

# THE BENEFITS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL NETWORKING AMONG THE RURAL DWELLERS IN IWO AGRICULTURAL ZONE OF OSUN STATE AN IMPLICATION FOR CHANGING SOCIAL VALUES TOWARDS RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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## ABSTRACT

This study assessed social capital for sustainable livelihood among the rural dwellers in Iwo Agricultural Zone of Osun State with the following specific objectives; identifying respondents' socioeconomic characteristics, level of social capital worth and benefits accruing to the respondents as a result of their participation in social network. A total of 231 respondents were selected for the study through a multistage sampling technique and data were collected with the use of structured interview schedule. Descriptive statistics such as mean, percentages and frequencies were used in presenting the data, while inferential statistics such as Chi-square and PPMC were used in testing the hypotheses of the study. The results of the finding revealed that the mean age of respondents was calculated as 43 years. Majority (63.2%) indicated that their worth is based on number of people with whom they network. The study also shows that religious organization provides a linkage system to respondents' social network. About half of the respondents have a high level of social capital worth, (43.3%) benefited from all seasons livelihood due to social networking while (39.4%) and (37.2%) respectively derived security and recognition benefits respectively. Level of education ( $\chi^2 = 29.107$ ), religion ( $\chi^2 = 7.322$ ), Age ( $r = 0.165$ ) and household size ( $r = 0.257$ ) have significant relationship with respondents' social capital worth. Similarly, benefits level have significant relationship ( $r = 0.356$ ) with social capital worth. The findings further revealed that inferiority complex, low level of education, poor communication network, poor road network and dominance by superior members were the major constraints to social networking in the study area. Therefore, Existing organizations in the study area should be more strengthened by government and NGOs so as to meaningfully and adequately benefit members as well as attract others for improved livelihood.

**KEYWORDS:** Social Capital Networking, Rural Development

## INTRODUCTION

Social capital is widely seen as a resource that facilitates cooperation within or between groups of people. It can emerge in relationships in many areas of life, such as those involving friends and families, school communities, ethnic, religious and community groups, occupational groupings, firms, governments and other institutions. The term social capital is used to refer to connections which exist among people and organizations. These social networks have important implications for social identity, emotional support, as well as the exchange of goods, services, and information. Putnam (2001) defines "Social capital as value of the social networks which is embodied in various communities (both

geographically and communities of interest), and the trust and reciprocity that flow from those networks. According Woolcock (2001), an individual acquires social capital through participation in informal networks, registered organizations, associations of different kinds and social movement and it can also represent the sum of these experiences. Social networks are often built when, happiest and most rewarding times are spent talking to neighbours, sharing meals with friends, attending religious gatherings and volunteering for community projects. There is growing evidence that social capital is an element for sustainable development due to the role it plays in managing risks, shocks, and opportunities. It therefore, holds strong position to confront poverty and vulnerability (Narayan and Pritchett, 1997). The recognition that social capital is an input in a household or a nation's production function has major implications for development policy and project design. It suggests that the acquisition of human capital and the establishment of a physical infrastructure need to be complemented by institutional development, at the local and the national level in order to reap the full benefits of the afore mentioned investments (Grootaert, 2001). There is a good number of studies addressing the effects of social capital on those facets of development that can contribute to making growth more sustainable in the long run, for example human development and social cohesion. But it is not clear yet what type of networks may exert a positive effect on the different dimensions of development (Sabatini, 2008). There is therefore the need to assess the roles played by social capital in enhancing productivity and welfare of rural households, the level of development of communities and that of the nation as a whole. To achieve the main objective, the study specifically, identified the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and the various livelihood activities that the respondents engage themselves in within the study area. Also, the study examined respondents' levels of social capital worth and identified the benefits that respondents derived from participating in social networking. Finally, the study determined the relationship between some selected socio economic characteristics, specific benefits derived from participating in social networking and respondents' level of social capital worth;

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study was carried out in Iwo Agricultural Zone of Osun State. Iwo Agricultural Zone is made up of seven Local Government Areas (LGAs). The Zone lies on 70 81North of the equator and 40 51 East of the Greenwich meridian. The agricultural zone has a moderate rainfall of 2000 - 3000mm per year. It has high temperature of about 280C and high relative humidity of over 90% and it has a long period of raining season between 6-8 months and 3-4 month of dry seasons. The population of this study included all the rural dwellers in Iwo Agricultural Zone of Osun State. Multistage sampling technique was adopted for the study. The first stage involved random selection of Fifty seven percent (57%) of the local government areas (LGAs) including Irewole, Isokan, Ola-oluwa and Ayedaade L.G.A. The Second stage involved selection of thirty percent (30%) of villages from the list of registered villages in each of the four Local Government Areas selected for this study. This therefore implies that two (2) villages was selected from Irewole LGA, one (1) villages from Isokan LGA, three (2) villages from Ola-oluwa LGA and two (2) villages from Ayedaade LGA respectively, which makes a total of seven (7) villages considered for this study. Forty percent (40%) of the rural dwellers in each village was considered. Therefore, a total of 231 respondents were selected for this study as the sample size. Data for this study was mainly primary data which was collected from the rural dwellers from each of the selected villages in Osun State. The data was collected with the aid of a pre-tested and validated structured interview schedule based on the objectives of the study. The dependent variable is the assessment of social capital for sustainable livelihood which was measured by the respondents' level of involvement in social capital worth while the independent variables include the socio-economic characteristics of

the respondents, and the specific benefits derived from participating in social capital. Descriptive and inferential tools were used for the analysis. The descriptive tools include frequency distribution, percentages and the mean values while Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Chi-square were used to determine the relationship between variables.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Socio-Economic Characteristics

The age distribution of respondents as presented on Table 1 shows that about (71.8%) of the respondents were below 51 years of age and the mean age was 43 years. This implies that majority of the respondents were in their active years and had enough vigour to engage in livelihood activities. This situation is favourable for livelihood diversification and social networking. This result is consistent with the reports of Fabusoro et al. (2010) who reported similar mean age among the labour forces in rural areas of southwest Nigeria. Also, on table 1 more than three-quarter (65.8%) of the respondents were males while females accounted for the remaining (34.2%). This implies the dominance of male household heads over the females in the scene of rural income-generating activities. This result is in agreement with the claim of Ebitigha (2008), Oludipe (2009) and Ewebiyi (2014) that males still dominate rural income-generating activities. Ekong (2003) also found that there are more male household heads of active productive age in the rural areas of southwest Nigeria than females. Hence, male dominance in income-generating activities is expected to impact positively on livelihood diversification of the respondents in the study area, as males are often considered more energetic and anxious to strive hard to improve their family well-being, which is one of the expected outcomes of livelihood diversification. Most (69.3%) of the respondents were married (19.9%) single, (7.8%) widowed and (3.0%) divorced. This could have an implication on livelihood diversification since married individuals are likely to have access to more family labour which could also have influence on access to efficient use of livelihood assets as well as changing roles and responsibilities. This finding is in conformity with Ebitigha (2008) and Oludipe (2009)) who asserted that marriage can both increase access to livelihood assets, especially among women and thereby increase the level of their livelihood activities. More than half (65.4%) had one form of formal education or the other, while (16.5%) had no formal education and (8.7%) had vocational education. This suggests that majority (65.4%) of the respondents in the study area were literate. This may likely increase the extent of their livelihood diversification as a result of human capital assets arising from a high level of literacy. Almost half (48.9%) of the respondents were Muslims, while (45.1%) were Christians and a minority (6.1%) accounted for those that practiced traditional religion. Religious belief is one of the major identities of most Nigerians. This suggests that almost everyone is involved in one religion or the other in the study area. The implication of this is that the religious affiliations of the respondents may determine their livelihood activities and the extent of diversification. According to Ewebiyi (2014) religion is closely related to culture, so all rural development programmes and policies that will create an enabling environment for rural livelihood diversification should be within local-rural culture. 40.3% of the respondents had between 1-4 persons in their household, (29.9%) had 5-8 persons, and (17.3%) had 9-12 persons while (12.6%) had more than 12 persons. The mean household size was calculated as 7. This depicts a fairly large family size in the study area. This result corroborates those of Aderinto (2012) and Fabusoro et al. (2010) that a fairly large household size is dominant in rural Nigeria. This implies that large member of household in the study area are likely to have more diversified income sources if all the members are working and contributing to household welfare.

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Socio-Economic Characteristics**

Socio-Economic Variables	F	Percentage	Mean ± SD
<b>Age</b>			
≤ 20	9	3.9	42.77±14.91
21- 30	53	22.9	
31-40	53	22.9	
41-50	51	22.1	
51-60	36	15.6	
61-70	21	9.1	
above 70	8	3.5	
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	152	65.8	
Female	79	34.2	
<b>Marital Status</b>			
Single	46	19.9	
Married	160	69.3	
Widow	18	7.8	
Divorced	7	3.0	
<b>Educational Level</b>			
Non formal	38	16.5	
Adult	22	9.5	
Vocational training	20	8.7	
Primary	47	20.3	
Secondary	46	19.9	
NCE/ND	38	16.5	
HND/BSc	20	8.7	
<b>Religion</b>			
Christianity	104	45.0	
Islam	113	48.9	
Traditional	14	6.1	
<b>Household Size</b>			
1-4	93	40.3	6.57±4.63
5-8	69	29.9	
9-12	40	17.3	
13-16	20	8.7	
>16	9	3.9	

**Source:** Field survey, 2014

### Livelihood Activities

Only 25.1% of the respondents diversified into arable crop farming in both seasons of the year and 24.2% diversified into cocoa production also in both seasons. (15.6%) and (14.3%) of the respondents diversified into cassava processing and oil palm processing respectively throughout the year. The respondents were also involved in local trade such as petty trading (18.6%), sale of agricultural products (14.7%) in both seasons of the year. The result further reveals that 12.1% of the respondents were involved in teaching, hunting (7.4%), palm wine tapping (7.4%) and hair plaiting (7.4%). Other livelihood activities the respondents engaged in throughout the year included transportation (6.5%), rentals (6.5%), tailoring (5.6%), estate management (5.6%), nursing (5.2%). However, the study further reveals the livelihood activities that were not so popular in the study area. Such activities include pottery (1.3%), clergy (1.3%), welding (1.7%) and brick making and laying which were mostly carried out in both seasons of the year. These are classified livelihood options in the rural areas, many of which are being used to augment income generated from the main rural livelihoods,

which area farming. The involvement of the respondents in the various activities during both seasons attests to the fact that rural households diversified their activities and are involved in more than one livelihood activity throughout the year. This finding is in agreement with the report of Fabusoro et al. (2010) and Ewebiyi (2014) who reported that rural households diversified their livelihoods in both wet and dry seasons of the year

**Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Livelihood Activities**

Livelihood Categories and Activities	Wet Season	Dry Season	Both Seasons
	%	%	%
<b>Own Farm</b>			
Arable farming	3.9		25.1
Cocoa	5.2	1.3	24.2
Cashew	3.5	2.2	6.1
Oil palm	3.9	3.0	21.6
Kolanut	2.2	3.0	14.3
Livestock	0.9	0.4	7.4
Fish farming	1.3	1.7	9.1
<b>Off-Farm Activities</b>			
Cassava processing	1.7	1.7	15.6
Oil processing	3.0	2.2	14.3
Hunting	1.3	4.3	7.4
Milling farm products	0.9	1.3	5.6
Grinding pepper	0.4	0.4	3.0
Gathering and selling NTFPs	0.4	0.4	3.0
Palm wine tapping	0.9	6.5	7.4
<b>Non-Farm Activities</b>			
Transportation	0.4	0.4	6.5
Carpentry	0.4	0.9	3.5
Tailoring	0.9	0.9	5.6
Motor repair	0.9	1.7	2.6
Shoe making	0.4	1.3	3.5
Rentals	0.4	6.1	6.5
Barbing	0.4	3.9	4.3
Hair plaiting	0.4	6.9	7.4
Blacksmith	1.3	2.2	3.5
Clergy	0.4	0.9	1.3
Vulcanizing	0.9	2.2	3.0
Butchery	0.9	1.7	2.6
Pottery	0.4	0.4	1.3
Mat making	0.4	1.7	2.2
Soap making and selling	0.4	3.9	4.3
Brick making and laying	1.3	0.9	2.2
Welding			1.7
<b>Local Trade</b>			
Estate management	0.4	0.9	5.6
Sales of processed agric. Products	1.3	1.7	14.7
Petty trading	0.4	1.7	18.6
Food vending	1.3	0.9	4.3
Selling of water	1.7	1.7	3.0
<b>Local Formal Employment</b>			
Teaching	0.4	0.4	12.1
Nursing	0.9	0.9	5.2

LGA civil service	1.3	1.3	3.0
LGA night guard	0.4	0.4	3.9
<b>Migratory Wage Services</b>	1.3	1.7	3.0

\*multiple respondents, Source: Field survey, 2014

### Ssocial Capital Worth

Results in Table 3 revealed the various categories of people the respondents have interacted with. Most of the respondents reported that they interact a lot with family members and relatives which was rated highest with a weighted mean of 4.42 and that this group still remains the most trusted with a mean of 4.33 and also a major group from which help and assistance is rendered to the individual. In relationship with the organization types, most of the respondents relates more with the religious group (1.29) and also participated more in the religious activities (3.49). The findings imply that the respondents' connections with formal organizations in the study area is low, and this may limit their access to help for improved livelihood diversification from external interventions.

**Table 3: Distribution of Respondents' by Social Capital Worth**

Social Capital Categories	A Lot	More Than Average	Average	Less Than Average	A Few	Mean
<b>How Do You Relate with the Number of People In Each of the Following Six Categories</b>						
You family members and Your relatives	63.2	25.1	6.5	0.9	4.3	4.42
People in your neighborhood	25.1	32.5	19.9	10.4	12.1	3.76
Your friends	26.0	33.8	19.5	11.7	9.1	3.48
Co-workers	16.5	27.7	29.4	11.7	14.7	3.56
Occupational/professional groups	10.4	28.1	33.8	9.5	18.2	3.20
Country fellow/old classmates	7.8	26.0	30.7	16.5	19.0	3.03
<b>With How Many of These Do You Still Maintain A Very Good Contact</b>						
Country fellow/old classmates	All	Most	Some	A Few	None	
Country fellow/old classmates	8.7	19.0	18.6	20.3	33.3	2.87
<b>How Many of These People Do You Trust</b>						
Your family members and Your relatives	24.2	36.4	26.8	8.2	4.3	4.33
People in your neighborhood	18.6	37.2	22.9	13.9	7.4	3.46
Your friends	20.8	35.9	22.9	9.5	10.8	3.46
Co-workers	16.5	29.4	26.8	13.4	13.9	3.21
Occupational/professional group	7.8	29.0	33.8	14.7	14.7	3.00
Country fellow/old classmates	5.2	22.1	27.7	24.7	20.3	2.67
<b>How Many Will Definitely Help You Upon Your Request</b>						
Your family members and relatives	48.5	24.2	6.5	9.1	11.7	3.93
People in your neighborhood	5.2	29.0	25.5	20.3	19.9	3.16
Your friends	8.2	30.3	21.6	16.0	23.8	3.18
Co-workers	3.9	22.1	26.4	21.2	26.4	2.94
Occupational/professional group	2.2	19.9	25.1	23.8	29.0	2.48
Country fellow/old classmates	6.1	12.1	18.6	28.6	34.6	2.49
<b>How Many Possess the Following Assets</b>						
Certain political power	10.8	23.4	39.4	18.2	8.2	3.10
Wealth or owners of an enterprise or a company	5.2	15.2	37.2	33.3	9.1	2.74

Broad connection with others	3.5	18.6	38.5	18.6	3.5	2.74
Influential	3.9	17.3	31.6	32.5	14.7	2.63
With high level of education	3.0	14.7	29.4	14.7	3.0	2.46
<b>How Do You Relate with the Number of the Following Types of Organization</b>	<b>A Lot</b>	<b>More Than Average</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Less Than Average</b>	<b>A Few</b>	
Governmental	11.3	27.3	35.5	14.7	11.3	1.14
Political	6.5	21.6	37.7	23.8	10.4	1.06
Social (youth, women, village committee)	12.6	26.4	32.5	20.3	8.2	1.13
Religious	27.3	27.7	23.8	10.4	10.8	1.29
Games/sports	5.2	17.3	20.8	19.0	37.7	1.28
<b>Do You Participate in the Activities of How Many of Each of These Groups</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>More Than Average</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>A Few</b>	<b>None</b>	
Governmental	8.7	27.7	33.3	15.2	15.2	3.00
Political	6.1	20.3	33.3	29.9	10.0	2.83
Social (youth, women, village committee,	10.0	33.3	30.7	19.0	6.9	3.20
Religious	27.3	29.9	17.3	15.6	10.0	3.49
Games/sports	7.4	15.2	21.6	17.7	38.1	2.36
<b>Among Each of the two Types of Groups and Organizations, How Many will Help you Upon your Request?</b>						
Governmental/	7.8	29.0	29.9	15.6	17.7	2.93
Political	5.2	19.0	32.9	29.0	13.9	2.73
Social (youth, women, village committee,	9.5	33.3	22.5	19.5	15.2	3.03
Religious	26.8	27.3	18.2	15.6	12.1	3.41
Games/sports	5.6	13.4	18.6	16.9	45.5	2.17

Source: Field survey, 2014

### Benefit Derived from Participating in Social Networking

Table 4 presents the benefits derived from participating in social networking by the respondents, the result shows that 43.3% of the respondents benefited from all season livelihoods as a result of their participation in social networking. The implication of this is that respondents in the study area were able to carry out their livelihood activities throughout the seasons, 42.9 percent reported that their participation in social networking has enabled them to source for credit facilities frequently. Also, the study revealed that 39.4 percent and 37.2 percent respectively of the respondents reported that security and recognition in the society were derived from participating in social networking. The implication of this is that mutual trust will be enhanced among rural dwellers which will further foster a sense of belonging.

**Table 4: Distribution of Respondent' by Benefit Derived from Participating in Social Networking**

Benefits Derived From Participation in Social Networking	Happens all the Times	Almost Every Time	Rarely Happens	Never Happens	Mean	Rank
All Season livelihood	43.3	27.3	15.6	13.9	2.00	1 <sup>st</sup>
Credit sources for my livelihood activities	15.6	42.9	21.6	19.9	1.55	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Recognition in the society	19.5	37.2	21.2	22.1	1.54	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Man-power development	14.3	34.6	21.2	29.9	1.33	12 <sup>th</sup>

Access to improved farm technologies	14.3	30.0	24.7	30.0	1.28	14 <sup>th</sup>
Joint marketing of agricultural produce	13.4	29.4	25.5	31.6	1.25	15 <sup>th</sup>
Controlled pricing	16.9	32.0	21.2	29.9	1.36	10 <sup>th</sup>
Ensured market for produce	16.9	26.0	22.1	35.1	1.25	15 <sup>th</sup>
Access to cheap labour	16.5	33.3	18.2	32.0	1.34	11 <sup>th</sup>
Assistance in cash	23.4	23.8	39.4	23.4	1.43	9 <sup>th</sup>
Assistance in kind	17.7	37.2	20.3	24.7	1.48	4 <sup>th</sup>
Collective purchase of agricultural inputs at reduced cost	10.4	30.3	29.9	29.4	1.22	18 <sup>th</sup>
Source of security	16.5	39.4	19.0	25.1	1.47	5 <sup>th</sup>
Sense of satisfaction	19.9	35.1	14.7	30.3	1.45	6 <sup>th</sup>
Supports in case of enterprise failure	10.4	35.1	20.8	33.8	1.22	18 <sup>th</sup>
Shared labour	16.9	34.2	24.7	24.2	1.44	8 <sup>th</sup>
Attraction of attention of government agents	11.3	32.9	29.0	26.8	1.29	13 <sup>th</sup>
Expansion of enterprise	10.4	28.1	29.9	31.6	1.17	20 <sup>th</sup>
Source of motivation	16.9	25.5	24.2	34.2	1.23	17 <sup>th</sup>
Ease of access to agric. machineries and other agro-inputs	14.3	24.2	26.0	35.5	1.17	20 <sup>th</sup>
Improvement in my farming and other livelihood activities	16.0	39.8	16.9	27.3	1.45	6 <sup>th</sup>

Source: Field survey, 2014

## Hypotheses Testing

### Relationship between respondents' socio-economic characteristics and social capital worth

Relationship between respondents' selected socio-economic characteristics and the social capital worth were tested. The results reveals that level of education ( $\chi^2 = 29.107$ ) and religion ( $\chi^2 = 7.322$ ) had significant relationship with respondents social capital worth. Education provides opportunities to get associated with a wide range of people from different ethnic, cultural, professional and educational background. This study justifies this position as education enhances respondents' levels of social capital networking. Significant relationship between respondents' religion and level of social capital worth establishes that religion is an important factor connecting people.

**Table 6: Summary of Chi-Square Result Showing the Relationship Between Respondents' Selected Socio-Economic Characteristics and Social Capital Worth**

Variables	$\chi^2$ -Value	DF	P-Value	Remark
Sex	2.475	1	0.116	Not significant
Marital status	1.214	3	0.750	Not significant
Level of education	29.107	6	0.00	Significant
Religion	7.322	2	0.026	Significant

Source: Field survey, 2014

## Hypothesis Testing

The study further tested for the relationship between each of respondents' age, household size and length of stay,



all of which were measured at interval level. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was employed. The study reveals that age ( $r = 0.165$ ) and household size ( $r = 0.257$ ) have significant relationship with respondents' social capital worth in the study area. This suggests that the old age provides opportunities for networking, with different categories of people who are of benefits to the households. Also, larger households provide greater chance for social capital networking thereby ensuring improved and sustained livelihood in the study area.

**Table 7: Summary of PPMC Result Showing the Relationship between Respondents Selected Socio-Economic Characteristics and Social Capital Worth**

Variables	R-Value	P Value	Remark
Age	0.165**	0.012	Significant
Household size	0.257***	0.000	Significant
Length of stay	0.157	0.217	Not significant

\*\* = Significant at 5% level

\*\*\* = Significant at 1% level

Source: Field survey, 2014

**Relationship between Respondents Level of Benefits Derived From Social Capital with Social Capital Worth and Livelihood Diversification**

The result in Table 12 shows that the benefits derived from social networking have significant relationship ( $r = 0.356$ ) with their social capital worth. This finding implies that the benefits derived from participating in social networking was the motivating force for their participation.

**Table 12: Relationship between Respondents Level of Benefits Derived From Social Networking with Social Capital Worth and Livelihood Diversification**

Variables	R-Value	P Value	Remark
Benefits and livelihood Diversification.	-0.066	0.318	Not Significant
Benefits and social capital worth.	0.356**	0.000	Significant

\*\*= Significant at 5% level

Field survey, 2014

**CONCLUSIONS**

The study concludes that rural dwellers in the study area were in their prime age, and therefore active and capable of all season livelihood diversification. The results of finding also reveal that a large number of respondents have spousal supports in performing their various livelihood activities, and sometimes, they may also rely on family members for labour as the average family size was large enough to support household livelihood activities. The involvement of the respondents in the various livelihood activities in both seasons attests to the fact that rural households diversified their activities and are involved in more than one livelihood activity throughout the year. The study further concludes that respondents trusted and depended on family members for help in terms of needs, as their social network was stronger with their immediate neighbours, family members and friends compared with others. The benefits derived from social networking were such that would bring about mutual trust among rural dwellers which would further foster a sense of belonging. Therefore, the study recommends that rural dwellers should be enlightened more about the importance of social capitals and the use of existing local groups for livelihood related interventions by NGOs and government should be encouraged as this will help the intended target to derive more benefits and thereby enhancing their livelihood for improved living standard.

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