

Relevance Of Agricultural Policy Implementation And Institutional Roles In Enhancing Cassava Based Entrepreneurship In Imo State, Nigeria.

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<i>The study examined the cassava value chain in Imo State in view of the crop; vital role in food security, industrial use and rural livelihoods in Nigeria. This is with the intuition of investigating the reasons for the persistence of the challenges in maximizing the potentials of cassava enterprises notwithstanding the government policy intervention and the various institutional frameworks set-up to support the cassava-based entrepreneurship. Specifically, the study examined the relevance of Agricultural policy implementation and institutional roles in improving cassava-based businesses in the state. A multiple sample technique was employed in the selection of 120 Value Chain Actors (VCAs) in the three Agricultural Zones in Imo State, namely; Owerri, Orlu and Okigwe. Using a mixed-method approach involving surveys, key Value Chain Actor interviews, policy document analyses and descriptive statistics, the study identified and highlighted policy gaps and institutional inefficiencies in the value chain broad spectrum of the cassava enterprise in respect to the existing policy and institutional frameworks of government. The study also highlighted that poor awareness of the existing policies and the frameworks, allied to poor project coordination and implementation; inadequate funding formed major set-backs which synergistically hinder their effectiveness. The study therefore recommended improved policy monitoring creation of awareness, improved capacity building, financing and efficient domestic and foreign markets for the cassava entrepreneurs.</i> Keywords: Agricultural policy, Institutional Roles on Cassava value chain entrepreneurship development, Imo state.
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Copyright © 2025 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited. Citation: Ellah, G. O; Eze, C. C; Orebiyi, J. S; Korie, O. C; Onyeagocha, S. U. O. (2025). Relevance Of Agricultural Policy Implementation And Institutional Roles In Enhancing Cassava Based Entrepreneurship In Imo State, Nigeria. UKR Journal of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences (UKRJAVS), Volume 1(2), 40-46.	

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the main source of National Income for most developing countries unlike the developed countries, where it contributes relatively small percentages to their National Income. In Nigeria, despite the decline in the share of agriculture in the GDP, owing to the rising importance of crude oil, though with fluctuations of prices; it continues to play a significant role in the development of the economy

Cassava (*Mainhot esculenta crants*) plays a key role in Nigeria's agricultural economy, providing food, raw materials for industries, jobs, and income for millions of rural families. One of the main sources of

carbohydrate in Nigeria is Cassava, which ranks first in output production in 2002 (Amos, 2013). According to FAO, in 2018 World Cassava production stood at about 2.78 Million metric tonnes and African's total production was about 170million metric tonnes, which is about 56% of the world production and Nigeria's production was about 60mT (FAO, 2019).

The study sought to find out how agricultural policy implementation and institutional framework, support and add to the growth of the cassava-value chain enterprise in Imo State. It aimed to uncover the challenges to effective policy delivery and to highlight

the institutional roles that can enhance cassava value chain development since cassava is a choice work for rural development, poverty alleviation, growth and food security (FAO, 2018).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Agricultural Policy and Institutional Framework in Nigeria

The Nigerian Government has many Agricultural Policy initiatives over time. They include Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs), Bank of Agriculture (BOA), Nigerian Agricultural Insurance Corporation (NAIC), Mandatory Substitution of 10% wheat flour with High Quality Cassava Flour (HQCF), Policy on forming cooperatives. Others include; CBN Rural Banking Policies, Small Medium Enterprises Development Fund (MSMEDF). Anchor Borrower Policy and N-Power for Youth Employment.

These policies are packaged to increase productivities, accessibility to inputs such as credits, improved seeds, fertilizers, as well as market linkages and product transformation in terms of value added.

2.2 Institutional Framework for Cassava Enterprises

Institutions such as ADPs, BOA, NAIC, Anchor Borrowers Programme of the CBN, NAIC, MSMEDF, and Cooperatives are strategic and instrumental, basic on execution of agricultural policies. These institutions provide credit, input distribution, extension services, capacity development and market accessibility. All targeted to enhance the transformation and improvement of agriculture in general.

2.3 Issues in Policy Implementation

In the past, household farming was the practice, whereby families produce primarily for family consumption and the remaining sold for cash requirement of the family and next season's cultivation.

In recent time, the focus has shifted to processing of the crop into a wide range of industrial products such as HQCF, Poultry feed, glue, ethanol (Chinaka, Omeke, Omu & Okoro, 2013).

Also, there are many improved varieties in use recommended by IITA but are scarcely used and not readily available. The demands for these products and

inputs are on the increase and government interest in cassava research is also increasing with strong emphasis on increased productivity and diversification of uses.

It is in furtherance of this that the Federal Government of Nigeria selected 18 priority value chain products, made up of 14 crops and four animal and related products. The priority value chains products in the programme are; rice, maize, wheat, soya bean, horticulture (fruits and vegetables), cowpea, cocoa, cashew, cassava, ginger, sesame, oil palm, yam and four animals and its related products (fish, dairy milk, poultry and beef (N-Power (Agro) Training Manual, 2018).

Despite Nigeria's position as the world's leading producer of cassava, with an estimated annual output of approximately 38 million metric tons (Nigeria Master Plan, 2006), the sector continues to face significant challenges. Smallholder farmers, who make up nearly 80% of the country's agricultural population (Awoke & Okorji, 2004), are constrained by several factors, including low productivity levels ranging between 5 and 9 MT/ha. These low yields are largely linked to limited access to reliable information, the use of low-yielding cassava varieties, the prevalence of pests and diseases, and the adoption of suboptimal farming practices (Eze, Amanze & Nwankwo, 2012).

Furthermore, the **Presidential Initiative on Cassava**, launched in 2013, brought national attention to the economic and industrial potential of cassava in Nigeria. The primary objective of the initiative was to promote cassava as a viable foreign exchange commodity while strengthening domestic production to meet national consumption demands. The broader vision was to stimulate rural industrialization by enhancing income opportunities for farmers, processors, and traders, thereby improving food security for both producers and consumers. This transformation aimed to reposition cassava from being primarily a subsistence crop to an industrial raw material for the production of ethanol, starch, pellets, and high-quality cassava flour (HQCF) for export markets. To realize this vision, Nigeria must adopt a **demand-driven strategy** focused on the promotion, development, and diversification of cassava-based industries (NCMP, 2006).

To attain this goal there is need for networking between Federal Ministry of Trade and Commerce, UNIDO and other Government Agencies to increase diversification, increasing and process of cassava products and putting in place several policies and reform measures, like the Economic Growth Recovery Plan (EGRP), Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) and Anchor Borrowers Scheme (ABA).

Other challenges in both policy and institutional roles are poor implementation which form a major road block. Most of times these arise due to many factors, like corruption, inadequate funds, poor infrastructure, limited stakeholder engagement and bureaucratic bottle neck.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Area

The research was carried out in Imo State Imo State which is one of the 36 States (and the Federal Capital territory Abuja) in Nigeria, with Owerri as the capital and largest city. The state is divided into three Agricultural zones namely; Owerri, Orlu and Okigwe. The State has 27 LGAs with Owerri having 11 LGAs, Orlu 10 LGAs and Okigwe 6 LGAs. Imo state is bounded in the East by Abia State, on the West by the River Niger and Delta State, and on the North by Anambra State. The State lies within Latitude 5° 45' and 6°35' North, and Longitude 6°35' and 7°28' East (Microsoft Corporation, 2009), with a total land area of 5,100 sq. km, a population of 4.8 million people and population density varying from 230-1,400 people per square kilometer (NBS, 2014).

The state has a high concentration of cassava famers, processors and traders. Further, the soil, vegetation, climate and inhabitants are disposed to favourable cultivation of cassava. Additionally, the state was purposively selected for the study because it is among the frontline 11 cassava Producing states in Nigeria with a mean yield of 13.1 MT/Ha (NCMP, 2006).

3.2 Sample Selection

Imo state was stratified into Agricultural zones, local government areas and communities, with each of the three Agricultural zones as a stratum. The respondents were mainly ADP farmers and with the help of their staff, a multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted in the selection process.

Using Yamene (1967) formula for size proportion, and proportionate sample model, the sample size of the stratum and sample size of the community were determined. The formulae are as stated in equations 3.1 and 3.2.

$$n_j = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2)} \quad \dots \dots \dots \text{Equ. 3.1}$$

Where:

- n_j = Sample size of the j^{th} stratum
- N = Total sample frame
- e = Limit of tolerance error
- 1 = unity
- n_h = $N_h \left(\frac{n}{N} \right) \dots \dots \dots \text{Equ. 3.2}$

Where:

- n_h = Sample size selected from each community
- N_h = sampling frame in each community
- n = sample size for the study
- N = Total sampling frame

The outcome is as specified in Tables 1 and 2

In summary, the tables showed that the sample size was 130 and 10 questionnaire was discarded for poor consent, leaving a total number of 120 respondents used in the analyses.

They were made up of the following VCAs.

Producers (farmers)	-	45	(37.50%)
Processors	-	14	(11.67%)
Trader	-	<u>61</u>	<u>(50.83%)</u>
Total	=	120	100%

NB: The input suppliers were not visibly present as a business estimated.

3.3 Data Collection

The primary data were collected through structured questionnaire administered to 120 Cassava Value Chain Actors (VCAs) across the three Agricultural zones in Imo State. In-depth interviews were conducted with the help of Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) Staff in Imo State.

3.4 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were used to interpret quantitative and qualitative data, respectively.

TABLE 1: SAMPLE SIZE SELECTION

AGRIC ZONE/L.G.A	POPULATION OF REGISTERED CASSAVA FARMERS	NAME OF SELECTED COMMUNITY	NUMBER OF REGISTERED CASSAVA FARMERS IN THE COMMUNITIES	POPULATION SAMPLING	SAMPLE SIZE
OWERRI:					
OHAI EGBEMA		UMUOKANNE	42	42 $\left(\frac{134}{384}\right)$	15
NGOR OKPALA		UMUOWA	45	45 $\left(\frac{134}{384}\right)$	16
MBAITOLU		NWORIEUBI	24	24 $\left(\frac{134}{384}\right)$	8
OWERRI NORTH		AMAKOHIA URATTA	23	23 $\left(\frac{134}{384}\right)$	8
	3,950	Sub-total	134		47
ORLU					
NWANGELE		AGBAJAH	40	40 $\left(\frac{125}{384}\right)$	13
ORU EAST		AWOOMAMA	25	25 $\left(\frac{125}{384}\right)$	8
IDEATO NORTH		OHIAUCHU (ARONDIZOGU)	29	29 $\left(\frac{129}{384}\right)$	10
IDEATO SOUTH		UMUEZEALA	35	35 $\left(\frac{128}{384}\right)$	12
	3,591	Sub-total	129		43
OKIGWE					
OKIGWE		IHUBE	30	30 $\left(\frac{121}{384}\right)$	10
OBOWO		OTOKO	40	40 $\left(\frac{121}{384}\right)$	13
ONUIMO		OKWELLE	21	21 $\left(\frac{121}{384}\right)$	7
IHITTE UBOMA		ONICHA UBOMA	30	30 $\left(\frac{121}{384}\right)$	10
	2,154	Sub-total	121		40
	9,695		384		130

Source Field Survey Data: 2024

TABLE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE SIZE OF VALUE CHAIN ACTORS IN THE STUDY AREA

AGRIC ZONE/L.G.A	NAME OF SELECTED COMMUNITY	SAMPLE SIZE	INPUT SUPPLIERS	PRODUCERS/ FARMERS	PROCESSORS	TRADERS	DISCARDED QUESTIONNAIRES
OWERRI:							
OHAI EGBEMA	UMUOKANNE	15	--	4	2	8	1
NGOR OKPALA	UMUOWA	16	--	6	1	8	1
MBAITOLU	NWORIEUBI	8	--	3	1	4	--
OWERRI WEST	OBINZE	8	--	3	1	3	1
		47	0	16	5	23	3
ORLU							
NWANGELE	AGBAJAH	13	--	4	1	7	1
ORU EAST	AWOOMAMA	8	--	3	1	4	--
IDEATO NORTH	OHIAUCHU (ARONDIZOGU)	10	--	3	1	5	1
IDEATO SOUTH	UMUEZEALA	12	--	4	2	4	2
		43	0	14	5	20	4
OKIGWE							
OKIGWE	IHUBE	10	--	4	1	5	--
OBOWO	OTOKO	13	--	5	1	5	2
ONUIMO	OKWELLE	7	--	2	1	3	1
IHITTE UBOMA	ONICHA UBOMA	10	--	4	1	5	--
		40	0	15	4	18	3

NB: 130 – 10 (discarded) = 120 Sample size
Field Survey: 2024

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 4.1: Distribution of Cassava VCAs Response to the Relevance and Adequacy or otherwise of the Nigerian Government Agricultural Policy and Institutional Frameworks.

Agric Policy and Institutional Framework (a) Policies	Producers				Processors				Marketers			
	Aware- ness*	Use *	%	Rank	Aware- ness*	Use *	%	Rank	Aware- ness*	Use *	%	Rank
CBN Grace periods to banks of 1yr, 4yrs, 5yr & 7yrs to peasant farmers, cash crops, medium/large scales & ranches, respectively	5	-	11	17 th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CBN Rural Banking Scheme	15	4	33	9 th	5	-	36	7 th	13	-	21	6 th
Presidential Initiative on cassava	8	-	18	15 th	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	11 th
Policy on Export incentive	-	-	-	-	4	-	29	-	4	-	7	8 th
Policy on Mandatory substitution of 10% wheat flour with HQCF	32	-	71	4 th	6	-	43	10 th	1	-	2	11 th
Nigerian Youth Investment Fund ₦75B.	28	-	62	5 th	8	-	57	4 th	22	8	36	3 rd
Micro Small Medium Enterprises Deypt. Fund (MSMEDF) of BOI, Nig.	26	2	58	6 th	6	-	43	3 rd	27	10	44	2 nd
Credit Guarantee Scheme of the CBN.	15	6	33	9 th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
N- Power Employing Nigerian Youths.	19	5	42	7 th	6	-	43	4 th	21	6	34	4 th
Policy on Forming Cooperatives	35	6	78	2 nd	9	2	64	2 nd	18	-	30	5 th
Extension Services (ADP).	38	15	84	1 st	5	-	36	7 th	-	-	-	-
Agricultural Insurance Scheme	15	-	33	9 th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Agricultural Manpower and Training	12	-	27	13 th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Agricultural Mechanization	13	-	29	12 th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Agricultural Co-operative Development Scheme.	35	10	78	2 nd	10	2	71	1 st	30	14	49	1 st
Agricultural Commodity Storage	10	-	22	14 th	5	-	36	7 th	2	-	3	9 th
Agricultural Commodity Exchange	6	-	13	16 th	-	-	-	-	2	-	3	9 th
Anchor Borrowing Scheme of CBN.	18	2	40	8 th	4	1	29	10 th	12	-	20	7 th
Average of %			40.67				27.05				14.00	

Agric Policy and Institutional Framework (b) Institutional Framework	Producers				Processors				Marketers			
	Aware- ness *	Use *	%	Rank	Aware- ness *	Use *	%	Rank	Aware- ness*	Use *	%	Rank
BOA (NACB, Peoples Bank & FEAP).	30	8	67	2 nd	6	2	43	1 st	-	-	-	-
Bank of Industries (BOI)	10	-	22	8 th	2	2	14	6 th	-	-	-	-
Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD)	20	-	44	5 th	6	2	43	1 st	2	-	3	3 rd
NIRSAL-CBN	30	2	67	2 nd	4	-	29	4 th	-	-	-	-
Commodity Exchange	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	7	2 nd
Federal Department of Extension Services.	40	10	89	1 st	4	-	29	4 th	1	-	2	5 th
National Root Research Institute	20	-	44	5 th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA).	10	-	22	8 th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Agribusiness Micro, Small Enterprises Investment Scheme	20	-	44	5 th	1	-	7	7 th	-	-	-	-
Agricultural Development Programme (ADPs).	25	10	56	4 th	5	5	36	3 rd	10	-	16	1 st
Commercial Agricultural Credit Scheme	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	3	3 rd
Average of %			45.50				20.40				3.1	

* Multiple Responses

Source: Field Survey Data, 2024

4.1 The result in table 4.1 on Awareness and Access of the 18 government Nigerian government policy indicates that the producers (40.67%) has the highest followed by the processors (27.05%) and marketers (14.00%). However, the access to these government policies were low at all levels of the cassava value chain. This showed a great policy-gap between policy awareness and the actual access to these initiatives, which in turn has affected the actors productivity and investment. This calls for more government actions in ensuring that these policies get to the farmers in the best way possible.

On the knowledge of the 10 government Agricultural institutional checks, the result indicates that the makers are more aware with an average percentage of (45.5%), followed by processors (20.4%) and marketers (3.15%). these averages are poor and an indication of weak frameworks which need to be strengthened. The low levels of awareness and access in the government agricultural policies and institutional frameworks could also be attributed to policy inconsistency. Bankole (2016) posited that policy inconsistency is the bane of cassava processing in Nigeria. Chibueze (2016), opined that inconsistent cassava policies discourages cassava processors and reduces the market viability of cassava investments.

4.1.1 Institutional Roles and Effectiveness:

Institutions played roles in extensions services with producers (89%), processors (29%) and marketer (2%), there is need for more extension service works to the processors and marketers as these are essential in the enterprise aspect of the cassava value chain. credit facilitation, producers (67%), with the other value chain actors having less than (50%). The respondents indicated that the huge collaterals and bureaucratic bottle-necks involved in accessing credits are reasons for low usage of the available policies in credit facilitations to the farmers. However, respondents rated institutional effectiveness as moderate (or average). This may be due to delays, inadequate funding and lack of follow-ups.

4.2 Obstacles to Policy Implementation

Key obstacles identified include; poor funding (75%), Political interference (65%), and lack of coordination among institutions (50%).

These issues weakened the effects and impact of policies on cassava value chain entrepreneurship.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

Agricultural policies and institutional frameworks have the potential to improve cassava value chain enterprise in Imo State. However, poor implementation and institutional weaknesses limited their relevance and impact. Strengthening institution capacity, improving policy execution and bring together stakeholder collaboration are critical for sustainable cassava value-chain development.

5.2 Recommendation

1. Energizing institutional capacity through training, funding and accountability mechanisms.
2. Maintaining timely and transparent policy implementation with stakeholders' involvement.
3. Enhance access to credit, inputs and markets for cassava entrepreneurs.
4. Improve synergy among institutions to avoid duplication, reduce inconsistency and enhance efficiency.

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