

COCOA FARMERS' LEADERSHIP DYNAMISM, GROUP RAPPORT AND COHESION IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the effect of leadership dynamism and group rapport on Cocoa Farmers group cohesion in Ogun State, Nigeria. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 93 cocoa farmers for the study. Descriptive statistics and linear regression were used to analyse the data. Results showed that the cocoa farmers were mostly male (81.7%), married (85.0%), within an active age (Mean = 49.2 years), had a moderate household size (Mean = 6 persons), a mean annual cocoa revenue per production cycle of ₦2,693,900 and are well experienced in cocoa production (Mean = 21.6 years). A major leadership dynamism, group cohesion and group rapport of cocoa farmers was that the cocoa farmers' leaders provide guidance and direction to the members of the group (Mean = 4.3), they believed that their group was the best in the vicinity and that regardless of the circumstances (Mean = 4.27) and were exceptionally friendly, courteous and respectful to other group members respectively (Mean = 4.25). The results of linear regression revealed that the cocoa farmers' leadership dynamism ($\beta = 0.676$) significantly ($p < 0.05$) increased the group cohesion of the cocoa farmers. The study recommended that cocoa farmers' leadership dynamism should be improved through intervention programmes such as training, workshops and seminars as this will translate into better-quality group cohesion thereby enhancing their cooperation and productivity amongst themselves.

Keywords: Nigeria, leadership dynamism, group rapport, group cohesion, cocoa farmers

INTRODUCTION

The cocoa sector assumes a significant part in the Nigerian economy. Proof has shown that the development pace of cocoa production has been declining, which has led to a fall in the fortune of the sub-area among different reasons. Daudu et. al., (2021) noticed that cocoa production in Nigeria saw a descending pattern after 1971 season, when its product declined to 216,000 metric tons in 1976, and 150,000 metric tons in 1986, along these lines lessening the nation's piece of the pie to around 6% and to fifth biggest maker to date. A lot of techniques that endeavour to achieve huge expansions in cocoa production have been battled, of which the viable mix of measures is pointed toward expanding the degree of ranch assets focused on the cocoa production and joining the ventures in an ideal way (Amanor, 2019). Advancement in agribusiness has happened after some time and for a long time through possibility and through the purposive yet additionally casual activities of ranchers looking for new and better ways and strategies for production. In any case, the exhibition of Nigerian agribusiness up to this point shows that the farmers have neither utilized nor assimilated the vast majority of the advances being acquainted with them (Ogunniyi et al, 2021).

Group dynamics alludes to how little gatherings (4-5 to around 25 individuals) and people act and respond to various conditions (Mohanty and Mohanty, 2018) or to the interior and outer powers that work with a gathering (Kadian and Rudroju, 2018; Adebayo, 2019). A few examinations have shown that the all-out efficiency of the gathering is more noteworthy than the amount of the usefulness of its individuals (cooperative energy impact) (Kamdem 2018a). Subsequently, there may be a high connection between's an association's prosperity on a specific movement and the elements among the colleagues (Gençer, 2019). For this multitude of reasons the advancement of collective vibes among ranchers having a place with a similar association has been supported to further develop execution in farming (Bharamappanavara and Jose, 2015).

In regard to the aforementioned issues, this present study examined the following objectives:

- i. Describing the personal characteristics of the respondents in the study area.
- ii. Examining the levels of leadership dynamism of the respondents in the study area.
- iii. Finding out the levels of group rapport of the respondents in the study area.
- iv. Assessing the levels of group cohesion of the respondents in the study area.
- v. Determining the effect of leadership dynamism and group rapport on the group cohesion of the respondents in the study area.

Based on the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were tested;

H01: There is no significant relationship between personal characteristics of cocoa farmers and their group cohesion.

H02: There is no significant relationship between leadership dynamism of cocoa farmers and their group cohesion.

H03: There is a significant relationship between the group rapport of cocoa farmers and their group cohesion.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Ogun State, southwest of Nigeria. It was created on 3rd February 1976 from the former Western State, borders Lagos to the South, Oyo and Osun to the north, Ondo to the east and Republic of Benin to the west. It covers an area of sixteen thousand, nine hundred and eighty square kilometers 16,980.55 km². It is located within tropical humid climate characterized by wet (from March/April to October/November) and dry (October/November till March/April) seasons. The state has a large arable land which supports the cultivation of both cash and food crops such as cocoa, oil palm, rubber, coffee, kolanut, cassava, yam and rice.

The population of the study comprised of members of Cocoa Farmers Association of Nigeria (CFAN) in the study area. The sampling size of the study was 93 which was 15% of the sampling population i.e. total active members (625) of CFAN in the study area. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select respondents for the study. Sampling was based on the existing eight (8) Agricultural Development Programme zones, namely; Abeokuta, Ijebu-Ode, Sagamu, Idiroko, Ajebandele, Ogbere, Ilaro and Aiyetoro of Produce Department, Ministry of Agriculture of the state.

Stage I: Thirty-seven and a half percent (37.5%) of the existing zones according to the zoning of Produce Department Ministry of Agriculture were randomly selected. This made a selection of three (3) zones from the eight (8) zones for their high concentration of cocoa farmers. The selected zones were namely, Ogbere, Ajebamidele, and Ilaro.

Stage II: From each of the selected zones, twenty percent (20%) of the stations in each zone were selected. The stations selected were Ajebamidele, J4, and Laagan, in Ajebamidele zone, Owode-yewa and Ilaro in Ilaro zone, Gbamugbam, Yewo, Onipetesi, and J3 in Ogbere zone. The selected stations were due to a high concentration of cocoa farmers in the stations. This made a total of nine (9) stations in all the selected zones.

Stage III: From each of the selected stations, ten percent (10%) of the respondents were randomly selected from each selected station, which gave a total of 93 respondents for the study.

Measurement of variables

Perceived leadership dynamism which was measured using a 7-item instrument; perceived group cohesion was measured using a 9-item instrument and perceived group rapport was measured using a 4-item instrument on a 5-point Likert scale of strongly agree, agree, indifferent, strongly disagree and disagree respectively. These variables were adopted and modified from Phan et al., (2004).

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics: These include the use of means, percentages and frequencies. These were used to present the personal characteristics of respondents and other analysis of subsequent objectives.

Linear regression: This was specified to determine the relationship between a dependent variable and a group of independent variables. It estimates the coefficients of the linear equation, involving one or more independent variables that best predict the value of the dependent variable. The importance of regression analysis to this study is to predict the cocoa farmers' group cohesion using their personal characteristics (age, farming experience, household size, educational level and annual cocoa revenue per production cycle), leadership dynamism and group rapport. The linear regression equation is represented in the explicit form thus:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + e \quad \dots \text{eq. 1.}$$

Where Y = Group cohesion

X_1 = Age (Years)

X_2 = Farming experience (Years)

X_3 = Household size (Persons)

X_4 = Educational level (Number of years of schooling)

X_5 = Annual cocoa revenue per production cycle (Naira)

X_6 = Leadership dynamism

X_7 = Group rapport

b_i = Coefficient ($i = 1, 2, 3, \dots, n$)

a = Constant

e = Error Term or Stochastic Disturbance

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results in Table 1 revealed that the mean age of the cocoa farmers was 49.2 years implying that majority of the cocoa farmers were in the economically active age range, which is in line with the findings of Adeogun, Olawoye, and Akinbile, (2010); Adebayo, (2019). This implied that farmers involved in cocoa production were not young in age. This finding supports Gray (2001) and Maharajh, et al. (2018) who disclosed that cocoa farmers in West African countries, in general, have an average age of 50 years.

The sex categorization of cocoa farmers showed that most (81.7%) of the farmers were males. This could be attributed to the fact that most of the respondents used the enterprise as an extra source of income for the family which is the perceived primary responsibility of males and that more male farmers were involved in cocoa farming activities due to the nature of operations involved in its production. This result agrees with the finding of Matthew et al. (2018); Fasina and Ayodele, (2018); Adesiyani., Adesiyani. and Agbonlahor, (2019) that men are prominent in cocoa production. The mean income generated from cocoa was found to be ₦2,693,900 and this implied that the cocoa farmers were able to acquire much over time due to high income from their production cycle. The mean household size of the cocoa farmers was found to be 6 persons per household. This implied that the sampled cocoa farmers had people around them who could assist in farming activities been carried out on their respective cocoa field. The mean household size recorded in this study corroborated the findings earlier reported by Fasina and Ayodele (2018), who disclosed that African families keep large household size. These family members provide farm hands during peak farming activities that incidentally coincides with vacation periods (August to September) of school children. 54.20% of the cocoa farmers are members of other farmers' association. Thus, 40.8% of the cocoa farmers were group leader. This implied that an average cocoa farmer is a social is a member of the cooperative society, social group association or partaker of community activities. Besides, a majority of 85.0% of the respondents were married. The high proportion of married respondents showed that more members of the farm family were likely going to be available for cocoa production in the study area thereby increasing their production. This is a development in the positive direction because farm family members will be available to assist on the farm thus reducing the money spent on labour to work on the farm. Family labour is an important component of labour for small farmers which by the virtue of large family size, there could be pressure on land and might be fragmented, hence small farm holdings tend to abound (Awe, 1995; Adebayo, 2019). The effect is that such farmers who are constrained by inadequate land area may not readily adopt an extension package that requires large scale farming. This finding corroborates Adeogun et al., (2010) who reported a high percentage of cocoa farmers to be married thus suggesting

that it could have been the sense of responsibility inherent in the status of being married coupled with the desire to have an extra source of income that propelled the respondents to take up the enterprise. The major consequence of this is that it can help them to enhance their productivity towards meeting their family needs. This result conforms favourably with the findings of Adebayo, (2019). On the other hand, 88.4% of the respondents had access to formal education. Fabiyi et al., (2007) and Enete and Amusa (2010) disclosed that the majority of cocoa farmers only attempted to finish primary school education or another equivalent. This result agrees with the findings of Adebayo (2019 and Walton et al., (2020) who opined that majority of the cocoa farmers had formal education which indicates that they are highly educated. The results further revealed that the respondents spent an average of 21.6 years in cocoa farming activities. This implied that the respondents were more experienced and had a vast knowledge of the farming activity as they had been doing it for long. These findings corroborated the report of Enete and Amusa, (2010) who disclosed that cocoa farmers had long years of experience and that the longer a farmer is engaged in cocoa production, the vaster and more knowledgeable he knows the farming activities involved.

Table 1: Personal Characteristics of Respondents

Personal characteristics	Description
Age	Mean = 49.2 years
Sex	Male (81.7%)
Marital status	Married (85.0%)
Educational level	Formal education (88.4%)
Membership of other farmers' association	54.20%
Household size	6 persons
Years of experience	Mean = 21.6 years
Social Status	Predominantly group leader (40.8%)
Annual cocoa revenue per production cycle	Mean = ₦2,693,900

Table 2 revealed the leadership dynamism of cocoa farmers in Ogun State. The table revealed that cocoa farmers leaders provide guidance and direction to the members of the group was ranked first as a key feature of leadership dynamism while they ranked that leaders keeping group members informed of relevant information, through meetings, conversation and verbal information as second feature, leaders approaching extension officers to give them necessary information and support was ranked third. The table also further reveals and ranked the cocoa farmers group leaders were self-confident and they develop and maintain relationship with group leaders within the

domain respectively as fourth and fifth, however, cocoa farmers ranked that leaders do not have high drive to exercise initiative in social action and they feel leaders have been influencing group members behaviour negatively as they are ranked sixth and seventh. This implies that the cocoa farmers still to a reasonable extent believed the judgement of their leaders which might be a strong factor keeping them in the association. Adebayo et al., (2019) disclosed that the strength of group leaders and extent of training in governance they receive as to whether the leaders is active or not, leaders role and assigned powers is capable of breaking or making a group and as such for proper dynamics roles and responsibility is essential to guide leadership of groups.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on their leadership dynamism

SN	Leadership Dynamism	Mean	Rank
1.	Leaders in my group provide guidance and direction to group members.	4.3	1 st
2.	Our leaders keep group members informed of relevant information, through meetings, conversation and verbal information.	4.25	2 nd
3.	Leaders of this group approach extension officers to give needed information, Co-operation and support	4.18	3 rd
4.	My group leaders are self-confident.	4.13	4 th
5.	Our group leaders develop and maintain relationship with group leaders within their domain.	3.8	5 th
6.	Leaders of this group do not have high drive to exercise initiative in social action.	2.87	6 th
7.	*I feel our leaders have been influencing group member's behaviour negatively.	2.07	7 th

Group cohesion was considered and presented on Table 3. Majority of cocoa farmers believed that their group was the best in the vicinity and their leaders were diligent in the discharge of duties as they ranked this as the first and second feature of group cohesion. Cocoa farmers finding it easy to communicate with each other in the group was ranked third while members of the group having similar interest were ranked fourth. Resisting to the formation of in-group cliques and maintaining membership strength was ranked fifth and sixth respectively. Furthermore, cocoa farmers felt the group was too large for proper coordination and difficultly for the group to overcome internal or external threat, shock or displacement which exists within the group was ranked seventh and eight while some felt group members do not all work towards the group success. This implies that the cocoa farmers had moderate group cohesiveness. This level of cohesion recorded among cocoa farmers is attributed to the fact that the needs of the farmers were being met by their groups. The more the needs of farmers,

which form the reasons for subscribing to their various groups are met or satisfied the more they would like to remain in their various groups as active members (Ofuoku and Urang, 2009). According to Borek, A.J. and Abraham, C., (2018), cohesiveness is higher in groups in which the goals of the group are congruent with the goals of the members than in groups where the members do not share the overall group goals. Therefore, a group maintain its cohesiveness if members share common goal. As long as the members achieve their goals, they would want to continue as members of the group and would also be committed to the group.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents based on their group cohesion

	Group cohesion	Mean	Rank
1	I feel our group is the best in the vicinity.	4.27	1st
2	I feel that our leaders are diligent in their duties.	4.17	2nd
3	We find it easy to communicate with each other in the group.	4.1	3rd
4	Members of my group have similar interest in the group.	4.03	4th
5	We don't allow in-group cliques to be formed within the group.	4	5th
6	Over the years, our membership has not reduced.	3.77	6th
7	*I think the group is too large for proper coordination.	2.3	7th
8	*Our group has been finding it difficult to overcome internal or external threat, shock or displacement which exists within the group.	2.2	8th
9	*We do not all work towards the group success.	2.08	9th

Furthermore, revealing on Table 4 are the responses to group rapport statements. All the cocoa farmers agreed that regardless of the circumstances, they were exceptionally friendly, courteous and respectful to other group members was ranked first while members really care about the well-being of other group member was ranked second. Group members' sharing in other people's joy, aspiration and problems was ranked third while members do not feel a personal inclination to help other group members when they have problems was ranked fourth.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents based on their group Rapport

	Group Rapport	Mean	Rank
1.	Regardless of circumstances, I am exceptionally friendly, courteous and respectful to other group members.	4.25	1 st
2.	I really care about the well-being of other group member	3.95	2 nd
3.	In this group, we share each other's joy, aspiration and problems.	3.63	3 rd
4.	*I do not feel a personal inclination to help other group members when they have problems.	2.5	4 th

The linear equation below explained the effect of cocoa farmers' group cohesion using their personal characteristics (age, farming experience, household size, educational level and annual cocoa revenue per production cycle), leadership dynamism and group rapport. The model showed a significant relationship between the cocoa farmers' group cohesion vis-à-vis their leadership dynamism. The table below showed that the coefficient for the farming experience of cocoa farmers is 0.676. The implication of this is that for every additional one percent in cocoa farmers' leadership dynamism it is expected that their group cohesion would increase by an average of 67.61%. These findings are in line with Vallejo, 2009 who analysed the model of leadership in family firms under transformational theoretical approach. The regression results are presented below:

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F
1	.586 ^a	.343	.254	2.387	3.876**

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		β	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	9.983	4.212		2.370	.022
	Age	-.006	.050	-.020	-.114	.910
	Farming Experience	-.048	.037	-.236	-1.320	.193
	Household Size	.165	.182	.139	.904	.370
	Years Of Schooling	-.117	.070	-.222	-1.678	.099
	Cocoa revenue (Cocoa Revenue/Million Naira)	.027	.170	.018	.157	.876
	Leader Dynamism	.676	.144	.587	4.704	.000
	Group Rapport	-.202	.189	-.134	-1.069	.290
	a. Dependent Variable: Cocoa Farmers' Group Cohesion					

CONCLUSION

The study showed that most of the cocoa farmers were majorly male and married. They are within an active age, have a moderate household size and a well experienced in cocoa production. A major leadership dynamism, group cohesion and group rapport of

cocoa farmers is that the cocoa farmers' leaders provide guidance and direction to the members of the group, they believed that their group was the best in the vicinity and that regardless of the circumstances, they were exceptionally friendly, courteous and respectful to other group members respectively. Besides, the cocoa farmers' group cohesion is significantly related to their leadership dynamism. Based on the results of this study, cocoa farmers' leadership dynamism should be improved through intervention programmes such as training, workshops and seminars as this will translate into better-quality group cohesion thereby enhancing their cooperation amongst themselves.

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