

The Role of Social Capital in Cashew Nut Production in Ugwolawo District, Kogi State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: The study assessed the role of social capital in cashew nut production in Ugwolawo District, Kogi State, Nigeria. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from one hundred and five (105) respondents selected using purposive, simple random and stratified sampling techniques. Data were analyzed using both descriptive (eg frequency, percentages and mean) and inferential statistics. There was high level of participation in social groups' likewise high level of productivity of cashew nuts in the study area. Correlation analysis revealed that sex ($r = 0.192$, $p = 0.050$) had a significant relationship with level of participation in social groups, while age ($r = 0.037$, $p = 0.0708$), level of education ($r = -0.168$, $p = 0.086$), cashew farming experience ($r = -0.113$, $p = 0.252$), farm size ($r = -0.009$, $p = 0.928$) and income from cashew farming ($r = 0.170$, $p = 0.083$) had no significant relationship with level of participation in social groups. No significant relationship was established between level of participation in social groups and level of productivity of cashew nuts ($\rho = 0.166$, $p = 0.091$). It is recommended that social group formation should be encouraged among cashew farmers in order to access social capital as it plays a vital role in cashew nut production. Cashew farmers should develop their social groups well and strong enough to access social capital in order to boost their cashew nuts productivity and income.

KEYWORDS: Social capital, cashew production, social groups, participation, rural livelihoods

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I. INTRODUCTION

Value chain describes the full range of activities required to bring a product or service through different phases of production, including the transformation, the input of various producers' services and response to consumer demand (Kaplinksky and Michael, 2000). It is the key framework for understanding how inputs and services are brought together and then used to grow, transform or manufacture a product: how the product then moves physically from the producer to the customer and how the value increases along the way (Martin and Patrick, 2010). According to them the value chain approach increasingly is being used to guide and drive high-impact and sustainable initiatives focused in improving productivity, competitiveness, entrepreneurship and the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Agriculture value chain refers to actors connected along a chain producing, transforming and bringing agricultural goods and services to end-consumers through a sequence set of activities (Riisgaard and Ponte, 2014). Cashew is reportedly ranked third in world production of edible nuts that are traded globally (Akanni and Adams, 2011). The annual world production of cashew nuts was about 3,186,039 tones and Nigeria was rated the second among the top ten producer with 660,000 tones after Vietnam with 961,000 tones (Food Agriculture Organization, 2008) and in metric tons, Nigeria produces approximately 150,000 metric ton (NEPC, 2017). The introduction of Brazilian cashew biotype with improved and desirable nuts and quality characteristics by the Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN) has further increased the popularity of the crop and the spread in Nigeria (Hammed, Adedeji, Asogwaet al., 2007). The contribution of Kogi state to the nation's production is about 30% annually, while the Eastern part of the state accounted for about 60% of the state production (Adejo, Otitolaye and Onuche, 2011). The tree is capable of living for 50-60 years; most producing for about 15-20 years (Caribbean Technology Service, 1993).

The average yield of the nuts of a mature cashew tree ranges from 7-11kg per annum (Adejo et al., 2011). Cashew currently contributes approximately \$250 million to Nigerian economy each year with over 300,000 families depending on cashew for their livelihood for the past five years. The average production growth for the last five years has been 11,300MT/year and the expected average growth in the next five years is 13,500MT/year which makes it one of the highest expected growth rate in Africa (Oyewole, 2016). Value addition through processing has been found to improve income and shelf-life of agricultural produce (Lawal and Jayeola, 2007). According to Olife et al. (2013) there are 3 types of cashew processing practiced in Nigeria; small cottage processing, processing for export and processing for local market. They further enunciated that small cottage processing involves manual processing of cashew nut carried out by small cottage industries and

rudimentary methods such as roasting is usually adopted. Processing for export started after liberalization of the commodity market in 1986 and the processing for the local market targeted the middle and high domestic consumers. Raw Material Research and Development Council (RMRDC) has initiated the establishment of cashew processing clusters in the cashew belt of Nigeria. The council in collaboration with Kogi State University, Anyigba established a mechanized 1ton⁻¹ cashew nut processing plant within the university. This catalysed the establishment of four 500kg day⁻¹ cashew processing plant in the 3 senatorial district of Kogi state by the state government in collaboration with the Bank Of Industry (BOI) (Olife et al., 2013). The potential revenue generated by increased value adding processing of cashew is tremendous and an income of 20% from Nigeria's current processing level would create more than 344,000 new jobs and additional income of over \$75 million according to USAID study estimate in 2002 (Oyewole, 2016).

To realize this potential, an effective marketing structure is imperative. Marketing is one of the vital aspect of agriculture, since agriculture entails the production of goods and services, production is said not to be completed until the commodity produced reaches the final consumer (Adejo et al., 2011). There has been a tremendous price appreciation of Nigerian cashew nuts in the international markets with a ton of cashew nuts which sold for N24,753.00 in 1993 rising to N180,011.00 in 2003 (FAO, 2007; Asogwa, Hammed and Ndubuaku, 2008). The marketing of cashew is mostly affected by price instability due to the seasonal nature of its production and lack of storage facilities (Adejo et al., 2011). More than 65% of farming families who are small holder farmers depend on the crop as a major source of income in Nigeria (CBN, 2005). Cashew is grown throughout Nigeria but the cultivation is centralized primarily in the south and middle belt regions in small holder farms and plantations (Olife et al., 2013). The major products from cashew are dried cashew nuts, cashew kernels (nuts) which are ready to eat product, cashew nut shell liquid (CNSL), cashew juice, cashew apple candy or jam and cashew apple wine (Olife et al., 2013). Ripe cashew apple is sweet and rich in vitamin C and sugar, its nuts contain the fat soluble vitamins A, D, K and minerals such as calcium, phosphorous and iron which are required for the healthy growth of human body (Akanni and Adams, 2011). It was mainly used in Afforestation Schemes for the control of erosion in the former Eastern Nigeria (Asogwa et al., 2008).

The enormous possibilities in the cashew-nut enterprise would be under explored under the unorganized small-holder system which characterizes the industry in Kogi state. This is so for obvious reasons, individual farmers lack the resources to make the required investments needed to reap full benefits from the cashew industry. Social capital is defined as the networks of relationships and norms that govern community members in the pursuit of their objectives (Grootaert, 1998; Naswem, Unongo and Njoku, 2015). It is the benefits derived from the collection of goodwill followership, sympathy and social intercourse among people which make up social units that help agricultural production (Putman, 2000). It can also be referred to as social assets either with respect to the source of investment or with the goods or service produced (Reiner, 2002). Social capital according to Grootaert and Bastelaer (2002) is an institution, relationship, attitudes and values that govern interactions among people and contribute to economic and social development. Similarly, Dasgupta (2002); Olubunmi, Abraham and Adesola (2015) define social capital as a system of interpersonal networks which enhances cooperation and collaboration that helps to create economic opportunities. It has been identified as one of many inputs that can be used along with others such as labour, physical and human capital to improve market performance (Fafchamps and Minten, 1999) and also includes the specific benefits of belonging to a group and the collective value of all social networks of mutual benefits (Putman, 2000). Social capital is an important resource of individuals and organization as it complements other resources that individual and organization control (Ahuja and Gautam, 2000). The basic ideas about social capital is that one's family, friends and age grades, neighbourhood constitutes an important asset that can be called in production crises (Ejairu, 2007) and it embodies social dimensions such as social networks, trust, reciprocity, social norms and collective action which can be harnessed for the wellbeing of individuals and the entire society and has the potential to facilitate the accrual of economic benefits to individuals and groups (Anzaku, Chidebelu and Achike, 2013). Social capital is widely seen as a resource that facilitates cooperation within or between groups of people and the connections which exist among them (Ayodele and Adewole, 2015). According to Olubunmi et al. (2015), social relationships can play an important role in the daily lives of farming households as this can in turn bring about efficient functioning of socio-economic well-being, agricultural productivity, food security and economic performance of the agricultural sector. The concept of social capital according to Ejairu (2007) has become very significant in agricultural production due to the inability of formal financial organizations to take care of production capital requirements in agricultural production. Social capital in form of social networks may indirectly affect agricultural productivity by influencing farming practices and the household propensity to adopt newer technologies via the supply of information through the networks (Katungi, 2007; Liverpool and Winter-nelson, 2010; Balogun, Yusuf and Oloniniyi, 2017) and may also indirectly impact agricultural productivity by affecting the quantity of labour available either from the immediate or extended family or through the social relationships available to individuals (Balogun et al., 2017).

Communities endowed with a rich stock of social networks and civic association will be in a stronger position to confront poverty and vulnerability (Moser, 1996). Social capital is increasingly becoming the missing link which the most vulnerable members of community can exploit to better their lot (Naswem et al., 2015). Farmers in rural areas still have difficulties in accessing credit due to the bureaucratic bottlenecks hence the only viable alternative left for farmers is what they get from social capital in agricultural production (Odebode and Adetunji, 2010). The idea of social capital has become very significant in agricultural production due to the inability of the formal capital institutions to provide the necessary requirements in agricultural production (Balogun et al., 2017). The use of collective actions and interconnectedness among individuals to the up-liftment of national economy particularly in agricultural production cannot be overemphasized (Odebode and Adetunji, 2010).

Due to the global dwindling and falling prices of crude oil which has been the main stay of Nigeria economy, the need to diversify her economy to other sectors specifically agriculture and mining sector becomes necessary. Cashew as a cash crop has enormous potentials to boost the agricultural sector in that order due to its high-value and demand both in the local and international market thus helping in boosting the Economy and at the same time realizing the diversification of her economy. Nigeria cashew industry is mostly incorporated with smallholder farmers (individual farmer) who barely have enough resources in realizing, deriving and utilization of the enormous potentials in cashew. The need to discover if there is any significant social capital utilization by cashew farmers in the study area so as to inform effective intervention cannot be overemphasized. Hence, the need to study the role of social capital in the cashew value chain in Ugwolawo district, Kogi state.

The broad objective of this study was to study the role of social capital in the cashew value chain in Ugwolawo district, Kogi state. The specific objectives were to:

1. describe the socio-economic characteristic of the respondents;
2. identify the types of social group the cashew farmers belongs to;
3. determine the level of participation in social groups by cashew farmers;
4. identify the benefit derived by the cashew farmers from participating in social groups; and
5. ascertain the level of productivity of cashew nuts in the last cashew farming season.

Two hypotheses were tested:

Ho₁: Selected socio-economic characteristics of the respondents have no significant influence on the level of participation in social group.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between the level of participation in social group and level of productivity of cashew nuts in the study area.

Conceptual Framework for the Study

Different terminologies in literature are used to refer to farmer groups including producer organizations, farmers' organizations, groups of cooperative action, private cooperative organizations.

This study is built on the concept that when a cashew farmer joined a social group with active/high participation, it will lead to improved and high level of productivity and it is presented in a simple context conceptual framework (figure 1), which sees social capital as one assets/capital that cashew farmers will use to boost or improve their level of cashew nuts productivity.

A cashew farmer (A) who's productivity is limited by social factors, economic factors and farm attributes can be enhanced through belonging to a social group (B). Membership of social group will create an avenue for collective ideas, reciprocal efforts and other benefits especially when participating highly in the group activities like attending meetings, daily/monthly contribution, abide by the rules and regulation of the group etc.

The cashew farmers derived a lot of benefits (C) like access to credit facilities and loans, input support, financial assistance from other group members, access to production and marketing information, cooperative farming and soon which could lead to high level of cashew nuts productivity (D) and thereby improving their income status as well as standard of living.

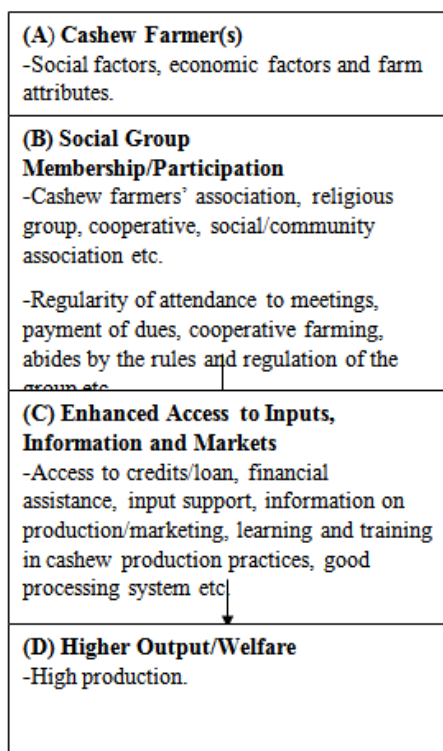


Fig 1: The Conceptual Framework of role of social capital in cashew nut production in Ugwolawo District, Kogi State, Nigeria.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Ugwolawo District, Kogi State, Nigeria. Ugwolawo is headquarters of Ofu Local Government Area and is situated in Kogi East Senatorial District. Ofu Local Government Area is located on latitude 7°20'N 7°05'E and longitude 7.333°N 7.083°E (Ofu Local Government, 2015). It is located in Zone D of the Agricultural Zones of Kogi State (Ibitoye, 2012). The Local Government Area has a population of about 192,169 inhabitants (National Population Census (NPC), 2006) with a land mass of about 8,747.5square kilometers. The Local Government has a number of tourist delights namely; UlokoAmo Water Falls in Ofokopi, Ugbakoji Hills in Itobe, Egane Water Falls and Natural Bridge, Ofakete Natural Bridge in Ugwolawo, Alo Natural Tunnel and Ojuwo Mission Settlement in Ugwolawo. The main occupation of the inhabitants in the Local Government is farming. The major crop grown includes maize, cowpea, millet, groundnut, melon etc. Ofu Local Government is also known for cultivation of tree crops such as cashew, citrus, mango etc. The people also keep livestock such as goat, poultry and sheep (Ofu Local Government, 2015).The social groups predominant in the study areas are cashew farmers association, religious groups, daily contribution groups, cooperative societies, cultural groups, traders/marketers association, community association, educational association, neighbourhood/club groups and burial societies.

2.2 Population and Sampling procedure

The population of this study consists of all the cashew producers in Ugwolawo District of Kogi State. Ugwolawo District is made up of 4 council wards namely; Aloji, Ugwolawo 1, Ugwolawo 2 and Ochadamu ward. A multistage sampling procedure was employed for this study. Firstly, Ugwolawo Ward 1 was purposively selected for this study in view of the fact that cashew production is highest in the District. Secondly a census of all cashew producers in the ward was conducted through the various village heads and six (6) villages in Ugwolawo Ward 1 were selected out of eighteen (18) villages that made up the Ward using simple random sampling technique. A sample frame was developed for each of the villages through the village heads and using a proportional allocation of 50% across board, a total sample size of 105 respondents was used for this study. A well structured interview schedule was used to collect the data which were analysed using both descriptive and inferential tools.

III. DISCUSSION

3.1 Types of Social Groups that Cashew Farmers' Belonged to

Table 1 shows the distribution of cashew farmers according to the social groups they belong. The result indicated that 63.8% of the respondents belonged to cashew farmers association, 77.1% belonged to religious groups, 53.3% belonged to daily contribution groups, 78.1% belonged to cooperative societies, 86.7% belonged to social/community association and 73.3% belonged to neighbourhood groups. Other social groups that farmers belonged to were cultural groups (38.1%), traders/marketers associations (41.9%), educational societies (34.3%) and (43.8%) belonged to burial group. This implies that cashew farmers belonged to a variety of social groups, farmers association, religious groups, daily contribution group, cooperative societies, social/community association and neighbourhood group are the social groups that most cashew farmers belong to. It also showed that there exist the activities of cashew farmers association. This is in conformity with Naswem et al. (2015) who reported that women oil-palm processors belonged to wide varieties of organizations and Olubumi et al. (2015) who also reported that majority (94.5%) of the farmers were members of one social group or the other. Cashew farmers' membership of social groups will enable them access and mobilize social capital for cashew production and access to markets and other socio-economic opportunities.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents according to the Type Of Social Groups they belong

| Variables | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Social Groups | | |
| Cashew farmers association | 67 | 63.8 |
| Religious group | 81 | 77.1 |
| Daily contribution group | 56 | 53.3 |
| Cooperative societies | 82 | 78.1 |
| Cultural group | 40 | 38.1 |
| Traders/marketers association | 44 | 41.9 |
| Social/community association | 91 | 86.7 |
| Educational societies | 36 | 34.3 |
| Neighbourhood group | 77 | 73.3 |
| Other farmers association | 46 | 43.8 |
| Burial societies | 20 | 19.0 |

*Multiple responses recorded

3.2 Level of Participation of Cashew Farmers in Social Groups

Fig 1 indicates that majority (87.6%) of cashew farmers had high level of participation in social group. This implies a high level of participation of cashew farmers in most of the activities of the social groups which may also indicate the failure of government support system in the study area. This is line with Olubumi et al. (2015) who indicated a high level of farmers' participation in social groups. This will increase the access of cashew farmers to social capital.

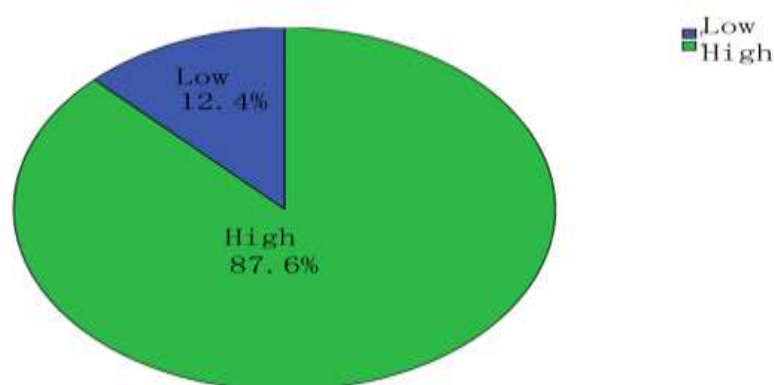


Figure 1: Level of Participation in Social Groups

3.3 Benefits Derived from Participating in Social Groups

From Table 2 over seventy percent (70.5%) indicated that they benefited from group membership through learning and training in cashew production practices, 86.7% benefitted through access to production and market information, while 100% reported that their incomes improved through participation in social groups. Other benefits cashew farmers derived from belonging to social groups included support for economic activities (92.4%), access to input (56.2%) , financial assistance (82.9%). The promotion of cultural ties (91.4%) and promotion of cooperation among cashew farmers (82.9%) were also important benefits to the farmers. This implies that cashew farmers in the study area derived a lot of benefits from participating in social groups. This is in line with Fakayode (2015) who reported that farmers derived several benefits from participating in social groups and Olubumi et al. (2015) who reported that access to markets information, support on economic activities and enhancements of agricultural production as the major benefits derived from social groups. This shows that respondents accessed social capital by participating in social group and their contribution to the cashew value chain was consequently positively impacted.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents according to the Benefits derived by Participating in Social Groups (N=105)

| Benefits | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Learning and training in cashew production practices | 74 | 70.5 |
| Facilitate access to production and market information | 91 | 86.7 |
| Facilitate access to credit facilities and loan | 11 | 10.5 |
| Reduce transaction cost | 24 | 22.9 |
| Improve income level | 105 | 100.0 |
| Support in economic activities | 97 | 92.4 |
| Input support | 59 | 56.2 |
| Better decision making | 92 | 87.6 |
| Access to government aids | 09 | 8.6 |
| Financial assistance | 87 | 82.9 |
| Enhance agricultural production | 91 | 86.7 |
| Promote cultural ties | 96 | 91.4 |
| Promote cooperation among cashew farmers | 87 | 82.9 |
| Better pricing power | 31 | 29.5 |
| Source of land for cashew production | 17 | 16.2 |

*Multiple responses recorded

3.4 Level of Productivity of Cashew Nuts as Perceived by Cashew Farmers

In Table 3 (61%) of the cashew farmers indicated high level of productivity, while 28.6% indicated medium level and 10.7% indicated low level of cashew nuts' productivity. This is in contrast with Ibrahim (2015) who reported that farmers' cashew nut farms in Mkinga District of Tanzania had low cashew nuts productivity. This result could be attributed to the high level of social capital enjoyed by cashew farmers participating in social groups and the favourable climate for cashew nuts production in the study area.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents according to their Level of Cashew Nut Productivity in 2017

| Level of Production | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| Low | 11 | 10.7 |
| Medium | 30 | 28.6 |
| High | 64 | 61.0 |
| Total | 105 | 100 |

3.5 Relationship between Socio-economic characteristics and level of Participation in Social groups

The first null hypothesis states that “selected socio-economic characteristics of the respondents have no significant influence on the level of participation in social group”. Results of correlation analysis in Table 4 revealed that among the selected socio-economic characteristics, relationship exist between sex and level of participation in social groups ($r = 0.192$, $p = 0.050$). This is at variance with Fakayode (2015) who found no significant relationship between sex and participation in farmers groups as a result of sex been a determinant in participation in social group in the study area. Table 4 also revealed no significant relationship between participation and age ($r = -0.037$, $p = 0.0708$), level of education ($r = -0.168$, $p = 0.086$), cashew farming experience ($r = -0.113$, $p = 0.252$), farm size ($r = -0.009$, $p = 0.928$) and income from cashew farming ($r = 0.170$, $p = 0.083$). This implies that age, level of education, cashew farming experience, farm size and income from cashew farming have no influence on the level of participation in social group in the study area. Other studies have established relationship between participation and these socio-economic variables (Fakayode, 2015; Olubunmi et al. 2015). The difference in the findings could be explained by the more socially homogenous setting that obtains in the study area

TABLE 4: Relationship between Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents and Level of Participation in Social Groups

| Selected socio-economic characteristics | R | P-value | Decision |
|---|--------|---------|----------|
| Sex | 0.192 | 0.050* | S |
| Age | -0.037 | 0.708 | NS |
| Level of education | -0.168 | 0.086 | NS |
| Cashew farming experience | -0.113 | 0.252 | NS |
| Farm size | -0.009 | 0.928 | NS |
| Income from cashew farming | 0.170 | 0.083 | NS |

* Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: Field Survey(2017)

4.6 Level of social group participation and level of productivity of cashew nuts

The null hypothesis two states that “there is no significant relationship between the level of participation in social group and the level of productivity of cashew nuts in the study area.” Results of correlation analysis revealed that no significant relationship exist between level of participation in social group and the level of productivity of cashew nuts in the study area since ($\rho = 0.166$, $p = 0.091$). The null hypothesis could therefore not be rejected. This implies that participation in a social group does not have influence on the productivity of cashew farmers in the study area. This may be explained by the status of cashew nuts production which is usually not the primary focus of most farmers in the study area. Cashew trees are sometimes found in the wild and farmers may not make deliberate efforts to tend them, except perhaps to clean the bush around them to prevent damage from bush burning. Thus, cashew farmers’ may not necessarily need social capital through participation in social group to boost their productivity.

IV. CONCLUSION

Social capital plays some role in the cashew value chain in the study area although it did not significantly influence productivity. It was also found that group membership among cashew farmers was high and among the selected socio-economic characteristics of the cashew farmers, only sex was found to have a significant relationship with the level of participation in social group.

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended;

1. Government and other donor agencies should assist the cashew farmers via the social group in providing inputs, cashew production and marketing information, credits and loans.
2. Cashew farmers in the study area should mobilize their social capital through their participation in social group to reduce transaction and production cost and improve price and stability.
3. Since cashew farmers exist in groups, extension agents should take the advantage of that in delivering extension services in order to enhance their productivity.
4. Social group formation should be encouraged among cashew farmers in order to access social capital as it plays a vital role in cashew nut production.

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