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# Factors Inhibiting Persuasive Communication of Agricultural Extension Workers Through Internet Media in Accelerating Information Dissemination in Farmer Women Groups in Ponorogo Regency, Indonesia

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#### Abstract

The development of digital information technology today allows the use of various media for agricultural extension. The internet has become an important medium in disseminating information, including for agricultural extension workers and farmer women groups. Agricultural extension workers have a crucial role in conveying information persuasively and are expected to utilize internet media to support their tasks and accelerate the dissemination of information to farmers. This study examines the obstacles in persuasive communication carried out by agricultural extension workers using internet media to accelerate the dissemination of information to Farmer Women Groups in Ponorogo Regency. The method used is qualitative descriptive with data analysis through in-depth interviews and participatory observation. The informants in this study consisted of agricultural extension workers and members of farmer women groups in Babadan District. The results of the study showed that there were technical obstacles such as lack of technological facilities and uneven internet access, as well as time limitations due to the dual roles of group members. Low digital literacy is also an obstacle, influenced by age, low education, and lack of technological experience. Behavioral barriers include a preference for in-person counseling and age stereotypes, where older members lack confidence in using technology. The influence of the social environment also plays a role. The suggested solutions include increasing digital literacy, improving technological infrastructure, and handling stereotypes and negative social influences to increase the effectiveness of counseling.

Keywords: Persuasive Communication, Agricultural Extension Workers, Information Dissemination

#### INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology has brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including in the agricultural sector. One of the important developments is the use of internet media as a tool to convey agricultural information to farmers. Internet media offers various advantages, such as ease of access, fast delivery of information, and the ability to reach a wider audience. The use of the internet in agricultural extension can increase the efficiency and effectiveness of information delivery, which in turn can help farmers in improving the productivity and quality of their agricultural products. In Indonesia, agricultural extension workers are increasingly using internet media. One of the uses of the internet in the agricultural sector is to disseminate agricultural technology information to extension workers which is then conveyed to farmers in easy-to-digest language (Kustanti et al. 2020).

Women farmer groups play a very important role in supporting and increasing agricultural productivity in Indonesia. According to (Pusluhtan 2022) the existence of farmer women groups, it is a forum that provides opportunities for women to play a role in advancing the agribusiness sector. Based on data compiled from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the number of women farmers in Indonesia in 2019 was recorded at 8,051,328 people. And this number continues to increase until 2022. The government through the Ministry of Agriculture (Kementan) strives to make the agricultural sector a women-friendly sector. (Pusdiktan 2022)

The purpose of the Ministry of Agriculture is to raise the role and status of women working in the agricultural sector. According to data, Ponorogo Regency is one of the areas with a large amount of potential for agricultural women human resources with a total of 66,892 women farmers out of a total of 231,017

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farmers.(BPS Jatim 2019)

Communication plays an important role in establishing a good cooperative relationship between extension workers and farmers, and has a great influence on the process of achieving agricultural goals (Faqih & Aisha. 2019). The role of women farmers in the development of the agricultural sector is one of the main pillars in supporting the economy in many developing countries, including Indonesia. The role of agricultural extension workers is also very vital in supporting the increase in productivity and quality of agricultural products. (Anwarudin et al. 2021) explained that counseling is also said to be the development of the community's potential in a persuasive-educational manner which is carried out through the learning process by applying the principles of counseling properly and correctly supported by development activities. One of the key aspects in the effectiveness of agricultural extension is the ability to have good persuasive communication from extension workers and farmer women groups. So there needs to be participatory communication between them. Participatory communication is a powerful tool to influence the audience. This approach involves the audience actively in the communication process, starting with a deep understanding of their perspectives and concerns. (Cangara, 2021) Dissemination of information is the main activity of agricultural extension workers. In its implementation, the use of persuasive communication is very important in conveying information to farmers. This is done with the aim that farmers are able to change their attitude and can adopt agricultural technology so that it has an effect on increasing their agricultural output (Tegene et al. 2023).

Agricultural information dissemination is an activity to disseminate information in the field of agriculture to the target or audience (Indraningsih, 2018). The development of information technology and the role of agricultural extension workers in the dissemination of agricultural information can be synergized to encourage efforts to increase the use of the internet as a source of agricultural information by agricultural extension workers. This is important in supporting efforts to accelerate the dissemination of agricultural information to farmer women groups. According to him, information dissemination is a stage of change in the process of disseminating information that is conceptualized, directed, and managed. (Kristiawan et al. 2018) In the group of women farmers, information dissemination has a very important role in supporting and increasing agricultural productivity in Indonesia. They are not only involved in agricultural activities, but also play a role in household management whose rewards will have economic value (generating income) and social value (taking care of/regulating the household and solidarity to earn a living in generating household income). Thus, the dual role of women is a productive job because it includes earning a living (income earning work) and taking care of the household (domestic/household work) as satisfaction and functions to maintain the continuity of the household (Sajogyo, 1994). In the context of information dissemination, farmer women groups are often faced with various obstacles that prevent them from accessing and utilizing internet technology optimally. Agricultural development has an important role in helping to overcome these obstacles. Agricultural extension workers not only serve as a source of information, but also as facilitators who can help farmer women in utilizing internet technology for their agricultural interests. However, to be able to carry out this role effectively, agricultural extension workers need to understand the obstacles faced by women farmers in accessing and utilizing internet media. A deep understanding of these barriers can help agricultural extension workers in designing more effective and persuasive communication strategies.

Based on this, the author aims to identify and analyze the persuasive communication barriers faced by agricultural extension workers in using internet media to disseminate information to farmer women groups. With a deeper understanding of these barriers, it is hoped that the right solution can be found to increase the effectiveness of agricultural information dissemination. This research is also expected to contribute to the development of more effective policies and programs in supporting information dissemination among farmers, especially farmer women groups.

## **METHOD**

This research was carried out in Babadan District, Ponorogo Regency. The reason for choosing the location

is because Babadan District is one of the areas in Ponorogo Regency with a high number of farmer women groups with group activity. Babadan District is a productive agricultural product producing area where this area is a fertile area and easy access to irrigation so that the production period until the harvest of products in the agricultural sector can be maximized. The approach in this study uses qualitative descriptive, where the approach is used to research on the natural condition of the object and the researcher as a key instrument. The informants in this study are agricultural extension workers and members of farmer women groups in Babadan District. The technique for determining informants in this study is to use the purposive sampling technique, namely sampling using certain considerations. (Creswell, 2013) stated that validity in qualitative research is an effort to check the accuracy of research results by applying certain procedures, namely by data collection techniques carried out with triangulation techniques, namely different data collection techniques to obtain data from the same source. The process is by means of participatory observation, focus group discussion (FGD), semi-structured interviews and field documentation. The analysis technique used in this study is an interactive analysis technique by Miled and Huberman. According to Miled and Huberman (Saleh, 2017) in explaining that activities in qualitative data analysis are carried out interactively and take place continuously until they are complete, so that the data is saturated. A measure of data saturation is characterized by the absence of new data or information.

No. Group / Agency Name Report Status BPP Babadan EBAgricultural Extension Officer BPP Babadan 2. ВМ Agricultural Extension Officer BPP Babadan 3. ICE Agricultural Extension Officer BPP Babadan 4. ID Agricultural Extension Officer BPP Babadan 5. YS Agricultural Extension Officer KWT Jasmin 6. NH Farmer KWT Srikandi Berkarya 7. SSL Farmer KWT Haparan 8 F.W Farmer KWT Lotus 9. ΚT Farmer KWT Lestari 10. MW Farmer KVT Taman Saari 11. ICE Farmer KWT Kartini 12. ΜI Farmer KWT Patih Lima Hijau 13. FW Farmer Kuta Srikandi Jaya 14. BC Farmer KWT Dewi Sri 15. NH Farmer

Table 1. List of Research Informants

Source: Primary Data processed 2024

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

# **Factors Inhibiting Persuasive Communication**

Factors that hinder persuasive communication of agricultural extension workers through internet media in farmer women groups to accelerate information dissemination can be seen from several factors. Communication barriers can in principle be measured according to a certain level. Obstacles in persuasive communication in principle refer to at least two factors, namely technical factors and non-technical factors. From the results of interviews and observations to agricultural extension workers at the Babadan District Factors Inhibiting Persuasive Communication of Agricultural Extension Workers Through Internet Media in Accelerating Information Dissemination in Farmer Women Groups in Ponorogo Regency, Indonesia

Agricultural Extension Center office, several obstacles were classified into two factors, including technical and behavioral factors and humanity.(Hendri, 2019)

#### **Technical Factors**

#### Infrastructure

The availability of infrastructure facilities that have not been maximized is an obstacle to extension workers in the process of disseminating information via the internet to farmer women groups in Babadan District. These infrastructure facilities are like the type of gadgets for members of the farmer women group which do not all support the latest application features and also the lack of facilities such as laptops and computers. said that the factors of availability of access facilities and parafacilities that have a relationship in the stages of information search. The more complete the facilities to access the internet such as wifi, computers, and other facilities, the smoother the extension workers will be able to carry out the (Wijaya et al. 2015) starting and browsing stages. This means that the infrastructure factor plays an important role in increasing the use of the internet in extension activities. In addition to gadgets that do not all have the latest features, another problem is that there is not a good internet network. The problem of uneven infrastructure is an obstacle for agricultural extension workers. There is a gap in access to information technology, where most members of the peasant women group do not have adequate devices to access the internet. The lack of members who have the latest devices and the lack of facilities such as laptops and computers are also an obstacle. In addition, there are still other problems that worsen the condition, such as the uneven good internet network in several regions. In certain locations, it is difficult to get a stable internet signal. In fact, in some villages, the wifi assistance provided at the village office is insufficient to cover all members of the peasant women group, especially for those who live in areas that are somewhat far from the service center.

### **Time Constraints**

Another factor that inhibits persuasive communication experienced by agricultural extension workers in the process of disseminating information through internet media is the limited time that members of the farmer women group have. The members of this group of peasant women in addition to working in agriculture they also have responsibilities as wives and housewives. Based on research (Herawati et al. 2013), several factors that affect women's limitations in accessing communication and information technology are low ability to use computers and lack of awareness of its benefits, tendency to give in to children and husbands in computer access, social views that consider women more suitable in the domestic realm, limited time due to domestic obligations, and the concept of masculinity in information technology that considers Technology belongs only to men. According to an agricultural extension worker in Babadan District, the limited time of the farmer women group in accessing the internet in addition to the busyness factor is also caused by the factor that the members of this farmer women group prefer to get information from fellow farmers rather than having to search for themselves on the internet. Members of the peasant women group have dual responsibilities as workers in the agricultural sector and as wives and housewives. This time limitation makes it sometimes difficult for them to participate in activities organized online. In addition, most members of the farmer women group have very limited time to be able to participate in online activities. said that many women still face barriers to using the internet. One of the problems faced is the availability of time and costs caused by their duties as housewives. Some of them also have additional jobs as teachers or office workers, which further narrows their time. Therefore, they tend to prefer to get information from fellow farmers or their group leaders rather than searching on the internet themselves. The preference factor to get information from fellow farmers or group leaders can also be an obstacle in accessing the internet. Some members of the peasant women group prefer to wait for information from others rather than search for it on their own. This emphasizes the importance of the role of the group leader in conveying information to members, so that agricultural extension workers need to provide understanding to members so that they can be independent in finding the information needed (Terry & Gomez, 2010).

## Low Digital Media Literacy

Other inhibiting factors that technically affect persuasive communication experienced by agricultural extension workers are access ability and low digital literacy are two important factors that affect the effectiveness of the use of internet media for farmer women groups. Members of the peasant women group often face obstacles in accessing information and communication technology such as internet access and how to use it. Many of them do not understand how to access correct and accurate information. In addition, the low level of digital literacy is also a serious problem. According to (Astuti, 2013)many women, they still think that mastering digital technology is the domain of men, so they don't feel the need to have technical skills. In addition, mental conditions such as feelings of inferiority, inferiority, lack of confidence, and fear to discuss and explore further about digital technology are also obstacles. Many members of the peasant women group do not have enough knowledge or skills in using technological devices, such as computers or smartphones, and do not understand how to use the internet effectively. As a result, they may find it difficult to access relevant information or take advantage of the opportunities offered by internet media. In addition to being constrained by lack of accessibility, another obstacle is the low digital literacy among farmer women groups. The lack of digital literacy among farmer women groups is a significant challenge in this digital era. Members of peasant women groups often have limited use of internet media. This can be caused by a variety of factors, including low levels of education, old age, lack of access to training, and lack of experience using modern technology. The lack of digital literacy can hinder the ability of members of women farmer groups to access information, communicate effectively, and take advantage of the opportunities offered by internet media. They have difficulty in searching for information, understanding how to use online applications or *platforms*, and participating in agricultural learning activities that utilize digital technology. As a result, they still find it difficult to access relevant information or take advantage of the opportunities offered by the internet media. They also have difficulty participating in virtual activities such as online seminars or webinars, and are only able to access live streams from YouTube media, while the use of media such as Zoom or Google Meet is also lacking.

Table 2. Matrix of Technical Factors Hindering Persuasive Communication of Agricultural Extension Workers in the Use of Internet Media to Farmer Women Groups in Ponorogo Regency

It	Technical Factors	Information
1.	Infrastructure	a. Not all members of the peasant women group have gadgets that support internet
		media access.
		b. There are several places where members of the farmer women group live and have
		not received adequate internet signal access.
		c. There is free wifi assistance from the village government, but the reach has not
		expanded. Another problem is sometimes the wifi assistance from the village government
		cannot always be used.
2.	Time Constraints	a. Members of the peasant women group have a dual role. Apart from being farmers,
		they also take care of the household which results in their time not being maximized in
		accessing internet media.
		b. Many of the members of the peasant women's group are not fully employed in the
		agricultural sector. Some of them work as teachers, sellers in the market, and also become office
		employees in private and government offices.
3.	Low Digital Media Literacy	a. Not all members of the peasant women group have a high education. This makes
		them less literate in the use of media.
		b. Age also affects low digital literacy. Many members of the peasant women group
		come from generation X and generation Y where on average they lack mastery of information
		technology.

Source: Primary Data processed 2024

#### Behavioral and Humanitarian Factors

Behavioral and humanitarian inhibiting factors in the persuasive communication process of agricultural extension workers to farmer women groups include dogmatism, stereotypes, and the influence of the environment itself. This is in accordance with the statement of Herbert G. Hick and G. Ray Gullet in their book Organization Theory and Behavior in (Hendri, 2019) stating that persuasive communication has three inhibiting factors, namely dogmatism, stereotypes, and influence by the environment.

## **Dogmatism**

Dogmatism is an attitude of a person who wants to maintain his attitude, opinion, and behavior. This is

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mainly done when the information is suspected to hinder and even damage its position. This obstacle can be seen in the inoculation theory, when a person is immune from the influence of persuasion that has the potential to interfere with their attitudes and beliefs. The dogmatism factor is an attitude that seeks to maintain opinions and behaviors, this happens if the message conveyed will damage a person's attitude or position. In its implementation, agricultural extension workers do not feel this dogmatism factor too much. This happens because what is conveyed by extension workers, especially information related to the use of internet media, is almost always received by members of the women's farmer group. This explains that in the context of agricultural extension to farmer women, the dogmatism factor exists but tends not to be the main obstacle in the use of internet media as a means of extension. This is due to the good reception of information conveyed through (Hick and Gullet, 1975) online media by most members of the peasant women group. However, there are some exceptions where some women farmers may still prefer face-to-face counseling to online information, especially due to a lack of technological mastery. Thus, the dogmatism factor does not significantly hinder the use of internet media as a means of extension, the challenge lies more in the limited mastery of technology among a small number of peasant women.

## Stereotype

Another inhibiting factor for persuasive communication is stereotypes. Stereotypes can hinder the process of using internet media by agricultural extension workers to farmer women groups. According to (Hendri, 2019) stereotypes, it can be interpreted as a rigid and overly simplistic generalization of people or groups in society. This is the result of the process of interaction between family, ethnicity or ethnicity, as well as politics about certain actions and behaviors. In the process of persuasive communication between agricultural extension workers and farmer women groups in Babadan District, the stereotype factor that occurs is the stereotype of religionism. According to (Ayalon da Römer, 2018) stereotypes, agriism is a stereotype based on prejudice based on human age. Age stereotypes that are still attached to farmer women groups can make them feel insecure or less interested in accessing agricultural information through the internet. Age stereotypes create barriers for peasant women, especially older ones, to access and use internet technology for agricultural purposes. The perception that older women are less capable of mastering technology and the traditional division of roles that put them in the role of housewives can make it difficult for peasant women to reap the benefits of internet media. Elderly peasant women are more happy if the information provided online or through media access is light and easy to access. If the information is presented through an application or is difficult to use, they are reluctant to access it. Stereotypical inhibiting factors have a major impact on agricultural extension workers in utilizing internet media to interact with farmer women groups. Age-related stereotypes are still a significant obstacle, especially for older farming women, in terms of confidence and interest in using the internet as a source of agricultural information.

## **Environmental Influence**

Social inhibiting factors, especially environmental influences, are the result of two intersecting thought values. In this condition people only see persuasion messages as good or bad, wrong or true, black or white, unnuanced or gradual. A person will listen and will be influenced by the person he admires, and vice versa will also reject if the speaker is not liked by them. This factor is an inhibiting factor when agricultural extension workers in Babadan District convey information to farmer women groups in terms of the use of internet media. There are still members of the farmer women group who cannot receive information properly. (Hendri, 2019) Some members of the peasant women group may not be able to receive information well if they do not like the messenger or if the information conflicts with the value they espoen. This inability shows that social and environmental factors, including the perception of the messenger and social conformity, play a major role in the effectiveness of extension in terms of disseminating information about the use of internet media among women farmers.

Table 3. Matrix of Behavioral and Humanitarian Factors Hindering Persuasive Communication of Agricultural Extension Workers in the Use of Internet Media to Farmer Women Groups in Ponorogo Regency

Τ÷	Behavioral and Humanitarian Factors	Information

1.	Dogmatism	<ul> <li>a. Extension workers do not always feel it because information about the use of internet media is generally accepted.</li> <li>b. Obstacles arise if there is a preference for face-to-face counseling over</li> </ul>
		online. c. The main challenge is the limited mastery of technology by a small number of peasant women
2.	Stereotype	<ul> <li>a. Age stereotypes prevent older peasant women from accessing technology.</li> <li>b. The perception that older women are less able to master technology.</li> <li>c. Preference for information that is easily accessible online.</li> <li>d. Age stereotypes are an obstacle in increasing confidence and interest in the internet</li> </ul>
3.	Environmental Influence	<ul> <li>a. Social influence hinders the reception of the message if the presenter is not liked.</li> <li>b. Social conformity and perception of the message bearer affect the effectiveness of counseling.</li> <li>c. Some peasant women reject information if it contradicts the values they hold</li> </ul>

Source: Primary Data processed 2024

## CONCLUSION

The persuasive communication process carried out by agricultural extension workers to farmer women groups in Ponorogo Regency faces various obstacles that can be categorized as technical obstacles as well as behavioral and humanitarian barriers. Technical obstacles include limited infrastructure, where most group members do not have adequate technological devices to support internet access, as well as uneven internet network problems. Time constraints are also a significant inhibiting factor, as members of the farmer women group have dual responsibilities as farmers and housewives, as well as additional jobs that narrow the time to participate in online activities. The low digital media literacy among group members, caused by age factors, low education levels, and lack of experience in using technology, also hinders the effectiveness of using internet media. In addition to technical barriers, there are also behavioral and humanitarian barriers. The dogmatism factor is not felt by extension workers, because information about the use of internet media is generally received by members of farmer women groups. However, the preference for direct counseling still exists, especially among those who lack technological mastery. Age stereotypes are a significant barrier, where older peasant women tend to lack confidence and are less interested in accessing internet technology. Environmental influences, including perception of the messenger and social conformity, also affect the effectiveness of counseling. Some group members may reject information if they don't like the message conveyor or if the information conflicts with their values. To overcome these obstacles, efforts are needed to increase digital literacy among members of peasant women groups, improve information technology infrastructure, and reduce the influence of stereotypes and a negative social environment. Thus, counseling can run more effectively and efficiently, so that the goal of information dissemination through internet media can be achieved optimally.

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