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Training Needs of Media Practitioners on Dissemination of Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) Information in Nigeria

Meludu, Nkiru T.¹, Okanlawon, O.M.,² and AdeOluwa, O. O.³

¹Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria.

²Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State.

³Department of Agronomy, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.
Corresponding Author E-mail: oklat4real@gmail.com

Abstract

This study was carried out to assess the training need of media practitioners on the dissemination of Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) information in Nigeria. Multistage sampling technique was used to select 22 print, audio and audio-visual media practitioners in nine states (Oyo, Osun, Ekiti, Imo, Enugu, Kaduna, Plateau, Abuja and Anambra States) across three geo-political zones (South-West (SW), South East (SE) and Northern Nigeria (NN) of Nigeria to give a total sample size of 198 out of which 192 were sampled. Data were collected through well-structured questionnaire and analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics using Chi-square and Pearsons Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The study revealed that the mean age of respondents was 40.34 ± 12.9 and majority (94.8%) of the respondents had tertiary education. Many of the respondents were print media practitioners (41.7%). The mean years of media experience was 9.48 ± 6.29 and majority (83.3%) of the media practitioners sampled belonged to the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ). More than half (51%) of the respondents were informed about organic agriculture through electronic media, and majority (75.0%) had high level of awareness about EOA practices with favourable attitude (58.3%) towards EOA information dissemination. Respondents needed further training (65.1%) on benefits of EOA, EOA technologies (64.1%) and certification of organic farms (60.9%). To ensure adequate dissemination of EOA information, there should be regular training of media practitioners on EOA practices to ensure effective dissemination of EOA practices to the general public and more stakeholders should be involved in promoting EOA information dissemination in Nigeria.

Keywords: Training need, Organic, Dissemination, Mass media, Journalist

Les Besoins en Formation des Media Spécialisées Dans la Diffusion de L'information Sur L'agriculture Ecologique Biologique (EOA) au Nigeria

Résumé

Cette étude a été réalisée pour évaluer le besoin en formation des professionnels des médias en matière de diffusion d'informations sur l'agriculture biologique écologique (EOA) au Nigéria. La technique d'échantillonnage aléatoire à plusieurs degrés a été utilisée pour sélectionner 22 praticiens des médias écrits, audio et audiovisuels dans neuf États (Oyo, Osun, Ekiti, Imo, Enugu, Kaduna, Plateau, Abuja et Anambra) de trois zones géopolitiques (Sud-Ouest, Sud-est et nord du Nigeria (NN) pour donner un échantillon total de 198 personnes, desquelles 192 ont été échantillonnées. Les données ont été collectées à l'aide d'un questionnaire bien structuré et analysées

à l'aide de statistiques descriptives et inférentielles, corrélation du moment et du produit Pearsons (PPMC). L'étude a révélé que l'âge moyen des répondants était de $40,34 \pm 12,9$ ans et que la majorité (94,8%) des répondants étaient diplômés de l'enseignement supérieur et que 41% étaient des professionnels de la presse écrite (41,7%). Le nombre moyen d'années d'expérience dans les médias était de $9,48 \pm 6,29$ et la majorité (83,3%) des professionnels des médias échantillonnés appartenait au Syndicat des journalistes du Nigéria (NUJ). Plus de la moitié (51%) des répondants étaient informés de l'agriculture biologique par le biais des médias électroniques et la majorité (75,0%) étaient très sensibilisées aux pratiques de l'agenda d'évaluation, avec une attitude favorable (58,3%) à l'égard de la diffusion de l'information. Les répondants avaient besoin d'une formation complémentaire (65,1%) sur les avantages de l'EOA, de ses technologies (64,1%) et de la certification des exploitations biologiques (60,9%). Pour assurer une diffusion adéquate des informations EOA, les professionnels des médias devraient être régulièrement formés aux pratiques EOA afin d'assurer une diffusion efficace des pratiques EOA auprès du grand public et un plus grand nombre de parties prenantes devraient être associées à la promotion de la diffusion des informations EOA au Nigéria.

Mots-clés: Besoin de formation, Organique, Diffusion, Médias de masse, Journaliste

Introduction

The need to disseminate information on Ecological Organic Agriculture is very paramount to ensure safety of our environment, soil and citizenry. Communicating ideas to farmers and other end users is better done through the media to solicit a more effective response. Effective news, information and communication are pertinent before development can take place (Agbaje, 2013). Media practitioners are specialists in disseminating information to end users through the use of Information and Communication Technology. They make a significant contribution in enhancing agricultural production by increasing the efficiency, productivity and sustainability of small-scale farms. The role of ICT in enhancing food security and supporting rural livelihoods is increasingly recognized and had been officially endorsed at the World Summit on the Information Society (Nyagba, 2009). This includes the use of computers, internet, geographical information systems, mobile phones, as well as traditional media such as radio or TV in promoting agriculture development. Phillip (2006) asserted that rural communities require information on supply of inputs, new technologies, early warning systems (drought, pests, and diseases), credit, market prices and their competitors which can be obtained with the aid of ICT to bring about increase in agricultural production. Mass media methods in agricultural information dissemination generally, are useful in reaching a wide audience at a very fast rate. They are useful as sources of agricultural information to farmers

and as well constitute methods of notifying farmers of new developments and emergencies. They could equally be important in stimulating farmers' interests in new ideas and practices. It is important to provide information to enable the rural community make informed decisions regarding their farming activities, especially in the rural areas of developing countries (Lwoga, 2010). In Nigeria, various communication media are being used to transmit organic agriculture information to farmers in line with national policy on agriculture. The communication media include farm magazines, leaflets, newsletters, newspapers, pamphlets, radio and television, among others. Among other sources of information, radio and TV also depict value for information dissemination (Igbokwe and Ajala, 1995). Therefore, in order to sensitize a wider audience of farmers and consumers, the use of mass media is evident thereby creating a 'level playing field' between producers and traders in a region. This will enable rural communities to interact with other stakeholders on organic products mobilization, marketing and value addition, thus reducing social isolation. It also widens the perspective of local communities in terms of national or global developments, opens up new business opportunities and allows easier contact with friends and relatives, rural communities benefit from better access to credit and rural banking facilities. Oyewole, Oloyede and Meludu (2014) reported that despite the increasing number of dailies being published in Nigeria, it is very important to note that coverage of agriculture-based news is extremely low. Therefore, there is the need to get the farmers

and the consumers informed about the benefits of organic agriculture through the use of appropriate media. This study therefore, assessed the training needs of media practitioners on EOA information dissemination.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study was to assess the training needs of media practitioners on the dissemination of EOA information in Nigeria while the specific objectives were to:

1. determine the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents;
2. discover respondents' source of information on EOA;
3. ascertain respondents awareness' about EOA practices;
4. determine respondents perception to disseminate information on EOA; and
5. ascertain respondents' training needs on EOA information dissemination.

Materials and Methods

A well-structured questionnaire was used to obtain data from selected media practitioners across the country. Multistage sampling procedure was used for data collection. The first stage included random selection of three out of the six geo-political zones of the country where sensitization on organic agriculture had been carried out {South-West (SW), South East (SE) and Northern Nigeria (NN)}. Three states where sensitization on EOA had been done were purposively selected from each of the zones to make a total of nine states (Oyo, Osun and Ekiti States from the SW, Imo, Enugu and Anambra States from the SE and Kaduna, Jos and Abuja from NN). Also, simple random selection of 22 print, audio and audio-visual media practitioners was done in each of the selected states to give a total sample size of 198 respondents, out of which 192 were sampled. The use of descriptive and inferential statistics such as Chi-square and Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC) were used to analyse data for the study.

Results and Discussion

Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

It was revealed in Table 1 that the mean age of respondents in the study area was 40.34 ± 12.9 which indicated that they were still quite young and resourceful in their activities. This implies that many of the respondents were adults and fall within the economically active age group. It was also revealed from the study that majority (72.9%) of the respondents in the study area were married which indicated that they likely obtained a form of support or the other from their immediate family in executing their daily activities. Majority (94.8%) of the respondents in the study area had tertiary education, implying that they were educated and predisposed to exploring new methods in disseminating agricultural information to eventual end users. Many of the respondents (41.7%) sampled were involved in dissemination of agricultural information through the print media followed by audio-visual (30.7%) and audio media (27.6%). This implies that printed materials were mostly used in disseminating agricultural information to end users in the study area. Oyewole, Oloyede and Meludu (2014) also affirmed that print media was mostly used to disseminate agricultural information in Southwest, Nigeria. It was also revealed that an average media practitioner in the study area had 9.48 ± 6.29 years of experience in disseminating agricultural information to end users. This implies that many of the respondents had reasonable number of working experience that could enable them disseminate agricultural information through the use of mass media. Ani, (2006) also affirmed that the working experience of media practitioners to a large extent affects their managerial know-how as well as the use of various communication methods including the mass media to disseminate relevant information.

It was also revealed that majority (83.3%) of the respondents belonged to the national umbrella body of Nigerian Journalists (NUJ) while others belonged to some other related associations which are mostly the source of contact for any information to be disseminated to them.

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Frequency	%	Mean
Sex			
Male	146	76.0	
Female	46	24.0	
Age			
<20	2	1.04	40.34±12.9
21-30	16	8.33	
31-40	75	39.1	
41-50	68	35.4	
51-60	28	14.6	
>60	3	1.6	
Marital Status			
Single	49	25.5	
Married	140	72.9	
Widowed	3	1.50	
Educational Qualification			
Secondary	10	5.2	
Tertiary	182	94.8	
Type of media outfit			
Print media	80	41.7	
Audio	53	27.6	
Audio-visual	59	30.7	9.48±6.29
Years of media experience			
>5	61	31.8	
6-10	65	33.9	
11-15	32	16.7	
16-20	16	8.3	
>21	18	9.4	
Professional Associations			
NUJ	160	83.3	
MMPN	11	5.7	
RATTAWU	8	4.2	
FIBAN	9	4.7	
Continental Broadcast Service	1	0.5	
Ass. of Governors office correspondence	1	0.5	
Yoruba Broadcaster Association	2	1.0	

Source: Field survey, 2016

Respondents' Source of Information on EOA

The study (Table 2) revealed that more than half (51%) of the respondents received information about Ecological Organic Agriculture through electronic media like radio, television and internet, while 48% of the respondents received information on EOA through the print media like

newsletters, magazines and publications. Some of the respondents (37%) got informed about EOA through trainings and workshops, while about 28% got informed about EOA through research institutes. This result implies that more trainings should be organized for media practitioners on EOA, especially in the Northern

Table 2: Respondents' source of information on EOA

Source of information on EOA	YES	NO
Agricultural Researchers	40.1	59.9
Print media (journals, publications, newspapers)	47.9	52.1
Electronic media (Television , Radio, Internet)	51.0	49.0
Family and Friends	47.4	52.6
Extension Agents	42.7	57.3
Trainings/workshops	37.0	63.0
Research Institutes	28.1	71.9

Source: Field survey, 2016

and Eastern part of the country to ensure wide coverage and awareness of EOA to relevant stakeholders. Khushk and Memon (2004) stated that production and distribution of printed materials help farmers in the transfer of new information and technologies. Oyewole, Oloyede and Meludu(2014) also asserted in a similar study that Nigerian media practitioners usually make use of multiple sources of information before dissemination of agricultural information to end users.

Respondents' Awareness on EOA

In Table 3, it was revealed that many (70.0%) of the respondents were aware that planting of cover crops helps to prevent erosion and increases soil nutrients. However, few (36%) of the respondents were aware of the use of crop rotation to manage

soil nutrients, 47% of the respondents were aware that use of plant residue supplies nutrient to the soil. Just about 30% of them were aware of the use of neem and ash for pest control and about 26% of them were aware of the use of farm and kitchen wastes for compost manure. The study (Table 4) further reveals that majority (75.0%) of the respondents had high level of awareness about EOA practices but they were not really involved in the production. This result implies that majority of the respondents still need to be trained on EOA practices so that they will be able disseminate correct and new EOA innovation to stakeholders within their region through their various media outfits. Agbaje (2013) stated that creation of awareness is the first step towards the adoption process.

Table 3: Table showing respondents' Extent of Awareness on EOA

Awareness on EOA practices	Extent of Awareness		
	To a large extent	To a lesser extent	Not at all
Planting of cover and leguminous crops to prevent erosion and increase soil nutrient	2.6	70.3	27.1
Use of animal manure for composting	11.4	66.7	21.9
Use of plant residue to supply nutrients into the soil	47.4	36.5	16.1
Mulching for leaching of soil nutrients & weed control	31.3	45.3	23.4
Crop rotation to replace replenished soil nutrients	35.9	39.6	24.5
Bush fallowing to allow soil regain its lost nutrients	43.8	33.3	22.9
Biological and cultural methods of weed control	37.0	33.9	29.2
Use of neem solution and wood ash for pest control	29.7	40.1	30.2
Shifting cultivation to control pests and diseases	27.6	41.7	30.7
Compost application to increase soil fertility	34.9	41.7	23.4
Green and Animal manuring	29.2	38.5	32.3
Use of farm and kitchen wastes for compost manure	25.5	43.2	31.3

Source: Field survey, 2016

Table 4: Level of Awareness on EOA

Level of Awareness on EOA	Frequency	Percent
Low	48	25.0
High	144	75.0

Source: Field survey, 2016

Respondents' perception on dissemination of EOA information

The study (Table 5) revealed that more than half (58.3%) of the respondents had favourable attitude to dissemination of EOA information in the study area. This implies that the high level of awareness of EOA practices influenced the attitude of the respondents towards disseminating information about it. This is in line with David *et al*

Table 5: Perception category of respondents to EOA information dissemination

Attitude category	Frequency	Percent
Unfavorable	80	41.7
Favorable	112	58.3

Source: Field survey, 2016

al (2009)'s finding that mass media have the capacity to increase farmers' knowledge and attitude towards agriculture.

Respondents' Training Need on EOA

Majority (65%) of the respondents need training on the health benefits of stakeholders (Fig. 1) while 64% of the respondents require training on organic agricultural production practices. Result also shows that 61% of the respondents required training on certification of organic farms. Other training needs as indicated by the respondents are on Agro-processing of EOA produce (53%), organic principles and practices (56%) and organic agricultural marketing (51%). This result implies that regular training should be carried out on regular basis for media practitioners across the country to ensure high awareness, knowledge and involvement of respondents on EOA for wider coverage and increased involvement of other stakeholders. Ariyo *et al.* (2013) also affirmed in a similar study that media practitioners need regular training on new agricultural technologies to be disseminated to the eventual end users in the Northern part of Nigeria.

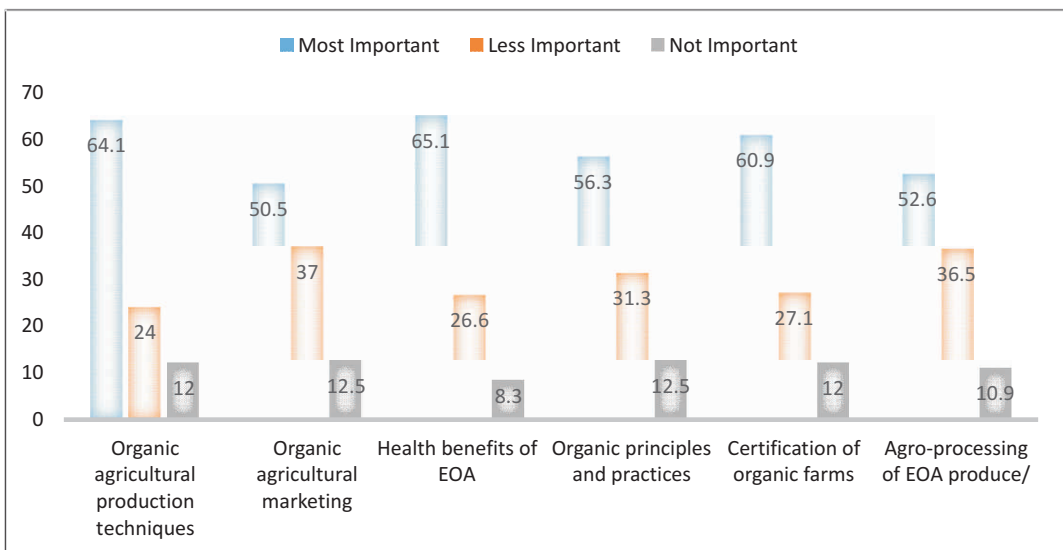


Figure 1: Training needs of respondents on EOA

Source: Field survey, 2016

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that media practitioners should be involved in frequent training on EOA practices to ensure effective dissemination of EOA practices to the general public.

Media practitioners also need to be equally sensitized along with other agricultural stakeholders on improved EOA technologies that will enhance sustainable agriculture.

The study recommends that policy makers should also ensure the presence of media practitioners when developing appropriate EOA policies for adequate dissemination of information to the public, and that more stakeholders be involved in promoting EOA information dissemination.

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