

Promoting Food Security as a Weapon against Social Violence in Nigeria: The Role of Marketing Communications

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Abstract

Any food insecurity problem in Nigeria portends danger not only for the nation's social peace and order, but for the entire African continent. In the face of rising youths' unemployment, restiveness, militant groups, insurgency and terrorism, many believe that food security could serve as a veritable panacea against further explosions of these social crises, because a hungry man is an angry man. The specific objectives of the study included to: determine the effect of marketing communications towards promoting commercial farming for food security in Nigeria; ascertain the impact of integrated marketing communications towards promoting peasant/small and medium-scale farming for achieving food security in Nigeria, and examine the effect of marketing communications as tools for promoting farming as a career amongst Nigerians. Survey design was employed in gathering data which were statistically analyzed with Likert 5-points scale and measure of central tendency. Results obtained indicate that: Marketing communications was significant towards promoting commercial farming for achieving food security in Nigeria; integrated marketing communications was significant towards promoting peasant, small and medium-scale farming for achieving food security in Nigeria; while marketing communications could serve as a potent tool for promoting the farming culture as a career amongst Nigerians. The study recommended that marketing communications tools should be employed on a nationwide campaign aimed at promoting commercial farming, peasant/small and medium-scale farming and the general farming culture as a career amongst Nigerians.

Keywords: *.Food Security .Social Violence .Commercial Farming .Small-Scale Farming .Marketing Communications.*

INTRODUCTION

The population explosion being witnessed in Nigeria over the past two decades without a commensurate economic growth rate has precipitated some social problems. These include increased youths' unemployment, armed robbery, kidnapping, militancy, electoral violence and many more, all in the quest for survival. It is the feelings of hopelessness and frustration that often fuel social violence, especially amongst the youths. This is compounded by years of bad governance, mismanagement, corruption and a consequent unsatisfactory economic performance.

Expansion of the economy to create employment opportunities for young school leavers and graduates has been rather sluggish (Eze, Odigbo & Ehikwe, 2015). Many social commentators are of the view that food security through increased agricultural activities amongst the populace could be used to stem this ugly tide. For instance, Eme, Onyishi, Uche and Uche (2014), observe that in Nigeria, food accounts for a large, and increasing, share of family budgets for poor families. If prices of staple foods soar, poor people bear the brunt. As clothing and shelter serve as basic necessities of life, food remains the most vital because of its centrality to human existence. Clearly, the ruthless

expedition for food has shaped human history, provoking wars, driving migration and underpinning the growth of nations.

Nwaniki (2007) believes that if nothing is done about the worsening food security problem among many African poor, the continent might be heading to a major human disaster. Adegbola, Bamishaiye and Daura, (2011) also assert that food shortages in Nigeria are primarily due to underproduction and advised that more crops should be grown to meet production shortfall, while also ensuring adequate post-harvest storage facilities. They reiterated that the agricultural problem in Nigeria began from the time the country started the production of crude oil in commercial quantity in the mid 1960's till now.

A Central Bank of Nigeria report in 2014 stated that 80 per cent of Nigerian youths were without jobs in 2014 (CBN, 2014). While the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) recorded that 54 per cent of Nigerian youths were unemployed in 2012. This was contained in the "2012 National Baseline Youth Survey Report" issued in Abuja by the NBS in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Youth Development (NBS, 2013). Food security is defined by Gurkarm (2005), as a state of affairs where all people at all times have access to safe and nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life. The World Food Summit, stated that food security is a condition where all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (World Food Summit, 2003).

Nigeria's former Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister for the Economy, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, once admitted that the spate of unemployment was giving her sleepless nights. Quoting the National Bureau of Statistics, the minister declared that "each year, about 1.8 million young Nigerians enter into the labour market and we need to ensure that the economy provides jobs for them. The concomitant effect of youths' unemployment manifests itself in various forms across the country: kidnapping, armed robbery and even militancy in the Niger Delta and to some extent the Boko Haram menace (Eze, Odigbo & Ehikwe, 2015). This could be identified as some of the negative outcome of unemployment (Okonjo-Iweala, 2014).

Statement of Problem

Despite the enormous economic problems Nigeria has, this study believes that food security challenges could be addressed through a well-planned integrated marketing communications programme, especially if marketing communications strategies are used to create public awareness on the dangers of food insecurity, make agricultural information attractive to the media and have a policy that will compel the media to devote more time and space to agricultural issues, which may not yield money like political topics. It will also address the gap that exist in the country in the use of marketing communications to address the inadequate highlighting of agricultural topics in the mass media and the poor display of mass media surveillance role of highlighting corruption in the agricultural sector, especially in the management of agricultural subventions, subsidy and fund disbursement. All these are expected to help promote commercial farming, peasant/small and medium-scale farming and increase farming as careers amongst Nigerians.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study included:

- i. To determine the effect of marketing communications towards promoting commercial farming for food security in Nigeria.
- ii. To ascertain the impact of integrated marketing communications towards promoting peasant/small and medium-scale farming for achieving food security in Nigeria.
- iii. To examine the effect of marketing communications as tool for promoting farming as a career against social violence amongst youths in Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

The following null-hypotheses were tested in the study:

- i. Ho: Marketing communications do not have significant effect towards promoting commercial farming for food security in Nigeria.
- ii. Ho: Integrated marketing communications do not have significant impact towards promoting peasant/small and medium-scale farming for achieving food security in Nigeria.
- iii. Ho: Marketing communications do not have significant effect as tool for promoting farming as a career against social violence amongst youths in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)

Marketing communications entails the professional blending of all the major communication media/channels (advertising, public relations, publicity, sales promotion, personal selling, social media, direct marketing, Africa traditional media or 'oramedia,' etc.) in a campaign. According to Abramovich (2013), IMC is a strategic marketing process specifically designed to ensure that all messaging and communication strategies are unified across all channels and are centred around the customer or target publics of a communication's campaign. In the views of the American Association of Advertising Agencies (4A's, 1989), IMC is an approach to achieving the objectives of a marketing campaign through a well-coordinated use of different promotional methods that are intended to reinforce each other (Businessdictionary.com, 2012).

That is to say for majority of Nigerians to drop the white-collar job syndrome, is not going to be child's play that could be achieved with kid's glove, because that culture has been exalted and entrenched in the psyche of the citizens as a superior one since the colonial years. White collar jobs were reserved for people who went to school, considered as the elitist class, while farming was meant for the illiterate poor. Nigerian governments over the years did nothing to correct this erroneous mind-set, which was even worsened by the discovery of crude oil. The oil boom years helped to fertilize and festered the white-collar life-style in the system. Unfortunately, today, with the crashing oil prices and consequent dwindling economic fortunes to the nation, people are being asked to journey back to farming, the once sullied and neglected profession, as the only saving grace. IMC experts like Sultan (2012), and Percy (2012), believes that the food security challenge in some African countries like Nigeria could be effectively addressed through a strategic application of marketing communication tools of advertising, public relations, sales promotions, publicity, personal selling, direct marketing, and many more directed at the youths and farmers. Finding out the veracity or otherwise of this claim is the major thrust of this study.

The Concept of Food Security

Food security is defined by Idrisa, Gwary, & Shehu (2008), as citizens or a populace having at all times an adequate level of food and food products to meet their increasing consumption demand to mitigate fluctuation in output and price. In the same vein, the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO, 1996), defined food security as a situation when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food for a healthy and active life. Some authors believe that food security can be equated to high level of food production (Ladele and Ayoola, 1997).

However, Omonoma and Agoi (2007), assert that there are four major elements of food security; food availability, food access, food utilization, and lack of or reduced food wastages. The FAO (2011), notes that the issue of food losses is quite inevitable in the efforts to combat hunger and improve food security. Odey (2002) defines food security as the availability and accessibility of foodstuff in desired quality to all consumers throughout the year. In its broader concept, food security is defined as a situation that

exist when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO, 2002; Andohol, 2012).

A study by Omotesho and Muhammad-Lawal (2010), reveals that 65.45% of the rural households in Nigeria are food insecure. Rice, maize, cowpea, gari, fish and palm oil consumed at 4.17, 18.59, 2.92, 2.66, 8.53 and 3.10 kg per week respectively constituted the least-cost food plan for the rural households. With an average household size of eight male adult equivalents, this plan has a cost implication of N73.73 per person per day. This shows that the cost of meeting this least-cost food plan was 38% lower than the one U.S. Dollar World Bank poverty line per person per day.

Again, Okuneye (1992) lamented the colossal failure of most of the national agricultural programmes initiated by various administrations in Nigeria. For instance, the National Accelerated Food Production Project (NAFPP) started in 1974, which had a focus of assisting the supply of agricultural inputs and education of farmers could not achieve its objectives due to the poor planning and the un-timeliness in the provision of these extension services to farmers. The failure of this program led to the birth of the Agricultural Development Program (ADP) in 1975, to arrest some of the shortcomings of the NAFPP. This saw to the setting up of 470 agro service centres in the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) all over the country by 1985 to meet the challenge of extension services provision to farmers that was difficult in the NAFPP days (Andohol, 2012). Unfortunately, some of these laudable programmes could not achieve their set goals due to the ad-hoc nature of planning, corruption and bad governance.

Methodology

Survey design was adopted in the study. Primary data were gathered through structured questionnaire administered on the target sample selected from the three South-East – States (Enugu, Ebonyi and Imo). The population size was 30,000, constituting farmers, young graduates and select entrepreneurs in the country, from which a sample size of 399 was statistically determined through Taro Yamane's formula. Proportionate sampling technique was used to allocate the samples to the three States. The data sourced were presented in Likert 5-points scale and statistically analyzed with measure of central tendency. Three hundred and eighty-five (385) copies of the questionnaire copies representing 96.50% were filled and returned, and were thus used for further analysis. The respondents were commercial and peasant farmers and young graduates from various universities in the three South-East States, aged between 20 to 60 years.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Likert's Scale Issue-Based Multiple Questions

This part is based on Likert 5-points scale, where: Strongly Agree (SA) = 5points, Agree (A) = 4 points, Undecided (Ud) is 3 points, Disagree (D) is 2 points, while Strongly Disagree (SD) is 1 point.

Table 1: Respondents' Answers

S/N	Questions	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1	Commercial farming contributes immensely towards achieving food security in Nigeria	28	30	37	151	139
2	Majority of Nigerian farmers are engaged in commercial farming activities	24	32	39	149	141
3	Peasant farmers contributes immensely for the food production in Nigeria	152	144	39	36	14
4	Small and medium-scale farming accounts significantly for the food production in Nigeria	141	147	41	33	23

5	Integrated marketing communications' tools of advertising and public relations will be effective for promoting farming as careers against social violence amongst youths in Nigeria	123	132	57	43	30
6	Integrated marketing communications' tools of word-of-mouth will be effective for promoting farming as careers against social violence amongst youths in Nigeria	133	147	45	43	17

Source: Field survey, 2015.

Test of Hypothesis One

Ho: Marketing communications do not have significant effect towards promoting commercial farming for food security in Nigeria.

Hi: Marketing communications have significant effect towards promoting commercial farming for food security in Nigeria.

Test Statistics = Measure of Central Tendency

Decision Rule

If Mean < 1.5, the Respondents Disagree.

If $1.5 < \text{Mean} \leq 2.0$, the Respondents are Undecided.

If Mean ≥ 2.0 the Respondents Agree.

Table 2: Test of Hypothesis 1

S/N	Questions	SA	A	Ud	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	Marketing communications strategy of making farming more appealing have significant effect towards promoting commercial farming for food security in Nigeria	28 (140)	30 (120)	37 (111)	151 (302)	139 (139)	2.11	Disagreed
2	Marketing communications strategy of farming incentives will promote commercial farming amongst Nigerian graduates	24 (120)	32 (128)	39 (117)	149 (298)	141 (141)	2.088	Disagreed
	Grand Mean =						2.099	Disagreed

Source: Field survey, 2015.

Data from questions 1 and 2 on table 1 were used.

Interpretation of Results

Results displayed on table 2 show that with a Mean score of 2.11 which is < 3.50, the respondents disagreed that marketing communications strategy of making farming more appealing have significant effect towards promoting commercial farming for food security in Nigeria. Then, with a Mean score of 2.088 which is < 3.50, they again disagreed that marketing communications strategy of farming incentives will promote commercial farming amongst Nigerian graduates. All these cumulatively gave a Grand Mean of 2.099 < 3.50, thus, rejection of the null-hypothesis and an acceptance of the alternative hypothesis which holds that "Marketing communications have significant effect towards promoting commercial farming for food security in Nigeria."

Test of Hypothesis Two

Ho: Integrated marketing communications do not have significant impact towards promoting peasant/small and medium-scale farming for achieving food security in Nigeria.

Hi: Integrated marketing communications have significant impact towards promoting peasant/small and medium-scale farming for achieving food security in Nigeria.

Test Statistics = Measure of Central Tendency

Table 3: For Test of Hypothesis 2

S/N	Questions	SA	A	Ud	D	SD	Mean	Decision
3	Peasant/small-scale farmers in Nigeria could be motivated to do more via radio and television adverts	152 (760)	144 (576)	39 (117)	36 (72)	14 (14)	4.00	Agreed
4	Small and medium-scale farming could also be increased in Nigeria via personal selling and promotions	141 (705)	147 (588)	41 (123)	33 (66)	23 (23)	3.91	Agreed
	Grand Mean						3.95	Agreed

Source: Field survey, 2015.

Data from questions 3 and 4 on table 1 were used.

Interpretation of Results

Results displayed on table 3 indicate that with a Mean score of 4.00 which is >3.50 , the respondents agreed that peasant/small-scale farmers in Nigeria could be motivated to do more via radio and television adverts. With a Mean score of 3.91 which is >3.50 , the respondents equally agreed that small and medium-scale farming could also be increased in Nigeria via personal selling and promotion. All these cumulatively gave a Grand Mean of $3.95 > 3.50$, thus, a rejection of the null-hypothesis and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis which states that "Integrated marketing communications have significant impact towards promoting peasant/small and medium-scale farming for achieving food security in Nigeria."

Test of Hypothesis Three

Ho: Marketing communication does not have significant positive effect as tool for promoting farming career amongst Nigerians.

Hi: Marketing communications have significant positive effect as tool for promoting farming career amongst Nigerians.

Test Statistics = Measure of Central Tendency

Table 4: For Test of Hypothesis 3

S/N	Questions	SA	A	Ud	D	SD	Mean	Decision
5	Integrated marketing communications' tools of advertising and public relations will be effective for promoting farming as careers against social violence amongst youths in Nigeria	123 (615)	132 (528)	57 (171)	43 (86)	30 (30)	3.71	Agreed
6	One of the integrated marketing communications' tools of word-of-mouth will be effective for promoting farming as careers against social violence amongst youths in Nigeria	133 (665)	147 (588)	45 (135)	43 (86)	17 (17)	3.87	Agreed
	Grand Mean						3.79	Agreed

Data from questions 5 and 6 on table 1 were used. Source: Field survey, 2015.

Interpretation of Results

Results displayed on table 4 reveal that with a Mean score of 3.71 which is >3.50 , the respondents agreed that integrated marketing communications' tools of advertising and public relations will be effective for promoting farming as careers against social violence amongst youths in Nigeria. With a Mean score of 3.87 which is >3.50 , the respondents equally agreed that integrated marketing communications' tools of word-of-mouth will be effective for promoting farming as careers against social violence amongst youths in Nigeria. These gave a Grand Mean of $3.79 > 3.50$, thus, a rejection of the null-hypothesis and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis which states that "Marketing communications have significant positive effect as tool for promoting farming career amongst Nigerians."

Discussion of Findings and Conclusion

Results of this study reveal that commercial farming has not contributed significantly to the food production capacity of Nigeria, hence, has not also proved a veritable contributor towards achieving food security in the country. This finds support in the report by Attah (2012) that Nigeria's situation on food security is highly precarious and pernicious as a significant percentage of the Nigerian farmers are subsistence. Notwithstanding, agriculture has remained the largest sector of the Nigerian economy, it generates employment for about 70% of Nigeria's population and contributes about 40% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with crops accounting for 80%, livestock 13%, forestry 3% and fishery 4%. This is buttressed by the United Nation's millennium goal report that under the burden of chronic poverty and hunger, livestock herders, subsistence farmers, forest dwellers and fisher folk use their natural environment in unsustainable ways, leading to further deterioration of their livelihood conditions. Empowering the poor and hungry as custodians of land, waters, forests and biodiversity can advance both food security and environmental sustainability (MDG 7). Ojo and Adebayo (2012) also lament that the contribution of irrigated agriculture to crop production in Nigeria is very small, and advise that Nigeria's food policy and programmes require a new approach and philosophy if the fate that befell Nigeria's neighbour will not befall the country more so, that the country lacks clear cut food policy.

Result number two of the study also shows that peasant/small and medium-scale farming impact significantly towards achieving food security in Nigeria. This notwithstanding, efforts at improving this vital sector through micro-credits have been a failure over the years, due to the lethargic attitude of Nigerian commercial banks in granting loans to the SMEs. A World Bank report showed that 39% of small scale firms and 37% of medium scale firms in Nigeria are financially constrained (World Bank, 2010). Many SMEs in Nigeria lack the capital to continue their business and they are forced to close shop because they are unable to access the required funds (Gbandi & Amissah, 2014).

Finally, the result number three of the study shows that marketing communications have significant positive effect as tool for promoting farming career amongst Nigerians. This finding is supported by Eze, Odigbo and Ehikwe (2015) that in this 21st century, small and medium scale companies can use modern communication channels, available personal selling and direct marketing, especially word-of-mouth communications to boost their business activities. Mungcal (2011) observed that the use of social media is particularly important for small-scale farmers in terms of cost and wider reach to distant markets/consumers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proffered:

- i. Nigerian entrepreneurs should be educated and enlightened through marketing communications 'strategies to go into commercial agriculture as a noble profession.

- ii. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) should employ marketing research to find out why the huge funds deposited in commercial banks for the SMEs are not being accessed and use integrated marketing communications' media to enlighten peasant and small-holder farmers to access the funds in order to increase their production.
- iii. Sustained marketing communications campaigns should be mounted to win the interest of Nigerian youths, especially unemployed graduates into the farming profession as a noble career. Governmental incentives in form of soft loans to them, should also be used to gain success in this area.

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