

Factors Influencing Youths participation in Agricultural Marketing Co-Operatives Societies in Ruangwa District, Tanzania

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Abstract

The main aim of this study was to assess the factors influencing youth's participation in Agricultural Marketing Co-operative Societies in Ruangwa District. The study specifically aimed to;

- Examine youth perception in Agricultural Marketing Co-operative Societies in poverty reduction
- Determine social factors influencing youth's participation in Agricultural Marketing Co-operative Societies
- Analyse economic factors influencing youth's participation in Agricultural Marketing Co-operative Societies

The study was conducted in Ruangwa District in Lindi Region. The district was purposively selected as the study area since it has a long history way back in the 1920s on cooperation and co-operative establishment in Tanzania. For example, Ruangwa AMCOS, Mandawa AMCOS, Namichiga AMCOS and Mbekenyera AMCOS have a success history of co-operative sector performance.

This study was guided by the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). This theory was postulated by Fishbein and Ajzen (1967). The theory focused on identifying the factors underlying the formation and change of behavioural intent. According to the TRA, most behaviours of social relevance are under volitional control and, thus, behavioural intention is the single most important predictor of behaviour. The theory further suggested that, the greater a person's behavioural intention to perform a specific behaviour, the greater the likelihood the person actually will perform that behaviour. According to the TRA, behavioural intention is determined by an individual's attitude toward the behaviour and by the subjective norm an individual perceives to exist in association with that behaviour. The theory assumes that a person's behaviour is determined by his/her intention to perform the behaviour and this intention is in turn a function of his/her attitude toward the behaviour and his/her subjective norm.

This study adopted a cross-sectional research design. The design was useful since it seeks to describe the problem in detail, considering it as a whole and through it conclusions was made. It was involved the intensive study of a phenomenon in its natural habit, in such a way that the mutual relationship of relevant factors remained intact. Since the design was flexible in the use of data collection techniques it brought deeper insight and better understanding of the problem in the selected case study area.

The study employed simple random sampling and purposive sampling. Simple random sampling technique was applied when selecting the youth respondent from selected AMCOS, Mandawa and Mbekenyera wards in Ruangwa District. Purposive sampling was employed to gather all the information because it focuses on the particular Co-operative society. In order to

make this process done, the researcher selected government officials such as District Co-operative Officers (DCO) because they have an experience on the co-operative sector in the study area.

Both Primary data and Secondary data were collected in this study. Primary data was collected by administering a semi-structured questionnaire. In this sense, questionnaires were used to gather all quantitative data, while qualitative data were obtained through interviews, documentary reviews and others were collected through review of both empirical and theoretical data from journals, dissertations, magazines and the internet.

Qualitative data was analysed through content analysis techniques where data from respondents especially interview data were summarized into meaningful study context to answer the research questions. In other aspect, Quantitative data were analysed objective wise where the first objective was analysed using Likert scale technique and perception index was developed. The second objective analysed through ordinal regression where the dependent variable was ranked into three order scales i.e. 1 = low, 2 = moderate and 3 = high. The third objective was analysed through binary logistic regression data analysis technique since the dependent variable was a categorical variable (dichotomous)

The findings indicated that:

- Economic factors such as market accessibility, land availability, capital size, subscription and profitability had great influence youths to have participation in AMCOS.
- Access to social capital networks and youth perception on agricultural had influence on youth membership in AMCOS. The study revealed that education level of youth does not influence them to join with AMCOS.
- Youths had positive attitudes toward AMCOS in poverty reduction, it should be enriched with other potential services especially training on the best mechanisms that can be applied in agriculture to maximize productivity and enable them to use modern agricultural methods so as to improve quality of products they produce that can be sold at high price in the local market.
- Moreover, it was found that, youth should be encouraged to join with AMCOS since they will benefit with its potential services, they offer to the community which leads to agricultural sector development and finally poverty reduction.
- With regard to socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, it was found that 67% and 33% were males and females respectively. 62% of these respondents were aged between 31- 40 years 20% of respondents were aged below 36 – 45 and only 18% aged from 45 years and above. It was found that 40% attained Certificate or Diploma level of education, 28% of respondents attained high education i.e. degree and postgraduates, 20% attained secondary education i.e. ordinary level and advanced level of education and 12% attained primary education or didn't attain any formal level of education.
- In regard to respondent's marital status, the study found that 68% of respondents were otherwise which means were either single, widowed/widower or divorced and 32% of respondents were married. Furthermore, the study found that most of respondents 57% were businesspersons, 27% of them were employed and 16% were in agriculture sector.
- In examining youth perception toward AMCOS on poverty reduction. The study used five-point Likert scale i.e. 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree and 5 = strongly agree. A decision range is that, mean rating of 3.0 and above was accepted as positive perception while a mean rating below 3.0 regarded as negative perception toward AMCOS on poverty reduction. The findings showed that, the grand

mean score is 3.43 which is above 3.0, therefore, this means that, generally youth had positive perception on AMCOS toward poverty reduction. This implies that, youth agreed that, AMCOS is the best strategy for them to develop and improve their productivity due to market accessibility and stable price as a result of AMCOS interventions.

- In determining the influence of social factors for the youth to participate in AMCOS and was tested through ordinal logistic regression model with five social factors i.e. networking, social participation, dignity, level of education and marital status. In this aspect, it was revealed that, networking was positive and significantly influence youth to participate in AMCOS ($\beta = 1.591$, Wald = 8.526 and $p = 0.000$), social participation was positively and significantly influences youth participation ($\beta = 1.628$, Wald = 7.614 and $p = 0.006$), dignity was positively and significantly enhances youth participation ($\beta = 1.983$, Wald = 5.478 and $p = 0.040$), marital status was also positively enhances youth participation in AMCOS ($\beta = 0.540$, Wald = 0.349 and $p = 0.045$) where level of education was not statistically significant influences youth participation in AMCOS since $p = 0.064$ which is greater than the 0.05.
- In analysing the influence of economic factors on youth participation in AMCOS, binary logistic regression model was performed. It contained five independent variables (land availability, market accessibility, profitability, and capital size and subscription amount) and youth participation in AMCOS as dependent variable. The full model containing all predictors was statistically significant $X^2(5, N= 184) = 70.52$, $p < 0.05$, indicating that, the model was able to distinguish between respondents who reported that economic factors influence youth participation in AMCOS. Regarding this aspect, it was therefore revealed that, the strongest predictor that influences youth participation in AMCOS was the market accessibility.

The findings were statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ [$p = 0.006$, Wald statistic = 11.164 and $\text{Exp}(\beta) = 9.453$]. Wald test of 11.164 indicates that, market accessibility was significantly contributed in predicting youth participation to AMCOS. The other strong predictor that influences youth participation in AMCOS was land availability. The findings were statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ [$p = 0.000$, Wald statistic = 9.71 and $\text{Exp}(\beta) = 7.167$]. Wald test of 9.71 indicates that, land availability is significantly contributed in predicting youth participation in AMCOS in study area.

- Another economic factor that influences youth participation in AMCOS was capital size. From this perspective it was found that, size of capital was significantly contributed in predicting youth participation in study area. Profitability was also found among of economic factor that influenced youth participation in AMCOS. The findings further showed that, there were statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ [$p = 0.000$, Wald statistic = 4.918 and $\text{Exp}(\beta) = 3.484$]. Wald test of 2.018 was indicating that, the level of profit expected was significantly contributed in predicting youth participation in AMCOS. Lastly, the economic factor that influences youth participation to AMCOS was subscription amount (entry fee). The findings were statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ [$p = 0.041$, Wald statistic = 0.765 and $\text{Exp}(\beta) = 0.965$]. Wald test of 0.765 indicated that, subscription amount was also significantly contributed in predicting customer youth participation in AMCOS in study area.

Conclusion

- Agricultural Marketing Cooperative Societies are the cooperatives which help farmers to market and sell products at best reasonable price which lead to high profit among farmers and growth. The general aim of the study was to assess the factors influencing youth participation in AMCOS.
- Youth had positive perceptions toward AMCOS as the efficient strategy of poverty reduction in study area. Youth believes that, AMCOS was created to help farmers sell their products at a reasonable price which led to high price and in turn raise the income of famers and finally eradicate poverty in study area.
- There are four main social factors i.e. networking, social participation, dignity, and marital status which influence youth to participate in AMCOS. These factors were found to be statistically significant in predicting youth participation in AMCOS. Lastly, the land availability, market accessibility, profitability, capital size and subscription amount are the main economic factors influencing youth participation in AMCOS.

Recommendations

- The governments should assist in creating ready markets and facilitating linkages to other markets for agricultural produce. This will encourage the youth to participate in farming activities since they are assured of making sales and increasing their profits which will contribute to improved income to youth to participate in AMCOS.
- Youth should be exposed to more land so as to encourage them to participate in AMCOS since they are able to produce at high amount. This is because of the fact that some youths come from Mtwara Region and Districts for the search of land for the purpose of agricultural activities which could increase the number of youth participation in AMCOS after the production.
- Capital size also was found statistically significant influencing youth participation and it was revealed that, youth with low capital were less preferred to participate in AMCOS while those with high income had high membership rate, therefore the study recommends those with low capital to be boosted their capital through farmers loan so as to be able to meet AMCOS requirements and join.
- AMCOS management should establish a training and development programme to educate the youth and develop a positive perception. This will assist in changing their attitude about agricultural activities and take this activity as a full-time job.
- The government across the country should increase youth awareness about agriculture and agricultural Marketing Co-operatives activities. This will enable them to have a deeper understanding of the benefits that are derived from AMCOS and the challenges involved if they decide to take agriculture as a profession.
- Furthermore, the Government should continue and enhance the process of formulating policies that can enable the youth to access credit facilities from Microfinance banks, to specifically finance farming activities by the youth.
- Moreover, further studies on the assessment of effectiveness of AMCOS in poverty reduction and development of agricultural sector in Tanzania have to be taken into account. An experimental study ought to be done to evaluate the impacts of AMCOS on famers' development and growth.