

Full-Length Research Paper

Using Social Media to Attract Young Farmers in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory

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ABSTRACT: Youths are currently using social media. The goal of this study was to assess the effectiveness of social media in attracting youths to careers in agriculture in the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja. The primary purpose of this research is to assess the usage of social media in attracting youths to careers in agriculture in the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja, Nigeria. Other specific goals included determining the various benefits of social media perceived by respondents in utilizing agricultural practices in the study area, determining social media methods used to elicit youth interest in agriculture, and determining youth's level of satisfaction with the use of social media. In the study area, a sample of 360 agricultural youths were chosen at random using multi-stage sampling techniques. A questionnaire and a focus group discussion were used to collect data. Statistical Packages for Social Science were used to analyze the data (SPSS). The descriptive model was used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that youths in agriculture benefitted from using social media to acquire agricultural information. The result revealed that social media elicit youth interest in agriculture when view pictures / videos on whatsapp. The result further revealed that youths in agriculture were satisfied with the use of social media in Agriculture. Government should encourage the use of social media in agriculture to attract youth participation.

Keywords: Social media, youth, attraction, agriculture

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has remained one of the most profitable business sectors in the world, not just in Nigeria but in other nation (Adelanke, 2019). It employs a large portion of the population, alleviates poverty, and promotes economic development (Agwu et al., 2014). Despite the enormous benefits of the agricultural sector, youth participation and interest in the agriculture sector is low in many developing countries, particularly in Nigeria, resulting in low agricultural production. This has led to decline in agricultural output and the overall contribution of the sector over time (Adigun et al., 2017). The youths need to participate in agriculture in order to uplift agricultural development in Nigeria. Social media plays a vital role in agriculture. Waldorf (2013) stated that social media platforms have the potential to reach a large

audience, change perceptions through thoughtful messages and hashtags, and mobilize youth interest and participation in agriculture. It has the potential to change young people's attitudes toward agriculture. According to Fabinu (2014), the primary purpose of social media in agriculture is to share information, raise awareness, and provide opportunities. Social media can effectively empower youths with agricultural and educational information that will encourage them to engage in agricultural or agro- based activities. Irungu et al. (2015) stated that using social media to engage youth in agriculture as a means of attracting them to work in this sector is critical to a country's economic development and will help reduce unemployment, hunger, poverty, risk, and other problems in the agricultural sector.

Objective of the study

The broad objective of this study is to assess the use of social media in attracting youths in Agriculture in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria.

Specifically, this study is designed to:

- (a) Ascertain various benefits of social media perceived by respondents in utilizing agricultural practices in the study area.
- (b) Determine methods social media helped to elicit youth interest in agriculture.
- (c) Determine youth's stage of satisfaction with the usage of social media.

METHODOLOGY

Study area

The study was carried out in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nigeria. The Federal Capital Territory was formed in 1976 and it is bordered by the states, Niger to the Northwest, Kaduna to the Northeast, Nasarawa to the East and South, and Kogi to the Southwest. The territory is currently made up of six area councils, namely Abuja municipal, Abaji, Bwari, Gwagwalada, Kuje and Kwali (Odunsi, 2018). It is within the middle belt region of the country. It has an estimated population of 3,277,740 (World Population Review, 2020). Abuja lies between latitude 9.072264 and longitude 7.491302 and also covers an area of 7,315km (Latlog, 2018). The varying indigenous language of FCT-Abuja include Gupe-Abawa, Ganagana, Gbagyi, Nape, Asha, Gbagyi, Gbari, Igbra, Gwandara, Kami and Hausa. Nevertheless, English is the official language of the city and other major Nigeria language like Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Edo and Ibibio are also spoken due to availability of the tribe there (Daniel, 2020). The region is underlain by crystalline rocks consisting of granites and gneisses. The vegetation is mainly savanna with limited forest areas. Agriculture accounts for substantial part of the FCT economy. The major crops produced include yams, millet, corn (maize), sorghum, and beans. Mineral resources include clay, tin, feldspar, gold, iron ore, lead, marble, and talc (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). The FCT has rich soil for agriculture and enjoys a climate that is neither too hot nor too cold all year round (Project Championz, 2016).

Study population

The target population of the study comprised youths in agriculture who were between 18 and 35 years old. The Federal Capital Territory has six (6) Agricultural

Development Project (ADP) administrative zones, namely Abaji, Abuja Municipal, Bwari, Kwali, Gwagwalada and Kuje. The study was basically conducted in four (4) out of the six ADP zones of the FCT based on the agrarian nature of the area.

Instrument and techniques for data collection/ measurement of variable

Data were collected through the use of questionnaire, which was administered to the youth in agriculture by the researcher and well-trained enumerators (Staff of FCTADP) who live among the youth and understand the locality and their languages. This enabled the researcher to get the required information needed for the study. Also, Focused Group Discussions (FGD) were held to validate the data collected from the respondents.

Perceived Benefits of social media in utilizing agricultural practices

The Likert scale mean score derived from a 3-point rating was used to elicit the youths perceived benefit of social media in terms of information usage in agricultural practices in farm activities. In this case of using mean score derived from 3-point Likert rating to analyze the benefit acquired from the respondent, some agricultural information was itemized and the respondents were required to rank them based on their perceived benefit by checking any of the options namely: "To a great extent; "To a little extent; "and "Not at all". Values that were assigned to these options were 3,2 and1 respectively. The values were added to obtain 6, which was further divided by 3 to obtain 2.0 which was regarded as the mean, Agricultural practice with the mean scores of less than 2.0 was regarded as not benefited via social media, while agricultural practice with mean score equal or above 2.0 was regarded as having benefit via social media.

Method social media used to elicit youth interest in agriculture

This was achieved by asking the respondent to indicate on the options listed.

Level of satisfaction derived from the usage of social media by youth in agriculture

To achieve this objective, each respondents was asked to indicate the options that best describe his or her level of satisfaction by checking any of the three options

Table 1 Benefits of social media on agricultural practices to the respondent.

New Agricultural Practices	Mean
I got information on chemical for pest control methods	2.29*
I got information on chemical disease control	2.17*
I got information on chemical for storing produce	2.02*
I got information on physical farm measurement	1.89
I got information on qualities of seed to use	2.06*
I got information on the best time to start land preparation	2.00*
I got information on new planting techniques methods	2.09*
I got information on best time to weed the farm	1.97
I got information on best time to harvest seed produce	1.90
I got information on new storage techniques	2.12*

Table 2: Methods which social media used in eliciting interest in agriculture.

Items	Agree		Disagree	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
When I view pictures / videos on whatsapp	146	81.1	38	18.9
When I view pictures / videos upload, download agric videos from YouTube	104	57.8	76	42.2
When I view pictures / videos photos from blogs	97	53.9	83	46.1
When I view pictures / videos receive agric post, from face book	121	67.2	59	33.8

Computed from field data, 2019

namely very satisfied, satisfied and not satisfied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perceived benefits of social media to the respondents on agricultural practices

Table 1 shows the benefits of social media use on respondents' agricultural practices. The respondents showed positive response (agreed) to all the listed benefits of use of social media. The respondents improved in the following areas; pest control methods (\bar{X} =2.29), chemical for disease control (\bar{X} =2.17), new storage techniques (\bar{X} = 2.12), new planting techniques methods (\bar{X} =2.09), qualities of seed to use (\bar{X} =2.06), chemical for storing produce (\bar{X} =2.02), and best time to start land preparation (\bar{X} =2.00). This implies that social media brings about the sharing of agricultural related ideas among farmers and proved immensely useful to farmers in communicating agricultural information in the study area. This agrees with Bhalchandra and Deshmukh (2017) who found out that farmers are making use of social media for innovative practices, sharing information etc. on the Study carried out on Role of Social Media in Agriculture Marketing and its Scope. This result confirmed the finding of Khou and Suresh (2018) that most farmers in the villages of Pooranakuppam, Manaveli, Thavalakuppam and Nallavadu under Pondicherry uses social media for agricultural purposes. This is supported by Kipkurgat, Onyiego and Chemwaina (2016) who revealed that social media is largely beneficial and convenient as a source of agricultural information. This also agrees with Suleiman, Ogakason

and Faruk (2018) who revealed that farmers in the study area have access to social media platforms and use them to source agricultural information. They revealed further that social media has influenced farmer's participation in agriculture. However, the social media according to Lohento and Ajilore (2015) can influence and inspire youths to engage in more agricultural activities that are profitable and relevant to their environment which will increase food production, incomes and lower unemployment levels. In response to the question in your opinion on the usage of social media "what are the perceived benefits involved in using social media, findings were realized from the focused group that:

"Social media gives us the opportunity to access agricultural information including latest method of farming from other countries. Farmers are getting the right information on the right time. it addresses problems faced by farmers to some extent. It saves time and cost of the farmers for getting information and it is making us proud. But we still need the help of extension officers to do better in the usage of social media in agriculture." (Inferred from a Focus Group Discussion). *Focus Group Discussions also provided information that agrees with the above data. The discussants strongly indicated that social media could attract more youths to the sector.*

Methods Which Social Media Used in Eliciting Youth Interest in Agriculture

Data in Table 2 reveal that most of the respondents (81.1%) agreed that social media elicit their interest in agriculture when they view pictures and videos on

Table 3: Satisfaction with social media usage by the respondent.

Satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	35	19.4
Satisfied	83	46.1
Not satisfied	62	34.1

Computed from field data, 2019

Whatsapp. This could be because youth farmers get good picture of what's out there. Lathiya, Rathod and Kuldeep (2015) noted that in addition to text messaging, users can send each other images, video, and audio media messages.

Satisfaction with Social Media Usage by The Respondents.

Data in Table 3 reveals that majority of the respondents (46.11%) were satisfied with the social media usage in agriculture. Probably because it might have exposed them to modern and latest information for enhanced profitability of their farm enterprises leading to attitudinal change in behavior of the respondents. This result agrees with the finding of Danielle, Courtney, David and Erica (2017) on the study carried out on the Exploring Agriculturalists' Use of Social Media for Agricultural Marketing. They found out that all the participants were satisfied with their social media use and that they would not have changed anything about their adoption of this technology. They noted that one indication of this satisfaction was their desire to continue using social media in the future.

Conclusion

Agricultural productivity can be improved through the use of social media. So many youth farmers are actively engaging in social media platforms for agricultural purposes. The notable benefits derived by youths via social media were pest control methods, chemical for disease control, new storage techniques, new planting techniques methods, qualities of seed to use, chemical for storing produce, and best time to start land preparation. Findings show that social media elicit youth interest in agriculture when view pictures and videos on whatsapp. The Finding further shows that the respondents were satisfied with the usage of social media. Therefore, social media should be linked with agriculture in order to promote agricultural development in Nigeria.

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