

Evaluating the Potentials of Participatory Development Communication in Curbing the Challenges of Population Growth and Insecurity in Abuja Municipal Area

David A. Abraham^{[a],*}; Uloma Ajiri^[a]

^[a] Department of Theatre and Cultural Studies, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria.

*Corresponding author.

Received 22 May 2024; accepted 1 August 2024

Published online 26 September 2024

Abstract

The study focuses on population growth in Abuja Municipal Area Council and its security implications and the potential of participatory development communication in addressing the menaces. The work adopted qualitative research method in data gathering and analysis. Through this research approach, the researcher effectively made use of primary data collected from the field work through the use of questionnaire. However, a number of scholars have over the years argued that participatory development communication is a viable means of addressing societal issues. Hence, the work concludes and recommends that population growth has security implications on the residents of Abuja Municipal Area; and a viable communication approach like participatory communication approach should adopted and employed to address the issues. The results revealed that the urge to travel, quest for greener pasture/better living conditions like search for better employment opportunities, among others are the reasons for the persistent rural-urban migration and resultant effects have been the congestion of the available towns, intimidation and harassment of residents and migrants, rise in unemployment rates, crimes, youth restiveness, prostitution and at the other end, lack of positive social, economic, structural and political developments which is visibly evidence in Abuja Municipal Area.

Key words: Potentials; Participatory development communication; Security challenges and population growth

Abraham, D. A., & Ajiri, U. (2024). Evaluating the Potentials of Participatory Development Communication in Curbing the Challenges of Population Growth and Insecurity in Abuja Municipal Area. *Higher Education of Social Science*, 27(1), 69-73. Available from: URL: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/hess/article/view/13448> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/13448>

INTRODUCTION

Insecurity is one of the burning realities that have been confronting the Nigerian nation. In other words, Nigerian urban areas have been challenged by insecurity over the years. A number of reasons seemed to be responsible for the aforementioned challenges. One of such factors is population growth in the urban areas which occurred as a result of rural cum urban migration. A number of studies have shown that Nigeria has experienced population explosion in recent time. The country has an estimated population of 200 million people (Ajaero and Madu, 2021). With annual population growth rate of 3.2%, Nigeria ranks seventh most populous country in the world and is projected to be the third by the year 2050 (Adebayo, A, 2022)

Apparently, Abuja seems to be one of the urban areas that have witnessed rapid population growth over the years. Historically, the city of Abuja was originally the south-western part of the ancient Habe (Hausa) Kingdom of Zazzau (Zaria). It was populated for centuries by several semi-independent tribes. The largest of the tribes was Gbagyi (Gwari), followed by the Koro and a few other smaller tribes. Abuja is located in the centre of Nigeria, within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Abuja is a planned city, and was built mainly in the 1980s. It officially became Nigeria's capital on 12 December 1991, replacing Lagos, though the latter remains the country's Most populous city. At the 2006 census, the city of Abuja

had a population of 776,298, making it one of the ten most populous cities in Nigeria. (WGEA in Tijjani, 2023). This fact was further strengthened that Abuja has witnessed a huge influx of people into the city; the growth has led to the emergence of satellite towns such as Karu Urban Area, Gwagwalada, Lugbe, Kuje and smaller settlements to which the planned city is sprawling. The unofficial metropolitan area of Abuja has a population of well over three million and comprises the fourth largest urban area in Nigeria, surpassed only by Lagos, Kano and Ibadan. (WGEA in Tijjani, 2023).

This situation has security implications on the city, as such, a viable means of addressing the challenges is sacrosanct. One of such means could be participatory development communication. It was based on this background that the research was undertaken. The study is aimed at evaluating the security challenges associated with rapid population growth in Abuja Municipal Area Council.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of Participatory Development Communication

First used in the Philippines in the 1970s by Professor Nora Quebral, the expression “development communication, designates the processes of transmitting and communicating new knowledge related to rural environments. Development communication is the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and the larger fulfillment of the human potential (Quebral in John, 2021). An attempt at informing, creating awareness, educating, and enlightening the people so that they can better their lives in every way, development communication includes participatory action for learning and sharing of powers: social (human rights and the emergence of the civil society), economic (egalitarian society) and political (democratization), within specific cultural contexts.

At each level (social, economic, political) information flow and communication play an important development role (Coldevin, 2020). Without an adequate two-way flow of information and dialogue between periphery and center exchange of knowledge, market information, political dialogue development is unlikely to take place. Communication can link individuals and communities, governments and citizens in participatory and shared decision-making. Or, from an instrumental point of view communication media support development, either through informational and educational campaigns or through participatory forms of group media, which change attitudes and beliefs.

As a concept, development communication stems from the belief that telephones, radio, television, the Internet, or group media can support the overall betterment of less privileged people in underdeveloped countries. Development communication generally refers to the planned use of strategies and processes of communications aimed at achieving development.

Population growth

Population is defined by (Lebreton et al. 1992) as a group of individuals of the same species living and interbreeding within a given area. Members of a population often rely on the same resources, are subject to similar environmental constraints, and depend on the availability of other members to persist over time. Scientists studied population by examining how individuals in that population interact with each other and how the population as a whole interacts with its environment. As a tool for objectively studying populations, population ecologists rely on a series of statistical measures, known as demographic parameters, to describe that population.

Concept of Security

One’s protection from extermination is what we classify as security. In other words, anything that can pose a threat to one’s existence or that harms or make life unpleasurable can be classified as insecurity. According to Igbuzor (2022), security is “the situation that exists as a result of the establishment of measures for the protection of persons, information and property against hostile persons, influences and actions., it is the existence of conditions within which people in a society can go about their normal daily activities without any threats to their lives or properties. It demands safety from chronic threats and protection from harmful disruption. Security embraces all measures designed to protect and safeguard the citizens and the resources of individuals, groups, businesses and the nation against sabotage or violent occurrence (6). The word security originates from the Latin word ‘Se-curus’, ‘Se’ means without and ‘Curus’ means uneasiness. This implies that security originally refers to liberation from uneasiness, or a peaceful situation without any risks or threats. Thus, security has a wider meaning including to feel safe and to be protected.

Ikyase and Namo (2020) argued that security is not the absence of threats, but the ability to rise to the challenges posed by these threats with expediency and expertise. In contrast, Nwolise (2021) affirmed that a country may have the best armed forces in terms of training and equipment, the most efficient police force, the most efficient customs men, the most active secret service agents and the best quality prisons, and yet be the most insecure nation in the world as a result of defense and security problems from within “bad governance, alienated and suffering masses, ignorance, hunger, unemployment, or even activities of foreign residents or companies”. He further

identified ten dimensions of security such as physical security, treasury security, people’s power security, global security psychological security, technological security, image security, territorial security, legal security and spiritual security. Therefore, addressing the material poverty of Nigerians is security and not the building of arms and weapons of warfare. However, it is important to acknowledge that we have different forms of security. Some of them are:

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The participatory communication theory was used in the analysis of the data collected for this work. The participatory communication theory otherwise known as Dialectical Pedagogy was propounded by Paulo Freire in 1970. The Freirean argument in theory works by a dual theoretical strategy. He insists that subjugated peoples must be treated as fully human subjects in any political process and considered when taken any socio-economic decisions. This implies dialogical communication. Although, inspired to some extent by Sartre’s existentialism, a respect for the autonomous personhood of each human being, the more important source is a theology that demands respect for otherness – in this case that of another human being. This view and more makes this theory relevant to the thrust of this study. Over the years, population of Nigeria continue to grow in the face of the nation’s economic challenges. At the same time the nation’s rural dwellers continue to run and move to cities in search of better economic opportunities. This situation apparently has a number of implications on peace and progress of the country. This theory therefore, seems relevant to this study as it focuses on the issues of population growth and its consequences just like the study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research which is survey research employed a random sampling technique in selecting the respondents within the study area. The researcher picked 250 (two hundred and fifty) out of each of the various parts of the study area, hence, a total of 2000 (two thousand) through the use of questionnaire. However, responses from questionnaires that were administered to respondents were presented using statistical tools such as simple percentage, frequency count, mean and tables. Results of the research and other statistical analysis of the data were presented in the next chapter. Therefore, the formula for the computation is as thus;

$$\frac{F \times 100}{N}$$

Where

F = Frequency of response and

N = Number of respondents

DATA PRESENTATION

The study is aimed at assessing issues of population growth through participatory communication strategies in AMAC. To achieve this therefore, the researcher employed mixed research approach. Hence, in this section, quantitative and qualitative methods of data presentation and analysis were used to present the data that was collected from the field in the course of the study.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Table 1
Distribution of the Questionnaire According to the Selected Areas

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Garki	250	33.33%
Nyanya	250	33.33%
Wuse	250	33.33%
Total	750	100%

Source: Field Work, 2024

Analysis of Table 4

Table 5 represents the distribution of the respondents by senatorial areas. According to the table 250 (33.33) of the respondents represented Garki, 250 (33.33) of the respondents represented Nyanya while 250 (33.33) of the respondents represented Wuse. This decision also was made to cover the three areas of AMAC in order to obtain objective information on the issue under this study.

Table 2
Distribution of the respondents’ opinions on the extent rapid population growth increases security issues in AMAC

S/N	Options	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1	Rapid population growth has increased security issues in AMAC	SA	30	28%
		A	60	58%
		SD	9	8%
		D	9	8%
2	To some extent rapid population growth has increased security issues in AMAC	SA	76	70%
		A	22	20%
		SD	6	6%
		D	4	4%
3	To a much extent rapid population growth has increased security issues in AMAC	SA	64	59%
		A	40	37%
		SD	2	2%
		D	2	2%
4	To a great extent rapid population growth has increased security issues in AMAC	SA	30	287%
		A	54	50%
		SD	12	11%
		D	12	11%

Source: Field Work, 2024

It is important to acknowledge that the above opinions of the respondents in the table 2 above, are in line with Malthus theory’s position which says that due to certain factors, populations inevitably expand until they

outgrow their available food supply and infrastructural development causing the population growth to be reversed by disease, famine, war, or calamity. Apparently, like it has been shown by the results gotten and presented above, population growth in AMAC has led to a number of issues including calamities such as insecurity of different forms. Over the years, population of Nigeria, and that of AMAC particular continue to grow in the face of the nation's economic challenges. At the same time the nation's rural dwellers continue to run and move to cities in search of better economic opportunities. This situation apparently has a number of implications on peace and progress of the country. This theory therefore, seems relevant to this study as it focuses on the issues of population growth and its consequences just like the study.

Table 3
Distribution of the respondents' opinions on potential of participatory communication in addressing issues of population growth and insecurity in AMAC

S/N	Options	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1	Participatory communication has the potential to address the issue of population growth and insecurity in AMAC	SA	30	28%
		A	60	58%
		SD	9	8%
		D	9	8%
2	Participatory communication to some extent has the potential to address the issue of population growth and insecurity in AMAC	SA	76	70%
		A	22	20%
		SD	6	6%
		D	4	4%
3	To a much extent participatory communication has the potential to address the issue of population growth and insecurity in AMAC	SA	64	59%
		A	40	37%
		SD	2	2%
		D	2	2%
4	To a great extent participatory communication has the potential to address the issue of population growth and insecurity in AMAC	SA	30	287%
		A	54	50%
		SD	12	11%
		D	12	11%

Source: Field Work, 2024

The data in table 3 above is also in agreement with participatory communication theory. The argument in the theory works by a dual theoretical strategy. It insists that subjugated people must be treated as fully human subjects in any political process and considered when taken any socio-economic decisions. This implies dialogical communication. Although, inspired to some extent by Sartre's existentialism, a respect for the autonomous personhood of each human being, the more important source is a theology that demands respect for otherness in this case that of another human being. The dialogical

communication is based on group dialogue rather than such amplifying media as radio, print, and television. This theory becomes important as it looks at the focus of the study which aims at how communication strategies should be used to change the situations of the rural areas through change of policies and the mind of the people in order for the rural dwellers to find the rural areas comfortable and therefore control their coming to the cities which formed the statement of the problem of this study.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Apparently, the data presented and analysed above has shown a number of results from which the findings of this research could be drawn. For example, the option 1 on Table (1) showed that rapid population growth has increased security issues in AMAC as 28%-56% agreed and strongly agreed with the position against 8%-8% that disagreed and strongly disagreed with the position. Option 2 on the table showed that to some extent rapid population growth has increased security issues in AMAC as 70%-20% agreed and strongly agreed against 6%-4% that disagreed and strongly disagreed with the position. Option 3 on table (1) posits that to a much extent rapid population growth has increased security issues in AMAC as 59%-37% agreed and strongly agreed against 2%-2% that disagreed and strongly disagreed with the position. The option 4 on table (1) revealed that to a great extent rapid population growth has increased issues of insecurity in AMAC as 28%-50% agreed and strongly agreed with the position against 11%-11% that disagreed and strongly disagreed with the position.

Similarly, Table (2) has shown that participatory communication is viable tool that can be used to address issues of population growth and insecurity in AMAC as it is observed that in option 1 28%-56% agreed and strongly agreed that participatory communication has the potential to address the issues of rapid population growth in AMAC. Option 2 on the table proves that to some extent participatory communication has the potential to address the issues of rapid population growth and insecurity in AMAC as 70%-20% agreed and strongly agreed with the position against 6%-4% that disagreed and disagreed with the position. The option 3 on the table shows that to a much extent participatory communication has the potential to address the issues of rapid population growth and insecurity in AMAC against 2%-2% that disagreed and strongly disagreed with the position. Option 4 reveals that to a great extent participatory communication has the potential to address the issues of rapid population growth and insecurity in AMAC against the 11%-11% that disagreed and strongly disagreed with the position. This is in agreement with the position that, "Participatory communication is seen as promoting a horizontal system with a more democratic means of the decision-making

approach. It is quite endorsed by the different scholars and promotes to be adopted in the development strategy for the social change i.e., to promote participation from the below and sharing the relevant information to all the stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

This work appraises the potential of participatory communication in addressing the issues of population growth and insecurity in AMAC. The era of modernization and dependency advocated the diffusion model of communication development with an ultimate goal of behavior changes with a motive to persuade people to change their behavior by providing them with information i.e., change in knowledge, attitude and practice.

Population growth and insecurity are some of the major problems confronting many cities today. The problem of population growth and insecurity are in other words serious threat the urban areas in Nigeria. These problems on the other hand have serious implications on the development of the Nigerian urban settings. Thus, participatory communication seems to be one of the viable tools that could be used to communicate the challenges for national stability and progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations will make a positive change in AMAC and Nigeria at large:

- i. Participatory communication has been proven to be an effective means of communication that can be used to communicate varieties of social issues. Thus, it should be employed to discourage rural urban migration.
- ii. Government at the Federal, State and Local levels should endeavour to develop the rural area making it attractive, safe and business lucrative place to

accommodate people thereby discouraging rural urban migration.

- iii. Government should use different means in arresting the various security issues facing the country by improving unemployment, basic amenities especially in the rural areas.

REFERENCES

- Adebayo, A. (2022). Insecurity and socio-economic development in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development Studies*, 5(1).
- Agaptus, N. (2013). National security, religious anarchism, and the politics of amnesty in Nigeria. *Covenant Journal of Politics and International Affairs (CJPIA)*, 1(1).
- Ajaero, C., & Madu, I. (2021). Regression-based approach to income inequality decomposition in rural and urban Nigeria. *International Journal of Economic Studies*.
- Coldevin, G. (2020). *Communication strategies for rural development: A case study of the use of campaigns in Lesotho*. Rome: FAO.
- Igbuzor, T. (2022). Environmental degradation, rising poverty, and conflict: Towards an explanation of the Niger Delta crisis. *Journal of Environmental Studies*.
- Ikyase, I., & Namo, M. (2020). Poverty, unemployment, and questions of problems of insecurity in Africa. *Tropical Journal of Arts and Humanities*.
- John, M. (2021). State and review of migration in Africa. In *Conference on Role of Migration in African Development: Issues and Policies*. Dakar, Senegal: Union for African Population Studies.
- Nwolise, F. (2021). Issues of conflicts and national development challenges in Nigeria. *Tropical Journal of Arts and Humanities*.
- Tijjani, N. (2023). *Management problems of rapid urbanization in Nigeria*. Ile-Ife: University of Ife Press.