

**AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF KENYA SHOWS AS A STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION PLATFORM IN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

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DECLARATION

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PROF. WAMBUI KIAI

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my mother, Margaret Gwada. Thank you for always believing in me and for your constant prayers. Thank you for pushing me to do my masters. I would not be who I am today without you. I am also sincerely grateful for your moral, emotional and financial support throughout this whole journey. You have not only been a loving mother to me but a mentor as well. You have shown me that it is indeed possible to follow your dreams. I am eternally grateful. May God continue blessing you and shining his light towards you.

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May God Bless You.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-------------|
| DECLARATION..... | ii |
| DEDICATION..... | iii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENT..... | iv |
| LIST OF TABLES | viii |
| LIST OF FIGURES | ix |
| LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS | x |
| ABSTRACT..... | xi |
| CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| 1.0 Overview..... | 1 |
| 1.1 Introduction | 1 |
| 1.1.1 <i>Strategic communication</i> | 4 |
| 1.1.2 <i>Agricultural Shows</i> | 5 |
| 1.1.3 <i>Agricultural Society of Kenya</i> | 7 |
| 1.2 Statement of the Problem | 8 |
| 1.3 Research Objectives | 9 |
| 1.3.1 <i>General Objective</i> | 9 |
| 1.3.2 <i>Specific Objectives</i> | 9 |
| 1.4 Research Questions | 10 |
| 1.5 Significance of the Study | 10 |
| 1.6 Rationale of the study..... | 10 |
| 1.7 Scope of the Study..... | 11 |
| 1.8 Limitations of the Study..... | 11 |
| 1.9 Operational definitions..... | 12 |
| CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW..... | 13 |
| 2.0 Introduction | 13 |
| 2.1 Overview of Agriculture | 13 |
| 2.1.1 <i>Agriculture Globally</i> | 13 |
| 2.1.2 <i>Agriculture in Africa</i> | 14 |
| 2.1.3 <i>Agriculture in Kenya</i> | 15 |
| 2.2 Role of Agricultural Communication in Disseminating Information on Innovation and Technologies | 16 |
| 2.3 Strategic Communication and Agriculture Exhibitions | 18 |
| 2.4 Integrated Marketing Communications..... | 20 |
| 2.5 Agricultural Shows as a Strategic Communication Platform..... | 21 |

| | | |
|--|--|-----------|
| 2.6 | Agricultural Communication in Knowledge Transfer on Opportunities in Agriculture | 24 |
| 2.7 | Role of Agricultural communication in Agricultural clinics | 28 |
| 2.8 | Agriculture and Rural Economy | 31 |
| 2.9 | Theoretical Review | 32 |
| 2.9.1 | <i>The Hierarchy of effects Theory</i> | 32 |
| 2.9.2 | <i>Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action (AIDA) theory</i> | 34 |
| CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY | | 36 |
| 3.1 | Overview | 36 |
| 3.1 | Research Design..... | 36 |
| 3.2 | Site of the Study | 36 |
| 3.3 | Study Population | 37 |
| 3.4 | Sample Technique and Sample Size | 38 |
| 3.5 | Pre Test..... | 38 |
| 3.6 | Data Collection..... | 39 |
| 3.6.1 | Reliability..... | 39 |
| 3.6.2 | Validity | 40 |
| 3.7 | Data Analysis and Presentation..... | 40 |
| 3.8 | Ethical Consideration in the Research | 40 |
| CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION..... | | 42 |
| 4.0 | Overview | 42 |
| 4.1 | Response Rate | 42 |
| 4.2 | Reliability Test Results | 43 |
| 4.3 | Validity Results | 44 |
| 4.4 | Background Information | 44 |
| 4.4.1 | <i>Gender</i> | 44 |
| 4.4.2 | <i>Age</i> | 44 |
| 4.4.3 | Level of Education..... | 45 |
| 4.4.4 | Job Position..... | 46 |
| 4.4.5 | <i>Frequency of Participation</i> | 47 |
| 4.4.6 | <i>Highest Level of Participation</i> | 47 |
| 4.5 | Preparation for the Agricultural Show | 48 |
| 4.5.1 | <i>Research</i> | 51 |
| 4.5.2 | <i>Promotional Activities to Attract Visitors</i> | 52 |
| 4.5.3 | <i>Exhibition Space</i> | 54 |

| | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| 4.6 | Interpretation of the ASK Show Theme by Exhibitors | 55 |
| 4.7 | Dissemination of Information by Agricultural Trade Exhibitors..... | 56 |
| 4.8 | Perceived Effectiveness of Using Agricultural Shows as a Communication Platform..... | 58 |
| 4.9 | Discussion | 62 |
| CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .. | | 68 |
| 5.1 | Overview | 68 |
| 5.2 | Summary of Findings | 68 |
| 5.3 | Conclusion..... | 69 |
| 5.4 | Recommendations | 70 |
| 5.5 | Suggestions for Future Research..... | 72 |
| REFERENCES..... | | 73 |
| APPENDICES | | 79 |
| Appendix I: Questionnaire..... | | 79 |
| Appendix II: Interview Guide..... | | 86 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>Table 3. 1: Sample Size</i> | 38 |
| <i>Table 4. 1: Response Rate</i> | 42 |
| <i>Table 4. 2: Reliability Statistics</i> | 43 |
| <i>Table 4. 3: Distribution of Respondents by Gender</i> | 44 |
| <i>Table 4. 4: Distribution of Respondents by Age</i> | 45 |
| <i>Table 4. 5: Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education</i> | 45 |
| <i>Table 4. 6: Distribution of Respondents by Job Position</i> | 46 |
| <i>Table 4. 7: Years of Participation in the Agricultural Shows</i> | 47 |
| <i>Table 4. 8: Highest Level of Participation</i> | 48 |
| <i>Table 4. 9: Length of Preparation</i> | 49 |
| <i>Table 4. 10: Parties Responsible for Planning the Exhibition</i> | 50 |
| <i>Table 4. 11: Research Materials</i> | 51 |
| <i>Table 4. 12: Communication Material</i> | 53 |
| <i>Table 4. 13: Type of Space</i> | 54 |
| <i>Table 4. 14: Dissemination of Information by Agricultural Trade Exhibitors</i> | 56 |
| <i>Table 4. 15: Perceived Effectiveness of Agricultural Shows</i> | 59 |

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3. 1: Map of Study Area 37

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|----------------|--|
| AHSK | Agriculture and Horticultural Society of Kenya |
| AIDA | Attention, Interest, Desire and Action theory |
| ASK | Agricultural Society of Kenya |
| ASDS | Agricultural Sector Development Strategy |
| ASTGS | Agricultural Sector Transformation and Growth Strategy |
| ATAAS | Agricultural Technology and Agribusiness Advisory Services |
| EAAHS | East African Agricultural and Horticultural Society |
| EU | European Union |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| IMC | Integrated Marketing Communication |
| NACOSTI | National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation |
| RASK | Royal Agricultural Society of Kenya |
| UFI | Union des Foires Internationales |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |

ABSTRACT

Within the literature in communication, the concept of agricultural shows is growing. Presently they are recognized as a significant platform for communication that can possibly influence an organization's capacity to succeed and compete in a changing business environment. The study aimed to assess Agricultural Society of Kenya shows as a strategic communication tool in agricultural development. Targeting 342 exhibitors and 100 ASK staff members, the study employed a descriptive design. The exhibitors were sampled using census sampling technique while purposive technique was employed in sampling the ASK staff. An interview guide was employed to collect data from the ASK employees while a questionnaire gathered data from the exhibitors. The data collected using questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive analysis while qualitative data gathered using an interview guide was analyzed using thematic content analysis. The findings revealed that the theme of the agricultural shows influences the type of agricultural information conveyed by the exhibitors and consequently the dissemination techniques. A majority of respondents indicated that they relied on verbal and non-verbal means of communication; providing samples of exhibits to the visitors and allowing them to take photos and videos in disseminating information. The findings further revealed that the exhibitors perceived the agricultural shows to be effective primarily in communicating agricultural information and facilitating direct face-to-face interaction between sellers and potential buyers. Overall, these findings pointed to the effectiveness of agricultural shows as a strategic communication platform in ASK agricultural development. This study recommends integration and alignment of technology with the overall strategy of the exhibitor's businesses in order to enhance knowledge transfer to the visitors.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter covers the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, and research questions, significance of the study, rationale of the study, scope of the study, limitations and operational definitions of the study.

1.1 Introduction

Within the literature in communication, the concept of agricultural shows is growing. Presently they are recognized as a significant platform for communication that can possibly influence an organization's capacity to succeed and compete in a changing business environment as was posited by Seringhaus and Rosson (2016). The industry of agricultural shows has been surprisingly powerful, and it has kept on growing even in the midst of economic crises demonstrating that the show media qualifies to be recognized as a top tool for marketing for organizations trying to propel their operations (UFI, 2012).

Shows are a unique place where people sharing interests in specific subjects are physically present at the same time under one roof. These various groups go to the trade shows as they share an interest to a particular subject/issue (Petrova, 2014). The exhibitors just as the visitors are set up to invest their effort, time and finances to accomplish their goals (Blythe 2010). According to Munuera and Ruiz (2009) trade shows are a significant component of the strategy of promotion for industrial goods however, they are an appropriate information source on the trends in the market to motivate managers and decision makers to attend such shows. Thus, organizations invest in trade shows (Herbig et al. 2008). Also, trade shows are particularly practical in perceiving client needs, in the advancement of specifications of products and in supplier

search. According to Gopalakrishna and Lilien (2015) trade shows function as a medium in offering feedback on the performance of a service/product.

Norrish (2011), notes that planning a communication strategy in the initial phases of a programme/project, gives a right direction to target appropriate sharing of products and pathways to share the knowledge obtained from research. As such organizations need to use multichannel methods of communication to ensure the effectiveness of agricultural shows (Norrish, 2011). The participation of agricultural shows involves the coordination of different media since it incorporates other platforms for marketing communication, for example, social media, printing, direct mail and advertising (Häyrynen & Vallo 2012).

Andersen (2011), built up a three stages of a model of marketing communication for the process of building a relationship that incorporates a pre-relationship stage, a negotiation stage and, a relationship stage; this stages show the process of communication. In any case, these stages face various difficulties with regards to the platform of communication and strategy. As indicated by Andersen (2011), in the pre-relationship stage the correspondence is oriented in a one-way approach and the correspondence task is building awareness, which should be possible through mass media, referrals and reputation management. In the negotiation stage the correspondence is conversation, the correspondence task is to convince through thinking and actions that are utilized are powerful. In the third relationship advancement stage the correspondence task is commitment, which is attained through the trade environment, including sentiments, interest and intentions of the two players by means of databases, email and internet application. Since relationship learning at agricultural shows is a chance for making differential advantage in interaction (Li, 2006), it is fascinating to check whether agricultural shows as a platform for communication could be utilized effectively all

through the relationship-building process and in the event that they could be utilized as a platform for communication in all the stages.

According to Häyrynen and Vallo (2012) participation in trade shows relies upon the mix of different media since it incorporates other platforms of marketing communication, including advertising, promotion and social media. This reality makes the planning of the plan more complex (Cavanaugh, 2016). The participation in trade shows ought to be upheld by other platforms of marketing communication, for example, field deals and direct sales. For instance, an exhibitor could have a magazine advertisement about attending a trade show. The organization ought to welcome its current clients and new potential clients to the trade shows by means of social media and direct mail. Firms with multiple goals for showcasing for example, increasing sales and awareness, ought to specifically utilize different instruments of communication at the show.

This is a significant study area, as number of individuals from the general public with an immediate association with agribusiness keep on declining (Irani and Doerfert, 2013). The eventual fate of agribusiness relies upon communicators' capacity to successfully pass on information to audiences. Communication in agriculture appear to in any case utilize the one-way model of communication and need to revitalize correspondence, in light of the fact that as a general public, relies on the fiber and food framework, yet many in the public do not have a good relationship with it (Irani & Doerfert, 2013). Thusly, the gap between urban and rural societies grows, so as to improve misperceptions about farming and agriculture in Kenya, agricultural firms need to participate in two-way communication with clients/customers.

This study will especially focus on the Agricultural Society of Kenya (ASK) to discuss the function of trade shows as a vital platform for communication on the development of agriculture. ASK's role is to advance Agriculture and to provide available forums for the learning and information exchange in agribusiness. According to Achola, (2016) the shows by the society have a positive effect in the communication of development in agriculture in Kenya. This commitment was the springboard to pulling in different companies into utilizing the shows as a shop window. There exists little research on the more extensive function of agricultural shows in current society and while the goal of agriculture and societies shows are, still significant today, the manner by which these goals are attained may need to change in future. Agricultural shows are no longer focused at an absolutely farming crowd and their prosperity depend in approach of communicating to guests who are getting progressively isolated from the land.

1.1.1 Strategic communication

According to Argenti, Howell, and Beck (2005) strategic communication is adjusting to the communication to the overall strategy of the company to position itself strategically in the market. Hallahan, Holtzhausen, et al. (2007) characterize strategic communication as the deliberate utilization of communication by a company to attain its goals. Strategic communication is long-term communication towards a specific scope and direction. Strategic communication in the field of agriculture requires the presence of a grand strategy or perspective of the field with the goal that it tends to be communicated to partners from the local vicinity and in international areas. strategy is the policy decisions by governments and organizations about objectives, ethics, alignment and interactions with publics and different forces in the business world (Botan, 2006).

Agriculture communication is ceaselessly developing as a discipline. As indicated by Irani and Doerfert (2013) the field started as agricultural journalism and agricultural extension services, aiming at communication on the techniques and practices of farming; today, agricultural communication includes the correspondence of dependable, science-based data, natural resources and farming related advocacy work and public opinion. Communication is essential at all stages in the production, testing, adaptation and agriculture services delivery (Botan 2016). Powerful strategic communication accomplishes comparative advantage through its strategies configuration and resource allocation in continually changing macro and micro environments and through its information communication to all partners. Hence, partners must be viewed as each person or group who impacts the agricultural sector. While strategy can exist at all levels it is significant that a sectoral strategic model of communication is unified; that is takes a situation at or close to the highest point of the top of government hierarchy.

For a long time, agricultural shows in Kenya have been utilized as a mechanism of sharing information, for example, advancements and innovation for improving the efficiency and technique of agriculture (Teffeteller, 2009). In developing nations, where education levels are moderately low, the decision of communication media is significant. Thus, agricultural shows are critical, as it can convey information on current technology for agriculture to farmers who visit the shows with an interest in knowing more about the agricultural sector.

1.1.2 Agricultural Shows

Agricultural shows are temporary show functions that offer opportunities for farmers to conduct study visits and academic research. These shows fill in as events for members to come and see and gain experience (Irani & Doerfert, 2013). Alongside

different instruments, for example, functions, showrooms and road shows, agricultural shows also have a place in interpersonal communication. According to Kirchgeorg and Kastner (2010) Interpersonal communication is generally centered around sharing experiences with a particular group, resulting in individual encounters, letting the groups experience the brand and empowering passionate appeals. In this specific situation, thinking about the idea of the organization, the sector where it works and the intended interest group, the utilization of trade shows as a strategy for communication aims at making an immediate and individual interaction between the organization and its target audience, so as to make exceptional and sustaining recollections.

Byerlee, (2009) posits that the aim of agricultural shows is to advance agriculture and the economy in rural regions. Companies that choose to utilize agricultural shows as a tool for communication must design its schedule to occur prior, during and after the show. Truth be told, the need to sort out all the activities at all these phases is emphasized by both scholastics and by marketing professionals. Trade shows provide a forum for organizations to show and exhibit their items to potential purchasers who could have an exceptional interest in purchasing those items. The allocated time and location of trade shows is practical for exhibiting organizations and helpful for purchasers. Trade shows are extravagantly utilized as key indicators of communication. The essential function of trade shows with regards to communication is to improve sales (Irani & Doerfert, 2013). Organizing and coordinating a successful agricultural show calls for joint effort and cooperation of researchers, agricultural companies, farmers, media houses, schools, and the overall population (Morgan, 2010). The show gives an opportunity to each one of those connected or by implication in the production of agricultural produce or related activities to display agricultural products (Gusau, 2011).

1.1.3 Agricultural Society of Kenya

The Agricultural Society of Kenya (ASK) is a non-governmental organization that was setup with the objective of looking into the development and advancement of the Kenyan agricultural industry. It has 16 branches in the country; likewise, it organizes and undertakes contests on field days and furrowing. The ASK (2019) notes that the general public further conducts youth programs for their Young Farmers' Clubs of Kenya (YFCK) (ASK, 2019).

The ASK was established in December 1901 then known as the East African Agricultural and Horticultural Society (EAA&HS) (ASK, 2019). The first show by the society was in February 1902. Later the society became the Agriculture and Horticultural Society of Kenya (A&HSK), however due to the depression in 1921-1924, the new association was not successful. Later, it developed further during the 1920s, and organized shows in East Africa. The society barely following the World War 11 and in 1947 diversified and expanded, shaping the YFCs, obtaining the Nairobi, Kitale and Nanyuki showgrounds

In the 1950s the society started to enroll Africans (ASK, 2019). African participation picked up after independent in 1963 when the Kenyan government got involved and urged farmers to enroll themselves in the society. Between 1960s to 1970s, the ASK grew extraordinarily both regarding enrollment and show grounds. The government kept on offering backing to the ASK, while it utilized its shows as a significant piece of its extension services to the citizens and a platform to train farmers. ASK deliberately organizes shows in the country and at present they have 16 agricultural shows in their yearly schedule.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Information on agriculture is an essential part in enhancing agricultural productivity (Chisita, 2012). The significance of sharing information and knowledge in research for advancement settings has been established through research. Knowledge and information access is known to be probably the greatest determinant of production of agriculture. Trade shows' exhibitors and guests are at a favorable position since the two sides go to the function with the goal of providing or searching for information, expressing one's opinion and engaging with each other. The shared information between the exhibitor and the guest can be executed after the show, subsequently promoting the development of agriculture.

Agricultural shows have assumed a main function in the advancement of agribusiness and the nation's economy (Byerlee, 2009). Agricultural shows are conducted with the aim of promoting interpersonal communication on matters related to better agricultural practices (UFI, 2012). In Kenya, The Agricultural Society of Kenya (ASK) was setup with the objective of looking into the development and improvement of the Kenyan agricultural industry. ASK organizes shows countrywide and as of now they have 16 agricultural shows in their yearly schedule of functions (ASK, 2019). The ASK efforts in advancing communication in agriculture utilizing agricultural shows, reveals the significance of agricultural shows in the development of the Kenyan agricultural industry.

Research by Häyrinen and Vallo (2012) indicated that communication is a significant instrument in the development of agriculture. According to Byerlee (2009) agricultural shows have assumed a main function in the improvement of agribusiness and the rural economy since eighteenth century. Agricultural shows are significant in Kenya.

This is apparent from the way that Agricultural shows take place yearly in the nation. The plans of the ASK is to guarantee the achievement of 16 Agricultural shows situated in various areas in Kenya. In spite of the way that Agricultural shows are attended in Kenya, little examination has been led to assess their part as a tool for communication. Consequently, this study intends to establish the role of agricultural shows as a communication platform in agricultural development by the ASK.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study was to assess Agricultural Society of Kenya shows as a strategic communication platform in agricultural development.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To determine the influence of the ASK theme (Promoting innovation and technology in agriculture and trade) in disseminating agricultural information by the exhibitor.
- ii. To determine how exhibitors, disseminate agricultural information during agricultural shows.
- iii. To determine exhibitor's perceived effectiveness of using Agricultural shows as a platform for communication.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. How does the ASK theme (Promoting innovation and technology in agriculture and trade) influence the dissemination of agricultural information by the exhibitors?
- ii. How do the exhibitors disseminate agricultural information during agricultural shows?
- iii. How do exhibitors perceive the effectiveness of using Agricultural shows as a platform for communication?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The outcomes of this research could be helpful to different groups of individuals. The research findings could help the companies to make informed decisions about a specific show. The trade shows participants could be in a situation to decide if the shows are suitable to guarantee that the shows fitted into their strategy and help them to accomplish their business goals. The trade shows could utilize the outcomes to define strategies that would enhance organization's participation and guarantee its sustainability. The study could help policy makers and the government to formulate policies in regard to agricultural development. In addition, the study will provide reference and literature for future research.

1.6 Rationale of the study

The researcher focused on agriculture shows. For the researcher, agricultural shows are important in communicating information relevant in agriculture development in the country. As a consequence, the researcher felt the need to make sense of the role of

agricultural shows as a strategic communication platform in agricultural development focusing on the Agriculture Society of Kenya.

The findings were expected to serve as a foundation for further studies on the role of agricultural shows as a strategic communication platform in agricultural development by comparing the findings from this research to the agricultural sector in the country, or examining the actual impact of agriculture in the economy of the nation and in society building.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study focused on agricultural shows in Kenya and their role on agricultural development. Agricultural shows if implemented properly can be beneficial in providing information on the best agricultural practices for agricultural development. The location of the study was Nairobi County. The study targeted 342 exhibitors and 100 ASK employees. The target population was appropriate since it was composed of the individuals who engage in agricultural shows to share information and to promote their products.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Reluctance of some respondents to take active participation in the study was a limitation experienced by the study. Further, the study experienced the limitation of time hence the research was not able to collect a lot of data over a long period of time.

1.9 Operational definitions

Agricultural shows: are impermanent show functions that offer opportunities for farmers to conduct study visits and academic research (Irani & Doerfert, 2013).

Communication: This is the procedure used in sharing or passing on information by which ideas and concepts are transferred from a source to a recipient with the expectation to change their insight, mentality and expertise (Adebayo, 1997).

Strategic communication: is adjusting correspondence to the organization's strategy, to upgrade its strategic position (Argenti, Howell, & Beck, 2005).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section highlights literature on the role of trade shows and agricultural exhibitions as a platform for strategic communication in agricultural development. The literature highlighted in the chapter is grounded on the study objectives. Further, the chapter covers the theories anchoring the study.

2.1 Overview of Agriculture

2.1.1 Agriculture Globally

After the 2nd World War in 1945, the history of rural and agricultural development is characterized by changing concerns and priorities. Following the end of the war and the increased rate of malnutrition Tilahun (2013) observed that countries across the globe started to make effort of increasing food production. After the end of WWII, the global agricultural status has been geared towards the sustenance of a stable food supply and agricultural products with the increase in consumption as the population grew. The pioneers of the new age of agriculture were developed nations such as New Zealand and the USA (Almas & Campbell, 2012). Advances in technology within the agricultural sector has facilitated increased yields while a regime for free trade including developing countries which increase competition and productivity necessary for customers to purchase agricultural, produce at lower prices (Almas & Campbell, 2012). A key objective of the new age of agricultural production was to end world hunger by making agricultural food easily accessible to the growing population across the globe.

According to Fugile, Keith, MacDonald, James and Ball (2007) in the USA, as a result of development of new technologies in agriculture an increase in agricultural production was evident in 1950-2000. The increase in agricultural production in the USA

was a key contributor of the nation's economy. Brown (2005) noted that India has implemented actions in the past to improve its agricultural practices. Initially, only wheat was produced in North India, this progressed to the production of rice. A rotation technique was adopted where wheat had to be harvested first for rice to be planted. Now, the combination is used across the world to help feed large populations. The production of agricultural produce in India can be categorized into two; commercial and food crops. The main food crops in India included coarse cereals, rice, pulses and wheat while commercial food included sugarcane, tea, oil seed, coffee, tea and raw cotton.

2.1.2 Agriculture in Africa

In many countries, agriculture is a critical sector in the development of the economy and in alleviating poverty. Agriculture has played an important role in industrial development and growth in developing nations. The importance of agriculture in developing nations is more evident than in developed nations. In Nigeria, Omache (2016) observed that the agricultural sector performed poorly for 30 years, this resulted in the government developing new agricultural schemes and programs to enhance agricultural productivity in the country. A report by the world bank (2008) explained that Nigeria had developed and distributed 57 Improved Rice Varieties (IRVs) to rural farmers using 4 policies and programs. The efforts by Nigeria were aimed at increasing rice production to attain food security in the country.

The technology advisory project (ATAAS) was developed in 2010 through the cooperation between the world bank and the government of Uganda. The aim of ATAAS was to improve the level of agricultural production and improve individual income. This was to be attained by improving research in advisory and agricultural services in Uganda. Otage (2013) identified that in Uganda a scheme for technology adaptation and transfer

was implemented. The scheme involved the participation of local welders in fabricating post-harvest technology for agricultural production. The production cost of farmers was reduced by mechanizing cassava shredders and maize cobs sorters.

2.1.3 Agriculture in Kenya

According to Sgitawa (2016), agriculture in Kenya is a key economic sector that contributes approximately 24% of the country's GDP directly and 27% of the GDP indirectly. The agricultural sector not only produces food but also manufacturing raw materials which in turn creates environment. According to Macharia (2013) agricultural development is thus essential in reducing poverty in Kenya. It is worth to note that agricultural sector recorded impressive growth in the first two decades after independence. This was the period when the first president led a campaign called *rudini mashambani* which in English means return to farms. This call was well responded to and as a result small scale agriculture recorded fast growth and as a result economic growth was rating at a commendable growth of up to 7 percent (Nyoike, 2015). This was, at that time, the most remarkable growth in sub-Saharan Africa. The main key factors that contributed to this growth was the support rendered to farmers by the government through agricultural extensions and research. This growth however, started to decline especially the years 1980-1990. Since the growth of economy depends highly on the growth of agricultural sector economic growth dwindled in a big way during this period. Several factors attributed to this, which included negligence amongst the agricultural extension departments as well as research. Investment in this sector was low with as low as 2% in the annual budget. There was mismanagement in the sector. The agricultural institutions during this period also collapsed.

A key objective of the agricultural sector in Kenya is to attain national food security (Nyoike, 2015). Vision 2030, the Big four agenda in 2017 and the Medium term plan III documents the importance of agriculture in Kenya, all with the emphasis of providing 100% nutrition and food security (ASTGS, 2018). The Big Four Agenda is based on the belief that food security needs an agricultural sector that is commercial, vibrant and modern that ensures sustainable development of the economy. In addition, the strategy suggests that a price policy focusing on reasonable and stable prices for produces and offering the same products to customers at affordable prices. According to the big four agenda, agricultural development will improve smallholders' income and ensure easy availability of food. This will ultimately improve the economy of Kenya.

2.2 Role of Agricultural Communication in Disseminating Information on Innovation and Technologies

Information is potent in the development of agriculture since it provides a framework to stakeholders on the decisions required with regards to the current patterns and trends of agriculture (Chisita, 2012). Further, Ajayi and Gunn (2009) revealed that communication was essential in agriculture. Communication is important in responding to the challenges and opportunities of technological, economic and social changes and in this regard, to facilitate food security, improve agricultural production and the livelihood of people living in rural areas. Further, the effectiveness of information is attained through efficient communication with people. According to Chisita (2012) farmers need relevant and reliable agricultural information in relation to better methods of farming. Further, Chisita (2012) argued that the current services of agricultural extensions have failed to meet farmers' information needs due to the lack of systems to effectively facilitate gathering, transmitting and sharing information.

The target population size determines the selection of the appropriate channel. According to Arumapperuma (2008) the more farmers have exposure to innovation and technology the higher the probability of the farmers to adopt and implement the innovation. Communication channel effectiveness relies not only on the number of farmers receiving information and the success of the channel in affecting the decisions by the farmers in adopting and implementing the innovation (Murage, *et al.*, 2012). Communication channels are categorized as localite channels and cosmopolite channels. Cheboi and Mberia, (2014) argue that even though interpersonal communication channels can be cosmopolite or local, approximately all channels of mass media are cosmopolite. The cosmopolite channels of communication emerge from outside the social system under investigation; other communication channels reach people from within the social system such as communication with an extension on agent or change agent, farm input supply personnel and persons from other villages. Localite channels may include communication with neighbors and friends, family members (Cheboi and Mberia, 2014).

Agwu^{et al} (2008) notes that effective communication is an important tool for establishing and maintaining a good working and social relationships. Thus, effective communication allows people to exercise control over their environment and the main reason for communication is to improve the skills and knowledge and change the attitude of the receivers. According to Agwu *et al.*, (2008) various communication channels such as farm magazines, radio, newsletters, television and leaflets are used to share information on agriculture to farmers. However, the authors noted that radio is the most common means of mass communication. The study recommended that radio programs need to be rescheduled to evening hours when farmers will be free to listen to such programs.

Gathecha *et al.*, (2012) evaluated farmers' information needs and channels of communication used to share information on improved pigeon varieties in Makueni County. The research revealed that most of the farmers in Makueni county relied on information shared from other farmers, seed retailers and community leaders. Further, the research indicated that the most preferred channels by farmers included field days, agricultural officers and ICIRISAT employees. However, the study revealed that approximately 39% of the respondents faced the challenge in obtaining information.

Rodgers (2003) was of the opinion that communication is the process by which people share knowledge and information with the core objective of mutual understanding. The channels of mass media are means of sharing messages; they include the use of magazine, television, newspapers, and radio which enable an individual to reach a large group of audiences facilitate while interpersonal channels entail face-to-face exchange of information between people (Rogers, 2003). Channels of interpersonal communication could either be cosmopolite or local while mass media is cosmopolite. Notably, Murage *et al.*, (2012) notes that knowledge is an essential variable, however, the approach in which farmers receive information via varying sources has a significant influence on both the acquisition and adoption of knowledge.

2.3 Strategic Communication and Agriculture Exhibitions

Adebayo (1997) defined communication as the process of conveying or sharing information/knowledge by transferring ideas from one source to a receiver will the aim of influencing the attitude, decision, skill and k knowledge of the receiver. The development of communication tools between farmers and scientists continues to be a great issue. Results from research have for long been communicated using technical jargons beyond farmers reach in rural regions (Kimaru, 2011). The conveyors and sources of information,

the approach in which the messages are packaged and targeted can make a difference on how policies are utilized and perceived. The continued interaction increases the chances for effective communication, the more the time stakeholders spend with farmers the better the understanding and sharing of information and confidence to confide in each other as partners in technology development and transfer.

Nzozzo and Mogambi (2016) explained that information use in the agricultural sector is improving farm productivity. Information provision on the trends of weather and the best farming practices helps farmers in making the right decisions on the crops needed for plantation and the market to sell the produce and to buy different inputs. Changes in agricultural technology, the environment, and agricultural policies have resulted in the change of farmers' information needs. According to Oladele (2006) information is essential in increasing the production of agriculture and in implementing strategies for farm produce marketing and distribution. In addition, information is an avenue of sharing best practices, experiences, funding sources and new markets by different farmers.

According to Keller (2003) strategic communication is adjusting to the communication to the overall strategy of the company to position itself strategically in the market. Exhibitions facilitate the alignment of communication process with the general goals and strategy of an organization. The increase competition in the business environment has raised awareness to the importance of marketing tools among which include the use of exhibitions. In addition, in the current business market, organizations have various approaches of reaching their clients which include both traditional and modern media. According to Kotler (2003) the marketers at the same time are maximizing on the advantages of the communication mix.

The use of strategic communication in exhibitions is best understood by assessing each role in the processes of buying and selling. Exhibitions are deemed as an essential technique of strategic communication for organizations operating within the international business arena. This makes the international businesses a key aspect of strategic communication in turbulent times enabling the organizations to develop effective relationship with the customers, to offer a variety of sales and promotions, to understand and sustain good relations with international businesses, to monitor competition from the international sector, and to minimize the barriers present in new markets. As such, the use of trade shows has facilitated strategic communication between the exhibitors and the customers (Oladele, 2006).

2.4 Integrated Marketing Communications

For a long time, the commonly used communication disciplines included direct marketing, public relations, advertising and sales promotions. According to Boutin (2015) organizations used to deal with each independently, with discrete targets, objectives, and budgets. However, these tools are currently being incorporated under the integrated marketing communication (IMC), which is intended to improve the consistency and effectiveness of marketing communications. Basic to the IMC issue is that the buyer does not perceive marketing communication techniques as separate and distinct elements (Kreidly, Aden, & Tvrtkovic, 2014). The concept of IMC is a phenomenon wherein the hindrances that have existed between the core disciplines of marketing communication are separating. By eliminating these boundaries, IMC centers around the goal of assisting with building associations with clients rather than just the customary objectives of marketing communication and brand-building.

At the core of the IMC is the cautious coordination of all components of marketing communication being used by a company so as to verify that they all convey the same message, which will fortify and strengthen the fundamental brand message (Shimp, 2007). The concept of IMC has been viewed as a critical issue of marketing management because effectiveness in incorporating the different mix of marketing communication available to them. With the four communication types of conversation, consultation, transmission and registration the integration of channels and tools needs to take place to facilitate the four. By achieving this, an enhancement of communication effectiveness is witnessed. This is at the core of what marketers' endeavor to achieve with their combination of all the tools of marketing communication.

2.5 Agricultural Shows as a Strategic Communication Platform

Ayci (2011) posited that communication involved the process of information exchange between different individuals. Effective marketers have based their operations on the foundation of the wider concept of promotional strategy and marketing communication. This technique is referred to as integrated marketing communication (IMC) and it covers direct mail, sales promotion, advertising and personal selling (Kurtz & Boone, 2006). According to Kellezi (2014) trade shows have become a technique for communication and are perceived to be powerful due to face-to-face interaction.

Exhibitors and visitors of trade shows are at an advantage during the transaction process since both parties attend trade shows with the goal of providing or searching for information, interacting with other people and expressing their opinion. A trade show is usually set out in a specific location at a specific time and the products and services are presented during the time of the function. Due to face-to-face interaction, the attendees' reaction is visible and the exhibitors are able to provide answers to the visitors.

Essentially, Syoboda *et al.*, (2002) posited that exhibitors need to meet the wants and needs of customers and be ready to hold conversations.

A trade show is a method of selling and can be a strength to the company because it comprises of a mixture of communications such as advertising, selling and promotion. Most of the other mediums of communications do not have a mixture of all the elements of the communication mix (Sashi & Perretty, 2012). Recently, as noted by Tanner and Chonko (2015) trade shows are the second largest component of advertising. Evers and Knights (2008) explained that trade shows also referred to as expositions and exhibitions provide an avenue for companies to promote their products and their services. According to Smith (2011) trade shows provide an arena to present new products and promote the services or products offered by different companies. Trade shows frequently last about a week and can be available to just experts or the overall population. Booths are the actual space that an organization displays its services and products within (Smith, 2011).

Trade shows provide a forum for organizations to show and exhibit their items to potential purchasers who could have an exceptional interest in purchasing those items (Situma,2012). Shows could be depicted in a more exhaustive and broad manner as follows: Shows are functions that intend to showcase and transfer information, technological development and development inventions with respect to tradable services and goods through the use of booths. Trade shows are functions whose coordinator, name, type, duration, subject, date, and location are resolved ahead of time, that are sorted out in fields that suit capabilities for building up and improving the transfer of information, collaboration, and future business relations, and that focus on the interest of the field, area, and the general public (Aycı, 2011).

Rehak (2008) led an investigation expecting to dissect the situation of current trade shows and propose improvement, which would assist organizations with showcasing in a more compelling manner. The examination found that organizations inappropriately prepare for trade shows and their advertising does not fit the possibility of the successful promotion. The greatest challenge is the use of online marketing. As indicated by the study, organizations use online marketing, however, this is just done through the website of the company. The research suggested that organizations should utilize these methods with the goal to pull in more visitors to the trade shows. Organizations ought to display unconventionally on the grounds that it generally draws in possible clients. The study failed to focus on agriculture trade shows thus exhibiting a research gap.

Engblom (2014) revealed that trade shows have a critical role in the marketing mix of companies. Consequently, it is of fundamental significance to comprehend the various processes connected to the participation of trade shows so as to arrive at the most ideal outcomes. The research focused on 4 processes: 1) planning and implementation, 2) HR, 3) marketing communication, and 4) evaluation and control. The first and second processes were identified to be the most common in organizations. Surely, effective exhibitors plan cautiously their presentation and the best exhibitors enlist suitable people to deal with the entire exhibition process – without overlooking the significance of advertising and evaluation. The study however did not establish the relationship of trade shows as agricultural communication.

2.6 Agricultural Communication in Knowledge Transfer on Opportunities in Agriculture

An investment in training and educating people on farming is getting perpetually significant as the difficulties related with embracing climate smart and sustainable techniques and connecting with marketing opportunities in present day value chains are developing (Malecki and Tootle, 2016). The growing commitment of international and public organizations in food value chains alongside the growing sensitivity of customers to worldwide sustainability issues and reduction of poverty implies that opportunities for individuals to take part in agribusiness today and in the future are ostensibly more noteworthy. Simultaneously, nonetheless, increased competition and the quality demand in the market and rivalry over natural resources, such as land from the side of production infer the need for these individuals to build up a scope of aptitudes and knowledge that have not been available in rural regions (Huggins, 2000).

Right now there is a terrible rising issue that the youth's training needs specifically those expected to create abilities to participate in beneficial, productive and sustainable farming have rarely been efficiently addressed in schools and training facilities. Indeed, even today, numerous training plans contain no particular affirmation of the specific prerequisites of young people (Sitawa, 2016). In such a situation, it is not astounding that individuals do not consider farming to be a feasible and alluring profession. Regardless, of late models have emerged of activities focused at young people which have featured new methodologies and procedures to building up the youth capacities to take part in farming. A large number of these activities can possibly be adjusted to various settings, and scaled up.

The goal of Agricultural trade shows is to help in exchange of knowledge between different farmers, developers of technology, colleges and scholars. They comprise of associations and institutions that create and spread information and knowledge to help in the production of agricultural produce, advertising and handling of post-harvest farm products and the natural resources management (World Bank, 2012). In the event that experts and different specialists communicate properly, successful exchange of knowledge is accomplished. At the center of such powerful information exchange are three fundamental groups: Firstly, youth members who are keen on innovations; secondly, the important and adequately complete information which needs to be disseminated at a suitable speed to the presently held youth knowledge and, thirdly, the existing environment (Malecki and Tootle, 2016).

Partnerships between colleges, food processing companies, public authorities, farm staff and farmers comprise a network of agricultural innovation and knowledge, regularly situated in a specific area. Generally, private or public associations, addressing professional training and advisory services are the primary drivers of a network of innovation and education. Network activities are driven by representatives who comprehend and approach the network development from both a financial and a social perspective (Knickel et al., 2009). They are frequently set off by issues deemed as troublesome (Huggins, 2000). Nonetheless, any procedure to facilitate networks must consider network participation constraints: limited time for entrepreneurs to engage in networking and autonomy of independent of the owners of the business (Malecki and Tootle, 2016).

According to Ziam et al., (2009) brokers of knowledge emphasize on innovation, basically by encouraging the exchange of information between people, associations and

industries. The coordinator is in contact with organizations from specific businesses, and some of these organizations are inventive and can subsequently figure out what information is required in the sectors. In any case, for the coordinators, who have more than one major function in their portfolio, it is conceivable to transfer information from the developed and underdeveloped sectors. Brokers of information create a relationship with different networks. As per the weak ties theory, this way brokers of knowledge can bridge the gap between formal and informal networks, subsequently providing a source for resources and information. Then again, this permits them to continually evaluate the circumstance in their enterprises and capture advancements that can be implemented in different markets, and the show coordinator has encouraged industrial access. Trade shows in Europe are seen through complex capacities. The new pattern is to develop activities and conference facilities on the grounds of shows. This idea is supported by urban areas' authorities as conferences and trade shows are exercises which produce mass movement and are a kind of high-spending tourism with significant consequences for urban areas (Jefferson & Lickorish, 2011). This strengthens the likely interest of trade shows coordinators to advance information exchange between the show participants

A change in agriculture is being witnessed, and with it, an updated set of aptitudes is expected to address new hindrances. As mentalities, desires and employment in agribusiness change, there is proof that the aptitudes and capabilities of individuals don't address the issues of the present agricultural industry (Blackie et al, 2009). The agriculture profession should, for instance, be better ready to work across various sectors, in association with various partners and comprehend the value chain and potential for entrepreneurship and profit at various stages. The growing significance of all multidisciplinary approaches demand farming experts to have the option to coordinate

practices and information from outside their control and work inside the agriculture multi-functionality (IAASTD, 2009). As people move from the approach of business as usual” there is need to incorporate this approach into agriculture programs and training institutions.

As a result of sufficiency of agricultural knowledge, numerous individuals have underestimated agriculture (Glassman et al., 2006). "Literacy in agriculture is critical for the future of any country (Frick and Spotanski, 2010). This absence of information has made a generalization about "cultivating" and "farmers." It was found in the investigation by Holz-Clause and Jost (2015), that individuals have a cliché perspective on a farmer as an elderly person that "wears overalls and chew[s] on straw." So as to increase the interest of people in agriculture, instructors must incorporate school staff, parents/guardians and policy makers in the process of training (Russell, 2013). According to Frick and Spotanski (2010) the decrease in agricultural proficiency could be brought about by the advancements in agriculture technology. Farm work was initially labor intensive from a physical aspect; notwithstanding, today farmers can do a lot of work using a technological innovation (Frick and Spotanski, 2010). Accordingly, the output of agricultural production has increased radically, permitting purchasers to spend less per capita on food, which brings about a bigger portion of the populace going into nonfarm occupations and careers (Dimitri et al., 2005).

The strategies used to introduce education on agriculture can enormously impact individuals' mentality towards the topic (Okiror et al., 2011). According to Riedmiller (2012) the quality of a school garden is the absolute most significant factor impacting the information, aptitudes and perspectives of individuals learning about agriculture. Platt, et al., (2008) detailed a critical growth in the use of live animals versus digital tools in

instructing students on agriculture. Additional studies have discovered that directed farming practices and standards allowed the application by students to the agricultural knowledge learned in school (Newcomb, et al., 2004). The self-awareness of the student corresponds to the quality and amount of the student's inclusion in the farming project (Astin, 2011). Okiror et al. (2011) reasoned that there are a few advantages to students taking an interest in school garden projects. They additionally found that these advantages were passed on to the parents of the students.

2.7 Role of Agricultural communication in Agricultural clinics

Trade shows give a setting to genuine experiences between products/services and people. Trade shows are a medium through which correspondence happens and give a setting for conversation and an environment wherein individuals and services/products can interact. Expos are especially compelling a result of their different capacities with regards to other instruments. Expos and exhibitions as tools serve many individual needs since individuals can converse so straightforwardly with a client so as to trigger new and fulfill existing needs for information (Newcomb, McCracken, Warmbrod, & Whittington, 2014). Exhibitors can show the benefits of their organization for example, their dependability, care for their customers and quality of products/services. Alternately, by participating in a trade shows an organization gets important criticism from discussions with guests and that information can be utilized to create and develop products/service, conduct market research and to anticipate what's to come. Partaking in trade shows permits an organization to meet prospective clients and to apply a more noteworthy impact on existing customers. By partaking in trade shows organizations can perceive any adjustments in buyer structures and conduct (Astin, 2011).

Institutions are changing and there is apparent need to advance into new methodologies that will empower an organization to stay in the business. Consequently, conventional marketing where institutions could control their market and how it conveys information on its services and products have had a transformative change, for example, clients purchased what was near them and were just ready to get information that was within that market. Companies were thusly ready to viably control their actions a through the conventional 4Ps which are product, promotion, price and place. The unforeseen development today has seen a shift in the approach of conducting business (Situma, 2012). The satisfaction of customers was progressively turning into an area of focus for organizations in the modern world and has seen the way or marketing change because of the acknowledgment that companies find it challenging to control information. Instead of attempting to control purchasers, companies needed to fulfill them. The current pattern in the exceptionally competitive environment was that clients did not need more decisions however needed precisely what they needed, when, where and how they needed it (Astin, 2011).

The changing marketing concept to suit client needs and desires has in this way driven marketers to investigating the best methods of developing and maintaining clients' relations. According to Craven (2002) in a competitive business environment, it was vital to recognize a technique that drove the clients to an organization and not the competition. Platt, et al (2008) noticed the issues that marketers were confronted with which included recession, diminished purchasing power by customers, competition, product awareness by consumers and pricing pressure. Under these conditions, marketers had the difficulties of developing unique and effective promotions for the survival of the organization. Essentially as was noted by Sternkopf (2005) trade shows provide a chance for

companies to assess the competition, identify new trends and attract prospective customers.

Managers select specific trade shows which suit the organization's needs. Organization exhibitors take an interest in trade shows so as to discover answers for explicit issues (Miller, 2013). The specialists consider the need of relating the objectives of trade shows with marketing mix. In addition, trade shows encourage the understanding of different goals for marketing. Those goals can be categorized as communication, price, condition, product and distribution. The objectives of communication are broad, on the grounds that numerous B2B organizations are restricted in their opportunities to promote their services and products using different channels. The goals of communication include; developing individual contacts with guests, attracting prospective clients and completing the profiles of the customers. Additionally, they include developing press relations and increasing advertising proficiency, understanding the needs of the customer through research and recording new experiences with different partners (Neven & Kanitz 2011).

According to Dekimpe et al. (2013) the process of purchasing by customers is categorized into different stages, where potential purchasers look for specific information so as to move from one stage then onto the next. Buyers pass move the phase of recognizing their needs and how the various accessible products can fulfill them, toward determining where they can get the products, and lastly buy them and provide their feedback after the purchase. Marketers have consistently given significance to this process and as posited by Kotler and Keller (2012). As customers move toward the process of purchasing, there is a need for more customized communication. Be that as it may, most of the managers in marketing utilize a blend of personal and non-personal

correspondence strategies, so as to best accomplish their goals. Critically, Dekimpe et al. (2013) recognizes trade shows as an ideal blend of direct deals and advertising.

2.8 Agriculture and Rural Economy

After the 2nd World War in 1945, the history of rural and agricultural development is characterized by changing concerns and priorities. In the 1990s the multifunctional agriculture was formed after the WTO policy reforms in the EU as a paradigm shift of agricultural production. The concept of multifunctional agriculture involves a strong moral based on sustainable production that ensures economic and environmental stability in rural societies over the potential for disruptive practices of agricultural production (Almas & Campbell, 2012). According to multi-functionalism, agriculture has different roles the economic and non-economic sectors. The goal of the multifunctional model by the EU is to implement agriculture in the maintenance of rural landscapes, create employment, biodiversity protection and contribute to rural areas viability and in the production of food (De Master, 2012).

In Kenya, the 2009-2020 Agricultural Sector Development Strategy indicated that the agricultural sector contributed 65% of the exports in Kenya. Further, the sector provides more than 18% of formal employment, 70% of informal employment in rural regions and provides 80% of livelihoods in Kenya. In addition, Muhanji *et al.*, (2011) noted that African Indigenous Vegetables (AIV) production supports approximately 60% of rural economy. Moreover, due to the awareness growth in health eating habits among rural households, the demand for AIV has grown in both formal and informal settings. However, the supply is not able to meet the increased demand. This is an indication of the existence of a gap in the market in rural economies that facilitates the need to educate

farmers to learn more about agriculture and how they can market their products to improve rural economy

2.9 Theoretical Review

The study was guided by two theories that is the hierarchy of effects theory and the Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action theory.

2.9.1 *The Hierarchy of effects Theory*

Lavidge and Steiner (1961) developed the hierarchy of effects theory. The theory is made up of 6 broadcasting steps. It is the work of the advertiser to persuade the customer through each and every step of broadcast. The six steps are composed of awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, convictions and purchase. According to Lavidge and Steiner (1961) the theory is a hierarchy of effects since the customer's quantity reduces from one step to the next implying that business organizations should put more effort in attracting and maintaining customers to the final step of purchase through innovative communication marketing that shared distinctive value to the audience targeted.

The steps are defined as below:

Awareness: The customer is fully aware of the advertisement of a specific product or service. This step is challenging since it does not guarantee that the customer will have full comprehension of the brand following the advertisement. This is because, on a daily basis, customers see many advertisements, thus remembering a specific advertisement may be a challenge.

Knowledge: At this step, the customer gains knowledge on the advertised product or market. In the modern world of digital media, this step is specifically

important as the expectation of customers to gather information on a product or service at a button click is high. In case, customers do not possess the information on a specific product or service, they are inclined to move to the competition. Thus, it is the role of the advertiser to ensure that information is readily accessible to the customers.

Liking: At this step, the customer is driven to liking the product or service. At this point, the advertiser focusses on the features that can attract a customer or a client into liking the advertised product/service.

Preference: This step involves the advertiser working towards disconnecting the customer from rival products/services and to focus on the items presented by the advertiser. As such, the advertiser highlights the benefits of the brand, the unique features of the brands to facilitate the customer to differentiate themselves from the brands by competitors.

Conviction: At this step, the advertiser creates a desire for the customer/client to make a purchase. This can be attained by allowing the clients/customers to test the services or products being advertised.

Purchase: This is the final stage where having convinced the customer, a purchase is made. So as not to lose a customer at this final step, the phase needs to be easy in terms of payment and processing.

The presumption of the response hierarchy model is that customers/clients undergo three steps; cognitive, affective and behavioral. In a situation where the audience is highly involved with a product and assumes it to be highly differentiated, the learn-feel-do sequence is adopted. Then the do-fee-learn sequence follows in a situation where the customers assume high involvement with a product but perceive it to have no to little

differentiation. Lastly, the learn-do-feel sequence is adopted when the audience has low involvement with a product or service and assumes no to little differentiation. Hence, by adopting the correct sequence, the advertisers are able to select the best approach for marketing communication (Kotler and Keller, 2012).

This theory has been utilized in research related to advertising; Vakratsas and Ambler, (1999) assessed more than 250 journals on how advertisements influences buyers and the hierarchies related with the process of decision making by the consumer. Through scientific research, the authors categorized research into seven models of the functioning of advertising: market reaction, cognitive information, low involvement and persuasive hierarchy, pure effect, integrative and hierarchy free. All models backing affect, cognition and behaviour model were included within the persuasive hierarchy.

This theory was used to bring out the awareness and knowledge brought about during agriculture shows. It highlighted the process where a consumer gets to know about the products or services and the way they process the information given. The trader should know of the essentiality of branding information in an impactful fashion that motivates potential clients to enquire about the product.

2.9.2 Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action (AIDA) theory

According to Hadiyati (2016) the AIDA theory was postulated by Elmo Lewis, an American businessman in 1898. The purpose of the theory was to maximize on the sales of an organization and in particular through direct interaction of the buyer and the seller (Pashootanizadeh & Khalilian, 2018). The theory of AIDA does not only focus on the materials of training within an organization. The theory is an acronym for attention, interest, desire and action. In addition, Lewis noted that a products or a service needs attract the attention of the customer and arise the interest of the same customer towards

the good/service. Once done, the seller must develop within the customer a desire to purchase the item which is then translated into action. which is the ultimate purchase of the product/service. The AIDA theory is encompassed on the cognitive phases an individual experience when purchasing a service or a product.

Notably, the AIDA theory is without its criticism. According to Egan (2008) a key limitation of the theory is its absence to analyze the after sale behavior of the consumers. Egan (2008) argues that the theory does not explain the behavior of the customer following a purchase to determine whether a repeat purchase will be made. From this understanding, the theory only supports single purchase of products/services. Bendixien (1993) also criticizes the theory for having a linear approach of purchasing a product. However, irrespective of this critics, the AIDA theory has been used in literature as a reliable model in assessing the phases experienced by many consumers when purchasing a product/service. Thus, it was deemed appropriate for the current study.

According to Prathapan and Zakkariya (2018) the adoption of the AIDA theory by organizations promotes growth in terms of income and the size of the customers. The AIDA theory is positively associated with increase in the satisfaction and attraction of customers. Basil and Bolls (2018) noted that organizations that have been able to effectively adopt the theory have resulted in increased sustainability and growth over time. Hence, the theory is fit for the current study since it helped the theory assess the extent to which exhibitors ought to use strategic communication so as to attract and maintain potential and existing customers respectively.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter covers the approach adopted in the study. It highlights the approach implemented in collecting and analyzing the data. This included the research design, population of the study, technique of data collection and the method of analysis and presentation of the gathered data.

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive cross sectional design. The design was fit in undertaking the study since it allowed for data collection from a specific sample and facilitated the phenomenon description. In addition, the design allowed for conclusions to be made from the findings. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) was of the opinion that a descriptive cross section design is fit for studies whose objective is to describe specific phenomenon.

3.2 Site of the Study

The study was located in Nairobi County, the capital city of Kenya. Nairobi county is divided into eight constituencies namely; Embakasi, Makadara, Westlands, Langata, Kamukunji, Dagoretti, Starehe and Kasarani. The study area was appropriate since the offices of the ASK are located in the County of Nairobi. The location of the study was appropriate since the ASK offices are situated in Nairobi County.

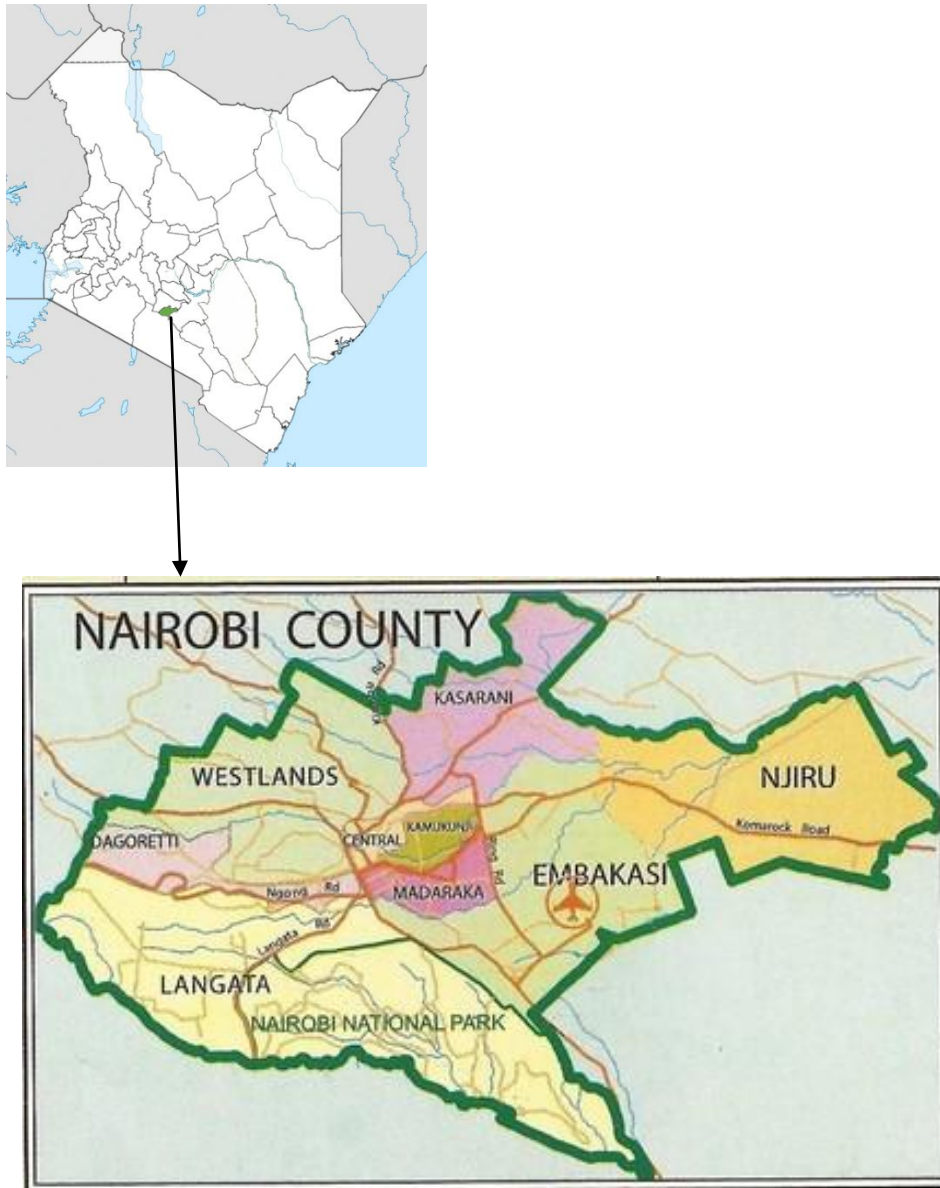


Figure 3. 1: Map of Study Area

3.3 Study Population

According to Wimmer and Dominick, (2011) a study population infers to a group of variables, phenomenon, concepts and subjects. A target population is the number of participants that a researcher aims to gather data from. The aim of a target population is

to describe the group of participants that a researcher intends to draw a sample from in order to collect data. The population of this study was 342 exhibitors registered to participate in the agricultural show during the Nairobi International Trade Fair in October 2019. Additionally, the study targeted 100 employees from ASK.

3.4 Sample Technique and Sample Size

A sample size is the specific number of participants chosen from the entire population that data is collected from. Purposive and census sampling were used to calculate the sample size of the research. The Ask employees were sampled using purposive sampling. The sample from the ASK employees was determined to be 19 senior staff management from which 6 were senior managers and 13 were heads of departments. The census sampling was used to sample all of the 342 registered exhibitors in the 2019 Nairobi International Trade Fair. The sample size of the study is presented on Table 3.1

Table 3. 1: Sample Size

| Type of Population | Number of Population |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Exhibitors | 342 |
| Senior management staff at ASK | 19 |
| Total | 361 |

3.5 Pre Test

Before collecting the data for the study, a pre- test of the research design was conducted. The researcher obtained for a research permit from NACOSTI. The permit gave the researcher the power to conduct the research in the targeted location. The reliability of the research instruments was measured by administering 10 research

instruments to selected respondents in the trade shows. The people who were used for the pre-test did not participate in the actual collection of data.

3.6 Data Collection

Primary sources were adopted for the collection of data for the study. A questionnaire and an interview guide were used to collect data from the exhibitors and the ASK senior management employees. The questionnaire was employed in the collection of data from the exhibitors. A semi-structured questionnaire was developed. In addition, the closed ended questions were framed using a Likert scale where the respondents were required to share their attitudes and opinions. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part collected data on the demographic information of the researcher while the second data collected data on the agricultural shows as a tool for strategic communication in agricultural development.

The interview guide collected data from the ASK senior management. The interview guide ensured that in-depth information is collected from the ASK staff. The interviews were open ended, implying that the respondents had the opportunity to share their opinions freely on the research topic.

3.6.1 Reliability

Reliability is the measure of consistency of the research instruments adopted. The Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the research instruments. According to Cooper and Schindler (2010) a Cronbach's alpha of 0.7 and greater is acceptable. If the Cronbach's alpha is less than 0.7 the researcher ought to make the necessary corrections to the research instruments prior to collecting data.

3.6.2 Validity

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) opines that validity is the extent to which the research instruments designed are able to measure what they are intended to measure. The study adopted content validity which was attained using expert judgement. The researcher sought the opinions of the experts in the field in relation to the designed research instruments. The researcher consulted with the academic supervisor and lecturers at the university to analyze the content validity of the research instruments. Corrections were done following the recommendations of the experts.

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

According to Sharma (2005) the data collected was analyzed on the basis of the research objectives. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis were adopted for the research. Descriptive statistics were employed in the analysis of quantitative data through the help of SPSS. The descriptive statistics allowed the researcher to organize the collected data in a meaningful approach. Percentages and frequency were the adopted descriptive statistics. Tables were used to present the analyzed quantitative data. On the other hand, content analysis was adopted for qualitative data which was presented in narration form. The qualitative analysis involved allocating a pseudo name to each respondent such as SM01, SM02

3.8 Ethical Consideration in the Research

The study collected sensitive data from the respondent; therefore, the research held the moral obligation to treat all the information gathered with modesty and confidentiality. Prior to collecting the data, the researcher informed the respondents the objective of the study. Further, the researcher assured the respondents that confidentiality was to be maintained and that the information shared was to be used for academic

purposes only. Further, the researcher only collected data from the respondents who voluntarily agree to take part in the study. The researcher informed the respondents that they have the right to refuse to respond to any question that makes them feel uncomfortable. Further, the research did not offer any incentives to entice the participants to take part in the research.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Overview

The purpose of this chapter was to present the obtained results from data analysis of the collected data. The chapter covers the response rate of the study. The background of the respondents is covered next. Then the chapter covers the response of the data collected to the research questions. Lastly, the discussion of the results aligned to existing literature is presented.

4.1 Response Rate

To determine whether the data gathered was representative of the target population, the response rate of the study was calculated. According to Bryman (2008) a response rate denotes the ratio/proportion of the respondents who responded to the research instruments correctly and completely. The study findings are presented on Table 4.1.

Table 4. 1: Response Rate

| Research Instrument | Target Population | No. of Respondents | Response Rate |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Questionnaire | 342 | 312 | 91.23 |
| Interview Schedule | 19 | 14 | 73.68 |
| Overall | 361 | 326 | 90.30 |

A total of 342 questionnaires were distributed out of which 312 completed and returned the research instruments translating in a response rate of 91.23%. The remaining 14 participants either failed to efficiently complete the research instruments or did not take part in the collection of data. The study also targeted to interview 19 ASKS managers, however, only 14 were available for the interviews, thus giving a response rate

of 73.68% to the interview schedules. Generally, the study sought to collect data from 361 individuals but only managed to obtain responses from 326 participants, which represents an overall response rate of 90.3%. Bryman and Bell (2014), expressed that a response rate of 50% to be satisfactory; 60% to be good enough; and 70% to be excellent. With reference to this recommendation, it is correct to postulate that the response rate of the was more than adequate.

4.2 Reliability Test Results

The survey questionnaire utilized in the study utilized two scales that assessed the dissemination of information by agricultural trade exhibitors and the perceived effectiveness of using agricultural shows as a communication. The dissemination of information by agricultural trade exhibitors was measured on a scale containing 10 items. For example, the first item stated, “I have adequate time to interact and communicate with the visitors.” The scale assessing the perceived effectiveness of the agricultural shows comprised of 5 statements. The alpha coefficients of the three scales are summarized in Table 4.2.

Table 4. 2: Reliability Statistics

| Variable | Cronbach’s Alpha | No. of Items |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Dissemination of Information | 0.724 | 10 |
| Perceived Effectiveness | 0.713 | 5 |

Table 4.2, the Cronbach alpha varied from 0.712 to 0.24. This concurred with Hair, et al., (2013), that a Cronbach’s alpha greater than 0.6 indicated reliability. Therefore, these findings point to an overall reliable instrument.

4.3 Validity Results

Content validity was applied for the study. The professionals from the university were asked to assess the two research instruments. The experts analyzed the relevance of the research items in addressing the research objectives. The feedback obtained indicated the opinions of the experts on the research items to be valid.

4.4 Background Information

This section highlights the demographic information of the respondents. The findings were presented using tables.

4.4.1 Gender

The researcher enquired from the respondents their gender. The findings are presented on Table 4.3

Table 4. 3: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

| Gender | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|---------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Male | 163 | 52.24 |
| Female | 149 | 47.76 |
| Total | 312 | 100.00 |

Table 4.3 reveals that the men in the trade show ere more than the women. 52.24% of the participants were men. This is an indication that both genders were almost represented equally during agricultural shows.

4.4.2 Age

The researcher enquired from the respondents their age. The findings are presented on Table 4.4

Table 4. 4: Distribution of Respondents by Age

| Age (years) | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Under 25 | 52 | 16.67 |
| 25-34 | 93 | 29.81 |
| 35-44 | 113 | 36.22 |
| 45-54 | 44 | 14.10 |
| 55 and above | 10 | 3.21 |
| Total | 312 | 100 |

Table 4.4 reveals that exhibitors from different age groups were presented in the study. Majority of the respondents (36.22%) fell in the 35 to 44 years' age-group. This was followed by participants aged between 25 and 34 years who covered 29.81% of the study sample. Only 3.21% of the participants represented the 55 and above years' group.

4.4.3 Level of Education

The researcher enquired from the respondents their highest academic level attained. The findings are presented on Table 4.5

Table 4. 5: Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education

| Highest Level of Education | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Certificate | 7 | 2.24 |
| Diploma | 33 | 10.58 |
| Bachelors | 209 | 66.99 |
| Masters | 51 | 16.35 |
| PhD | 12 | 3.85 |
| Total | 312 | 100 |

Table 4.5 shows that majority of the respondents had acquired a relatively high academic level. In particular, 66.99 % of the respondents had a bachelors’ degree; 15.35% had a bachelors’ degree; 3.85% had a PhD and 10.58% had a diploma qualification. The remaining cohort (2.24%) did not have a post-secondary qualification. Essentially, each of the sampled respondents had acquired some level of education, hence were in a position to share the necessary information required.

4.4.4 Job Position

The researcher also sought to determine the characteristics of the exhibitors in terms of their job positions. To this effect, the research participants were requested to reveal the positions they hold at work. The findings are exhibited on Table 4.6.

Table 4. 6: Distribution of Respondents by Job Position

| Job Title | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|---------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Sales/Marketing | 203 | 65.06 |
| Owner/Partner/Managing Director | 82 | 26.28 |
| Administrator | 15 | 4.81 |
| Others | 12 | 3.85 |
| Total | 312 | 100.00 |

Table 4.6 reveals that a majority of respondents (65.06%) were salespeople and marketers. Owners and partners formed the second largest share of the exhibitors as they represented 26.28% of the respondents. The 3.85% of respondents in the “Others” category was comprised of people in the business environment whose operations were still small to incorporate such marketing and sales staff.

4.4.5 Frequency of Participation

The exhibitors were asked whether they had ever participated in trade fairs before. All the respondents (100%) affirmed that they had. The respondents were then asked to indicate for how long they had taken part in the trade fairs. The responses are displayed in Table 4.7.

Table 4. 7: Years of Participation in the Agricultural Shows

| Years | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Less than 2 years | 28 | 8.97 |
| 2-5 years | 214 | 68.59 |
| More than 5 years | 70 | 22.44 |
| Total | 312 | 100.00 |

A vast majority of majority of the respondents (68.59%) had exhibited in the trade fairs for a period of 2 to 5 years. Only 8.97% of the respondents had exhibited for less than 2 years. This suggests that most of the respondents were frequent exhibitors at the agricultural shows and thus were appropriate in providing meaningful insights in regards to effectiveness of the trade shows as a communication platform.

4.4.6 Highest Level of Participation

The researcher sought to determine the highest level of exhibition the respondents had ever participated in. Three levels were considered including: County level, national level and international level. Table 4.8 shows the distribution of the respondents by highest level of participation.

Table 4. 8: Highest Level of Participation

| Level | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|---------------|------------------|--------------------|
| National | 281 | 90.06 |
| International | 31 | 9.94 |
| Total | 312 | 100.00 |

The respondents were split unevenly between those who had participated at a national and international level. Table 4.8 shows that a majority of respondents (90.06%) had exhibited at national level. Only a few respondents (9.94%) had participated at an international level.

In the same light, interviews with the key informants revealed that the agricultural fairs serve as an important hub for diverse business from different parts of the world to exhibit their products and services. The following is an excerpt of an interview with one of the senior managers involved in the organization of the trade fairs:

“The exhibitions are not only attended by local companies and businesses.

Exhibitors from Tanzania, Uganda and different parts of the world also attend. So the shows are very open to anyone who wants to participate whether local or foreign.” (SM 014)

Similarly, another senior manager expressed that:

“We give a chance to anyone both local and international that wants to exhibit at our events provided they meet our requirements.” (SM03)

4.5 Preparation for the Agricultural Show

The researcher also endeavored to investigate the different ways the exhibitors prepare for the agricultural shows. The following aspects were considered; time taken to prepare and whether or not they carried any form of research about the theme of the

agricultural show. Accordingly, the respondents were asked how long they take to prepare. Table 4.9 shows a breakdown of the different time periods taken by the exhibitors.

Table 4. 9: Length of Preparation

| Time Period | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Under 2 Weeks | 13 | 4.17 |
| 2 Weeks | 27 | 8.65 |
| 2 Weeks to a Month | 114 | 36.54 |
| Over a Month | 158 | 50.64 |
| Total | 312 | 100.00 |

As it can be seen in Table 4.9, a large proportion of respondents (50.64%) take over a month to prepare for an agricultural show. Closely following this group of exhibitors is the group that takes 2 weeks to a month (36.54%). Only a few exhibitors (4.17%) take less than 2 weeks. Overall, these results indicate that exhibitors take a long period of time to prepare for the agricultural shows.

The respondents were also requested to indicate the number of people involved in the preparation of the exhibitions. Most of the exhibitors (85.26%) reported that it takes more than one person to prepare for the trade fairs. The participants were subsequently asked to identify the individuals. Table 4.10 presents a summary of the participant's responses in relation to the people in charge of planning.

Table 4. 10: Parties Responsible for Planning the Exhibition

| Responsibility | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| General Management | 164 | 52.56 |
| Marketing/Sales Department | 98 | 31.41 |
| Owner/Managing Director | 31 | 9.94 |
| Event Contractor | 19 | 6.09 |
| Total | 312 | 100.00 |

It is apparent from Table 4.10 that the primary responsibility for preparing for trades show for most exhibitors is accorded to the general management (52.56%) and the marketing or sales department (31.41%). In 9.94% of the exhibiting businesses, the owner or managing director takes responsibility. Only 6.09 of the businesses use an external event contractor.

As pertains to the selection criteria of exhibitors by the ASK, the senior managers agreed that the ASK tends to give priority to companies that rent or lease large spaces as reflected in the following comments:

“When we are selecting the exhibitors, we usually give priority to those who reserve large spaces, members and sponsors and the number of years they have exhibited at our shows.” (SM09)

“We normally prioritize those who have leased their spaces, those who are registered members of the ASK and how frequently they attend the shows.” (SM11)

“In as much as companies can get information about our events, we directly target the big companies and prominent ones for recruitment. These companies are personally known to us and are usually on our mailing lists. They are the ones that have a lot of experience in exhibitions and

possess a good understanding of the potential benefits of exhibiting a trade fair.” (SM 05)

4.5.1 Research

With respect to conducting research on the theme of an agricultural show, all the exhibitors mentioned that they carry some form of research. Accordingly, the exhibitors were asked to indicate the type of research materials they used for the 2019 Nairobi International Trade Fair. The participants’ responses were summarized using frequencies and percentages as shown in Table 4.11.

Table 4. 11: Research Materials

| Material | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Journals | 4 | 1.28 |
| Newspapers | 103 | 33.01 |
| YouTube | 250 | 80.13 |
| Professional Consultation | 26 | 8.33 |
| Social Media | 256 | 82.05 |

Table 4.11 indicates that a majority of the respondents (82.05%) used social media for researching the theme of the trade fair. YouTube was next as represented by 80.13% users, then newspapers (33.01%). Journals were not popular research materials as only 1.28% of the respondents used them. Generally, these findings show that exhibitors have a strong preference for digital social networks in researching on the themes of agricultural shows.

The interviews with the senior managers of the ASK showed that the organizers use a variety of communication tools to amplify the trade fairs’ reach to attendees and

exhibitors. The following interview excerpts from two key informants demonstrate ASK's efforts in elevating its reach:

"We notify exhibitors months before the agricultural show, usually 5 months.

There are different methods we use to notify them. We send them emails and text messages. We advertise on radio, newspapers and TVs. We also post the dates on our website and various social media platforms."

(SM02)

Highlighting the importance of furnishing trade participants with information about the trade fairs one of the interviewee expressed that:

"There are many ways we convey information to businesses that are interested in exhibiting with us. We put out advertisements on the dailies, radio and TV stations, and billboards. We also use social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. We also have those businesses that have leases with us. These ones we make direct contact with them through direct mailing, text messaging and phone calls. The whole point of making these communications is to make sure that the exhibitors receive sufficient information about or events early enough to be able to judge the costs and benefits." (SM07)

4.5.2 Promotional Activities to Attract Visitors

Geared towards attraction of visitors to the exhibitors' stands, promotion before at the trade fair is considered an important undertaking for the exhibitors. Consequently, the researcher asked the respondents how they budget for promotional activities before the agricultural show. A majority of the respondents mentioned that they set aside funds for promotional activities such as advertising on billboards, radio and television, printing and

distributing posters and running social media campaigns. To this end, all the exhibitors confirmed the type of communication channel used for pre-trade fair and on-stand promotion was influenced by their budget. The researcher further sought to identify the different forms of communication used by the exhibitors to convey information to the visitors during the agricultural shows. The participants' responses are presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4. 12: Communication Material

| Material | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Brochures | 210 | 67.31 |
| Face-to-Face | 241 | 77.24 |
| Power-point | 41 | 13.14 |
| Practical Presentation | 211 | 67.63 |
| Audio-visual presentation | 53 | 16.99 |
| Demonstration Plots | 31 | 9.94 |
| Others (e.g. banners) | 20 | 6.41 |

Table 4.12 indicates there is a vast scope of communication methods utilized by exhibitors to convey information to the visitors at agricultural sows. It is apparent that during the trade fairs, face-to-face interaction with the visitors (77.24%) takes the lead over other forms of communication. Practical presentations rank as the second most preferred channel of conveying information to the visitors (67.63%). A similar proportion (67.31%) also prefers using brochures. Demonstration plots were the least preferred form of communication (6.41%). When asked about the experience of using their preferred mode of communication, most exhibitors mentioned that it suited them well. In the same

light when asked what they considered when developing a message or content based on the theme of the trade fair, most respondents mentioned that they assess whether the theme reflects their businesses’ overall marketing goals and objectives. The following excerpt from an interview with a senior manager at ASK confirmed that most exhibitors focus on how to attract customers to their stands by undertaking pre-trade fair promotional activities:

“Aside from preparing their booths and spaces, most exhibitors involve themselves in advertising that they are going to be at the show.” (SM08)

4.5.3 Exhibition Space

The exhibitors were asked to indicate their preferred type of space during exhibition. Three types of spaces were considered; open-space, permanent structure and structured booths. Table 4.13 presents a breakdown of the participants’ responses.

Table 4. 13: Type of Space

| Space | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Open-space | 231 | 74.04 |
| Permanent Structure | 34 | 10.90 |
| Structured Booth | 47 | 15.06 |
| Total | 312 | 100.00 |

A majority of exhibitors (74.04%) prefer open-spaces. Structured booths are the next most preferred spaces (15.06). Only 10.9% of the exhibitors expressed preference for permanent structures. When requested to comment on the importance of selecting a space communicating to the visitors, most exhibitors mentioned that spaces provide important venues for personal contact, fostering trust and customer engagement.

4.6 Interpretation of the ASK Show Theme by Exhibitors

One of the objectives of this study was to assess the influence of the ASK theme in the dissemination of agricultural information by the exhibitors. This section presents results relating to this objective. In assessing this objective, a question was posed to the respondents as to how the theme influences the type of information they convey to visitors. A majority of the respondents (80.13%) mentioned that the theme influenced the type of products and services they put on exhibition and subsequently their form of communication channel. This implies the theme influences the core objectives of the exhibitors, the budgeting, the selection of products and the stand design.

When asked whether or not they understood the theme of the 2019 Nairobi International Trade Fair, an overwhelming majority (89.74%) said yes. Most of the exhibitors mentioned that the theme was not complex and corresponded well with their goals at the trade fair. In the same light, all the respondents reported categorically that they did not have any concerns with the theme of the 2019 Nairobi International Trade Fair.

An essential feature of trade shows, as places of knowledge transfer are the procedures involved in the development of the trade fair theme. In this regard, the researcher sought to uncover whether exhibitors participate in the formulation of the trade fair theme. A large proportion of the respondents (97.12%) expressed that they have never made recommendations to the ASK in matters concerning the theme. The few exhibitors who have previously made such recommendations claimed that the ASK does not respond to their suggestions.

The low involvement of the exhibitors in the development of trade fair themes is consistent with a key finding that emerged from interviews with the senior managers of

the ASK. In particular, the senior managers concurred that ASK’s decisions are predominantly informed by the opinions and experiences of the ASK officials as highlighted by the following excerpts.

“Only few have contributed. Very few. But they are never that involved.” (SM14)

“There are a few whom I’ve seen. However, they never follow up to the end. They attend the meetings once or twice and never come back.” (SM07)

“Most of the decisions that we make come from us. Although we invite trade participants to our meetings to give their opinion, they hardly attend. They are not proactive. I believe with time we will be able to put better mechanisms in place to gather data from the exhibitors and use it in our decision making. I believe their views are as equally important as ours.” (SM02)

4.7 Dissemination of Information by Agricultural Trade Exhibitors

The second objective was centered on identifying how exhibitors disseminate information to visitors during the agricultural shows. Accordingly, the respondents were asked to indicate their level of level of agreement or disagreement to statements probing the dissemination of information using agricultural trade exhibitors. Frequencies and percentages are presented in Table 4.14

Table 4. 14: Dissemination of Information by Agricultural Trade Exhibitors

| Descriptive Characteristics | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| I have adequate time to interact and communicate with the visitors | 10 (3.21%) | 6 (1.92%) | 18 (5.77%) | 149 (47.76%) | 129 (41.35%) |

| | | | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| The visitors engage in communication with me during the exhibition | 6 (1.92%) | 16 (5.13%) | 17 (5.45%) | 147 (47.12%) | 126 (40.38%) |
| I receive immediate feedback from the visitors | 5 (1.60%) | 16 (5.13%) | 26 (8.33%) | 145 (46.47%) | 120 (38.46%) |
| I have thorough knowledge of my product and services | 9 (2.88%) | 19 (6.09%) | 24 (7.69%) | 143 (45.83%) | 117 (37.50%) |
| I have a good command of language | 8 (2.56%) | 25 (8.01%) | 29 (9.29%) | 138 (44.23%) | 112 (35.90%) |
| During the agricultural show, I make use of verbal and non-verbal communication | 4 (1.28%) | 0 (0.00%) | 2 (0.64%) | 161 (51.60%) | 145 (46.47%) |
| I request my visitors to participate as my assistants while I do my exhibition as a way of engaging them | 25 (8.01%) | 13 (4.17%) | 13 (4.17%) | 166 (53.21%) | 95 (30.45%) |
| I offer samples of products and services exhibited to the visitors. | 7 (2.24%) | 1 (0.32%) | 1 (0.32%) | 160 (51.28%) | 143 (45.83%) |
| During my exhibitions, most visitors prefer taking photographs and videos | 1 (0.32%) | 6 (1.92%) | 10 (3.21%) | 161 (51.60%) | 134 (42.95%) |
| After each interaction with | 9 | 26 | 29 | 134 | 114 |

the visitors on my booth I (2.88%) (8.33%) (9.29%) (42.95%) (36.54%)

thank them for their time and

participation

The results show that a vast majority of respondents (98.07%) agreed and strongly agreed that they use both verbal and non-verbal means of communication during agricultural shows. The second most used dissemination strategy involves offering samples of products and services to the visitors. In particular, a majority of respondents 51.28% agreed that they used this strategy while 45.83% strongly agreed. Allowing the visitors to take photographs and videos represents the third most commonly utilized dissemination approach, which received approval by 94.55% of the respondents. The least utilized dissemination method involves requesting the visitors to participate as the exhibitors' assistants. A majority of respondents (8.01%) expressed strong disagreement with this method compared to other dissemination methods. In the same light, the method received approval from only 83.66%, which was the least approval rating of all the methods. Moreover, when asked whether they would register as exhibitors in the upcoming agricultural shows, all the respondents said yes. Among the reasons provided for their intention to return revolved around the opportunities presented by the agricultural shows such as on-site sales, improvement in brand visibility, promotion of products and services and market research.

4.8 Perceived Effectiveness of Using Agricultural Shows as a Communication Platform

The third objective was intended to explore the perceptions of the exhibitors on the effectiveness of the agricultural shows as a communication platform. In responding to this research objective, the respondents were asked whether they considered agricultural

shows to be the best platform for showcasing their brand. A majority of the respondents (90.06%) said yes. Most of these respondents mentioned that using the agricultural shows is better as the shows boost their brand visibility and facilitate interactive learning experiences. The exhibitors were then requested to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement to statements probing effectiveness of using agricultural shows.

Frequencies and percentages are presented in Table 4.15.

Table 4. 15: Perceived Effectiveness of Agricultural Shows

| Descriptive Characteristics | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| The exhibitor and the visitors are able to have a face-to-face interaction during the agricultural show | 0 (0.00%) | 1 (0.32%) | 2 (0.64%) | 180 (57.69%) | 129 (41.35%) |
| During the exhibition presentation, young people were not attentive | 50 (16.03%) | 39 (12.50%) | 24 (7.69%) | 100 (32.05%) | 99 (31.73%) |
| My exhibition communicates a lot of information on agricultural farming | 0 (0.00%) | 0 (0.00%) | 0 (0.00%) | 172 (55.13%) | 140 (44.87%) |
| After each exhibition presentation, I got immediate feedback | 4 (1.28%) | 2 (0.64%) | 10 (3.21%) | 170 (54.49%) | 126 (40.38%) |
| During my exhibition presentation, the audience is interactive | 6 (1.92%) | 17 (5.45%) | 19 (6.09%) | 165 (52.88%) | 105 (33.65%) |

Table 4.13 shows that all the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed he statement, “My exhibition communicates a lot of information on agricultural farming.” This implies that the agricultural shows are perceived to be highly effective in terms of communicating agricultural information. The next top ranked item was, “Agricultural shows allow for face-to-face interaction between the exhibitor and visitors” which received approval from 99.04% of the respondents. This implies that agricultural shows are effective to a large extent in facilitating direct face-to-face interaction between sellers and potential buyers. The third most approved statement was, “After each exhibition

presentation, I got immediate feedback.” A majority of the respondents (94.87%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. This is an indication that agricultural shows are viewed to be effective in seeking feedback from potential buyers. Overall, the results show that the exhibitors perceive agricultural shows to be highly effective as a communication platform.

The benefits of agricultural shows to exhibitors were also echoed by ASK senior managers as highlighted in the following interview excerpts:

“There is a lot to gain from the agricultural shows. The exhibitors are able to interact with the customers and in the process get to sell their products or services. So the agricultural shows are an avenue to generate revenue. You also find that during these shows, businesses are able to network with each other. Some business partnerships and alliances may be generated from such networking.” (SM05).

“The companies that exhibit benefit in terms of their brand image. The trade fair helps them to promote their image and exposure.” (SM08)

“Through the trade fair, you find that companies are able to sell their products and services. So the shows are a good avenue for boosting the sales of these companies.” (SM01)

“I believe that companies that participate in the trade fairs are able to connect with their customers better. They are able to listen to their needs and complaints in regards to the products or services offered by the companies. Therefore, it is undeniable that the trade fairs provide a platform for conducting market survey and collecting customer information all of which is good for the companies.” (SM 04)

The senior managers also revealed that the feedback from the attendees and exhibitions is in most cases positive, which implies that they deliver and produce trade fairs that all stakeholders are able to embrace:

“Generally we receive very few complaints from the exhibitors. So I would say that that the trade fair is a good thing for them. It adds value to their business. Of course there will be those that have few issues here and there. But these ones, in most cases are often ill prepared.” (SM09)

“The exhibitors are very content with the services. We receive very few complaints from them. There is plenty of good feedback. We plan on outdoing ourselves at every exhibition and such positive feedback is a sign that we are on the right track” (SM 05)

“The trade fairs are a good place for companies to interact directly with their customers. By paying attention to the needs of the customers, the companies are able to assure the customers of better quality products and services.” (SM07)

“Most exhibitors often sell their products and services at discounted prices during these events. This attracts many customers to such products and makes them happy at the end.” (SM02).

With regards to whether agricultural shows improve strategic communication, 83% of the exhibitors revealed that in the companies they represented strategic communication was facilitated and improved through attending agricultural shows. The exhibitors indicated that by following the themes set for each agricultural show, the companies were able to align the objective of the show with that of the companies, thus improving strategic communication.

4.9 Discussion

This study explored the role of agricultural shows as communication platforms. In particular, the study shed light on the connection between the ASK theme (Promoting innovation and technology in agriculture and trade) and dissemination of agricultural information by exhibitors; the different dissemination methods utilized by exhibitors and the perceived effectiveness of the agricultural shows. In addressing these objectives, this research drew from the views of various stakeholders' perspectives (exhibitors and organizers) on the role of agricultural shows.

As pertains to the first research objective, it was found that theming provides exhibitors with essential information on the planning and coordination process to attract different segments. The findings revealed that the themes affected the exhibitors marketing objectives, promotional budget and ultimately the choice of dissemination used in conveying information to the visitors. This finding reinforces the conclusion by Botha (2016) that theming is a pivotal tool for managerial use in marketing. The quantitative and qualitative results showed contrasting findings in regard to the participation of exhibitors in theme development. While the quantitative results showed that exhibitors desire to be involved in developing the theme of the shows, the qualitative findings revealed that the exhibitors rarely attend meetings. This finding reflects the argument by Gross and Pullman (2012) who claimed that themes are determined by organizers in a top-down fashion. However, the finding is in contrast to the argument advanced by Binkhorst, Den and Dekker (2009) who noted that attendees should be the starting point in order to not only create satisfactory visitor attractions or offerings, but also to market the offerings in a manner that addresses the specific needs of the visitors.

In addition, in following the theme of the ASK, the study found that the exhibitors prepared for the exhibitions. The findings indicated that the exhibitors took more than one month to prepare for the agricultural show. This was supported by Kirchgeorg and Kastner (2010) who expressed that so as to have successful agriculture shows there is a need to systematically plan all activities during the phases of preparation, implementation and follow-up. Further, the findings indicated that in preparing for the exhibition the exhibitors rented and leased for exhibition space. According to the ASK officials, the ASK usually give priority to those who reserve large spaces, members and sponsors and the number of years who have exhibited at previous shows. Booths are the actual space that an organization displays its services and products within (Smith, 2011). Further Trade shows provide a forum for organizations to show and exhibit their items in spaces availed by the ASK to potential purchasers who could have an exceptional interest in purchasing those items (Situma, 2012).

Further, the findings indicated that the exhibitors use a variety of communication tools to amplify the trade fairs' reach to attendees and exhibitors. According to Kurtz and Boone (2006) effective marketers have based their operations on the foundation of the wider concept of promotional strategy and marketing communication; this technique is referred to as integrated marketing communication (IMC) and it covers direct mail, sales promotion, advertising and personal selling. Further, the findings established that geared towards attraction of visitors to the exhibitors' stands, promotion before at the trade fair is considered an important undertaking for the exhibitors. Additionally, the findings revealed that there was a vast scope of communication methods utilized by exhibitors to convey information to the visitors at agricultural sows. It is apparent that during the trade fairs, face-to-face interaction with the visitors takes the lead over other forms of

communication. This concurred with Kellezi (2014) that trade shows have become a technique for communication and are perceived to be powerful due to face-to-face interaction. Moreover, this finding is supported by the AIDA theory by Hadiyati (2016) which posits that attention, interest, desire and action are at the core of communication. The findings of the study agreed with the AIDA theory by explaining that an exhibitor needs to gain the attention and interest of the consumer prior to instilling a desire for the customer to purchase the product under exhibition.

The findings also indicated that the theme influenced the type of products and services they put on exhibition and subsequently their form of communication channel. This concurred with Petrova (2014) who revealed that trade shows are a unique place where people sharing interests in specific subjects are physically present at the same time under one roof. These various groups go to the trade shows as they share an interest to a particular theme. In addition, Ayci (2011) was of the opinion that trade shows are functions whose coordinator, name, type, duration, theme, date, and location are resolved ahead of time, that are sorted out in fields that suit capabilities for building up and improving the transfer of information, collaboration, and future business relations, and that focus on the interest of the field, area, and the general public (Ayci, 2011). From the findings, it was revealed that most of the exhibitors have never made recommendations to the ASK in matters concerning the theme. The few exhibitors who have previously made such recommendations claimed that the ASK does not respond to their suggestions. In this regard, it can be concluded that the exhibitors did not take the advantage of strategic communication using trade shows. This is because, by suggesting different themes, they can easily align the goal of their organizations with that of the trade shows. This follows

Hallahan, Holtzhausen, et al. (2007) who characterize strategic communication as the deliberate utilization of communication by a company to attain its goals.

With respect to the second objective, it was established that exhibitors deploy a wide range of strategies to initiate a convenient environment to invite and transfer relevant information to the visitors. Face-to-face communication was found to be the most widely used method for conveying information to the visitors. The second most popular dissemination strategy entailed providing the visitors with samples of the exhibits. This indicates that the interpersonal forms of communication are the most widely used in disseminating agricultural information during the trade fairs. This is in line with the findings obtained by Gathecha et al, (2012) in their study to examine the farmers' information needs and channels of communication used to share information on improved pigeon varieties in Makueni County. The scholars revealed that most common communication channels were interpersonal in nature and involved the use of farmers, community leaders and seed retailers to disseminate information. The finding also supports the notion by Rogers (2003) that local interpersonal channels are commonly used in large social settings including field days by farmers, demonstrations, seminars, and agricultural shows. Following the hierarchy of effects theory by Lavidge and Steiner (1961) the findings suggested that the different tools and approaches used by the exhibitors followed three steps of response; cognitive, affective and behavioral.

On the third objective which was to assess the perceived effectiveness of agricultural shows as a strategic tool of communication, the findings further revealed that agricultural shows are effective in relation to communicating agricultural information and facilitating direct face-to-face interaction between sellers and potential buyers. This finding corroborates the evidence adduced in previous studies by Smith (2011) who noted

that trade shows provide an effective arena for communicating products and services offered by businesses in various industries. Similar sentiments were advanced by Situma (2012) who asserted that trade shows provide a valuable platform for organizations to showcase their products to prospective customers.

It was also found that the agricultural shows are effective in seeking feedback from potential buyers. Therefore, the findings demonstrate that agricultural shows are perceived to be an effective communication platform. Further, according to Gopalakrishna and Lilien (2015) trade shows function as a medium in offering feedback on the performance of a service/product. In addition, Dekimpe et al. (2013) was of the opinion that agricultural shows facilitate buyers to move pass the phase of recognizing their needs and how the various accessible products can fulfill them, toward determining where they can get the products, and lastly buy them and provide their feedback after the purchase.

Further, from the findings, it was clear that drawing the attention of young people was hard. This called for exhibitors to follow the recommendations by Sitawa, (2016) to adopt new models focused at young people which have featured new methodologies and procedures to building up the youth capacities to take part in farming. Further, Malecki and Tootle, (2016) noted that attracting the youth in agricultural issues may be difficult if new methodologies and approaches are not achieved. Hence, this calls for agricultural shows to adopt new technologies and methodologies so as to grab the attention of young visitors in trade shows so as to meet the requirements of the AIDA theory.

Further, the findings revealed that the exhibitions provided a lot of information to the visitors on farming development through interaction. This concurred with Chisita (2012) that farmers need relevant and reliable agricultural information in relation to better

methods of farming. Exhibitors and visitors of trade shows are at an advantage during the transaction process since both parties attend trade shows with the goal of providing or searching for information, interacting with other people and expressing their opinion (Syoboda *et al.*, 2002). In addition, Ayci (2011) was of the opinion that trade shows help in improving the transfer of information, collaboration, and future business relations, and that focus on the interest of the field, area, and the general public.

This study established that exhibitors use agricultural shows for varying reasons. Among the main reasons firms exhibit at the shows were; to increase brand awareness; to make sales and interact with potential customers. What is apparent, therefore, is that agricultural shows serve different purposes across industries. As such, future studies should investigate the effectiveness of agricultural trade shows at several levels such as industry-level. In addition, the findings revealed that the agricultural shows improved strategic communication. This concurred with Keller (2003) that strategic communication is adjusting to the communication to the overall strategy of the company to position itself strategically in the market. Exhibitions facilitate the alignment of communication process with the general goals and strategy of an organization. In addition, Oladele (2006) was of the opinion that trade shows have facilitated strategic communication between the exhibitors and the customers. Neven and Kanitz (2011) explained that trade shows facilitated the exhibitors in understanding the needs of the customer through research and recording new experiences with different partners thus improving strategic communication.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Overview

This chapter presents a summary of the key findings and conclusions of the study. In addition, recommendations of the study are discussed. Lastly, the chapter highlights areas for further research.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The purpose of the research was to determine the role of agricultural shows as a strategic communication platform in agricultural development, a case study of the ASK. The study was guided by three specific objectives; to determine the influence of the ASK theme (promoting innovation and technology in agriculture and trade) in disseminating agricultural information by the exhibitor; to identifying how exhibitors disseminate agricultural information during agricultural shows and finally, to determine the perceived effectiveness of using agricultural shows as a platform of communication by the exhibitor.

In regards to the first objective, it was found that the theme of the agricultural shows influences the type of agricultural information conveyed by the exhibitors and consequently the dissemination techniques. The findings also found that despite a few exhibitors making recommendations on the theme of the trade fairs, ASK did not respond back to the exhibitors. The qualitative findings, however, revealed that the exhibitors are not proactive enough in ensuring their input is considered during the formulation of the theme.

As pertains to the different methods used to disseminate information, a majority of respondents indicated that they relied on verbal and non-verbal means of communication. Providing samples of exhibits to the visitors and allowing them to take

photos and videos were also found to be common dissemination techniques adopted by exhibitors. The least used method involved treating the visitors as the exhibitors' assistants.

With respect to the third objective, a majority of respondents indicated that they considered the agricultural shows to be one of the best platforms for showcasing their brand. In addition, the findings revealed that the exhibitors perceived the agricultural shows to be effective mainly in communicating agricultural information and facilitating direct face-to-face interaction between sellers and potential buyers. Overall, these findings highlight the effectiveness of agricultural shows as a strategic communication platform in agricultural development the case study being ASK.

In addition, the findings of the study agreed with the theories anchoring the study; hierarchy of effects theory and the Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action theory. The findings indicated that in order to attain the hierarchy of effects theory the exhibitors need to utilize different forms of communication tools so as to attract and maintain the attention of the visitors up-to the last phase of purchase. Further, the findings concurred with the Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action theory that in trade shows, simply drawing the attention and interest of the visitors is not enough, the exhibitors need to create a desire for the guests to ultimately act and purchase the product/service being offered.

5.3 Conclusion

The significance of agricultural shows in the advancement of agriculture is evident in the practical world of business and set up in exact study findings. The role of channels for information dissemination is to follow the theme of the trade show in the effort towards attaining company goals. Undoubtedly, participation in agricultural shows

is an important resource in relationship to communication strategy. These functions offer significant opportunities to build relationships and advancement that should be investigated by all actors in the sector so as to maximize on its effectiveness. Exhibitors and guests ought not just investigate participation in trade shows to develop new relationships, but to fortify the existing relationships. This is especially significant when relationship and cultural distance are greater. Since the business environment favors relationship, informality and conflict, misunderstandings in relationships can be dissipated. Moreover, participation in trade shows permits networking that goes beyond the communication between the buyer and the seller. It includes all industry actors partaking in the show. Exchange reasonable coordinators Also the coordinators of trade shows have the duty to feature the relational aspect of trade shows.

5.4 Recommendations

Drawing from the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. The participating effectiveness of trade shows relies upon human, physical and authoritative resources. Similarly, the coordinators of these shows ought to incorporate and adjust innovation to the general procedure of the organization for participation in trade shows. There should be coordinated and integrative efforts over the organization's functions. Exhibitors ought to interlink their contribution in the virtual and physical platforms, calibrating the market resources allocation. The fundamental reason is to withdraw the strategy benefits that has synergies in investigating the mixed interface among virtual and physical channels. The exhibitor/product's reputation present in either of the platform influences the guests' appraisal of the offer. Exhibitors should additionally benefit from the virtual trade

- shows benefits of connectivity and interactivity to constantly make and convey better value to the clients. Eventually, the achievement of the function show will rely upon the verbalized exertion among exhibitors and coordinators of the trade shows and their consolidated approaches in incorporating virtual and physical platforms.
- ii. The coordinators of the trade shows need to audit their charges, and improve their car park facilities and improve catering which were viewed as less favorably in comparison to different variables by the participants of the show. It is conceivable to contend that the high charges unintentionally encourage exhibitors to sell in order to procure some income to cover their expenses of participation. This will draw in more exhibitors.
 - iii. The exhibitors need to make more suggestions on the themes they would want to be covered in the trade fairs. This is because, the exhibitors are in a position to directly interact with the visitors and understand their demands and the things they would like to be covered during the shows. More to this, the ASK need to consider the suggestions of the exhibitions so as to attract more exhibitors which in turn attract more visitors in the trade shows.
 - iv. To develop a relationship between participation in trade show and marketing, the coordinator of the show must build up a correspondence plan that underscores the advantages of the relationship and specifically, the actual space, events and activities that ought to consent to such rationale. Consideration should be given to the training needs and qualifying staff to adopt a posture that encourages dialogue and interaction. Also, the coordinator of the trade show can offer training to exhibitors to improve the viability of their participation and demystifying the trade shows as solely aiming to make sales.

5.5 Suggestions for Future Research

More research needs to be undertaken on the role of agricultural shows as a strategic communication platform in Kenya. The studies could target agricultural shows hosted in other towns in Kenya, with small to medium-sized events. Such studies can provide insights into the level to which knowledge concerning the role of agricultural shows as a strategic communication tool can be generalized.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data on Agricultural Society of Kenya shows as a strategic communication tool in agricultural development. This questionnaire is divided into two sections. The demographic questions about the identity of the respondents will be covered in section A. Section B will collect data on the study variables. The information you share in this questionnaire will be used for academic purposes only. The information you provide will be anonymous in order to keep your confidentiality. Kindly read and follow the instructions in each part of the questionnaire. Put a tick against the information most applicable to you and fill the blank spaces. Your participation and cooperation will be appreciated.

Section A: Demographic Data

1. Kindly indicate your gender?

Male Female

2. Kindly indicate your age bracket

i. Under 25 years

ii. 25 to 34 years

iii. 35 to 44 years

iv. 45 to 54 years

v. 55 and above

3. Kindly indicated the highest academic level you have attained

i. PhD

ii. Masters

iii. Bachelors

- iv. Higher Diploma []
- v. Diploma []
- vi. Certificate []
- vii. Other, please specify: _____

4. Kindly what position do you hold in the organization you are representing

5. Have you participated in other agricultural shows?

- i. Yes []
- ii. No []

If yes, for how many years have you been an exhibitor during agricultural shows?

6. Kindly indicate the highest level of trade show you have been an exhibitor?

- i. International level []
- ii. National Level []
- iii. County Level []

Section B: Preparation for the Agricultural Show

7. How long do you take to prepare for an agricultural show?

- i. Under 2 weeks []
- ii. 2 weeks []
- iii. 2 weeks to a month []
- iv. Over a month []

8. How many people do you work with when preparing for an agricultural show

exhibition?.....who are

they?.....

9. Do you undertake any research to the theme set prior to the day of the agricultural show?

i. Yes []

ii. No []

10. What materials of communications did y make use of during the 2019 Nairobi International Trade Fair?

i. Journals []

ii. Newspapers []

iii. Magazines []

iv. YouTube []

v. Consultation with professional []

vi. Social Media pages []

vii. Other sources (Kindly elaborate)

11. Kindly elaborate on your preparation of the communication budget during prior to the agricultural show

12. Did you use your budget as a reference to the communication tool adopted during the 2019 trade fair?

i. Yes []

ii. No []

Kindly explain your answer.....

13. During the agricultural show, do you use any of the following means of communication? (Tick where applicable)

i. Brochures []

ii. Face-to-face []

- iii. Power-point presentation []
- iv. Practical presentation []
- v. Audio – Visual presentation []
- vi. Demonstration plots []
- vii. Other communication tools

14. What was your experience in adopting any of the selected communication tools in question 13?

15. Kindly explain the things you consider when developing content for trade fairs

16. When exhibiting, what kind of space do you prefer?

- i. Open space []
- ii. Permanent structure []
- iii. Structured booth []

17. Kindly explain the importance of selecting a space prior to the day of the trade fair

Section B

Part 2: Interpretation of the A.S.K Show theme by Exhibitors

18. How does the set theme for the trade fair influence your approach in conveying information?

19. Did you understand the 2019 trade fair theme?

- i. Yes []
- ii. No []

20. What was your opinion of the 2019 trade fair theme?.....

21. Did the 2019 trade fair theme raise any concerns?

i. Yes []

ii. No []

If yes, please explain your concerns with the 2019 theme.....

22. Do you follow the theme set by the ASK when developing content for your exhibition?

i. Yes []

ii. No []

Please explain your answer.....

23. Is it a challenge preparing for an exhibition on the grounds of the set theme only?

i. Yes []

ii. No []

Please explain your answer.....

24. Have you ever recommended a theme to the ASK?

i. Yes []

ii. No []

If yes, what was the theme.....

25. Does the ASK consider the themes suggested by exhibitors?

i. Yes []

ii. No []

Part B: Perceived effectiveness of using Agricultural shows as a communication platform

26. Are agricultural shows the most effective platforms in developing the brand for your organization?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

Kindly elaborate

27. Please indicate with a tick (√) the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: The scale to use is: 1=Not at all; 2-To a small extent; 3=To a moderate extent; 4=To a large extent; and 5; To a very large extent

| Description and characteristics | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| i. Agricultural shows allow for face to face interaction between the exhibitor and visitor | | | | | |
| ii. I notice that the young audiences were not attentive during exhibition presentation | | | | | |
| iii. My exhibition communicates a lot of information on agricultural farming | | | | | |
| iv. I get immediate feedback from my audience after the presentation of my exhibition | | | | | |
| v. During my exhibition presentation, the audience is interactive | | | | | |

Part C: Dissemination of Information by Agricultural Trade Exhibitors

28. Please indicate with a tick (√) the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: The scale to use is: 1=Not at all; 2-To a small extent; 3=To a moderate extent; 4=To a large extent; and 5; To a very large extent

| Description and characteristics | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| i. I have adequate time to interact and communicate with the visitors | | | | | |
| ii. The visitors engage in communication with me during the exhibition | | | | | |
| iii. I receive immediate feedback from the visitors | | | | | |
| iv. I have thorough knowledge of my product and services | | | | | |
| v. I have a good command of language | | | | | |
| vi. I use both verbal and non-verbal means of communication during agricultural shows | | | | | |
| vii. I request my visitors to participate as my assistants while I do my exhibition as a way of engaging them | | | | | |
| viii. I offer samples of products and services exhibited to the visitors. | | | | | |
| ix. During my exhibitions, most visitors prefer taking photographs and videos | | | | | |
| x. After each interaction with the visitors on my booth I thank them for their time and participation | | | | | |

29. Will you actively engage in agricultural shows in the years to come?

i. Yes []

ii. No []

Please explain your answer.....

“THANK YOU”

Appendix II: Interview Guide

1. On average, how many exhibitors attend agricultural shows?
2. In your opinion, do exhibitors value agricultural shows? Please explain
3. How does the ASK communicate the location and dates for agricultural shows to the exhibitors? Please explain
4. How does the ASK choose the exhibitors to take part in any agricultural show
Please explain
5. In your opinion, how do exhibitors prepare for agricultural show exhibitions?
Please explain
6. Do the exhibitors suggest different themes for agricultural shows to the ASK?
7. Do the agricultural shows, help the exhibitors in attracting new markets for their respective organizations? Please explain
8. Does the ASK allow foreign exhibitors to participate in agricultural shows?
Please explain
9. What feedback does the ASK receive from exhibitors after agricultural shows?
Please explain
10. In general, what do the visitors of the agricultural shows think of the exhibitors?
Kindly explain
11. Do the exhibitors maintain a relationship with the ASK following the end of the shows? Please explain

“THANK YOU”