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# Factors influencing role performance of community based organisations in agricultural development

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The study evaluated factors influencing role performance of community based organisations in agricultural development in Imo State, Nigeria. Data for the study was collected with the aid of structured questionnaire administered to 72 randomly selected respondents in the study area. Data analysis was by use of frequencies, percentages and ordinary least square multiple regression. Findings revealed that income ( $X_1$ ), experience ( $X_2$ ), type of agriculture activity ( $X_4$ ) and quality of leadership ( $X_5$ ) were significant at 1% level while membership size ( $X_3$ ) was significant at 5% level. The implication of the finding is that there was significant relationship between role performance and the selected variables. Based on the findings of the study it was recommended that agricultural policy makers should take into consideration the identified socio-economic characteristics of CBOs that influence their role performance.

**Key words:** Role performance, community based organizations.

## INTRODUCTION

The history and importance of community based organizations in rural areas is a long one. They have been deeply involved in activities that has impacted on the livelihood of rural people. Community based organizations are formal voluntary social groups that are found in communities which differ in size, objectives and degree of interaction among members. In these organizations members have had the ability to influence ideas and actions of others. For this reason most community and agricultural development agencies have sought the support of these organizations as effective means of changing the structure of communities, harnessing their resources and improving agricultural development. Such is the importance of community based organization's role in the development of the area. Agricultural development has received attention over the past decade by governments in Nigeria. The country embarked on many agricultural development programmes geared towards effective improvement of agricultural development, although primarily concerned with increasing farm productivity is essentially an interactive process which takes place within a social eco-

nomical and cultural system.

The failure of many agricultural development programmes in Nigeria could be traced to poor organizational structure at the grassroots level. The rural resource-poor farmers are isolated, undereducated and lack the means to win greater access to resources and markets. FAO (1997) recorded that a study of international labour organization in (ILO) poverty oriented projects worldwide showed that the poorest farmers were excluded from activities and benefits due to the use of conventional mode of transfers aimed at boosting agricultural production and generating wealth for the rural community dwellers. In practice, conventional projects usually target medium to large-scale progressive producers while supporting them with technology, credit and extension services in the hope that improvements will gradually extend to the more backward strata of rural society but none of these projects lead to production increases in yield of crops for participants and non participants. A number of factors are responsible for this such as constantly changing technology through education and research, availability of equipment and supplies including the ability of farmers to obtain them on time, poor transportation network, among others. It is the gap arising from the poor performance of government and other institutional organizations that led

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to the formation of community based organizations (CBOs) as means of achieving agricultural development. Community based organizations serve as the apex organizations by which communities can embark on agricultural development projects, small scale industries, vocational and trade, skills, rural transportation and other rural economic activities (Fakoya et al., 2000; Awa and Ema, 1992; Anyanwu, 1992; Adejumobi, 1997).

Community based organisations have played far reaching roles in community development. One of which is agricultural development. Certain factors influence the performance or otherwise of CBOs in executing their roles. This study therefore evaluates factors influencing role performance of community based organisations in agricultural development in Imo State, Nigeria

## METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Imo State of Nigeria. The state has an estimated population of 3.7 million people with growth rate of 2.89. It lies between longitudes 6°40' and 7°35' East and Latitudes 5°21' and 6° north. The annual rainfall in the state ranges between 2,000 - 2,500 mm. The temperature is between 26 - 280°C and relative humidity of about 98% during raining season and between 60 - 80% during dry season (IPEC, 2004). The state is divided into 3 agricultural zones namely Owerri, Orlu and Okigwe which comprises 27 local government areas (IPEC, 2004). There are many CBOs and farmers associations in Imo State which are involved in agricultural development activities. The people are mostly farmers and artisans. The main crops and livestock produced are yam, cassava, cocoyam, maize, rice, goat, sheep, poultry, fishing etc.

A multi - stage sampling procedure was employed in the study. The state was stratified according to the 3 agricultural zones; namely Owerri, Orlu and Okigwe. 6 local government areas were purposively selected from each agricultural zone, giving a total of 18 local government areas (LGAs). 2 communities were then selected from each chosen LGA giving a total of thirty 6 communities. The purposive sampling was done due to the presence of many community based organizations (CBOs) that are into agricultural development activities as found during the reconnaissance survey of the study area. The list of CBOs involved in agricultural activities in the selected communities were compiled with the assistance of resident extension agents and key informants such as village heads, community leaders and officials of CBOs. From this sampling frame, 2 CBOs were randomly selected from each chosen community giving a sample size of 72 CBOs for the study. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained from chairmen and secretaries of CBOs. This was achieved using structured and validated questionnaire.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, percentages, frequencies and inferential statistic such as multiple regression. The multiple regression model is implicitly specified as follows:

$$Y = f(X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5, e)$$

Where;

Y= role performance measured by the number of roles performed out of the total numbers of roles expected of the CBOs.

X<sub>1</sub> = income level of CBOs in naira.

X<sub>2</sub> = Experience of CBOs in agriculture (yrs)

X<sub>3</sub> = Membership size (Number of people)

X<sub>4</sub> = Type of agricultural activities (measured on a 4 point scale of crop = 1, Livestock = 2, Fish farming = 3, agro – processing = 4).

X<sub>5</sub> = Quality of leadership (Dummy variable, 1 for good leadership,

zero

for poor leadership).

E = error term.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Socio-economic characteristics of community - based organizations

Table 1 shows that 43.1% of the CBOs sourced their income from levies on members. Also 11.1 and 5.5% of the CBOs got their income from launching and fines respectively. The result of the analysis generally implies that CBOs in Imo state had limited access to external sources of income in carrying out agricultural development activities. CASSAD (1992) stated that funding of the association came from contributions made by members, only rarely were donations received from external sources. Increasing the number of sources of income would have positive effect on their agricultural development activities. Local production could be improved where there is enough capital to finance the production. Hence, the importance of credit facilities in agricultural production cannot be overemphasized. Credit is one of the basic requisites to increasing agricultural production. Farmers need credit to increase their scope of agricultural production (FAO, 2004).

The findings of the study reveal that majority (58.3%) of CBOs engaged in crop farming while (23.6%) of them are into livestock farming. Also (12.5%) and (5.6%) of them practiced agro-processing and fishing farming respectively. This result indicates prominence of crop farming and livestock over other agricultural activities. CBN (2000) reported that livestock production is the major source of income and food to most families throughout the country especially in Imo State. Livestock contributed about 6.6% of gross domestic products in Nigeria while poultry accounted for about 69% in the year 2000. Farm income as used in this study was the total annual far income of CBOs as assessed by leaders from each organization,

Table 1 shows that 41.9% of the CBOs had annual income level of N103, 000 - 128,000, while (27.8%) of them had income of N77,000 - N102,000. Also, 12.5 and 9.7% of the CBOs had annual farm incomes of N51,000 - N76, 00 and N129,000 and above respectively. The mean income level of the CBOs was N96, 548.61 per annum. This result implies that, with the huge income earned from their agricultural activities in Imo State they would be encouraged to engage more in agricultural development. This result is similar to those of Matthews – Njoku (2003).

Table 1 shows that most (56.9%) of the CBOs have acquired 2 - 10 years experience in farming while 20.8 and 13.9% of them acquired 11 - 19 years and 20 – 28 years experience in farming respectively. Also 8.4% of the CBOs acquired 29 - 37 years experience in farming with 12.6 years as their mean farming experience.

The result of the analysis implies that the more farming

**Table 1.** Socio-economic characteristics.

Sources of income	frequency	percentage
Donation by members	29	40.3
Levies on members	31	43.1
Launching	8	11.1
Fines	4	5.5
<b>Type of agricultural activity</b>		
Crop	42	58.3
Livestock	17	23.6
Fish farming	4	5.6
Agro-processing	9	12.5
<b>Income level</b>		
25, 000 - 50, 000	6	8.3
51, 000 - 76, 000	9	12.5
77, 000 - 102, 000	20	27.8
103, 000 - 128, 000	30	41.7
129, 000 and above	7	9.7
<b>Farming experience</b>		
2 - 10	41	56.9
11 - 19	15	20.8
20 - 28	10	13.9
29 - 37	6	8.4
<b>Membership size</b>		
7 - 20	8	11.1
21 - 34	7	23.6
35 - 48	39	54.2
49 - 62	8	11.1
<b>Age of organization</b>		
2 - 10	33	45.8
11 - 19	10	13.9
20 - 28	17	23.6
29 - 37	12	16.7

Source: Field survey data, 2007

**Table 2.** Expected roles of CBOs.

Roles	Ranking
Arrange funds to finance agricultural projects	9 <sup>th</sup>
Create awareness	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Organize agricultural workshops	8 <sup>th</sup>
Encourage farming	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Supply of agricultural inputs	7 <sup>th</sup>
Market members products	5 <sup>th</sup>
Establish unity among community members	6 <sup>th</sup>
Provide access to micro-credit	1 <sup>st</sup>
Free advisory service	4 <sup>th</sup>

experience a CBO acquires, the more agricultural activities she is likely to practice. This means that most CBOs in the state have acquired substantial years of experience

in farming that they now know the benefits derived from involving in agricultural development. This finding also agrees with Matthews-Njoku and Asiabaka (2003) that farming experience significantly and positively relates with adoption of improved soil conservation practices. This suggests that farmers with more experience would likely adopt feasible practical techniques that would enhance soil conservation and ultimately influence their crop yield. Most (54.2%) of CBOs had large membership size of 35 - 48 while 23.6 and 11.1% of them had membership size of 21 - 34 persons, 49 - 62 persons and 7 - 20 persons respectively with a mean membership size of about 37 persons. The result of the analysis shows that majority of the CBOs had large membership size showing the capacity and capability to embark on agricultural development to increase food productions.

About 46% of the CBOs that are involved in agricultural development are within the age of 2 - 10 years. Also 23.6 and 16.7% of them have existed for 20 - 28 years and 29 - 37 years respectively. The mean age of the CBOs was 16 years. This age for the CBOs is not surprising since groups emerge and die as fast as the people composing them. The prevalence of the groups formed is indicative of the recent awareness created by the agricultural and rural development programmes of government which emphasized the mobilization groups (Imo ADP, 2000).

## EXPECTED ROLES OF CBOS

Table 2 shows the ranking of respondents with regards to expected roles of community based organizations in agricultural development. Respondents ranked provision of access to micro-credit as the first, then followed by creating awareness. The third ranking was for encouraging farming. Then provision of free advisory service and then marketing of members products.

There is no gainsaying the fact that CBOs are indispensable to agricultural development in rural communities. This is because they have been involved in poverty reduction measures in various forms. For instance, Olaleye (1999) had reported that provision of credit to rural farmers is a way of helping them increase their production and obtain higher standard of living. Also, Onweagba (2000) noted that among others, rural women organizations help to spread incentives and benefits to allow majority of the populace to be positively involved in the development process.

## FACTORS INFLUENCING ROLE PERFORMANCE OF CBOS IN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Tables 3 shows the relationship between role of CBOs and selected variables. The double - log function had the highest coefficient of multiple determination ( $R^2$ ) of 0.8153 and F-ratio of 58.2672 and conformed to a priori expected signs and the number of significant variables (5) were also highest. Thus, the double - log functional

**Table 3.** Multiple regression results of the relationship between role performance of community - based organizations and Selected variables.

Explanatory variables	Linear	Semi-log	Double-log	Exponential
Constant	19.0137	11.6144	26.1093	21.7929
Income (X1)	5.9215 (2.9393)**	1.0821 (2.6451**)	0.0614 (2.9662)**	0.0071 (2.4483)*
Experience (X2)	6.7729 (3.2026)**	0.9257 (1.0613)	0.0821 (2.5818)**	0.0083 (3.7727)**
Membership (X3)	3.4018 (1.0498)	1.1.4467 (1.2938)	0.1659 (2.3235)*	0.0047 (1.2051)*
Type of agric. Activity (X4)	4.1167 (1.0498)	1.3982 (1.3094)	0.0337 (3.2718)**	0.0047 (1.2051)
Quality of leadership (X5)	3.9045 (1.2807)	1.4217 (1.1842)	0.0592 (2.9749)**	0.0092 (3.2857)**
R <sup>2</sup>	0.4831	0.4018	0.8153	0.6812
F ratio	12.3369	8.8662	58.2672	28.2053
N	72	72	72	72
Standard Error	3.1066	3.9887	0.0914	0.1083

P ≤ 0. 05 Source: Field survey data, 2007.

form was used for the discussion as the lead equation. The result shows that income (X<sub>1</sub>), experience (X<sub>2</sub>), type of agriculture activity (X<sub>4</sub>) and quality of leadership (X<sub>5</sub>) were significant at 1% level while membership size (X<sub>3</sub>) was significant at 5% level. The hypothesis is hereby rejected since there was significant relationship between role performance and selected variables. The aggregate effect of the variable accounted for about 82% change in the role performance by the CBOs. The coefficient of income (X<sub>1</sub>) was significant and positively related to the CBOs role performance. The positive relationship implies that the richer the CBOs, the higher the level of involvement in agricultural development activities. Income will increase their production.

Experience (X<sub>2</sub>) had a coefficient of 2.5818, which was significant and positively related to the role performance by CBOs. This implies that the more the farming experience the CBOs acquire, the more the roles they are likely to perform. This is in consonance with the relationship between age and role performance since an increase in age while farming denotes increase in farming experience. Membership size (X<sub>3</sub>) with coefficient of 2.3235 was positively related to the role performance of CBOs. This implies that the CBOs with more people in their organization invariably had more role to perform. This would lead to a positive effect to agricultural development.

The coefficient of the types of agricultural activity (X<sub>4</sub>) was 3.2718. This was significant and positively related to the role performance of CBOs. Farmers consider enterprise with less risk or a combination of enterprise for diversification. This agrees with the study of Matthews-Njoku (2005) which found that there is a positive relationship between income, experience in agriculture, type of agri-

cultural activities, and membership size with the adoption of soil conservation technologies. Moreover, quality of leadership (x 5) was significant at 1% with a coefficient of 2.9749 that was positively related with the role performance. This means that quality of leadership determines the level of involvement in agricultural development. Asiaibaka (2002) had reported that leading involves a close personal relationship. This is why leadership is the ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives. It is the human factor which binds a group together and motivates it towards goals. In line with this, Ekong (2003) stated that the leader's official position grants him a certain minimum number of functions and responsibilities which enables him to become involved and affect the outcomes of community issues more readily than actors in the community's political structure.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has noted that community based organizations (CBOs) are variously involved in agricultural development. The factors influencing role performance of community based organisations in agricultural development include income, experience, type of agriculture activity, quality of leadership and membership size. Based on the findings of the study it was recommended that agricultural policy makers should take into consideration the identified socio-economic characteristics of CBOs that influence their role performance.

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