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RESEARCH PAPER

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Attitude of Cocoa Farmers to Growth Enhancement Support Scheme (GES) in Ijebu East Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Attitude is a predisposition to act in a certain way and it is the state of readiness that influences a person to act in a given manner. This study was carried out to examine attitude of cocoa farmers to Growth Enhancement Support Scheme (GES) in Ijebu East Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was used to select one hundred and fifty (150) respondents for the study. Descriptive statistics was used to describe the objectives while hypothesis was analyzed with Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Result showed that the mean age of respondents was 40.14 years. Most (80.00%) of the respondents were males and married. The mean year of farming experience was 7.77 years. Almost all (95.33%) the respondents had one form of formal education or the other. The mean household size was 8 people. Many (50.00%) of the respondents had 3 – 5ha while only few (8.00%) cultivated more than 8ha for cocoa. The plots were acquired through inheritance (57.33%) and Self-effort (42.67%). Majority (76.00%) of the respondents got their capital from cooperative societies while very few (3.33%) sourced loans from microfinance banks. The mean output was 10.63 bags/ha. Majority (70.67%) of the respondents displayed low attitude to the GES scheme. However, the effective and efficient of GES scheme were affected by poor telephone network (77.33%), low publicity and awareness (76.67%), and incomplete farmers' data base (74.67%). Result of correlation analysis showed an inverse but significant relationship between the socio-economic characteristics and cocoa farmers' attitude to the GES scheme at $p < 0.05$.

It is hereby recommended that government should compel the GSM service providers in Nigeria to extend and improve their network services to the rural area while the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development should increase publicity and awareness on GES, complete and update the farmers' data base in the study area.

Keywords: Attitude, Growth Enhancement Support Scheme (GES), Cocoa Farmers and Challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's agriculture is characterized by smallholder farming. More than 90% of the agricultural output is accounted for by small-scale farmers with less than two (2) hectares under cropping. It is estimated that about 68 million ha (75%) of the total land area has potential for agricultural activities with about 33 million ha under cultivation. Similarly, of the estimated 3.14 million hectares irrigable land area only about 220,000 ha (7%) is utilized (World Bank, 2008; Daniel, 2009). The agricultural sector generates about 90% of the non-oil export revenues, employs about one-third of the total labour force and provides a livelihood for the bulk of the rural population (Federal Ministry and Rural Development (FMARD), 2006). Prior to the oil boom of the 1970s, Nigeria had been a major exporter of agricultural commodities, including cocoa. Cocoa production is not an exception of these challenges. Cocoa is a bean that is in high demand all over the world especially by developed countries. Cocoa has several uses and benefits to an economy. Africa is the largest producer of cocoa to the international market, which are normally in Europe and America. The nation is currently the fourth largest producer of cocoa in the world, behind Ivory Coast, Ghana and Indonesia, according to statistics provided by the International Cocoa Organization (Maureen, 2014). Nigeria's cocoa production should hit 305,000 metric tonnes in the 2013/2014 season (Maureen, 2014). The sector's contribution to economic growth and

sustained rural development remains to be fully exploited (FMARD, 2006). Agricultural productivity in Nigeria has not grown sufficiently due largely to under-investment in new technology, slow adoption of existing improved technologies, constraints associated with the investment climate, and lagging infrastructure (Daniel, 2009). Cocoa value chain as integral of Growth Enhancement Support Scheme (GES) of Federal Ministry of Agriculture was introduced promote cocoa production and productivity in Nigeria. The Growth Enhancement Support Scheme (GES) is one of the many critical components of the Federal Government's Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA). It was designed for the specific purpose of providing affordable agricultural inputs like fertilizers and hybrid seeds to farmers in order to increase their yields per hectare and make it comparable to world standard. The GES is an innovative scheme, which seeks to remove the difficulties usually associated with the distribution of fertilizers and hybrid seeds in the Country (Akinwunmi, 2013a). However, it was observed that farmers' apathy was a major challenge to the success of the GES as only 61.00% of expected beneficiaries turned out to redeem their inputs (Akinwunmi, 2013b). The attitude of cocoa farmers to the redemption of inputs is a major factor in the on-going Cocoa value chain. Attitudes are defined as a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution or event (Bergevoet *et al.*, 2004). It is a predisposition to act in a

certain way (Allen *et al.*, 2003). It was reported that farmers thought GES programme was scammers at work when they received the text messages; so many of them did not turn out to redeem their inputs (Natsa, 2013). It is against this background that this study assessed attitude of cocoa farmers to GES programme in Ogun State.

Specific objectives are to

- I. Describe socio-economic characteristics of the respondents in the study area
- II. identify sources of capital to the respondents in the study area
- III. estimate the cocoa output in the study area
- IV. ascertain cocoa farmers' attitude to the GES programme in the study area
- V. identify problems to GES programme in the study area

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and cocoa farmers' attitude to GES in the study area.

Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The study area was Ogun State, Nigeria. The State has twenty (20) Local Government Areas with its capital at Abeokuta. Ijebu East Local Government Area was purposively selected for this study based on the *a priori* information that the LGA is the largest cocoa producer in Ogun State. There are eleven wards in Ijebu East Local Government Area. Ogbere (J3 and J4), Ijebu-Ife and Ijebu Mushin were purposively selected. A simple random sampling technique was used to select fifty (50) farmers from each of the selected wards to make up 150 cocoa farmers as sample size for this study.

Data Collection Method

Data collection was through primary sources using interview instruments, observations and memory recall. The instrument used for the data collection was subjected to content validity by consulting experts in the field of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development. Items found ambiguous were removed. Test-retest was carried out with ten (15) cocoa farmers who were not part of this study to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. The reliability of $r = 0.78$ which was significant indicating high internal consistency of the instrument used for this study.

Measurement of Variables

Age and farming experience were measured at interval level while educational level and marital status were measured at nominal level. Problems to GES were ranked based on degree of severity. Those attitudinal statements with the mean scores below 4.80 were regarded as low while those with 4.8 means and above were regarded as high attitude.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentage, and mean was used to analyze the objectives while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the hypothesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

The results in Table 1 showed that the mean age of the respondents was 41.60 years. Many (63.33%) of the respondents were between 41 - 50 years revealing presence of young and middle aged individuals who are known to be economically active and innovative. This finding is in consonance with Oladoja *et al.* 2006 who stated that people who are young are more active hence tend to adopt

improved production techniques. Most (80.00%) of the respondents were males while only (20.00%) were females. This indicates dominance of male folk in cocoa farming in the study area. 68.00% of the respondents had spent between 6-10 years in cocoa farming while 10.67% had been in cocoa business for more than 10 years. The mean year of experience was 7.40 years.

This further shows that cocoa production is not a new business to the people in the study area. The result showed that 32.00% of the respondents attended primary school, 56.67% had secondary school education and 6.66% had tertiary education. Most (82.67%) of the respondents were married while 10.67% were single and 6.66% were separated.

Table 1. Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents (n = 150).

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Age			
≤ 30	16	10.67	40.14
31-40	33	22.00	
41-50	95	63.33	
Above 50	06	4.00	
Sex			
Male	120	80.00	
Female	30	20.00	
Marital status			
Single	16	10.67	
Married	124	82.67	
Divorced	10	6.66	
Years of experience			
≤ 5	32	21.33	7.77
6-10	102	68.00	
Above 10	16	10.67	
Educational level			
No formal education	07	4.67	
Primary education	48	32.00	
Secondary education	85	56.67	
Tertiary education	10	6.66	
Household size			
1-5	40	26.67	8.00
6-10	102	68.00	
Above 10	08	5.33	
Farm size			
≤ 2	35	23.33	
3 – 5	75	50.00	
6 – 8	28	18.67	
Above 8	12	8.00	
Farm acquisition (source)			
Self-effort	64	42.67	
Inheritance	86	57.33	

Source: Field survey, 2014

This literacy level in the study area may affect the rate of adoption of innovations by the cocoa farmers. This result is in agreement with Asiabaka, 2002 that educational level is a very important determinant in adoption of innovation. The findings showed that average household size was 8 members. 68.00% of the respondents had 6-10 people while 5.33% had more than 10 people in their households. This indicates that the household size of respondents was relatively large. This finding agrees with Adegbite *et al.* 2007, who explained that household size is an important factor in any rural development intervention, besides the children assist on the farm and in other household activities. Many (50.00%) of the respondents had 3 – 5ha while only few (8.00%) cultivated more than 8ha of cocoa farms. This means that the cocoa farmers operate on a small scale. The cocoa plots were acquired through inheritance (57.33%) and Self-effort (42.67%).

Sources of Capital

The capitals used by the respondents were sourced from Cooperative, Personal savings, Banks and borrowing from Friends and Family. Result in Table 2 revealed that majority (76.00%) of the respondents got their capital from Cooperative societies while 8.67% got theirs from personal savings. Findings also revealed that 3.33% of the respondents obtained loans from microfinance banks while 12.00% of the respondents borrowed money from their friends and families. The implication of this is that microfinance banks have not significantly contributed to cocoa farming as their credit facilities are not readily available to farmers in the study area. The result supports the findings of Omoare *et al.* 2013 that banks have not made significant impact as their credit facilities are not readily available to the farmers.

Table 2. Sources of capital utilized by the respondents (n = 150).

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Personal savings	13	8.67
Family and friends	18	12.00
Cooperative societies	114	76.00
Microfinance banks	05	3.33

Source: Field survey, 2014

Cocoa Output (bags/ha)

The Cocoa output was measured in number of bags harvested per hectare of land in the study area. 60.67% of the respondents got about 3 - 5bags/ha while only 12.00% of the respondents realized more than 5bags/ha.

Cocoa farmers' attitude

Attitude simply refers to 'a person's evaluation of any psychological object'. An attitude is (a) directed towards an object,

The mean output was 3.54bags/ha. This is an indication that the output was very low and this may be attributed to poor management and reliance on old cocoa plantation inherited by the farmers from their fore-fathers.

person, institution, or event; (b) has evaluative, positive or negative, elements; (c) is based on cognitive beliefs towards the attitude-object (i.e., the balancing between positive and negative attributes of an object

leads to an attitude); and (d) has consequences for behavior when confronted with the attitude object

(Bergevoet *et al.*, 2004). Attitude is determined by the beliefs that are salient or important to a person.

Table 3. Cocoa Output (bags/ha) (n = 150).

Output (bags/ha)	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
≤ 2	41	27.33	3.54
3 – 5	91	60.67	
5 and above	18	12.00	

Source: Field survey, 2014

Table 4. Cocoa farmers' attitude (n = 150).

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
I spent considerable amount to redemption center*	141(94.00)	9(6.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	4.94	0.24
I am satisfied with GES scheme	53(35.33)	54(36.00)	13(8.67)	30(20.00)	0(0.00)	3.90	1.09
The agro-inputs are too costly*	77(51.33)	40(26.67)	15(10.00)	18(12.00)	0(0.00)	4.22	0.98
GES could help lower production cost	136(90.67)	8(5.33)	6(4.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	4.87	0.44
The GES coverage is low*	78(52.00)	56(37.33)	2(1.33)	14(9.33)	0(0.00)	4.31	0.90
I am not interested in the GES*	23(15.33)	16(10.67)	7(4.67)	20(13.33)	94(62.67)	2.27	1.59
The text messages look like scam*	65(43.33)	31(20.67)	10(6.67)	11(7.33)	33(22.00)	3.65	1.54
I would spend more money on GES inputs to retrieve them*	67(44.67)	81(54.00)	0(0.00)	2(1.33)	0(0.00)	4.41	0.57
The quantity provided is too small for my farm*	123(82.00)	27(18.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	4.82	0.39
I feel reluctant to respond to the message	106(70.67)	25(16.67)	4(2.67)	15(10.00)	0(0.00)	4.48	0.95
I received the messages very late*	88(58.67)	53(35.33)	2(1.33)	7(4.67)	0(0.00)	4.49	0.74
Government means well for the farmers	91(60.67)	36(24.00)	11(7.33)	12(8.00)	0(0.00)	5.12	0.20

Source: Field survey, 2014 *negative statements Values in parenthesis are percentages

Attitudes are formed by what an individual perceives to be true about the attitude-object. This perception may or may not be based upon information and knowledge and/or an emotional reaction towards the object. In fact attitude reflects personal factors. It is the state of readiness that influences a person to act in a given manner (Rahman *et al.*, 1999). In this study attitudinal statement considered include, time and nature of text messages sent to the farmers, distance and transportation fair to redemption centers, quantity of agro-inputs to be distributed, cost of the agro-inputs, arrival time of the inputs, feeling of the farmers to the messages received among others. From these statements, the result of the study showed that majority of farmers have low attitude (mean < 4.80) towards the GES. For instance about 95.00% of the cocoa stated that they would spend considerable money to redeem the inputs while 82.00% of the respondents complained that the quantity of the inputs per farmers was too small for their farms and 70.67% of the farmers indicated that they felt reluctant to redeem the inputs. The low response to the GES scheme may be due to long time neglect of rural farmers in the past and inconsistency in the government policy for agriculture. However, 35.33% of the respondents were satisfied with GES scheme while 60.67% of

the cocoa farmers indicated that government meant well for the farmers. This corroborates the report of Akinwunmi, 2013a (incumbent Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development) that the GES is an innovative approach to fertilizer subsidy and other input administration, through an electronic system that ensures that only registered farmers benefit. It is meant to change the mentality of Nigerians to view agriculture as a business instead of a pastime.

Challenges to GES programme

Results in Table 5 showed various challenges confronting the GES programme in the study area. The respondents ranked telecommunication problems (77.33%), low coverage (76.677%) and late arrival (74.67%) of the inputs as the major impediments to GES programme. Findings also revealed that late commencement of GES programme (72.67%), poor location of redemption centers (66.67%) and inadequate capital (62.67%) affected the farmers turn out for the GES programme in the study area. Other challenges indicated were inaccessible inputs (57.67%) and poor road network (56.67%). Nigeria's rural road network is one of the least developed in sub-Saharan Africa (Dauda, 2010 cited in Oyediran 2013).

Table 5. Challenges to GES programme (n = 150).

s/n	Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1.	Inadequate capital	94	62.67	6 th
2.	Late commencement of GES Programme	109	72.67	4 th
3.	Inaccessible inputs	86	57.33	7 th
4.	Incomplete farmers' data base	112	74.67	3 rd
5.	Poor road network	85	56.67	8 th
6.	Poor location of redemption centers	100	66.67	5 th
7.	Poor telephone network	116	77.33	1 st
8.	Low publicity and awareness	115	76.67	2 nd

Source: Field survey, 2014 *Multiple responses

Test of Relationship between socio-economic characteristics and cocoa farmers' attitude

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between the socio-economic characteristics and cocoa farmers' attitude to the GES scheme in the study area. From result in Table 6 the age of cocoa farmers indicates that they are economically active and have farming experience, thus expected to respond very well to the messages. In contrast, the age, experience and

household size were negative to the farmers' attitude on the GES scheme. It means that the poor attitude of respondents to the GES scheme may be due to the challenges confronting the programme and not the socio-economic characteristics of the cocoa farmers. Hence, there was an inverse but significant relationship between the socio-economic characteristics and cocoa farmers' attitude to the GES scheme at $p < 0.05$.

Table 6. Test of Relationship socio-economic characteristics and cocoa farmers' attitude.

Variables	r	p-value	Decision
Age	-0.73	0.00	S
Household size	-0.54	0.00	S
Experience	-0.74	0.00	S

Source: Field survey, 2014 S = significant at $p < 0.05$ level

CONCLUSION

The attitude of the farmers to GES scheme was very low. It can be concluded that the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents have no direct bearing on the attitude of the farmers to the GES scheme rather the constraints affected the farmers turn-out to redeem the agro-inputs as specified in the e-wallet messages sent to them through their mobile phones.

Recommendation

It is hereby recommended that the:

- i. government should compel the GSM service providers in Nigeria to extend and improve their network service in the rural areas
- ii. government should upgrade the rural infrastructure in Nigeria

- iii. the Federal Ministry of Agriculture should increase publicity and awareness on GES, complete and update the farmers' data base
- iv. The GES scheme should commence at the peak of farming season so that farmers can utilize the largesse effectively.

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