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Reality Television Show as a Tool for Promoting Agriculture among Youths in Imo State, Nigeria

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Emeka Festus Odoemenam[1*], Ndidi-Paschal O. Anyoha[2], Ernest I. Okoronkwo[3] and Goodness E. Echefu[4]

[1,2,3,4] Department of Agricultural Extension, Federal University of Technology, Owerri
[*]Correspondence and presenting author: emeka.odoemenam@futo.edu.ng; +2348133980612
[2]ndypaschal2004@yahoo.com; +2348033396100
[3]okoroernestify@gmail.com; +2348138732629
[4]ekarejoe@gmail.com; +2347045080059

Abstract

The study examined the potential of reality television shows (RTS) as a tool for promoting agriculture among youths in Imo State, Nigeria. Proportionate and simple random sampling techniques were used to select 98 respondents. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analysed using mean scores, standard deviation and Pearson correlation. Results showed that the major motivations for viewing RTS were connecting with celebrities online ($\bar{x}$ = 2.60), creating social media content ($\bar{x}$ = 2.50), and career exposure ($\bar{x}$ = 2.10). The most significant potentials of RTS for agricultural promotion were social media integration ($\bar{x}$ = 1.79), showcasing successful young agripreneurs ($\bar{x}$ = 1.76), and gender inclusivity ($\bar{x}$ = 1.65). Key challenges included negative perceptions of agriculture ($\bar{x}$ = 1.65) and limited access to television and streaming services ($\bar{x}$ = 1.51). There was no significant relationship (r = 0.27; p > 0.05) between youths' motivation for viewing RTS and their perceived challenges. The study concludes that RTS can serve as an effective tool for youth-oriented agricultural promotion when combined with interactive digital engagement and relatable agribusiness success stories. The study recommends that extension agencies and media organisations should increase their support to enhance the reach and effectiveness of agricultural RTS.

Keywords: Reality television shows, youth, agriculture promotion, agripreneurship

Introduction

The media strongly influences the values, attitudes, and conduct of societies, especially among young people (Kunwar & Bhatt, 2025). Television (TV) remains a potent medium of communication because it combines visual and sound stimuli, making it an effective tool for moulding viewers' views, identities, and goals. Reality television has recently become a dominant genre. Reality television distinguishes itself by using unscripted circumstances and featuring actual people in scenarios devised by producers. Kunwar and Bhatt (2025) argue that reality television shows (RTS) influence young people's conduct and social attitudes to a considerable extent, both positively and negatively. It can motivate the youth by building confidence and showcasing talents.

Reality television is considered a genre that incorporates real-life scenarios that are unscripted and include non-professional individuals rather than trained actors (Anjorin & Okungbieri, 2025). These shows frequently feature competition, surveillance, and audience participation, which increase suspense and emotional involvement (Das et al., 2021; Nwajiuba et al., 2023). Nigerian reality television shows such as Big Brother Naija and Naija Farmer have been used to distribute agricultural information to youth, highlighting the genre's potential in development communication (Anjorin & Okungbieri, 2025; Nwajiuba et al., 2023).

Reality television shows (RTS), such as talent competitions and lifestyle programming, have become potent cultural phenomena that shape the aspirations and professional inclinations of young people in Nigeria and across Africa (Anjorin & Okungbieri, 2025; Chikafa & Matweke, 2021). However, these shows tend to prioritise flashy occupations in entertainment and media, which can eclipse traditional industries such as agriculture that are essential to many African economies (Nwajiuba et al., 2023)—despite this challenge, emerging agritainment RTS such as Naija Farmer, Face of Agric. Nigeria, Agro-Star and Agrovest are actively leveraging reality TV to rebrand farming as an esteemed career and attract youth engagement in agricultural practices (Anjorin & Okungbieri, 2025; Nwajiuba et al., 2023).

Beyond land-based farming, agriculture offers other job prospects such as agribusiness, agro-processing, agricultural extension, and digital-platform-based agripreneurship (Anjorin & Okungbieri, 2025; FAO, 2020). However, youth perceptions of agriculture remain a serious concern, as many associate it with low pay, strenuous physical work, and little social prestige (Nwachukwu & Okafor, 2022; Chikafa & Matweke, 2021). Such persistent unfavourable impressions include perceiving agriculture as a poor and unbecoming profession, appropriate only for retirees to pass the time, and not a viable career option for young people (Nwachukwu & Okafor, 2022). Interestingly, new initiatives like Nigeria’s 2025 Youth in Agribusiness Call to Action and reality TV series like Naija Farmer are transforming agriculture into a modern, tech-driven and lucrative industry (Anjorin & Okungbieri, 2025).

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective was to examine reality television shows (RTS) as a tool for promoting agriculture among youths in Imo State, Nigeria. Specifically to:

1. ascertain the youth’s motivations for viewing reality television shows;
2. determine the potential of RTS as a tool to promote agriculture among youths; and
3. identify perceived challenges in using RTS to promote agriculture.

Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant relationship between youths’ motivation for viewing RTS and their perceived challenges in using RTS to promote agriculture.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Imo State, Nigeria. Imo State is situated in the south-eastern part of Nigeria between latitudes 4°45′ and 7°15′ N and longitudes 6°50′ and 7°25′ E with a total land area of about 5,288 km^2 (National Indoor Sports Centre Government, 2019). The state is bounded in the east by Abia State, in the west by the River Niger and Delta State, in the north by Anambra State and in the south by Rivers

State (Southern East Central Government, 2024). The state has telecommunication facilities such as masts and network satellites that boost television broadcast and online streaming services, especially in urban centres.

The study population comprised youths aged 15-29 years, as this is the current official age bracket of youth in Nigeria according to the Revised National Youth Policy (2019-2023) launched by the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2019; Nigeria Youth SDG, 2022).

The respondents were selected through a 3-stage sampling procedure using both proportionate and simple random sampling techniques. The first stage involved selecting five (5) local government areas (LGAs) from the 27 LGAs that constitute Imo State using 20% proportionate sampling. This means that two (2) LGAs were selected from the twelve (12) LGAs in Orlu zone, two (2) from Owerri zone out of the nine (9) LGAs and one (1) from Okigwe zone out of the six (6) LGAs. In the second stage, two (2) communities were selected from each identified LGA using simple random sampling. The third stage was the simple random sampling of ten (10) youths. This generated a total sample size of 100 youths selected for the study, but 98 samples were retrieved and used for analysis.

Youth motivation for viewing RTS was measured on a 3-point scale of “to a large extent”, “to a lesser extent”, and “not at all”, with assigned scores of 3, 2, and 1, respectively. The potential of RTS was measured on a 3-point rating scale of “high potential”, “moderate potential”, and “low potential”, with assigned scores of 2, 1, and 0, respectively. Challenges in utilising RTS were measured using a 3-point rating scale of “severe”, “moderate”, and “not at all”, with assigned scores of 2, 1, and 0, respectively.

Structured questionnaires were utilised to elicit responses from the youths, and the data obtained were analysed using mean scores, standard deviation and ranking. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed to test the study’s hypothesis.

Results and Discussion

Youths’ Motivation for Viewing Reality TV Shows (RTS)

Table 1 shows that youths are connected to reality television not just for entertainment, but as part of their everyday social and digital lives. Connecting with celebrities online ($\bar{x}$ = 2.60) and creating social media content ($\bar{x}$ = 2.50), which both ranked highest, suggests that young people today are not just watching; they are actively participating. Reality television has now become a space where they interact, express themselves, and even build social identities. This fact corroborates studies like Newman et al. (2023), where the authors noted that young audiences are drawn to media content that allows them to engage with influencers and online communities, rather than traditional, one-way broadcasting. In the Nigerian context, this trend is even more relevant because social media increasingly shapes youth culture.

Similarly, viewing motivations such as passing time ($\bar{x}$ = 2.34) and seeing different career opportunities ($\bar{x}$ = 2.10) suggest that reality television still serves both

entertainment and exposure functions. This connotes that the media can shape career awareness and aspirations among youths.

In contrast, viewing motives like voyeurism ($\bar{x}$ = 1.44) and emulating contestants ($\bar{x}$ = 1.55) were low. This suggests that most youths are not unthinkingly copying what they see but are more interested in engaging, learning, and social connection.

These findings imply that any reality television programme aimed at promoting agriculture must move beyond just showcasing farming; it must be interactive, relatable, and socially engaging.

Table 1: Distribution of youths according to their motivation for viewing RTS (n = 98)

S/N	RTS viewing motivation	Mean	SD
1	To learn new things	2.07*	0.87
2	To emulate the character portrayed by the contestants	1.55	0.70
3	To see different career opportunities	2.10*	0.80
4	To pass time	2.34*	0.82
5	For voyeurism (sexual content)	1.44	0.69
6	To learn about different cultures	1.76	0.89
7	To connect with celebrities online	2.60*	0.70
8	To create social media content	2.50*	0.76

Source: Field survey, 2025
Mean index – 2.00

Potentials of RTS as a Tool for Promoting Agriculture among Youths

As revealed in Table 2, the most preferred elements of RTS, according to the respondents, include social media usage ($\bar{x}$ = 1.79), success stories of young agripreneurs ($\bar{x}$ = 1.76), and gender inclusivity ($\bar{x}$ = 1.65). This implies that RTS has strong potential for promoting agriculture among youths. Youths want to see real people succeeding in agriculture through relatable stories, not abstract ideas. When they see people like themselves doing well in agriculture, it becomes easier to imagine themselves in that space. This aligns with social learning theory and is also supported by Amusan and Adeleke (2024), who emphasised that youth involvement in agriculture increases when there is awareness, exposure, and visible success models.

Similarly, regarding the role of interactivity ($\bar{x}$ = 1.62), youths today prefer content they can engage with - comment on, share, and discuss. This reinforces the idea that agricultural communication should adopt participatory and digital approaches.

Also, practical farming tips ($\bar{x}$ = 1.31), although ranked lowest, is significant, suggesting that technical content alone may not attract youths to agriculture unless it is embedded in entertaining formats. In other words, the delivery pattern of a message matters as much as the message itself.

Table 2: Potentials of RTS as a tool to promote agriculture among youths (n = 98)

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD
1	Showcasing success stories of young agripreneurs	1.76*	0.53
2	Wide audience reach (rural and urban)	1.39*	0.68
3	Gender inclusivity	1.65*	0.63
4	Interactivity (feedback from viewers)	1.62*	0.57
5	Social media usage	1.79*	0.41
6	Providing practical tips and techniques for farming	1.31*	0.66

Source: Field survey, 2025
Mean index – 1.00

Perceived Challenges in Using RTS to Promote Agriculture

Results in Table 3 highlight some real barriers in using RTS to promote agriculture. The most significant challenge is the perception of agriculture as uninteresting ($\bar{x}$ = 1.65). This is a recurring issue in Nigeria. As Olagunju and Dawodu (2022) corroborate, many Nigerian youths still perceive agriculture as a low-status or unattractive profession, often associated with hardship rather than opportunity. This perception alone can discourage interested youths from participating.

Another major challenge is limited access to television or streaming services in rural areas ($\bar{x}$ = 1.51). This is linked to infrastructural gaps and suggests that even if good programmes are developed, they may not reach the target audience without improved access to media and ICT. Also, the issue of lack of sponsorship ($\bar{x}$ = 1.36) highlights financial constraints in promoting agricultural media content. Without adequate funding, sustaining such programmes may be difficult.

Interestingly, among the findings is a lack of interest in agricultural content, which ranked lowest ($\bar{x}$ = 0.64). This is very important as it suggests that youths are not completely uninterested in agriculture. The real problem, as revealed by the findings, lies in presentation, perception, and exposure, which could be a potent tool for promoting agriculture through reality television shows.

Table 3: Distribution of youths according to their perceived challenges in using RTS to promote agriculture (n = 98)

Challenges	Mean	SD	Rank
Lack of interest in agriculture-related content	0.64	0.82	6th
Difficulty in making agricultural topics entertaining and engaging	1.02*	0.70	4th
Limited access to television or streaming services in rural areas	1.51*	0.66	2nd
Perception of agriculture as uninteresting	1.65*	0.66	1st
Competition with other popular TV genres or shows	0.69	0.65	5th
Lack of interest from sponsoring agencies	1.36*	0.66	3rd

Source: Field survey, 2025
Mean index – 1.00

Hypothesis

The hypothesis tested the relationship between youths' motivation for viewing RTS and their perceived challenges in using RTS to promote agriculture. The results revealed a weak positive correlation (r = 0.27), indicating that an increase in youths'

motivation to watch RTS was associated with a slight increase in their perceived challenges in using reality TV shows for agricultural promotion. However, the relationship was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$).

This suggests that youths' motivation for viewing RTS does not significantly influence how they perceive the challenges of using the medium to promote agriculture. In other words, both motivated and less motivated viewers perceived similar challenges in using reality TV programmes for agricultural promotion. This finding implies that factors other than viewing motivation, such as programme content quality, audience participation and relevance of agricultural information, may play a more important role in shaping youths' perceptions of the challenges associated with using RTS for agricultural promotion.

Table 4: Test of relationship between youths' motivation for viewing RTS and their perceived challenges in using RTS to promote agriculture

Variable	r-value	p-value	Decision
Youth's motivation for viewing RTS	0.27	0.415	Not significant

Source: Field survey, 2025

Conclusion

Reality television shows (RTS) have significant potential to promote agriculture among youths because they are interactive, gender-inclusive, and socially engaging media platforms. Youths are primarily motivated by opportunities for social interaction, digital engagement, and career exposure. Key strengths of RTS for agricultural promotion include social media integration, success stories of young agripreneurs, and audience participation. However, negative perceptions of agriculture, limited media access, and inadequate sponsorship remain major challenges.

Recommendations

i. Agricultural extension agencies and media organisations should design youth-oriented reality television programmes that integrate social media interaction and showcase successful young agripreneurs, thereby improving the attractiveness of agriculture among youths.
ii. Government and development partners should support the production and dissemination of agricultural reality television programmes through increased sponsorship and improved access to digital and broadcast media, particularly for rural youth audiences.

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