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Original Research Article

Gender roles and economic of cassava enterprise among farmers in Ayamelum Local Government Area in Anambra State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the gender roles and profitabilities among cassava farmers in Ayamelum Local Government Area in Anambra State, Nigeria. A multi-stage random sampling was used to select 40 males and 40 females to make a total of 80 respondents. Interviews schedule was used for data collection while frequency count, percentage, mean scores and gross margin analysis were used in analyzing the data. The result shows that 50% of the respondents were married while the mean age of the respondents was 37years. Women were more involved in cassava production and processing activities than men and therefore likely to produce more cassava if efforts and investments were shifted in their favour. The percentage gross margin for the cassava production and processing was 748.2% which implies that cassava production and processing have higher profitability as a result of low variable cost attached to it. Bad road network, poor marketing structure and high cost of input were identified as constraints working against cassava production and processing in the study area.

Key words: Gender roles, profitabilities, cassava production and processing activities.

INTRODUCTION

Cassava has been neglected for a long time in Nigeria, but now has become a key food security crop with many comparative advantages over cereals (Ogunleye et al., 2008). Cassava is one of the major crops grown by the smallholder farmers in the southern and Eastern part of Nigeria (Ayoade, 2013). Because of its capacity to yield under marginal soil conditions and its tolerance to drought, cassava plays a significant role in food security both in rural economy and social welfare of the people.

Cassava is a very versatile commodity with numerous uses and by products. Each component of the plant can be valuable to its cultivator. According to Kormawa and Akoroda (2003), about 16 percent of cassava root production was used as industrial raw material in 2001 in Nigeria, 10 percent was also used as chips in animal feeds, 5 percent was processed into a syrup concentrate for soft drinks and less than 1 percent was processed into high quality cassava flour used in biscuits and confectioneries.

Gender, according to Sinkaiye and Jimbowo (2005) is a term always associated with roles and responsibilities of males and females in the society as a social classification of sex. However, it is the social cultural difference between males and females as against the biological difference. Gender roles give us an insight into issue affecting women and it is focused mainly on the social and economic structure of a society.

In recent time, it has been observed that the different roles played by males and females with regard to cassava production and processing in the study area were not being able to be investigated by the scholars. Therefore, it is in the light of the above statement that this paper was born. The general objective of this study was to determine the gender roles and profitabilities among

Table 1a. Percentage distribution of farmers according to socio-economic characteristics

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Sex	40	100.00	
Male	40	100.00	
Female			
Marital Status			
Single	16	20.0	
Married	40	50.0	
Widow	9	11.3	
Divorced	6	7.5	
Separated	9	11.3	
Age			
21-30	17	21.3	
31-40	40	50.0	
41-50	16	20.0	37
51-60	7	8.8	
Household size			
1-2	53	66.3	
3-4	18	22.5	3
5-6	6	7.5	
7 and above	3	3.8	
Farm size for cassava			
<1ha	11	13.8	
1-2ha	56	70	1.5
3-4ha	13	16.3	
Occupation			
Full time farming	50	62.5	
Trading	25	31.3	
Civil servant	5	6.3	
Source Farm land			
Inherited	15	18.8	
Leased	55	68.8	
Purchased	10	12.5	
Source of labour			
Family	24	30.0	
Hired	56	70.0	
Source of agro-input			
Input dealers	17	21.3	
Fellow Farmers	53	66.3	
AADP	10	12.5	

Source: Field Survey 2015

cassava farmers in Ayamelum local Government Area in Anambra State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to; (a) identify socio-economic characteristics of the farmers. (b) Determine cost and returns on cassava production and processing (c) determine the gender roles on cassava production and processing (d) identify constraints working against cassava production and processing in the study area.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The study area for this research was Ayamelum, is a local government in Anambra State, Nigeria with her

Table 1b. Percentage distribution of farmers according to socioeconomic characteristics

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Educational level			
Non formal education	4	5.0	
Primary school attempted	11	13.8	
Primary school completed	9	11.3	
Secondary school attempted	34	42.5	
Secondary school completed	18	22.5	
OND/NCE	2	2.5	
B. Sc/HND	2	2.5	
Farming experience (years)			
1-10yrs	72	90	
11-20yrs	5	6.3	6.0
21 and above	3	3.8	
Access to credit			
Yes	46	57.5	
No	34	42.5	
Institutional source			
Commercial bank	16	20.0	
Agricultural bank	12	15.0	
Microfinance bank	52	65.0	
Non institutional source			
Isusu club	47	58.8	
Money lender	12	15.0	
Personal saves	21	26.3	
Access to extension agent			
Yes	20	25	
No	60	75	
Expense on cassava production and processing(N) between			
3000-6000	34	42.5	
6100-9000	38	47.5	7,267
9100 and above	8	10	
Estimated income from cassava (N)			
10,000-50,000	12	15.0	
50,001 – 10,000	67	83.8	64,700
Above 100,000	1	1.3	

Source: Field Survey, 2015

headquarters at Anaku. The L.G is of eight (8) communities; Omor, Omasi, Igbakwu, Anaku, Umumbo, Ifite Ogwarri, Umuerum and Umunje. Ayamelum is located at the left bank of Anambra River. It has a boundary with Uzouwani Local government in Enugu state in the North, in the South with Anambra East local government in Anambra State, in the East with Awka North local government and in the west with Anambra West local government of Anambra state. The estimated population of the local government in the last population

Table 2. Gender distribution of respondents according to cassava production and processing activities.

Female			Male	
Activities	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Land clearing	20	50.0	39	97.5
Ridge making	12	30.0	40	100.00
Planting cassava	32	80.0	19	47.5
Weeding	40	100.0	17	42.5
Harvesting	30	75.0	22	55.0
Peeling cassava	36	90.0	13	32.5
Gari making	38	95.0	17	42.5
Fufu making	40	100.0	9	22.5

Source: Field Survey, 2015

census is 158,152 (NPC, 2006). Farming is the major occupation of the people in the area. The climatic and soil conditions of the study area favour the extensive production of food crops like cassava, yam, rice, maize, vegetables, Okro, tomatoes ,among others.

In this study, eight (8) communities that make up of Ayamelum were used. Ten farmers each from a community with equal number of males and females were selected using random sampling techniques and this gave a total sample size of eighty (80) respondents.

Data were collected through a structured interview schedule .Data collected for the research were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean scores and gross margin analysis.

To determine the cost and returns on cassava production and processing, gross margin analysis was used. Gross margin is the difference between the gross farm income (GI) and the total variable cost (TVC). It is a useful planning tool in a situation where fixed capital is a negligible portion of farming enterprise as in the case of small scale subsistent agriculture (Abdullahi, 2012).

GM = GI-TVC Where GM= gross margin, I=gross income.

TVC=total variable cost. %GM=GM/TVC×100/1

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1a show that 50% of the respondents were married while 20% of the respondents were single. The average mean age was 37yrs. This shows that the respondents were still in their active productive years. This result is in consonance with Ogunleye et al. (2008) who found that most cassava producers and processors in Ogo-Oluwa local government area of Oyo State were within the active age. The average mean household size of the respondents was 3 while 62.5% of the respondents were full time farmers. Majority (68.8%) of the respondents acquired land by lease and about 70% of the respondents cultivated 1-2ha of land. The average farm size cultivated cassava by the farmers was 1.5ha. This shows that the cassava farmers in the area were still small scale farmers. This finding is in line with Mbanaso (2010) who reported that farmers in the south-east zone were small –scale farmers. About 70% of the respondents used hired labour as their source of labour while 66.3% of the respondents sourced agro inputs from their fellow farmers.

Table 1b indicates that majority (42.5%) of the farmers attempted secondary school while 11.3% of the farmers completed primary school. High number of educated people among the farmers could enhance their opportunity of adopting new innovation for cassava production and processing. This finding agreed with Rao and Rao (1996) who found education and training to be positively significant to adoption of an innovation .The mean year of farming experience was 6 years. About 57.5% of the respondents had access to credit while 75% of the respondents did not have access to extension services. The average amount spent on cassava production and processing was N7, 267 while the average income from cassava was N64, 700 respectively.

Table 2 reveals that 100% of the male farmers were involved in ridge making while 97% of male were involved in land clearing. All the female farmers (100%) were involved in weeding of cassava and FUFU making while about 90% and 95% of female farmers were involved in peeling of cassava and gari processing. These findings agreed with Ezedinma et al. (2007) and Lenis et al. (2009) who found women to be mostly engaged in planting, weeding, harvesting and processing of cassava in their separate studies. However, the participation of either male or female in any of the above roles is just complementary.

Table 3 shows the constraints faced by respondents as either very serious, serious and not serious. Bad road network with a mean score 2.82, poor marketing structure

Table 3. Distribution of respondent according to constraints faced in cassava production and processing

Variables	Mean	SD
Bad road network	**2.82**	**0.509**
Poor marketing structure	**2.66**	**0.758**
High cost of inputs	**2.57**	**0.806**
Lack of access to credit	1.84	0.767
Age of the farmers	1.46	0.528
Time of planting	1.46	0.642
Poor soil fertility	1.42	0.735
Low output of the crop	1.36	0.559
Disease/pest infestation	1.19	0.538
Farm size	1.14	0.53
Weed infestation	1.13	0.340

Source: Field Survey, 2015

with a mean score 2.66 and high cost of inputs with a mean score 2.57 were perceived by the respondents as very serious constraints working against cassava production and processing in the study area. This finding disagreed with Ogunleye et al. (2008) who said that spoilage during processing was a serious constraints working against cassava processing in Ogo-Oluwa L.G Oyo State. Other constraints were; lack of access to credit, age of the farmers, time of planting, poor soil fertility, low output of the crop, disease infestation, farm size and weed infestation.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the finding of this paper, it is observed that planting of cassava, weeding, peeling of cassava, processing of gari and fufu making were the major roles played by female with regard to cassava production and processing while male farmers were fully involved in land clearing and ridge making. However, the participation of either male or female in any of the above roles is just complementary. Bad road network, poor marketing structure and high cost of inputs were seen as constraints against cassava production and processing. Therefore, it is recommended that federal government in conjunction with the state and local government should make agro – inputs available to formers, rehabilitate the existing roads and market in order to transport and marketing agricultural produce. In as much as women dominated the roles of cassava production and processing in majority of the states in Nigeria, government should as well shift effort and investment with regards to cassava transformation initiatives in their favour in order to encourage food security of the nation. In view of this, the paper therefore calls for policy design to encourage women's access to land use for cassava multiplications.

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