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FACTORS INFLUENCING PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE IN SURULERE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

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Abstract

This study assessed factors influencing participation in agricultural cooperative of farmers in Surulere Local Government Area. Multistage sampling technique was used to select 100 Farmers in the study area. Data were collected using interview schedule. Descriptive statistical tools and logit model were used. The mean number of years spent in school was 6 years. The coefficient of years of farming experience was positive and significant at 10 percentage level. It was concluded that the highly experienced farmers participate better or more in agricultural cooperative. Therefore, the less experienced farmers should be sensitized by agricultural extension agents on the need to participate better or more in agricultural cooperative.

Keywords: Age, cooperative, farming experience, household size and participation status

1. INTRODUCTION

Historically, agriculture has played a crucial role in meeting the needs of the world's poor and hungry in rural areas, where a disproportionate number of these people now live. Before the country's oil discovery in 1958 and subsequent expansion in the 1970s, agriculture in Nigeria contributed considerably to GDP (roughly 80%) but was later abandoned (Nlebem & Raji, 2019). Several development projects were established and executed to rectify the problem, including agricultural cooperative banks, agricultural banks, and others.

Due to agricultural cooperatives' aid, small-scale farmers could develop their businesses, bring their goods to market, and boost local economies. Cooperative organisations "offer the greatest vehicle for reaching the bulk of the small-scale farmers at the grassroots" in Nigeria,. Furthermore, it was reported that the majority of cooperative organisations in Nigeria at the time served the agricultural community.

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Despite not working in agriculture itself, the remaining 4% of cooperatives are big consumers of food and other agricultural products.

Cooperative societies have been described as an effective instrument for improving the productivity as well as the income of farmers and non-farmers. Cooperatives can contribute to increased bargaining power, production scales, crop diversification and stabilization, adding value to agricultural products, expanding markets and capitalizing producers (Osmar de Paula and Alcido, 2021). Agro-industrial cooperative organizations have been recognized as important actors for economic development given their ability to increase the gains of local economies, promote regional development and the well- being of population.

Co-operation signifies protection of the weak, provision of equal justice to all in the society and promotes societal welfare. According to them "each for all and all for each is the motto of co-operation". The need to regain agricultural sustainability, agricultural cooperative banks, agricultural banks and other developments programmes were initiated and enforced (Nleblem and Raji, 2019). Agricultural cooperative societies are the only form of business that addresses, fully, all economic, democratic and social dimensions of poverty reduction simultaneously.

Agricultural cooperatives do not only help the farmers to obtain latest skills to tap from the available environmental resources but, also, help them to have access to production inputs

The Nigeria agricultural production has not been able to bridge the gap between the demand and supply of food. Thus, the economy has remained import driven rather than self-sustaining. Yet, the farmers can step-up food production by forming themselves into cooperative. But the low membership strength of most of the societies and their meagre resources have led to loss of farmers' the opportunity of polling enough resources together to enjoy the benefit of large scale production and other benefits accruable to members of cooperatives. Cooperative growth and development in Nigeria has not been impressive and membership has continued to nose dive, thus, inhibiting agricultural growth. The gap established in this work is to find out if agricultural cooperatives can help to increase agricultural productivity of the farmers as the farmer's current level of production is low. Given that agricultural systems in Sub-Saharan are typically fragmented into a myriad of small or micro farms over vast and remote rural areas, the role of agricultural cooperatives has become increasingly important. Historically, agricultural cooperatives have played an important role, all over the world, in providing market access, credit and information to producers.

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The International Labor Organization (ILO) acknowledged that cooperatives play a significant role in economic, social, and political development. A key economic role of the organisation is to provide members with opportunities to increase their income and decrease their poverty levels (Tumenta *et al*., 2021). These advancements aid in the areas of credit availability, inventory management, material logistics, and product marketing (Ankrah *et al*, 2021). Agricultural cooperative societies can have a positive social impact by, for example: enhancing farmers' living and working conditions; providing production, health, funeral, and life insurance and safeguarding consumers against commodity adulteration; taking other social actions like caring for the elderly, children, and the disabled; and providing employment opportunities for the socially disadvantaged. Politically, agricultural cooperatives represent the interests of their members and the general public. Farmers need to form groups and improve their ability to work together horizontally if this impressive agricultural success is to continue (Liu *et al*., 2020). This paves the way for several advantages, such as the realisation of economies of scale essential to participation in value chains, the implementation of quality management practices, the addition of processing steps requiring minimal technological investment, the acquisition of product certification through group certification schemes, and the marketing of products (Olojede, *et al*., 2020; Sharma, 2020).

The specific objectives are to:

1. Describe the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents in the study areas;
2. Estimate factors influencing participation in agricultural cooperative of respondents in the study area

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in in Surulere Local Government Area, Oyo-State, Nigeria. Its headquarters is in the town of Iresa-Adu. It has an area of 23 km² and a population of 142,070 at the 2006 census (NPC, 2006). The annual growth rate of 3.4% was estimated (National bureau of Statistics, 2018). Therefore, in 2024 the State's population is 229, 016. Some of the towns in the local government are Iresa-Adu, Igbon and Iresa-Apa. The main economic activities of the residents of the towns that make up Surulere local government is farming. The main produce from there farming activity is: Yam, Cocoa, Palm oil, Maize and Tobacco.

The population for this study consisted of all farmers in Surulere Local Government Area of Oyo State.

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Multistage sampling technique was used to select the respondents. The first stage was the purposive sampling of four (4) villages. The second stage was the proportionate sampling of 10% of registered famers. Thus, a total of 100 respondents were interviewed.

Descriptive Statistical Tools that were used include frequency counts, percentages, means and Logit model. These were used to describe socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and the factors influencing participation in agricultural cooperative of respondents. Also, Logit model was used to test for the null hypothesis.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 1 illustrates the Socio demographic characteristics of respondents.

Most (60%) of the Farmers were males. The farming is dominated by males. This is probably because; crop is a perennial crop that is usually been inherited by male folks.

The farmers which were less than 40 years of age were 62.00%.Thus, a good number of the respondents were in their youths. The respondents that were within ages of 40 to 44 years and 45 to 49 years were 18.00% and 11.00% respectively. Also, the respondents that were greater than 50 years of age were 7.00%. Therefore, the aged respondents were less than the younger ones. Moreover, the mean age of the respondents was 37 years. This was an indication that the farmers were young, productive and agile. This could enable them to adopt and diffuse innovative technologies and/or training that could improve their production.

The marital status of respondents were single (31.00%), married (66.00%) and divorced (3.00%). The married category were the main category (66.00%). The married status could encourage the use of household members as cheap family laborers to the respondents.

The household size of respondents were 3 (55.00%), 4-6 (34.00%) and > 6 (8.00%). The 3 individuals category was the main category (55.00%) and the mean household size was 4 individuals. This implies that the respondents have very few household members that were depending on them. This could reduce diversion of resource that is meant for farming to household up keeps.

The number of years spent in school were < 7 (67.00%), 7-12 (28.00%) and > 12 (6.00%). The mean number of years spent in school was 6 years. This implies that most of the respondents were mainly primary school leavers. Education could improve adoption of improved training on farming.

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Table 1: Socio economic demographic characteristics of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	60	60.00
Female	40	40.00
Age (years)		
<40	62	62.00
40−44	18	18.00
45−49	11	11.00
>50	7	7.00
Mean = 37		
Marital Status		
Single	31	31.00
Married	66	66.00
Divorced	3	3.00
Household size		
3	55	55.00
4-6	34	34.00
> 6	11	11.00
Mean = 4		
Number of years spent in school		
< 7	67	67.00
7-12	28	28.00
> 12	6	6.00
Mean = 6		

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Factors influencing participation in agricultural cooperative of respondents

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Table 2: Relationship between training received by farmers from extension agent and selected characteristics

Dependent variable	Independent variables	Coefficient	P>|t|
Participation in agricultural cooperative			
	Number of years spent in school	-0.356	0.187
	Household size	0.382	0.308
	Years of farming experience	0.494	0.091
	Constant	0.144	0.598

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

In Table 2, factors influencing participation in agricultural cooperative of respondents was presented. The coefficient of years of farming experience was positive and significant at 10 percentage level. This shows that the highly experienced farmers participate better or more in agricultural cooperative. This was probably because high experience could increase the likelihood of an individual to participate in highly innovative endeavor such as agricultural cooperatives.

Conclusion and Recommendation

It was concluded that farmers were in their productive years. The respondents were not highly educated. The highly experienced farmers participate better or more in agricultural cooperative. It was recommended that young and educated individuals should be encouraged to participate in farming. Government and non-governmental organization should employ more extension agents. The less experienced farmers should be sensitized by agricultural extension agents on the need to participate better or more in agricultural cooperative.

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