



USES OF INDIGENOUS METHOD IN HANDLING CASHEW PRODUCT IN KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the indigenous method in handling cashew production Kogi State, Nigeria. Simple random selection was used to select 240 respondents. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results of the study shows that about 35% of the respondents in the study area were within the age bracket of 41 – 50 years, majority (75%) of the respondents were male with household size of 1-5 people (57.1%) and 33.8% of the respondents possessed considerable experience of 6-10 years and above in cashew farming. Study also reveals that 26.7% of the respondents' cultivated 1ha while 42.5% of the respondents cultivated between 2-4 ha. Similarly, 30.8% cultivated above 4 ha. More than half (54.2%) of the respondents used both hired and family labour in cashew farming, while 23.3% and 16.7% used hired labour and family labour respectively in carrying out their farming activities. The study shows the Majority (77%) of the respondents used to bag the cashew nut for sale, it also revealed that majority (81.3%) of farmers do not use hand shelling for cashew nut and more than half (55.4%) of the respondents do not sundry cashew before sale and majority (70.8%) of respondents used to weigh cashew. Cashew farmers were of the view that cashew nut shell liquid is a by – product of cashew processing industry as this occupied the first position on the ranking with Mean ratio of 2.22, while cashew apple is said to have many medicinal values ranked 4th with mean ratio 2.10. It can be concluded that cashew has a great economic value which has increased their income. It was recommended among others that adequate training must be carried out to sensitize the farmers about the benefits of using indigenous method in handling cashew product and the extension services provided should be extended to the farmers in the study area in order to increase their awareness about surplus supply of cashew nuts to address their paucity.

Keywords; Cashew, Farmers, Indigenous, Handling.

INTRODUCTION

Anacardium occidentale L., commonly called cashew is an important dicotyledonous tropical evergreen tree belonging to the family Anacardiaceae, order Sapindal, and genus *Anacardium*. The genus comprises about eight species, among which Cashew (*A. occidentale*) is of economic importance due to its edible fleshy apple and kernel (Adelere *et al.*, 2020; Cherian and Lekshmi, 2021). It originated in Brazil and adapted to the different parts of the world where it is cultivated as a major cash crop, most especially in West African countries such as Ghana, Republic of Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Guinea-Bissau. In the past, the cashew tree was mostly grown to control soil erosion, mitigate desertification, as an ornamental plant and for the production of wood used in furniture making. Whereas, in recent times, great attention has been drawn to the cashew fruit due to its enormous economic importance and value-added products obtained from its various parts (Alabi *et al.*, 2023). In Nigeria, cashew tree cultivation has become very popular across many parts of the country, where it serves as a major household business and a source of livelihood.

Sadly, the initiatives aimed at promoting effective cashew cultivation methods have not produced the anticipated outcomes. This means that the comprehensive adoption of best agricultural



practices by growers is still not a reality, and the productivity of cashew orchards continues to be low. (Houndahouan *et al.*, 2018).

The cashew tree's kernel and apple are currently underutilized in Nigeria in terms of generating revenue. Since the harvesters only eat a small percentage of the fresh apples, there is still a lot of waste on farms. The household income is decreased by this waste. Therefore, it is essential to investigate value addition for cashew apples and nuts. Value addition has been shown to increase product revenue and shelf life for commodities like cocoa. (Lawal and Jaiyeola, 2007). This study determined the awareness of value addition among cashew farmers in Kogi State Nigeria.

The major objective of the study was to investigate the uses of indigenous method in handling cashew product in Kabba Bunu Local Government of Kogi State.

The specific objectives were to;

- 1) describe the socio economic characteristics of cashew farmers in the study area;
- 2) identify indigenous method employed by farmers in handling cashew products;

METHODOLOGY

The Study Area

The study was conducted in Kogi State, located in the middle belt region of Nigeria. The study area lies between latitude 6° 30'N and 8° 48'N and longitude 5° 23'E and 7° 48'E. The main tribes are the Igala, Ebira and Yoruba. The crops commonly cultivated include; Cashew, Cocoa, Palm tree, Coffee, Groundnut, Maize, Cassava, Rice, yam and Melon

Methods of Data Collection

To achieve the objectives of this study on the uses of indigenous methods in handling cashew products in Kogi State, Nigeria, both primary and secondary data were collected.

1. Primary Data

Primary data were obtained directly from respondents through the following instruments:

*Structured Questionnaire: A well-designed questionnaire was administered to cashew farmers, processors, and marketers across selected communities in Kogi State. The questionnaire captured information on socio-economic characteristics, indigenous handling methods, challenges, and perceived effectiveness of these methods.

*Interviews: Oral interviews were conducted with key informants such as community leaders, experienced farmers, and extension agents to gain deeper insights into traditional knowledge and cultural practices.

*Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Group discussions were organized with small clusters of cashew farmers and processors to generate collective views, validate individual responses, and identify common indigenous practices.

*Observation: Direct field observation was employed to physically examine the indigenous handling methods such as drying, storage, and processing techniques used by respondents. These helped to cross-check and validate information obtained from questionnaires and interviews.

2. Secondary Data

Secondary data were sourced from existing literature, including journal articles, government reports, academic theses, conference papers, and publications from relevant institutions such as the National Cashew Association of Nigeria (NCAN). These provided a broader context and background information to complement the primary data

Sampling Procedure and Sample Size A multistage sampling technique was used to select 240 respondents for the study. The first stage was purposely selected of Kabba-Bunu local government in Yoruba speaking areas due to high production of cashew. Stage 2 involved the selection of two communities from the local government which are Oke-Dayo and Kakun. The third stage: involved a random selection of (120) farmers from each communities to make the total number of 240 farmers due to high number of cashew farmers in the local government. The respondents were therefore subjected to well structure questionnaires.

Methods of Data Analysis

Data were analysed using descriptive statistical tools- mean, mode and frequency distribution



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio – economic Characteristics of Respondents

The section presents the socioeconomic characteristics of cashew farmers in the study area. Table 1 provides the summary.

Table 1: Distribution of the Respondents based on the Socio-economic Characteristics (n=240)

Parameters	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Gender			
Male	181	75	
Female	59	25	
Marital status			
Single	40	16.7	
Married	184	76.7	
Widowed	3	1.3	
Divorced	13	5.4	
Age (years)			
≤20-30	36	15	
31-40	55	22.9	
41-50	83	35	
51-60	41	17.1	45
61-70	16	7	
71-80	9	4	
Farming experience (years)			
≤5	55	22.9	
6-10	92	38.3	
11-15	41	17.1	12
>15	52	21.7	
Educational status			
No formal education	26	10.8	
Arabic education	32	13.3	
Primary education	28	11.7	
Secondary education	54	22.5	
Tertiary education	100	41.7	
Farm size (ha)			
<1	64	26.7	
2-4	102	42.5	
>4	74	30.8	5
House hold size			
≤5	137	57.1	5
6-9	74	30.8	
10-12	20	8.3	
>12	9	3.8	
Type of labour use			
Hired labour	47	19.5	
Family labour	63	26.3	
Both	130	54.2	

Source: Field survey, 2025.

The resulting Table 1 revealed that 75% of cashew farmers were male while 25% were female indicating that more males were involved in cashew production than the female. Table 1 shows that majority (76.7%) of the respondents were married while 16.7% were single. The mean age of the respondents was 45 years indicating that those involved in cashew production are advanced in age. The findings also revealed that a significant proportion (38.3%) of the respondents have had long farming experience in cultivating cashew with the mean farming experience of 12 years. The length of time a farmer has engaged in farming serves as a strong indicator of the practical experience and



indigenous knowledge accumulated in cashew nut production. This suggests that years of farming not only enhance technical competence but also improve the ability to adapt indigenous methods for better handling and productivity. This finding is consistent with the results reported by earlier studies. Nwaru *et al.* (2006) viewed that the number of years spent in farming business may give an indication of the practical knowledge acquired on how to cope with the inherent farm production processing and marketing challenges. About 22.5% and 41.7% of the respondent's secondary and tertiary schools respectively. This implies that education contributes to adoption of new technology, participation in developmental programmes and sustainable usage of innovation for a long time until a new innovation is discovered as the best course of action by adopters. Oluwatosin (2011) corroborated this finding that more educated farmers are more likely to adopt progressive farming practices and new technologies and thus increase their overall efficiency. The finding further revealed that 26.7% of the farmers cultivate less than 1ha while 42.5% of farmers cultivate between 2-4 ha. Also, 30.8% cultivate above 4 ha. 54.2% of the respondents used both hired and family labour in cashew farming, while 23.3 and 16.7% used hired labour and family labour respectively in carrying out their farming activities. It means that the small-scale farmers constitute about 50% in the lot of cashew farmers in Kogi State.

Indigenous Method Employed by Farmers in Cashew Value Addition

Table 2 shows that majority (88.8%) of the respondents were using hands to harvest their cashew and also 67.9% of the respondents used to sort out cashew before sale while 77% used to bag the cashew nut for sale. The result further revealed that majority (81.3%) of the respondents do not use hand shelling for cashew nut and more than half (55.4%) of the respondents do not sundry cashew before sale. Majority (70.8%) of the respondents used to weigh cashew. This implies that farmers have the knowledge of weighing cashew nut which leads to increase their income in line with Crusoe, (2006) Study that most farmers lack knowledge in handling the crop for maximum yield. Other indigenous method of handling cashew product followed in like manner. It also revealed that majority of famers has inadequate knowledge about handling value addition to cashew products (Crusoe, 2006).

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents based on the Indigenous Method Employed by Farmers in Handling Value Addition to Cashew Products

Method	Frequency	Percentage
Hand Picking	213	88.8
Washing	51	21.2
Peeling	51	21.2
Sorting Out	163	67.9
Sundry of Cashew	107	44.6
Weighing	170	70.80
Roasting on the Fire	107	44.6
Hand Shelling	45	18.7
Hand Pressing to extract Juice	93	38.7
Bagging	185	77
Salting	76	31.7

Source: Field survey, 2025.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that increase in age and level of education of the cashew farmers, the more the value addition to cashew by the farmers as access to information by the farmers will be encouraged. Also farmers highlighting their relevance, effectiveness, and limitations in the production-to-consumption chain. Findings revealed that local farmers and processors rely heavily on traditional practices for harvesting, drying, storage, and processing due to affordability, accessibility, and cultural familiarity. These indigenous techniques have contributed to the preservation of cashew quality, reduction of post-harvest losses, and sustenance of rural



livelihoods. However, the research also established that while indigenous methods remain valuable, they often lack efficiency compared to modern technologies, leading to lower productivity and limited competitiveness in larger markets. The integration of indigenous knowledge with modern processing techniques would therefore not only improve product quality and shelf life but also enhance income generation, employment opportunities, and food security in the state.

- i. Adequate training must be carried out to sensitize the farmers about the benefits of indigenous method in handling cashew.
- ii. The extension services provided should be extended to the farmers in the study area in order to increase their awareness about surplus supply of cashew nuts to address their paucity.
- iii. Cashew farmers should adopt high yielding, improved varieties that have shorter germination period and requires less labour for harvest.
- iv. Helping hands can be extended to smallholder cashew nut farmers by NGOs and private bodies to establish their own processing factories at an affordable rate and manage them as private bodies and engage in international cashew nut sales.
- v. Government needs to create a framework under which smallholder cashew nut farmers can be provided with basic cashew nut production inputs to facilitate timely availability and application of inputs

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