

Construction of a Socio Economic Status Scale for Rural Youth in Southwest Nigeria

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Abstract

The need to develop an appropriate scale for measuring the Socio economic Status (SES) of rural youth who are important segment of Nigerian population necessitated this study. Multistage sampling technique was adopted in the selection of four hundred and fifty – five (455) rural youth from Oyo and Osun state of South west Nigeria respectively. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to determine items that are valid for inclusion in the scale using the sigma scoring method. Out of seventy – five collated items for measuring SES, only 38 are valid for determining the SES of rural youth in the study area. The respondents' SES is positively skewed with mean 155.3 with minimum and maximum score of 106 and 211 respectively. The study concluded that programme of change for rural youth should concentrate more on improving the SES of rural youth in order to reduce the menace of rural – urban migration among rural youth in the study area.

Keywords: Rural, Socio economic, Status, Youth, Nigeria.

Introduction

The Nigeria's rural population is about 65 percent and the rural dwellers are known to earn their living from farming occupation and these people directly or indirectly live on the resource of land mainly for their major occupation farming (Olurode, 2001). With this rural population, who are considered to make up of some disguisedly poor and poverty ridden.

Rural youth has been considered in this study because of the significant roles they play in agriculture and ensuring food security. They are considered to be the future leaders, innovative, energetic, all these characteristics are very significant which could be exploited in ensuring rural development. The term rural youth refers to young men and women between the ages of 18 and 35 (NYP, 2001). In rural areas, young people have a major stake in how the natural, economic and social resources of their communities are developed (Waldie, 2004). In many communities young people have no "voice". Current development policy tends to focus on the household and in doing so, centres on the lives of adults and neglects the young ones in the community. Hence, they are vulnerable to poverty.

Socio economic status (SES) is an important social category of which its definition in most societies may vary among cultures and villages. It is one of the most important variables that have been measured in social science research. It plays a significant role in planning and execution of development programmes especially in developing countries Nigeria inclusive (Tiwari, et al, 2005).

In most developing countries the measurement of socio economic status is challenging (Worall et al, 2003). Although, the specific definition of SES and what is considered to constitute a rich or poor farmers would depend on the local conceptions of the term socio economic status (Bellon, 2001). It has been noted that in developing countries like Nigeria, social science researchers are been confronted with diverse problems in the measurement of certain characteristics of rural dwellers such as level of living, wealth, state of affluence and social status (Adewale, 1999). The indicators of socio economic status changes with time in every rural community because of its dynamic nature both in human and resources. The concept socio economic status could be defined as the position that an individual or family occupied with respect to the prevailing average standards of cultural possessions, effective income, material possessions as well as participation in the group activities of the communities (Akinbile, 2007). Wilson (1985) described socio economic status as a classification of individual, household or family according to occupation, income, education or some other indicators of social status.

Socio economic status has been found to affect labour availability for agricultural purposes, savings and investment decisions, types of crop – grown, number and varieties of animals a livestock farmer could keep and adoption of innovation. Although, research efforts had been tailored on the measurement of socio economic status in the past (Ifeanyi et al, 2009; Akinbile, 1997, Ladele, 1990; Adewale, 1999). None of these studies focused its attention on the important segment of the rural population termed to be rural youth.

Objective of the study

The purpose of this study was to develop a socio economic status scale (SES) for rural youth in Southwest Nigeria through validated socioeconomic status indicators.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Oyo and Osun states of Southwest Nigeria. Data were collected from rural youth with the aid of pretested and validated interview schedule. Four hundred and fifty – five rural youth were selected for the study using multistage sampling technique. The sampling techniques include random selection of 15 percent of total local government area in each state. This makes three local governments from each state. In all, ten local government areas for this study. The second stage involves random selection of 5 percent of total villages in each selected local government areas these resulted into 115 villages. At the village’s level, there is no list of rural youth in the selected villages that could form the sample frame; the researcher developed a sampling frame for the purpose of this study. Thereafter, fifty percent of the total youth in each village was selected for this study. In all, a total of four hundred and fifty – five respondents were used as sample size for the study.

One hundred and fifty two items were identified and collated and were subjected to initial pruning in order to eliminate those SES indicators that are vague and repetitive, this lead to reduction of the items to seventy- five items. Table 1 shows an example of item analysis procedure for valid SES indicators.

Table 1: Example of sigma scoring for valid items (wall clock/ Executive members of social organisation)

Number of wall clock	F	CF	CFMP	CPMP	Z	Z(Z+2)²
0	159	159	79.5	0.17	-0.95	2
1-6	296	455	307	0.68	+0.47	5
Executive members of social organization	F	CF	CFMP	CPMP	Z	Z(Z+2)²
0	125	125	62.5	0.14	-1.08	2
1-4	330	455	290	0.64	+0.36	5

F - Frequency , CF - Cumulative frequency , CFMP- Cumulative frequency Mid- point , CPMP- Cumulative proportional Mid- point , Z – Sigma score ,
Z(Z+2)²- Standard score

Validity of the socio – economic status scale

The validity of the theoretical construct, that is the utilisation of agricultural information on selected arable crops was determined by examining its relationship with the socio-economic status of the respondents. This was done by calculating the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) of the items of socioeconomic status. A total of seventy five items of socioeconomic status indicators were initially included in the data instrument, but after pretesting, a total of thirty –eight items of socioeconomic status were left for item analysis. The item analysis involved the assigning of scores for each item using a scale with several categories of scores. Each respondent’s scores in the 38 items were added up, making the total score of all items. Each item was evaluated to determine whether or not the item discriminates in the same way the overall instrument is intended to discriminate by calculating the Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient (r) between the respondents’ scores in the item and their total scores in all the items. The (r) values as shown in Table 2. Only 38 items with the significant r-values at 5% or less probability significance level were selected for inclusion in the socioeconomic status scale. These are the items that significantly discriminate in the same way. They are considered as valid items in the socioeconomic status scale.

Weights of the valid items were calculated using the sigma method of weighting as used by Akinola and Patel (1987). The weights of the valid item are shown in Table 2 Each respondent's SES score were calculated by summing up the weights of all his/her item responses. Respondent's minimum score was 106 while the maximum SES score was 209.

Table 2: Discriminating indices of socioeconomic indicators using Pearson correlation.

S/N	Item Description	Coefficient
1.	Total Number of Children	0.559**
2.	Total Number of Children in Nursery	0.318**
3.	Total Number of children in Primary School	0.562**
4.	Total Number of Children in secondary school	0.324**
5.	Wall Clocks	0.604**
6.	Chairs	0.304**
7.	Tables	0.332**
8.	Electric Iron	0.105*
9.	Radio	0.407**
10.	Fan	0.170**
11.	Mobile Phones (GSM)	0.153*
12.	Wrist Watches	0.117*
13.	Stoves	0.355**
14.	VCD players	0.134*
15.	Generators	0.118*
16.	Motorcycles(Okada)	0.101*
17.	Bicycles	0.107*
18.	Shoes	0.508**
19.	Clothing Wears	0.695*
20.	Mattress beds	0.385**
21.	Touch lights	0.366**
22.	Lanterns	0.460**
23.	Spades	0.203*
24.	Buckets	0.581**
25.	Aluminum Pots	0.549**
26.	Spoons	0.197**
27.	Ceramic plates	0.583**
28.	Photo frames	0.493**
29.	Membership of social Organization	0.355**
30.	Number of Executive Membership	0.649**
31.	Farmland	0.639*
32.	Umbrellas	0.452**
33.	Rain coats	0.158*
34.	Chickens	0.477**
35.	Goats	0.496**
36.	Hoes	0.470**
37.	Cutlasses	0.194**
38.	Herbicide sprayers	0.120*

Source: Field survey, 2009.

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level of (2 - tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 - tailed).

The respondents' SES scores were categorised into low, average and high socioeconomic status as reported in Table 3. The table shows that close to half (43.3%) of the respondents were categorized as average SES based on their score while about one-third (30.1%) and 26.9% were into low and high SES categories respectively as shown in Table 3.

The location estimates of the mean (155.3) and median (152.0) were found to be fair close to each other. This therefore indicated that the distribution of the socioeconomic status SES scores of 455 respondents in this study is fairly close to that of a normal distribution where the location estimates of median and mean tends to be close to each other. Using the mean SES, about 80.9% of the respondents have their SES score below the mean. The finding of this study therefore revealed that majority (80.9%) of the sampled rural youth in the study area are either of low or average socioeconomic status categories as shown in Table 3. According to Pamela (1987) socioeconomic status plays an important role in occupational aspirations of rural youth. The finding of this study is contrary to the finding of Everett (1970) that most of the rural youth studied were of average and high socioeconomic status categories. Low socioeconomic status of rural youth in the study area has a great implication on the future of rural youth in the study area. Because they would be looking for opportunities to improve their socioeconomic status. As it has been noted by Seyfrit (1986) that low socioeconomic status of rural youth could influence rural – urban migration decisions and this would not be in favour of rural development in the study area.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to socioeconomic status (SES).

SES Category	Frequency	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative Percentage
Low (< 155.3)	233	233	51.2
Average (155.3 - 178.9)	135	368	80.9
High (>178.9)	87	455	100.0

Sources: Field survey, 2009. Mean = 155.3, Median 152.0, SD=23.6

Reliability of the socio-economic status scale

Reliability of the socio-economic status scale was carried out using split-half technique. The reliability test was done by correlating the socioeconomic status scores of the even-numbered and odd-numbered halves of the sampled farmers for this study. The split-half technique assumes each of the halves to be a whole sample of rural youth. The correlation coefficient (r) is 0.63. It may be inferred that there is a significant relationship between the scores of the two halves of the respondents since the observed r-value exceeds the tabled r-value of 0.25 at 1.0% level of significance. In other words, the scores between the two halves are similar. This testifies that the scale gives consistent results in different measurement instances. It may be inferred that whenever the scale is used it would discriminate between the socio-economic status of the rural youth.

Conclusion

The study concluded that only 38 socio economic indicators are valid for measuring socio economic status of rural youth in Southwest Nigeria.

The items with the highest significance in determine SES of rural youth in the study area include clothing wears, followed by executive membership of social organization and size of farm land. The study further revealed that the scale is positively skewed, implying that majority of the sampled rural youth are of low SES. The low SES among rural youth could influence rural – urban migration decision which is not in favour of rural development. Therefore, there is need to assist rural youth in the study area in improving their SES by intensifying the poverty alleviation programmes in the rural areas.

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