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Project Acceptability and Participation as Determinants of Beneficiaries' Income in Fadama II Communities in Ogun State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how project acceptability and participation determine beneficiaries' income in ten local government areas that participated in Fadama II rural development project. Descriptive survey design of the ex-post facto type was adopted. Two objectives and two research questions were stated while two null hypotheses were tested. A self-designed instrument i.e. "rural development innovation acceptability and participation scale'' with 0.73 reliability was administered complemented by focus group discussion. Data generated were analysed using descriptive statistics comprising frequency counts, percentages, mean score and content analysis as well as inferential statistics of multiple correlation matrix. Out of a total of 795 participants, 537(68%) were male while 258(32%) were females. Income sources of the respondents are 565(71%) farming, 107(13.5%) fishing, 33(4.1%) animal husbandry, 53(6.7%) public service, 31(3.9%) trading and 6 (0.8%) others. Beneficiaries in Ijebu North local government area ranked project acceptability 1st with 34.80 while participation was ranked 1st with 39.43 in Obafemi Owode local government area. Results of analysis showed there is a positive significant relationship between the dependent variable income and the two independent variables acceptability (r=0.292) and participation (r=0.793) at 0.05 level of significance. The study therefore recommended that the involvement of all stakeholders in projects acceptability and participation should be improved to ensure higher project impacts.

Keywords: Project acceptability, participation, beneficiaries' income, Fadama II communities

The strategic role of rural communities in the socio-economic development of the country as the main source of agricultural products for human consumption and raw materials for industrial growth made it of great importance. This has accentuated confirmed interest by successive governments in rural transformation. Despite this, the quality of life of the rural populace remains low. According to World Bank (2010), Agbaje, Okunmadewa, Omomona and Oni (2013) this is because of the long neglect of rural areas including Fadama communities.

This pathetic situation is reported by a World Development report (2008) which indicates that 52.7 percent of the 72.7 million rural people in Nigeria are experiencing neglect which has made their environments highly inhabitable and with a high percentage of income poverty. Experts have noted that in spite of over twenty five different development programmes for social and infrastructure improvements that have been implemented in Nigeria, the prevalence of limited access to qualitative and quantitative infrastructure, agricultural inputs, credit facilities, employment and social services, show that so little may have accrued to the targeted beneficiaries. Obviously, majority of the rural populace have been living under poor socio-economic and environmental conditions such that poverty has become a common phenomenon in the

rural communities. These rural poor live below $1.25 a day with very high maternal and infant mortality rates over time (National Bureau of Statistics, 2005; World Development Report, 2008).

According to Cavendish and Campbell (2008) despite the implementation of many rural development strategies in recent decades, rural incomes have not improved significantly. In the opinion of Fadipe, Adenugaand Lawal (2014), rural income poverty has persisted because of lack of access to facilities that enhance productivities, thereby predisposing the populace to disease, hunger, deprivation, want and premature death. Several experts have identified the causes of the problem of income poverty in rural areas of Nigeria. To Akinlade, Yusuf, Omonona, and Oyekale (2011) the high level of poor income and poverty in rural areas is because of the "top-down" approaches to rural development that has been adopted for several decades in Nigeria. Other experts have also listed causes like lack of access to productive assets, benefits and impacts of rural projects due to lack people participation and involvement.

Consequently, the Federal government introduced the National Fadama II development as a rural development project. It employs the community- driven development approach that emphasised beneficiaries' participation. This differentiated it from most previous projects that treated beneficiaries as passive aid recipients (Labonne, Biller & Chase, 2007). The project had a goal of reducing income poverty in Nigeria, especially in rural communities that have Fadama potentials based on five components including rural infrastructure investment for the creation of economic and physical rural infrastructure comprising rural roads, culverts, market stalls, cold storage, boreholes and irrigation among others.

It also supports pilot productive asset acquisition to enhance the improvements in the productivity and income of Fadama resource users by facilitating the acquisition of productive assets by individuals or Fadama user groups. Demand-responsive advisory services are to support advisory services that will enable Fadama resource users to adopt output-enhancing techniques and more profitable marketing practices in their enterprises. The capacity building component of the project was to increase the ability of its beneficiaries to assess their needs, participate in planning, and implement and manage economic activities, and to increase the capacity of the project coordinators to conduct monitoring and evaluation. It also had the conflict resolution component designed to address the shortcoming of Fadama I by increasing the capacity of FUGs to manage conflicts, which were more particularly serious and more frequent between pastoralists and crop farmers. In this regards, the Fadama II project showed a lot of potentials in the new innovations it was designed to introduce in the agriculture and rural development practice in Nigeria.

Hence, it is pertinent to find out how acceptability and participation of this project determined beneficiaries' income in the participating communities. Therefore, the objectives of the study are to determine the level of acceptability and participation in Fadama II project and the influence of project acceptability and participation had on beneficiaries' income in Fadama II communities in Ogun state. In order to determine the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, the study tested two null hypotheses. There is no significant relationship between project participation and Fadama II project beneficiaries' income. There is no significant relationship between project participationand Fadama II project beneficiaries' income.

Literature Review

Several literatures have attempted to identify the importance of beneficiaries in the conception, implementation and evaluation of participation in rural development projects. Hence, Food and Agricultural Organization report (1988) defined and interpreted participation to mean sensitizing people to make them more responsive to development programmes and to encourage local initiatives and self-help, involving people as much as possible actively in the decision-making process with regards to their development. It also means organizing group action to give to hitherto excluded disadvantaged people control over resources, access to services and/or bargaining power; promoting the involvement of people in the planning

and implementation of development efforts. Also, it means beneficiaries involvement in the sharing of their benefits; and "the involvement of a significant number of persons in situations or actions which enhance their well-being, e.g. their income, security or self-esteem".

Majority of the rural populace in Nigeria source their income either directly and indirectly from farming activities (Olawepo, 2010). This large populace constituting about 60% of the national population are responsible for about 90% of the country's local food production and contribute up to 45 percent to the gross domestic product. However several studies have identified that rural people in Nigeria are characterized by low income and high nutritional deficiency. Oyekale, Adeoti and Ogunupe (2004) observe that income inequality has been increasing in rural areas and can be linked to the growing dimension of poverty. Attempting to identify the causes of low income in rural Nigeria, Olawepo (2010) observes that limited ownership of assets, large family size and high dependency rates are responsible.

Oyekale *et al*. (2004) conclude that rural population in Nigeria earns lower income than their urban counterpoints. They observe that a high level of income inequality exist between Nigerian rural and urban areas because urban dwellers usually earn more than rural dwellers due to their higher level of literacy. Furthermore, they identify that the agrarian nature of rural communities and lack of skills by rural people contribute to the low income status of these people. According to Adebayo, Akogwuand Yisa (2012), the income level of rural communities may be attributed to certain crucial factors, and understanding these factors may hold the key to effective rural development policy formulation. A closer look at the determinants of rural income would provide an in-depth knowledge about the factors that explain low income yield and poverty in rural regions.

Ipinnaiye in Ogunniyi, Adepoju, and Olapade-Ogunwole (2011) note the importance of solving the problem of widening income inequality. Also, he corroborates the assertion of Oyakale *et al.* (2004) that this challenge had been existing long before now as it also accompanied the rapid economic growth. Aigbokhan (1997) also confirms this phenomenon that low rural income and widening income disparity occur regardless of the commitments shown by many developing countries like Nigeria towards its reduction. Olatona (2007), Olawepo (2010) and Oyekale *et al*. (2004) conclude that low rural income and income inequality are closely related to poverty. Arising from these, it is obvious that this issue remains a fundamental problem that should be solved, hence, the adoption of agricultural and rural development approach as a panacea to ameliorating the situation. In this regard, Rogers in Matanmi (1994) traces the importance of agricultural and rural development innovations appropriate to solve problems peculiar to Nigeria's rural environment. He notes further that although several innovations have been utilised with the intention to improve productivity, income and quality of life in totality in the rural areas, they have failed because their acceptability by the beneficiaries was poor. He believes that innovations failed because they could not demonstrate the fascinating contents that could motivate acceptability such as:

> *economic profitability, low initial cost, low perceived risk, a decrease in comfort, time saving, effort and immediate reward, compatibility with socio-cultural values and beliefs of the farmers, low complexity and high simplicity, less risk for the farmers than those otherwise and ease of observation and communication.*

European Union (2015) identifies it as the willingness, public approval to accede to or receive a project to be implemented in a community based on socio-economic and psychological considerations. International Fund for Agricultural Development (2009) also defines it as getting involved or the offer of support by institutions through projects and the continuation of maintenance of benefits realized at the end of the project. FAO (1988) defines participation as:

> *sensitising people to make them more responsive to development programmes and to encourage local initiatives and self-help. It also refers to involving people as much as possible actively in the decision-making process which regards their development, organizing group action to give to hitherto excluded disadvantaged people control over resources, access to services and/or bargaining power.*

It is promoting the involvement of people in the planning and implementation of development efforts as well as in the sharing of their benefits; and in more general, descriptive terms; "the involvement of a significant number of persons in situations or actions which enhance their well-being, e.g. their income, security or self-esteem" (Uphoff: 1979).

Review of Empirical Studies

Past studies have discussed the purposes, benefits and effectiveness of participation of local people in decision-making processes of development project implementation in areas that directly affect their lives. World Bank (1994) observes that the stakeholders' participation in development facilitates the determination of the relevance and the appropriateness of the process and product of development efforts, commitment of stakeholder in the ownership of and projects, a willingness to share costs and an interest in sustaining the programme and, better planning based on the concerns and ideas of a wide range of stake.

It promotes a better match between human capability and improved institutional preference enhances information flows which allow markets to function more efficiently; increases equity by involving the poor and disadvantaged in development efforts; and strengthens the capacity of stake holders as a consequence of their participation the process of development. In addition, Conroy (2006) illustrates that participation of intended users can mean that applied and adopted research will be better oriented to farmers' problems.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted Sherry Arnstein theory of community participation as its the theoretical framework of this study. In the proposition of Sherry Arnstein (1969) community participation revolves around the people where the poor and the power-holders are equally involved in any of the processes of formulation, passage and implementation of public policies that are designed to ameliorate the development challenges of the poor. To this end, citizen participation in rural development projects should be an empowerment for redistribution of power and income which enables the have-nots presently excluded from the economic processes. This gives them the opportunity for improved income and quality of life.

Method and Analysis of Data

This study adopted the descriptive survey design of the ex-post facto type because the independent variable had already taken place. Purposive total enumeration sampling technique was used to select the sample elements for the study which amounted to all the seven hundred and ninety five (795) members from the ten (10) Fadama II Local government areas which are Abeokuta North, Ifo, Ipokia, Odeda, Odogbolu, Ijebu North, Ijebu North East, Obafemi Owode, Ogun Waterside and Yewa North. A self-designed instrument i.e. "Rural development Innovation Acceptability and Participation Scale'' with 0.73 reliability was administered on the beneficiaries of Fadama II development project complemented by Focus Group Discussion. The data generated were analysed using descriptive statistics like frequency counts, percentage, mean score and content analysis while further analyses was done using inferential statistics of Multiple Correlation Matrix at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Demographic information of respondents of this study provides an insight into the personal variables of the participants in the Fadama II communities in Ogun state. The different numbers of respondents in each of the Fadama II communities are presented in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents by Fadama II communities. It shows that 139 (17.5%) were from Abeokuta North, 84(10.6%) were from Ifo, 46 (5.8%) were from Odeda, 73(9.27%) were from Ipokia, 56(7.0%) were from Odogbolu, 105(13.1%) were from Ijebu North, 50(6.3%) were from Ijebu North East, 104(13.1%) were from Obafemi Owode, 76(9.6%) were from Ogun Waterside and 62(7.8%) were from Yewa North Local government areas respectively. The Table also indicates that 537(68%) of the respondents were male while 258(32%) were females. This shows that the beneficiaries and the participants were made up of both genders therefore meaning that the project was gender friendly.

This Table indicates that 45(5.7%) respondents were between 20-30 years, 197(24.8%) were between 31-40 years, 377(47.4%) were between 41-50 years and 176(22.1%) were 50 years and above. The result indicates majority of the respondents were between 41-50 years. The result also shows that the age groups recorded significant number of respondents that took part in the study. This means that the entire respondents that were involved in the Fadama II project were adults.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Sl. No.	Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage
	Membership of Fadama Communities		
1	Abeokuta North	139	17.5
2	Ifo	84	10.6
3	Odeda	46	5.8
4	Ipokia	73	9.2
5	Odogbolu	56	7.0
6	Ijebu North	105	13.1
7	Ijebu North East	50	6.3
8	Obafemi Owode	104	13.1
9	Ogun Waterside	76	9.6
10	Yewa North Local	62	7.8
	Total	**795**	**100**
	Gender		
1	Male	537	68
2	Female	258	32
	Total	**795**	**100**
	Age		
1	20-30	45	5.7
2	31-40	197	24.8
3	41-50	377	47.4
4	50 above	176	22.1
	Total	**795**	**100**

Table 2: Demographic data

Sl. No.	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
1	Farmers	565	71
2	Fishermen	107	13.5
3	Animal husbandry	33	4.1
4	Public servants	53	6.7
5	Traders	31	3.9
6	Others	6	0.8
	Total	**795**	**100**
Literacy Level			
1	Cannot read	456	57.4
2	Can only read but could not write	112	14.1
3	Can read and write	227	28.6
	Total	**795**	**100**

Source: *Field Survey.*

Table 2 shows that 565(71%) of the respondents were farmers, 107(13.5%) were fishermen, 33(4.2%) were engaged in animal husbandry, 53(6.7%) were public servants, 31(3.9%) were traders and 6 (0.8%) were others (Table 2). This means that the participants were from diverse occupational backgrounds. Also, it shows that Fadama II communities are not only inhabited by crop farmers, fishermen and those involved in animal husbandry, this environment are also inhabited by several other people with diverse occupations. Consequently, the findings actually depict that all of them depended directly or indirectly on the Fadama resources together. Based on this, it could be deduced that this wide range of occupations of Fadama II communities' residence shows there was high level of demand for access to the meagre resources in these environments and indicates that this limited resources cannot go round the people, hence, it is a potential cause of conflicts among community members and in some cases between communities.

This table also shows that majority of the respondents i.e. 456(57.4%) cannot read, 112(14.1%) can only read but could not write while 227(28.6%) can both read and write. This is an indication that Fadama user groups were not restricted to non-literates. Furthermore, this indicates that the composition of those with one form of literacy ability or the other would have influenced their participation and achievement in the level of adoption, assimilation and indeed utilisation of different skills through capacity building programmes in the areas of productive assets provision, conflict management systems and local development planning of Fadama II project.

Table 3: Mean Score of acceptability and participation in the ten Fadama II local government areas

Fadama II Local Government	Frequency	Mean Score of Acceptability	Rank	Mean Score of Participation	Rank
Abeokuta North	139	33.33	3rd	38.49	3rd
Ifo	84	32.71	5th	37.95	7th
Ipokia	73	33.02	4th	38.06	6th
Odeda	46	32.06	8th	37.50	9th
Odogbolu	56	32.43	7th	37.59	8th
Ijebu North	105	34.80	1st	38.92	2nd
Ijebu North East	50	32.66	6th	37.94	10th
Obafemi Owode	104	34.70	2nd	39.43	1st
Ogun Waterside	76	30.14	9th	38.22	4th
Yewa North	62	33.02	4th	38.16	5th

Source: *Field Survey.*

Table 3 shows the mean scores of the respondents on acceptability and participation of the project from the ten Fadama II local government areas. The mean score for acceptability showed that Abeokuta North Local Government Area had 33.33, Ifo had 32.71, Ipokia had 33.02, Odeda had 32.06, Odogbolu Local Government had 32.43. It also reveals that Ijebu North had 34.80, Ijebu North East had 32.66, Obafemi Owode had 34.70, Ogun Waterside had 30.14 while Yewa North had 33.02. With these mean score, Ijebu North ranked 1st with 34.80, Obafemi Owode ranked 2nd with 34.70, Abeokuta North ranked 3rd with 33.33, Ipokia ranked 4th with 33.02, Yewa North ranked 4th with 33.02, Ifo ranked 5th with 32.71, Ijebu North East ranked 6th with 32.66, Odogbolu ranked 7th with 32.43, Odeda ranked 8th with 32.06 while Ogun Waterside ranked 9th with 30.14.

Also, the rating of the project participation based on the mean score from the table reveals that Obafemi Owode ranks 1st with 39.43, Ijebu North ranks 2nd with 38.9, Abeokuta North ranks 3rd with 38.49, Ogun Waterside ranks 4th with 38.22, Yewa North ranks 5th with 38.16, Ipokia ranks 6th with 38.06, Ifo ranks 7th with 37.59, Odogbolu ranks 8th with 37.59, Odeda ranks 9th with 37.50 while Ijebu North East ranks 10th with 37.94.

Based on this, it can be inferred that the project was well accepted in all the communities. The Fadama II local government areas under study showed differences in their level of acceptability of Fadama II development project. The interactions of the researcher and the Fadama communities support the assertion of Arokoyo (2004) cited in Koyenikan and Foby (2010), that respondents' participation in previous programmes, decentralization, standardization of project planning and needs made them to accept and adopt the Fadama II project.

This revelation is important based on the findings of Koyenikan and Foby (2010) and World Bank (2013), which agree that the level of acceptability of projects affect participation in development programme. Further, a KII with a Fadama II coordinating officer asserts that:

> *the acceptability of any change like the ones brought by Fadama II approach may not be easily attained and participation in it may not be encouraging. However, the experience of Fadama II has been a successful one in most areas because the people saw that they have the opportunity to determine what they needed to satisfy their needs. Therefore, they accepted and participated in the project by adhering to the guidelines provided for them.*

At another FGD session, a respondent says that:

> *our people now believe that Fadama II project is different from the previous ones we have participated in. We can all see the assets, infrastructure and the increase in our income which we never achieved before our participation in Fadama II.*

Furthermore, the Table indicates that Ijebu North Local Government Area recorded 38.92 as the mean score of participation; Ogun Waterside Local Government Area had 38.22; Abeokuta North local government area had 38.49; Obafemi-Owode Local Government Area had 39.43; Ipokia Local Government Area had 38.06; Odogbolu Local Government Area had 37.59; Ijebu North East Local Government Area had 37.94; Ifo Local Government Area had 37.95; Yewa North Local Government Area had 38.16; and Odeda Local Government Area had 37.50.

The table shows that participation was not equal in all the Fadama II local government areas under study. Obafemi-Owode Local Government Area had the highest collective mean score of participation at 39.43, as indicated by the 104 beneficiaries with the highest individual mean score of participation of 4.93. Ijebu North Local Government Area came second, with a collective mean of 38.92 and 4.87 in their level of participation. This was followed by Abeokuta North Local Government Area, which had a mean score of 38.49 and 4.81. Yewa North Local Government Area, had 38.16 and 4.77; Ipokia Local Government Area had 38.06 and 4.76; Ifo Local Government Area had 37.95 and 4.74; Ijebu North East Local Government Area had 37.94 and 4.74; Odogbolu Local Government Area had 37.59 and 4.69; while the lowest participation mean score was recorded by Odeda Local Government area which had 37.50 and 4.69.

However, this finding shows that the level of participation was high in all the Fadama II local government areas even though some of the mean scores may be higher than the others. Also, the study reveals that the communities participated in the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects. Respondents noted that their level of participation was high because of awareness through publications, print, electronic media, translation in local languages, radio programmes, and sensitization through drama. Also, they noted that the advisory services empowered the communities to know that they could own and control their development activities by initiating local development plans that address relevant needs like support for marketing infrastructure, empowering stakeholders, conflict resolution mechanism, non-farm enterprises, women support, and resource management.

Their participation activities were also reflected in decision-making processes, resources, membership mobilisation and training programmes for capacity building. The importance of participation in the outcomes of projects like this has been confirmed by the study of Ibeawuchi and Nwachukwu (2010), which note that participation of beneficiaries in all the phases of the micro-projects cycle (identification, planning, prioritisation, designing, implementing and maintenance of intervention measures) promoted significant impacts on the livelihood of participants. In the words of Khwaja (2004), higher community participation in a decision also implies a lower likelihood that the external organisation rather than the community is identified as the main decision maker.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix on the Relationship between Project Acceptability, Participation on Beneficiaries' Income

	Income	**Acceptability**	**Participation**
Income	1		
Acceptability	.292**	1	.131**
Participation	.793**	.440**	.661**

Significant at 0.05.

Table 4 shows that there is a positive significant relationship between the dependent variable income and the two independent variables acceptability (r=.292) and participation (r=.793). The positive correlation of the two independent variables with the dependent variable indicates that the dependent variable would increase as the independent variables increase. Therefore, the two null hypotheses were rejected as the two independent variables positively determined the income of the beneficiaries of the project.

This corroborates the finding of Bello, Salau, Miri and Allu (2013) that high rate of acceptance and adoption of improved technologies enhanced income level and savings of cattle farmers. Olaolu, Akinnagbe and Agber (2013) that participation in Fadama II programme made appreciable impacts on mean household expenditure, poverty reduction and farmers' income. This is also similar to the findings of Ibanga, Jaya and Ndabaga (2016:344) observed project acceptability influenced beneficiaries' participation.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that acceptability and participation in Fadama II development project was high among the beneficiaries of the project in the ten local government areas. Based on the positive correlation of the dependent variable income and the independent variables acceptability and participation, it is concluded that

acceptability and participation both impacted positively by increasing the income of participants of the project.

This study therefore recommends that the involvement of all stakeholders of project like this should be improved to ensure higher project impacts. Further, this project should be used as the benchmark for designing agricultural and rural development projects in the future.

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