

GOOD GOVERNANCE AND THE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR AGRIBUSINESS IN NIGERIA

BOA GOVERNANÇA E O USO DE REDES SOCIAIS PARA O AGRONEGÓCIO NA NIGÉRIA

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Abstract: The world population increases rapidly, and hence food supply, proportional to the need of the teeming population, remains a critical challenge confronting stakeholders. Thus, there is a need to develop strategies to boost agriculture, and this course must be planned, arranged, tested, evaluated, and implemented. In this context, good governance and the use of social networks are proven to make a tremendous contribution in boosting agricultural outputs. Nigeria was an agro-based nation until oil products were discovered in the middle of the 1950s. This discovery led to the country's over-dependence on oil products, which negatively altered its level of food production. However, the current administration is determined to "diversify the country's oil-denominated economy by investing more in agriculture and encouraging farming. Thus, this paper discusses how good governance and the use of social networks can help promote agribusiness in the Nigerian context. Discussion of this kind is crucial as good governance determines the success or failure of a given nation, and society depends, to a certain extent, on the media for information about various aspects of life, including agriculture. The outcomes of this study are expected to advance our knowledge and suggest further evidence-based research on good governance and the use of social media for agribusiness promotion.

Keywords: Agribusiness. Governance. Food security Nigeria. Social networks.

Resumo: A população mundial aumenta rapidamente e, portanto, o abastecimento de alimentos, proporcional à necessidade da população abundante, continua sendo um desafio crítico para as partes interessadas. Assim, é necessário desenvolver estratégias para impulsionar a agricultura, e este curso deve ser planejado, organizado, testado, avaliado e implementado. Nesse contexto, está comprovado que a boa governança e o uso de redes sociais têm uma enorme contribuição para o aumento da produção agrícola. A Nigéria era uma nação de base agrícola até que produtos petrolíferos foram descobertos em meados da década de 1950. Esta descoberta levou à dependência excessiva do país de derivados de petróleo, o que alterou negativamente seu nível de produção de alimentos. No entanto, a administração atual está determinada a "diversificar a economia do país denominada em petróleo, investindo mais na agricultura e incentivando a agricultura. Assim, este artigo discute como a boa governança e o uso de redes sociais podem ajudar a promover o agronegócio no contexto nigeriano. Discussões desse tipo são cruciais, pois a boa governança determina o sucesso ou o fracasso de uma dada nação, e a sociedade depende, até certo ponto, da mídia para obter informações sobre vários aspectos da vida, incluindo a agricultura. Espera-se

que os resultados deste estudo aumentem nosso conhecimento e sugiram mais pesquisas baseadas em evidências sobre boa governança e o uso de mídias sociais para a promoção do agronegócio.

Palavras-chave: Agronegócio. Governança. Segurança alimentar Nigéria. Redes sociais.

I. Introduction

Governance represents the actions and principles of governing a society. Therefore, elected leaders are expected to keep governance alive. In reality, the government is the most important factor responsible for the planning and coordination of physical, social, and economic aspects of society. When successfully implemented, good governance can guarantee people's well-being. Likewise, stakeholders play an important role in achieving good governance for the development of society from various perspectives. In particular, agricultural production can be improved through promotion and growth which are needed not only to cater to the food supply but also to benefit the economy via exportation to earn more foreign earnings for the state. To achieve this aim, certain principles of governance such as participation, accountability, transparency, effectiveness, and the rule of law should be incorporated into agricultural and food security programs (Fhi 360, 2021).

Additionally, social networks currently represent a powerful means that can be used for the integration as well as sharing and dissemination of knowledge among experts and interested partners in both formal and informal sectors to promote agricultural products. Social networks have the required potentials to promote agribusiness, particularly in agro-food preparation and supply. In this way, stakeholders can be involved in research and knowledge-sharing to develop expertise in certain aspects such as pest-control technique, quality control, goods preservation, rate of supply and demand, as well as dynamism in local and foreign markets competition.

The world population is currently soaring rapidly, and the required steady food supply, proportional to the need of the teeming population, remains a critical challenge confronting the stakeholders. Thus, there is a need to develop strategies to boost agriculture, and this course must be planned, arranged, tested evaluated, and implemented. In this context, the knowledge of biotechnology could help to increase the food supply. Nevertheless, social networks are proven to make a tremendous contribution in boosting agricultural outputs, especially by disseminating

discoveries far and wide for the growth and promotion of agricultural products for the benefit of society.

Nigeria, the most populated country among 54 African nations, was an agro-based nation until it discovered oil aplenty in the middle of the 1950s, which has led to the country's over-dependence on oil products and thereby negatively altered its level of food production. However, the current administration is determined to "diversify the country's oil-denominated economy by investing more in agriculture and encouraging farming. The government aimed at food self-sufficiency and increased foreign exchange earnings" (Mojeed, 2021, p. 1). This policy requires good governance and well-design strategies to promote agribusiness.

Therefore, this paper aims to discuss the benefits of good governance and the use of social networks for agribusiness promotion in the Nigerian context. In this era of globalization and virtual communication, research of this kind is crucial as good governance determines the success or failure of a given nation, and society depends, to a certain extent, on the media for information about various aspects of life, including agriculture. The outcomes of this study are expected to advance our knowledge and suggest further evidence-based research on good governance and the use of social media for agribusiness promotion to help address the social and economic needs of society. The power of communication can never be underestimated considering its significance in shaping public perceptions.

II. Agribusiness Promotion in the Nigerian Context

A multi-factor that may eventually relegate the importance of oil to the bare minimum in the next two decades might be the newly manufactured non-fuel consuming devices and machines including electric automobiles. The need for such invention emerged from the fact that the world environment faces the challenges of global warming, and hence the need to reduce gas emission as a global policy to promote and implement a green environment with a considerable reduction of carbon emission contributed by other fuel consuming machinery. Nigeria, a country that heavily depends on petroleum products, has launched different agricultural development policies, such as the Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP) and Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA), to diversify the country's economy by boosting agricultural products. However, despite the development of these policies, the agricultural sector has grown only at an average of 15% in the last five years (Mojeed, 2021).

Nigeria currently strives to survive in the pool of insecurity which causes several socio-cultural and economic issues such as restriction of farming activities as a result of banditry, herders-farmers conflict, and kidnapping. Despite current challenges, hope is still not faded for Nigeria to once again recapture its position and integrity in agribusiness even with better options. Nigerian policy makers and the agricultural agencies could employ collective efforts with a consistent networking approach as an invaluable communication tool to develop and promote agriculture in the country and across the globe. In this regard, research shows that social networking sites such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram, can be used to successfully promote agriculture at a low cost (Inegbedion et al., 2021). This approach can positively facilitate and enhance efficiency and increase turnover for farmers across the country.

III. Governance and Agribusiness Promotion in Nigeria

According to Candel (2014), governance implies an interaction between public and/or private entities with the ultimate goal of achieving collective objectives. Government, on the other hand, is associated with more hierarchical and state-centered forms of managing public concerns (Pierre & Peters 2000; Kersbergen & Waarden, 2004). Lokpobiri, (2019), while discussing the shortage of food supply in African countries, mentioned that farmers in Africa are predominantly rural dwellers. They produce agricultural products steadily, but within the limit of their productive capacity under the category of subsistent farming culture in which remotely manufactured hand-implements are being used persistently. This issue might not be of great concern if the governance is practically functional with meaningful intervention characterized with proper accountability.

Moreover, food production could be easily subjected to regular boost and timely supply with active networking among private/public partners as well as the provision of an enabling environment created by the authorities. Unfortunately, in the case of Nigeria, the government seems hesitant to pay adequate attention to the agricultural sector particularly its growth and promotion. For more than two decades, farmers have been operating in an insecure environment across the nation. This situation has significantly undermined the efficiency of food production. Traditional ways of preventing global food crises have failed, and hence efforts to integrate good governance into the provision of food security have recently gained support among experts. Following the 2007-2008 food crisis, it became clear that food security necessitated excellent

governance at international, national, and local levels (McKeon, 2013). Nigeria's policy on agriculture can tremendously be supportive of the economic growth when governance is put in its best practice.

There are various opportunities to further develop agriculture when good governance is directed toward the agricultural sector. For instance, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) have recently initiated a project to evaluate, scale-up, and improve food security. Particularly, this project aims to pilot policies and governance in developing and rising economies (Fhi 360, 2021). In the 1980s, Nigeria's agriculture policies included efforts to provide support for the development of medium and large-scale commercial agricultural production systems that incorporate active participation of the youth population (FMAWRD, 1996). Thus, there is a need to use the initiatives offered by modern agriculture to maximize the economic contribution of agricultural production to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Good governance, precisely, could help to achieve the goals of agriculture and food security in a variety of ways (Pereira & Ruysenaar, 2012). A system that determines to eliminate hunger is a healthy system of governance because of its response to the food crisis. At times, the inadequacy of food supply is a product of inflation. Thus, only good governance could handle the complex issues which emanate from food insecurity. According to Voley (2002), good governance can help to improve service delivery and generate positive development outcomes. Farmers' engagement in the creation of agricultural policies, for instance, can bring about inclusive agricultural policies that can enhance farmers' access to agricultural and food value chains.

The Nigerian government needs to revamp the country's economy by heavily investing in agriculture which was the initial source of the Nigerian economy. From the inception of the Northern and Southern protectorates, each region was into agricultural production per excellent up till the colonial era. Agriculture accounted for about 90% of the GDP of Nigeria and the country became the leading producer and supplier of cash crops such cocoa, cotton, palm oil, groundnut, rubber, and Sorghum. However, Nigeria discovered oil, and the commercial quantity started to be explored in Oloibiri in 1956. This oil exploration gradually drove the interest of

the policymakers away from agricultural production shortly after the attainment of Nigeria's independence in 1960.

Nigeria is blessed with arable land for farming. In this regard, Shittu (2007) mentioned that 80% of Nigerian land is arable. However, only 40% of the land is cultivated, which indicates its underutilization. The inability to fully use the arable land made the agricultural sector contribute only 25% to the Nigerian GDP. Table 1 shows that the gaps in food supply after the shift from more sustainable economic resources to oil for development.

Table 1. Gaps in the demand and supply of staple food items in Nigeria

Crop	Demand tons	Supply tons	Observation
Rice	6.3 million	2.3 million	Insufficient supply chain integration remains an issue
Wheat	4.7 million	0.06 million	Driven by demand for various types of wheat (white, hard, durum), etc. for bread biscuit and semovita
Maize/Corn	7.5 million	7.0 million	Limited imports are required but can shift due to feeding demand
Soya Beans	0.75 million	0.60 million	Animal feed and protein cost alt. driving demand
Chicken	200 million Birds	140 million Birds	Gap filled by illegal imports that enter the market at lower price point than domestic producers; gap also a moving target based on fast food/QSR demand
Fish	2.7 million	0.8 million	Fall off in ocean catch and weakness in aquaculture yields due to cost of fish feed a constraint on growth
Tomatoes	2.2 million	0.8million	Actual production is 1.5 million tons but 0.7 million ton is lost post-harvest
Yams	39 million	37 million	Limited gap today but volumes expected to rise in a planning period
Oil Palm	8.0 million	4.5 million	Refers to fresh fruit bunch (FFB) from which oil is extracted at a 10% - 15% efficiency rate
Cocoa	3.6 million	0.25 million	Demand is global which will rise to 4.5 million by 2020
Cotton	0.7 million	02 million	Demand is for seed cotton and could rise to 1.0-1.5 million tons
Sorghum	7.0 million	6.2 million	Demand will further rise as use in feed grows in 2016-2020. Import of malt extracts and glucose syrup is currently used to manage the gap, hence a commercial threat for Nigerian farmers

Source: Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development 2016

Factors responsible for the low production of agricultural products include the lack of exportation of alternative economic resources that could increase national GDP and export earnings for the development of the economy, which can be the artificial causes of inadequacy in the food supply. The poor policy in Nigeria which aims to diversify the economy faces various challenges, including insecurity, and lack of good governance, as well as challenges of using modern communication technology for Agribusiness promotion. The following section explains the role of social networks in agribusiness promotion in the country.

IV. Social Networks and Agribusiness Promotion in Nigeria

In the course of taking the agricultural industry to a great level, experts and literate local dwellers have used the opportunity made available by the social networks and the internet facility to incorporate their wealth of agricultural experience with colleagues in agricultural research institutes, stakeholders, government agencies and clients to interact on agro-related issues to boost agricultural development. A study (Bartholomew, 2011) found significant evidence in the Sub-Mission on Agricultural Extension (SAME) proprietors' pronounced collaboration among business partners with detailed office addresses and phone contacts of colleagues who have a positive view of the cooperative society networks.

Also, farmers can use several modern communication devices to ease the production process. For example, mobile phones have helped farmers minimize transaction costs in agribusiness from the planting choice through the ultimate selling point of farm produce (Ratnadiwakara, de-Silva, & Soysa, 2008). According to Duncombe and Heeks (2002), the use of modern communication devices for agricultural operations, such as mobile phones, has the potential to support rural development, poverty alleviation, and long-term agricultural development. Additionally, Oguniyi and Ojebuyi (2016) mentioned that voice calls are the most commonly used mobile phone service for agricultural activities in the country, with about 83.4% of farmers using this type of communication service. The farmers mention that voice calls are faster and less costly and allow them to communicate and get instant responses from their business partners.

Similarly, a study conducted by Okafor and Malisu (2013) found that about 93% of farmers in the study area use mobile phones for agricultural activities. These outcomes suggest that the use of mobile phones for agribusiness is common among Nigerian farmers and their

perceptions of the usefulness of mobile phones are highly positive. Some of the benefits of using mobile phones as identified in the preceding studies include.

- a) Better access to information
- b) Better access to extension services
- c) Better market links and distribution networks and
- d) Better access to finance

Okafor and Malusi's (2013) study demonstrated uneven access to information is a great challenge facing the rural market in developing countries. Nevertheless, the use of Mobile Applications for Agricultural and Rural Development (M-ARD) provides farmers with access to important information. Farmers and rural populations can also use M-ARD to get quick access to extension services such as agricultural production, marketing, technology, food security, and nutrition. In addition, M-ARD apps have increased rural access to financial and insurance products. Another study found that about 61% of agro-entrepreneurs in Nigeria use social networks such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram (Ajayi, 2015). Facebook is the primary social media platform and most popular among Agro-entrepreneurs. This type of social network is mostly used by farmers in agribusinesses to facilitate customer relationships. However, Ajayi's study shows that farmers in Nigeria face various challenges in using social media, such as inadequate technical knowledge, lack of access to electricity, client base, age, and the cost of data connection.

Additionally, previous studies demonstrate that the use of social media, to some extent, has improved agribusiness practices in Nigeria. Also, social media increases the literacy level of farmers and helps them to meet virtually and discuss how to get improvement's support in the agribusiness at an appointed time. The government, as well, can reach out to the central leadership of the farmers' association to pass vital information and relate well on issues that are beneficial to farmers and agro-entrepreneurs. This mutual relation helps to boost the agribusiness and food supply policy of the government.

V. Conclusion

This paper discussed good governance and the use of social networks for agribusiness promotion in the Nigerian context. The outcomes demonstrated that good governance could help to achieve the goals of agriculture and food security in a variety of ways, such as improvement of service delivery and farmers' engagement in the creation of agricultural policies

to bring about inclusive agricultural policies that can enhance farmers' access to agricultural and food value chains. Additionally, different social networking sites, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram are used for agribusiness promotion in Nigeria. However, Facebook is the most commonly used platform among Agro-entrepreneurs to facilitate customer relationships. However, farmers in Nigeria face various challenges in using social media, such as inadequate technical knowledge, lack of access to electricity, client base, age, and the cost of data connection.

Social media increases the literacy level of farmers and helps them to meet virtually and discuss how to get improvement's support in the agribusiness at an appointed time. Also, the government could reach out to the central leadership of the farmers' association via social media to pass vital information and relate well on issues that are beneficial to farmers and agro-entrepreneurs. This paper is limited to how good governance and the use of social media can help promote agribusiness, particularly in the Nigerian context, which could advance our understanding in this regard. Thus, further research may focus on the empirical investigation into the effectiveness of good governance and the use of social networks in promoting agribusiness in the country.

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