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EFFECTIVE DISSEMINATION OF AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION THROUGH APPLICATION OF AGENDA SETTING THEORY

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ABSTRACT
The study aims at examining the dissemination of agricultural information adoption the agenda-settings model. The study reviewed various related literatures on agricultural information and the theory of agenda settings. The study reveals the role of mass media in information dissemination in the area of agriculture and the need for repetition of media information and its influence on farmers placement of value towards the information. The study recommends that agricultural information should be well packaged and repeatedly broadcast in any medium so as to stress the value of the content as it will entrance the level of seriousness the target group or farmers will perceive them.

Keywords: Dissemination; Agricultural Information; Agenda Setting Theory.

Introduction
Agriculture is viewed as a vital means through which food insecurity poverty and unemployment can be addressed and one of the long-term strategies conceived so far for its development is to improve on the availability and access to quantitative and qualitative agricultural education which is transmitted to the practicing farmers in the form of agricultural information. Agriculture is associated with the production of basic food crops and domestic animals. hallison, (1993) noted that agriculture and farming are synonymous as long as farming was not commercialized but as the process of economic development accelerated, many more other occupations allied to arming came to be a part of agriculture. Today, marketing, processing distribution of agricultural products are all accepted as a part of modern agriculture thereby making the meaning of agriculture to wider in scope Farmkline, 2000). Agriculture may also be defined as the production, Processing, marketing and distribution of crops and livestock products Hufnann, 2006). Agricultural is also defined as the art or science of production of crops and livestock on farm. Nevertheless, either

some or portion of a population must be involved in Agriculture in other to ensure food supply for the population (Arcand, 2000). Simons, (2002) stated that despite the immeasurable benefits of agriculture to any society, its development is retarded by certain factors of which inadequate access to agricultural education is one of them. Obiora, (2016) noted that in order to achieve the goals of sustainable Agricultural productivity in Nigeria, it is imperative to ensure adequate provision of agricultural information.

Agricultural Information

Agricultural information according to Tadesse, (2008) is defined the various sets of information and messages that are relevant to agricultural production activities of farmers such as crop production and protection animal production and management and natural resources production ad conservation. Agricultural information therefore, refers to agriculture related data which are transformed into meaningful and useful contexts or forms for effective decision making in agriculture or farming related activates Emmanuel, Yusufu, Sheriff and Shehu, (2016), Observes that agricultural information services contribute significantly to agricultural production.

Through agricultural information farmers can adopt new technologic or farming systems, know when to plant and harvest, which crop to produce and which animal to rear and where to sell. It is also through agricultural information that farmers can know where to acquire bank loans and other farming inputs, as well as how to control pests and disease. Such information will consequently increase agricultural production and improve the standard of living of farmers. Ekoja, (2000) defines agricultural information as published and unpublished knowledge on all aspects of agriculture which are inter-disciplinary in nature and have universal application.

Aina, (1990) stated that for the agricultural information is inter- disciplinary and therefore classified them under these sets:

1. **Technical/scientific information** - this type of agricultural information arises from research and developments work carried out in various agricultural research institutions including universities.
2. Commercial agricultural information this set of information gives enlightment on the marketing of agricultural produce in order to maximize profits.
3. **Social** - Cultural agricultural information- This encompasses traditional information on agricultural practices, local cultures, background information on farming communities labour availability etc. This type of information will be useful to policy makers and planners.
4. **Legal agricultural information**- this deals with all legislations that affect agriculture such as land tenure, the production distribution and sales of agricultural products. Inspite the investment of the government of Nigeria at different levels on the provision of agricultural knowledge and information to farmers, the knowledge base of farmers is still at its low state as most farmers complain of inadequate knowledge as one of the major problems that hinder agricultural development in

the Nigerian society (Ministry of Agriculture, Owerri 2019).

One of the acceptable marketing theories that promote information dissemination is the agenda-setting theory by Mccombs and Shew.

Agenda-Setting Theory

Agenda-setting describes the ability to influence the importance V placed on the topics of the public agenda (McCombs and Reynoids, 2002). Agenda-setting is the creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the news media. The study of agenda-setting describes the way media attempts to influence the viewers, and establish a hierarchy of news prevalence (Daring and Rogers, 1988) and (Rogers and Daring, 1988). The agenda-setting by media is driven by the media's bias on things such as politics, economy and culture, etc. (McCombs, 2005).

The agenda-setting theory states that if a news item is covered frequently and the prominently, the audience will regard the issue as very important. Agenda-setting theory was formally developed by McCombs and Shaws in 1968 on a study on the American Presidential election. In the 1968 'Chapel Hill Study' McCombs and Shaw demonstrated a strong correlation coefficient between what 100 residents of Chapel Hill, North Carolina thought was the most important election issue (Shotton, 2012). By comparing the salience of issues in news content with the public's perceptions of the most important election issue, McCombs and Shaw were able to determine the degree to which the media determines public opinion. Agenda-setting is the creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the news media in which the public's agenda is the dependent variable (the traditional hypothesis). (Cohen 1963) observed that the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what think about. This world will look different to people depending on the map drawn for them by Writers, editors and publishers of the paper they read.

There are the three models of analyzing the effects of agenda-setting according to Daring and Rogers, (1988). There are the 'awareness model', the 'priorities model' and the 'salience model'. The research on the effect of agenda-setting compares the salience issues in news content with the public perceptions of the most important Issue, and then analyses the extent of influence by guidance of the media. Most investigations are centered on these three models. Aruguete, (2017) noted that one of the most critical assets in the concept of agenda-setting role of mass communication is the time frame for this phenomenon. However, Daring and Rogers, (1988) and Rogers and Daring, (1988) stated that most researches on agenda-setting are based on the following:

1. The press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it.
2. Media concentration on few issues and subjects leads to the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues.

Types of Agenda-setting

Research shows that the media agenda, audience agenda and policy agenda influence the agenda setting. Rogers and Daring (1987) describe how the under-listed types of agenda-setting are influenced by other factors.

- Policy agenda-setting or political agenda-setting which focuses on how the elite no policy makers agenda are influenced by other factors.
- Media agenda-setting or agenda building which focuses on how the media's agenda is influenced by other factors.
- Public/Audience agenda-setting which is the traditional hypothesis and focuses on how the audience or public's agenda is influenced by other factors such as personal, religious and cultural values.

Process of Agenda-setting (Accessibility)

Iyengar and Kinder, (1987) stated that agenda-setting occurs through a cognitive process known as accessibility. Accessibility implies that the more frequently and prominently the news media covers an issue, the more instances of that issue become accessible in audience's memories (Iyengar, 1990). When respondents are asked what the most important problem facing the country is, they answer with the most accessible news issue in memory, which is typically the issue the news media focus on the most. The agenda- setting effect is not the result of receiving one or a few messages but due to the aggregate impact of a very large number of messages, each of which has a different content but all of which deals with the same general issue (Daring and Rogers, 1988). Mass media coverage in general and agenda-setting in particular also has a powerful impact on what individuals think that other people are thinking. Noelle-Newman (1977) observed that the public tend to allocate more importance to issues that have been extensively covered by mass media. The agenda-setting can be of great in the process of packaging and dissemination agriculture educational to people.

Comparison of agenda –setting with policy agenda-building

McCombs (2004) and Belocy agenda-building and Sheafer (2010) noted that as more scholars published articles on agenda-setting theories it became evident that the process involves not only active role of media organizations, but also participation of the public as well as policy makers. Rogers and Dearing (1988) described the difference between agenda-setting and agenda-building based on the dominant role of media or public. Thus 'setting' and agenda refers to the agenda on society, transfer of the media agenda to the public agenda while building an agenda includes some degree of reciprocity' between the mass media and society where both media and public agendas influence public policy.

According to Sun Young lee and Daniel Riffe the agenda-building theory speculates that the media does not operate within a vacuum. The media agenda in fact is the result of the influences that certain powerful groups exert as a subtle form of social control. Journalists have limited time and limited resources that can contribute to external sources getting

involved in the news media's gate keeping process, and some scholars have attempted to reveal certain relationships between information sources and the agenda the news media as made up, probing who builds the media agenda. There are multiple sources that can participate in this agenda-building process through various different ways, but researchers have been the most interested in the effectiveness of information aids such as media kits and press releases within the news media agenda, and this is a measure of the success of organizations public relations efforts.

Berkowitz, (1992) implemented a more nuanced analysis of agenda setting and agenda-building theories by introducing the terms policy agenda- setting and policy agenda-building. He argues that when scholars investigate only the linkage between media and policy makers, it is still appropriate to use the notion of policy agenda-setting. However, when the focus is placed not only on policy by makers, personal agendas, but also on the broader salient issues where media represent only one indicator or public sentiment and therefore suggests talking about policy agenda-building.

Agenda-building according to West, Turner and Lynn, (2013) ascribes importance not only to mass media and policymakers, but also to social process, to mutually interdependent relation between the concerns generated in social environment and the vitality of governmental process.
Thus according to Cobb and Elder, the agenda-building framework makes allowances for continuing mass involvement and broaden the range of recognized influences on the public policy-making process.

Although the public docs have a place on the list of possibly Influencing to powerfully shape media agendas, it seems the more correct to argue the possibility that when journalists look to their own interests for story ideas they are actually trying to predict their audiences' needs. This used of mass involvement has become more prominent with the advent of Internet and its potential to make everyone a pamplileteer (Scheufele, 2010). Increase in the role of citizens in agenda-setting sheds light traditional agenda-building research. This is now the case because the general public can now create their media, Social median has changed way people view and perceive things. Social media gives the general public voice momentum. Comments and replies give potential for people to address your thoughts or open new doors for conversation.

Factors in Agenda-Setting

Cobb and Elder, (1971) noted that some access than others and are thus more likel.0ups have a greater ease of to get their demands placed on agenda than others. For instance, policy makers have been found to be more influential than the overall group of news sources because they often better understand journalists needs for reliable and predictable information and their definition of news worthiness (Berkowitz) (1992) and Kennamer (ed). Cobb and elder (1971) ascribed even more importance to decision makers, claiming that in order for an issue to

attain agenda status, it must be supported by at least some of key decision makers as they act as guardians of the formal agenda.

They also asserted that certain personages in the media can act as opinion leaders and bring media coverage to a particular issue. Government-affiliated news rates in becoming media agenda and have been found by a number scholars to be the most frequently appearing of sources at the local, state and national levels.

News sources can also provide definitions of issues, thus determining the terms of future discussion and framing problems in particular ways. Hilgarten and Bosk, (1988) stated that what interpretation of reality will dominate public discourse has implications for the future of the social problem, for the interest groups and policymakers involved, and for the policy itself. The relationship of media and policymakers is symbiotic and is\ controlled by shared culture of unofficial set of ground rules as journalists need access to official information and policymakers need media coverage; nevertheless, the needs of journalists and policymakers are often incompatible because of their different orientation in their as powerful sources are at their best in routine situations and react more slowly when crisis or disaster occur (Rogers and rearing, 1988). Consequently, policy makers who understand the rules of this culture the best will be most capable of setting their agendas and issue definitions. On the other hand, media also influence policymakers when government officials and politicians take the amount of media attention given to an issue as an indirect expression of public interest in the issue.

Conclusion

In order to achieve the goal of sustainable agricultural productively and development, it is imperative that there should be an adequately packaged agricultural education programme with a functional means of transmission and accessibility which is the standpoint that this article rests. What are the ways through which the agenda-setting theory can be applied in effective agricultural education delivery?

1. Any given agricultural information should be duly scrutinized before it is certified foe transmission.
2. The needs and problems of farmers should be communicated to the government and other relevant stakeholders involved in agriculture repeated through the mass media by any given agricultural information agency.
3. More agricultural mass media stations should be established by both the government and private agencies for information accessibility to farmers.
4. The mass media should be relaying any given agricultural information repeated so that target audience would consider its salient (very important)
5. Since the media plays a significant role in influencing the belief or thought system of individuals, it will be worthy of adopting the various mass media systems in the agricultural education delivery

process as the public consider mass media information to be very salient.

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