

Television Stations and Agribusiness in Kampala Uganda.

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Abstract. The purpose of this study was to assess the role of television coverage on agribusiness in Kampala, Uganda. The objective was to find out the number of programs and the amount of time devoted to agribusiness by television stations in Kampala, Uganda in the last two- years (2014-2016). The participants included the program managers of UBC, NBS and URBAN television stations in Kampala, Uganda. The main research instrument was interview guides. The study found that the selected TV stations had between 1 to 3 agribusiness telecast programs. Furthermore, the study found that the surveyed TV stations had only 5 to 30 minutes of airtime assigned to agribusiness programs. The study concluded that televised agribusiness programmes are effective in disseminating information to the farmers given their audio and video capabilities. Television and mass media in general should therefore go beyond teaching skills or transferring technology, the scope and objectives of TV agribusiness programmes should be broadened to include such structural constraints as poverty, the distribution and allocation of social resources. The following recommendations were made: the need for television programs to increase agribusiness programs in their airing, the television stations increase the coverage use to televise

agribusiness, the need for the government to support the television stations in their agribusiness programs, the farmers should be made aware of the intention of the show and how it would be of great benefit to them and other farmers in all the parts of the country.

Keywords: Examining, Television, Agribusiness.

1. Introduction

Generally, television is considered to be a powerful medium that performs active role in informing and educating at larger scale. For the past more than two decades, television has become part and parcel of our lives having visible direct and indirect impact on rural and urban population (Zia, 2012). During the recent past, Uganda media, particularly electronic, has witnessed unprecedented growth and many private satellite television and FM radio channels are operational in almost all parts of the country present. For a long time, the content of what is covered is usually perturbing to the public on the point of its relevance and or importance to the community, who is the intended audience. Media content, especially news, is about events or people that are

overwhelming enough to catch the reporter's attention (Ojebode, 2006).

The protrusion can be as a result of oddity, negativity or numerical or spatial magnitude further contends that, people who are at the frontline of the society, even if they perform an ordinary task, get focused on by the mass media. Once prominence accomplishes its role of attracting the initial media attention, status conferral takes over and this is a function of continued media patronage. This is an indication that what is covered by media may at times depend on influence of a person and not the importance to community (Mencher, 1989).

In Uganda, use of electronic media in agricultural sector seems to be a recent phenomenon. However, it is not clear whether these recent strides have made significant impact on farming communities. Electronic media in form of radio and television has remained in use by the department as one of the important teaching tools. But how far these media have been effective in achieving desired results seems to be an important area to be investigated. Grace, (2004) argues that communication plays an important role in the development of a country. If means of communication are economical, fast and well-developed they can produce favorable impact on attitude, modernization and widening of market.

Uganda being an agricultural country has a rich and vast natural resources base, covering various climatic zones. So the agriculture sector has potential for accelerating economic and industrial growth in a country like Uganda. The importance of agriculture for Uganda's economy can be gauged in three ways: first, it provides food to consumers and raw material for domestic industries; secondly, it is a source of foreign exchange earnings; and third, it provides a market for industrial goods. At the time of independence, the agricultural sector had the largest contribution to GDP of Uganda. Although over the years' service sector has become the largest contributor but agriculture sector still remains the largest contributor to its GDP. This sector is also a major source of employment in Uganda, sharing more than 70% of total employment (FAO, 2007).

Despite the paramount importance of agriculture, in Uganda, its pace of development is very slow. The agricultural production of the country is lower as compared to other countries of the world, even within the country there is an ample gap between per hectare yield of crops between progressive and conventional farmers (MAAIF, 1996). This is only because of indifference towards acquiring and adopting latest production technologies for enhancing crop yields and achieving sustainability in agriculture.

Media is now a mainstream form of communication around the world and continues to grow in popularity with the increase in the number of gadgets and devices like smart phones and the ease of use whilst on the go. There are now billions users of various media platforms in the world and other industries have embraced these platforms in business and consumer engagement, however, it has not been widely accepted in agriculture. Limited research available shows that there are increasing trends in farmer and agribusiness uptake in media as the popularity of modern media receiving devices increase (Angwenyi, 2016).

2. Theoretical Perspective

This study adopted Development communication theory, Development communication theory is a view and theoretical stand promoted by scholars like Glean Hecter (1969), Everly Cammerron (1972) and Krosore Maine (1984). The basic claims of this theory center on the attitude of communities to change and how communication supports and impact drives the change process.

According to Mefalopulous (2008) development communication theory is the notions of development communications have evolved with time: Initially, development communications was characterized by the use of mass media that considered people as audiences ready to be influenced by the messages they received, which was pure and simple one-way asymmetrical communication. This specific communication perspective is rooted in the basic Sender-Message Channel-Receiver (SMCR) model; this model envisions a sender transmitting a message

through the appropriate channel to a receiver (or group of receivers). However, the model has been criticized for not being effective and it has been revised several times to enhance its effectiveness, aspect such as feedback were included to design a more symmetrical flow of communication.

The main idea behind development communication theory is media for development of people in a nation or to help the target population. Communication seeks to serve the people without manipulation and encourage genuine response. There is no propaganda as ulterior motive of communication.

Development communication theory is about working for local development and creating opportunities. Its objectives are to uplift the quality of life of people not only economically but also socially, culturally, politically etc. by using the tools of development communication. The theory later became known for its use in the developing and under developed countries. The concept of participation was later added which paved the way for model to be used for social change, development communication and democratic-participant communication theory.

Development communications process can be adjusted according to the needs, which improves the programs as a learning process, as the concept of development communication is continuously evolving. Development of different digital technologies has made the concept broader and more participatory.

The implementation of this theory plays an important role in agricultural development and communication is essential ingredients for effective transfer of technologies, information, knowledge and awareness to the farmers.

3. Statement of the problem

The agribusiness sector in Uganda is beset with myriads of information constraints, the situation has been exacerbated by persistent failures in both input and output markets and the reasons for market failure include imperfect competition, public goods and institutional failure, that is a major challenge facing the growth of agribusiness (Omamo, 2003). There is still a big disconnection between agriculture/agribusiness and major communication channels, mainly due

to lack of rural roads in major agro-ecological zones, grossly underdeveloped agricultural research systems and limited use of modern technologies in the crop, livestock and fisheries subsectors. Dorward (2009) stated that the major areas of institutional failures include underdevelopment of rural market institutions, labor, insurance and food markets, weak legal institutions and enforcement of contracts, land tenure issues and underdeveloped property rights as well as problems of collective action and development of cooperatives.

The impact of the knowledge/information sharing thought the course of human development seems to be lagging behind in Kampala, Uganda (Okello, 2006). Moreover, there are limited studies on developing strategies to enhance the role of media in the dissemination of agricultural information among farmers in Kampala, Uganda. This shows the extent to which this dominant sector (agriculture) has been neglected by not only educationists and researchers but also by the media. This study contributes to this contextual gap by examining the role of television coverage in promoting agribusiness in Kampala, Uganda.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the role of television coverage in promoting agribusiness in Kampala, Uganda.

5. Objective of the study

To find out the number of programmes and the amount of time devoted to agribusiness by television channels in the last two- years (2015-2016).

6. Research Questions

To what extent have television stations in Kampala, Uganda devoted programmes and time to agribusiness related issues in the last two-years (2015-2016)?

7. Literature Review

Electronic Media plays an important role to educate both illiterate and literate the farmers

and peasants on Modern Agricultural Practices (MAPs) and system in a sustainable manner. Success of agricultural development programs in developing countries largely depends on the nature and extent of use of mass media in mobilization of people for development in general and agribusiness in particular (Irfan *et al.*, 2006). Television has been acclaimed to be the most effective media for diffusing the scientific knowledge to the masses. In poor countries where literacy levels are low, the choice of communication media is of vital importance, particularly Television is significant, in its transfer of modern agricultural technology to literate and illiterate farmers and peasants alike even in interior areas, within short periods of time (Khan *et al.*, 2010).

With the main stream of Ugandan population, engaged actively in agriculture, television could serve as a suitable medium of dissemination of farm information and latest technical knowledge. The farmers can easily understand the operations, technology and instructions through television, the coverage of different subject matter by television with regard to agriculture, animal husbandry, agricultural marketing, agricultural engineering and cooperatives. In this article, an attempt is made to know about the importance of television and its effect in the field of agriculture through sound communication (Nazari & Hassan 2011).

Electronic media such as TV can be vital in this context. In Uganda, majority of the farmers are small and most of them reside in rural areas, where TV may be considered less effective because many of the rural dwellers may not afford it and its costs, in this digital TV era. However, Mazher, *et al.* (2003) reported that among various mass media used for technology transfer process, TV seems to be a more powerful way to communicate the latest information to the farmers. with TV, several programmes can be broadcasted on different channels. With all the above, the role and capacity of TVs in promoting agribusiness is undisputable. But what remains questionable especially in developing countries is whether these media houses give adequate attention to agribusiness issues. This seems to be a new area

and the literature is very scanty. There is a big need to ascertain how much time is devoted on telecasting information related to agriculture and agribusiness. The few related studies which exist are mainly on radio or on specific agricultural programs, which in most cases are projects to be implemented for a given time. Such programs may not give adequate knowledge to farmers related to the most recent practices in the field of agribusiness.

For example, it is important to look at farmers' knowledge about different agricultural TV broadcasts of their interest and so they can pay adequate attention. In developing countries like Uganda, it is rare to find a TV program commonly known by the masses as being agricultural. Therefore, the concept of an agricultural or farmers' TV, which has already been seen in developed countries, is still far to be fetched in developing countries. There is different agribusiness related information that can be covered and therefore broadcasted on TV, including new innovations in agriculture, agricultural technologies, market information on farm inputs, outputs as well as labor and education (Jost, 2013). Considering the importance of television as a major source for disseminating agricultural information and playing a significant role in adoption of new practices across the world, this study was planned to analyze the extent to which TV stations in Kampala, Uganda are covering agribusiness issues in their programs.

According to Muhammad *et al.*, (2004), television is an effective medium among the mass media which can be used effectively for agricultural best practices and technological transfer among the farming community. It has been acclaimed to be one of the most important communication tools available today. Much of its success in teaching lies in the unique combination of sight, sound, and motion. This coupling of audio and visual stimuli has proven that it can change human behavior and ultimately improve farmers' learning. These TVs have the potential of providing information very easily to large audience dispersed over wide geographical areas, which is impossible through personal contacts.

8. Methodology

This study used face to face interviews to collect data from television program managers about the number of programmes and time devoted to agribusiness by television channels in Kampala, Uganda in the last two-years (2015-2016). Interviews were preferred by the researcher because it supports the use of visual aids and the detection of social cues and body language, also with this type of interview, the interviewer, can gain a deeper insight to specific answers by treating the interview questions like a meaningful discussion and deducing the availability of each response.

Sampling Technique and procedure

Simple random sampling was used for selecting television stations in Kampala, Uganda which the names of all television stations in Kampala, Uganda was written on small pieces of paper and then a few stations were randomly selected while the researcher selected the program managers using purposive sampling method based on his own knowledge and professional judgment. According to Amin (2005), purposive sampling is usually used when a limited number of individuals possess the trait of interest. In other words, it is the only viable sampling technique in obtaining information from a very specific group of people.

Research Instruments

This study used interview guides as its main research instruments.

9. Data analysis

Qualitative data was analyzed using manual coding on the transcripts to identify the significant statements across individual interviews. Subsequent readings of the significant statements helped in identifying meaning of units or sub-themes emerging within the patterns. The objective of this study was to find out the number of programmes and time devoted to agribusiness by television channels in Kampala, Uganda in the last two-years (2015-2016). The objective was achieved by asking program managers of the selected television stations during face to face interview sessions.

Their responses were summarized in table 1 below:

Table 1: Showing the number of agribusiness programs in selected TV stations in Kampala, Uganda in the last two years 2015 – 2016.

TV Stations	UBC	NBS	Urban
Number of Agribusiness programs	3	1	1

Source: Primary Data, 2017

Table 1: revealed that UBC television stations had majority of the agribusiness programs while Urban TV and NBS TV had the least program as regard to agribusiness. UBC television has most of the agribusiness programs because it is a government television hence airs it as government initiated project to fight against.

The interview findings were stated as follows:

For UBC television the researcher asked the following questions:

The researcher asked the name of the agribusiness programs the station airing and the key interview informant said:

“The UBC-TV have agribusiness programs such as Business today, Farmer’s basket, and News on agribusiness”.

In an interview session, the researcher asked of how the above mentioned programs have been running in the station? Key interview informant said:

“The business today program was airing for 4-years; farmer’s basket was airing for 10- years while News on agribusiness airing for the period of 4-years”.

On a similar note, the researcher asked of how the above mentioned programs have benefited farmers? Key interview informant said:

“The agribusiness programs encourage farmers to start agriculture or farming as a business and also benefited through sharing of knowledge and practices, technologies and new innovation”.

Furthermore, the researcher asked if there are any challenges they face as they run agribusiness

programs on the television station. The key interview informant response:

"We are facing a lot of challenges which include, programs expensive in rural areas, transportation is very difficult because of lack of good road, time consuming and language barrier" Key interview informant

Finally, the researcher asked of how the above mentioned challenges can be addressed? The interview informant said:

"The challenges can be solved through supporting the program by the government, encourage the young to participate in agribusiness programs and help the farmers with some chemicals that their farming activities" Key interview informant

For URBAN television the researcher asked the following questions:

The researcher asked the name of the agribusiness programs the station airing and the key interview informant said:

"Urban television has one agribusiness program that is feed the nation" Key interview informant

In an interview session, the researcher asked of how the above mentioned program has been running in the station? Key interview informant said:

"The feed the nation program was aired for the period of 2- years" Key interview informant

On a similar note, the researcher asked of how the above mentioned program has benefited the farmers? Key interview informant said:

"The program has helped farmers to be able to market their own products, share knowledge and ideas for innovation purposes and youth are able to practice agricultural business on their own" Key interview informant

Furthermore, the researcher asked if there are any challenges they face as they run agribusiness program on the television station. The key interview informant response:

"The Urban television is facing a lot of challenges in running agribusiness program which include, difficult to communicate to the farmers effectively, lack of interest of the youth on agribusiness, transportation is difficult due to

bad roads and most of the people are not interested in watching agribusiness program compared to other programs" Key interview informant

Finally, the researcher asked of how the above mentioned challenges can be addressed? The interview informant said:

"The challenges can be addressed by encouraging people to watch agribusiness programs, farmers should give maximum cooperation to journalist and program should be in local language, so that it can be understood by farmers" Key interview informant

For NBS television the researcher asked the following questions:

The researcher asked the name of the agribusiness programs the station airing and the key interview informant said:

"The NBS-TV has only one program on agribusiness called Agricultural business" Key interview informant

In an interview session, the researcher asked of how the above mentioned program has been running in the station? Key interview informant said:

"The agricultural business program was aired for the period of 2 – years" Key interview informant

On a similar note, the researcher asked of how the above mentioned program has benefited the farmers? Key interview informant said:

"The program has been at the forefront in promoting agribusiness, disseminating information on new agricultural technology and help farmers in marketing their products." Key interview informant

Furthermore, the researcher asked if there are any challenges they face as they run agribusiness program on the television station. The key interview informant response:

"The NBS TV is facing challenges in agribusiness coverage which include, language barrier, inadequate resources and convincing them to advertise is very difficult" Key interview informant

Finally, the researcher asked of how the above mentioned challenges can be addressed? The interview informant said:

“The challenges can be addressed through sensitization of farmers, lobbying for more resources and government should support the program” Key interview informant

The above responses imply that agribusiness programmes covered on television stations have been able to greatly influence farmers’ perception and understanding of agribusiness. The programmes indeed have helped farmers to get a wider understanding of agribusiness and venture into the one they believe is more profitable and manageable for them.

From the above responses, it can be deduced that agribusiness programs are very expensive and yet very instrumental in shaping the agribusiness of the country. In this regard, it is imperative that the government supports the television stations in promoting agribusiness programmes given the fact that agriculture is the backbone of Uganda.

Table 2: Showing the coverage of television stations on agribusiness programmes.

Name of stations	Programs	Air used (minutes) weekly
UBC	Business today	5
	Farmers’ basket	25
	News on agribusiness	5
NBS	Agricultural business	30
Urban TV	Feed the Nation	30

Source: Primary Data, 2017

Table 2: revealed that most of the agribusiness programmes run on TV have been allotted airtime of 30 minutes across all the television stations surveyed. Other programs have been allotted airtime of 5 minutes featuring news time. It is true that television stations have very many programs that they promote, for instance, most entertainment programs have airtime of 1hr to 2hrs (e.g. football, music, soap operas, movies etc.). These programs as much as they are good for entertainment, they have not been successful in fighting poverty in the country more than agriculture, and yet agricultural programs are not

given much airtime on most television airings. It is therefore based on the findings of the study the amount of airtime uses to televise agribusiness should be increase to atleast 1-hour, so that the agribusiness information will be enough to the farmers.

10. Discussion of findings, Conclusion and Recommendations.

10.1 Discussions

With governments often stated, commitment to agricultural development, and rural development in general, one would have expected a vigorous and sustained media programs on agriculture and related activities; however, this seems not to be so. This study found that all the television stations visited had one or three programmes on agribusiness. UBC television had three programs of agribusiness while NBS and URBAN had one agribusiness program.

The objectives of the programmes were also found to be similar. Generally, they are designed to enlighten the farmers on new farming techniques, encourage the people to go back to the land for mass food production (News on agribusiness, UBC TV), and put agriculture back on its feet as the backbone of Uganda economy (Farmer’s Basket, UBC TV), farmer and their products (Agricultural business NBS), The program is geared into promoting agricultural business to secondary school children in to grow improved seed URBAN). Unfortunately, the duration of these weekly programmes did not go above 30 minutes and were transmitted during non-peak hours or featured in news for 5 minutes. From the various topics treated in the programmes, it is clear that emphasis was on teaching farming techniques and introduction and application of fertilizers and herbicides.

The study revealed that most of the agribusiness programs run on Televisions were allotted airtime of 30 minutes across all the television stations surveyed. Other programs had been allotted airtime of 5minutes featuring news time. It is true that television stations have very many programs that they promote, for instance, most entertainment programs have airtime of 1hr to 2:30 minutes (e.g. football, music, movies etc.).

These programs as much as they are good for entertainment, they have not been successful in fighting poverty in the country more than agriculture, and yet agricultural programs are not given much airtime on most television airings. Therefore, based on the finding it is important that agribusiness should be given at least airtime of 1hr and at the same time, the government should be at the forefront of making this a reality.

10.2 Conclusion

The study was to find out the number of programmes and time devoted to agribusiness by television channels in Kampala, Uganda in last two years (2015 – 2016). The study found that there are few agribusiness programs covered and less airtime used by the television stations in Kampala, Uganda.

10.3 Recommendations

The study found that some television stations have very few agribusiness programs. This study recommends that more agribusiness programs should be run by the television stations given the fact that Uganda is an agricultural country and therefore disseminating agribusiness information to the farmers can strengthen the economy.

Furthermore, this study found that not much airtime is assigned to run agribusiness programs, it is therefore, the television stations increase the coverage use to televise agribusiness, this will enable enough agribusiness information to be disposal to the farmers and will even increase much viewership for the television stations.

In addition, televising agribusiness show was found to be very expensive for the television stations to cover on their own. Therefore, there is need for the government to lend a supporting hand financially so as to motivate such ventures that promote the good of the country.

Furthermore, the study found that during the creation of the agribusiness shows, some farmers were not cooperative to the journalists. This study recommends that farmers should be made aware of the intention of the show and how it

would be of great benefit to them and other farmers in all the parts of the country. Similarly, journalists can as well involve the participation of the local leaders and district leaders so as to make the farmers even more cooperative.

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