

Comparative Analysis of the Performance of Farmers' Cooperatives in Ikwerre and Etche Local Government Areas of Rivers State

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Abstract: *This study compared of the Performance of Farmers' Cooperatives in Ikwerre and Etche Local Government Areas of Rivers State. Specifically the study sought to examine the performance of farmers' cooperative in Ikwerre Local Government Area, Examine the performance of farmers' cooperative in Etche Local Government Area and Compare the performance of farmers' cooperative in Ikwerre and Etche Local Government Areas. The data was sourced from primary source. Data was collected through well-structured copies of questionnaire. Descriptive statistics (mean scores) and inferential statistics (T-test) analysis were used for the analysis of data collected. The results showed that the performance of farmers' cooperative was 2.70 implying that the cooperatives performed to a great extent. However, in Ikwerre farmers' cooperatives had a grand means of 2.79 while in Etche the grand mean was 2.1 implying that the farmers' cooperatives in Ikwerre performed better than the cooperatives in Etche. The t-test results showed no significance difference in the performance of farmers' cooperative society ($t\text{-calculated} = 1.893 < t\text{-critical} = 1.96$). The measure that enhances the performance of farmers' cooperatives include contributing to social activities in the community of the members, improving the financial performance of cooperative, providing additional services to members and creating opportunities for members to individually interact with each other. The study concluded that there should be enlightenment campaign that will increase farmers' involvement in cooperative societies.*

Keywords: *Cooperative Societies, Farmers, Cooperative Performance*

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I. Introduction

International Cooperatives Alliance (ICA) (2010) defines Cooperatives society as a self-sufficient association of people bound together wilfully to meet common, economic, social and cultural needs through a mutually owned and collectively controlled undertaking. It is dependent on the values of the development of agriculture, forestry, banking, loan, agro-processing, stockpiling, marketing, angling and housing and its network covers 85 percent rural family units. It is additionally a business undertaking that focuses on total identity of the component elements of proprietorship control and utilization of services (Nweze, 2003).

In the same vein, Virendra et al (2015) defined cooperatives as an association of individuals with collective obligations and contemplations for the advancement of the poor particularly less privileged. Cooperative societies also involve themselves in economic activities like disbursement of loans, distribution of agro-inputs like (seeds, fertilizers and agricultural chemical).

According to Vitaliano (1995) cooperatives serve as basic tool for actualizing food security at family level. In order to achieve best institutional intervention for attaining agricultural development among the small scale farmers in any country, cooperative societies should be considered. In the developed nations like United States of America, Canada, Australia, almost all European countries and socialist country like China have achieved food self sufficiency through cooperative (Chambo, 2009). Moreover, Ijere (1977), has asserted that cooperative organization promote socio-economic transformation of the farming communities where they operates. It is worthy to note that the socio-economic characteristics of farmers have a significant effect on their performance. The outputs can be affected by the age of farmers, access to credit facilities, gender, size of farm, level of education, farming experience.

Cooperative societies are established to better the social and economic of the rural dwellers, empower and consequently assists to increase revenue. With an increase in revenue, the rural populace would likely be encouraged to pay their taxes. This will in turn assist the local and state government in improving on their internally generated revenue.

Objectives of the study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the performance of cooperative societies in the study area, specifically, the objectives are

- 1) Examine the performance of farmers' cooperative in Ikwerre Local Government Area
- 2) Examine the performance of farmers' cooperative in Etche Local Government Area
- 3) Compare the performance of farmers' cooperative in Ikwerre and Etche Local Government Areas.

II. Methodology

Study Area

The research was conducted in two Local Government Areas of Rivers State, Ikwerre and Etche. Ikwerre is one of the many native ethnic groups in Rivers State. Ikwerre people are traditionally farmers, fishermen, hunters, palm wine tappers, artisans and traders.

Research Design

In this study, a survey research method was adopted.

Data Collection Method and Sources

A cross sectional survey method was used to collect primary data from members of cooperative societies and their leaders by means of semi-structured questionnaires given to the respondents including age, gender, and level of education.

Data Analysis Techniques

Mean scores were used to ascertain the level of performance of cooperative societies in the study areas. A four point likert scale; Very Great Extent (4), Great Extent (3) Low extent (2) and Very Low Extent (1) with a required mean of 2.5 was used to ascertain the level of cooperative performance

The t-statistics was used to compare the performance of farmers' cooperative in Ikwerre and Etche Local Government Areas.

III. Results and Discussions

Farmers' Cooperatives Performance in Ikwerre and Etche Local Government Areas

Table 1:Performance of Farmers' Cooperative in Ikwerre and Etche Local Government Areas.

S/N	Performance	n	Sum	Ikwerre	decision	N	ETCHE	mean	ALL
				Mean			Sum		
1	Enhanced value addition	68	170	2.50	A	45	116	2.58	2.54
2	Increase in sale turnover and income.	68	205	3.01	A	45	116	2.58	2.80
3	Increase member farm output and productivity.	68	196	2.88	A	45	122	2.71	2.80
4	Enhance members savings through patronage refund	68	189	2.78	A	45	135	3.00	2.89
5	Easy accessibility to farm machineries bargaining power	68	198	2.91	A	45	121	2.69	2.80
6	Achieving through collective market access	68	211	3.10	A	45	123	2.73	2.92
7	Regulation of market activities and competition by fixing of charges and price control	68	157	2.31	D	45	90	2.00	2.15
	Grand Mean			2.79				2.61	2.70

Source: Field survey 2018, detail in appendix 10

The respondents in both LGAs agreed on all questionnaire items except regulation of market activities and competition by charges fixing and price control.

The grand mean performance of famers' cooperatives was 2.70, this value is greater than the required mean (2.5) implying that the cooperatives performed to a great extent. However, famers' cooperatives in Ikwerre had a grand mean of 2.79 while famers' cooperatives in Etche had a grand mean of 2.61 implying that the cooperatives in Ikwerre performed better than the cooperatives in Etche.

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Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test showing Significant Difference in the Performance of farmers' cooperative in Ekwerre and Etche LGAs.

Responses	N	Mean \bar{X}	SD	Df	t_{cal}	t_{crit} (0.05,111)	Sig. t (PV)	Level of sig	Dec.
Level of awareness of Insecticides Treated Nets (ITNs)	68	2.784	0.283	18	1.893	1.96	0.107	0.05	Accepted
Level of awareness Conventional Nets	45	2.613	0.304						

Source; Field Survey Data 2018, SPSS 20.0 output, detail in appendix

The rundown of t-test result on the disparity in the Performance of farmers' cooperative in Ikwerre and Etche in table 4.3 shows that the t-calculated is |1.893| and the critical (table) value of $t_{(0.05, 111)} = 1.96$. Since $t_{cal} = 1.893 < t_{crit (0.05, 111)} = 1.893$, the researcher therefore concludes that there is no significant in the performance of cooperative societies in Ikwerre and Etche Local Government Areas.

IV. Conclusion

The grand performance of farmers' cooperatives was 2.70, since this value is greater than the required mean (2.5) it was concluded that the cooperatives performed to a great extent. However, farmers' cooperative in Ikwerre had a grand means of 2.79 while in Etche Local Government Area the grand means was 2.61 implying that the farmers' cooperatives in Ikwerre performance better than the cooperatives in Etche. The t-test results on the difference in performance of farmers' cooperatives in Ikwerre and Etche shows that the t-calculated is = 1.893 and the t-critical is 1.96, it was consequently concluded that there was no significant difference in the performance of farmers' cooperatives in Ikwerre and Etche Local Government Area.

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