



Media Assessment of Cashew Farming, Processing and Marketing for Sustainable Development in Kogi East, Kogi State, Nigeria

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14712985>

Abstract

The study investigated “Media Assessment of Cashew Farming, Processing and Marketing for Sustainable Development in Kogi East, Kogi State, Nigeria.” The objectives were to; examine the level of media coverage of cashew farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi East, investigate the channels of information on cashew farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development among cashew farmers in Kogi East, and determine the effectiveness of the study on the media assessment of cashew farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi East, Kogi State, Nigeria. It adopted the Diffusion of Innovation and Knowledge Gap media Theories. It adopted mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) using a structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews as research instruments. A random sampling of 200 respondents among the farmers from the 7-cashew farming local governments was done by the researchers. The 2 chairmen of the Cashew Value Chain were interviewed. It found that; 57% of the respondents indicated that the media coverage of cashew farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi East was not impressive, that 54% of the respondents agreed that they got agricultural information from their fellow farmers, and finally, 59% of the respondents agreed that the study of media assessment of cashew farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi East was highly effective. The interviews indicated affirmative responses from the questionnaire. It concluded that the media assessment of cashew farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi East was a disservice to the farmers in the zone. It is recommended that journalists in the Agriculture Extension Workers should do more of their media coverage of cashew farming activities.

Keywords: Media assessment, cashew farming, processing and marketing, sustainable development, agriculture extension workers and Kogi East

Introduction

Watching over society and its happenings is the core role of the media. The Mass Media has since taken up the role of watchdog of society by gathering, processing and reporting information to diverse audiences. Communication establishes ideas that subsequently birth sustainable development in any society. The role of the fourth estate of the realm in a democratic country like Nigeria must be uniquely carried out by the media. The media consists of radios, newspapers, televisions, cartoons, textbooks, paintings, and social media where films and music are shown in this digital era.

Media are platforms through which written, broadcast information reach a wider audience. They further



include a diverse array of media technologies through which a larger audience can be reached. Technology that facilitates the reach of the information involves varying degrees of outlets such as; television radio, advertising, movies, the Internet, newspapers, magazines, and so forth (Kumar, *et al* 2017)

Development in any country is an offshoot of rural development which is a gradual step anchored through the media to attract the attention of the government at the top. Development can be sustained if the media are frequently available to play the role of watchdog of society. Asemah (2011) notes that development is an action and initiative taken to improve the standard of living in a non-urban society where innovative evolution is limited. For development to be sustainable, the media must always engage in research, report and incessant reminder to the authorities on the need to keep revamping deteriorating infrastructures.

The new social media presence, the management and control of media content have been weakened, as the new media allow more people to access the content online without restrictions or immediate censorship. Mass media are spreading agricultural techniques to the farmers at a faster rate than personal contacts and modern agriculture is characterised among other things by the silent role of communication, a factor of innovative evolution and progress. Electronic media transmission of innovation of agricultural technologies is rapid in a quantitative diffusion (Drew, 2013, Khushk & Memon, 2014 & Nwibo, *et al* 2022).

The cashew plant and its farming are argued to have originated from Brazil which allowed the Portuguese explorers to introduce it to Nigeria in the 15th-16th century. Cashew plants are differently called by many names across the world. It is called “Devil’s Nuts” in Mozambique by the Moconde tribe. In Nigeria, it is called Cashew, Portuguese-Caju, French-Cajou, Spanish-Maranon, Italian-anacardio, Dutch-acajou and Indonesia-jambu mente. In some cultures, and traditional preservations, cashew nuts are offered at wedding ceremonies as a token of fertility and aphrodisiac properties to strengthen the marriages (Agboniarhuoyi, *et al*, 2015).

Cashew plants grow virtually across 27 out of 36 states in Nigeria. The country yields over 22, 855.19 kg/kh in 2012 when compared to global scale within the same period, Peru (51,136.36 kg/ha, Philippines 46,807.81kg/ha, Vietnam 38,944.84 and Mexico 30,088.44 kg/ha (FOA, 2014). Subsequently, studies have indicated that Nigeria is rated as the second top producer of cashew nuts in the world with about 660,000 tons after Vietnam the highest in the world with about 961,000 tons annually (Ojotule & Mustapha, 2020).

The Cashew Nut Marketing value chain in Kogi East needs media assessment because nothing moves for popularity without media engagement. In Kogi State, as part of the efforts to establish firm agricultural practices, the government of Nigeria established Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs) that span across the whole nation and the state is not left out. Agricultural extension workers equally ensure that agriculture is given a boost to enhance food security in the state to export. Information Literacy among farmers is a media responsibility. Agricultural extension workers provide the farmers with the right information on innovative agricultural technologies and what they should know to improve their farming, processing and marketing.

Poor marketing system of agricultural products leads to inherent inefficiencies in the agricultural commodities in the market. For Cashew nuts to be marketed, it involves several players and media channels which start with the sale of raw cashew nuts from farmers to the retailers who then sell to the wholesalers until it reach the processors and finally to ultimate consumers (Iyaji *et al*, 2022)

The Cashew Value Chain (CVC) in Kogi East has various umbrellas working assiduously to ensure efficient production, marketing and distribution to the end consumers. For effective functioning of the cashew chain structure, Kogi East has the Local Buyers Association (LBA), and National Cashew Association of Nigeria (NCAN) with Farmers, Middlemen, Processors (Uptakes), and Transporters.

Kogi East senatorial district comprises 9 local government areas. They are Ankpa, Bassa, Dekina, Ibaji, Idah, Igalamela/Odolu, Ofu, Olamaboro and Omala Local Government Areas respectively. Populous among these local governments for maximum cashew nuts production are Ofu, Olamaboro, Idah, Ankpa, Dekina, Igalamela/Odolu and Omala Local Government Areas. Therefore, their productive capacity calls for the



assessment of Media Engagement with cashew farmers in the zones.

Statement of the Problem

The essence of cashew farming is for its economic value to the farmers for monetary value and economic growth. Agricultural Development Projects (ADP) in Kogi State have intensified efforts in agricultural technologies aiming to boost cassava, cashew and other kinds of farming in Kogi State. The senator representing Kogi East, Senator Jibrin Echecho has embarked on many efforts to boost cassava and cashew farming in the zone. Media assessment of cashew farming, processing and marketing nuts is a necessary study to ascertain the extent to which the media gives attention to the farmers in the zone.

However, Ohara, *et al* (2023) have carried out a study entitled “Mass Media Perception and utilisation for Accessing Agricultural Information Among Farmers in Ogoja Agricultural Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria, Again, Nwibo *et al*, (2022), Ojotule & Mustapha, (2020), Ojedoku, *et al* (2024), Agbongiarhuoyi *et al*, (2015) among other studies carried out on myriad of issues regarding cashew farming and the media roles. These studies still leave a gap that the current study intends to fill because they did not focus on the Media Assessment of Cashew Farming, Processing and Marketing in Kogi State. It is for this reason that the current study sets out to ascertain media assessment of cashew farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi East, Kogi State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The study has its main objective to ascertain media assessment of cashew farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi East, Kogi State, Nigeria. It, however, has the following specific objectives and they are to:

1. Examine the extent of coverage of cashew farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi East,
2. Examine the media channels through which the cashew farmers in Kogi East access information on cashew farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi State
3. Ascertain the effectiveness of the study of media assessment of cashew farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi East, Kogi State Nigeria

Literature Review

History of Cashew Farming, Processing and Marketing in Nigeria

Cashew farming is a Nigerian iconic recognition in the global market. Nigerian Export Promotion Council in 2021 declared that with 81% of the produce being exported, the country as a prominent figure in the world. About 22 states in Nigeria are known for farming. Cashew nuts farming enhances a vital source of vitamins C and B, protein and unsaturated fats which lowers high blood pressure (Alina, 2020).

After the Portuguese traders brought the cashew seedlings into Nigeria around the 16th century, it was first planted in the Agege area of Lagos State before it began to spread to a few other parts. Years passed like 400 years and above after introducing the plant to Nigerian soil, the trees were exploited mainly for apples, as no commercial intentions were hatched for its nuts then (Aliyu, 2012).

Anambra State was an escarpment area in Udi. The first move to commercialise cashew planting was in 1950 at Ogbe, Oji, Udi and Mbala by the defunct Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation (ENDC) and Iwo, Eruwa, and Upper Ogun by the defunct Western Nigeria Development Corporation (WNDC). Cashew farming continued to span across 27 states of the federation including Kogi, Ekiti, Ondo, Cross River, Osun, Anambra, Ebonyi, Nasarawa, Ogun, Kwara, Imo, Abia, Benue, Enugu, Oyo, Taraba, Kaduna, Sokoto, Plateau, Kebbi, Abuja



and others (Adeigbe, et al, 2015).

Nigerian cashew nuts sell at a discount in the world market within the region of 20 to 30% as at 2007. Among the militating factors for good marketing of Nigerian cashew nuts in the world market include low quality, small nuts and kennel size. More importantly, poor kernels peel difficulties in removing the Testa from the kernels. Poor peeling issue is a complexity faced by Nigerian products that depreciate the prices and marketing of the products in the international cashew market. Biologically, *Analepses trifacial* (cashew stem girdler) and shoot wilt dresses have been identified to be the cause of a significant reduction of cashew production and marketing in Nigeria (Adeigbe *et al*, 2015).

Media And Farming

The media can be any mechanical device that multiplies messages randomly and takes them to a larger audience simultaneously without delay. Mass media can be seen as an electronic information-giving technology that enables the mass production of messages to be transmitted to a large and heterogeneous audience. The continuous global food crisis is putting cashew farmers in unprecedented pressure on conventional farming systems and the farmers need to adapt to emerging technologies to increase cashew productivity (Eremi, et al, 2023 & Seems, 2010).

Media information on agricultural farming has greatly evolved from familiar channels to more sophisticated electronic channels, including wireless mobile phones, the internet, and social media, applications and emails among others. Effective use of media in agricultural farming individuals will address gender-based poverty which has become a global problem and will mitigate the deep-rooted income inequalities among farmers in various communities (Eremi, , 2023)

Empirical Review

Eremi *et al* (2023) in a study entitled “Mass Media Perception and Utilisation for Accessing Agricultural Information among Farmers in Ogoja Agricultural Zone Cross River State Nigeria”. The study randomly selected 200 respondents, and the findings indicated that farmers needed media information on innovative farming technologies and herbicides with 89% in agreement. The study affirms the need for mass media assessment of agricultural information for effective farming in Nigeria. The study equally identified radio, television and newspapers as mass media channels through which farmers get information on innovative agricultural information.

Nwibo et al (2022) studied “Influence of Mass Media Promoted Agricultural Programmes on Arable Crop Production in Ezza North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, Nigeria “. The study selected 120 respondents and adopted a quantitative survey method with a structured questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. It revealed that most of the farmers relied on radio (98%) for information on agricultural technologies to boost productivity in the local government.

Iyaji *et al* (2022) carried out a study entitled “Assessment of Cashew Nut Value Chain in Kogi State, Nigeria “and found that 86% of the farmers agreed that they got information from their fellow farmers in innovative farming technologies in Kogi State. This indicated that the media coverage of cashew farming, processing and marketing in Kogi State is low.

Agbongiarhuoyi *et al* (2015) carried out a study entitled “Assessment of factors associated with a low yield of cashew among farmers in growing areas of Nigeria” and found that most of the information on cashew farming among farmers in Kwara State is within the circle of farmers themselves. This showed that the two-step flow of information took place among farmers.

Theoretical Overview

The study adopted the Diffusion of Innovation and Knowledge Gap media Theories.



Diffusion of Innovation Media Theory

It was developed and propounded by Everest M. Rogers in 1962, which laid emphasis on how communication gains momentum and rapidly spreads through a specific population at high speed. People embrace the innovation of technologies with the expectation to improve their environment and comfort themselves.

The result of this diffusion is that people, as part of the social system, adopt a new idea, behaviour or product that they deem necessary for the betterment of social status. The word 'Adoption' means that people do something differently from what they had previously; purchase or use a new product, acquire and perform new behaviour etc. The key to adoption is that the person must perceive the idea, behaviour, or product as new or innovative and it is through this that diffusion is possible (Asemah et al, 2017)

The theory of Diffusion of Innovation is grounded in the fundamental idea that the adoption of innovations is a social process influenced by interpersonal communication and social networks (Nwaoboli, *et al* 2022). Diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system; diffusion is a special type of communication concerned with the spread of messages that are perceived as new ideas (Omachi, *et al* 2024)

Cashew farmers in Kogi East adopt technological advancement in farming implements by adopting new tools such as tractors and herbicides and hope to get information on more farming innovations underway. The theory is, therefore, apt and relevant to this study.

Knowledge Gap Theory

It was developed by Philip J. Tichenor, George A. Donohue and Clarice N. Olien in their proposal in 1970. The assumption of the theory states that everyone in each society does not necessarily require an increase in information spread. People who have access to higher socio-economic relevance tend to stand a better chance of acquiring new information about current happenings in society. This status differentiation has brought about two groups of people in society. In every society, there are educated and less educated people. This theory assumes that the educated people who have the resources have higher chances to information than the non-educated and poor people in the society. The knowledge gap is between the advantaged people who get firsthand information and later pass it on to those who do not have access to such information.

Asemah, et al (2017p.93) states that "Mass Media have the effect of increasing the different gaps between members of a social class. The theory is treated as a commodity that is not distributed equally throughout the society and the people at the top of the ladder have easier access to it" The theory is relevant to this study as stated in the study of Agbongiarhuoyi *et al* (2015) which indicated that the farmers in Kwara State got information among themselves as the educated farmers got information and transmitted to others.

Methodology

The study adopted a structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews. The mixed research method design provided opportunities for comparison of data and strengthening the data. The structured questionnaire was designed to elicit data from the cashew farmers who process and market their produce through the Cashew Value Chain (CVC). The in-depth interview was carried out using the same research questions to elicit information from the chairman of the Local Buyers Association (LBA) and the chairman of the Cashew Farmers Association (CFA). The researchers randomly selected 200 cashew farmers from 7 dominant cashew farming local government areas in the zone. They are Ankpa, Omala, Idah, Igalamela/Odolu, Ofu, Dekina, and Olamaboro local government areas respectively.

Data Presentation



Table 1: Extent of media coverage of cashew farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi East

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	22	11%
High	12	6%
Can't tell	114	57%
Low	18	9%
Very low	34	17%
Total	200	100%

Source: Authors' field survey, 2024

The data in Table 1 indicated that the farmers 57% cannot explain the extent of media coverage of cashew farming, processing and marketing in Kogi East.

Table 2: The media channels through which the cashew farmers access information on cashew farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi East.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	44	22%
Television	32	16%
Newspapers	02	1%
Social Media Platforms	14	7%
Farmers-to-farmers phone call information	108	54%
Townhall meetings by Kogi Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs)	0	0%
Total	200	100%

Source: Authors' field survey, 2024.

Table 2 showed that the majority (54%) of the cashew farmers in Kogi East revealed that the channel through which they get information on cashew farming, processing and marketing is through the individual farmers-to-farmers phone call information.

Table 3: Effectiveness of the study of media assessment of cashew farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi East, Kogi State Nigeria

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Highly effective	118	59%
Effective	52	26%
Can't tell	10	5%
Highly ineffective	12	6%
Not effective	08	4%
Total	200	100%

Source: Authors' field survey, 2024.

Table 3 indicated that the majority (59%) of the farmers rated the study of media assessment of cashew farming,



processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi East as highly effective.

Presentation of Interview with Kogi East Chairman of Local Buyers Association (LBA) in Collaboration with the National Cashew Association of Nigeria (NCAN).

Question guide

What is the level of media coverage of cashew farming, processing and marketing in Kogi East for national development? I mean, how often do journalists come to your office to ask questions that will help promote cashew farming, processing and marketing to improve cashew farming?

Response

Let me be honest with you, we do not have journalists interviewing us on cashew farming, processing and marketing here. We only deal with our set of system arrangements which gives us the understanding of how to promote our cashew nuts. We do undergo training of 20 people from dominant cashew-producing local governments in Kogi East. We do not have media coverage attention. What we do in Kogi East is to give money (little) to the people we train so they start something on their own as an empowerment.

Question guide

What channel do you get information on innovative agricultural technologies or marketing strategies for favourable cashew farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi East?

Response

The main medium or channel we get information is from radio or phone calls from our national chairman (NCAN) then, we pass the information to other members (buyers and transporters) in individual information system.

Question guide

How effective do you think the study of media coverage of cashew farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi East is?

Response

The study of media coverage of cashew farming, processing and marketing is highly effective and timely needed to boost our cashew farming system in Kogi East. You know that information is power and if the information does not get to the right people, it is not yet information.

Interview with the chairman of the Kogi East cashew Farmers Association.

Question guide

What is the level of media coverage of cashew farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi East?

Response

Seriously, I do not know the media coverage you talk about. If it news men coming to us to gather information, I cannot recall such an encounter with the journalists for the promotion of cashew nuts in the zone.

Question guide

What channel do you get information on innovative agricultural technologies about cashew farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi East?

Response

We only rely on information from our leaders on any new development in cashew farming, processing and marketing in our Area here. We usually get phone calls or when we meet, we discuss new ideas or herbicides to help our cashew farming, processing and marketing process.

Question guide

How effective do you think the study of media assessment of cashew farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi East is?

Response



To me, it is highly effective as it will help to call on the media from their dysfunctional service to the cashew farmers in the region. What is the essence of farming without the media advertising our produce for public patronage?

Discussion of Finding

The majority 114 (57%) of the cashew farmers indicated their lack of knowledge of media coverage of cashew farming processing and marketing in Kogi East. It showed the media's unfriendliness to the farmers in the zone. The study of Hammed *et al* (2008), however, affirmed low Awareness creation and lack of funding for the research on cashew farming as the major factors militating against the high increase in the production of nuts. The current study indicates farmers' lack of media assessment. The in-depth interview with the chairmen of the LBA and Cashew Farmers indicated that the media do not properly give attention to the cashew farmers. The interview showed media dysfunction and a disservice to professionalism in cashew farming, processing and marketing in Kogi East.

Table 2 shows that the channel through which the cashew farmers get information on innovative agricultural technologies and other news in Kogi East is through farmers-to-farmers information channel. The majority 108 (54%) of the farmers indicated that the only way they got much education on cashew farming information was through phone calls from their farmers. The finding aligned with the study of Iyaji *et al* (2022) who carried out a study entitled "Assessment of Cashew Nut Value Chain in Kogi State, Nigeria" and found that 86% of the farmers agreed that they got information from their fellow farmers in innovative farming technologies in Kogi State. The study aligned with the assumption of Knowledge Gap Theory. The current study is a notification that the media in Kogi East need to brace up for professional engagement with the cashew farmers in the zone. The interview with the chairmen of LBA and Cashew Farmers Association showed equilibrium with the findings of the questionnaire data analysed.

Table 3 shows that the study of media assessment of cashew farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi East is an effective way to enhance media engagement with the cashew farmers in Kogi East. Of the cashew farmers, 118 (59%) rated the study highly effective. The interview with the chairmen of the Local Buyers Association (LBA) and the Cashew Farmers Association showed agreement with the findings of the questionnaire. It was revealed during the interviews that the farmers agreed with the effectiveness of the study on the media assessment of cashew farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi East. Nwibo *et al* (2022) agreed with the finding of the current study that media engagement serves as a promotional way of boosting cashew farming and marketing in Arable Crop Production Development in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The findings of the current study have shown that media engagement in cashew farming, processing and marketing in Kogi East is highly insignificant and low. The appraisal showed that agricultural extension workers in Kogi East have neglected their media coverage duties. This indicates neglect is an utter disservice to the media's professionalism.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that journalists should wake up to their job in engaging the cashew farmers in farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi State, Nigeria. It also recommended that the Agriculture Extension Workers (AEW) in the state should mobilise their media team to interact with farmers and inform them of the innovations that can boost their farming, processing and marketing for sustainable development in Kogi East, Kogi State, Nigeria.

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