and cannot be manipulated.

Population, sample size and sampling techniques

The target population of this study consisted of all communities in South-west, Nigeria. A combination of stratified, proportionate and random sampling technique was used in selecting the sample. The sample consisted of actively involved members of six purposively selected communities in Osun, Ondo and Ogun states of South-

west, Nigeria. Data of actively participating members were given by Community Development Committee (CDC) leaders in each sampled community. The three selected states represented each dialectical blocks in the south-west. That is, Osun from Oyo/Osun block, Ondo from Ondo/Ekiti block while Ogun was chosen from Lagos/Ogun axis. The population of actively participating community members was conservatively put at 300 members in the three selected states.

A sample size of 300 members was selected from the six purposively selected communities in the three selected states. The distribution of respondents was as follows: Ife-tedo and Ila Orangun-100; Igbara Oke and Oka Akoko -100; Ayetoro and Ijebu-Ife – 100. The stratification goes thus; community leaders' class, respondents' class and change agents' class.

Table 1: *Respondents used from each community*

State	Communities	Inhabitants	Community Leaders	Change Agents
	Ife-tedo	42	5	

Osun				3
	Ila-Orangun	40	6	4
Ondo	Igbara-Oke	37	9	4
	Oka-Akoko	39	6	5
Ogun	Aiyetoro	43	5	2
	Ijebu-Ife	38	7	5
	Total	239	38	23

Instrumentation

The instruments for the study are two sets of self-structured questionnaires: Adoption of Utilization of Programme Communication Variables Scale and Community Development Projects tagged (AUPCVSCDPQ). These were complemented with nine sessions of Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The questionnaire was constructed along a 4-point Likert-type scale. The questionnaire contains 27 test items. It was designed to measure the influence of adoption of utilization of programme communication variables on

sustainable citizen participation in community development programmes.

Validity and reliability of the study

The draft questionnaire was tested for content validity. Experts in the field of Adult Education and Social Work, Agriculture extension, Communication and Language Arts and Community Development Unit were contacted. Based on their criticism and modifications, the researchers adjusted the test items. Also, face validity of the instruments was tested. The test items were given to non-experts such as friends of the researchers, communication and development conscious community dwellers and enlightened citizens to find out if the test appears logical for the purpose for which it was intended. After the necessary modifications, and consultation with the researcher's supervisor, the test instruments were ascertained valid for data collection in the study areas.

To ascertain reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted on a sample of the population different from the selected sample of the research study areas. Precisely,

six communities in Oyo State were purposively selected, and proximity informed the selection. These are Ido, Akinyele, Iwere-Ile, Lanlate, Tede, and Aawe. Thirty six copies of the questionnaire were distributed but 34 copies were retrieved for analysis. The reliability value of the instrument is $r = 0.83$. The respondents in the pilot study were not included in the major study.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Pearson Product Movement Correlation (PPMC) was used to analyse data collected in order to test the significant relationship between the independent variable and dependent variables at 0.05 level of significance. On data analysis, scores were also used as covariate in order to equate the subjects' initial differences. Simple percentage and frequency distribution counts were used for demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Demographic characteristics of respondents

Characteristics of respondents for the study is one of the major prerequisites for understanding issues on programme communication strategies as they determine

citizen participation in planning and implementation of community development projects in South-West, Nigeria. The different numbers of respondents in each selected state and community for the study are presented in below.

Fig. 1: Respondents by categorisation

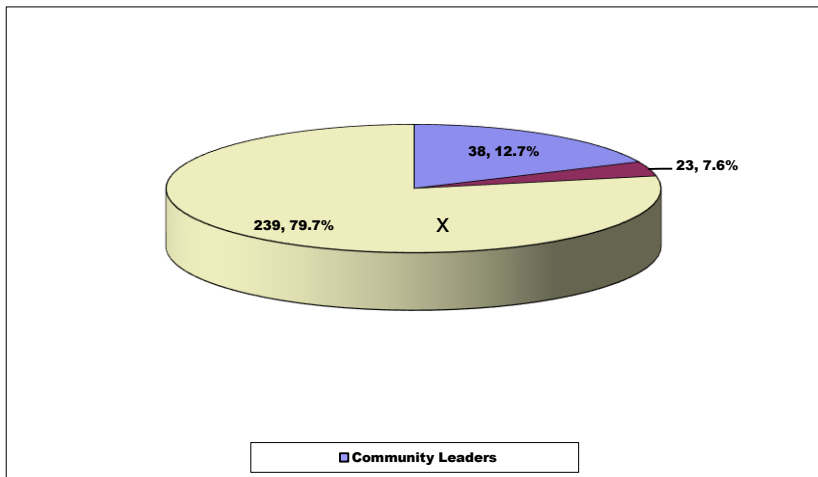


Figure 1 shows that 239 (79.7%) of the respondents were inhabitants of the selected six communities, 38(12.7%) were community leaders while only 23(7.6%) were change agents working in the selected communities.

Fig. 2: Respondents by gender

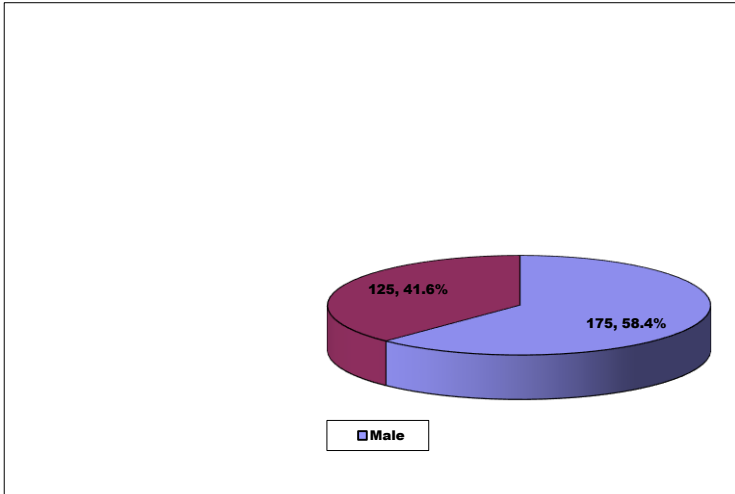


Figure 2 indicates that 175(58.4%) of the respondents were male while 125(41.6%) were female. The result reveals that more male than female took part in the investigation.

Fig. 3: Respondents by age distribution

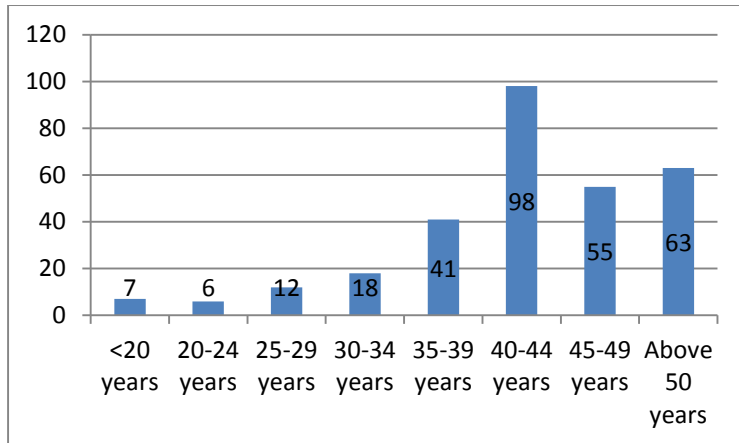


Figure 3 indicates that 7 respondents fell below 20years; 6 were between 20 and 24 years; 12 25 and 29years; 18, 30 and 34years; 41, 35 and 39years; 98, 40 and 44years; 55, 45 and 49years and 63 respondents were of 50years and above. The result reveals that majority of the participants were between 40 years and above. The result also shows that a very reasonable number of respondents, who took part in the study, spread through ages 30 to 49 years. The result was an indication that respondents from the selected sample who were mostly adults embraced the community development projects.

Fig.4: *Respondents by educational status*

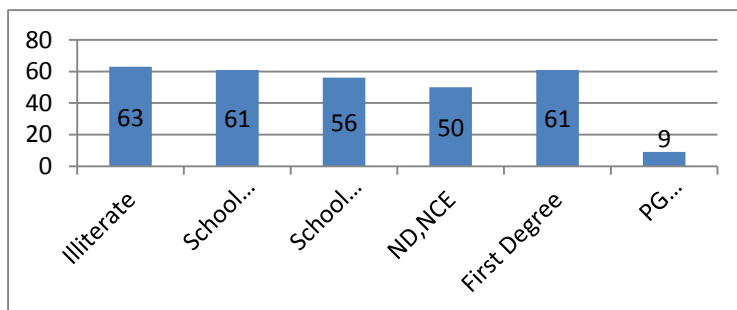


Figure 4 shows that non-literate participants accounted for 65 of the respondents, participants with less than school certificate were 61, school certificate/teachers Grade II were 56, ND/National certificate of Education were 50, first degree-61, and 9 respondents obtained post graduate degree. Respondents with non literate and first degree participate more than any other category in the study. The result indicated that non-literates and literates participated in CD programmes. The non-literate participants were able to take part in responding to the test items because the instrument was constructed in two versions of Yoruba (respondents' native language) and English. Notably, community members with higher

degrees and others were of low representation in their involvement in the study.

Test of hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between adoption of programme communication and usage of programme communication

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation between the adoption of programme communication and usage of programme communication

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Adoption of Programme Communication	33.3833	3.4616	300	.526*	.000	Sig.
Usage of Programme Communication	34.5067	4.0832				

** Sig. at .01 level, *Sig. at .05 level

It is shown in the above table that there was a positive significant relationship between adoption of programme communication and usage of programme communication ($R = .526^{**}$, $N = 300$, $P < .01$). The Null hypothesis is rejected. This indicated that adoption of programme communication had influenced usage of programme communication.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between adoption of programme communication and citizen participation in community development projects.

Table 3: *Pearson Product Moment Correlation between the adoption of programme communication and citizen participation in community development projects*

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Adoption of Programme Communication	33.3833	3.4616	300	.498**	.000	Sig.
Citizen Participation	120.22	12.75				

Community Development Projects	00	33				
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** Sig. at .01 level, *Sig. at .05 level

It is shown in the above table 3 that there was a positive significant relationship between adoption of programme communication and citizen participation in community development projects ($r = .498^{**}$, $N = 300$, $P < .01$). The Null hypothesis is rejected. It is noted that adoption of programme communication had influenced citizen participation in community development projects.

DISCUSSION

Hypothesis one established that there was a positive significant relationship between adoption of programme communication and citizen participation in community development projects ($r = .498^{**}$, $N = 300$, $P < .01$). The Null hypothesis is rejected. It is noted that adoption of programme communication had influenced citizen participation in community development projects. This is supported by the findings of Dauda (2009), who stated that over the last 34 years, communication has

accentuated the pace of development in most Nigerian communities. When properly put into use, it brings about positive behaviour change, and when this occurs, development evolves. This is also in line with the findings of Anyanwu (2002) who submitted that every cooperative action (development) is contingent upon effective communication; while peoples' daily life is filled with communication experiences. It is through communication that community members can reach some understanding of one another. Through it, they can build trust, coordinate actions, plan strategies for the accomplishment of goals and reach agreement on development issues.

Hypothesis two revealed that there was significant relationship between adoption of programme communication and citizen participation in community development projects ($r = .498^{**}$, $N = 300$, $P < .01$). The Null hypothesis is rejected. It is noted that adoption of programme communication had influenced citizen participation in community development projects. The result supported the findings of Piostrow, Kincaid &

Rinehart (1997) which asserted that the use of positive information for development purposes, also known as development communication, involves the process by which information and understanding of developmental issues are transferred from one citizen to another. It also forms the basis for all human interaction and functioning in the development process. Every inhabitant relies on development information, just as the existence of every human community depends on communication. Also, the findings corroborated McCall (2011)'s submission that communication for development stresses the need to support two-way communication systems that enable dialogue and that allow communities to speak out, express their aspirations and concerns and participate in the decisions that relate to their development.

CONCLUSION

It is evident from the findings of this study that programme communication strategies such as policy advocacy, social and community mobilisation, interpersonal communication and media mobilisation enhanced citizen participation in all the life-cycle of

community development programmes. Also, policy advocacy influenced citizen participation in the life-cycle of community development programmes. In the same vein, social and community mobilisation is a potent factor in ensuring citizen participation in the life cycle of community development programmes. Interpersonal communication and media mobilisation are important in the process of citizen participation in community development programmes. Programme communication imparted on each of community cohesion, adoption of community education, enhancement of decision making process, local leadership effectiveness and felt-needs identification and selection. Although, programme communication strategies were adopted and used in the sampled communities, their level of utilisation was lower than their adoptions.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Policy on a subject like this is all about guideline on the adoption and usage of programme communication in implementing community development. As a matter of policy, every community development project must be

backed up with, at least, a particular programme communication strategy. Apart from this, in ensuring a proper utilisation of this in-built programme communication strategy, a programme officer knowledgeable in communication for development must be attached to the project. Alternatively, all change agents, as a matter of policy, must undergo training in the area of programme communication. The government, as a matter of policy, must have a checklist that will guide every community in ensuring that programme communication is properly adopted and used in the implementation of community development programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Community development is of utmost importance to any developing economy of the world. As such, it is recommended that all stakeholders should engage the use of programme communication as an information giving and motivational strategies to encourage community people to embark on it. Change agents should use programme communication approach in mobilising community people into participating in planning and

implementation of community development efforts. It is necessary for development planners to look into the possibility of packaging citizens' participatory inducers that will not solely rest on the use of mass mediated channels alone but with more emphasis on communication alternatives such as policy advocacy, social and community mobilisation, interpersonal communication and media mobilization. Scholars of community development practices should, as a matter of urgency, increase researches into the uses and effects of programme communication strategies in community development. Media organisations should contribute to the encouragement of using programme communication strategies in mobilising community actions for community development projects.

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