



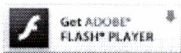
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- [หน้าแรก](#)
- [วัตถุประสงค์และขอบเขต](#)
- [กองบรรณาธิการ](#)
- [ผู้ทรงคุณวุฒิ](#)
- [วารสารทั้งหมด](#)
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- [วิธีการส่งบทความ](#)
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- [สมัครสมาชิกเพื่อส่งบทความ](#)

สืบค้น

-----ทุกฉบับ----- ▼

ผู้แต่ง

คำสำคัญ

บทความ

Search

ลิงค์ที่เกี่ยวข้อง

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วารสาร

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จำนวนดาวน์โหลดบทความทั้งหมด คน

บทความวิจัย

- [The Proper Non-Chemical Agriculture Message and Channel Design for the Learning of Ban Hin How Farmer Group, Lom Kao District, Phetchabun.](#)
- [สำนักข่าวอิศรา: บทบาทการสื่อสารเพื่อสันติภาพและเสียงสะท้อน ของผู้ที่อยู่ในพื้นที่ขัดแย้งใน 3 จังหวัดชายแดนภาคใต้](#)
- [การพัฒนารูปแบบการจัดการความรู้ของกองการกระจายเสียงและวิทยุโทรทัศน์ กรมการทหารสื่อสาร](#)
- [ความพึงพอใจและความคาดหวังต่อคณะกรรมการกิจการกระจายเสียง กิจการโทรทัศน์ และกิจการโทรคมนาคมแห่งชาติ \(กสทช.\) ของสื่อมวลชนและประชาชนในกรุงเทพมหานคร](#)
- [กลยุทธ์ของการสื่อสารผ่านวิทยุชุมชนในการต่อสู้ทางการเมืองในจังหวัดเชียงใหม่](#)

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- ประสิทธิผลกิจกรรมค่ายผู้นำนิเทศศาสตร์ ภายใต้โครงการอบรมเชิงปฏิบัติการ เรื่อง “สร้างนักคิดจิตอาสา” ของวิทยาลัยนิเทศศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต
- การศึกษาเนื้อหาการสื่อสารการตลาดบนแอปพลิเคชันไลน์
- ประสิทธิผลโครงการส่งเสริมการมีส่วนร่วมกับภาครัฐโดยการจัดอบรมการผลิตสื่อสร้างสรรค์ด้วยการบรรยายและ ฝึกปฏิบัติของกลุ่มเครือข่ายผู้บริโภคกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์และชนเผ่าพื้นเมืองในกิจการกระจายเสียงและกิจการโทรทัศน์
- การสื่อสารแบบมีส่วนร่วมของพลเมืองเพื่อส่งเสริมพระพุทธศาสนา
- การปรับตัวของผู้ผลิตรายการวิทยุกระจายเสียงเพื่อการเปลี่ยนผ่านสู่การออกอากาศออนไลน์
- ภาพยนตร์โฆษณาในยุคดิจิทัล
- เทคโนโลยีการกระจายเสียงสื่อใหม่ในยุคดิจิทัล
- แนวทางในการเตรียมตัวและการปฏิบัติของผู้วิจัยเพื่อการเก็บข้อมูลจากผู้ต้องขังหญิงในประเด็นเนื้อหาที่มีผลกระทบต่อนักจิตใจ

- วัตถุประสงค์และขอบเขต |
- กองบรรณาธิการ |
- วารสารทั้งหมด |
- เกณฑ์การตีพิมพ์ |
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การออกแบบสารและช่องทางการสื่อสารเรื่องการเกษตรไร้สารเคมีที่เหมาะสมต่อการเรียนรู้ของกลุ่มเกษตรกรบ้านหินขาว อำเภอหล่มเก่า จังหวัดเพชรบูรณ์

The Proper Non-Chemical Agriculture Message and Channel Design for the Learning of Ban Hin How Farmer Group, Lom Kao District, Phetchabun.

Dr.Busayagorn Teeraputtigunchai*

Sunchai Ruengroj**

Panomtien Tongsit***

บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษาเรื่องการออกแบบสารและช่องทางการสื่อสารเรื่องการเกษตรไร้สารเคมีที่เหมาะสมต่อการเรียนรู้ของกลุ่มเกษตรกรบ้านหินขาว อำเภอหล่มเก่า จังหวัดเพชรบูรณ์ เป็นการศึกษาเพื่อตอบวัตถุประสงค์หนึ่งจากสามข้อของโครงการวิจัยเรื่อง "การใช้ประโยชน์จากงานวิจัยการเกษตรไร้สารเคมีเพื่อขยายผลผ่านกระบวนการสื่อสาร กรณีศึกษา: การขยายผลกับกลุ่มเกษตรกรผู้สนใจการเกษตรไร้สารเคมีบ้านหินขาว อำเภอหล่มเก่า จังหวัดเพชรบูรณ์ ใช้กระบวนการวิจัยเชิงปฏิบัติการแบบมีส่วนร่วม กลุ่มผู้ให้ข้อมูลหลักประกอบด้วยเกษตรกรผู้เชี่ยวชาญและกลุ่มเกษตรกรจากบ้านหินขาว อ.หล่มเก่า จ.เพชรบูรณ์ 7 คน นักวิจัยท้องถิ่นและเกษตรกร จ.พิจิตร 6 คน รวม 13 คน

ผลการวิจัยพบว่าการออกแบบสารและช่องทางการสื่อสารเรื่องการเกษตรไร้สารเคมีต้องครอบคลุมเนื้อหาสาร 3 ประเภท คือ 1) สารเพื่อสร้างทัศนคติที่ดี 2) สารเพื่อสร้างความรู้ความเข้าใจและสร้างทักษะ และ 3) สารเพื่อป้องกันปัญหาด้านสุขภาพ โดยใช้การสื่อสารกลุ่มเล็กแบบเห็นหน้าเป็นหลัก ตัดเย็บรายละเอียดของสารเป็นกรณีไป ควรบูรณาการช่องทางการสื่อสาร เช่น ใช้การสื่อสารระหว่างบุคคลเพื่อโน้มน้าวใจควบคู่กับใช้สื่อใหม่เพื่อสื่อสารข้อมูลข่าวสาร ทั้งนี้พบว่าการอบรมสาธิต ลงมือปฏิบัติจริง และการแลกเปลี่ยนเรียนรู้ร่วมกัน เป็นช่องทางการสื่อสารที่มีประสิทธิภาพสูงสุด

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Abstract

A study of the proper non-chemical agricultural message and channel design for the learning of Ban Hin How farmer group was one of three objectives of the research project entitled "the Usage of non-chemical agriculture researches for outcome expansion through communication process, a case study of expansion to non-chemical-interested farmer group at Ban Hin How, Lom Kao district, Phetchabun province". This research was a participatory action research with 13 key informants; a non-chemical agriculture skilled farmer, 6 members of non-chemical-interested farmer group at Ban Hin How, a local researcher, and 5 farmers from Phichit province.

The study found that;

The proper non-chemical agriculture message and channel design must cover three kinds of content which were; 1) message to create a positive attitude, 2) message to create knowledge, understanding and skills, and 3) message to identify health problems and apply face-to-face communication through various channels. The content details should be designed case by case. The sender should integrate the channels used such as applying interpersonal communication channels for persuading, together with applying new media for information sharing. Demonstration, training, practice and learning exchange forum are a set of activity media considered as the most effective communication channels.

Introduction

Ban Hin How community, located in Lom Kao district, Phetchabun province, is 70 kilometers away from Phetchabun city. The community consists of 2 villages which are named, Moo 3 and Moo 4. Most of the villagers are farmers and become laborers after harvesting season is completed. They plant corn and tobacco. Over the past few years, they have started planting bitter melons, cucumbers, and dragon fruit. Most of them occupy a small piece of land they inherited from their ancestors; mostly 2 to 4 acres each, their ways of cultivation rely mostly on agricultural chemical substances. Most of the farmers are middle aged or older. Most of the young generations have moved out to work in other areas of Thailand.

The reasons why the farmers use the agricultural chemical substances is because of marketing motivation through various channels, such as instructions from some government officials, advertising and product promotion in mass media and specialization media, as well as inspirations from the main stream farmers. They focus only on immediate results but forget to calculate the production cost and health costs they are paying. When asked why they use pesticides, the farmers stated that they wanted to get maximum produce amounts and they were unsure how to cultivate without pesticides. Last but not least, they could not find any farmer close to them succeeding in using bio insecticide. All of the mentioned reasons cause them to keep using agricultural chemical substances in their production lines.

At the same time, all over the world, including Thailand, the world trend is heading towards food safety to maintain quality of life. There are piles of research studies about problems caused by agricultural chemical substances, some even focus on the way to convey non-chemical agriculture messages. By conducting a ground survey, the researcher has found two researches, funded by the Thailand Research Fund (TRF), studying none-chemical agriculture communication. The first one, conducted by Chumjuss Sueadee and others during the year 2003-2004, was entitled, "Communication process for non-chemical agriculture expansion". At that time, non-chemical agriculture was not quite interesting in the eyes of most Thai farmers. The team conducted a participatory action research in Tainum sub district, Pho Thale district, Phichit province in order to expand the knowledge of non-chemical agriculture to farmers in the area by applying assorted strategies which were; knowledge and capacity building, team building and developing process, a reliability creation process of the personal media, and a channel design. All of these strategies were driven through participatory communication (Sueadee, C. et al., 2004). Another interesting research, entitled, "A proper learning process, management of bio-agriculture for a bio-agriculture farmers group in Na Ku sub district, Phak Hai district, Phar Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya province", was conducted by Yaowaluk Sookseelueng and others (Sookseelueng, Y. et al., 2012). The striking point of this research was that the proper learning process management of bio agriculture should follow two principles; 1) setting a common goal, 2) stimulating, giving consolation, and advice, as well as applying performance tracking. The learning process orders were as follows; 1) the review of farmers' way of cultivation 2) the review of tacit knowledge and lacking knowledge 3) necessary learning on bio-agriculture 4) agricultural plot planning 5) site experiment 6) experiment conclusion 7) site visiting and 8) analyzing and lesson learning.

Both researches were interesting as they demonstrated how communication process could be an effective tool to push forward the concept of non-chemical agriculture to the farmers. Thus, the researcher would like to apply the knowledge learnt from the researches to design the non-chemical agriculture messages and channels in order to communicate with the interested farmers in Ban Hin How.

There was a newcomer farmer there. Mr. Panomtien Tongsit, who inspired by sufficiency economy according to His Majesty King Rama 9's initiative, started to work as a farmer in 2013 because he wanted to maintain a good quality of life in a long run. Before that, he used to be a senior geologist in a huge private company with a high income. He has learnt about cultivation and has integrated local knowledge with new technologies. He was also interested in creating a group of new generation farmers to pioneer non-chemical agriculture. In the first field trip, the researcher also met other 5 farmers who were interested in non-chemical agriculture learning. After a discussion, Panomtien was willing to be a part of the research team as the farmer group leader and coordinator. The research site then was Panomtien's farm. It was a site for the group to learn, share, workout and discuss throughout the research process.

Panomtien, himself had a capacity to be both a personal media and an opinion leader to carry the concept of non-chemical agriculture to the other farmers in the community in the future. Anyway, at that time, he still had few experiences with agriculture, so the researcher decided to search for other farmers in Phetchabun who had more experience in non-chemical agriculture to join in the project. Finally the researcher found Mr. Sunchai Ruengroj who was locally well-known as a professional farmer in non-chemical rice berry cultivation. In his ordinary life, Sunchai was a senior-professional-level teacher, teaching agriculture subjects for grades 7-9 in Bantok School. He had devoted his free time to cultivate various plants for many years, and started to plant non-chemical rice berry in 2012. His dedication yielded by the end of 2013 when the first rice berry product was harvested. At present, he is able to produce 2,100 kilograms of rice berry in the area of 1.25 acres.

The researcher met Sunchai and persuaded him to join in the project as a non-chemical agriculture skilled farmer. The mission was to integrate the two TRF researches and expand the results to the Hin How farmers group. It was interesting to find out a way to design messages and channels to convey the messages to the farmers group. As a result, they could have skills, understandings, and confidence in non-chemical agriculture, leading to experimental work by themselves and ability to pass on the concept to the other farmers after participating in the project.

The research team assumed that the way to design messages on this topic must cover forms and contents that fulfilled both individual and common needs. Yaowaluk and others mentioned in the research paper that, when communicating to farmers, the messages should be striking, based on problems faced and direct experiences. An effective channel design was also challenging. The research team composed of a communication academic, a non-chemical agriculture skilled farmer, and a farmer group leader, decided to find out the solutions for these objectives by applying participatory action research.

Participatory communication was one of the key theoretical concepts applied in this research. It was based on equality in communication situations, role switching between a sender and a receiver, power distribution, with an aim to create shared meaning and understanding.

The research team also applied the concept of audience-participation-based message design approach. Kanjana Kaewthep (Kaewthep, K. 2006, pp.46-57) stated that this theoretical concept was a part of participatory communication. It based on two-way communication that receivers could participate in message sending process. For this reason, a sender must realize that; 1) it was a receiver who gave meanings to the messages, 2) the receiver's knowledge and understanding grounds were never empty, but filled with myriad contents which might be the same, similar to, or totally different from the contents that the sender would like to convey, and 3) thus, the sender should give priority to a process that persuade the receiver to be a part of the message and channel design process.

Materials and Methods

The research methodology applied in this study was as follows;

1. Population and Sample group

The research applied a purposive sampling technique. The purposive samples were involved with or interested in non-chemical agriculture. The key informants, total of 13 people in this study, were divided into 2 subgroups. The first subgroup consisted of a non-chemical agriculture skilled farmer, and 6 members of non-chemical-interested farmers group at Ban Hin How. The second subgroup consisted of a local researcher and 5 farmers from Phichit province.

2. Data Collecting Tools

2.1 In-depth interview tools consisted of a semi-structured interview form, a notebook and a sound recorder.

2.2 Participated observation tools consisted of an observation form, a camera, a video tape recorder and a sound recorder.

2.3 Focus group interview tool was a list of questions.

3. Data Collecting and Synthesizing

The data collecting and synthesizing processes in this study were done when conducting the research activities which including 19 steps as follows;

3.1 Studied the TRF research entitled "communication process for non-chemical agriculture expansion" then synthesizing and integrating the information about communication capacity building of personal media in designing the activities in the research process. Moreover, the research team asked the TRF researcher to be a personal media in this study, as well as using the TRF research area as a learning center for site visiting. The researcher also studied the second TRF research entitled, "A proper learning process management of bio-agriculture for a bio-agriculture farmer group in Na Ku sub district, Phak Hai district, PhraNakhon Si Ayutthaya province", and synthesize the data, then apply the knowledge from the research in terms of designing the research activities to suit the farmers' learning process.

3.2 Conducted a field study to analyze primary data of Ban Hin How community and evaluate the feasibility.

3.3 Targeted the key informants of the study by purposing sampling using selection criteria as follows;

- a non-chemical agriculture skilled farmer must have been a farmer for at least 5 years with a minimum 3 years of non-chemical agriculture, having some experiences in non-chemical agriculture communication, and willing to continuously join the research activities.
- a farmer interested in non-chemical agriculture must have been a farmer for at least 1 year, having no experience in non-chemical agriculture or having non-chemical agriculture experiences less than 2 years or having non-chemical agriculture experiences with lack of continuity, with intention to apply knowledge gained to one's work, and willing to continuously

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join the research activities.

3.4 Met the non-chemical skilled farmer to clarify the research purpose and process to be done, as well as persuading him to join in the project.

3.5 In-depth interviewed with Chumrus Sueadee, the TRF researcher of the project "Communication process for non-chemical agriculture expansion" to get insights about the progress of the research afterward, the present situation on non-chemical agriculture in Phichit, and plan the research activities.

3.6 Held a forum for self introduction and shared understanding to allow the participants to get to know one another more, share the objectives of the research, exchange experiences in cultivation, hear the expectations on joining the project, and build shared understanding.

3.7 Designed messages and channels for non-chemical agriculture with the participation of the non-chemical agriculture skilled farmer and the farmers group leader.

3.8 Communicated the designed messages to the farmers group through forums and other research activities.

3.9 Conducted a workshop on a simple bio insecticide to create a learning atmosphere and prepare for site visiting.

3.10 Brought the farmers group to a site visit and learn from the non-chemical farmers groups in Phichit (2 days).

3.11 Held a forum and a workshop on eight bio insecticides and Bokashi compost production and seed selection.

3.12 The farmer group leader and 3 other group members voluntarily had blood tests for chemical residue at Hin How Health Promoting Hospital.

3.13 The farmers conducted experimental work in their plant plots, collecting the data throughout the cultivation and harvesting period. During this, performance tracking had been conducted; the non-chemical skilled farmer had followed up the progress once a month (3 times throughout the process).

3.14 Held postharvest learning exchange forum. The non-chemical skilled farmer and the farmers together shared both individual and common experiences taught to the other farmers in the community and gave a workshop on Bokashi compost production.

3.15 Conducted a focus group meeting to look at lessons learnt on communication skills, team learning on found-out problems on site during the experimental work, and planning for community learning exchange forum.

3.16 Held community learning exchange forum, inviting the TRF researcher and farmers from Phichit to be the resource people together with the non-chemical skilled farmer and the farmers group to share experiences and knowledge with the other farmers in the community.

3.17 Analyzed and synthesize the data gained from the research activities.

3.18 Wrote the research report.

3.19 Presented the findings to the public.

Results

The results of the study of the proper non-chemical agricultural message and channel design for the learning of a farmers group at Ban Hin How were as follows;

- Before designing the messages and channels, it was crucial to conduct a stakeholder analysis. The research team consulted Chumrus, the TRF researcher, to get learning for lessons on message and channel design from the referred research. When finished, the research team could get deeper understanding of the receivers and types of persuasive messages in different stages. Then the team designed the messages by sorting them into 3 categories which were; 1) message to create a positive attitude, 2) message to create knowledge, understanding and skills, and 3) message to identify health problems

The positive attitude creation message design must place importance on creating a link between a proper mindset for non-chemical agriculture practice with the benefits such as being healthy and economically independent in a long run, as well as building up self-esteem. The proper mindset for non-chemical agriculture involved honesty, patience, hardiness, self-discipline and uninhibited.

In the early stages, it was important to communicate the positive attitude creation messages as a key message. At the same time, it was also possible to insert messages to identify health problems caused by chemical substances. Then the messages to create knowledge, understanding, and skills could be conveyed. After this, it was practical to communicate the 3 categories of message together. It was also significant to point out the relationship of them in various situations.

The research team found out that the effective channel design should apply a caravan of activity media based on small group and face-to-face communication. There were plenty of activity media used, such as small group discussions, meetings, site visiting, forum, workshop, experiment work, and performance tracking. There were also specialization media used during the process. The media included booklets and information posters. Thus, the channels used and their effectiveness for non-chemical agriculture communication could be summarized as shown in Table 1.

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Table 1: Channels and effectiveness in non-chemical agriculture communication

No.	Channels	Message Delivered	Media Applied	Effectiveness for Non-Chemical Agriculture Communication
1	A forum for self introduction and shared understanding	-Experiences in cultivation -Benefits gained from non-chemical agriculture -Basic concepts and foundation practice in non-chemical agriculture	-Personal media -Specialization Media (Stake holder analysis table)	High Reasons -Based on participatory communication -Allowing participants to get background information about each stake holder -Building shared understanding from the beginning
2	Planning & Site visiting	-Aims and objectives of the research -Present status of the research being outcome expanded -Objectives of the activity -activity content -resource persons -activity evaluation	-Personal media -Study Site -Specialization media(Brainstorming Chart)	High Reasons -Based on two-way communication -Group learning on site -Experience sharing with direct experienced persons
3	Workshop on bio insecticides and Bokashi compost production	-attributes of a non-chemical agriculture farmer -How to produce and use bio insecticides and Bokashi compost -Seed selection	-Personal media -Activity media -Object media -Document media	High Reasons -Learning by doing -Confirming result by oneself -The target audiences prefer activity media allowing them to join in
4	Performance tracking	-Planting Techniques -Problems & Solutions -Consolation & support giving	-Personal media -Object media (cultivated bed/area) -Document media (memorandum book)	High Reasons -Knowledge & understanding verification -Consolation & support giving -Provoking continuing practice

No.	Channels	Message Delivered	Media Applied	Effectiveness for Non-Chemical Agriculture Communication
5	Postharvest Learning Exchange Forum	-Result yielded from practice -Expenses during cultivation season -Experience sharing with agricultural product traders -The future trend of non-chemical agricultural product	-Personal media -Document media -Activity media -Object media	High Reasons -Being a channel & sphere for the doers to communicate with the others -Participants able to get insights from the conclusion of practice and expense information
6	Focus Group on Lesson Learned	-Activity Planning for community learning exchange forum -Team & participant job descriptions	-Personal media -Specification media (Brainstorming chart) -Activity media	High Reasons -Allowing planning skill practice on site -communication rehearsal before the community learning exchange forum helps relieving the participants' nervousness
7	Booklet	-Experiences on non-chemical agriculture and lesson learnt from participating in the project -How to produce and use bio insecticides	-Document media	Quite high Reasons -The target audiences are not familiar with heavily content reading but interested in the illustration inside. -The booklet is effective in communicating with other farmers and general public about the project
8	Informing Posters	-Tips on non-chemical farming	-Specialization media (posters)	High Reasons -Giving a short cut understanding of non-chemical farming with brief content and illustration

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9	Community Learning Exchange Forum	-Conclusion & Lesson Learnt throughout the process -Exchanging experiences & ideas among participants from Phichit and Phetchabun on *marketing concepts *Agricultural product processing *Group management -Effect of Agricultural chemicals on health *	-Personal media -Activity media -Document Media -Object media -Specialization media (Posters, Power Point)	High Reasons -Being a channel and sphere in communicating concepts, knowledge, and experiences from the participants to the community -Being in forum to share and learn with the experts from Phichit -Being in forum to demonstrate marketing activities
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Summary & Discussion

After conducting the research, the research team summarized and discussed further to give more attributions on the proper non-chemical agriculture message and channel design as follows;

1. The non-chemical agriculture message and channel design strategies

At the first stage, the message and channel design to convey non-chemical agriculture Concepts must stress on positive attitude message creations to persuade the receivers. Anyway, the positive attitude message creation should not carry only the benefit concerned contents (health and environmental caring, reducing expenses, long-run cost saving) but should also underline the proper attitudes and behaviors that farmers must create while cultivating. Some of the key attitudes and behaviors were honesty, patience, diligence, carefulness, and life-long learning. Thus, the positive attitude message strategy must apply a two-sided strategy to be conveyed to the farmers; one had to invest first, then one could expect to gain.

The strategy used to design and communicate health problem messages could apply narratives based on true story and invite the receivers to be parts of message creation process by sharing one's own experience in a forum, then link the narratives to in-depth information, the symptoms of chemical exposure, along with scientific explanations. This way it would interest the receivers and allowed them to see concrete evidence of the chemical danger, as well as being able to link the whole information to their own personal experiences.

The study confirmed that the non-chemical agriculture messages needed to be specifically designed case by case, be it for an individual or a group. It was also crucial to mention that the concept "one message fits for all" could not be applied in this study owing to the differences among each individual and groups. They were diverse in terms of economical status, health conditions, kinds of plants cultivated and agricultural areas, soils, climates, and the community's socio-cultural

contexts. With this reason, anytime a sender conveyed a non-chemical agriculture message, he should carefully analyze the target group, the context, objectives, and communication situations before planning and designing messages and channels, even when communicating with the same target group used to communicate before.

Incidentally, the proper communication channels used to communicate with a small group of farmers, between 5-20 persons, should be based on face-to-face communication both formal and informal. There were some useful informal communication channels such as informal or dinner talks. The semi formal communication channels were site visiting, workshop and forum meetings. These channels were useful as they allowed any participant to share knowledge, experiences, and problems faced when cultivating without any chemical substance. A workshop was a channel to train and learn by doing. It allowed the farmers to gain better understanding as well as giving confidences to the farmers to try non-chemical agriculture in their own cultivation areas. The findings were along the lines of Pravisa Pongaram's study (Pongaram, P., 2006) which found that the most influential communication factor of chemical usage reduction was training. Learning and exchange forums were effective in terms of insight creation and outcome expansion.

No matter what channels mentioned above were selected, one could always design and convey the three categories of non-chemical message through these channels. The positive attitude message creations must firstly be stressed. After that, the positive attitude messages (conveyed through giving case studies, direct experiences and site visiting) could be conveyed, along with knowledge, understanding, and skill creation messages (conveyed through holding workshop, practicing and experimenting, creating a mutual agreement, and performance tracking), identifying health problem (conveyed through narrative telling, information and experience sharing, and blood testing), throughout the whole process.

2. The way to integrate communication channels

Everett M. Rogers, who proposed diffusion of innovations concepts, mentioned the importance of channels in a process of innovation diffusion. He mostly focused on binary opposition analysis of the channels, such as advantage & disadvantage comparison between mass media and interpersonal communications, between universal and local communications (Rogers, E., 2003: pp.204-208), but, not much had been said about the channel integration. This study stated the importance of the channel integration in diffusing a concept of non-chemical agriculture. A sender should not view and use each channel separately as it would be more practical to integrate the channels in order to gain the highest benefits. There were some examples of channel integrations shown here; applying interpersonal communication through informal talks to persuade the farmers, while applying the new media to give and exchange information, applying the universal forms of communication such as meetings, workshops together with local communication such as dinner talk or meetings in traditional festivals.

Communication through the mass media, new media and other forms of universal communication had a high potential in the knowledge stage of innovation diffusion. The interpersonal communication and the local forms of communication, whether it be meetings in a coffee club, dinner talk, or meetings in traditional festivals, had impressive impacts on the receivers in the persuasion stage as they allowed the emotional dimension to play its role. Thus, channel hybridization was necessary for effective diffusion of non-chemical agriculture.

3. The role of new media as an effective easy access and inexpensive virtual Community and learning hub for non-chemical agriculture learning

Kanjana Kaewthep (2012: pp.15-51) stated some outstanding attributes of the new media which were; easy to access, based on two-way communication, contributing to continuing learning, integration, and community of practice building. This study found that the new media played a key role in the learning process of both the non-chemical agriculture skilled farmer and the farmer group leader in terms of researching and exchanging knowledge and lessons on non-chemical agriculture and other related topics, such as the international market trend, the national and international safety agricultural food standards. Thus, the new media was a huge community of practice of non-chemical agriculture among academics, researchers, and farmers. It was easy to access and allowed the farmers to shift their roles from receivers to senders within the same channel. It was also a non-place community as its members could interact and exchange information, opinions, and emotions on interesting non-chemical agriculture topics. The findings were along the lines of Natha Suwantharut's research (2012) on media selection and message design for social movement of Big Trees Project. The research found that the reasons why the founders of the project used the new media to communicate with the target group was because of the benefits of the new media that allowed the users to design the messages themselves. It was easy to share and apply two-way communication while this study found that information sharing in the new media led to communication links among farmers interested in non-chemical agriculture. For example, the exchange of information in the new media led to a participation in workshops and trainings and the meetings of people met in the new media. It brought about a linkage and outcome expansion among farmers and between farmers and consumers, as the farmers group from Phichit used the new media to contact its consumers nationwide.

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