



The Effect of Socio-Economic Characteristics of Co-Operators on the Level of Participation in Co-Operatives in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of Socio-economic characteristics of Co-operators on the level of Cooperatives participation in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State. Purposive and proportionate sampling procedures were used to select 25% of the Co-operators from the sample frame of 442 Co-operators to give a total of 111 respondents. A list of the Co-operatives was obtained from Zaria Local Government Secretariat to provide the sampling frame. The data for the study was collected by the use of structured questionnaire. The data was analyzed using both descriptive (frequency, percentage and mean) and inferential statistics (Chi-square). The findings revealed four different forms of Co-operative Societies in the area. Majorities (37.8%) of the Co-operators were at their productive stage of life with the mean of 26 years. Majority (63%) of the Co-operators belongs to multipurpose Co-operatives with a mean of 5 years membership. Also, the Co-operators (97.2%) attended formal school and they were civil servants. They were using Co-operatives as their secondary occupation. It was also, revealed that majority (78.4%) of the Co-operators were very active members. The Chi-square test of association indicated a significant association between the socio-economic characteristics (age, marital status, educational level and family size) of the Co-operators and the level of participation in Co-operatives activities. The Co-operatives should encourage their members to participate fully in Co-operatives activities was given as recommendation.

Key words: Educational level, Cooperatives, Co-operators, Local Government and Zaria.

Introduction

The term Cooperative Society is dated back to Rochdale pioneers equitable society in 1844 during the industrial revolution. From these beginning, Co-operative spread around the world taking widely different forms according to colonial territories where it was encouraged and controlled by the colonial Government (Encyclopedia, Britanica, 1968).

Cooperative is a social process by which individuals work together to realize a common objective or goal. Cooperative is present in every age of humanity including the oldest. In most cases, cooperative occurs when an external factor threatens a certain number of individuals. Cooperative is also defined as a voluntary organization formed by people with common interest registered as a legal entity and operated along democratic lines for the purpose of supplying service to its members who contributes both capital and business (Olayide, 1981).

Helms (2005) defines cooperative society as an association of persons who have voluntary joined together to have a common end through the formation of a democratic controlled enterprise, making equitable contribution to the capital required and accepting a fair share of the risk and benefit of the undertaking in which the member activity participate.

In most countries, cooperative was borne out of the extreme weight of poverty, exploitation and the wide gap between the rich and the poor (Odubanjo, 2010). The story of cooperative society in Nigeria started in the 1930s after the legislative unit passed the bill about the creation of this movement in 1935 after the submission of Strickland report. It took a couple of years for the birth of cooperatives but from the very beginning, such strategy appeared to be effective. The major interest of the colonial masters in introducing cooperatives at this time was agricultural (Ijere, 2005). Prominent among the early indigenous groups were the Ibadan Agricultural Society founded in 1904, the Agege Planters' Union founded in 1907 and the Egba Farmers' Association founded in 1910 respectively. These cooperative organizations were founded in the major cocoa growing areas of Nigeria, wholly independent of Government support or initiatives. The administrative activities of the Co-operatives are entirely a function of its members (Ijere, 2005). Co-operative started in the northern Nigeria in 1956 with more emphasis on the development of multiple cooperative societies combining agricultural marketing with credit (CBN, 1986).

The strength of a Co-operative depends upon its ability to mobilize its resources and members not only in gaining market share and achieve economic growth but also in maintaining members' commitments, satisfaction and retaining them. Highly satisfied and committed members are more likely to support their Co-operative by participating in all cooperative activities (Henry *et al.*, 2005). As democratic organizations, Co-operatives rely on members for the realization of their distinctive character. Hakelius (1996) noted that a vital part of any cooperative organization is its members, their active participation and loyalty to the Co-operative are integral for its success.

In view of the above discussions, the study was conducted to assess the effect of socio-economic characteristics of the Co-operators on the level of participation in cooperatives. The specific objectives were to: Describe the socioeconomic characteristics of Co-operators in the study area, determine the different forms of Co-operatives in the area, ascertain level of Co-operators' participation in Co-operatives and Examine the association between the Socio-economic Characteristics of Co-operators and the participation in Co-operatives activities.

Hypothesis of the Study

Ho = there is no significant association between socio-economic characteristics of Co-operators and the level participation in Co-operative in the study area ($P < 0.05$).

Ha = there is significant association between socio-economic characteristics of Co- operators and Co-operative participation in the study area ($P > 0.05$).

Materials and Methods

The Study Area

This study was conducted in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State. Zaria lies within latitudes $11^{\circ}09'N$ to $11^{\circ}13'N$ and longitudes $7^{\circ}39'E$ to $7^{\circ}68'E$. It has a total land area of 300 square kilometers with a population of 1,001,982. It has a tropical wet and dry climate with warm weather year round. A wet season lasting from May to October and dry season from November to May. Rainfall in the area starts as early as April from 00mm and it reaches 180 mm in May to the peak of 816mm in August. It then decreases to 150mm in October and back to 00mm from November to December (Abubakar, 2012). The major tribes found are Hausa/ Fulani with a significant number of Yoruba, Igbo and other ethnic groups. It is a primarily agriculture based economy with staple foods such as guinea corn, millet and sweet potato. Also, cash crops like cotton groundnut and tobacco were cultivated in the area. Zaria is a home of numerous artisans from traditional craft

like leather work, dyeing, cap making, print shops, furniture makers and textile industries (Maiwada, 2007).

Purposive and proportionate sampling procedures were used for this study. Four wards (Runji, Amaru, Limancin Kona and Kaura) were purposively selected based on the predominance of Co-operative Societies in the area. Also, a proportionate sampling procedure was employed in selecting 25% of the Co-operators from 442 Co-operators as sample frame to give a total of 111 respondents for the study. The list of Co-operatives was obtained from Zaria Local Government Secretariat.

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used for the study. Primary data was collected using well-structured questionnaire which was administered by the researcher while Secondary data was sourced from journals, textbooks, magazines, past projects and other relevant literatures related to the study.

The instrument for data collection was subjected to validity test. Cronbach alpha test of internal consistency was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Values of alpha above 0.70 were considered as adequate. Thus, alpha value of 0.70 and above showed that the instrument was very reliable.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data obtained for the study. Descriptive statistics (such as mean, percentage and frequency distribution tables) were used to achieve objectives I, ii and iii. Inferential statistics (such as chi-square) was used to achieve objective iv. Also, the inferential statistics was used to test the hypothesis in order to make inferences and reasonable conclusion about the variables considered. Socio-economic characteristics were considered as independent variables and co-operative participation as dependent variable.

Results and Discussion

Co-operators Socioeconomic Characteristics

Results in Table 1 show the distribution of Co-operators according to their Socio-economic Characteristics. The result depict that the Co-operators were between the ages range of 16, 20, 25 and 30 years with a mean of 26 years. This shows that most of the Co-operators were at their productive age group. Kune and Mberengwa (2012) asserted that 30 – 50 years of age indicates the youthfulness of farmers and hence their potential to venture into Co-operative activities.

As indicated in Table 1, 49.5% of the Co-operators were singled and 50.5% were married. This shows that marital status has effect on the Co-operative participation and they use it to sustain the urgent needs of the family.

Findings in Table 1 further revealed that 12.5% had a household size of 16 – 20, 26.66% had 21 – 25, 36.8% had 26 – 30 and 25.2% had >30. It was also found out that the mean household size of the Co-operators was 7 persons. The findings was in line with Etene and Okon (2010) who observed that majority of the rural farmers have a household size ranging from 5 -8 persons.

Table 1 indicated further that 47.7% of the Co-operators had tertiary education while 45.9% had secondary education and 3.6% primary education respectively. The level of education in Zaria had made them to consider Co-operatives as a way of life. Ogunbameru *et al.* (2008) stated that the level of education attained is one of the important socio-economic factors in the overall capital accumulation and investment.

Primary occupation of the Co-operators as indicated in Table 1 shows that majority (44.10%) of the Co-operators were Civil servants while the secondary occupation revealed that majority (46.8%) of the Co-operators were farmers. This finding was in agreement with Abimbola and Oluwakemi (2013) who stated that agriculture is the main source of income in Nigeria especially to the rural people.

Table 1 further expressed that majority (69.36%) of the Co-operators cultivates 1- 5 ha, 3.6% cultivates >5ha while 27.02% cultivates 0 – 0.5ha with the mean farm size of 2ha. This indicated that most of the Co-operators in the study area were small scale farmers. This was in line with Iliya (1999) who reported that majority of the farmers in Nigeria were small scale farmers who cultivate less than five hectares of land.

Results in Table 1 revealed that majority (54.1%) of the Co-operators had farming experience between 1-10 years, (20.7%) had farming experience between 11-20 years, (9.9%) had farming experience between 21-30 years while (0.9%) had more than 30 years farming experience. Thus, the mean farming experience was 9 years. This shows that most of the Co-operators were farmers since their childhood which is in line with Abimbola and Oluwakemi (2013) who stated that agriculture is the main source of income in Nigeria, especially in the rural areas.

Forms of Co-operatives, Co-operatives Membership, Years of Co-operative Membership and Level of Co-operators Participation

Table 2 shows that 51.12% of the Co-operators had Multipurpose Co-operatives, 24.71% had Farmers' Co-operatives, 23.03% had Women Co-operatives and 1.12% had Fishermen Co-operatives. This was a clear indication that Multiple Co-operatives dominated the other Co-operatives in the study area.

Table 2 expressed further that majority (63.1%) of the Co-operators belongs to Multipurpose Co-operatives, 18% belongs to Farmers' Co-operative and 18.9% belongs to Women Co-operatives. This could be as a result of the fact that most of the Co-operators were civil servants.

Table 2 also, shows that 48.6% of the Co-operators have spent 1-5 years as members of different Co-operatives, 36.9% spent 6-10 years and 14.4% spent more than 10 years. However, the mean years of Co-operators membership was found to be 5 years.

Table 2 further revealed that majority (78.4%) were very active participants, 14.4% were active and 7.2% were found to be inactive members. This might be due to the fact that majority of the Co-operators were at their productive stage of life and educated. This findings was in agreement with finding of Kune and Mberebgwa (2012) who reported that 30-50 years of age indicates youthfulness of farmers and hence their potential to venture into Co-operatives activities.

Chi-square Test of Association

Table 3 indicates a test of association between socio-economic characteristics of Co-operators and participation in Co-operatives. The result indicates a significant association between Age, Marital status, Family size and Educational attainment of the Co-operators. This implies that an increase in age, marital status, family size and education will increase the level of participation in Co-operatives. This further indicates that socio-economic characteristics (age, marital status, family size and level of education) influenced the Co-operators participation in Co-operatives activities. This agrees with Osterbeg and Nilson (2009) who reported that the level of education attainment play a significant role in the participation of members in Co-operatives activities as well as influencing the benefit provided by the Co-operatives.

Table 1: Distribution of Co-operators based on their Socio-economic Characteristics (n=111)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Age			
16-20 years	12	10.8	26.12 years
21-25 years	29	26.1	
26-30 years	42	37.8	
>30 years	28	25.2	
Sex			
Single	55	49.5	
Marriage	56	50.5	
Household Size			
0-5	58	52.2	6.52 persons
6-10		26.1	
11-15	09	8.1	
16-20	10	08	
>20	05	4.5	
Educational Status			
Qur'anic education	00	00	
Adult education	03	2.7	
Primary education	04	3.6	
Secondary education	51	45.9	
Tertiary education	53	47.7	
Primary Occupation			
Farming	30	27.0	
Fishing	03	2.7	
Trading	13	11.7	
Civil servant	49	44.1	
Tailoring	12	10.8	
Business	01	0.9	
Secondary Occupation			
None	02	1.8	
Farming	52	46.8	
Fishing	00	0.0	
Trading	24	21.6	
Civil servant	05	4.5	
Tailoring	23	20.7	
Butcher	04	3.6	
Mechanic	01	0.9	
Student	01	0.9	
Farm Size			
0.-0.5 ha	30	27.02	2.14 hectares
1-5 ha	77	69.36	
>5 ha	04	3.60.	
Farming Experience			
1-10 years	60	54.1	8.85 years
11-20 years	23	20.7	
21-30 years	11	9.9	
>30 years	01	0.9	

Field Survey (2018).

Table 2: Forms of Co-operatives, Co-operatives Membership, Years of Co-operators Membership and Level of Co-operators Participation (n=111) *=Multiple responses

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Forms of Co-operatives			
Multipurpose	91	51.12	
Farmers	63	24.71	
Women	40	23.03	
Fishermen	2	1.12	
	196*		
Co-operatives Membership			
Multipurpose	70	63.1	
Farmers	20	18.0	
Women	21	18.9	
Years of Co-operators Membership			
1-5	54	48.6	
6-10	41	36.9	5.14 years
>10	16	14.4	
Level of Co-operators Participation			
Very Active	87	78.4	
Active	16	14.4	
inactive	8	7.2	

Source: Field survey (2018).

Table 3: Chi-square Test of Association between Socio-economic Characteristics and Co-operative Participation (n=111)

Variable	Degree of freedom	X ² tab(0.05)	X ² cal.	Decision
Age and Participation	6	0.303	7.203	Rejected
Marital Status and Participation	2	0.241	2.845	Rejected
Education and Participation	6	0.547	4.973	Rejected
Family size and Participation	44	0.282	48.922	Rejected

Source: Field survey (2018).

Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings from the study indicated that majority(37.8%) of the Co-operators were at their active stage of life with 26 years mean and married with the mean household of 7 persons. The Co-operators (97.2%) attended formal education and they were civil servants. They used Co-operatives as a secondary occupation. The findings also found four forms of Co-operatives in the study area with multipurpose having the majority (63.1%). In addition to that, the mean Co-operatives membership was 5 years. The Co-operators participation in Co-operatives activities were 78% as very active. Also, the association between socio-economic characteristics of Co-operators and participation in Co-operatives activities was significant. This implies that as the socio-economic characteristics (age, marital status, family size and level of education) increased the level of participation in Co-operatives activities will also increased. The Co-operatives should encourage their members to participate fully in Co-operatives activities was recommended.

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