

Media Content and Economic Growth of Citizens in Musanze District in Rwanda



Nisingizwe Theoneste¹, Dr Eugenia Nkechi Irechukwu²

^{1,2} Department of Social and Development Studies, Mount Kenya University.

ABSTRACT: The project aimed at analyzing media content and its influence on the economic advancement of residents in Musanze District. It suggests that media information can have either detrimental or beneficial effects, thereby shaping an individual's stance toward economic progress. The study aimed to achieve the following objectives: (i) to assess the accessibility of information on the economic growth of citizens; (ii) to examine the influence the disseminated information has to the mindsets of citizens towards their self-development; and (iii) to investigate the extent to which media information convinced citizens to undertake economic activities they carry out. The research employed a descriptive survey design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The target population of this study was 28,298 citizens who constitute the adult population of Muhoza Sector of Musanze District. In this study 395 respondents were sampled from 28,298 adult citizens of Muhoza Sector. This sample was scientifically determined using an appropriate research formula. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula. Stratified random sampling was implemented, wherein four strata cells making Muhoza Sector namely; Cyabararika, Kigombe, Mpenge, and Ruhengeri. For validity, the questionnaire was shared with seasoned researchers for their inputs which were taken into consideration before piloting the questionnaire and conducting comprehensive data collection. The data analysis encompassed both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative research involved precise measurement techniques to yield accurate mathematical outcomes. Data were presented in tables and graphs, and quantitative data were analyzed and interpreted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The findings in different tables showed strong positive correlations (Pearson = 1) between media sources, disseminated information influence, persuasion extent, and economic growth. A perfect correlation with economic growth indicates that increased accessibility to information corresponds to higher economic growth. Very strong correlations (Pearson = 0.854) between disseminated information influence and economic growth, and extremely strong correlations (Pearson = 0.904) with persuasion extent, suggest substantial positive associations.

KEYWORDS: The media, Media content, accessibility, media influence, economic growth.

INTRODUCTION

This paper identified the effects of Rwanda media content on economic growth of Citizens in Musanze District. There are different studies consulted for example the study called 'Access to and Usage of Information among Rural Communities of Kilosa District Morogoro Region in Tanzania' by Mtega in 2012, it was found that having access to and using information is really helpful for rural folks to make their lives better. But even though information is super important for making places better, not many folks in developing countries can get enough of it. Another study by Lwoga in 2012 talked about the information needs and behaviors of small-scale farmers in Tanzania. It said that before giving out information to rural areas, it's smart to know exactly what information folks need there. Also, to make sure people use information well, it's suggested that the information should be given out in ways that work for rural communities. It's a good idea for radio and TV stations to have more shows that talk about rural stuff and to air them at times when rural folks can listen or watch.

Sanghamitra (2009) argued that, the availability of information is crucial for efficient decision making by citizens and consumers. Similarly, consumers and investors rely on information to make purchases of products and securities. However, citizens' access to information is limited by the tools provided to them. Less developed economies, in particular, face challenges due to insufficient communication technologies. While access to communication infrastructure and information is often considered essential for growth and productivity, its absence poses a significant barrier. Agriculture stands out as one of the primary sectors that significantly contributes to economic growth. It is one of the most powerful tools to end extreme poverty. Agriculture is also crucial to economic growth accounting for 4% of global gross domestic product (GDP) and in some least developing countries, it can account for more than 25% of GDP (UN, 2015).

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Research conducted by the London School of Economics in 2010 found that most people in many countries mainly get important information from media sources like newspapers, TV, and radio. Also, recent advances in technology, especially the popularity of mobile phones and the internet, have completely changed how information spreads. Mass media and new tech breakthroughs in communication, like phones and the internet, are now the main ways people get information in today's world. There's also a rising dependence on the knowledge-based economy to boost economic growth.

The results of a study investigating 'the impact of television on promoting agribusiness to Kenyan youth', conducted by Angwenyi (2016), reveal that 70% accepted the data presented, a local TV program used as a case study, is pertinent to young individuals interested in entering agribusiness. This suggests that the content shared served as a valuable resource for youth seeking information to engage in agribusiness. These respondents indicated that the agribusiness information provided by the program facilitated operational coordination. These findings are related with a study conducted by Drew (2022), which emphasizes that raising awareness about cultivating high-quality crops and livestock for sale can assist young people in creating income and employment opportunities in agriculture.

In a study conducted by Cheffo (2016) on farmers in Oromia region of Ethiopia, 79.5 % of them [farmers] expressed that the research showed that the agricultural programs were helpful and important for the participants. It suggested that listening to radio programs about agriculture helped them learn how to enhance their farming methods. Additionally, the study noted that radio programs are typically timely and effective in reaching listeners, regardless of their location, as long as they have a working radio and power source.

The study conducted by Norris (2012), to assess 'the role and effectiveness of electronic media (TV and Radio) in the dissemination of agricultural information to the farmers in Fars and Kohgiluyeh va Buyer Ahmad provinces' of Malasia, revealed that farmers' knowledge was insufficient, with the mean knowledge scores. In Fars and Kohgiluyeh va Buyer Ahmad provinces, the average scores for farmers' knowledge were 3.99 ± 1.94 and 3.73 ± 2.11 , respectively. After participating in educational programs broadcasted on radio and television, these scores rose to 6.41 ± 1.50 and 6.26 ± 1.67 , respectively. There was a notable and positive link between farmers' knowledge and their educational level. Mass media are effective means for spreading agricultural information, leading to enhanced knowledge levels and influencing audience behavior. Broadcast media continue to play a crucial role in agricultural development and educational interventions, highlighting the importance of conveying agricultural education programs through radio and television for optimal effectiveness.

The research conducted by Seidu (2011) regarding 'The impact of Simli Community Radio on Livelihood Enhancement' within the Simli community in Ghana' demonstrated that Simli Radio has played a significant role in enhancing awareness and understanding of solutions to community development challenges spanning various domains such as culture, rural development, education, hygiene and sanitation, agriculture, and local governance. The radio station has served as an effective platform facilitating interaction between authorities and community members. Furthermore, it has fostered the growth of small and medium enterprises by creating market opportunities for SME operators, leading to increased sales and incomes.

Manyama (2010), in her publication 'instilling a culture of saving in south Africa, analyzed an awareness campaign conducted across the media on TV, radio and in print whereby the benefits of savings were discussed in more than 20 occasions. Basing on that campaign's experience, it was thus concluded that the savings culture can be instilled, if there is radical paradigm shift in our society, aggressive awareness campaigns through the media and education to ensure that the young people grow up recognizing the importance of saving.

MDIF (2018) provided clarity on the role of the media in economic development by analyzing the role of media as a coordination-enhancing mechanism in policy development. The report looks at a number of historic case studies, including successful economic development examples such as Poland and Hungary, and less successful ones including Ukraine. In the successful cases of Poland and Hungary, "not only has the media played a role in transforming situations of conflict into coordination, but also access to information has allowed politicians and the populace to coordinate on good conjectures leading to economic progress.

In 'Governing with and for Citizens' the research conducted by Never Again Rwanda (2016), it highlighted the critical role of the media in citizens participation in different programs aimed at improving their livelihood. In this study, media houses, especially broadcast media, emerged as increasingly effective in channeling citizens' concerns. Indeed, participants in various discussions commended the new trend of Rwandan broadcast media of offering citizens spaces to raise their concerns and express their needs. Different radio shows have been identified by participants in this study as a privileged channel citizen for citizen participation. These are such programs like 'makuruki muri karitsiye (Radio and TV 10), Ikaze Munyarwanda (Flash FM), Rwanda Today (KFM), Rirarashe (Radio and TV 1, Kubaza Bitera Kumenya (Radio and TV Rwanda, RBA), among other media programs involving citizens through calls in, WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook handles and short messages (SMS). Citizens are constantly heard raising their individual and community concerns through media shows and sometimes reports on changes induced by those programs.

Potter (2021) complements the vital role of the media in enlightening citizens whereby the sub-indicator on the 'Media educates citizens on national policies and programs' outsourced all sub-indicators with (98.9%) while the media 'Contribution to Policy Formulation' also scored very well with 90.9%.

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The use of media all over the world has not only reduced the gap of information, but has also contributed to the economic growth of nations. Locksley (2009) emphasized that the business of producing content generates substantial income flows and creates a significant number of jobs, directly contributing to development and poverty reduction. The research conducted by Biraro (2015) on Izuba community radio and socio-economic development demonstrates the effects of Izuba Radio programmes in the economic development of its listeners. Respondents of this study commended the contribution of Izuba Radio programs to the improvement of their lives whereby 35% of respondents affirmed to benefit from radio education; 76% of the respondents increased contribution of the family economy; 53% of the respondents improved agriculture and farming techniques; 88% of the respondents created income generating activities and 76% respondents participated in government programmes.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used the descriptive research design to examine the impact of media content on economic growth of citizens in Musanze District. The descriptive design allowed the researcher to effectively collect primary data that facilitated the assessment of media content in regard to its accessibility, influence and persuasion it has on citizens' economic growth. The quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze and interpret the data collected from media content consumers. The target population of this study is composed of 28,298 citizens who constitute the adult population of Muhoza Sector of Musanze District. In this study, 395 respondents were sampled from 28,298 adult citizens of Muhoza Sector. This sample was scientifically determined using appropriate research formula. In stratified random sampling the strata were formed based on members' shared attributes or characteristics. These four strata are Cyabararika, Kigombe, Mpenge and Ruhengeri cells. To conduct the research, a range of methods was employed as practical approaches to gather information relevant to the study subject. The study primarily utilized documentation, questionnaires, and interviews as means of collecting data. For interview, it was given to the executive secretary of Muhoza Sector in Musanze District. For data analysis, SPSS tool version 21 was used to produce data with mean and standard deviation for decision-making regarding central tendencies.

RESULTS

Table 1. Accessibility of information by citizens

Favorite media sources of information	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Listening to Radio	55.0	0.550	0.0898
Watching TV	18.0	0.180	0.1096
Valid Reading online publications	25.0	0.250	0.1059
Reading print newspapers	11.0	0.110	0.1133

Source: Primary data, (2024)

Table 2. Assessment of Economic growth of citizens

Assessment of Economic growth	Percent	Overall Mean	Std. Deviation
Personal development mindset	63.1	0.631	0.0855
Income generating activity	30.9	0.309	0.1027
Valid Increase of saving culture	4.9	0.049	0.1166
Improvement of living standards	1.1	0.011	0.1186

Source: Primary data, (2024)

Table 3. Influence of disseminated information on the mindsets of citizens in Musanze District towards their self-development

Influence of disseminated information	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Hardworking towards self-development	49.0	0.49	0.0261
Valid Forming cooperatives/groups	30.0	0.30	0.0217
Work with financial institutions (create business)	4.0	0.4	0.0192

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Learn from success stories & replicate lesson learnt	4.0	0.4	0.0192
Learn new skills to improve self-development	13.0	0.13	0.0552

Source: Primary data, (2024)

Table 4. Extent of media information persuasion in citizens

	Percent	Overall Mean	Std. Deviation
Message Framing	43.6	0.436	0.0959
Credibility of sources	25.1	0.251	0.1058
Valid Emotional appeal	21.1	0.211	0.1079
Social norms & values	7.1	0.071	0.1154
Call to action	3.1	0.031	0.1175

Source: Primary data, (2024)

Table 5. Correlations analysis between media content and economic growth of citizens

		Media sources of information	Influence of disseminated information	Extent of persuasion of media
Media sources of information by citizens	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	350		
Influence of disseminated information	Pearson Correlation	.854**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	350	350	
Extent of persuasion of media information	Pearson Correlation	.904**	.825**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	350	350	350

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data, (2024)

Table 6. Model Summary of media sources and economic growth

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.873 ^a	.762	.761	.314

a. Predictors: (Constant), Media sources of information by citizens

Source: Primary data, (2024)

Table 7. Model Summary of influence of disseminated information and economic increase

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.799 ^a	.638	.637	.626

a. Predictors: (Constant), Influence of disseminated information

Source: Primary data, (2024)

Table 8 Model Summary of extent of persuasion of media

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.703 ^a	.494	.493	.740

a. Predictors: (Constant), Extent of persuasion of media information

Source: Primary data, (2024)

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this part, the researcher interprets data and draw conclusions. The first objective was to evaluate how easily Musanze District residents can access information on economic growth. This goal was affirmed by the findings in Table 1, indicating that a majority of participants (55%) favour Radio as their primary information source, with online publications (25%) and TV (18%) following. Print newspapers, preferred by only 11%, are currently diminishing. Citizens' preference for Radio stems from its effortless accessibility, affordability, and portability, distinguishing it from the relatively expensive and inaccessible TV and online publications, especially in remote areas. However, with the rapid ICT progress in Rwanda, featuring a mobile penetration rate of 87.4% and internet subscription of 60.7% per 100 inhabitants as of July 2023 (RURA, 2023), the costs of smartphones and internet are decreasing. This trend is leading to a shift towards internet use for accessing media information, particularly among educated citizens.

The second objective was to investigate how disseminated information influences the self-development mindsets of Musanze District residents. Table 3 results demonstrated various aspects of citizens' mindsets affected by such information. Nearly half of the respondents (49.1%) reported a positive influence, fostering a hardworking attitude toward self-development. Around 30.9% acknowledged that disseminated information played a role in encouraging cooperative efforts, reflecting a community-oriented approach. A smaller percentage (4.0%) associated disseminated information with citizens engaging financial institutions for business creation. Another small percentage (2.3%) believed it motivated them to learn from success stories for personal pursuits. Approximately 13.7% reported an impact on their decision to acquire new skills. The overall mean was 2.01, indicating a moderate influence on citizens' mindsets, with a standard deviation of 1.365, suggesting variability in responses. These results suggest that disseminated information notably impacts various dimensions of citizens' mindsets related to self-development in Musanze District, influencing work ethics positively and fostering a communal approach to development. Smaller percentages indicate diverse ways disseminated information shapes citizens' mindsets.

Objective three aimed to examine how media information impacts the encouragement of citizens in Musanze District to engage in economic activities. The findings from Table 4 indicate a substantial proportion of message framing (43.6%), emphasizing the significance of comprehending how media content goes with perceptions of economic prospects and obstacles in Musanze District. It is imperative for researchers and policymakers to scrutinize the framing techniques utilized by media channels to ensure an impartial and accurate portrayal of economic information. The moderate impact of credibility of sources (25.1%) underscores the necessity for initiatives promoting media literacy, enabling citizens to assess information source reliability critically. Enhancing the credibility of media sources can augment the persuasiveness of economic messages. Emotional appeal (21.1%) can be harnessed to bolster the alignment of media content with citizens' values and aspirations; however, caution is warranted to prevent the manipulation or exploitation of emotions for economic ends.

The findings in Table 5, demonstrate extremely strong positive correlations among media sources of information, influence of disseminated information, extent of persuasion of media information, and economic growth. The perfect positive correlation (Pearson = 1) with economic growth suggests that as the accessibility of information from various media sources increases, there is a proportional increase in economic growth indicators. The very strong positive correlation (Pearson = 0.854) indicates that as the influence of disseminated information on citizens' mindsets increases, there is a substantial corresponding increase in economic growth. The extremely strong positive correlation (Pearson = 0.904) suggests that as the perceived extent of persuasion by media information increases, there is an even more substantial corresponding increase in economic growth.

The findings presented in Table 6 illustrate a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.873, signifying a robust positive correlation between the predictor variable (media sources of information used by citizens) and the dependent variable (economic growth). This implies a substantial linear connection between media sources of information and economic growth.

The findings in table 7, showed the coefficient (R) of 0.799, signify a positive correlation between the predictor variable (influence of disseminated information) and the dependent variable (economic growth). This implies a substantial linear relationship between the influence of disseminated information and economic growth.

The findings presented in table 8, display a multiple coefficient (R) of 0.703, signifying a moderately positive correlation between the predictor variable (extent of persuasion of media information) and the dependent variable (economic growth). This implies a consistent linear relationship between the extent of persuasion and economic growth.

For conclusion, the findings in different tables showed strong positive correlations (Pearson = 1) between media sources, disseminated information influence, persuasion extent, and economic growth. A perfect correlation with economic growth indicates that increased accessibility to information corresponds to higher economic growth. Very strong correlations (Pearson = 0.854) between disseminated information influence and economic growth, and extremely strong correlations (Pearson = 0.904) with persuasion extent, suggest substantial positive associations. Overall, these findings underscore the crucial role of media-related factors in shaping positive economic outcomes in Musanze District.

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