

Citation: Banda, M. M & Changala, M. (2019). Adult Education Methods Used in Disseminating Information to Small Scale Farmers on the Use of e-voucher in Chongwe District, Zambia. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 3(7), 29 – 38.

Adult Education Methods Used in Disseminating Information to Small Scale Farmers on the Use of e-voucher in Chongwe District, Zambia

By

Martha Malita Banda and Moses Changala

Abstract

This study sought to explore adult education methods used in the dissemination of information on the use of e-voucher as a farmer input distribution system to small scale farmers in Chongwe district of Zambia. The study employed a descriptive research design. A sample of 30 respondents comprising 26 small scale farmers, 2 officers from the Zambia National Farmers' Union and 2 from the Zambia National Commercial Bank was purposively selected. Data was collected through interview guides and focus group discussions. Data was qualitatively analysed by content analysis and information presented in descriptions and narrations. Verbatims which were considered significant to the study were also included for illustration. Findings revealed that adult education methods used in the dissemination of information to small scale farmers on e-voucher in Chongwe district included radio programmes, farmer meetings and door-to-door visits by cooperative leaders and agricultural extension workers. The study also established that dissemination of the information was mostly done in local languages as most of the farmers could not speak or understand English. This posed a challenge of language barrier as some officers involved in the dissemination of information were not conversant with the local languages. The study recommended that a local or community radio station should be set up for the purpose of undertaking farmer awareness campaigns and information sharing on e-voucher and other aspects of agriculture in local languages. It also recommended that materials on e-voucher and related aspects should be translated into local languages for ease of access by small scale farmers. The study also recommended that preference in the deployment of agricultural extension officers should be given to those who are able to speak local languages while those who are unable to do so should be given the opportunity, through training, to acquire them.

Key words: Adult education, methods, dissemination, information, e-voucher, small scale farmers

Citation: Banda, M. M & Changala, M. (2019). Adult Education Methods Used in Disseminating Information to Small Scale Farmers on the Use of e-voucher in Chongwe District, Zambia. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 3(7), 29 – 38.

Adult education methods used in disseminating information to small scale farmers on the use of e-voucher in Chongwe district, Zambia

By

Martha Malita Banda and Moses Changala

Introduction

Adult education entails activities designed for the purpose of bringing about learning among those whose age, social roles and self-perception define them as adults (Nafukho, Amutabi and Otunga, 2005). Courtney (1989) asserts that adult education does not prepare people for life, instead it helps them to live successfully through gaining competence to deal with social roles or being able to solve their personal and community problems. The problems include those faced in the agricultural sector. Oyebamiji (2012:57) asserts:

We live in a global world where everyone is interconnected. Investment in the education of adults which will eventually lead to skills development, information and communication technologies, and capital formation at the grassroots level through the mass media cannot be understated. The main thing that separates developed from underdeveloped countries is a gap in knowledge. This is why investment in adult education through the mass media becomes important.

Adult education believes in the principle of human desire for self-improvement. It believes that adults, by nature, have a desire to improve themselves in their social, intellectual, economic and political status and, therefore, voluntarily opt to undergo programmes of their choice (Shikur, 1997). This implies that adult education programmes should be responsive to the needs and aspirations of the target groups, who should appreciate its value or necessity, if it is to be effective and relevant. It also implies that a conducive environment which would enable adults acquire relevant knowledge, skills and competencies ought to be created by programme providers and facilitators.

The success of production in agriculture, especially among small scale farmers relies, to a large extent, on farmers' improved knowledge, attitudes, skills and competencies which may be transmitted through well thought out adult education programmes. It also depends on new ideas and innovations aimed at enhancing efficiency and increasing productivity.

The Zambian government, like many other governments in the Sub-Saharan Africa, has, since 2002, implemented the Farmer Input Support Program (FISP) as part of its agricultural transformation agenda. In order to achieve the overarching objectives of the agricultural transformative agenda, the FISP programme has undergone a lot of changes in form of implementation. One of the major changes has been the shift from traditional farmer inputs distribution system to the electronic voucher (e-voucher) method through agro-dealers. This change was necessitated by the poor performance of the traditional method of input distribution despite increased funding to the program (Ministry of Agriculture, 2018). E-voucher was introduced in all the ten provinces of the country.

Citation: Banda, M. M & Changala, M. (2019). Adult Education Methods Used in Disseminating Information to Small Scale Farmers on the Use of e-voucher in Chongwe District, Zambia. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 3(7), 29 – 38.

E-voucher was fully implemented during the 2017/2018 farming season. An assessment of the programme during this season revealed some notable implementation successes such as reduced government costs associated with procurement, transport and storage of inputs. The other successes related to increased private sector participation in input distribution especially in rural areas and an increase in beneficiary targeting (Ministry of Agriculture, 2018). This entailed some level of efficiency in the delivery of farming inputs to small scale farmers.

According to Musika (2018), private sector participation in inputs distribution to rural farmers has helped the government to cut on the cost of transport and other logistics. During the 2015/2016 agricultural season, for example, about 230 new agro-dealers came on board as a result of the e-voucher initiative. Registered agro-dealers participating in the program were required to stock their shops with a variety of inputs in addition to fertilizer and maize seed.

E-voucher has been used as an input distribution system in reaching approximately 241,000 beneficiaries from thirty selected districts across all the ten provinces of Zambia. The districts are Chongwe, Petauke, Katete, Chipata, Mambwe, Lundazi, Mazabuka, Monze, Choma, Kalomo, Sinazongwe, Kazungula, Sesheke, Kaoma, Mumbwa, Chibombo, Kapiri Mposhi, Mkushi, Serenje, Mpongwe, Solwezi, Zambezi, Samfya, Mansa, Mwense, Chiyengi, Kawambwa, Chikantata and Isoka (Hambulo, 2009). This implies that the e-voucher programme has had extensive coverage in the country.

However, it was observed that some small scale farmers were still having difficulty in accessing farming inputs using e-voucher. The magnitude of delays and confusion in the 2017/2018 farming season farmer input distribution was staggering because, of the one million farmers targeted for the season e-voucher roll out, only 400,000 farmers or less had reportedly successfully registering and accessing inputs (Musika, 2018). Ministry of Agriculture (2018) adds that e-voucher also faced challenges of delays in government funding resulting in late distribution of e-cards, poor internet connectivity and poor flow of beneficiary information. It explains that these challenges made stakeholders, especially farmers and agro-dealers, not to appreciate the e-voucher programme. This could mean that there was lack of awareness or vital information on the part of small scale farmers on some aspects of e-voucher, implying a knowledge gap. This study, therefore, sought to explore adult education programmes used in disseminating information to small scale farmers on the use of e-voucher in Chongwe district.

Literature Review

The literature for the study was reviewed under the themes: the concept of adult education, the Zambian agricultural sector and e-voucher and approaches to information dissemination.

The Concept of Adult Education

Adult education in all its ramifications accommodates all forms of education whether formal, non-formal and informal aspects of education whose ultimate goal is to develop the process by which members of the community may learn to work together to identify problems and to seek out solutions to such problems (Oyebamiji, 2012). Knowles (1980) asserts that the mission of adult education is one of satisfying the needs of individuals, institutions and society. In order to meet the needs of learners, it is important to be aware of two salient terms associated with

Citation: Banda, M. M & Changala, M. (2019). Adult Education Methods Used in Disseminating Information to Small Scale Farmers on the Use of e-voucher in Chongwe District, Zambia. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 3(7), 29 – 38.

teaching and learning. These are pedagogy which refers to the art and science of teaching children and andragogy which entails the art and science of helping adults learn. Knowles observes that many principles of learning as well as teaching methods have developed with and for children, and argued that teaching adults requires a different set of instructional strategies.

According to Knowles (1980), the theory of andragogy is based on the five important assumptions about the differences between children and adult learners. The first assumption is self-concept. As people mature, their self-concept moves from one characterised by independence and self-direction. Adults have a need to be seen by others as being capable of directing themselves. The second assumption is experience. As people mature, a growing reservoir of experience is accumulated that becomes an expanding resource for learning. This implies that adults like to apply their existing knowledge and experience to their new learning experiences. The third assumption is readiness to learn. As people mature, their readiness to learn becomes focused on their developmental tasks of their social roles. This entails that adults usually time their learning experience with their developmental tasks.

The fourth assumption is orientation to learning. As people mature, their time perspective changes from knowledge acquired. In the same way, focus towards learning shifts from subject-orientation to problem-orientation. Adults want to apply what they have learnt today. Therefore, they enter into education with a problem-centred orientation of learning. Motivation to learn is the fifth assumption. As people mature, their motivation to learn is internally driven, which puts them at an advantage in their quest to acquire relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes compared to children and youths.

The primary mission of adult education, therefore, is to stimulate the dormant and latent desire for self-improvement in adults. It is this principle which helps many people as reinforcement for participating in various adult education courses leading to effective learning outcomes (Shikur, 1997). Additionally, Gboku & Lekoto (2007) assert that the overall purpose of adult education is to help individuals become knowledgeable, skilled and dedicated citizens who are willing to work individually and collectively towards achieving and maintaining an improved quality of life.

Indawa & Mpofo (2006) explain that there are as many types of adult education programmes and activities as there are varieties of clientele needing them for various purposes. They add that the type of adult education programme that any one person or group will need is best determined by them. Indawa & Mpofo, however, point out that people may be assisted to ensure that they make the right choice and that usually experts and providers of adult education programmes are best suited to assist those who need adult education programmes.

The Zambian agricultural sector and e-voucher

Agriculture is important to every country's economy because it provides several benefits among other things, jobs. It ensures food security and contributes to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In Zambia the agricultural sector supports the livelihood of approximately 70 percent of the population and contributes around 10 percent of GDP besides being the backbone of the Zambian rural economy. Of the 4.1 percent economic growth recorded in 2017, agriculture, forestry and fishing combined had the highest contribution of 1.2 percent (Central

Citation: Banda, M. M & Changala, M. (2019). Adult Education Methods Used in Disseminating Information to Small Scale Farmers on the Use of e-voucher in Chongwe District, Zambia. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 3(7), 29 – 38.

Statistical Office, 2018 In Ministry of Agriculture, 2018:2). In view of the above, the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP) and the Economic Stabilisation and Growth Programme (ESGP) put particular emphasis on agriculture alongside tourism, energy and mining, as the basis for diversification (Ministry of Agriculture, 2018).

Haliso & Ajayi (2014) posit that the most important and common economic activity in developing countries is agriculture because it produces food, employment and even raw materials for industries. The Zambian government has over the past 15 years been implementing the FISP whose aim has been premised on economic gains to small scale farmers and to the country as a whole through increased productivity and promotion of private sector participation in input distribution. Increased agricultural productivity have been viewed as having the potential to increase agricultural contribution to GDP, increase household food security and reduced vulnerability. However, the costs for managing the FISP have been escalating since its inception and many experts have advised that the funds could be utilized in other agricultural projects with higher impact. Under the conventional FISP, input supply faced a lot of challenges. Therefore, e-voucher was introduced to mitigate all such challenges. It was against this background that the government fully implemented the e-voucher program in the 2017/2018 farming season after successfully piloting the program in selected districts (Ministry of Agriculture, 2018).

Chikobola & Tembo (2018) report that the current e-voucher system in Zambia has the capability of identifying the type of inputs redeemed by farmers, making it possible to map the demand for various inputs. The following were the objectives of e-voucher: reduced public expenditure associated with delivery of inputs, promotion of private sector participation in agricultural input distribution, promotion of crop diversification through provision of freedom of input choice to farmers, improved beneficiary targeting, and reduced resource leakages through duplicate farmers and unintended beneficiaries by linking farmers to their national registration cards (Ministry of Agriculture, 2018). The ultimate rationale behind e-voucher was to enhance the farmer input delivery system in the country.

Approaches to information dissemination

Nowadays, information seeking and dissemination have become digitalized with the use of information communication technology across all social strata. It is not unusual to see both male and female farmers with mobile phones for personal and farming purposes. Through the Global System of Mobile Telecommunication (GSM), farming information are sought and sent through e-mail, text message and internet network, covering production and marketing activities (Haliso *et al.*, 2014). According to Barrantes & Yagüe (2015), the current situation of small farmers is far from being solved even though development strategies have been investigated for many years. They explain that until a few decades ago, these strategies were based on the need to introduce new technologies tested in experimental centres but that the biggest dilemma was how to get farmers to adopt these new external technologies or technology transfer.

There are several approaches or methods to information dissemination in a number of contexts and sectors, including the agricultural sector. A study by Haliso *et al.* (2014) on ‘The New Approach to information Dissemination Methods to Female Crop Farmers in Lagos State’ points out that information is an important factor that contributes to farming success. Therefore,

Citation: Banda, M. M & Changala, M. (2019). Adult Education Methods Used in Disseminating Information to Small Scale Farmers on the Use of e-voucher in Chongwe District, Zambia. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 3(7), 29 – 38.

farmers require and need diverse information in order to support their work. This implies that agricultural knowledge and information need to be managed like other key business inputs.

Another study conducted by Kuteya *et al.* (2016) on ‘Farmer Input Support Programme Electronic Voucher Implementation’ established that agricultural assistants were responsible for making small scale farmers aware of the operations of e-voucher as an input distribution system using various dissemination methods. Adekule *et al.* (2002) identify information dissemination methods such as personal contact which includes the use of farm extension agents, radio and television, publications, field days, agricultural shows and demonstrations.

Chuma (2005) suggests that methods of extension education can be classified as individual, group or mass methods. He explains that individual methods are used in agricultural extension in recognition of the fact that learning is an individual process and that the personal influence of the extension worker is an important factor in securing peoples’ participation in extension activities. Chuma states that although this method is time consuming, its importance cannot be overemphasised. He adds that it is through working individually with the clientele that extension workers learn about the people of the area, how they think, what their needs are, and how they carry on their work. Ngoma (1992) also posits that discussion, visits, phone calls, letter writing, result demonstration and client model are examples of individual methods of information dissemination. Obibuaku (1983) points out that group methods of extension education take into account the inclination of the individual to respond to pressures and opinions of groups in which he/she participates and listens to views of others. Mass media methods, on the other hand, are useful in reaching a wide audience at a very fast rate. The various methods which come under mass method are classification newspapers, radio, television, publications (National Open University of Nigeria, 2008).

Rogers (2003) states that mass media and interpersonal communication are the two main communication channels. Rogers defines communication as a process in which participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding. This communication occurs through channels and between sources. A source is an individual or an institution that originates a message whereas a channel is the means by which a message gets from the source to the receiver.

A study by Barrantes & Yagüe (2015) revealed that in Peru many of the new technologies in the rural countryside failed to produce the expected results due to the lack of interest on the part of the farmers, little flexibility to adapt to personal preferences, and lack of proactivity. This implies that much as new technologies can be introduced to farmers with a view to improving practice and enhancing productivity, there is no guarantee that the intended beneficiaries would readily accept and adopt them.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design which was predominantly qualitative. A sample of 30 respondents consisting of 26 small scale farmers, 2 officers from the Zambia National Farmers’ Union and 2 officers from Zambia National Commercial Bank. Data was collected through interviews and focus group discussions. Data was analysed using content analysis and

Citation: Banda, M. M & Changala, M. (2019). Adult Education Methods Used in Disseminating Information to Small Scale Farmers on the Use of e-voucher in Chongwe District, Zambia. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 3(7), 29 – 38.

information was presented in descriptions and narrations. Verbatims which were considered significant to the study were also included for illustration.

Findings and Discussion

The study revealed that adult education methods that were used to disseminate information on the use of e-voucher as an input distribution system in Chongwe district included radio programmes, farmer meetings with agricultural extension officers and door-to-door visits by the officers. The study indicated that there were scheduled programmes on national radio which disseminated information on various aspects of agriculture, which incidentally included e-voucher. These were supplemented by occasional door-to-day visits to farming areas by agricultural officers and cooperative workers who held sessions of farmers on e-voucher.

One small scale farmer reported:

Some of the measures that were put in place to disseminate information on e-voucher was radio programmes. They also arranged meetings with various cooperatives in all the parts of our communities and, in particular, in areas where these programmes were being implemented. Camp extension officers from the Ministry of Agriculture and cooperative leaders were used to conduct door-to-door sensitization of the programme to different farmers.

Another small scale farmer said:

Dissemination of information on the e-voucher was mostly done by agricultural extension officers who would only visit once in a while due to lack of transport and sometimes it is shared on the radio. We also had a number of meetings on the e-voucher with the National Farmers' Union the time they brought e-voucher cards.

This finding is consistent with Adekule *et al.* (2002) who identified information dissemination methods to farmers such as personal contact which included the use of farm extension agents, radio and television, publications, field days, agricultural shows and demonstrations, except that in the case of Chongwe district, television, publications and field days were not highlighted. This implies that the media employed to disseminate information to small scale farmers on e-voucher were quite limited.

Officers from the Zambia National Commercial Bank and the Zambia National Farmers' Union added that small scale farmers in Chongwe district were sensitised on aspects such as financial literacy to equip them with information on how to transact and pay for their e-voucher cards as well as how to prudently use and reinvest their financial resources realised from their produce.

One officer from the bank said:

Radio programmes, farmer meetings, camp extension officers' meetings and door-to-door meetings with small scale farmers are used in the dissemination of information on financial literacy and financial management.

The above finding is in line with Haliso *et al.* (2014) who hold that since information is such an important factor to farming success, farmers need diverse information in order to be empowered and supported their work. They add that information should be managed like any other key business input. Furthermore, Musika (2018) is of the view that there is need to intensify sensitisation programmes for all stakeholders including Ministry personnel, local leaders, small scale farmers and agro-leaders on various aspects of farming, including e-voucher.

Citation: Banda, M. M & Changala, M. (2019). Adult Education Methods Used in Disseminating Information to Small Scale Farmers on the Use of e-voucher in Chongwe District, Zambia. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 3(7), 29 – 38.

Therefore, the significance of adult education programmes to the success of the agricultural sector in general and the e-voucher initiative cannot be overemphasised.

The study also established that dissemination of the information was mostly done in local languages as most of the farmers could not speak or understand English. This posed a challenge of language barrier as some officers involved in the dissemination of information were not so conversant with the languages spoken by the local people. This finding is consistent with Obibuaku (1983) who points out that group methods of extension education should take into account the inclination of the individual to respond to pressures and opinions of groups in which he/she participates and listens to views of others.

Conclusion

The study concluded that information dissemination is key to the success of any undertaking and sector, including the agricultural sector. It also concluded that one of the key vehicles to information dissemination for small scale farmers are well designed adult education programmes. The study further concluded that although a number of adult education methods were used to disseminate information to small scale farmers in Chongwe district, namely radio programmes, farmer meetings and door-to-door visits by agricultural and cooperative officers, much more needed to be done in order to diversify and enhance them so that they can be more effective and cater for most of the intended beneficiaries, who in this case were small scale farmers..

Recommendations

The study recommended that a local or community radio station should be set up for the purpose of undertaking farmer awareness campaigns and information sharing on e-voucher and other aspects of agriculture in local languages. It also recommended that materials on e-voucher and related aspects should be translated into local languages for ease of access by all small scale farmers. The study also recommended that preference in the deployment of agricultural extension officers should be given to those who are able to speak local languages while those who are unable to do so should be given an opportunity, through training, to acquire them.

Citation: Banda, M. M & Changala, M. (2019). Adult Education Methods Used in Disseminating Information to Small Scale Farmers on the Use of e-voucher in Chongwe District, Zambia. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 3(7), 29 – 38.

References

- Adekunle. A.A., Onyibe. J.E, Ogunyinka, O.M., Omenesa, Z.E., Auta, S.J. & Kuyello, A.U (2002) Agricultural information dissemination: An audience survey in Kano State. International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), 2004 Ibadan, Nigeria old.iita.org/cms/details/Audience%20survey.pdf.
- Barrantes, C. & Yagüe, J.L. (2015). Adults' education and agricultural Innovation: A Social learning approach. *Procedia - Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 191, 163-168.
- Courtney, S. (1989). Defining adult and continuing education. In S.B. Merriam & P.M. Cunnig (eds) *Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education*. San Francisco: Jossey- Bass. (pp.15-25).
- Chuma, P. (2005). University extension education, Batch 240, Unit 1, Lusaka: Zambian Open University.
- Gboku, M. & Lekoko, R.N. (2007). *Developing Programmes for Adult Learners in Africa*. Cape Town: Pearson Education.
- Haliso, Y, & Ajayi, T.B. (2014) New approval of information dissemination methods to female crop farmers in Lagos state. *Journal of Library & Information Science* | (4), 2, 316-328.
- Hambulo, N. (2009). The agricultural sector can help Zambia move towards sustainable economic development. Lusaka: Economic Association of Zambia.
- Indabawa, S., & Mpofu, S. (2006). *The Social Context of Adult Learning in Africa*. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education.
- Knowles, M.S. (1980). *The modern practice of adult education: From pedagogy to andragogy*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Cambridge.
- Kuteya, A.N., Lukama, C., Chapota, A. & Malata, V. (2016). Lessons learnt from the implementation of e-voucher pilot. Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute Policy Brief No.81, Lusaka.
- Ministry of Agriculture (2018). The PMRC e-voucher research report 2017/2018, Lusaka: PMRC.
- Musika (2018). FISP electronic voucher programme to promote diversification. Lusaka, pp. 0-15.
- National Open University of Nigeria. (2008). Extension and methods, Abuja: National Open University of Nigeria.
- Nafukho, F., Amutabi, M. & Otunga, R. (2005). *Foundations of adult education in Africa*. Cape Town: Pearson Education.
- Ngoma, P.S. (2006). An introduction to research part 1. Lusaka: Zambian Open University.
- Oyebamiji, M.A. (2012). The role of mass media in the delivery of adult education for national development. Nigeria: *Global Journal of Educational Research*, 1(11), 57-63.
- Rogers, E.M (2003). *Diffusion of innovations* (5th Ed). New York: Free Press.
- National Open University of Nigeria. (2008). *Extension and methods*, Abuja: Nigeria.
- Obibuaku, I.O. (1983). *Agricultural extension as a strategy for agricultural transformation*. Nigeria: University of Nigeria Press.

Journal of Popular Education in Africa

July, August & September 2019, Volume 3, Number 7, 8 & 9

ISSN 2523-2800 (online)

Citation: Banda, M. M & Changala, M. (2019). Adult Education Methods Used in Disseminating Information to Small Scale Farmers on the Use of e-voucher in Chongwe District, Zambia. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 3(7), 29 – 38.

Shikur, R.R. (1997). *A synergy of theory, practice and strategies in adult learning*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd.