



MANAGERIAL INFORMATION NEEDS OF MEMBERS OF NATIONAL COTTON ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated managerial information needs of members of National Cotton Association of Nigeria (NACOTTAN) in Ogun state. The study was carried out in three selected zones with NACOTTAN presence namely; Ijaka-oke, Imala and Iwoye-ketu . A sample size of 88 respondents was used for the study. Data was collected through questionnaires and was analysed using descriptive statistics. Results reveal that the mean age of respondents was 50.5 years, while 51.2% of the respondents were above 50 years and 32.3% had no formal education. The major constraints affecting the association were insincerity of executives on accountability (\bar{X} =3.73), unstable market price of cotton (\bar{X} = 3.66) and low level of technology (\bar{X} = 3.50). Farmers' educational status was significantly associated with managerial information needs ($\chi^2=13.14$, $p=0.04$) while, significant difference existed in respondents' managerial information needs across selected zones ($F=11.78$, $P=0.01$). Study concluded that NACOTTAN members had high managerial information needs. Therefore the association members need to improve on their activities, for the association's managerial information needs to be met.

Keywords: National Cotton Association of Nigeria, Managerial information needs,

INTRODUCTION

Farmers' organisation refers to a collective entity of farmers in a village or in contiguous villages who have come together with common goals for economic benefits related to agricultural activities (Couturier, *et al.* 2006). Farmer organisations are used as a tool to promote rural development and to ensure food security in a way that complements state development strategies and market approaches (Nou, 2006).

The main reason behind the establishment of farmers' organisations is to provide effective and collective support services to smallholders, thus surmounting the major obstacles to productivity improvement, and to enhance self-help and collective power to regulate markets. This implies that in theory farmers' organisations should be able to strengthen farmers' bargaining power with external buyers and reduce transaction costs, potentially leading to increased incomes and food security and hence sustained agricultural growth and poverty alleviation (Barham and Chitemi 2008; Bachke 2010).

FOs have diverse services and functions including access to production facilities and equipment, technical information and advice, inputs (seeds, fertilisers, feed, pesticides), markets (transport, trading, market information), financial means, provision of social services (health insurance, literacy) and natural resource management (Chirwa *et al.*, 2005).

Farmers' organisation can help by buying crop produce from farmers at a reasonable price and then selling it to private traders, or sometimes FOs can facilitate private traders to come to communities by encouraging members to grow

more produce to sell in bulk (Rweyemamu, 2003; Barham *et al.*, 2008).

One important aspect contributing to an organisation's success and sustainability is the trust between members and the management committee (Hansen *et al.* 2002). However, trust takes time and effort to build, and is easily broken (Pomeroy *et al.* 2001; Pretty 2003). Farmers' trust grows as they achieve successful collaboration with leaders. Trust requires good communication and open dialogue between leaders and members to clarify the needs and expectations of farmers. Furthermore, trust is built when leaders share decision making with members, respect concerns, needs and knowledge, and are transparent in their management (Tewari and Khanna 2005). Trust among Farmers' organisations members was also found to be a factor in improving collective marketing performance (Barham and Chitemi, 2008).

Information is a critical resource in the operation and management of organisations. Timely availability of relevant information is vital for effective performance of managerial functions such as planning, organising, leading, and control. An information system in an organisation is like the nervous system in the human body: it is the link that connects all the organisation's components together and provides for better operation and survival in a competitive environment. Indeed, today's organisations run on information. Therefore, Devadson and Lingam (1996) stated that, information needs represent gaps in the current knowledge of the user. In day to day work; lack of self-sufficiency constitutes an information need. Information needs are thus a factor that may drive cotton farmers to seek information to fill the gaps in their information and knowledge. Farmers'



organisations require different types of information for day to day agricultural activities. Moreover, the level of information needs may differ between people, or a group of people, depending on a range of factors, such as age, level of education, socioeconomic status, range of information sources available, level of awareness, and ease of use of information (Kaniki, 2003). The selection of an information source depends on a number of factors; including level of income, farm size, age, geographical location, level of education (Riesenberg, and Gor, 1999). Information opens windows of giving out experiences, best practices, sources of financial aids and new markets.

Before the era of liberalization, cooperatives thrived as the main farmers' organisations in Africa. However, most cooperatives could not compete in open-market economies and are today weak, dormant or dead (World Bank, 1995). With the decline of cooperatives and other farmers' organisations, many farmers lack a collective voice. They cannot access affordable production inputs such as finance, technology, land and are locked out of markets. As a result, a large number of small-scale farmers live in poverty and cannot influence policies that affect their livelihoods. Other challenges facing farmers' organisations are the difficulty of registering with local authorities, poor relations with some support agencies, weak institutional capacity and low capacity of members, low participation by women farmers, and poor accounting and general management skills. The greater the challenges facing farmers' organisations, the greater the need for external support from government and development agencies, as experienced in many developing countries. Without external support many farmers' organisations are unlikely to survive, limiting their potential impact on livelihood improvement and food security (Bingen *et al.* 2003; Chirwa *et al.* 2005). Farmers' organisations in Nigeria are also faced with many challenges ranging from inadequate information on access to market, lack of trust between leaders and member of organisations, inadequate access to production inputs, financial assistance and so on. NACOTTAN is also faced with some of these challenges; hence it become necessary to ascertain managerial information needs of NACCOTAN to overcome these challenges.

This study in this light investigated the managerial information needs of National Cotton Association (NACOTTAN) members in Ogun State, Nigeria.

The general objective of this study was to investigate the Managerial Information Needs of National Cotton Association of Nigeria (NACOTTAN) members in Ogun State, Nigeria.

The specific objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To describe the personal characteristics of National Cotton Association of Nigeria (NACOTTAN) members in Ogun State;
2. To ascertain information needs of National Cotton Association of Nigeria (NACOTTAN) members in Ogun state; and
3. To determine the constraints affecting the organisation managements (national cotton association of Nigeria (NACOTTAN) in Ogun state

The hypotheses of this study were stated in null form as follows:

H₀₁: There is no significant association between respondents' personal characteristics and their managerial information needs.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in respondents' managerial information needs across selected zones

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in Ogun State Nigeria. The population of the State is 3,751,140 (2006 Census). However, among the occupation of the people in the study area is Farming, mostly produce crops like cassava, cowpea, maize, millet, yam etc and also produce cash crop like cotton, cocoa, coconut, oil palm. The vegetation of the state is derived savannah with annual rainfall of between 1,000 to 1,250 m. The wet season of the area begins in February or early March and stops around mid-October. Dry season begins in November and lasts for about 3 to months.

The population of the study was all members of National Cotton Association of Nigeria (NACOTTAN), Ogun state.

Data for the study was obtained using multistage sampling procedure to select farmers from National Cotton Association of Nigeria (NACOTTAN) in Ogun state. Out of the four Local Governments Areas where NACCOTAN is registered in the State, three Local Governments Areas were selected using simple random sampling technique. These are Imeko-Afon, Yewa North and Abeokuta North. These Local Government have four, two and five zones, respectively. Out of these three Local Governments Areas, 20% of the zone in each Local Government was sampled. These are Ijaka-Oke from Yewa North having 50 members, Imala from Abeokuta North having 50 members and Iwoye-Ketu from Imeko-Afon having 70 members. Proportionate sampling was used to obtain the sample size for the study, 50% of respondents were sampled from the list of farmers in Ijaka-oke and Imala zones while 54% were sampled from Iwoye- ketu zone making a total of 88 respondents. The managerial information needs was measured using five Likert type rating scale of



not at all =1, very low = 2, low = 3, high = 4 and very high = 5. The scores for managerial information need of members in the association ranges between 1 and 5. Hence the higher the mean score the higher the extent to which the association requires information in the management technique.

The study data was analyzed using Pearsons Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Chi square.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' personal characteristics

Table 1 shows the personal characteristics of the respondents. It shows that 51.2% of the respondents were above 50 years while very few (18.1%) were between ages 21 and 40 years. The mean age of respondents was 50.5 years. This implies that NACOTTAN members or cotton farmers are getting older and there is need for replacement by younger ones in the association or organisation. The youths need to be encouraged to be members of the association in order for the management of the association to be effective and also for the cotton production to be sustained in the state. Adeogun *et al.* (2010) opine that, the younger farmers would most likely be willing to spend more time to obtain information on improved technologies compared to the old farmers.

The Table also shows that 89.8% were male and 10.2% were female. This connotes that males are about eight times the population of female in the association. The higher percentage of male to female could be as a result of having more male in cotton production than female because cotton production requires intensive capital and hard labour. This is in line with Adebayo *et al.* (2002) who reported that male are actively involved in farming activities than female.

On the educational level of the respondents, 33.0% had no education, 35.2% attended primary school, (23.9%) attended secondary school while (8.0%) attained tertiary education level. This shows that the educational level of the respondents was low. This might affect the management of the association because well-educated farmers can easily access information on organisational management from different sources, and can be able to create knowledge out of those sources. Dule and Aina, (1990) opined that the level of education affects information accessibility, comprehension and adoption of new agricultural innovations and practices.

Table 1 Frequency distribution showing the personal characteristics of respondents (n=88)

	Variables	Frequencies	Percentages
Age (Years)	21-30	1	1.1
	31-40	15	17.0
	41-50	27	30.7
	51-60	32	36.4
	61-70	10	11.4
	71-80	8	3.4
Sex	Male	79	89.2
	Female	9	10.2
Educational level	None	29	33.0
	Primary	31	35.2
	Secondary	21	23.9
	Tertiary	7	8.0
Marital Status	Married	74	84.1
	Widowed	10	11.4
	Divorced	4	4.5
Years Registered	2005-2010	65	71.6
	2011-2015	23	28.4
Regularity of Attendance in Meetings	Regularly	68	77.3
	Occasionally	20	22.7

Source: Field survey, 2015

Many (84.0%) of the association's members were married. 11.4% were widowed and 4.5% were divorced. This implies that majority of the respondents are in marital association. This is similar to the result obtained by Adeogun *et al.*

(2010) who reported that majority of cocoa farmers were married in Nigeria.

In addition, 71.6% of the respondents registered within 2006 – 2010 and 28.4% were registered within 2011 to 2015. This means that majority of the respondents interviewed had

registered with the association since its beginning in Ogun state in 2006. This also implies that majority of respondents have been in the association for long and are therefore conversant with the problems relating with the management of the association.

Finally, the Table shows how regularly the respondents attended meeting. Majority (77.3%) of attended meeting regularly while 22.7% did not attend meeting regular Those that said they do not attend meeting regularly might not be pleased with the management styles of the association executive members. The non-attendance of meeting by sizable number of the association members could impact on the managerial information needs of the association members.

Respondents' Managerial Information Needs

The managerial information needs of the association were captured in Table 3. The Table showed the various areas and extent to which the association requires information in the management techniques.

The findings from Table 2 reveal that NACOTTAN members need high level of managerial information in all the areas investigated as all the mean values were greater than 4.00. The Table however shows that NACOTTAN members need higher level of information in the area of effective information dissemination from executives to members ($\bar{X} = 4.40$), sales and negotiation in collective marketing by group members ($\bar{X} = 4.36$) and awareness of innovation on management practice ($\bar{X} = 4.30$). This implies that NACOTTAN needs managerial information in all areas investigated and most especially on dissemination of information from executives to

members, sales and negotiation in collective marketing by group members and awareness of innovation on organisation management practices. Other areas of interest are act of farming record keeping, payment of monthly due by members, act of obeying the association's bye laws, and members' attendance of meeting and ability to learn from extension agents. Bingen *et al.* (2003) opine that without external support many farmers organisations are unlikely to survive and can limit their potential impact on livelihood improvement and food security. Prompt and regular payment of monthly due can serve as credit which can be loan to members to improve their farm productivity.

Also regular attendance of meetings will enable members to get updates on relevant information that will be needed to improve their productivity. Sales and negotiation in collective marketing by group members can help to generate income; this income can then be put back into the organisation by spending it on data generation, business planning, and administration (Shankariah and Shingi, 1997). Record keeping, both at farming and organisational level can aid effective monitoring and development of organisation. Effective dissemination of information from executive to members makes the organisation more governable and promotes unity which will make members to contribute meaningfully to decision making process and also promote collective marketing ability of its members. Finally, the findings in Table 2 shows that NACOTTAN members managerial needs in very high since all the managerial information needs sentences had their mean value higher than 4 and the mean value range for managerial information is 1-5.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution Showing Respondents' Managerial Information Needs Levels (n=88)

Managerial information needs	\bar{X}	S.D
Effective and timely information dissemination from executives to members	4.40	0.58
Sales and negotiation in collective marketing by group member	4.36	0.55
Awareness of innovation on management practices	4.30	0.55
Information on computer literacy to assist in data gathering and processing	4.27	0.67
Information required in association registration	4.25	0.55
Information on how to develop clear organisational goals and strategies	4.25	0.44
Participatory decision making process	4.25	0.57
Documentation of Relevant data to make decision by executives	4.23	0.47
Sources of farm inputs	4.19	0.48
Members ability to contribute on decision making process	4.19	0.60
Members attendance of meeting	4.18	0.56
Ability to learn from extension service	4.18	0.69
Act of farming Record Keeping	4.15	0.80
Little or no information flow from executive members to floor members on administrative issues	4.15	0.67
Abiding to association's bye laws	4.11	0.62



Payment of monthly due	4.08	0.49
Knowledge of record keeping to maintain a viable farmers' organisation	4.07	0.70

Source: Field survey, 2015

Constraints affecting Farmers' Organisational members

Table 3 shows the constraints facing respondents in the association (NACOTTAN) at different level of severity. From the mean values in Table 3, the severity of constraints of the association was shown, majority of the respondents revealed that there is very high level of insincerity of executives on accountability ($\bar{X} = 3.73$), unstable market price of cotton ($\bar{X} = 3.66$), low level of technology ($\bar{X} = 3.50$).

The mean values of all other constraints measured were above 3.00 ($\bar{X} = 3.00$) which implies that these constraints are severe except for conflict management among members ($\bar{X} = 2.91$) that has mean value less than 3.00, thus having the least severity of all constraints identified in the

association. This is in line with the work of Chirwa *et al.* (2005) who identified lack of basic literacy and business skills; and low accountability coupled with a tendency for the misuse of farmers' organisations resources by their leaders as challenges facing farmers' organisation. Other challenges identified by Chea (2010) were the difficulty of registering with local authorities, poor relations with some support agencies, weak institutional capacity and low capacity of members, and poor accounting and general management skills (Chea, 2010).

The findings above show that the association still has a long way to go in its way of doing things, for the association to mitigate the identified challenges that could make meeting managerial information needs a difficult task.

Table 3: Frequency distribution showing constraints facing respondents in the association (n=88)

Constraints	\bar{X}	SD
High level of insincerity of executives on accountability.	3.73	0.47
Unstable market price of cotton	3.66	0.52
Low level of technology	3.50	0.63
Non-involvement of members on decision making by the executives	3.44	0.56
Poor working relationship with some support agencies	3.41	0.56
Excess market supply and spoilage	3.33	0.47
Skills in relations to the executives performance	3.31	0.53
Lack of basic literacy and business skills.	3.27	0.54
Inadequate access to financial sources	3.27	0.56
Record keeping and proper administrative strategies.	3.17	0.44
Members reluctance to attend association meetings	3.08	0.68
Poor harmonious relationship among members.	3.05	0.76
Members unwillingness or failure to pay dues	3.01	0.65
Conflict management among members	2.91	0.62

Source: Field survey, 2015.

Testing of Hypotheses

Relationship between personal characteristics and managerial information needs.

Chi-square analysis showing the association between the personal characteristics of NACOTTAN members and their information needs.

Table 4 reveals that only the educational status ($\chi^2 = 13.14$, $p = 0.04$) was significantly

associated with the managerial information needs of NACOTTAN members in the study areas.

This implies that education levels will most likely influence members' information needs. This could imply that the more educated ones will require less information; this could also be attributed to their exposure, since more educated people are likely to be more exposed than the low literacy ones.

Table 4: Association between respondents' personal characteristics and managerial information needs

Personal Characteristics versus managerial information needs	χ^2 - Value	df	p-value	Decision
Age	21.07	5	0.78	NS
Sex	0.00	1	0.63	NS
Education	13.41	3	0.04	S
Marital status	4.57	2	0.10	NS



Personal Characteristics versus managerial information needs	χ^2 - Value	df	p-value	Decision
Occupation	2.83	2	0.24	NS
Experience	12.54	13	0.49	NS

Source: Field survey, 2015.

P-value is significant at 0.05 levels

Relationship between personal characteristics of respondents and identified constraints

The result as presented in Table 5 shows that the relationship between ages, years of experience and constraints facing the organisation members. The significant of the relationship was determined at 0.05 levels. The PPMC analysis shows that only respondents' age ($r = 0.21$, $p = 0.02$) was significantly related with the constraints facing NACOTTAN members in the zones sampled. This could imply that younger members are able to access opportunities that help them mitigate some of the identified constraints.

Table 5: Relationship between respondents' personal characteristics and identified constraints

Variables	r-value	p-value	Decision
Age	0.21	0.02	S
Years of experience	0.07	0.78	NS

Age	0.15	0.02	S
Years of experience	0.07	0.78	NS

Source: Field survey, 2015.

P-value is significant at 0.05 levels

Difference in respondents' managerial information needs across selected LGAs.

There was a significant difference existed among the selected zones (Imala, Iwoye- ketu and Ijaka-oke) with respect to their managerial information needs. This implies that the area in which the zones needs information are different. This may be due to the fact that members in one zone attends meeting regularly and they are able to get relevant information that can be useful than others.

Table 6: Test of differences in managerial information needs across selected zones

Variables	F	p-value	Decision
Information need	11.78	0.02	S

Source: Field survey, 2015.

P-value is significant at 0.05 levels

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this study, it can be concluded that NACOTTAN members were old with majority having low educational level. It can also be seen that they need high level of information on management of the organisation. Therefore the association members still have lot to do to ensure smooth running of the organisation, most especially in the area of sourcing managerial information to move the organisation forward.

The study however recommended the following;

- 1) The executives should ensure effective and timely information dissemination to member on issues relating to inflow and outflow of capital or inputs given to them by the government or support agencies.
- 2) Agencies providing assistance to FOs should concentrate on skill development of members in areas relating to sales and negotiation in collective marketing by group member. Arrangement can be put in place to buy their produce in bulk from them to boost their livelihood.
- 3) Training to improve members' awareness of innovations on management practices can be organised for FOs members

- 4) Capacity building on computer literacy to assist in data gathering, data processing and record keeping should be organised by government and non-governmental agencies to improve the FO performances.
- 5) The executive should also be democratic by allow the members to participate on decision making of the association.
- 6) The youths need encouragement to be members of the association in order for the management of the association to be effective and also for the cotton production to be sustained in the state.

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