

## **CASHEW NUT PRODUCTION AND CASHEW FARMERS' WELFARE IN KOGI STATE, NORTH CENTRAL, NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Cashew nut production plays a vital role in the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in many tropical regions. This study investigates the socio-economic effects of cashew nut production on the welfare of cashew farmers in Kogi State, North Central Nigeria. Using a survey research design, data were collected from 373 cashew farmers across the three senatorial districts of the state. The study employed descriptive statistics and regression analysis to analyse the data. The findings reveal that cashew nut production, income levels, and the level of education among cashew farmers are statistically significant and positively associated with their welfare. Specifically, an increase in cashew nut production, income, and education levels corresponds to an improvement in farmers' overall well-being. The results also indicate a positive relationship between access to credit and farm size, although their effects on welfare were not statistically significant. These findings underscore the importance of promoting cashew farming as a viable livelihood strategy and addressing factors that can enhance the productivity and profitability of this agricultural activity. The study recommends strengthening educational programs for cashew farmers, facilitating access to credit and financial services, promoting sustainable farming practices, and investing in infrastructure development in cashew-producing regions.

**Key Words:** Cashew nut production, Cashew farmers' welfare, Kogi state.

**JEL Classification:** Q51, Q53

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Cashew farming has a considerable impact on the welfare of cashew farmers, their families, and the broader communities in which they reside (Godwin & Felix, 2022). The socio-economic effects of cashew nut production on cashew farmers' welfare encompass a wide range of interconnected factors that influence their living standards, financial stability, and overall quality of life (Usman & Muhammed, 2023). One crucial aspect of cashew farming is its potential to alleviate poverty and contribute to rural development (Hassan & Charles, 2019). By providing a source of income, cashew cultivation can uplift farmers from poverty and empower them economically (Ken, 2022). This, in turn, led to improvements in healthcare,

education, and access to basic amenities, fostering social progress within their communities (Joseph, 2020).

The socio-economic impacts of cashew nut production vary among farmers (Lawal & Victor, 2022), influenced by challenges like price volatility, market fluctuations, and climate change-induced uncertainties (Daniel, 2019). Market price variations result in income instability, hindering investment in farming and meeting household needs (Nelson, 2017). Climate-related risks such as erratic rainfall patterns threaten crop yields, particularly in vulnerable regions (Monday, 2020). Despite contributing to job creation and local economic development, the cashew industry faces issues regarding workers' rights and fair income in processing units (Emmanuel & Godwin, 2021). Recognizing these complex socio-economic effects is essential for formulating policies and interventions that promote sustainable agricultural practices and inclusive development.

In Kogi State, North Central Nigeria, cashew nut production is a vital agricultural activity that significantly contributes to the regional economy and livelihoods of farmers. However, the increasing lack of access to credit, poor level of education as well and climate change-induced uncertainties have raised concerns about the sustainability and productivity of cashew nut production and farmers' welfare in the state. It is in a bid to contribute to the body of knowledge in this field that this study investigated the effect of cashew nut production and cashew farmers' welfare in Kogi state, north central, Nigeria. Following the introduction, the rest of the paper is structured thus: Section 2 literature review, Section 3 outlines the methodology employed in the study, Section 4, deals with discussions of the results and Section 5 encompasses the conclusion and policy implications of the findings.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Conceptual Clarification**

Cashew nut production encompasses cultivating, harvesting, and processing cashew nuts, a vital economic activity worldwide (Soni & Kohli, 2017). It involves a complex supply chain involving farmers, traders, processors, exporters, and retailers (FAO, 2018), contributing significantly to economic growth (Wambugu et al., 2019). Cashew trees are drought-resistant, aiding in soil conservation (Wambugu et al., 2019). Cashew farmers cultivate trees for nut production, often in orchards or plantations (Adewumi et al., 2021). They specialize in nurturing and harvesting cashew crops for commercial gain (Adegbehingbe et al., 2020). These small-scale entrepreneurs rely on cashew farming for income (Pauw et al., 2020). Cashew farmers' welfare reflects their overall well-being and livelihoods (Adebayo et al., 2021). It encompasses the economic, social, and environmental aspects of sustainable farming (Ogunlade et al., 2021). Improved access to inputs, credit, and markets enhances their welfare (Ogundipe et al., 2020). Infrastructure and cooperative associations further bolster their welfare (Kalu et al., 2020).

### **2.2 Theoretical Literature**

#### **2.2.1. The Agricultural Household Model (AHM)**

This is a theory in agricultural economics that examines how rural households allocate resources among various activities, such as crop cultivation and off-farm employment. Developed in the 1970s and 1980s, the AHM emphasizes collective decision-making within households and considers factors like labour availability, land endowment, and market opportunities. The model explores how households manage risks and fluctuations in income through diversification and income smoothing strategies.

### **2.2.2. The Livelihoods Framework**

This theory developed by Robert Chambers, is a conceptual tool used in development studies to analyse strategies individuals and households use to sustain their livelihoods. It emphasizes the multidimensional nature of livelihoods, considering economic, social, human, natural, and physical capital. Key assets include human skills, social networks, natural resources, physical infrastructure, and financial resources. These assets interact with external factors like institutions and policies to shape livelihood outcomes, highlighting the importance of considering vulnerabilities and capabilities in development interventions to enhance resilience and well-being.

### **2.2.3. The Global Value Chain (GVC) framework**

Pioneered by Gary Gereffi and others, offers a robust analytical approach to understanding the governance structure, value distribution, and upgrading potential within Kogi State's cashew value chain. This framework enables the examination of the roles played by various actors, including farmers, processors, exporters, and retailers, in different stages of cashew production, processing, and marketing. By analysing power dynamics and coordination mechanisms among these actors, the GVC framework elucidates governance structures within the cashew industry.

## **2.3 Empirical Literature**

The extant empirical literature on the subject under scrutiny is divided into two strands. On one hand, there are existing studies that are explicitly concerned with ways to enhance citizenry engagement in cashew production and on the other hand those that majorly on the socio-economic characteristics of the cashew farmers. In a nutshell, Ayinde (2021) investigated factors limiting youth involvement in cashew production towards income generation in Osun State, Nigeria. The study employed descriptive statistics and inferential for the analysis. It was revealed that the youth practice cashew farming mainly to earn a living. Friends, printed materials, and farmers' groups play a vital role in disseminating information. The study emphasised that inadequate funding and inadequate infrastructural support were the main factors limiting the involvement of youth in cashew production.

Okoye, Obi and Okeme (2021) examined socio-economic factors affecting cashew production in Ogaji, Ankpa L.G.A North central Nigeria. The study collected data through a semi-structured questionnaire and interview administered to 143 registered farmers. The study adopts descriptive analysis using inferential statistics of mean score ranking, frequency tables and graphs. Findings reveal that the socio-economic factors affecting production were; Access to and use of credit facilities, farmers-herders conflict, income level, transportation problems, lack of access to capital and poor extension services agent relations the major socio-economic factors affecting cashew production in the study area. Also, Danso-Abbeam, Fosu and Ogundeji, (2021) examined the technical and resource-use efficiencies of cashew production in Ghana: implications on achieving sustainable development goals. The single-stage double bootstrap Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) was used to estimate technical efficiency and its determinants. The estimated results indicate that the average bias-corrected technical efficiency score was lower than the original average score, suggesting that the original efficiency scores had been skewed upwards. Results of the resource use efficiency analysis suggest that cashew farmers in Ghana do not escape the criticisms of inefficient resource allocation.

Okereke (2021) analysed the economic impact of cashew farming on rural farmers in Ihube, Southeastern Nigeria, focusing on its role in poverty alleviation. The study employed diverse data sources for analysis and found that income from cashew plantations has notably reduced

poverty levels among farmers in Ihube, possibly due to minimal input requirements and increasing export demand for cashews as an aphrodisiac and snack. Similarly, Ayinde, Opayinka, and Adeniyi (2021) investigated youth perceptions of cashew production for poverty reduction in Osun State, Nigeria, using a multistage sampling technique and structured interviews. Their descriptive and inferential analyses indicated that male youths are predominantly involved in cashew farming for livelihood purposes, motivated by factors such as unemployment, favourable production environments, and employment opportunities. Benta (2020) explored the impact of government intervention on cashew nut production in Tanzania's Mtwara Region, utilizing a mixed-methods approach combining survey questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions. The findings suggest that government interventions have moderately contributed to providing incentives and fostering internal processing industries within the cashew sector.

Pelemo (2019) examined the poverty status of cashew farmers in Kogi State, Nigeria. The study used descriptive statistics and the Foster Greer Thobekke model for the analysis of the data. The findings revealed the cashew farmers were mostly male gender. The mean years spent in formal education among cashew farmers was seven years while the mean farm size of cashew farmers was 6.1 hectares. Based on the result, the FGT poverty measure showed that cashew farmers were living below the poverty line. The scholars discovered that the major constraints faced by cashew farmers were poor storage facilities and inadequate capital.

#### **2.4 Gap in the literature and value addition**

Based on the foregoing this study identified that previous studies focused on enhancing cashew nut production or examining the socio-economic characteristics of cashew farmers, but did not explicitly link these factors to the welfare of the farmers themselves, which is the primary motivation for engaging in cashew farming. Therefore, this study aimed to fill that gap by specifically investigating the socio-economic effects of cashew nut production on the welfare of cashew farmers level in Kogi State, Nigeria. Also, most previous studies focused on the macro or aggregate level of analysis, rather than examining the effects at the micro or individual farmer. By conducting a "micro study" focusing on individual cashew farmers, this study aimed to provide a more granular and farmer-centric analysis of the relationship between cashew nut production and farmer welfare.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Theoretical Framework**

This study adopts the Livelihoods Framework, pioneered by Robert Chambers as the theoretical framework. This is because the Livelihoods Framework provides a theoretical basis for analysing how individuals and households sustain their livelihoods in development studies. It emphasizes the multidimensional nature of livelihoods, incorporating economic, social, human, natural, and physical capital. Key assets include human skills, social networks, natural resources, physical infrastructure, and financial resources, which interact with external factors like institutions and policies to shape outcomes.

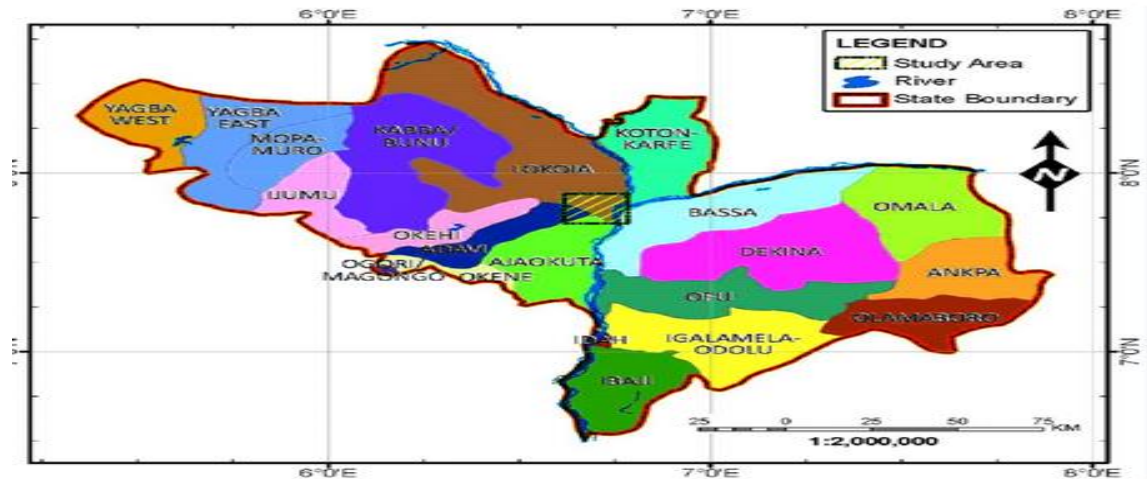
#### **3.2 Research Design**

This study will utilize a survey research design, chosen for its ability to comprehensively describe the field under study and its effectiveness in studying large populations. Additionally, this design method is effective in gathering data on people's opinions, feelings, attitudes, and perceptions regarding a specific issue.

#### **3.2 Description of Study Area**

Kogi State, formed in 1991 from parts of Kwara and Benue States, lies in central Nigeria. Named after the convergence of Rivers Niger and Benue in Lokoja, its capital, it spans 29,833 sq km, bordered by several states. With a population of over 3 million, Kogi is home to diverse

ethnic groups, including Igala, Ebira, Okun, Bassa, Nupe, and Yoruba. Its economy relies mainly on agriculture and fishing, facing challenges from climate change. Rising temperatures and changing precipitation patterns affect agriculture and contribute to flooding, while desertification is a growing concern. Notably, cashew nut production thrives in Kogi State's tropical climate and sandy loam soil, with the state being a major producer in Nigeria. Small-scale farmers depend on cashews for income, supported by government initiatives promoting value chain development and processing facilities to ensure quality for local and international markets.



**Figure 1:** Map of Kogi State, 2023

### 3.3 Population of the Study

The research population comprised all the cashew farmers across the three senatorial districts in Kogi State. The population is shown in Table 1

**Table 1: Distribution of Population of the Study**

S/N	Area	Total number of farmers
1.	Kogi East	17,935
2.	Kogi West	7,341
3.	Kogi Central	3,974
	Total	29,250

**Source:** Kogi State Ministry of Agriculture, 2023

### 3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for the study is 395 and it is determined with the aid of Taro Yamane's (1967) formula. The study employed the sampling technique of stratified random sampling. This is because stratified random sampling allows the division of the population into strata whereby a simple random sampling is used to give an equal chance of selection to the member of the population to be included in the sample. The sample size determination procedures are shown below:

$$\text{Sample Size (n)} = \frac{N}{(1+Ne^2)} \text{-----} 1$$

Where: n = Sample size, N = Total population size of cashew farmers, and e = Acceptable sample error

$$\text{Sample Size} = \frac{29,250}{(1+29250(0.05^2))} = \frac{29,250}{74.125} = 394.60 = 395 \text{ (Sample Size)}$$

From the above calculation, the total number of questionnaires to be distributed is 395. The breakdown is as follows in the number of copies of the questionnaire to be distributed in the three senatorial districts. Thus, the Bowley (1976) proportional allocation formula will be used to achieve this:

$$N_h = \frac{n(N_h)}{N} \text{-----} 2$$

Where:  $N_h$  = Group population from each stratum,  $n$  = Overall sample size,  $N$  = Overall population and  $n_h$  = sample size from each stratum, in this case, each senatorial district.

**Table 2: Distribution of Sample Size across the three (3) senatorial districts**

Kogi East: 242	$\frac{395 \times 17,935}{29,250}$	=
Kogi West: 99	$\frac{395 \times 7,341}{29,250}$	=
Kogi Central: 54	$\frac{395 \times 3,974}{29,250}$	=

Source: Researcher’s Computation, 2023.

**Table 3: Target Cashew farmers across the three (3) senatorial districts**

S/N	Areas	Questionnaire distributed
1.	Kogi East	242
2.	Kogi West	99
3.	Kogi Central	54
	<b>Total</b>	<b>395</b>

Source: Researcher’s Computation, 2023.

### 3.5 Method of Data Collection

The method of data collection in this study included the use of a questionnaire method. Based on the questionnaire, 395 copies of the questionnaire were distributed among the cashew farmers across the 3 senatorial districts in Kogi State. Data was sourced and collected from cashew nut farmers in Kogi State.

### 3.6 Method of Data Analysis

While descriptive statistics was used to analyse the demographic characteristics of the respondents, rectilinear regression analysis was employed to achieve the main thrust of the paper. Thus, the paper adapted the model by Matos (2023) using rectilinear regression analysis. The rationale for utilizing rectilinear regression analysis in this research is grounded in its appropriateness for scenarios where a linear relationship exists between the variables of interest. Additionally, rectilinear regression is preferred when researchers seek to estimate and interpret the impact of independent variables on a continuous dependent variable. This approach facilitates the quantification and understanding of the effects of each independent variable on the dependent variable, ensuring robust and meaningful insights are obtained.



CFE	2.9855	1.57529	373
CFA	.3913	.63286	373
CFF	.2464	.53779	373

**Source:** Field Survey, 2023.

The finding from the descriptive statistics result showed that in a dataset of 373 observations: Cashew Farmers' Welfare (CFW) has an average score of 3.8152 with a moderate level of variability (Std. Deviation: 1.63568). Cashew Nut Production (CNP) averages around 5.1522 with a moderate spread (Std. Deviation: 2.55994). Cashew Farmer's Income Level (CFI) has an average of 8.5290 with relatively higher variability (Std. Deviation: 5.14773). Cashew Farmer's Education Level (CFE) shows an average of 2.9855 with moderate dispersion (Std. Deviation: 1.57529). Cashew Farmers' Access to Credit (CFA) averages 0.3913 with some variation (Std. Deviation: 0.63286). Cashew Farmers' Farm Size (CFF) has an average of 0.2464 with moderate variability (Std. Deviation: 0.53779). These statistics provide insights into the characteristics of these variables, which can inform decision-making in the context of cashew farming.

**Table 5: Correlations Result**

		CFW	CNP	CFI	CFE	CFA	CFF
Pearson Correlation	CFW	1.000	.090	.384	.499	.261	.218
	CNP	.090	1.000	.132	.082	.197	.181
	CFI	.384	.132	1.000	.618	.115	.451
	CFE	.499	.082	.618	1.000	.255	.375
	CFA	.261	.197	.115	.255	1.000	.071
	CFF	.218	.181	.451	.375	.071	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	CFW	.	.148	.000	.000	.001	.005
	CNP	.148	.	.061	.169	.010	.017
	CFI	.000	.061	.	.000	.089	.000
	CFE	.000	.169	.000	.	.001	.000
	CFA	.001	.010	.089	.001	.	.204
	CFF	.005	.017	.000	.000	.204	.

**Source:** Field Survey, 2023.

Table 5 displays the correlation matrix for variables relevant to cashew farming, indicating the strength and direction of linear relationships. Cashew Farmers' Welfare (CFW) positively correlates with Cashew Farmer's Income Level (CFI) ( $r = 0.384$ ) and Cashew Farmer's Education Level (CFE) ( $r = 0.499$ ), implying higher welfare is associated with increased income and education. CFW also shows weaker positive correlations with Cashew Farmers' Access to Credit (CFA) ( $r = 0.261$ ) and Cashew Farmers' Farm Size (CFF) ( $r = 0.218$ ). Cashew Nut Production (CNP) exhibits weak positive correlations with other variables, while CFI and CFE display a relatively strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.618$ ), indicating higher income correlates with higher education levels among cashew farmers. CFI also correlates positively with CFW ( $r = 0.384$ ) and CFF ( $r = 0.451$ ), suggesting higher income relates to better welfare and larger farm sizes. Similarly, CFE correlates positively with CFW ( $r = 0.499$ ), indicating higher education is associated with better welfare. CFA and CFF show relatively weak correlations with other variables, except for a moderate negative correlation between CFA and CFF ( $r = -0.204$ ). Significance values (Sig. or p-values) confirm most correlations are statistically significant, underscoring the observed relationships' reliability. These correlations provide insights into the interrelations among different factors in cashew farming, such as the association between higher welfare and education levels with increased income.

The regression analysis in Table 5 elucidates the relationship between cashew nut production (CNP) and indicators of farmers' welfare. The results show a positive relationship between



CNP, CFI, CFE, CFA, and CFW, with coefficients indicating that a one-unit increase in CNP, CFI, CFE, and CFA corresponds to a 0.037, 0.043, 0.371, 0.378, and 0.134 increase in farmers' welfare, respectively. These findings align with those of Ayinde, Opayinka, and Adeniyi (2021) and Zambia (2022), highlighting cashew nut production as a significant source of livelihood for citizens.

**Table 6: Regression Coefficients Results**

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients			Standardised Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	1.973	.368		5.369	.000
	CNP	.037	.050	.057	.734	.464
	CFI	.043	.032	.135	1.347	.180
	CFE	.371	.104	.357	3.581	.000
	CFA	.378	.203	.146	1.862	.065
	CFF	.134	.260	.044	.516	.606

a. Dependent Variable: CFW

**Table 7: Regression Model Summary Result**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.532 <sup>a</sup>	.683	.556	1.41111	.283	10.415	5	132	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), CFF, CFA, CNP, CFE, CFI

Table 7 presents the summary of a regression model, which aims to analyse the relationship between multiple predictor variables (CFF, CFA, CNP, CFE, and CFI) and a dependent variable (cashew farmers' welfare). The R Square which measures the proportion of variance in CFW that can be explained by the predictors (CFF, CFA, CNP, CFE, and CFI) is 53%. This indicates that about 53% variance in cashew farmers' welfare is explained by the variations in CFF, CFA, CNP, CFE, and CFI while the remaining 47% is captured by the error term

## 5. CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This study offers insights into the socio-economic impact of cashew nut production on farmers' welfare in Kogi State, Nigeria. Findings indicate significant positive correlations between cashew farming, income levels, and farmers' education, emphasizing the need to promote cashew farming and enhance productivity. Improving education access, and credit availability, and adopting sustainable practices can enhance economic and social well-being. A supportive policy environment recognizing cashew farming's role in rural development is crucial. Investments in infrastructure, value addition, and market access can maximize the cashew industry's potential for economic growth and poverty reduction. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Strengthen educational programmes for Kogi State cashew farmers to enhance welfare through improved education levels.
2. Promote sustainable cashew farming practices to address climate change risks, enhancing long-term productivity and farmer welfare.
3. Invest in infrastructure development in cashew-producing areas to minimize losses, streamline transportation, and bolster the cashew value chain, thereby enhancing farmer welfare.

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