

# Marketing Communications Strategy for Curbing Youths' Unemployment through Farming in Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

The rate of youths' unemployment and poverty in Nigeria has been adjudged by the World Bank and the United Nations development index over the years to be so high. This has invariably stunted the country annual gross domestic product and economic development over the past twenty years. All efforts of various governments of the country to reverse this ugly trend through some laudable projects like skills acquisition programmes, small and medium-scale enterprises micro-credits, poverty alleviation and other programmes have not met with the requisite results, due to the get-rich-quick and consequent culture of unproductivity exhibited by the youths, who were the target beneficiaries. The newly sworn-in President, Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, has vowed to address this problem through youths' massive participation in farming. To what extent could marketing communications tools of African traditional media, word-of-mouth communications (WOM), electronic-word of mouth communications (eWOM) and social-media communications be of help? This study tried to find out. Survey design was employed in gathering data which were statistically analyzed. Results indicate that the applications of African traditional media, word-of-mouth communications (WOM), electronic-word of mouth communications (E-WOM) and social-media communications, which are popular amongst the Nigerian youths will be effective marketing communications tools for motivating the youths into adopting the farming culture for poverty alleviations. That will also help in significantly changing the get-rich-quick mentality of the average Nigerian youth. Thus, it was recommended amongst other things that a nationwide marketing communications campaign based on WOM, E-WOM and social-media as major tools should be used to effectively promote youths' participation in farming, so as to solve youths' unemployment, poverty and crime in the land.

**Keywords:** Marketing Communications, Farming, Youths' Unemployment, Poverty Eradication.

## 1. Introduction

According to Omeje (2005), staggering and growing level of youth unemployment in Nigeria, leading to hopelessness, restiveness and feelings of frustration, often precipitates or fuels violent conflicts in the country. High population growth rate amid unsatisfactory economic performance compounds the problem of youth unemployment in Nigeria. There is a markedly unfavourable imbalance between Nigeria's population growth rate and economic performance. Expansion of the economy to create employment opportunities for young school leavers and graduates has been rather sluggish. This heightens the risk and incidents of anti-establishment protests and frustration-related violence. The frustration and vulnerability of the youths make it possible for them to be recruited, inspired or hired for violence with relative ease. In the midst of mass misery and poverty, violence is seen and promoted as an economic opportunity by many subalterns and jobless youths. This phenomenon resonates with the greed versus grievance theory of Paul Collier & Anke Hoeffler (2002; Omeje, 2005).

According to the Central Bank of Nigeria, 80 per cent of Nigerian youths were without jobs in 2014 (CBN, 2014). This is despite repeated figures released by the National Bureau of Statistics indicating that the Nigerian economy was experiencing positive growth rate. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on its own admitted 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). Figure one in this text from Rise Network (2013), shows that the country's overall unemployment rate in 2011 was 23.9 percent, with youths' unemployment accounting for over 50 percent of that.

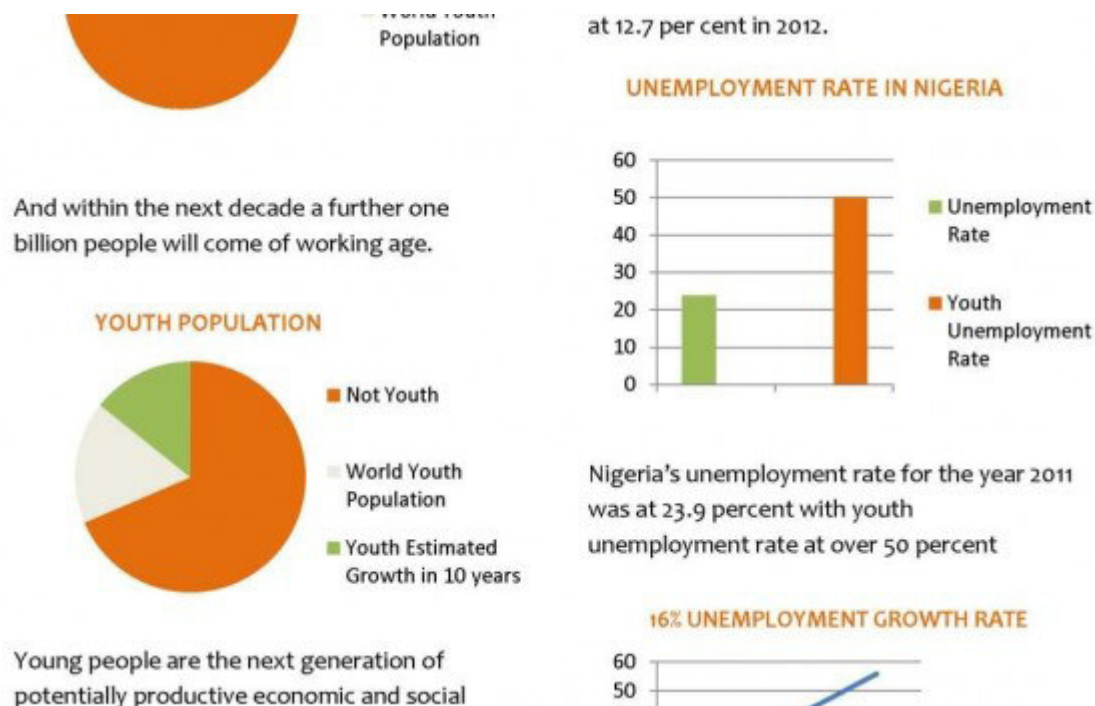


Fig. 1: Source: Rise Network (2013), Youth Unemployment In Nigeria: Shocking Statistics, Facts And Why The Future May Not Be So Bright Afterall, <http://risenetworks.org/2013/05/16/youth-unemployment-in-nigeria-is-there-hope-for-nigerian-youth/>

Ndifreke (2013), believes that the bulk of the problem lies in the ability of the Nigerian government and leadership to provide an enabling environment where creativity and innovation is birthed, nurtured, grown and expanded with a sincere motive and drive towards economic development and people development. To the youths, Ndifreke (2013) advised not to give up, but arm themselves with extant knowledge, look inward for creativity, network with like minds and groups. Supporting, Abasi (2013) pointed out that there could be a turning point, if Nigeria, appropriately harnesses its vast resources. If nothing is done to cater for sustainable employment and favourable economic conditions, considering Nigeria's current demography and the projected 200 million people in 2050; then the most populous African country would have faced undesired and dark days. So, it is incumbent on the leadership of this great country to start acting and thinking beyond the present. To cut unemployment, there must be stabilization of basic amenities - clean water, energy, functional healthcare and educational systems. Various cottage industries started by individuals in this country failed to survive and their failure is basically linked to high operating energy cost, added Abasi (2013).

It was because of this gory picture, that the chairman of the Subsidy Reinvestment and Employment Programme (Sure-P), Dr. Christopher Kolade, bemoaned the rising rate of unemployment in the country, saying that no fewer than 40 million Nigerians are without jobs (Thisdaylive, 2013). In its Economic Report on Nigeria released in May 2013, the World Bank noted that poverty reduction and job creation have not kept pace with population growth, implying social distress for an increasing number of Nigerians. Job creation in Nigeria has been inadequate to keep pace with the expanding working age population, reported the World Bank. To buttress these views, Nigeria's former Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister for the Economy, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, admitted that the spate of unemployment was giving her sleepless nights. Quoting the National Bureau of Statistics, the minister declared that "each year, about 1.8million young Nigerians enter into the labour market and we need to ensure that the economy provides jobs for them. We have seen the concomitant effect of youth 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 could be identified as some of the negative outcome of unemployment (Okonjo-Iweala, 2014).

## 2. Statement of the Problem

According to Sunnews (2014), the gravity of Nigeria's unemployment problem, especially graduate unemployment, is reflected by the trampling of graduate job seekers to death during stampedes at a 2013 Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) recruitment drive across the country. That incident, alone, tells us that something needs to be done urgently to address the scourge of unemployment in the country. World Bank statistics in 2013 put the number of Nigerians living in destitution at 100 million, while its 2014 report put Nigeria among the

five poorest countries in the world. The high rate of unemployment and low per capita income in the country are just two of the indices used by the World Bank in arriving at this assessment. All levels of government in the country need to be reminded that unemployment, especially among youths, is a time bomb for any country (Sunnews, 2014).

It is mindful of this disturbing fact that the newly sworn-in President, Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, announced recently that he was going to confront the problem frontally through a massive youths' agricultural programme. His government will in its first 100 days collaborate with States and Local Governments to innovatively fund youths in commercial agribusiness programmes and launch Agricultural Support Programmes that will drive agricultural land development and mechanization (*Nigerianmonitor, 2015; Newsheadline, 2015*). However, youths' agricultural programmes had been tried in the past without much success. There was the school-to-land programme and many more that didn't yield the expected result. Hence, the motivation for this study to assess the potency of marketing communications tools of word of mouth communications, e-word of mouth communications and social media strategy which are popular with the Nigerian youths for enhanced youths' participation in farming in order to curb youths' unemployment in Nigeria.

### **3. Research Objectives**

The objectives of the study include:

- i. To assess the extent marketing communications tools of word-of-mouth communications (WOM) via African traditional media would enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming.
- ii. To determine the extent marketing communications tools of e-word of mouth communications (eWOM) would enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming.
- iii. To ascertain the extent marketing communications tools of social-media would enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming.

### **4. Research Hypotheses**

The following null-hypotheses were tested in the study:

- i. Marketing communications tools of word-of-mouth communications (WOM) via African traditional media will not significantly enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming.
- ii. Marketing communications tools of e-word of mouth communications (E-wom) will not significantly enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming.
- iii. Marketing communications tools of social-media will not significantly enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming.

### **5. Scope of the Study**

The study was restricted in scope to a survey of the effect of only those marketing communications media that are popular amongst Nigerian youths/students, which are mainly the age-old African traditional media and the new communications media. Majority of Nigerian students don't buy or read newspapers, watch only football on televisions and listen to only music channels on radio. Hence, to achieve a truly national geographical spread, students from six universities were selected from each of the six geo-political areas of the country. They are: South-East – University of Nigeria, Nsukka; South-South – University of Calabar; South-West – University of Lagos, North-Central – Benue State University; North-East – Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and North-West – University of Maidugri. Students of diverse fields of study were accommodated in the study, with the exception of medical students.

### **6. Review of Related Literature**

#### **6.1 Theoretical Framework**

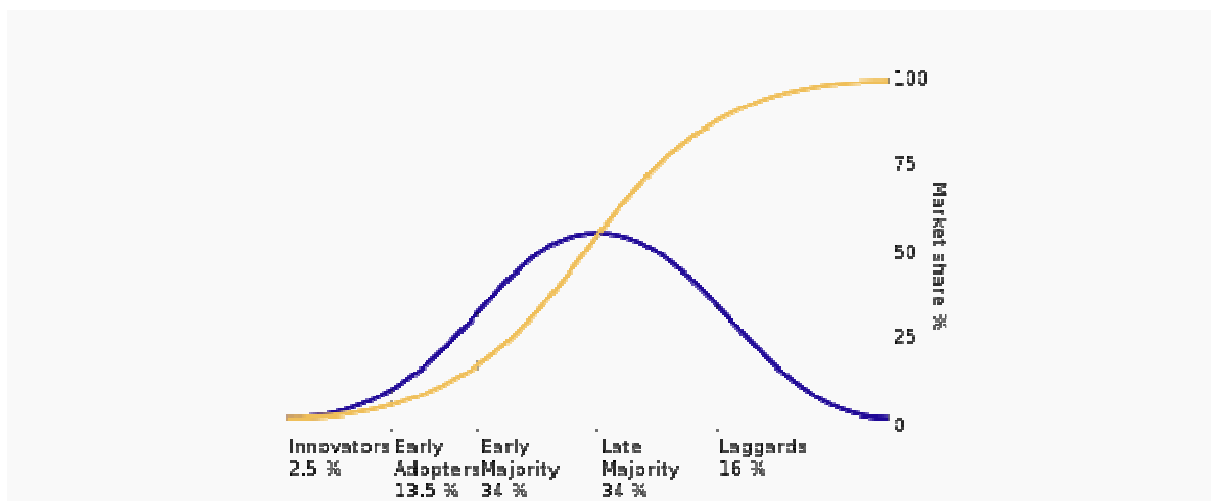
The theoretical construct for this study is founded on the application of the diffusion of innovation theory which dwells on appropriate steps for introducing new ideas to a given population or society.

#### **6.2 Diffusion of Innovation Theory**

Developed by Everett Rogers in 1962, the diffusion of innovations theory seeks to explain how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology could be effectively spread through cultures (Rogers, 2003). The theory which has been tested in more than 6000 research studies and field tests, explains how an innovation, idea, behaviour, or object perceived as new by a target publics, society or population is treated when introduced to them (Robinson, 2009). Hence, in the diffusion of innovation theory, communicators in society with a new message, idea or innovation, are taught the basic psych-social variables that might likely influence the adoption or rejection of such new ideas by the target populace.

Rogers (2003), espouses the theory that there are four main elements that influence the spread of a new idea: the innovation, communication channels, time, and a social system, which relies heavily on human capital.

The innovation must be widely adopted in order to be self-sustained (Henley, et al., 2011). Within the rate of adoption, there is a point at which an innovation reaches critical mass. The categories of adopters are: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards (Rogers, 2003:62), as depicted in figure 2 below:



**Fig. 2: Rogers, Everett M. (2003), *Diffusion of Innovations*, Fifth Edition 2003, Free Press, New York, p221.**

In addition to the gatekeepers and opinion leaders who exist within a given community, there are change agents from outside the community. Change agents essentially bring innovations to the communities—first through the gatekeepers, then through the opinion leaders, and so on through the community.

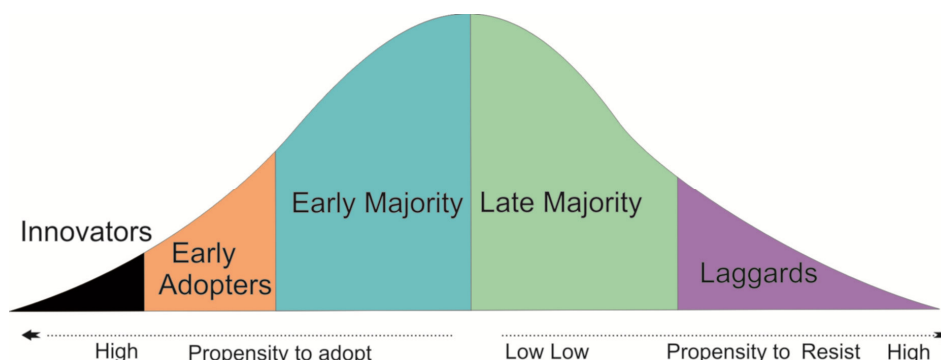
Innovators are the first individuals to adopt an innovation. Innovators are willing to take risks, youngest in age, have the highest social class, have great financial liquidity, are very social and have closest contact to scientific sources and interaction with other innovators. Risk tolerance has them adopting technologies which may ultimately fail. Financial resources help absorb these failures.

Early adopters are the second fastest category of individuals who adopt an innovation, because they have the highest degree of opinion leadership among the other adopter categories. They are typically younger in age, have a higher social status, have more financial liquidity, advanced education, and are more socially forward than late adopters.

The Early Majority category of people adopts an innovation after some length of time, significantly longer than the innovators and early adopters. They are certainly and noticeably slower in the adoption process. They tend to have above average social status, contact with early adopters, and seldom hold positions of opinion leadership in society.

The Late Majority category of individuals usually adopts an innovation after the average member of the society must have done so. This is because they approach an innovation with a high degree of skepticism and after the majority of members of society must have done so. They view the new innovation with much subdued skepticism. They certainly would not want to be the first scape goat or victims. They usually belong to below average social status, have very little financial liquidity, in contact with others in late majority and early majority, who they watch to see their own experience first, before plunging into it.

The Laggards are the last to adopt an innovation, because they tend to be very conservative, have remarkable aversion to new ideas, change and change-agents. They are typically traditionalists and tend to be advanced in age. Unlike members of the previous categories, individuals in this category show little to no opinion leadership. They belong to the lowest social status in society, lowest financial liquidity, be oldest of all other adopters, and in contact with only family and close friends (**Rogers, 2003**). The five categories and their degree of influence are again shown on figure three:



**Fig. 3: Five categories of adopters and their degree of influence.** Source: Rogers (2003), Diffusion of Innovation, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diffusion\\_of\\_innovations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diffusion_of_innovations)

Rogers (2003), then went ahead to explain five intrinsic factors of innovations that influence an individual's decision to adopt or reject a new idea or innovation as follows:

#### 1. Relative Advantage of the New Idea

This means the degree to which the new idea is perceived as better than the idea it supersedes by the target audience, measured in terms that matter to those target publics, like political offices, economic advantage, social prestige, ego massage, convenience, or satisfaction (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 2005). The greater the perceived relative advantage of the new idea, the more rapid its rate of adoption is likely to be by the target audience (Bell, 2003).

#### 2. Compatibility with Existing Values and Practices

This talks about the degree to which the new idea or innovation is perceived by the target publics as being consistent with their values, past experiences, expectations and needs (Valente, 2006). An idea that is incompatible with their values, norms or practices will not be adopted as rapidly as an innovation that is compatible (Renana et. al., 2010).

#### 3. Simplicity and Ease of Use

This entails the degree to which the new idea or innovation is perceived by the target publics as being easy or difficult to understand and adopt. New ideas that are simpler to understand are adopted more rapidly than innovations that require the adopter to develop new skills and understandings. In other words, complex ideas or difficult-to-apply ideas are most likely to be shunned by the target publics (Rogers, 2003).

#### 4. Trialability

This means the degree to which the new idea or innovation can be experimented with on a limited basis. An innovation that is trialable represents less uncertainty to the individual who is considering it (Robinson, 2009).

#### 5. Observable Results

This means that the easier it is for individuals to see the results of a new idea or innovation, the more likely they are to adopt it. Visible results lower uncertainty and also stimulate peer discussion of a new idea, as friends and neighbours of an adopter often request information about it. According to Rogers (2003), these five qualities determine between 49 to 87 percent of successes in the adoption of new ideas. However, some authors argue that social systems determine diffusion, norms on diffusion, roles of opinion leaders and change agents, types of innovation decisions, and innovation consequences (Mahajon et. al., 2000; Anderson & Ross, 2005).

### 6.3 Application of the Diffusion Theory to Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Nigeria

Over the years, Nigerian youths especially the 1.8million fresh graduates that are being churned out from our universities every year, have shown remarkable aversion to farming. They prefer white-collar jobs. Attempts by previous administrations to turn their interests into blue-collar jobs, including farming met with stiff resistance and consequent failure. Hence, Tersoo (2013), observed that despite the numerous poverty alleviation strategies introduced in Nigeria over the years, poverty alleviation still remains an issue. There is widespread agreement that the previous strategies failed to achieve their objectives due to the non-adoption of sound strategies. According to Mbaegbu (2008), a good number of these poverty reduction policies over the years have failed to adopt sound strategy of developing local entrepreneurs through entrepreneurial skills and wealth creation processes which increases purchasing power and demand for goods and services. It is true that the poverty alleviation programmes like the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme Funds, the Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI); the National Directorate of Employment (NDE); Mass Mobilization for Social Justice and Economic Reconstruction (MAMSER); Better Life for Rural Women; the People's Bank, Community Banks; Fund for Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), the Capacity Acquisition Programme (CAP), and many more. All these were aimed at equipping Nigerian poor with skills to create jobs for themselves and

other people instead of hunting for white-collar jobs in the public sector, but their implementations rendered the projects a failure (Mbaegbu, 2008). If the aims and objectives of those projects were first diffused to the populace, with the basic elements of the diffusion theory factored into the exercise, through massive enlightenment campaigns, majority of the recipients wouldn't have regarded the largesse as their own share of the national cake (Iguisi, 2008), which contributed to the failures.

Again, a case for the adoption of the diffusion theory for such programmes finds support in the observations of Ovie and Akpomuvie (2011), that the causes of failure of the programmes are divided into two broad categories: those associated with policy design and implementation and causes associated with policy acceptability. Factors that relate and have bearing on these causes include: misunderstanding of the policies made for the people by the policy makers and the recipients: misplaced priorities: favoritism and benefit capture, which breeds contempt for the policies. A situation where the change agents or policy makers do not know the people they make the policy for, especially their felt needs, led to either overestimation or underestimation of the problems and consequent misplaced priorities. The prevailing public policy on poverty alleviation is at variance with the peoples' perception of the projects. Hence, the poor did not share government's enthusiasm for poverty alleviation. Majority of them believed that the exercise were ruses to enrich the rich at the expense of the poor, which in some cases actually turned out to be so, due to corruption in the system. Thus, the credibility quotient of the Nigerian poor over those programmes was very low, and many therefore could not participate in what they saw as attempts in futility. Thus, the inculcation of the diffusion of innovation theory by the Buhari administration in the implementation of the proposed youths' employment programme through farming is expected to yield a better result.

## **7. Methodology**

The researchers adopted survey design in this study. The primary data were gathered through electronic questionnaire (E-questionnaire) via the Internet administered on students from six universities selected from each of the six geo-political areas of the country. They are: South-East – University of Nigeria, Nsukka; South-South – University of Calabar; South-West – University of Lagos, North-Central – Benue State University; North-East – Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and North-West – University of Maidugri. With a student population size of 180,000, a sample size of 400 was statistically determined through Taro Yamane's formula. Proportionate sampling technique was used to allocate it to the 6 universities. The data sourced were presented in Likert 5-points scale and statistically analyzed with Spearman's Correlation Coefficient. Only 382 of the E-questionnaire representing 95.50% were filled and returned to us, and were thus used for the analysis.

## **8. Data Presentation and Analysis**

### **8.1 Respondents' Demographic Data**

48% of the students were male, while 52% were female. They were all in the age bracket of 16 to 30 years. 20% were 1<sup>st</sup> year students, 20% were 2nd year students, 20% were 3rd year students, while 40% were final year students. Students from all the departments in the 6 universities were accommodated in the study, with the exception of medical students who seemed to be strictly engrossed in their own trade and most unlikely to go into farming.

### **8.2 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	Word-of-mouth communications (WOM) through African traditional media will enhance youths' adoption of farming in Nigeria	134	191	20	22	15
2	Word-of-mouth communications (WOM) through youth meetings and associations will enhance youths' adoption of farming in Nigeria	129	199	22	14	18
3	Word-of-mouth communications (WOM) through peer group media will enhance youths' adoption of farming in Nigeria	131	212	10	10	19
4	E-word-of-mouth communications (E-wom) through Facebook will enhance youths' adoption of farming in Nigeria	98	177	31	39	37
5	E-word-of-mouth communications (E-wom) through Twitter will enhance youths' adoption of farming in Nigeria	96	164	30	47	45
6	E-word-of-mouth communications (E-wom) through Whatsapp will enhance youths' adoption of farming in Nigeria	114	159	55	33	21
7	Social-media tools of text-messages would enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming	113	149	48	43	29
8	Social-media tools of E-mails would enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming	102	148	52	41	39
9	Social-media tools of Voice-mails would enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming	111	141	49	44	37

**Source: Field survey, 2014.**

### Test of Hypothesis One

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Marketing communications tools of word-of-mouth communications (WOM) via African traditional media will not significantly enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Marketing communications tools of word-of-mouth communications (WOM) via African traditional media will significantly enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming.

### Test Statistics = Measure of Central Tendency

#### Decision Rule

If Mean < 2.5, the Respondents Disagree.

If 3.5 < Mean ≤ 2.5, the Respondents are Undecided.

If Mean ≥ 3.5, the Respondents Agree.

**Table 2: Test of Hypothesis 1**

S/N	Questions	SA	A	Ud	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	Word-of-mouth communications (WOM) through African traditional media will enhance youths' adoption of farming in Nigeria	134 (670)	191 (764)	20 (60)	22 (44)	15 (15)	4.06	Agreed
2	Word-of-mouth communications (WOM) through youth meetings and associations will enhance youths' adoption of farming in Nigeria	129 (645)	199 (796)	22 (66)	14 (28)	18 (15)	4.05	Agreed
3	Word-of-mouth communications (WOM) through peer group media will enhance youths' adoption of farming in Nigeria	131 (655)	212 (848)	10 (30)	10 (20)	19 (19)	4.12	
	<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>4.07</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Data from questions 1, 2 and 3 on table 1 were used.

### Interpretation of Results

Results displayed on table 2 show that with a Mean score of 4.06 which is  $>3.50$ , the respondents agreed that word-of-mouth communications (WOM) through African traditional media will enhance youths' adoption of farming in Nigeria. With a Mean score of 4.05 which is  $>3.50$ , the respondents equally agreed that word-of-mouth communications (WOM) through youth meetings and associations will enhance youths' adoption of farming in Nigeria. Then, with a Mean score of 4.12 which is  $>3.50$ , they again agreed that word-of-mouth communications (WOM) through peer group media will enhance youths' adoption of farming in Nigeria. All these cumulatively gave a Grand Mean of  $4.07 > 3.50$ , thus, a rejection of the null-hypothesis and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis that "Marketing communications tools of word-of-mouth communications (WOM) via African traditional media will significantly enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming."

### Test of Hypothesis Two

**Ho:** Marketing communications tools of e-word of mouth communications (E-wom) will not significantly enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming.

**Hi:** Marketing communications tools of e-word of mouth communications (E-wom) will significantly enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming.

**Test Statistics = Measure of Central Tendency**



**Table 3: For Test of Hypothesis 2**

S/N	Questions	SA	A	Ud	D	SD	Mean	Decision
4	E-word-of-mouth communications (E-wom) through Facebook will enhance youths' adoption of farming in Nigeria	98 (490)	177 (708)	31 (93)	39 (78)	37 (37)	3.70	Agreed
5	E-word-of-mouth communications (E-wom) through Twitter will enhance youths' adoption of farming in Nigeria	96 (480)	164 (656)	30 (90)	47 (94)	45 (45)	3.57	Agreed
6	E-word-of-mouth communications (E-wom) through Whatsapp will enhance youths' adoption of farming in Nigeria	114 (570)	159 (636)	55 (165)	33 (66)	21 (21)	3.82	Agreed
	<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>3.7</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Data from questions 4, 5 and 6 on table 1 were used.

### Interpretation of Results

Results displayed on table 2 show that with a Mean score of 3.70 which is  $>3.50$ , the respondents agreed that E-word-of-mouth communications (E-wom) through Facebook will enhance youths' adoption of farming in Nigeria. With a Mean score of 3.57 which is  $>3.50$ , the respondents equally agreed that E-word-of-mouth communications (E-wom) through Twitter will enhance youths' adoption of farming in Nigeria. Then, with a Mean score of 3.82 they also agreed that E-word-of-mouth communications (E-wom) through Whatsapp will enhance youths' adoption of farming in Nigeria. All these cumulatively gave a Grand Mean of  $3.70 > 3.50$ , thus, a rejection of the null-hypothesis and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis that "Marketing communications tools of e-word of mouth communications (E-wom) will significantly enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming."

### Test of Hypothesis Three

**Ho:** Marketing communications tools of social-media will not significantly enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming.

**Hi:** Marketing communications tools of social-media will significantly enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming.

**Test Statistics** = Measure of Central Tendency

**Table 4: For Test of Hypothesis 3**

S/N	Questions	SA	A	Ud	D	SD	Mean	Decision
7	Social-media tools of text-messages would enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming	113 (565)	149 (596)	48 (144)	43 (86)	29 (29)	3.71	Agreed
8	Social-media tools of E-mails would enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming	102 (510)	148 (592)	52 (156)	41 (82)	39 (39)	3.61	Agreed
9	Social-media tools of Voice-mails would enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming	111 (555)	141 (564)	49 (147)	44 (88)	37 (37)	3.64	Agreed
	<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>3.65</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Data from questions 7, 8 and 9 on table 1 were used.

### Interpretation of Results

Results displayed on table 4 indicate that with a Mean score of 3.71 which is  $>3.50$ , the respondents agreed that social-media tools of text-messages would enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming. With a Mean score of 3.61 which is  $>3.50$ , the respondents equally agreed that Social-media tools of E-mails would enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming. Finally, with a Mean score of 3.64 they also

agreed that Social-media tools of Voice-mails would enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming. All these gave a Grand Mean of  $3.65 > 3.50$ , thus, a rejection of the null-hypothesis and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis that "Marketing communications tools of e-word of mouth communications (E-wom) will significantly enhance Nigerian youths' interest and participation in farming."

## 9. Discussion of Findings

As can be seen from the results of this study, the Nigerian youths' seeming phobia for farming could be changed through the application of the right media strategies. Some of these behavior patterns in our society are steeped in history, where farming was seen as a profession for the peasants, who dress in rags and often feed from hand to mouth. Hence, such cultural stereotypes that mirrored farming as a profession for the local rural dwellers, the school dropouts and the never-do-wells in society, could be changed through a professional application of the right African traditional media strategies as our number one finding indicated; the right word-of-mouth media strategies as the number two findings showed and the right e- word-of-mouth and its extended social media strategies as reflected by the number three result.

## 10. Conclusion

No nation can survive without farming, and as the current generation of farmers in the country, mainly old men and women are getting sidelined by age, there is need for the teeming unemployed youths in the country to adopt the farming culture as a noble profession. However, for them to do that, the right incentives for commercial farming must be provided for them, and also mass-communicated to them through those media channels that popular amongst the youths. They must also be assured through such communication campaigns that the present government of Gen. Muhammadu Buhari means well, so, it will not be business as usual, where funds earmarked for such programmes rarely got to the people they were meant for, but rather ended up in the pockets of politicians. The President has promised "Change" and we hope for a departure from such programmes' implementation disease that had held the country down over the years due to corruption, and strongly believe that the proposed farming programme for the youths in the country will be a success.

## 11. Recommended Marketing Communications Strategy For Curbing Youths' Unemployment Through Farming In Nigeria

For the teeming unemployed youths in Nigeria to willingly accept the farming culture as a way out of poverty, a multi-media marketing communications approach will be necessary, but must be targeted at those media channels that are popular amongst Nigerian youths as follows:

### 11.1 African Traditional Media (Oramedia) Approaches

The use of African traditional media for poverty alleviation programmes' campaigns in Nigeria is rooted in the fact that they are indigenous means of communication by the people amongst themselves, hence very potent. It is done through both human and non-human vehicles like idiomatic expressions, talking drums, folk songs, drama, festivals, town criers, traditional wears, artefacts, paintings, stories, itinerant dance and mime groups, puppet shows, folk media and many more which serve not only to inform, educate and entertain but also to influence attitudes and behaviour (Osho, 2011). It is the major means of communication by the rural people who constitute over 70 percent of the Nigerian population. They are transmitted from one generation to the other. People grew up with them, and they get accustomed to them in their day-to-day interactions. So, they are bound to be with the people till eternity (Osho, 2011). It is an intrinsic part of the enduring, sustaining and inevitable culture and tradition of the African people (Odigbo et al., 2013). Hence, it could be used to tactically caricature youths who are surrendering to lives of unproductivity, laziness and docility to wake up from their slumber and adopt farming as one of the noblest professions in the world.

In some African tribes, messages from traditional media are regarded sacred and always religiously obeyed by the people (Odigbo et al., 2013). Hence, it is highly effective than all other means of communication because they are interactive, inter-personal, combine verbal communications with non-verbal codifications, and they are simple, natural and less expensive. The high content of non-verbal components in oramedia actually makes them to be more effective because non-verbal communicates the mind more than verbal. Again, one unique thing about oramedia is the immediate feedback, which makes communication to be effective, because it is embedded in the cultural values and tradition of the people through body language, signs, and objects (Osho, 2011). Its potency lies in the fact that it is culturally based as it is natural with the tradition and customs of the people. It involves their language, dialect, individual occupation or family occupation or communal occupation. By the account of Osho (2011:34), most Africans live in the rural communities, raising livestock or engaging in farming, notwithstanding that Africa has many big cities that are growing rapidly, thus, African traditional media could be used to reach youths in Nigerian local environments and win their interest in farming most effectively.

Again, in most local communities, the indigenous media serve as effective complement to the

conventional media in the modern age, because for messages to properly get to the grassroots and have an arresting effect on them, the message from the conventional media must be linked up through their traditional media. Thus, oramedia is used to reinforce the information they get from the mass media, and the people believe in the messages of the traditional media more than the exogenous media or the new media. Moreover, the messages from the traditional media are easy to understand and do not require the interpretation of anybody, because it is transmitted in the language and culture that are traditional to the people, simple and less sophisticated as majority of the rural populace in some communities still don't know how to manipulate many things in their handsets and laptops or how to engage in social media communications (Odigbo et al., 2013; Osho, 2011).

### **11.2 Word-of-Mouth Media Approaches**

According to Eze, Ehikwe & Odigbo (2015), word-of-mouth communications is the passing of information by verbal means, but also general information, in an informal, person-to-person manner. Word-of-mouth communication is also characterized as oral, person-to-person communication between a receiver and a communicator whom the receiver perceives as non-commercial, regarding a brand, product or service. It also involves the exchange of ephemeral oral or spoken messages between a contiguous source and a recipient who communicate directly in real life (Eze, Ehikwe & Odigbo, 2015).

Word-of-mouth communication is again when people share their evaluations of service/product encounters to their friends or family, thus, becoming organizations hidden sales persons. As a communication and marketing process, word-of mouth communication can be effective as a promotional strategy, because they condition the minds of the target audience to take eventual positive decisions, which includes the satisfied customer (recipient of a farming-based poverty alleviation programme) suggesting to other potential youths the benefits he derived from adopting farming as a profession, which they will view as 'hearing from the horse's mouth'. Thus, he becomes a hidden message-bearer and change-agent for the programme. The channel has credibility in the eyes of the potential youths, and will be judged as objective since it is coming from the mouth of one of their peers, especially in this period of economic downturn, which call for the adoption of small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) as a way out of poverty by the youths (Eze, Ehikwe & Odigbo, 2015).

### **11.2 E-word-of-mouth and Social-Media Approaches**

These are messages communicated to a target audience via the Internet. The opportunities offered by this media include: online discussion forums, consumer review sites, weblogs, social network sites, and many more (Lee, Park and Han, 2008). It include all the new Internet communications media for social networking like the Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Foursquare, Youtube and others (Choi and Burgess, 2007). Bao and Chang (2014) observed that in recent years, online social networks and social media platforms have further helped the spread of eWOM. What sets eWOM apart from traditional WOM is the combination of (1) unprecedented scale, (2) the possibilities for eWOM designers to control and monitor eWOM operation, and (3) unique properties of online interaction. One of the most important capabilities of the Internet is interactive communication at a larger scale: "for the first time in human history, individuals can make their personal thoughts, reactions, and opinions easily accessible to the global community of Internet users," and the interactive communication provides an online feedback mechanism to serve multiple functions (Cheung & Thadani, 2010; Bao & Chang, 2014). This media approach is very popular amongst the Nigerian youths and could therefore be used for an effective behavior-change campaign to get the youths accept and adopt farming as a noble and viable profession.

Unlike some mass media channels which allow for only one-way communication, social media outlets like the oramedia allow you to engage in two-way communication and to receive immediate feedback from the message source (Zabaniotou, 2008). Furthermore, it offers change-agents the opportunity to join discussions with multiple users so as to market their ideas, programmes or projects to them (Wilcox et al, 2002:149).

Other available tools and media here include: SMS: (short message service) also known as text messages, MMS: (multi-media message service), which may include elements such as images, video, and audio; Voice-mails, Push Notifications which are direct messages sent to a user either automatically or as part of a campaign, and Location-Based marketing messages delivered directly to a mobile device based on the user's location (Wunderman, 2011; Oguinn, 2008:624). They are therefore highly recommended for a successful behavior-change campaign to get unemployed youths in Nigeria develop interest in farming and adopt it as a profession.

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