



### Influence of farm radio international radio programmes on farmers in Oyo State, Nigeria

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**Abstract**

The paper sought to investigate the influence of FRI radio programmes on farmers' knowledge, skills, and practices in Oyo state. The study was anchored on the Uses and Gratifications theory. The paper opted for a Mixed Methods research design, using Survey and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to gather data from farmers. Findings indicated that exposure to FRI radio programmes is low among AFAN members who have not been mobilised by FRI. In contrast, exposure was high among FGD farmers who had previously been mobilised by FRI to listen to the radio programmes. Findings also showed that radio is effective in influencing the practices of farmers and helping them adopt new agricultural knowledge, skills and practices. It concludes that FRI radio programmes positively influence farmers and enhance their capacity. The study recommends that FRI and partners mobilise farmers from farmer's associations like AFAN for the radio programmes.

**Keywords:** Agricultural information, farmers, radio, farmer education, broadcasting





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## **Introduction**

Farmers' access to agricultural information has been identified as a driving force for sustainable agricultural development and food security. Opara (2008) posits that agricultural information can help farmers make informed decisions and improve their productivity, profitability, and livelihoods. Farmers can adopt new farming methods and technology through agricultural information that helps them determine which crops to grow, which animals to raise, where to sell, and when to sow and harvest their crops. The availability and use of agricultural information bridge the gap between scientists and farmers and enhance increased productivity and farmer well-being.

However, scholars (Yahaya, 2003; Mboho, 2009; Nyamba & Mlozi, 2012; Naveed & Anwar, 2013) have identified poor access to agricultural information as a critical problem for farmers. Consequently, disseminating agricultural information becomes vital in enabling farmers to improve their farming practices. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are powerful enablers in this context. However, the penetration of such technologies in developing and under-developed economies is often limited by infrastructure, literacy, and economic barriers (Effiong et al., 2021).

Incidentally, radio has widely been recognised by scholars (Effiong et al., 2021; Asemah & Edegoh, 2013; Myers, 2009; Craig, 2009; Opara, 2008) as a veritable tool for disseminating agricultural information among farmers in developing and under-developed countries, where access to other channels of information may be limited. It effectively disseminates new practices to farmers, particularly in rural areas (Opara, 2008). Radio is relatively cheap, easy to access and a non-literate friendly medium, making it the "rural farmer's friend." This is because many rural farmers in these countries lack access to the necessary infrastructure and resources to access other sources of information. The medium's ability to reach large audiences at a relatively low cost makes it even more attractive for promoting agricultural information that will improve the livelihoods of small-scale farmers (Ridwan et al., 2014).

In using radio to address the problem of agricultural information deficit, organisations and governments' ministerial offices partner with radio stations to produce agricultural programmes for farmers. Farm



Radio International (FRI), a Canadian non-profit organisation, partners with radio stations in Nigeria to address the information gap between farmers and the broader agricultural community (FRI, 2023). Going by what FRI does through partner stations, research is needed to understand the influence of FRI radio programmes on farmers in Oyo state, Nigeria. Specifically, this study would investigate how FRI programmes influence farmers' knowledge, skills, and practices to evaluate if agricultural information diffused through radio can spur growth among farmers and affect their farming practices.

### **Objectives of the study**

The following objectives informed the present study:

1. To find out the exposure of respondents to FRI radio programmes in Oyo state
2. To evaluate the respondents' motivation for listening to FRI radio programmes in Oyo state
3. To assess the influence of FRI radio programmes in Oyo state on the knowledge, skills and practices of respondents'

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research paper is anchored on the Uses and Gratifications theory, propounded by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in 1974 (Anaeto et al., 2008). Sherwood (2015) highlights the core assumptions of the theory as:

1. The audience is active, and its media use is goal-oriented. The theory implies that the audience selects the medium to fulfill specific needs.
2. The receiver determines what will be absorbed and does not allow the media to influence them otherwise.
3. The media competes with other sources to satisfy the need. This focuses on the idea that each individual has several needs.
4. People have enough self-awareness of their media use, interests, and motives to give researchers an accurate picture of that use. This idea claims that people know their motives and choices and can explain them verbally if necessary.

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5. The audience can determine the value of the media content.

The theory is an approach to understanding why and how people actively seek specific media to satisfy specific needs. The theory provides a basis for analysing underlying perspectives in the appropriation of various mass media and how they enhance mass communication and influence what people do with them.

In line with the theory's various assumptions, it can be deduced that the influence of FRI radio programmes on farmers relies heavily on the gratifications they obtain from the programmes. This theory fits into this study to explain how farmers use the agricultural information conveyed through FRI radio programmes. It helps the study evaluate the motivations behind farmers' engagement with FRI radio programmes and whether they meet these needs and subsequently influence their farming practices.

#### **Data and Methodology**

The study utilised mixed methods research design, using both focus group discussion (FGD) and survey research methods. FGD was used to gather data from farmers in Oyo state whom FRI radio partners had mobilised for localised discussions and contact sessions. The survey was used to gather data from farmers in Oyo state who may or may not have been exposed to FRI radio programmes and were very likely not to have had contact sessions with FRI partner radio stations.

Oyo state in southwest Nigeria was selected because it had a majority (two) of active FRI partner radio stations (FRI, 2023). In arriving at participants for the FGD, two local government areas were selected through simple random sampling. Names of the local governments in Oyo state where FRI radio partners confirmed to have had contact sessions with farmers were written down on separate sheets of paper, folded and dropped in a bag. Irepodun and Egbeda local governments were picked from the bag; thus, two FGD sessions were conducted among nineteen (19) farmers in total from Irepodun (12) and Egbeda (7) LGAs of Oyo state. Respondents for the FGD were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for a thematic analysis of the data.

Respondents for the Survey research were purposively selected. Members of the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), Oyo state, constituted respondents for the study because they had the key characteristics of respondents required (farmers). The study sample



was drawn from farmers (263) who attended the AFAN Oyo state chapter general meeting in February 2024. The survey research instrument was distributed during the meeting, and 154 questionnaires were retrieved. The researcher(s) analysed all retrieved questionnaires, however only questionnaires filled by farmers that indicated exposure to FRI partner radio stations agriculture programmes (62) were analysed for motivations for listening and influence of the programmes on farmer's skills, knowledge and practices to show the accurate picture of the influence of FRI radio programmes on farmers' in Oyo state. Data elicited were analysed using SPSS. Responses were accepted, indifferent or rejected based on the weighted mean value for each response. A mean of 3.51 and above is accepted, 3.50 to 2.50 is indifferent, while a mean of 2.49 and below is rejected.

## **Results**

### **Theme 1: Farmers' exposure to FRI radio programmes**

Question one of the focus group discussion guide sought to elicit data on what agricultural programmes respondents listen to. Findings showed that the respondents were exposed to programmes by two FRI partner radio stations in Oyo state. Most respondents listened to Egedotun on BCOS (an FRI partner station). At the same time, some mentioned listening to Agbe Lere, which airs at 8 pm on Amuludun 99.1 FM (a FRI partner station).

Excerpts of the discussion are shown below:

*I listen to BCOS and specifically listen to Egedotun on Mondays with repeat broadcasts on Fridays. – (FGD 1)*

*I often listen to Agbe Lere by Niyi Fadahunsi on Amuludun FM. – (FGD 1)*

*I listen to Egedotun on BCOS and have even been invited to the station to join them on the programme live. – (FGD 2)*

*I listen to Egedotun on Mondays, and I also listen to Agbe Lere on Amuludun 99.1 FM. – (FGD 2)*

On the contrary, some respondents said they were not used to listening to agricultural radio programmes or motivated to do so. Excerpts of this discussion are shown below:

*I am uninterested in agricultural radio programmes due to Nigeria's current state of agriculture. - (FGD 2)*

*I am not used to listening to agricultural radio programmes ... - (FGD 1)*



This implies that respondents are exposed to the radio programmes by FRI partner radio stations. The most listened to agricultural programme respondents identified that they listened to was Egedotun on BCOS. In contrast, some respondents mentioned not being exposed to Agricultural radio programmes.

### **Theme 2: Farmers' perception of programme scheduling**

Question two of the focus group guide sought respondents' satisfaction with the time slot apportioned to the programme they listened to. The majority of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the time the programmes are aired. Excerpts are shown below:

*Sometimes the programme airs when we are working on the farm. The best time for the programme is when farmers have settled down (eaten and rested) after work. We prefer the programme to be aired at 8 pm. - (FGD 1)*  
*Most agricultural programs should not be broadcast between 12 and 3 pm but somewhat between 7-8 pm - (FGD 2)*

Another respondent said he was satisfied with the time Agbe Lere was aired on Amuludun 99.1 FM. This implies that farmers are mainly dissatisfied with the time of the broadcast of the agricultural programmes and prefer that the programmes be aired in the evening between 7-9 pm.

### **Theme 3: Farmers' Motivation for Listening**

Question seven of the focus group discussion guides sought to elicit data on the respondents' motivations to listen to the understudied FRI radio programmes. Findings revealed that respondents are motivated by the style of presentation and the broadcasting strategy employed by FRI partner radio stations. A respondent gave an example of an agricultural programme he listened to and how the presenter's style of presenting kept him motivated to listen to the programme. An excerpt is shown below:

*The presenter of Egedotun on BCOS is an exceptional host. His style of presentation swells our heads and keeps us farmers hooked to the programme... - (FGD 1)*  
*If the government and all presenters adopt the method of visiting farmers on their farms like Mr. Ademola (Presenter of Egedotun on BCOS) in addition to the agricultural radio*

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programmes, it will make the programmes very understandable to the farmers... - **(FGD 1)**

The presentation style of presenters like Ademola Adeniyi (BCOS) makes the programmes easily understandable and endearing to listen to... - **(FGD 2)**

Recently, some agricultural radio presenters came to visit us at our farms. I was the only female farmer present out of 5 to 6 people in attendance. These presenters did not just stay in their studio presenting the programmes; they came to visit us. Visits like this make it easier for us to comprehend the content of the programmes and keep us listening. - **(FGD 2)**

However, some respondents expressed reasons why they were de-motivated to listen to the programmes; excerpts are shown below:

The content of the FRI radio programme is usually limited to Cassava and Yam tubers, which do not give room for other types of farming, such as animal husbandry. - **(FGD 1)**

The time of broadcast is discouraging and does not favour us. We prefer that the programme be done later in the evening, like 8 pm, when we return from the farms and rest so we can tune in more. - **(FGD 2)**

This implies that respondents were motivated to listen to the radio programmes due to the presenter's presentation style and the station's broadcast strategy. Meanwhile, some respondents mentioned they were de-motivated to listen to the programmes due to content limitation and time of broadcast.

#### **Theme 4: Influence of FRI the radio programmes on the knowledge, skills and practices of the farmers**

When asked if they could share instances where they have applied knowledge or skills learned from FRI's agricultural radio programmes to their farming practices, respondents shared their experiences. Excerpts are shown below:

Agriculture is something that most of us are born with. We had no idea (before listening to the radio programmes) that plantain should be planted within a 3-meter distance. We just planted like our predecessors taught us; thus, these programmes have given us knowledge. - **(FGD 2)**

I have gained a lot from listening to agricultural programmes. For example, I learned on the radio that if one builds a house,

they must ensure they have a garden where they plant vegetables.- **(FGD 1)**

I learnt that when we want to plant yam, we should choose a good fertile land. Secondly, we should cut every weed around it so it can get enough air. - **(FGD 1)**

I learned that to plant yams, we should find fertile land. Second, we should remove any weeds that develop around it to allow it to be well-aerated. - **(FGD 2)**

Respondents were affirmative when asked if the programmes have led to adopting new farming techniques and practices. They shared how they applied the knowledge they learnt from the programmes. Excerpts are shown below:

For example, I learned how to use seedlings to produce yam tubers. This is an innovation for me. On the radio, I learned that these seedlings can produce yam tubers. - **(FGD 2)**

If one listens to these agricultural programmes, one would learn how to make progress with one's work. For example, I learned how to grow yam from seedlings over the radio and recently harvested it. Food matters have been settled for the next six months, and I learned about this procedure on the radio. We thank God for the radio programme. - **(FGD 2)**

The implication is that radio has positively influenced the farmers' knowledge, skills, and practices, as they could recount how they implemented some of the agricultural information they got from the radio programmes.

**Table 1:** Respondents Exposure to FRI radio programmes

Variables	Response	N	%
Gender	Male	112	73.2
	Female	41	26.8
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Farming Category	Crop Farming	86	56.2
	Animal Husbandry	67	43.8
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Exposure to FRI partner radio programmes	Yes	62	40.5
	No	91	59.5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>153</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Frequency of Exposure to FRI radio programmes	Very Frequently	15	9.8
	Frequently	30	19.6
	Occasionally	13	8.5
	Rarely	4	2.6
	Never	91	59.5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>153</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 shows that majority of respondents (n=112, 73.2%) were male, majority of respondents (n=86, 56.2%) engaged in crop farming, majority of respondents were not exposed to FRI partner radio programmes and majority of respondents who were exposed to FRI partner radio programmes were exposed frequently (n=30, 19.6%).

**Table 2:** Farmers' motivation for listening

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
I am motivated to listen to the radio programme because of the way the topic is being discussed	19	24	11	5	3	62	3.82	Accepted
I am motivated to listen to the radio programme because of the presenter's presentation style	27	22	4	7	2	62	4.05	Accepted
I am motivated to listen to the	34	17	9	2	0	62	4.34	Accepted

radio programme because of the experts and guests invited									
I am motivated to listen to the radio programme because of the way the programme is packaged	12	25	14	9	2	62	3.58	Accepted	
I am motivated to listen to the radio programme because I want to improve my farming practices and agricultural yield	25	19	13	2	3	62	3.98	Accepted	

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents (mean = 3.82) accepted the notion that the topic being discussed on the agricultural radio programmes motivated them to listen. Also, with a mean of 4.05, majority of respondents accepted the notion that the presenter's presentation style motivated them to listen. Meanwhile, a majority of respondents (mean=4.34) accepted that they were motivated to listen to the radio programmes because of the experts and guests invited. Findings also revealed that a majority of respondents (mean = 3.58) were motivated to listen because of the way the programme was packaged. While a majority of respondents (mean=3.98) were motivated to listen to the radio programme because they wanted to improve their farming practices. From the foregoing we can see that most respondents affirmed all five factors used to measure the motivation of respondents. This implies that when a radio programme has most of these factors, respondents would be more motivated to listen to the radio programmes.

**Table 3:** Influence of FRI radio programmes on the knowledge, skills and practices of the farmers

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
I have learnt a new skill listening to the agricultural radio programme	14	29	7	5	7	62	3.61	Accepted
I have adopted new farming practices listening to the agricultural radio programme	11	27	12	9	3	62	3.54	Accepted
I have learnt to increase my farming yields as a result of the agricultural radio programme I listen to	9	26	11	6	10	62	3.29	Indifferent
Since I have been listening to the agricultural radio programmes, my overall farming practice has improved	12	24	17	7	2	62	3.59	Accepted

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 revealed that majority of respondents (mean=3.61) had learnt a new skill listening to the radio programmes. Similarly, majority (mean = 3.54) affirmed that they had adopted new farming practices by listening to the radio programmes. While, majority (mean=3.29) were indifferent when asked if they had learnt to increase their farming yields by listening to agricultural radio programmes. Finally, data in table 3 showed that majority of farmers (mean=3.59) had experienced an improvement in their overall farming practice because they had been listening to the radio programmes. This implies that FRI radio

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programmes in Oyo state positively influence the skills, knowledge and practices of farmers exposed to the programme.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Findings from the survey and FGD showed that FRI radio programmes in Oyo state positively influence the skills, knowledge and practices of farmers exposed to the programme. This supports the findings of Badiru & Akpabio (2017) and Folitse et al. (2016) that farmers' agricultural practices improve after listening to agricultural radio programmes and have high utilisation levels of information from agricultural radio programmes.

Meanwhile, the findings of this study contradict the findings of Ridwan et al. (2014) that conclude that farmers do not learn new things on agricultural-based programmes on radio, as findings of the present study revealed that the agricultural information broadcast on radio teaches farmers new agricultural skills, ideas and practices. Also, it contradicts the findings of Badiru et al. (2016) that showed that most respondents do not adequately utilise the agricultural information received on agricultural radio programmes.

Findings indicated that exposure to FRI radio programmes was low among AFAN members in Oyo state who had not been mobilised by FRI. In contrast, exposure was high among farmers from the FGD study who had been previously mobilised by FRI for localised discussions.

Findings from the FGD revealed that the farmers were dissatisfied with the time the programmes were aired. This supports the findings of Agwu & Adeniran (2009) that inappropriate programme scheduling is a significant barrier to farmers receiving agricultural information on communication channels such as radio.

In relation to the Uses and gratifications theory, findings support the notion that the audience is active and self-aware. It also revealed that the audience will gravitate towards media channels that meet their needs.

Findings from this study revealed that factors that motivated farmers to listen to the radio programmes include the desire to improve farming practices and yield, the invitation of guests and experts, the topic discussed, the presenter's personality, and the way the programme is packaged. More outstanding of all the motivation factors is the presenter's personality, as there was a correlation in both the FGD and Survey that the farmers found this most motivating.

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Also, findings support the assertions and conclusions of (Adamides & Stylianou, 2018; Badiru & Akpabio, 2017; Badiru et al., 2016; Nyambo & Ligate, 2013; Nazari & Hasbullah, 2010; Agwu & Adeniran, 2009; Opara, 2008) that radio is a vital source of agricultural information for farmers in developing countries like Nigeria.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The study concluded that radio is a farmer's friend (Opara, 2008), influencing farmers' practices and helping them adopt new knowledge, ideas and skills. Finally, the study concludes that FRI radio programmes positively influence farmers and enhance their capacity. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- To get more farmers listening to the agricultural radio programmes, FRI and its partners should mobilise farmers' association groups.
- Also, the scope of the content for the FRI radio programmes should be broadened to allow non-tuber and non-crop farmers to listen and improve their farming practices.
- The schedule for the agricultural information radio broadcasts should be reconsidered for effectiveness in reaching farmers.
- The presenters of the agricultural radio programmes should be down-to-earth individuals who can interact with the audience.
- Development organisations, agricultural extensionists, and parastatals trying to bridge the agricultural information gap among small-scale farmers in developing and under-developed countries should consider radio, as this study proves that radio is a vital agricultural information source.

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