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## CONTENT ANALYSIS OF AGRICULTURAL TRAINING ADVERTISEMENTS IN NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS

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*Received 9 August 2013, Revised 2 December 2013, Accepted 25 December 2013, Published online 31 December 2013*

### Abstract

It is obvious that the use of newspapers is one of the ways through which literate farmers could access agriculture-related information and are acquainted with innovations in agriculture. This study investigated the content of agricultural training advertisements in three Nigerian newspapers: The Guardian, Nigerian Tribune and Daily Times. Using multistage sampling techniques, 240 editions of these newspapers containing 609 advertisements for five years (2001–2005) were selected. In terms of agricultural sub-sectoral coverage, 30.3% were on veterinary services while forestry services recorded the least advertisement (4.0 %). The Nigerian Tribune newspaper has the highest coverage of agricultural training advertisements 40.7% compared to the 34.7% and 12.2% for Daily Times and Guardian newspapers, respectively. The result also showed that majority of agricultural training advertisements (81.10%) were placed on the non-prominent pages of the selected newspapers. Chi-Square analysis of association between the categories of agricultural training advertisements in the focal newspapers showed that there is significant relationship in the rate at which the sampled newspapers advertise different category of agricultural training advertisements in the newspapers ( $p < 0.05$ ). Chi square analysis also indicated that there is significant association between the placements of agricultural training advertisements and type of newspapers ( $p < 0.05$ ). This implies that advertisement placement on prominent pages of newspapers is determined by the policy of print media organization which also varies with cost of advertisement. It is therefore recommended that agricultural news items should be given more prominence as a panacea for increased information source to new entrants, especially the literate farmers to encourage farming.

**Keywords:** Agricultural Training Advertisement, Nigerian Newspapers, Literate Farmers

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### Introduction

Dissemination of different agricultural information are priorities for technological transfer and acquisition of new skills in agriculture especially now that literate but less technically sound individuals are engaging in agriculture. Oladeji (1999) posited that the movements of the new entrant (literate farmers) who usually have higher education than the traditional farmers, into the farming enterprise have brought about an upswing in the literacy level of the farming audience. This group of people, mostly urban based, may rely on the news media especially the print media for the much needed agricultural information. Reilly and Clark (1990) indicate that training is a process through which knowledge, skill and attitude for a purpose of a specific job, task or vocation is developed through instruction and practice. Newspapers serve as the major advertising medium for the smallest retailers as well as some of the largest

corporations. Therefore, there are agricultural content in Nigerian daily news; contents that must be content analyzed for efficiency. Content analysis according to Oladeji and Fawole (1999) is a systematic way of reporting social and economic life that is dominated or influenced by casual observations about the content of communication.

A broad channel of communication in extension is the mass media. Most mass media have a wide coverage and a far-reaching effect on agricultural information dissemination. Communication is a vital link in agricultural and rural development. However, agricultural news items have suffered limited coverage in Nigerian Newspaper (Olowu 1990; Salawu, 1983). While advertisements are predominant in most Nigerian dailies, most of the advertisements are non-agricultural (Oladeji and Olowu, 2001). Studies have been undertaken on content analysis of advertisements in

Guardian newspaper (Oloruntoba and Olowu, 2001) on agricultural news and stories, visuals and information clues in agricultural advertisements (Oladeji, 1999) but none has focused on agricultural training advertisements in Nigerian newspapers. It is against this background that this study will provide answers to the following questions:

- What are the content categories of agricultural training advertised in the selected Nigerian newspapers?
- What is the nature of placement of agricultural training advertisements on pages of newspapers?

## Methodology

There are 28 daily newspapers in Nigeria (Media World, 1996) and these newspapers constitute the study population. Sampling of newspapers was based on purposive selection and stratification based on circulation figures, location of publishing house and ownership. A five year period (July 1<sup>st</sup> 2001 to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2005) was chosen to determine the coverage given to agricultural training advertisement in three Nigerian newspapers. The period was chosen because it marked the emergence of many agricultural programmes and most especially poverty reduction programmes like Fadama II, Local Empowerment and Environmental Management Programme (LEEMP), Special Programme on Food Security (SPFS) and Community Based Poverty Reduction Project (CPRP) in the nation. Newspapers that were in circulation throughout the five year period of study were purposively considered for sampling. Consequently, The Guardian, Nigeria Tribune and Daily Times Newspapers that have wide coverage both in space and in content were selected.

Using simple random sampling technique in selecting the months in order to determine the number of editions to be examined, 50% of the months in the five year period were selected for a total of 30 months (6 x 5), 50% of the weeks in the months were selected for a total of 60 weeks (30 x 2), while three days were chosen from Monday to Friday as week days and a day from Saturday and Sunday, that is, weekends. This exercise made a total of two hundred and forty days (60 x 4) for the study. Hence, a total of 240 editions of newspapers were selected, used and data were analyzed with both descriptive and inferential statistics. The content of all agricultural training advertisements were analyzed based on their themes. The specific content areas prominently reported are those that have immediate functional relevance for the target audience. However, to facilitate the content analysis, six content categories that were mutually exhaustive and

exclusive were developed based on the training category as follows:

- Veterinary Services (VS) training category: This includes training advertisement on livestock related studies: Veterinary nursing and livestock management, veterinary physiology.
- Agricultural Services (AS) training category: This includes training advertisements on fish farming, animal feeds and nutrition, livestock production, pig husbandry, poultry keeping, crop protection, crop production, commercial horticulture, glass house and protected cropping, nursery practice, fruit production, vegetable, flower production, agricultural, food marketing, farm business administration and management, landscape.
- Forestry Services (FS) training category: This includes training adverts on Wood Science, Agro-forestry and forestry related activities.
- Agricultural Technology (AT) training category: This includes training adverts on agricultural mechanization, meat technology, food processing machine and any other agricultural related machine.
- Food Related (FR) training category: This include training advertisements on meat inspection, food and drink inspection, food marketing, food sciences and fisheries.
- Other Agricultural Related Training (OAR) training category: This includes training advertisements on other aspects of agriculture not mentioned.

Position of advertisement in selected newspapers and frequency are the two variables of prominence used in analyzing the editions. All agricultural training advertisements contained in the front page, middle page, back page or centre/special page of the sampled newspaper editions were considered prominent while those on other pages were rated as not prominent. The number of times agricultural training advertisements appears in front and back pages were counted and recorded. Hence, frequency is the number of times agricultural training advertisements appear on the prominent pages of the newspapers.

## Reliability of Coding

To ensure reliability of data, code and re-code method of reliability was employed to cross-check accuracy of coding using the Spearman Rank Correlation (*r*). Here 20 newspaper editions out of the total sample were selected. The proportion of agreement was 87 per cent.

## Results and Discussion

### ***Content category of agricultural training advertisement***

Findings showed that all the categories of Agricultural Training Advertisements were contained in the selected newspapers, except in the Guardian Newspaper that does not contain Veterinary Services and Agricultural Technology Advertisements. Olowu (1990) posited that

virtually all aspects of agriculture production activities are newsworthy because they are found in newspapers. Table 1 presents the distribution of the categories of agricultural training advertisements. Findings further revealed that the Nigerian Tribune has relatively the highest coverage with 40.7% compared with the 34.7% and 12.2% for Daily Times and The Guardian respectively.

Table 1. Categories of agricultural training advertisements

Advertisement Category	Daily Times		The Guardian		Nigerian Tribune		Overall	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Veterinary Services (VS)	32	39.0	0	0.0	29	27.6	61	30.3
Agricultural Services (AS)	12	14.6	6	42.9	15	14.3	33	16.4
Forestry Services (FS)	4	4.9	1	7.1	3	2.9	8	4.0
Agricultural Tech. (AT)	10	12.2	0	0.0	25	23.8	35	17.4
Food Related (FR)	15	18.3	3	21.4	15	14.3	33	16.4
Other Agriculture Related (OAR)	9	11.0	4	28.6	18	17.1	31	15.4
Sub Total	82	100	14	100	105	100	201	100
Non-Agricultural Advertisements (NAA)	154	100	101	100	153	100	408	100

The dominance of almost a third (30.0%) of the Veterinary Advertisements training categories may not be unconnected to the outbreak of epidemics such as the avian Influenza (Bird flu), Swine Fever and Swine flu in the livestock sub-sector within the period in the country. Again, livestock and fish farming are now in vogue among new entrant farmers than other aspects of agriculture. This brings to the fore the specific training needs advertisements for this category of farmers for optimum service delivery. According to FAO (1997), training is useful only when it is designed to meet the need of trainee, and is offered to people who will benefit from it.

### ***Placement of agricultural training advertisements***

Findings on Table 2 showed that the majority of agricultural training advertisements were placed on the non-prominent pages of the selected newspapers (81.10%) while few (18.90%) were displayed on prominent pages. This report is in agreement with previous findings that agricultural news or activities are mostly placed on non prominent newspaper pages (Agumagu, 1988; Fawole, 1995). Placement of agricultural advertisements on prominent pages of newspapers is a function of request for the pages by manufacturers, marketers or advertising agencies of agricultural products or services as well as the ability to pay the advertisement rates of prominent pages as advertisement rates differ for prominent and non-prominent pages of Nigerian Newspapers (Oladeji, 1999; Oloruntoba and Olowu, 2001).

Table 2. Prominence of agricultural training advertisements in selected Nigerian newspapers

Position of Advertisement	Daily Times		The Guardian		Nigerian Tribune		Overall	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Agricultural Advertisement								
Front Page	2	2.4	0	0.0	4	3.8	6	3.0
Back Page	7	8.5	1	7.1	10	9.5	18	9.0
Centre Page	2	2.4	0	0.0	3	2.9	5	2.5
Special Page	4	4.9	1	7.1	4	3.8	9	4.5
Other Page	67	81.7	12	85.7	84	80.0	163	81.1
Total	82	100	14	100	105	100	201	100
Position of Advertisements	Daily Times		The Guardian		Nigerian Tribune		Overall	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Non-agricultural Advertisements								
Front Page	19	12.3	24	23.8	34	22.2	77	18.9
Back Page	39	25.3	48	47.5	36	23.5	123	30.1
Centre Page	20	13.0	5	5.0	44	28.8	69	16.9
Special Page	21	13.6	3	3.0	16	10.5	40	9.8
Other Pages	55	35.7	21	20.7	23	15.0	99	24.3
Total	154	100	101	100	153	100	408	100

Table 3 presents the result of chi square analysis which shows that there is significant association between the placements of agricultural training advertisements and type of newspapers ( $\chi^2 = 60.53$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This implies that advertisement placement on prominent pages of newspapers is determined by the policy of print media

organization which also varies with cost of advertisement. The Cramer's V test of strength of association shows that the association between the categories of advertisements and the focal newspapers is strong (Cramer's V = 0.19,  $p < 0.05$ ).

Table 3. Chi square analysis of relationship between categories of agricultural training advertisements in the focal newspapers (n=201)

Variables	Tool	df	value	<i>p</i>	Cramer V	Decision
Categories of Advertisements * Newspapers	$\chi^2$	12	45.11	0.00	0.19	Significant

Significant at  $p < 0.05$

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that the advertisements of agricultural training placed in Nigerian newspapers were not given adequate coverage and prominence. The study has revealed that while the coverage of agricultural items in the papers is all-inclusive, such news items are not given positions of prominence in the newspapers. This is a serious cause for concern when viewed against the need to provide exposure to new entrants literate farmers in the agricultural sector. Indeed, agriculture should be accorded its dominance role in the Nigerian economy as it was before the discovery of crude oil, which is now the main stay of the economy. It is therefore recommended that agricultural news items should be given more prominence and sponsors of agricultural programmes should be encouraged to help in reducing the cost of advertisement as agricultural training advertisements can be a panacea for increased information source to new entrants, especially the urban farmers on agricultural training programmes.

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