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**ARABLE FARMER'S ENTERPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES AND
POVERTY STATUS IN BOLUWADURO LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AREA OF OSUN STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract: Poverty affects all sectors of society and believed to be higher in rural areas. However, entrepreneurial competencies have proved to be a weapon to reduce poverty among the populace. This study sought to investigate the effects of entrepreneurial competencies on household poverty in Boluwaduro Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria. Primary data were collected with the aid of well-structured questionnaire using a multi-stage sampling procedure to randomly select 120 household heads from the study area. Descriptive and inferential statistics such as FGT poverty index, budgetary analysis and probit regression were used for data analysis. The results showed that the mean age of the farmers was 50.94 years and were majorly males with a mean farm size of 7.43 acres cultivated mainly by family labour. Total household expenditure per month was N49730.5. The result of the budgetary analysis reveals a BCR of 1.8. Entrepreneurial competencies level was found to be moderate in the study area and 31.7% of the farmers were poor. Probit analysis showed that the Pseudo R-squared is 0.434, commitment and social competencies were significant at 1% and 5% level indicating positive influences on poverty reduction.

It was recommended that farmers in the study area should show high commitment to agri-entrepreneurship and government should initiate policies that would enhance commitment of people and social activities to further reduce poverty level.

Keywords: *Poverty, entrepreneurial, capacities, farming households*

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INTRODUCTION

Poverty is defined as situation of severe deprivation or lack of resources and materials necessary to live in a minimum standard conducive to human dignity and well-being [1]. Manifestations of poverty include inadequate distribution of resources, lack of access to basic social services such as education and health, food shortage, low life expectancy and lack of participation in decision-making processes. According to [2], millions around the globe, particularly individuals living in informal communal groups, are constantly in short of resources, which leads to environmental degradation, pushing the poor further into extreme, hardcore poverty.

In Nigeria, the proportion of Nigerians living below the poverty line of less than one dollar a day has increased dramatically during the last two decades [3]. In 2016, over 99 million Nigerians lived on below \$1.90 a day [4] and a recent release shows that poverty rate in the country stands at 40.1% in 2019 using \$1.05 (₦376.52) per capita per day [5]. Major causes for the destabilization of the economic growth and the increase in poverty situation in Nigeria are corruption and inconsistency in government policies and programs ([6]; [7]). High level of poverty in the rural regions was attributed to lack of infrastructural facilities and inadequate access to public services ([8]; [5]). To reduce poverty among Nigerians, successive governments introduced various poverty reduction programmes which are yet to achieve the desired objectives because of poor design and implementation.

Entrepreneurship has assumed a more significant role in the economic development of Nigeria as it has extended beyond increasing per capita output and income. However, despite the potential of agriculture in the Nigerian economy, poverty and hunger have remain threats and obstacles to the development of the country [9]. Thus, with the exceptions of few cases, the role of entrepreneurship and innovation has been given little emphasis in agriculture in spite of the fact that it is a critical aspect of value-added agriculture [10]. Competency is a combination of knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics which are required for successful task execution. It helps a person to perform better in practical form. It is the transformation of knowledge, skills and attitudes to performance for a particular task successfully. Competency is helpful in distinguishing the superior performers from other performers.

Agricultural entrepreneurs do have entrepreneurial competencies, mostly those associated with diversification of undertakings, which defines their entrepreneurial deeds [11] and it is expected that agricultural production in the country should expand through innovation and diversification and to be able to cope with this development, farmers need entrepreneurial competence to be able to recognize and pursue enterprise opportunities that will lead to job creation, improvement in their income and the country's economic growth [12].

It is therefore important to study impact of entrepreneurial competencies on farm households' poverty, and this study was carried out to investigate the impacts of farmers' entrepreneurial competencies on household poverty in Boluwaduro Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria while the specific objectives are to examine the levels of entrepreneurial competencies, determine the poverty status of the farmers in the study area, and evaluate the effects of entrepreneurial competencies on the poverty status of the farmers in the study area.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study Area

Osun is an inland State in South-Western Nigeria. Its capital is Osogbo. It is bounded in the north by Kwara State, in the east partly by Ekiti and Ondo States, in the south by Ogun State and in the west by Oyo State. The State of Osun was created on August 27, 1991, from the old Oyo State. Boluwaduro is one of the thirty Local Government Areas in Osun State, Nigeria at Latitude 7°57'00" N and Longitude 4°45'00"E. Its headquarters are in the town of Otan Aiyegbaju. It has an area of 144 km² and a population of 70,775 at the 2006 census. People living in the Local Government Area are Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, and Ebira with their primary occupation as farming and their secondary occupation as trading, driving and civil service.

The average annual rainfall is 52.35 inches (1,330 mm), though there are great deviations from this mean value from year to year. Usually, the rainy season lasts from April to October. The topography of the Local Government Area is hilly, so crops grown there are tree crops, Cocoa, Kolanut, Coconut, Oil palm and arable crops such as yam, cassava and pepper.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The study was carried out using a multi-stage sampling procedure. The first stage involves the purposive selection of Boluwaduro LGA. The second stage is the purposive selection of four major towns from Boluwaduro LGA they include; Otan Aiyegbaju, Eripa, Iresi and Igbajo. Lastly, random selection of thirty-five (35) farmers from Otan Ayegbaju, thirty (30) farmers each from Eripa and Iresi and twenty-five (25) farmers from Igbajo proportional to the size of the communities to make a total of 120.

Method of Data Analysis

The tools that were used in analyzing collected data include; descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Simple descriptive statistics such as means, percentages and frequency distribution was used to describe the socio and demographic characteristics of the respondents, Foster Greer and Thorbecke (FGT) was used to measure poverty of the farmers and Probit regression was used to know the effects of entrepreneurial competencies on poverty status of the farmers.

Foster Greer and Thorbecke measure of poverty indices: The FGT poverty indices developed by [13] was used to measure and decompose respondents' poverty indices based on their entrepreneurial competencies. The FGT model is specified as:

Z = the poverty line

y = the daily per capita expenditure which comprises expenditure on both food and non-food commodities

i = individual household 1, 2,, 120

q = the number of poor farming households in the population of size n,

α = the degree of poverty aversion;

$\alpha = 0$; is the headcount index () measuring the rate/incidence of poverty;

$\alpha =1$ is the poverty gap index() measuring the depth of poverty that is on average, how far the poor is from the poverty line;

$\alpha =2$ is the squared poverty gap() measuring the severity of poverty among households, that is, the depth of poverty among the poor.

Probit regression: Probit regression model following ([14]; [15]) was adopted in analyzing the effects of farmers’ entrepreneurial competencies on their poverty status. Probit regression, also called probit model, is used to model dichotomous or binary dependent variable (Y) which takes on the value (0/1). In this study, the binary probit model takes the value of 0 for poor households, and 1 for the non-poor households. The probability of belonging to one group and not to the other can be stated as:

$$\rho_i = prob[Y_i = 1/X] = \int_{-\infty}^{x_i'\beta} (2\pi)^{-1/2} \exp\left(-\frac{t^2}{2}\right) dt \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

$$= \Phi(x_i'\beta)$$

where Φ denotes the cumulative distribution of a standard normal random variable [16].

It should be noted that association between a given variable and the result of probability is determined by means of marginal effect (ME). The ME measures the change in probability which is related to continuous explanatory variables on the probability $P(Y_i = 1 | X)$. As opined by [17], the model is specified as:

$$\frac{\partial \rho_i}{\partial x_{ik}} = \phi(x_i'\beta)\beta_k' \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

Hence, marginal effects was calculated and reported in this study, and none of the five entrepreneurial constructs will have significant effect on household poverty as postulated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic Characteristics of the Farmers

Table 1 presents the socio-economic characteristics of farmers. The results in Table 1 show that the mean age of the farmers was approximately 50.94 years. This implies that the farmers are not younger and this old age might affect their productivity. Gender analysis of the farmers showed that (84.2%) were male while the rest 15.8% were female. This can be attributed to the traditional right of dominance the males have over females on issues like land acquisition and other production factors which conforms with [18] that observed that male farmers have superiority and dominance in land acquisition among arable crop farmers in Southwest Nigeria. The farmers’ marital status revealed that married persons accounted for (92.5%) while the single were (7.5%). This implied that majority of the farmers were married which may be attributed to the prevalence of early marriages or the ideals of the customs and traditions that are held in high esteem.

The mean household size is 7 ± 3 persons. This implied that the farmers who were engaged in farming enterprises in the area have a relatively large household size that formed bulk of the farm labour demand of the households which conform with [9] result that the average household in their study is 6 persons.

The results in Table 1 show the educational level of the respondents in the study area which revealed that about 55.0% had completed their Secondary education, (25.8%) of the rural household had completed their primary education while 19.2% had no formal education. This implies that approximately 55.0% of the farmers had formal education which no doubt increases their literacy levels and invariable had impacted their productivity.

More than half (60.8%) of the farmers had between 1 and 2.5 acres, 16.7% of had between 2.5 and 5 acres, (23.3%) of them had above 10, (8.3%) of them had between 2.6 and 5.0 while 7.5% had between 7.6 and 10 acres of land. The mean farm size is 7.43 acres. This is an indication that majority of the farmers in the study area were peasant farmers practicing subsistence agriculture. The findings imply that farmers in the area are mainly smallholders operating on less than or equal to 2.0 hectares of farmland. This could be as a result of land tenure system or due to the increasing population leading to acquisition of farm lands for industrial and residential purposes.

The type of labour employed by the rural household as revealed by the results in Table 1 show that few (42.5%) of the respondents used family and exchange in their work force, 28.3% of the respondent hired, 15.0% used their family, 10.0% used exchange method while 4.2% were exchange and hired. The implication of the findings is that farmers make use of family more than other sources in the study area.

Table 1. Socio-economic Characteristics of the Farmers

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
< 29	5	4.2
30-39	4	3.3
40-49	18	15.0
≥ 50	93	77.5.
Mean = 50.94	S.D = 8.14	
Sex		
Male	101	84.2
Female	19	15.8
Marital Status		
Single	9	7.5
Married	111	92.5
Household Size		
< 3	13	10.8
4 – 6	76	63.3
7-9	9	7.5
> 9	22	18.4
Mean = 7.0	S.D = 3.0	
Level of Education		
No formal education	23	19.2
Primary Education	31	25.8
Secondary Education	66	55.0
Farm size		

Contin. Table 1.		
1-2.5	73	60.8
2.6-5.0	10	8.3
5.1-7.5	0	0
7.6 -10	9	7.5
Above 10	28	23.3
Mean = 7.43	S.D = 9.26	
Labour type		
Family	18	15
Exchange	12	10
Hired	34	28.3
Family and Exchange	51	42.5
Exchange and Hired	5	4.2

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021.

Level of entrepreneurial competencies

Table 2 presents farmer’s level of entrepreneurial intent/drive in agribusiness in the study area. The levels of entrepreneurial drive in agribusiness for this study were based on asking farmers about their perceptions on their various rate of adoption of entrepreneurship behavior in agribusiness. The assessments were rated in a three-point likert scale of highly (3), moderately (2) and low (1). Majority (84.1%) of the farmers in the area perceived their extent of perseverance drive as been moderate, 9.2% reported of been high in perseverance of entrepreneurial competencies in agriculture, while 6.7% of the farmers identified low in perseverance of entrepreneurial competencies in agriculture in the area. Quite a substantial number (76.6%) of the farmers in the area perceived their extent of commitment drive as been moderate, 11.7% reported of been high in commitment of entrepreneurial competencies in agriculture, while 11.7% of the farmers identified been low in commitment of entrepreneurial competencies in agriculture in the area.

Larger proportion (75.8%) of the farmers in the area perceived their extent of motivation drive as been moderate, 14.2% reported of been low in motivation of entrepreneurial competencies in agriculture, while 10.0% of the farmers identified being high in motivation of entrepreneurial competencies in agriculture in the area. Majority (80.0%) of the farmers in the area perceived their extent of opportunity recognition drive as been moderate, 15.0% reported of been high in opportunity recognition of entrepreneurial competencies in agriculture, while 5.0% of the farmers identified been fair in opportunity recognition of entrepreneurial competencies in agriculture in the area. About two-third (69.2%) of the farmers in the area perceived their extent of social drive as been moderate 22.5% reported of been high in social of entrepreneurial competencies in agriculture, while 8.3% of the farmers identified been low in social drive of entrepreneurial competencies in agriculture in the area.

The results in Table 2 show that in spite of the poor enabling environment for entrepreneurial activities in the area, farmers still adopt entrepreneurial activities.

The finding shows a greater hope for entrepreneurship development in the area. The implication of the findings is that when there is adequate enabling environment, good government and private sector support to these farmers, entrepreneurship spirit will sprout out in the area while problem of food security and rural poverty would be minimized.

Table 2. Farmers' level of entrepreneurial competencies

Category	Perseverance	Commitment	Motivational	Opportunity recognition	Social Drive
Low	8 (6.7)	14 (11.7)	17 (14.2)	6 (5.0)	10 (8.3)
Moderate	101 (84.1)	92 (76.6)	91 (75.8)	96 (80.0)	83 (69.2)
High	11 (9.2)	14 (11.7)	12 (10.0)	18 (15.0)	27 (22.5)

Source: Data analysis, 2021

Note: Figures in parenthesis are the percentages of respondents in each category.

Poverty status and Foster-Greer-Thorbecke (FGT) poverty indices of the Farmers

Households were classified into either non-poor or poor based on the established poverty line following [19]. Table 3 shows the incidence, depth and severity of poverty in the area. Poverty incidence (Po) or head count is the proportion of households whose per capita monthly consumption expenditure falls below the established poverty line. The result of the analysis indicated that, about three-quarters (68.3%) of the households were non poor, while 31.7% were poor. This implies that most of the farmers in the study area are not poor. This is contrary to the findings of [20]. (NBS, 2013) who reported high incidence of poverty in the State. Poverty depth (P1) measures the mean distance between the expenditure (or income) of the average poor and the poverty line. Table 16 displayed the [13] indices. The result reveals that the poverty incidence 0.316 of the respondent are poor, implying that in the study area, 31.7% were poor among the farming households. The poverty depth of 0.071 indicated that the average income of the poor in the state was 7.1% less than the poverty line, while the severity of the poverty (P2) of 0.037 showed that the incomes of the poor were not close to the poverty line. This indicates a lower poverty level in the study area. Therefore, to successfully alleviate poverty in the area, appropriate policy instruments and approaches should be fashioned to lift farming household out of poverty totally.

Table 3. FGT results showing poverty status of respondents

Status	Frequency	Poverty incidence	Poverty gap/depth	Poverty severity
Poor	38	0.316 (31%)	0.071 (7.1%)	0.037 (3.7%)
Non poor	82	68.3		

Source: Data analysis, 2021

Effects of entrepreneurial competencies on farmers' poverty status

Table 4 presents probit regression results of the effects of entrepreneurial competences on household poverty status. The result revealed a Wald chi2 value of 15.027**, with a Pseudo R -squared of 0.434.

This was statistically significant at the $P < 0.01$ level, thus indicating that the model had a good fit to the data and a significant explanatory power. 2 out of the 5 explanatory variables related to household poverty status included in the model were statistically significant at different levels ($P < 0.01$, $P < 0.05$ and $P < 0.1$).

The results in Table 4 shows that commitment of the household heads was found to be negative and significant at 1% level which implies that commitment has a great importance in the determinant of poverty in the study area. Probability level with a coefficient of -0.231 which indicates that a unit increase in entrepreneurial competencies of commitment will cause a decrease in the household heads intensity of being poor by a factor of -0.231. This may be attributed to the fact that being committed to their enterprises helped their involvement in other profitable ventures. The result concurs with findings of ([21]; [22]).

Socials variable which includes social capital, social group (cooperative society, ethnic and religious association) of the household heads was found as shown in Table 4 to be negative and significant at 5% probability level with a coefficient of -0.252 which indicates that a unit increase in entrepreneurial competencies of social activities will cause a decrease in the household heads intensity of being poor by a factor of -0.252. Associations would enhance the means of livelihood of the farmers. This corroborates to that of [21] and [22] that of the three significant explanatory variables, social competence had the greatest effect on the poverty status of the respondents in their study area. To accentuate, perseverance had a negative but not significant influence on household poverty, having an inverse relationship means that a household continues to stay in its, poverty state because of their perseverance competency, in other words they flow with the little they have to munch.

Commitment was significantly negative to poverty status, implying that as commitment increases there will be decrease in their poverty status. Literally, it means they have determination to move up their status and become a better household. Being motivated does not necessarily connote doing, the result showed that motivational competencies of the respondents was positively not significant to the household poverty status, implying that being motivated those not mean you will be ready to take actions that will lift the household poverty status. In same vein, opportunity recognition assumes the same assumption.

Table 4. Probit regression showing results on the effect of entrepreneurial competences on household poverty status

Variable	Coefficient	Robust Std. Error	P> z
Perseverance	-0.191	0.119	0.110
Commitment	-0.231	0.086	0.007**
Motivational	0.107	0.088	0.226
Opportunity recognition	0.086	0.105	0.413
Social	-0.252	0.111	0.023*
Observations	120		
Pseudo R –squared	0.434		
Wald chi2	15.027**		

Source: Data analysis, 2021

*** Significant at 1%, ** Significant at 5%, * Significant at 10%

CONCLUSIONS

It was concluded based on the findings of this research that poverty is low among farming households in the study area and that farmer's entrepreneurial competencies level (moderate) had explained their household poverty status.

This has led to reduction of poverty among the farming household in the area. However, the extent of poverty reduction is still very in significant, which is an indication that the farmers have not fully taken advantage of some of the entrepreneurial activities or have participated to a less extent. Therefore, it is recommended that policies towards infrastructural facilities development in the rural areas should be initiated to further reduce poverty among farmers in the study area. Farmers in the study area should be motivated and show commitment to agri-entrepreneurship and they should be engaged in social capital such as social cohesion, cooperative societies and ethno religious activities. Government should also intensify efforts on entrepreneurial training in form of adult education, workshops and seminars for the farmers in order to reduce the level of poverty among the farmers.

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PREDUZETNIČKE KOMPETENCIJE POLJOPRIVREDNIKA I STATUS SIROMAŠTVA U PODRUČJU LOKALNE SAMOUPRAVE BOLUWADURO U DRŽAVI OSUN, NIGERIJA

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Apstrakt: Siromaštvo pogađa sve sektore društva i veruje se da je znatno veće u ruralnim područjima Nigerije. Međutim, preduzetničke kompetencije su se pokazale kao oružje za smanjenje siromaštva među stanovništvom. Ova studija je imala za cilj da istraži efekte preduzetničkih kompetencija na siromaštvo domaćinstava u oblasti lokalne uprave Boluwaduro u državi Osun, Nigerija.

Primarni podaci su prikupljeni uz pomoć dobro struktuiranog upitnika korišćenjem višestepene procedure uzorkovanja kako bi se nasumično odabralo 120 predstavnika Boluwaduro domaćinstava kao područja istraživanja.

Za analizu podataka korišćene su deskriptivne i inferencijalne statističke metode kao što su FGT indeks siromaštva, budžetska analiza i probit regresija.

Rezultati su pokazali da je srednja vrednost starosti farmera bila 50,94 godine i da su uglavnom to bili muškarci sa prosečnom veličinom farme od 7,43 acr (približno 3,00 ha) koja se obrađuju uglavnom zajedničkim porodičnim radom.

Ukupni mesečni troškovi domaćinstva iznosili su N49730,5 (približno 99,45 EUR).

Rezultat analize budžeta pokazuje BCR od 1,8. Utvrđeno je da je nivo preduzetničke kompetencije umeren u oblasti istraživanja i 31,7% poljoprivrednika je bilo siromašno. Probit analiza je pokazala da je Pseudo R-kvadrat 0,434; posvećenost i socijalne kompetencije su bile značajne na nivou od 1% i 5%, što ukazuje na pozitivne uticaje/trendove na smanjenje siromaštva.

Preporučeno je da poljoprivrednici u oblasti istraživanja treba da pokažu visoku posvećenost poljoprivrednom preduzetništvu i da vlada Nigerije treba da pokrene politike koje bi poboljšale posvećenost ljudi i društvenih aktivnosti za dalje smanjenje nivoa siromaštva.

Ključne reči: siromaštvo, preduzetništvo, kapaciteti, poljoprivredna domaćinstva

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