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Elitist Status and Perceived Radio Message Utility among Fulani Herdsmen in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Fulani herdsmen are greatly reputed as unrepentant users of radio, yet, empirical data on their perception of radio message utility seems scarce. Further, elitist status bears significance for individual's perception, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in any social group. Hence, this study was designed to examine elitist status and perceived radio message utility among Fulani herdsmen in Akinyele local government area (LGA) of Oyo State. The Yorùbá version of 202 copies of a structured questionnaire was administered through structured interview among randomly selected respondents. An 11-item scale was used to measure perceived radio message utility. One wayANOVA and Spearman's r were used to analyze data. Results show that perceived radio message utility wasvery low (mean =5.38±3.19; min. =1, max. =19). Elitist status and perceived radio message utilitywere positively and significantly related (Spearman's r = .523;p= 0.000). Age was significantly and inversely related with perceived utility (p < 0.05) but marital status and education were not (p > 0.05). The radio is yet to be optimally tailored towards meeting the needs of Fulani herdsmen, a group that is probably the most ardent listener of radio in the Nigerian society.

Key words: Radio, Fulani herdsmen, Elitist status, Utility.

Introduction

Ezeonwuka and Igwe (2016) presents a Fulani herdsman as a person with a waist dagger, with may be a staff for directing the herd of cattle, a small sized powerful shortwave radio set, and occasionally, a bow and arrows.

The above description of a typical Fulani herdsman is the mental image of how these herdsmen almost always appear on a typical day— with a radio set. Several authors

including Oso (2002); Shagari, Bello and Umar (2013) and Mahanan and Akut (2016) have confirmed this cliché and facile explanation. The radio is a powerful medium of disseminating agricultural information; and the importance of agricultural information for optimum agricultural production cannot be over-emphasized. Agricultural information enables agricultural producers to choose from several alternative choices of what to produce, how to produce and for whom to produce. Getting the farmer informed is the essence of agricultural extension— the central field that links farmers to innovations and resources. Indeed, the radio is a principal element of the nexus between agricultural information and agricultural extension.

The radio attenuates the problem of reaching the vast number of extension agents' target through personal contact. Bolarinwa and Oyeyinka (2011) for instance, assert that the ratio of extension agents to farmers is 1: 3000, making it almost impossible for the vast clientele to be reached especially in a resource-poor setting like Nigeria. Compared with other media, the radio is affordable, can convey messages to remote areas irrespective of infrastructural deficiencies like bad roads and poor electricity supply. More significantly, radio can be used to reach the vast, illiterate segment of the population (Mahanan and Akut, 2016). Radio messages are aired in different languages. Listening rather than literary skill is required to benefit from radio messages. Broadcasting through radio can be used to draw attention of departments, groups, organizations, institutions and governments to salient issues confronting the agricultural sector[1]. More relevantly, the Fulani herdsmen can be educated through radio about awareness of disease outbreak, cattle marketing, periodic vaccination to prevent losses and zoonosis, alternative points of marketing, etc. Yet, while having a great reputation for high radio use, there is a seeming dearth of systematic studies accounting for the utility that Fulani herdsmen derive from radio messages. It is therefore pertinent to be concerned about how Fulani herdsmen perceive radio messages in terms of adequacy

[1]However, radio use cannot surmount agricultural problems. The challenges of the agricultural sector are deeply rooted in larger social structures. Hence, solutions to same cannot be divorced from deeply rooted socio-structural interventions.

and appropriateness. Such perception may not be unconnected with elitist status of the herdsmen, making it plausible to expect that this status will influence perceived radio message utility among them.

Elitism is closely related to social class and what sociologists call social stratification. Elite "is often loosely used to refer to any superior or privileged group, but it more properly refers to groups defined by their superior power. Anelite is a ruling minority" (Scott and Marshall, 2009: 209). Consequently, elitist status is a measure of an individual's ranking in relation to other members of the group. It is an indication of how privileged a group member is. In any social group, the extent of being privileged or otherwise goes a long way to determine a person's perception, knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, etc. Hence, this study is an attempt to investigate elitist status and perceived radio message utility among Fulani herdsmen in Akinyele local government area (LGA) of Oyo State by answering the following research questions:

1. What is the extent of perceived radio message utility among Fulani herdsmen in the study area?
2. What is the effect of elitist status on perceived radio message utility?
3. How does marital status, education and age influence perceived radio message utility among Fulani herdsmen in the study area?

Methodology

This work is a Fulani-herdsmen based cross-sectional survey in Akinyele LGA, Ibadan. Structured questionnaire was used in data collection thereby guaranteeing anonymity of respondents. Akinyele LGA is one of the six peri-urban LGAs in Ibadan. It has 12 political wards and has a land mass of 575km^2. The people of the LGA are predominantly Yorùbá but several other tribes reside in the communities of the LGA, including the Fulani. There are large hectares of grassland which is suitable for animal rearing. This is probably why there is a concentration of herdsmen in the study area. According to the National Population Commission (2007), the total number of people in Akinyele LGA is 211359. Fulani herdsmen were assumed to constitute 50% of this population (211359÷ 2= 105,679.5). One hundred and five thousand, six hundred and

seventy-nine (105,679) was taken as the total population (N) figure for this study. With the use of sample size calculator, the required sample size at 95% confidence level and confidence interval of 7 was 196. This was increased to 205 but 202 copies of the questionnaire were used in the final analysis. Four wards were selected from the 12 wards in Akinyele LGA. These included Onidundu, Arulogun, Alabata and Orile-Ijaye/Atan wards. In each of these wards, two villages were further selected. They included Igaemo, Labode, Owe, Oboda, Mele, Okegbemi, Atan and Iroko. The Fulani herdsmen of these villages were located. The Yorùbá version of the questionnaire was administered via structured interview among them. The Fulani herdsmen are generally good speakers of Yorùbá language, owing to their long stay in Yorùbá community. Many of them were even born and bred in Yorùbá land.

Definition and measurement of variables: Elitist status was defined as respondent's standing or importance among members of the Fulani group.It was assessed with a 5-item author-devised index that asked if respondents could read in any language; write in any language; had ever been invited to speak on behalf of Fulani people; had any leadership role among fellow Fulani herdsmen; and had ever organized other kinsmen to achieve any goal. Response categories were 'yes' or 'no', which were scored 1 or 0 respectively. Scores were aggregated. Possible scores ranged from 0 to 5.

Perceived radio message utility was defined as the level of satisfaction and usefulness derived from radio messages. The variable was measured with an 11-item author devised scale. An example of items in the scale is: 'message from radio enlightens me on livestock management'. Responses included 'very well', 'just a little' and 'not at all'. The internal reliability of the scale as assessed with Crobach alpha was 0.784. Items were scored such that higher score meant higher perceived utility, from 0 to 2. Scores were aggregated. Possible score (scale) ranged from 0 to 22. In order to assess the distribution of perceived radio message utility, the mean score served as criteria to classify respondents into two. Those who scored the mean and below, ($n \leq$ mean) as well as those who scored above the mean ($n \geq$ mean) were categorized as having low

and high perceived utility respectively. Data collection took place between May and July 2016.

Data analysis: The distribution of socio-demographic profile of respondents was depicted with percentile analysis. Normalcy of distribution of perceived utility was assessed with Kolmogorov Smirnov test; and it was normal (p>0.05). The relationship between elitist status and perceived radio message utility was assessed with Spearman rank correlation coefficient (r).Levene's test was used to assess homogeneity of variance across sub-groups. One way ANOVA was used to assess significant differences in means across sub-groups of marital status, education, and age.Brown-Forsythe's test was used to affirm differences. Levene's test was used to assess homogeneity of variance across sub groups of socio-demographic characteristics. R and R^2 were used as measures of effect size while post hoc test (LSD) was used to identify homogenous sub groups.

Results and Discussions

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

All respondents were male. Respondents were predominantly married (83.2%). Marriage stability was excellent among respondents in the study area. Holders of secondary school certificate were 46.5%. This shows that about 1 out of 2 herdsmen had secondary education. This is rather impressive. Those without formal education were 23.3% while those with primary education were 29.7%. The percentage of those without formal education probably indicates that illiteracy is still a considerable problem among herdsmen. Just one respondent (0.5%) could boast of tertiary education. This is a strong indication that tertiary education is out of reach of Fulani herdsmen. Respondents aged between 18 to 25 and 26 to 35 were 16.8% and 23.3%, respectively. Those aged between 36 to 45 and 46 to 55 were 26.2% and 20.3% respectively. The 56 and above sub-group were 13.4%. These show that virtually all age groups are well represented in the study. This age distribution indicates that herding is widely practiced

by younger and older Fulani people, it is not confined to people of certain age category alone. Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Socio-demographic profile of respondents		(%)
Marital status	Single	15.3
	Married	83.2
	Divorced	1.0
	Widowed	0.5
Highest educational qualification	No formal education	23.3
	Primary School Certificate	29.7
	Secondary School Certificate	46.5
	Tertiary Certificate	.5
Age (in years)	18-25	16.8
	26-35	23.3
	36-45	26.2
	46-55	20.3
	56 and above	13.4

Elitist Status and Perceived Radio Message Utility

The mean score of elitist status was 1.30±1.10 (min. =0, max. =5). Elitist status was low among Fulani herdsmen in the study area. The mean score of perceived radio message utility was 5.38±3.19 (min. =1, max. =19). Mean perceived utility was very low; and 68.8% of respondents scored the mean and below. The percentage of those who scored above the mean was 31.2. Perceived radio message utility was arbitrarily considered low among 68.8%. This is a strong indication that radio messages have not been tailored towards the need of Fulani herdsmen; yet, these people are reputable for being great listeners of the radio. Elitist status and perceived radio message utility were positively and significantly related (Spearman's r = .523; p= 0.000). This relationship

was fairly strong. It indicates that increasing elitist status will significantly, positively and somewhat strongly affect Fulani herdsmen's acknowledgement of radio message utility.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Perceived Radio Message Utility among Respondents

Perceived radio message utility was best among singles (mean =5.74±3.3). This was closely followed by the married respondent's perceived utility (mean =5.36±3.1). Among the divorced, perceived utility was (mean =4.00±1.4). The mean perceived utility for the only widowed respondent was 1. These differences are insignificant (p>0.05). Levene's rest attest to these insignificant difference because there is sub-group homogeneity of variance across subgroups of marital status (p>0.05). Hence, marital status has no effect on perceived radio message utility. This implies that marriage confers no special influence on respondent's perception of radio message utility.

The 26-35 age sub-group scored the highest in perceived utility (mean =6.40±3.4). This was followed by the 18-25 age sub-group with a mean score of 6.02±3.2. The 36-45 sub-group scored a mean of 5.64±2.8 while the 56-above scored a mean of 4.51±3.3. The 46-55 sub-group scored the least (mean= 3.92±2.5). These differences were significant (p<0.05). However, the result of Levene's test threatened the validity of these differences (p<0.05). Nevertheless, Brown-Forsythe's test affirmed these differences (p<0.05). Therefore, age has a main effect on perceived radio message utility. Result of post-hoc test shows that the 46-55 and the 56 and above sub-groups were dissimilar with the 18-25, the 26-35 and the 36-45 sub-groups (p<0.05). Hence, the perceived radio message utility of younger Fulani herdsmen was significantly better than that of older ones. This is probably an indication that younger herdsmen are more comfortable with the language and presentations of radio programmes, when compared with their older counterparts. The extent of the association between age and perceived utility was -.241. $R^2$was .058, indicating that 5.8% of the variation in perceived utility was accounted by age.

The only respondent with tertiary education scored highest in perceived utility (mean =14). The mean perceived utility score of respondents without formal education, with primary and secondary education were 3.46±2.0, 4.68±2.5 and 6.70±3.3 respectively. Although there are significant differences in these means (p<0.05), Levene's test threatens the validity of these differences because it did not indicate sub-group homogeneity of variance across subgroups of education (p<0.05). In addition, Brown-Forsythe's test could not be used to affirm/refute significant differences because the tertiary sub-group had only one case. Consequently, education cannot be said to have significant effect on perceived utility. Meanwhile, it is clear from descriptive statistics that increasing education predisposed to increased perceived utility among respondents. This ordinarily reflects that formal education is an asset to the acknowledgement of perceived radio message utility among respondents. Findings indicating the effect of socio-demographic variables on perceived radio message utility among respondents are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Effect of marital status, age and education on perceived radio message utility among respondents

Socio-demographic variable	Sub-groups	Mean	ANOVA
			F statistic
Marital status	Single	5.74±3.3	.884
	Married	5.36±3.1	
	Divorced	4.00±1.4	
	Widowed	1.00	
Age (in years)*	18-25	6.02±3.2	4.56*
	26-35	6.40±3.4	
	36-45	5.64±2.8	
	46-55	3.92±2.5	
	56 and above	4.51±3.3	
Education	Noformal Education	3.46±2.0	18.01*
	Primary	4.68±2.5	
	Secondary	6.70±3.3	
	Tertiary	14	

*P≤0.05

Conclusion and Recommendation

Perceived radio message utility is low among Fulani herdsmen in the study area. This is a considerable cause for concern in the light that, the typical Fulani herdsman is an ardent radio listener. The tremendous benefits that are accruable from using radio as a tool of extension is yet to be optimally tapped. Elitist status has substantial and significant consequence on perceived radio message utility. Ranking higher, and being privileged had positive implications for improved perception of radio message utility. Indeed, elitist status is valid yardstick for assessing the direction of perceived radio message utility. Efforts to improve the acknowledgement of radio message utility must necessarily focus on less ranking and less privileged group members. Marital status and education are insignificant factors in perceived radio message utility. Being younger predisposes to stronger perceived utility of radio messages among Fulani herdsmen. The specific needs of older persons deserve to be more attended to, in radio programme development to ensure their improved acknowledgement of radio message utility.

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