

# COMMUNITY NEWSBOARD AS A MICRO-MEDIUM FOR DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

Wolfreda T. Alesna

Assistant Instructor  
Department of Agricultural Development Education  
Visayas State College of Agriculture  
Baybay, Leyte, Philippines

Portion of MS thesis in Development Communication in UP at Los Baños.  
Funded by Philippine Council for Agriculture and Resources Research.

---

## ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in Igang and San Isidro, both rice farming barrios in Baybay, Leyte, to measure the effectiveness of community newsboard (CN) as a micro-medium for development communication using randomly selected literate respondents. The pretest-posttest-control group design was used. Igang was selected as the treatment barrio and San Isidro as the control. Four of the seven variables (sex, frequency of exposure, perceived relevance of the CN messages and acceptability of the CN as a medium) considered in this study had significant relationships with gain in knowledge. Male respondents had significantly gained more knowledge about the information written on the CN than the female respondents. All the respondents who have read the CN unanimously perceived the CN messages as relevant and also accepted CN as a channel for disseminating farm and other developmental information. They have also significantly gained knowledge about the information written on it.

---

## INTRODUCTION

A unique communication tool like the community newsboard (CN) or the blackboard newspaper could

probably help communicators and extension program planners solve their problem of looking at alternative channels of communication. CN is a blackboard where barrio and other developmental information are

written by chalk in broadcast news style but in a format like that of a newspaper. Liu (1971) cited blackboards as sources of information of the people in the Chinese commune. The erasable print which Glattbach (1978) referred to was the *Moalboal Times*, a blackboard newspaper founded by Father Francisco Silva, former parish priest of Moalboal, Cebu. Father Silva claimed though that *Moalboal Times* is just an innovation of the blackboard newspaper in China.

In 1975, the Department of Public Information (now Ministry of Public Information) replicated the use of blackboard newspapers in two Cebu towns—Bogo and Tuburan. News gathering was patterned after that of *Moalboal*. Messages were also in the vernacular (*Cebuano*). The blackboard newspaper was also experimented upon in the province of Leyte by the Community Extension Service of the Visayas State College of Agriculture.

In October 1976, community newsboards were installed in barrios Gacat, San Isidro, and Kansungka in Baybay, Leyte. The newsboards were placed near the cooperative store, barrio hall and school. Many observers said the community newsboard or the blackboard newspaper proved to be effective as a medium for disseminating information. This is without empirical basis though, hence, this study.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in two barrios of Baybay, Leyte — Igang and San Isidro—which are both rice farming communities. One hundred literate respondents each for Igang and San Isidro were randomly selected. The pretest-posttest-control group design (Campbell & Stanley, 1963) was used. Igang was selected as the treatment barrio and San Isidro as the control.

While the pretests were given, blackboards measuring 1.2 x 2.4 m were installed by the barrio people through a cooperative work supervised by the ViSCA Social Laboratory technician. After the pretest, the information prepared by the researcher was written by chalk on the CN. The barrio people were given exposure for two weeks after which the messages were erased and the posttest given.

To find the effects of the independent variable (CN) on the dependent variable (gain in knowledge), the analysis of variance (ANOVA) with one-way classification was used. The linear regression model was used to find out any relationship between gain in knowledge and the seven predictor variables. Duncan's multiple range test was used to find any differences in the mean gain in knowledge between and among the variables. The chi-square test was run on the data to test if there existed some relationships between frequency of exposure and the different variables.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings imply that community newsboard which is the treatment of the study had significantly affected the increase of the after-treatment test scores of the treatment group (Igang). Results of the statistical test using the analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that the treatment effect was highly significant at 0.01% level. This means that farmers exposed to the messages written on the community newsboard had significantly gained knowledge about these messages.

Only four of the seven predictor variables considered in this study had significant relationships with gain in knowledge. These were sex, frequency of exposure, perceived relevance of the CN messages, and acceptability of the CN as a medium. No relationship was found between gain in knowledge and the respondents' age, educational attainment, and project status.

No differences in the mean gain in knowledge were seen between the young and adult respondents, the lowly (Grades I to IV) and highly (at least 2nd year HS) educated groups and the cooperators and non-cooperators.

The male respondents significantly gained more knowledge about the information written on the CN than the female respondents. This is probably because the information concerned the male farmers more since they are usually

the ones who attend to their farms. Respondents who were exposed to the CN gained more knowledge than those not exposed to it (Table 1).

Table 1. Mean gain in knowledge of the respondents categorized under the different variables arranged from lowest to highest.

Variables	Frequency	Mean Mean <sup>1</sup>
<i>Age</i>		
Young	53	-1.326a
Adult	147	-2.396a
<i>Sex</i>		
Female	95	-0.978a
Male	105	-2.180b
<i>Educational Attainment</i>		
Grades I-IV	71	-1.253a
Second Year HS & above	33	-1.781a
Grade V-First Year HS	96	-1.814a
<i>Project Status</i>		
Cooperator	96	-1.354a
Non-cooperator	104	-1.546a
<i>Frequency of Exposure</i>		
Not exposed	138	0.195a
Lightly exposed	16	-4.812b
Frequently exposed	11	-4.909b
Very frequently exposed	16	-6.187b
Moderately exposed	19	-6.263b

<sup>1</sup> Means of the same letter are not significantly different at .05% level.

All the respondents who had read the community newsboard unanimously perceived the CN messages as relevant and also accepted CN as a channel for disseminating farm and other developmental information.

Majority of the respondents who perceived the CN messages as relevant and who accepted the CN as a medium significantly gained knowledge about the information written on it.

No relationship was found between frequency of exposure and the respondents' age, educational attainment and project status. Three variables, namely, sex, perceived relevance, and acceptability of the medium, had significant relationships with frequency of exposure.

#### IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Community newsboard seemed to be effective as a micro-medium for development communication. If given the chance, this unique

medium could well reinforce other communication media especially in disseminating farm and other development information to the small farmers in far-flung communities.

Costwise, the CN can compete with other print media. The community newsboard is very easy to put up. Blackboard sheets could be solicited from big corporations. Funds for buying chalks and erasers and for the construction of nipa roof—which protects the CN messages from erasure in case it rains—can be raised through holding of benefit dances and/or solicitations. Labor for the construction of nipa roof could be obtained free through cooperative work. Students doing their Youth Civic Action Program (YCAP) could be mobilized, too. Government employees and officials rendering rural service could also put up CNs as a project in the communities where they are assigned. With a very low cost of production, there is no reason why this unique medium should not be given attention.

#### LITERATURE CITED

- CAMPBELL, D. T., and STANLEY, J. C. 1963. Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research. Chicago: Rand McNally and Company.
- GLATTBACH, J. 1978. Erasable print — blackboard newspaper. *Development Communication Report* 21:6-7.

LIU, A. P. L. 1971. Communication and national integration in Communist China. Berkeley: University of California Press.

MEHNERT, K. 1972. China returns. New York: The New American Library, Inc.