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Land Acquisition and Types of Crops Cultivated by Farmers in Ayedaade Local Government Area, Osun State, Nigeria

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Author's contribution

The study was designed, analyzed and discussed by the author. The author takes full responsibility for the whole study including data collation, manuscript drafting and editing.

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ABSTRACT

The research was carried out to assess the problems associated with land acquisition and their effect on the type of crops cultivated. Multistage sampling technique was used for selecting 120 farmers for the study. Results showed that the mean age of the farmers was 50.5 years, 76.7% were male and 66.7% married. Also, 64.2% had one form of education or the other with 65.0% having a farm size of less than 2.0ha and 48.3% having farming experience of 1-10years. Methods of land acquisition were mainly through inheritance (42.5%) and purchase (28.3%) with 76.7% cultivating arable crops like cassava and/or maize. Furthermore, (45.8%) of this were as intercrop. Access to market (43.3%) and credit facilities/needed finance (24.2%) influence the choice of crops cultivated. Chi-square analysis showed significant association ($p<0.05$) between method of land acquisition and education ($p=0.00$), age ($p=0.02$). Also there was significant relationship between method of land acquisition and types of crop cultivated ($p=0.00$). Most respondents were small scale farmers and could not increase their farm size due to financial constraints. Size of farm land was found to influence type of crop cultivated. Thus, the study recommends that farmers should be encouraged to cultivate bigger farm size and government should revisit the land tenure system and land use act to encourage acquisition of more land for agricultural activities.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Land is an essential element in agricultural development and its accessibility is crucial to the attainment of a sustainable national development. Accessibility to land as opined by [1] comprises of availability of usable land, affordability of such land, ease of transaction with that land and security of the owner's right. This implies that there must be cultivable that farmers can acquire when they so desire but in Nigeria this is not so. Land as one of the factors of production helps in the production of food as well as raw materials. With reduction in land for agricultural purposes, the level of food production will reduce drastically and it will eventually affect food security of the population. [2] opined that if Nigeria is to achieve meaningful economic development the issue of accessibility to land should be keenly looked into. [3,6] asserted that Nigeria has a total land area of about 92.4 million hectares out of which about ninety million hectares are suitable for cultivable and only about of that size is presently under cultivation. Apparently the country is endowed with cultivable land but all efforts to facilitate equitable access to it by the majority of rural people is still a mirage. Previous research efforts in this area [3,4,5,6,9] in Nigeria have mostly dwelt on the general constraints involved in land accessibility mostly under the customary land tenure system and the Land Use Act 1978 as promulgated.

According to [4] the main problem with respect to land cultivation is still land availability. Land availability for agricultural production as reported by [5] involves a complexity of interacting variables such as population, land tenure system, level of technology and the stage of the country's development. Out of these variables, the land tenure system puts serious limitation on the amount of land that is available for all categories of farmers. Land tenure system in Nigeria varies with tribes, clans, states and communities [6]. In most rural areas of Nigeria, land is communally owned and traditionally no single person has exclusive right over the piece of land being used for agricultural purposes. Land acquisition through inheritance occurs when a piece of land belonging to the ancestors is passed down to generation of a lineage. Most rural farm lands are tenured by inheritance and all members of such a lineage are assured of a piece of land. However, land fragmentation follows as the population increases from generation to generation, leading to reduced land availability. Land acquisition through rentage has being found to affect the types of crops to be cultivated due to the fact that land leasing is for a limited period of time. This often limit the borrower to planting arable crops in order to prevent the crops from staying too long on the farm land as such crops should not exceed the leasing period approved. However, the rural resource-poor farmers have had to adjust their farming enterprises through experiences to systems that help to ensure that food is made available to their households whatever the quantities. Such adjustments have often been in line with types of crops planted and/ or method of land acquisition. Hence, there is a need to understand how this adjustments are done in relation to crops cultivated in the study area.

1.1 Objectives

This study is aimed at examining activities of crop farmers with respect to land acquisition in Ayedaade Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria. Specifically the study; described the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents; identified the methods of land acquisition by farmers in the study area; determined the size of land that farmers have access to for farming; examined the factors affecting land acquisition by respondents;

identified the type of crops cultivated and determined the factors affecting the choice of crops cultivated by the farmers.

1.2 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses stated in their null forms were tested to achieve the objectives of the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between method of land acquisition and socio-economic characteristics of the farmer.
2. There is no significant relationship between method of land acquisition and the types of crop cultivated by the farmers.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Ayedaade Local Government Area of Osun State. Osun State is landlocked and occupies 9,251 square kilometers. It shares borders with Kwara State to the north, Oyo State to the west, Ogun State to the south and Ondo and Ekiti States to the East. The major economic activity of the people is farming, producing food and cash crops like maize, cassava, beans, cocoyam, tobacco and oil palm. Ayedaade Local Government Area is located in the western part of Osun State of Nigeria. It has a population of 150,392 [7] and is bounded by Isokan, Irewole and Aiyedire Local Government Areas to the East, North and West respectively. The people belong to the Yoruba speaking tribe and are mainly peasant farmers predominantly living in rural communities, which informed their dependence on the land as their main source of livelihood.

Multi stage sampling technique was used to select 120 farmers for the study. The first stage was the random selection of three [3] wards (Ode-omu, Gbongan and Orile-Owu) from the Local Government Area. The second stage was the random selection of four villages from each of the three wards to give a total of 12 villages. The final stage was the random selection of ten farmers from each of the villages (male and female farmers). Interview schedule was used to elicit information from the farmers on their personal characteristics, land acquisition methods and types of crop cultivated. Data collected were analysed using descriptive (frequencies, percentages and means) and inferential (Chi Square) statistics.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Personal Characteristics of the Farmers

Table 1 showed that majority of the farmers (60.9%) were within ages of 30 – 50 years and the mean age was 50.5year. This means respondents were mostly youths who are strong, agile and are expected to have enough farming experience. The percentage of male farmers and female farmers are 76.7% and 23.3% respectively. This indicates that there are more male farmers in the study area than female farmers. The result showed that majority 66.7% of the respondents are married; 70.8% of them are into farming and 64.2% had one form of education or the other. The table also shows that 65.0% of the farmers have farm size of less than 2.0ha. This implies that majority of the farmers are small scaled which could be as a result of the communal system of land acquisition. The small farm sizes could also be due to financial constraint, which makes the purchase of land difficult.

Table 1. Personal characteristics of the respondents (n = 120)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age (years) mean age =50.5yrs		
Less than 30	39	14.9
30 – 40	18	28.5
41 – 50	34	32.4
51 – 60	23	19.2
More than 60	6	5.0
Sex		
Male	92	76.7
Female	28	23.3
Marital Status		
Married	80	66.7
Single	27	22.5
Widow	13	10.8
Occupation		
Farming	85	70.8
Hunting	12	10
Trading	13	10.8
Civil Servant	10	8.3
Educational Status		
No formal education	23	19.2
Primary	37	30.8
Adult education	21	17.5
Post primary	29	24.2
BSc / HND	10	8.3
Religion		
Christianity	49	40.9
Islam	53	44.2
Traditional	18	14.9
Farm size (ha)		
Less than 1 ha	45	37.5
1 – 1.9	33	27.5
2 – 2.9	27	22.5
3 – 3.9	11	9.2
Above 4 ha	4	3.3

Source: Field survey, 2011

3.2 Respondents Methods of Land Acquisition and Farming Experience

Table 2 showed that 28.3% acquired land through purchase, while 42.5% through inheritance and 22.5% through rent/lease. This implies that majority of the farmers acquired their land through the communal land tenure arrangement, in which most of the land had been handed to them from their fore-fathers. Thus the land would have been fragmented and parties involved would have increased thereby resulting in small size of farmland available per individual which does not support the cultivation of some crops most especially perennial and cash crops.

Also, 34.0% of the respondents had over 20 years of farming experience with 25.8% having 6 – 10 years experience. This indicates that various agricultural re-vitalization efforts carried

out by the governments in the last 20 years have been experienced by these farmers and might have affected their attitude towards farming.

Table 2. Methods of land acquisition and farming experience

Variables	Percentage	Frequency
Method of land acquisition		
Purchase	34	28.3
Inheritance	51	42.5
Communal	7	5.8
Lease/Rent	27	22.5
Gift	1	0.8
Farming experience (years)		
1 – 5 years	27	22.5
6 – 10 years	31	25.8
11 – 15 years	20	16.7
Above 20years	34.0	42

Source: Field survey, 2011

3.3 Factors Affecting Land Acquisition

Table 3 indicated that financial constraint (40.8%), shortage of land (23.3%) and lack of support (18.3%) were the main factors affecting land acquisition among the farmers. It therefore implies that land may be available for sale but financial constraint makes the farmers unable to purchase more land in order to increase their farm sizes and therefore their production. There is a need to solve this problems by bringing farmers together as a group and giving support to them both technically and financially in order to ease the process of land acquisition. There is also a need to comprehensively review the land acquisition process in line with current realities and peculiar characteristics of these resource - poor farmers.

Table 3. Factors affecting land acquisition

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Financial constraint	49	40.8
Shortage of land	28	23.3
Lack of cooperation	17	14.2
Lack of support	22	18.3
Cultural constraint	4	3.3

Source: Field survey, 2011.

3.4 Types of Crop and Factors Affecting Choice of Crops Cultivated

Table 4 showed that majority (76.7%) of the farmers' cultivated arable crops while 23.3% of them cultivated perennial crops. Among other factors, method of land acquisition could be said to influence choice of crop for cultivation. However the major factor (43.3%) as shown in Table 4 is access to market with produce. Almost half (45.8%) of the farmers cultivated cassava/maize enterprise combination which might be as a result of the market demand of the two crops in addition to their being major household staple food and security crops. This

is important to the farmers as marketing of the harvested crops is what determines their success or failure in the farming enterprise.

Apparently most of the farmers practice mixed cropping and most combination of crops has either cassava or maize in it. These crops are households' major staple food or what can be termed food security crops. This trend is in agreement with the study carried out by [4] where the size of farm land invariably influenced the type of farming and enterprise combination opened to the farmers.

Table 4. Types of crops and factors affecting choice of crop cultivated

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Types of crop cultivated		
Arable crop	92	76.67
Perennial crop	28	23.3
Crops cultivated		
Yam/Maize	36	30.0
Melon/Cassava	10	8.3
Cassava/Maize	55	45.8
Cassava/Melon	4	3.3
Yam	2	1.7
Maize	9	7.5
Cassava	1	0.8
Vegetables/Orange	3	2.5
Factors affecting choice of crop		
Access to market	52	43.3
Credit facilities (needed finance)	29	24.2
Harvesting period	28	23.3
Nature of land ownership	7	5.8
Pest and diseases	2	1.7
Personal needs	1	0.8
Competition	1	0.8

Source: Field survey, 2011

3.5 Hypothesis One: Test of Relationship between Method of Land Acquisition and the Respondents Socio-Economic Characteristics

Table 5 indicated significant relationship between method of land acquisition and education as well as age. This relationship can be traced to the methods of land acquisition where 42.5% respondents indicated that their land was acquired by inheritance. In which case, middle-aged and older people are likely to own land. Furthermore, as reported by [8,9], there has been no survey or any registration of communal land areas in rural areas. Thus older and more enlightened individuals often take advantage of situations to expand their land areas.

Table 5. There is no significant relationship between method of land acquisition and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, using chi-square analysis

Variables	χ^2	*df*	*p*	*Decision*
Education	37.5	3	0.00	S
Age	21.1	4	0.02	S
Occupation	18.9	2	0.09	NS
Marital Status	13.0	3	0.16	NS
Sex	3.7	1	0.72	NS

3.6 Hypothesis Two: Test of Relationship between Method of Land Acquisition and the Type of Crops Cultivated

Table 6 showed that there is significant association between method of land acquisition and the type of crop cultivated. This test result affirms the assertion that land acquired through lease or rentage are often used only for arable farming. This further implies that the kind of land accessibility determines the types of crops cultivated hence it can be inferred that improving land accessibility and acquisition would improve farming activities and crop production in the study area holding other factors constant.

Table 6. There is no significant relationship between method of land acquisition and type of crop cultivated

Variables	χ^2	*df*	*p*	*Decision*
Type of crop cultivated	1.45	5	0.00	S

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concluded that land acquisition in this area is mainly dependent on financial capacity and birth right. Land acquisition is still constrained majorly by financial and cultural factors which make them adopt short term crops as a way out of the land acquisition impediments which keeps them not only subsistent but also poor as they cannot explore opportunities of farm expansion. The study further concludes that crops cultivated in the area is a function of method and size of land acquired, as the present land arrangement favours production of arable and short duration crops. There is a need to solve this problem related to land acquisition among small rural farmers by bringing farmers together as a group and giving support to them both technically and financially in order to ease the process. There is also a need to comprehensively review the land acquisition process in line with current realities and peculiar characteristics of these resource - poor farmers. Defective part of the land use act which regulates land activities need to be amended in line with the government drive for agricultural transformation and developing rural areas. Campaigns should be intensified on areas of opportunity in land acquisition and land management. Such campaigns should focus mainly on farmers' organizations. In addition, small scale farmers should be encouraged to engage in perennial/cash cropping to ensure food security and raw materials for our agro-allied industries and to guide against crop loss/failure as most cash crops can be intercropped with food crops.

COMPETING INTEREST

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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