



## CASHEW FARMERS' PREFERRED SOURCES OF INFORMATION IN IBARAPA CENTRAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

Farmers tend to be selective in their choice of communicated messages based on their compatibility with their existing practices, societal norms, values or beliefs. This study examined cashew farmers' preferred sources of information in Ibarapa central local government area of Oyo State. A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted to sample 70 respondents in the local government area. Structured questionnaire and interview schedule was used to elicit responses on respondents' personal characteristics, available source of information, adequacy of information sourced, preferred source of information and constraints faced by farmers with regards to information sources. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics (Chi square and PPMC) at  $p = 0.05$ . Mean age of the respondents was 32 years, most of the respondents (82.9%) were male, married (80.0%) and 34.3% had secondary education. Mean farming experience and household sizes were 14.4 and 6.5 respectively. Respondents' sources of information ranged from co-operative group (91.4%), cashew farmers association (75.7%), fellow farmers (55.7%) radio (50.0%) and mobile phone (40.0%). Respondents' most preferred source of information were extension agents (2.0), cashew farmers association (1.8), radio (1.0), and fellow farmers (0.9). The constraints encountered were unavailability of information source (2.0), inadequate extension agents (1.9) and inadequate capital (1.8) among others. Significant relationship existed between respondents' age ( $r = -0.228$ ), constraints encountered ( $r = -0.164$ ) and their preferred source of information. It is concluded that the government should provide adequate extension agents for enhanced cashew production and consequently higher income for improved standard of living for the rural farmers.

**Keywords:** Cashew, Information sources, Radio, Cashew farmers association and Extension agents

### INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has been an important sector in the economy of Nigeria due to its major contribution to national income over the years. Studies have shown that the growth of cash crops such as cocoa, cashew, coffee, cotton, groundnut, palm kernel, and rubber has contributed a lot to national development. Cashew (*Anacardium occidentale*) is an important industrial and export crop whose potential is yet to be fully exploited in Nigeria. Nigeria is rated as the fourth largest producer of cashew nuts in Africa and seventh in the world, with the bulk of its raw cashew nuts and cashew kernels exported to Vietnam and India, respectively (Okon, 2016). Cashew has for many years been used for food and income generation. Cashew is one of the crops that should be given priority attention in terms of its marketing locally and as an export commodity.

Information is vital in daily life. Modern societies as well as individuals depend a great deal upon the provision of the right kind of information, in the right form and at the right time. The major function of information is to increase the knowledge of the user, help him take a right decision and to reduce his level of uncertainty. Anything human beings interact with or observe can be a source of information (Bates 2012). The information source is a medium in which knowledge and/or information is stored. In other words, it is understood as something that contains

and/or stores information (Bitso, 2012). Sources of information are tools that can possibly meet the information needs of different categories of users. They are the information carriers. Sources of information for cashew farmers are: radio, television, extension workers, cooperative societies, friends and colleagues, newspapers and magazines, books/leaflets, phones, libraries and institutes. Also, observation of people, organisations, speeches, documents, picture and art work can also be described as information sources (Adio, Abu, Yusuf and Nansoh, 2016).

There are various sources of information but evaluating information source is an important process in development. Not all information is reliable or true nor will all information be suitable for one's need. Users must be able to critically evaluate the appropriateness of all types of information source prior to relying on the information. For better farming system and improved yield for cashew farmers, their knowledge, skills and attitudes must keep increasing and changing and this is where the role of the right and credible information must be recognized in the overall planning and execution of cashew farming activities. Studies reveal inadequate exposure of farmers to appropriate agricultural information as one of the major reasons for low yield recorded by many Nigerian farmers but the problem could be because the information sources available to them may not affect their felt



needs, contradict their existing practice, societal norms, values or belief or they may believe the source is not credible. To this end, this study investigated cashew farmers' preferred sources of information in Ibarapa central local government area of Oyo State

The broad objective of this study was to investigate cashew farmers' preferred sources of information in Ibarapa central local government area of Oyo State. The specific objectives were to:

- i. determine the socioeconomic characteristics of cashew farmers in the study area.
- ii. identify the agricultural information sources available to cashew farmers
- iii. ascertain information sources preferred by the respondents
- iv. determine whether the farmers are getting adequate information from these sources
- v. identify the constraints faced with regards to information sources

## METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out in Ibarapa Central Local Government area of Oyo State, Nigeria. It consists of two towns: Igbo-Ora and Idere. It is located in the Southwest geographical zone of Nigeria with its headquarter in Igbo-Ora. The population of the study was registered cashew farmers with cashew farmers association in Ibarapa central local government area of Oyo state. A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted to sample respondents for this study. The local government area has 10 wards. The first stage involved a random selection of fifty percent of the wards to give five wards. The second stage involved a systematic selection of 50% of members from cashew farmers' association membership list in each ward. A sample size of 70 cashew farmers was used as respondents for this study.

Data was collected through the use of structured questionnaire and interview schedule. To obtain information on socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents, relevant questions were asked on the following areas: age, sex, marital status, years of formal education, household size and farming experience. To identify sources of information and adequacy of information available to respondents, a list of information sources were provided and a scale of yes = 1 or no = 0 was used to measure their responses. To ascertain preferred sources of information among respondents, a list of some sources were provided and a three point likert-type scale of 'not preferred =0', preferred=1' and 'mostly preferred = 2' was used to measure their responses. To identify the constraints faced with

regards to information sources among respondents, a list of some items were provided and a three point Likert-type scale of 'not a constraint =0', mild constraint=1' and 'severe constraint = 2' was used to measure their responses. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics such as percentages, mean scores, frequency counts and inferential statistics such as Chi- Square and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Socioeconomic characteristics of respondents

Result in Table 1 shows that 34.3% of the respondents were between the ages of 41-50 with mean age of 32.4 years and standard deviation of 16.9 years. This indicates that most of the respondents are adults in their active and reproductive years, which will enable them to carry out farm activities effortlessly.

Table 1 shows that most (82.9%) of the respondents were male in the study area. This implies males are more involved in cashew production than females in the study area. Abubakar (2003) reported that the male domination of cashew farming activities as observed in the study area could be attributed to the fact that women are given opportunity to cultivate arable crops on their husband's plots while access to permanent crop production is usually restricted to men.

Results reveal that most of the respondents (80.0%) were married, while 15.7%, 2.9% and 1.4% were single, divorced and widowed, respectively. This is an indication of the fact that marriage is held as a very important institution especially in rural areas; as no adult would be deemed responsible without it. (Yekinni and Ajayi, 2011).

Result in Table 1 shows that respondents had 6 years as the mean of years of formal education which implied that they were fairly educated in the study area. The educational status of the respondents in this study might also influence their preferred information source.

Result in table 1 shows that majority (60.0%) of the respondents had their household size ranging from 6-10 persons. This could be regarded as large family size. Household size has great implication on farming. Larger household implies that the respondents have access to family labour for increased production.

Result shows that the respondents had 14 years as their mean years of farming experience and this implied that respondents have had long farming experience in cashew production in the study area.

**Table 1: Distribution of respondents by socioeconomic characteristics**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	S.D.
<b>Age</b>				
<29	9	12.9		
30 - 40	14	20.0	32.4	16.9
41 – 50	24	34.3		
>50	23	32.8		
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	58	82.9		
Female	12	17.1		
<b>Marital status</b>				
Single	11	15.7		
Married	56	80.0		
Divorced	2	2.9		
Widowed	1	1.4		
<b>Years of formal education</b>				
No formal education	19	27.1		
1 to 6 years	22	31.4	6.0	4.6
7 to 12 years	24	34.3		
>12 years	5	7.1		
<b>Household size</b>				
1-5	13	18.6	6.5	3.2
6-10	42	60.0		
Above 10	15	21.4		
<b>Farming experience</b>				
1 -5	5	7.1	14.4	10.5
6 – 10	30	42.9		
11 – 15	15	21.4		
Above 15	20	28.6		

Source: Field survey; 2018

**Sources of information on cashew production**

Result in Table 2 reveals source of information on cashew production. Co-operative group and cashew farmers association were the most common sources of information as 91.4% and 75.7% of the respondents indicated that they

obtained information from those sources. Slightly above average of the respondents (55.7%) got their information from fellow farmers and a half of the respondents received their information from radio (50.0%).

**Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on sources of information on cashew production**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	35	50.0
Television	25	35.7
Cooperative group	64	91.4
Cashew Farmers Association	53	75.7
Extension agents	22	31.4
Internet	18	25.7
Fellow farmers	39	55.7
Religious association	21	30.0
Mobile phone	28	40.0
Friends/Relatives	12	17.1
Film shows	02	2.9
Town criers	27	38.6
Library	05	7.1
NGOs	04	5.7
Educational forums: (Workshops, Seminars)	09	12.8

Multiple responses

Source: Field survey, 2018



The reason for radio's acceptability cannot be separated from the fact that it is cheap to acquire and can be operated with or without electricity as dry cells battery provide alternative power source for radio. One-third got information from mobile phone (40.0%) while the least patronized source was from film show (2.9%). This could simply be added to the challenge of power failure in the study area. This result is partly in line with the report of Adio, Abu, Yusuf and Nansoh (2016) who reported that the available information sources and services that are utilised by farmers were mostly colleagues, town criers, television, mobile phones, film shows in media, radio and relations of farmers.

#### Adequacy of information on cashew production

Table 3 presents findings on adequacy of information among respondents. Majority of the respondents had adequate information through cooperative groups (94.3%), cashew farmers association (85.7%), and fellow farmers (51.4%). Below average got adequate information through radio (45.7%) and mobile phones (44.4%). This is contrary to the findings of Adio, Abu, Yusuf and Nansoh (2016) who submitted that respondents got adequate information from town criers, relations and film show though it is line with their submission on inadequate information from conferences and workshops and Non – Governmental Organisation (NGOs).

**Table 3: Distribution of respondents based on adequacy of information on cashew production from the sources**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	32	45.0
Television	22	31.4
Co –operative group	66	94.3
Cashew Farmers Association	60	85.7
Extension agents	22	31.4
Internet	19	27.1
Fellow farmers	36	51.4
Religious association	21	30.0
Mobile phone	31	44.3
Friends/Relatives	09	12.9
Film shows	02	2.9
Town criers	06	8.7
Library	04	5.7
NGOs	02	2.9
Educational forums: (Workshops, Seminars)	05	7.1

Source: Field survey, 2018

#### Preferred source of information on cashew production

Table 4 shows the respondents' preferred source of information on cashew production in the study area. The weighted mean score reveals that preferred source of information was more on extension agents (2.0), cashew farmers association (1.8), co-operative group (1.7), radio (1.0), fellow farmers (0.9), mobile phone (0.8). This implies that the most preferred source of information were extension agents, cashew farmers association, co-operative group, radio, fellow farmers and mobile phone respectively. This could be as a result of the ability of these farmers to have face-to-face contact with these sources except radio. It is also probable

that they participate and observe the Small Plot Adoption Technologies (SPAT) demonstrations conducted by the extension agents. Moreover, these sources allow a two-way process of communication. This result corroborated the findings of Daud, Chado and Igbashal (2009) who submitted that most of the farmers preferred extension agents as source of information. In contrast, Agbamu (2014) submitted neighbour /fellow farmers as the most preferred source of information by cassava farmers in Delta State which could be attributed to the interpersonal communication and immediate feedback cassava farmers enjoy.

**Table 4: Distribution of respondents based on preferred source of information on cashew production**

Source	Not Preferred %	Preferred %	Mostly Preferred %	Weighted mean score	Rank
Extension agent	10.0	40.0	50.0	2.0	1 <sup>st</sup>
Cashew farmers Association	8.6	54.3	37.1	1.8	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Co-operation group	8.6	64.3	27.4	1.7	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Radio	47.1	35.7	17.1	1.0	4 <sup>th</sup>
Fellow farmers	55.7	25.7	18.6	0.9	5 <sup>th</sup>
Mobile phone	61.4	21.4	17.1	0.8	6 <sup>th</sup>
Friends / Relatives	58.6	27.1	14.3	0.8	6 <sup>th</sup>
Town criers	61.5	21.4	17.1	0.8	6 <sup>th</sup>
Film shows	67.2	20.0	12.8	0.7	9 <sup>th</sup>
Religious Association	67.1	21.4	11.4	0.6	10 <sup>th</sup>
Television	68.6	22.9	8.6	0.6	10 <sup>th</sup>
Internet	71.4	12.8	15.7	0.6	10 <sup>th</sup>
Library	82.8	14.3	2.9	0.3	13 <sup>th</sup>
Education forum	84.3	10.0	5.7	0.3	13 <sup>th</sup>
NGOs	91.6	4.2	4.2	0.2	15 <sup>th</sup>

Source: Field survey, 2018

**Constraints faced by respondents with regards to information sources**

Table 5 shows respondents' constraints with regards to information sources. Weighted mean score shows constraints items according to their severity as rated by the respondents. The constraints that were mostly encountered by the respondents were those on unavailability of information source (2.0), inadequate extension agents (1.9) and inadequate capital (1.8). This implies that unavailability of information source,

inadequate extension agents and inadequate capital constitute the major constraints faced by respondents as regards information source. All the constraints expressed by cashew farmers were interrelated and they could be solved by addressing the inadequate extension agents as expressed by them. The result of inadequate extension agents explains why respondents indicated that they prefer extension agent who they regard as credible source and who could visit them to offer free services.

**Table 5: Distribution of respondents based on constraints faced by respondents**

Constraints	Not a Constraint	Mild Constraint	Severe Constraint	Weighted Mean score	Rank
Unavailability of source type	15.7	27.1	57.1	2.0	1 <sup>st</sup>
Inadequate Extension Agents	17.1	30.0	52.9	1.9	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Inadequate capital	32.9	8.6	58.6	1.8	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Illiteracy	27.1	30.0	42.9	1.7	4 <sup>th</sup>
Poor power supply	35.7	15.7	48.6	1.6	5 <sup>th</sup>
Local leaders holding relevant information	24.3	45.7	30.0	1.5	6 <sup>th</sup>

Source: Field survey, 2018

**Respondents' socioeconomic characteristics and their preferred source of information**

Result in Table 6 shows the relationship between age, years of formal education, household size, farming experience and respondents' preferred source of information. The result shows that of all the socioeconomic characteristics examined, source preference is significantly related to age ( $r = -0.228, p < 0.05$ ), sex ( $\chi^2=79.400, p < 0.05$ ) and

marital status ( $\chi^2 = 162.857, p < 0.05$ ) but not significantly related to educational level ( $r= 0.008, p < 0.05$ ), household size ( $\chi^2= -0.120, p < 0.05$ ), and farming experience ( $\chi^2 = 0.130, p < 0.05$ ). The implication of this finding is that in considering source preference of farmers, age, sex and marital status of farmers must be given special consideration.

**Table 6: Relationship and correlation analysis of respondents' socioeconomic characteristics and their preferred information source**

Variables	PPMC (r)	$\chi^2$	df	p-value
Age	-0.228	-	-	0.016
Educational level	0.008	-	-	0.944
Household size	-0.120	-	-	0.320
Farming experience	0.130	-	-	0.285
Sex	-	79.400	2	0.000
Marital status	-	162.857	4	0.000

df – degree of freedom, S- significant, NS – Not Significant,  $\chi^2$ - Chi- square

Source: Data analysis, 2018

#### Correlation between respondents' constraints and preferred source of information

The PPMC result in Table 7 reveals that there was a significant correlation between respondents' constraints and their preferred source of information. This implies that constraints the respondents faced could determine their preferred

source of information because inadequate capital could affect sourcing of information from credible sources and could probably prevent farmers from trying some innovations available. Likewise inadequate extension agents could affect the efficiency of information use.

**Table 7: Correlation between respondents' constraints and their preferred source of information**

Variable	r-value	p-value	Decision
Preferred source of information vs. Constraints	-0.164**	0.000	S

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Data analysis, 2018

#### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that respondents got adequate information through cooperative groups, cashew farmers association, fellow farmers, radio and mobile phone. The preferred sources of information were extension agents, cashew farmers association, radio, fellow farmers, and mobile phone. The militating constraints to preferred information sources were unavailability of information source, inadequate extension agents, inadequate capital, illiteracy, poor power supply, and local leaders withholding relevant information. It is recommended that there should be:

- provision of adequate extension agents for enhanced cashew production, development workers promoting cashew-based technologies should largely depend on extension agents and (other credible and available information source). This will ensure fewer problems in driving agro-information flow, reduced cost of information delivery, ready acceptance and adoption of cashew-based innovations.
- explicit, current information should always be available for farmers through various information sources such as cashew farmers association, radio, fellow farmers and mobile phone.

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