

Uplifting the Socioeconomic Life of Rural People through the Provision of Credit facilities and Entrepreneurship Development: The Role of CUSO International

Ojong-Ejoh Mary Uyilowhma, Bassey Antigha Okon and Angioha Pius Unim
University of Calabar, Nigeria

The study examines the correlation between Canadian University Student Oversea International credit facilities, entrepreneurship development programme and the socio-economic life of rural people in Southern Senatorial District. Adopting the survey research method, data was collected from 400 participants from a population of 3847 beneficiaries of the various CUSO programs in Southern Cross River State, using a structured questionnaire. The participants were selected using proportional stratified and accidental sampling technique. Elicited data was analyzed using descriptive statistics before the result was then subjected to correlation analysis at 0.05 confidence level. The descriptive analysis revealed that all the participants, 371 (100.00%), were beneficiaries. 335 (90.30%) participants reported that their socioeconomic status has improved since they benefitted from the CUSO microcredit scheme. 352 (94.88) participants reported that they were beneficiaries of the CUSO entrepreneurship program. 346 (93.3%) reported that the entrepreneurship development program has helped improved their employment status. From the parametric statistics carried out, it was discovered that there was a statistically significant correlation ($r(369) = 0.113$; $p < 0.05$) between CUSO credit facilities and the Socioeconomic life of rural people. The result also revealed a statistically significant relationship between CUSO international entrepreneurship development programme and the Socioeconomic life of rural people. The study thereby calls for an expansion in the number of beneficiaries of the CUSO program. .

Keyword: CUSO International, credit facilities, entrepreneurship development, Socioeconomic life, Rural people

It has been acknowledged by social scientist and scholars globally that rural communities play an essential role in every society (Mathew, Osabohein, Ogumlusi & Edafe, 2019; Ogundipe, Ogunniyi, Olagunju & Asaley, 2019). Rural areas are the base source of food and fibre production

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Mrs Ojong-Ejoh, Mary Uyilowhma, Graduate Student, Department of Sociology, University of Calabar, Nigeria, Email: uyiejoh@gmail.com

Contribution of Authors:

1. Ojong-Ejoh, M. U. Conceptualized the study, wrote introduction, Literature Review and recommendation.
2. Bassey, A. O.: Methodology, Data collection and conclusion
3. Angioha, P. U.: Data collection, and interpretation

that supply all aspects of society. They are also the source of any nation's capital formation and a significant market for manufacturers (Olatunbosun, 1975). Despite their importance in any nation's sustainability, rural areas are the least developed, lacking social and economic infrastructures such as good roads, electricity supply, sound health system, good water supply. Nigeria is predominantly rural, with 48 per cent of the nation's total population live in rural communities (World Bank, 2019). Rural Nigeria is very underdeveloped with widespread poverty, increasing unemployment, growing population, glaring social and economic inequality resulting from stagnation in the economic development and government neglect (Oloruntoba, Folarin & Ayede, 2014; Angioha, Nwagboso, Ironbar, & Ishie, 2018). The poverty in rural Nigeria is not just attributed to its financial incapacitation due to low income, but also as a result of a high rate of illiteracy, ill-health and other social and economic deprivation (Egye & Muhammed, 2015). A person is 65 per cent more likely to remain poor if he resides in a rural area of lack of business idea, lack of incentives in the form of credit facilities, absence of social and economic infrastructures such as lack of pipe-borne water, good roads, electricity and quality healthcare (Ukwayi, Angioha & Ojong-Ejoh, 2018; Ojong-Ejoh, Iji & Angioha, 2019; Iji, Ojong & Angioha, 2018).

Southern Cross River State is largely rural and, like other rural areas, suffers social and economic deprivation that finds its origin in stagnation and often regression of rural life's economy. Several factors have been attributed to the underdevelopment and poverty rate in Southern Cross River State, despite the area been endowed with rich and diverse natural resources. Agricultural produce such as cassava, yam, plantain, banana, maize, rice being produced in large quantity in the area yearly, but yet the people still strive to survive (Eteng & Agbor. 2006; Omang, Liu, Wang, Eneji, Makundi & Eneji, 2011; Okoi & Omang, 2018; Ndem, Angioha & Dike, 2020; Ibiam, Bekomson & Angioha, 2020).

Various attempts have been made by development planners and the government overtime to find a solution to the underdevelopment and poverty of rural area in Southern and other parts of Cross River State, Nigeria (Ering, Otu & Archibong, 2014). These attempts though commendable, have failed to achieve much success or stem the tide of rural migration. Some of these programs include the Cross River State Commercial Agriculture Development Project (CR-CADP), National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) etc. Development scientists have attributed these policies and programs' failures to the fact that these policies do not involve the rural people in the decision-making and implementation of the policies. Decisions on these projects are taken at the federal level to restructure existing structures without taking into cognizance the needs of the ordinary rural people (Ering, Otu & Archibong, 2014; Iji, Ojong & Angioha, 2018; Okafor, Ezeaku & Ugwuegbu, 2016). Development scientist considers those past projects and programs as elitist and bourgeois, failing to improve rural peasants' socio-economic life, instead, creating wealth for a few in power at the expense of those it was meant for (Ering, Otu & Archibong, 2004).

Donor agencies, social scientist and development experts have in recent time maintained that any program meant for the rural people must involve them at every stage of the program (Ering,

Otu & Archibong, 2014; Ndem, Angioha & Dike, 2020). Hence, donor agencies and other development organizations have been carrying out projects that consider ordinary rural people's need. One of those agencies is the Canadian university service oversea (CUSO) International. CUSO International, with its partners, has been involved in activities geared towards creating lasting economic opportunities for the vulnerable poor, especially those in rural communities. In Southern Cross River State, Cuso programs YouLead project and Enterprise Development project was designed to promote youth employment and enterprise development with the aid of natural resources of the state such as agriculture, aquaculture, forestry and renewable energy (CUSO Annual Report, 2020). This project is a five-year project able to train and empower 10,416 youth (Cuso annual report 2020). This study attempts to assess the impact of the Cuso international program credit facilities, entrepreneurship development programme and the socioeconomic life of rural people in Southern Cross River State, Nigeria.

Theoretical Foundation

The integrated Rural Development approach is adopted for this study. Associated with the works of Abasiokong in 1981 and developed as a result of the failures of past development efforts based on economic cause-effect relationship popularly known as the bottom-top approach, which marginalized the masses (Abasiokong, 1981; Hallet, 1996). The integrated rural development model emphasises the involvement of the rural poor or the marginalized in being part of the development process. The model stresses the inclusion of the rural poor in the development, planning and execution of development programs. It sees development as a holistic and comprehensive strategy that involves improving the entire rural economy (Akanji, 2006). It emphasizes that rural development efforts need to be broadened by mobilizing and better utilizing natural and human resource through the provision of innovational and purchasing power, which a better distribution of income should do, employment opportunity, creating a closer link between agriculture and other sectors of the rural economy, and improving the standard of living through the provision of infrastructures (Hallet, 1996). The model holds that this can be achieved through a partnership between the government, donor agencies and rural people (Akanji, 2006).

The model is applicable as it explains the socio-economic issues discussed and emphasize the direction of the study. The model emphasizes that development policies and strategies should be multidimensional, covering the provision of improved services, creating income generation opportunities through capacity building, and improved provision of social infrastructures such as healthcare, educational facilities, and modern agricultural technology. CUSO International aims to help provide a change in rural areas by helping the poor in rural communities improve entrepreneurship capacity, invest more in themselves, earn a good income, and contribute to society's general development.

Review of Related Literature

The potentials of donor agencies such as CUSO International as an effective agent of socioeconomic wellbeing of the rural poor have been studied by various scholars (Iji, Ojong, & Angioha, 2018; Akanmi, Salisu, Fasina & Okunubi, 2019; Wakili, 2014). Wakili (2014) examined the

impact of Local Empowerment and Environmental Management Programme (LEEMP) on beneficiaries' socioeconomic status. Data was collected using both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods from 9 local government areas in Adamawa State. Collected data were analyzed using the descriptive and inferential statistic. Findings revealed that LEEMP programs such as water supply, education, health, and roads significantly positively impact beneficiaries' quality of life. Akanmi, Salisu, Fasina, and Okunubi (2019) assessed the effect of LEEMP on poverty alleviation in Oyo state, Nigeria. Needed data was elicited using survey questionnaire and interview guide. Data elicited from participants was analyzed using descriptive and parametric (correlation) statistics. Result revealed that LEEMP significantly correlates with poverty alleviation. Onugu and Onyekachi (2015) examined the impact of Lift Against Poverty Organization (LAPO) as an agent to poverty alleviation using data collected from five LAPO branches using quantitative method of data collection, result revealed that LAPO service was incline to poverty alleviation.

Wahab, Bunyau and Islam (2017) examined the Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia micro-credit scheme and its relationship with communities' wellbeing. Adopting the survey method, data was collected from 277 microcredit beneficiaries using a pretested interview schedule. Findings from the analysis revealed that the AIM micro-credit scheme successfully improved the living standard of beneficiaries. Zaidi (2017) assessed the correlation between Akhuwat foundation micro-credit scheme on the socio-economic conditions of beneficiaries. Quantitative data was collected based on the impact of the credit scheme on food security, housing schemes, poverty status, expenditure and monthly income. Findings from the descriptive data analyzed revealed a significant correlation with the improved standard of living of beneficiaries. Gichuru, Ojha, Smith, Symth and Szathowski (2019) examined the impact of microcredit on children nutrition, women empowerment, and contraceptive use in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, data was collected from a secondary review of studies on microcredits between 1990 and 2018. A meta-analysis carried out using STRATA revealed a correlation between microcredit and improved child nutrition, increased contraceptive use and positive women empowerment. Dzini and Obeng (2013) assessed the relationship between microcredit scheme and socio-economic wellbeing of women entrepreneurs in Ghana. Data was collected from 840 women beneficiaries of microcredit using a structured questionnaire, while an interview was conducted on 35 women. The result of the analysis revealed a correlation between microcredit and the expansion of women businesses. Iji, Ojong, and Angioha (2018) examined the correlation between microcredit schemes and poverty reduction in southern Cross River State, Nigeria. Data was collected from 400 participants selected from Southern Cross River using purposive and stratified sampling technique. Collected data were analyzed using simple lineal regression. Result revealed that microcredit scheme significantly correlates with the reduction of poverty.

Tende (2014) assessed the impact of government entrepreneurship programs on employment creation capacity in Nigeria. Data was collected from 1,159 beneficiaries selected from Nigeria's six geo-political zones using a structured questionnaire. The result from the analyzed data revealed that the government-owned entrepreneurship development programme does not necessarily create job opportunities because the beneficiaries do not derive maximum satisfaction

from the program. Akhuemonkhan, Raimi and Sofoluwe (2013) assessed the impact of entrepreneurship education on employment stimulation in Nigeria. Data was collected using quantitative method and analyzed using multiple regression model. Result revealed that entrepreneurship development significantly impacts on employment creation. Lateh, Hussain and Bin Abdullah (2018) Examined the linkage between social entrepreneurship development and poverty alleviation. Data was gathered from a review of from related studies carried out by scholars on the topic. The result from the review revealed that social entrepreneurship development is a tool for poverty reduction and employment

Method

Study Settings

Southern Senatorial District., found in the Southern part of Cross River State, Comprises of Seven Local Government Areas. Also Known as the Greater Calabar, the senatorial district covers an area of 4444 square kilometres, and with headquarters at Calabar, the Local Government is bounded by the Republic of Cameroun to the East, to the South by Akwa Ibom State and the Atlantic Ocean, Abia state to the West and Yakurr to the North. According to the National Population Census of 2006, the population of Southern Senatorial District stands at 1,590,200, accounting for 41.13 per cent of the entire population of Cross River State (National Population Commission, 2006). The original inhabitants of the Southern Senatorial District were the Efiks, Quas, Ekoi and Ejagham. They all share ethnic affinities, which are evident in their dress pattern, food, history and religion and cultural practices (Ojong-Ejoh, Angioha, Agba, Aniah, Salimon, & Akintola, 2021; Omang, Angioha, Ojong-Ejoh, & Abang, 2020). Apart from Calabar Municipal council and some parts of Calabar South, Southern Senatorial District is mostly rural, with most people engaging in agriculture as a source of livelihood. Because of the high rate of poverty in the Senatorial District, it plays host to several Non-Governmental Agencies such as FHI360, Pathfinder, CUSO International, DIN (Development in Nigeria), Concern Universal etc.

Research Method

The survey research method was adopted for the study, allowing a researcher to collect data from a particular population about their attitude, characteristics, beliefs etc. that are hitherto difficult to measure using observational methods at a meager cost. In using the survey, the quantitative method was used in eliciting data from the population under study. The quantitative data were collected using a self-developed semi-structured questionnaire developed to allow the participants to answer to a degree of agreement. The instrument was a 12-point instrument.

Participants

From data provided by the CUSO international, 3847 individuals have benefitted from their programme in Southern Cross River State. 400 participants were used for the study. The Taro Yamane Sample determinant technique was used in selecting the 400 participants. The computation is presented below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = Sample size

N = Total population

e = Error limits (0.04) on the basis of 95 per cent confidence level).

Therefore:

$$n = \frac{3847}{1 + \frac{3847(0.05)^2}{3847}}$$

$$n = \frac{3847 \times 0.0025}{3847}$$

$$n = \frac{6.1568}{3847}$$

$$n = 400$$

The four hundred participants were individuals who had benefited from Cuso international programmes and resides in the Southern Cross River State, Nigeria. To select the participants for the study. The proportional, cluster and accidental sampling was used. Southern Cross River was divided into seven clusters. These seven clusters were according to the Local Government Areas. The Clusters are; one represents Akpabuyo, two represents Akampka, three represents Bakassi, four represents Biase, five represents Odukpani, six represents Calabar Municipality and seven represents Calabar South. The proportional sampling was then used to select the sample from each local government area that is proportional to the sample size that is used for the study. A table showing the selection process is highlighted in table 1 below. The researcher then used the accidental sampling technique to select the needed sample from beneficiaries of each local government area. The researcher was able to get a list of each beneficiary from the office of CUSO according to the local government area. From this list, the researcher numbered each of the beneficiaries and then picks every 6th name on the list until the researcher was able to get the required number.

Table 1

Showing the Sampling Process Using Proportional Stratified Sampling

S/N	Local Government	No of Beneficiaries	Prop. of sample (n)	Sample Size (N)
1	Akamkpa	497	0.16	65
2	Akpabuyo	556	0.12	47
3	Bakassi	420	0.11	42
4	Biase	520	0.13	50
5	Calabar Municipal	736	0.12	48
6	Calabar South	714	0.24	95
7	Odukpani	406	0.13	53
	Total	3847	Σn=	ΣN=400

Source: Field Work 2020

Ethical Consideration

All research ethical process was followed in this study. A letter of approval was obtained from the Department of Sociology, University of Calabar for the study to be carried. A letter of introduction was also sent to the organisation, CUSO for ethical clearance for the researchers to carry out the study, which was duly approved. The researcher also attached a consent letter to the instrument of data collection which supported the verbal consent given by the participants.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

Data collection was for 7 months because of the nature of the research and participants. The researchers employed the aid of three (3) research assistants to collect data from the field. These research assistants were trained on the data collection process and the required ethics of social research. Data elicited from the participants were coded appropriately and then analysed using appropriate descriptive statistics such as tables, frequency distribution, and simple per centage before the results were then subjected to parametric (correlation) statistics at 0.05 confidence level. Out of the four hundred instruments distributed, only 371 instruments returned and used for the study.

Description of Variables

- (i) Assess the correlation between CUSO Credit Facilities and the Socioeconomic life of rural People in Southern Cross River State, Nigeria
- (ii) Examine the relationship between the CUSO entrepreneurship development programmes and the Socioeconomic life of rural People in Southern Cross River State, Nigeria

Results

Descriptive analysis of Results

The results were analysed according to the specific objectives of the study. The first objective was to assess the correlation between CUSO Credit Facilities and the Socioeconomic life of rural people. Tables, graph, frequency distribution and percentages was used to analyse the data before the result obtained was subjected to parametric (correlation) statistics.

Table 2

Responses on CUSO Credit Facilities

S/N	Statement	Yes	No
1	you benefitted from the credit facilities provided by CUSO	371 (100.00)	
2	Was the credit facility enough for the business you put in for	263 (70.89)	108 (29.11)
3	Has the credit improved your socioeconomic status	335 (90.30)	36 (9.70)

*percentage were written in parenthesis

Source: field report 2020

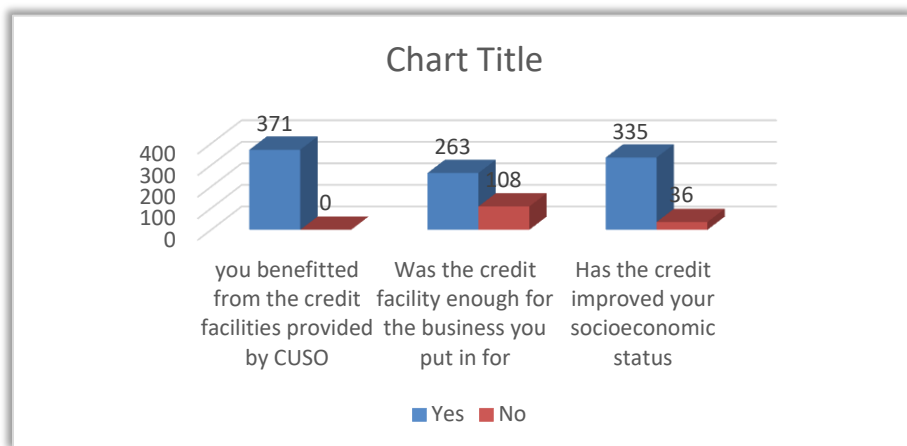


Figure 1: Graphical Illustration of Response on CUSO micro-credit Facilities
Source: field report 2020

Table 3

Responses on CUSO Credit Facilities

Statement	Very useful		Somewhat useful		Not useful	
How useful is the credit facility you received	101	(27.2)	202	(54.4)	68	(18.3)
How useful is the credit facility in helping you achieve your employment or business goals?	142	(38.3)	135	(36.4)	94	(25.3)
I have been able to be an employer of labour with the credit facility given to me	43	(11.6)	313	(84.4)	15	(4.0)
Did the credit facility help you expand your business/farm	96	(25.9)	201	(54.2)	74	(19.9)

*percentage were written in parenthesis

Source: field report 2020

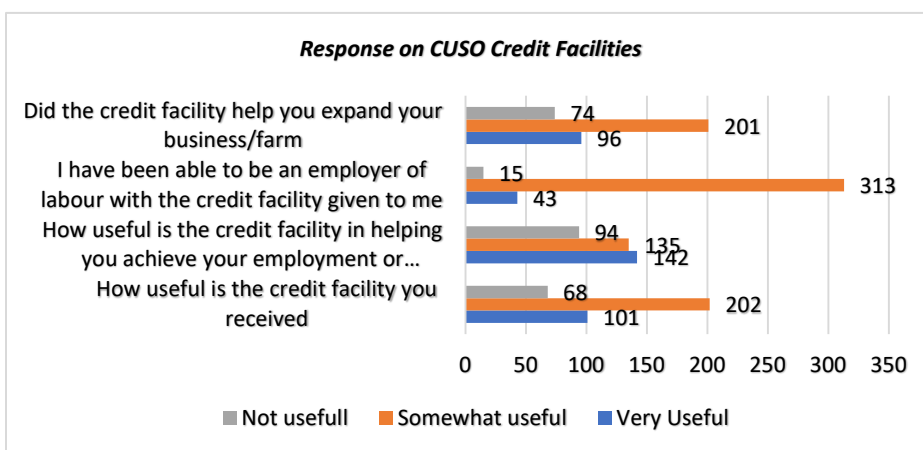


Figure 2: Graphical Illustration of Response on CUSO micro-credit Facilities
Source: field report 2020

Descriptive analysis according to the response of the respondents revealed thus; on you benefitted from the credit facilities provided by CUSO; all the participants 371 (100.00 per cent%) of the respondent reported Yes. On was the credit facility enough for the business you put in for; 263 (70.89%) participants reported Yes and 108 (29.11%) participants reported No. On has the credit improved your socioeconomic status; 335 (90.30%) participants reported Yes, while 36 (9.70%) participants reported No. On how useful is the credit facility you received; 101 (27.2%) participants reported Very useful, 202 (54.4%) participants reported somewhat useful and 68 (18.3%) reported not Useful. On how useful is the credit facility in helping you achieve your employment or business goals? 142 (38.3%) participants reported very useful, 135 (36.4%) reported somewhat useful and 94 (25.3%) reported not useful. On I have been able to be an employer of labour with the credit facility given to me; 43 (11.6%) participants reported very useful, 313 (84.4%) reported somewhat useful and 15 (4.0%) reported not useful. On did the credit facility help you expand your business/farm; 96 (25.9%) participants reported very useful, 201 (54.2%) reported somewhat useful and 74 (19.9%) reported not useful.

The second objective was to investigate the correlates between the CUSO entrepreneurship development programmes and the Socioeconomic life of rural people. Tables, graph, frequency distribution and percentages was used to analyse the data before the result obtained was subjected to parametric (correlation) statistics.

Table 4

Responses to CUSO international program in terms of entrepreneurship development

S/N	Statement	Yes	No
1	Were you part of CUSO entrepreneurship development program	352 (94.88)	19 (5.12)

**percentage were written in parenthesis*

Source: fieldwork 2020



Figure 3: Graphical Illustration of Response on CUSO micro-credit Facilities

Source: field report 2020

Table 5

Responses to activities of CUSO international in terms of entrepreneurship development

S/N	Statements	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Not useful
2	Was the entrepreneurship training useful in improving your chances of getting your current employment?	146 (39.4)	200 (53.9)	25 (6.7)

3	Have your earnings increased since after your entrepreneurship training	95	(25.6)	206	(55.5)	70	(18.8)
4	After your enrolment in the entrepreneurship training, how usefulness have you become	37	(10.0)	300	(80.8)	34	(9.1)
5	The CUSO entrepreneurship is useful in the development of small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs)?	7	(1.9)	349	(94.1)	15	(4.0)

*percentage were written in parenthesis

Source: fieldwork 2020

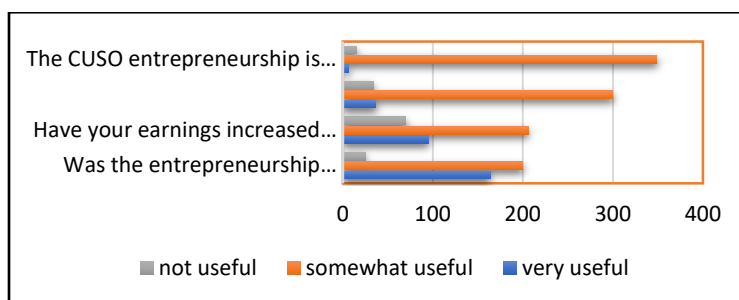


Figure 4: Graphical Illustration of Response on CUSO micro-credit Facilities
Source: field report 2020

Descriptive analysis according to the response of the respondents revealed thus; on Were you part of CUSO entrepreneurship development program; 352 (94.88) reported Yes and 19 (5.12) reported No. On Was the entrepreneurship training useful in improving your chances of getting your current employment? 146 (39.4) participants reported very useful, 200 (53.9) participants reported somewhat useful and 25 (6.7) reported Not useful. On Have your earnings increased since after your entrepreneurship training; 95 (25.6) participants reported Very useful, 206 (55.5) participants reported somewhat useful and 70 (18.8) reported not Useful. On After your enrolment in the entrepreneurship training, how usefulness has you become; 37 (10.0) participants reported very useful, 300 (80.8) reported somewhat useful and 34 (9.1) reported not useful. On the CUSO entrepreneurship is useful in the development of small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs); 7 (1.9) participants reported very useful, 349 (94.1) reported somewhat useful and 15 (4.0%) reported not useful.

Correlation Analysis

The first parametric statistics carried out was to examine the correlation between CUSO credit facilities and Socioeconomic life of rural People of Southern Cross River State, Nigeria. The independent variable here is CUSO credit facilities, this variable was measured continuously while the dependent variable is Socioeconomic life of rural people, and this variable was also measured continuously too. To analyze the data, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used at 0.05 level of significance and presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Pearson Product Moment Correlation of provision of credit facilities and Socioeconomic life of rural People

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-value	Sig.	R ²
CUSO Provision of credit facilities	371	8.21	1.91			
				0.113	.030*	0.012
Socioeconomic life of rural People	371	8.05	0.89			

**Significant at 0.05 level; df (369)*

Source: Field survey, 2020

The result presented in table 6 revealed a statistically significant of $r(369) = 0.113$; $p < 0.05$. the result revealed a calculated r-value of 0.113 that was greater than the critical r-value of 0.098, at 0.5 alpha (α) significant level. This implies there is a correlation between CUSO credit facilities and Socioeconomic life of rural People in Southern Cross River State. The correlation coefficient is a standardized measure of an observed effect, it is a commonly used measure of the size of an effect and R-values of ± 0.1 represent a small effect, ± 0.3 represent medium effect while ± 0.5 is a large effect.

The squared correlation $(0.113)^2$ that explains a measure of effect shows the amount of explained variance on the dependent variable. Therefore, 1.2% of the variance “Socioeconomic life of rural People” is accounted for by CUSO credit facilities. The size of the effect is small; this means that the CUSO international program in terms of provision of credit facilities correlates positively with Socioeconomic life of rural People in Southern Cross River State (this is because of the sign of the r-value). Therefore, an increase in CUSO credit facilities directly leads to an improvement in the Socioeconomic life of rural People in Southern Cross River State. Therefore, we can conclude CUSO credit facilities programmes significantly correlates with Socioeconomic life of rural People of Southern Cross River State, Nigeria.

The second analysis set out to analyze the relationship between CUSO entrepreneurship development programmes and the Socioeconomic life of rural People in Southern Cross River State, Nigeria. The independent variable here CUSO entrepreneurship development programmes, this variable was measured continuously while the dependent variable is Socioeconomic life of rural people, and this variable was also measured continuously too. Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient was used to carry out the analysis at 0.05 level of significance and the result is presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Pearson Product Moment Correlation of entrepreneurship development and Socioeconomic life of rural People

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-value	Sig.	R ²
entrepreneurship development	371	7.68	0.85			
				0.180	.000*	0.032
Socioeconomic life of rural People	371	8.05	0.89			

**Significant at 0.05 level; df = 369; Critical r-value = 0.098*

Source: Field survey, 2020

As presented in Table 4.9, the result was statistically significant $r(369) = 0.180$; $p < 0.05$. This was because the calculated r -value of 0.180 was greater than the critical r -value of 0.098, at 0.5 alpha (α) level of significance. This means that there is a significant relationship between CUSO entrepreneurship development programmes and Socioeconomic life of rural People in Southern Cross River State, Nigeria. The correlation coefficient is a standardized measure of an observed effect, it is a commonly used measure of the size of an effect and R -values of ± 0.1 represent a small effect, ± 0.3 represent medium effect while ± 0.5 is a large effect.

The squared correlation $(0.180)^2$ which is a measure of effect size indicates the proportion of explained variance on the dependent variable. Therefore, 3.2% of the variance in Socioeconomic life of rural People in Southern Cross River State is accounted for by CUSO entrepreneurship development programmes. The magnitude of the effect is small. Since the correlation is positive, (see the sign of the r -value) this means that the activity of CUSO entrepreneurship development programmes correlates positively with Socioeconomic life of rural People in Southern Cross River State. Therefore, an increase in activity of CUSO entrepreneurship development programmes will directly lead to an improvement in the Socioeconomic life of rural People in Southern Cross River State. The study therefore concludes that there was a statistical significant relationship between CUSO entrepreneurship development programmes and Socioeconomic life of rural People in Southern Cross River State.

Discussion

Result from the data gathered and analyzed revealed that that 193 (52.0%) participants were female while 178 (48.0%) were male. 197 (53.1%) participants were between 26-33 years, 158 (42.6%) participants were between 34 and 41 years, 9 (2.4%) were between 18 and 25 years, 7 (1.9%) were between 42 years plus. The average age of participants used for this study is 30 years. Collected data also revealed that 149 (40.2%) participants had secondary education, 215 (58.0%) had tertiary education while only 3 (0.8%) of the participants had primary education. out of the 371 participants used for this study, 212 (57.1%) were unemployed, 144 (38.8%) were self-employed/business owners, 8 (2.2%) were employed full-time, while 7 (1.9) were daily job workers.

from the descriptive analysis carried out on the first objective, the result revealed that all the participants, 100 per cent were beneficiaries of CUSO international Credit facilities. 70.89 per cent of the participants reported that the credit facilities provided by CUSO international were enough to startup the business they registered. 90.30 per cent of the participants reported that the credit facilities provided by CUSO has improved their socioeconomic status, 96.0 per cent of the participants reported that with their new business they have been able to employ people working for them. For those who had existing businesses, majority responded that the credit facilities provided were able to improve their existing businesses.

The result from the second objective revealed that 94.9 per cent of the participants reported they were part of CUSO entrepreneurship program. 93.3 per cent of the participants reported that the entrepreneurship program by CUSO helped in improving their chances of getting employed in one form or the other. 96.0 participants reported that the entrepreneurship program by CUSO has been useful in starting or improving their business in one way or the other.

Analysis was also carried out using Parametric (Pearson Product Moment Correlation) Analysis. from the first analysis result, there was a correlation between CUSO credit facilities and

Socioeconomic life of rural People in Southern Cross River State. This was because the calculated r -value of 0.113 was greater than the critical r -value of 0.098, at 0.5 alpha (α) level of significance. Also, the squared correlation $(0.113)^2$ which is a measure of effect size indicates the proportion of explained variance on the dependent variable. Therefore, 1.2% of the variance Socioeconomic life of rural People in Southern Cross River State is accounted for by CUSO international programs in terms of provision of credit facilities. we can conclude that there was a statistically significant correlation between CUSO credit facilities and Socioeconomic life of rural People of Southern Cross River State, Nigeria. The findings of Wahab, Bunyau and Islam (2017), Zaidi (2017), Gichuru, Ojha, Smith, Symth and Szathowski (2019) and Iji, Ojong, and Angioha (2018) supports this finding. Iji, Ojong, and Angioha (2018) study which examined the correlation between microcredit schemes and poverty reduction in southern Cross River State, Nigeria, found that microcredit scheme significantly correlates with the reduction of poverty. Gichuru, Ojha, Smith, Symth and Szathowski (2019) examined the impact of microcredit on children nutrition, women empowerment, and contraceptive use in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean. Meta-analysis analysis using STRATA revealed a correlation between microcredit and the improvement in child nutrition, increased contraceptive use and positive women empowerment. Zaidi (2017) study revealed that there is a significant correlation with the improved standard of living of beneficiaries.

Data from the second analysis revealed that there is a significant relationship between the activity of CUSO entrepreneurship development programmes Socioeconomic life of rural People in Southern Cross River State. This was because the calculated r -value of 0.180 was greater than the critical r -value of 0.098, at 0.5 alpha (α) level of significance. Also, the squared correlation $(0.180)^2$ which is a measure of effect size indicates the proportion of explained variance on the dependent variable. Thus, 3.2% of the variance in Socioeconomic life of rural People in Southern Cross River State is accounted for by CUSO entrepreneurship development. The study therefore concludes that there was statistical significant relationship between CUSO entrepreneurship development programs and Socioeconomic life of rural People in Southern Cross River State.

This study findings is supported by that of Tende (2014), Adofu and Akoji (2013), Lateh Hussain, and Bin Abdullah (2018) and Akhuemonkhan, Raimi and Sofoluwe (2013). Tende (2014) assessed the effect of entrepreneurship programmes by government on employment generation in Nigeria. The result from the analyzed data collected from showed that government-owned entrepreneurship development programme does not necessarily create job opportunity because the beneficiaries do not derive maximum satisfaction from the program. Adofu and Akoji (2013) in his study found that entrepreneurship skills help in the reduction of poverty.

Conclusion

This study has attempted to assess the impact of CUSO credit facilities and entrepreneurship development programmes on the socio-economic life of the rural people in southern Cross River state. Results from the analysis have revealed that Cuso programs correlates with the socio-economic life of people in southern cross river state. Hence, the study recommends that Cuso programs should be expanded to include more beneficiary households. This is because the current programs only cover a meagre per cent of households in the state. There is also a need for more capacity development programs to be introduced by other donor agencies to reduce the state of unemployment in Southern Cross River State.

Reference

- Abasiokong, E. M. (1981). *Integrated rural development in the Third World*. New York: Exposition Press
- Adofu, I. & Akoji, O. (2013). Alleviating poverty through the use of entrepreneurship skill acquisition in Kogi State, Nigeria. *International Open Journal of Economics*, 1, 14-23
- Akanji, O. O. (2006). Microfinance as a strategy for poverty reduction: a review of country's experiences of finance programme for the poor. In C. A. Nwigwe, B. T. Omonona & V. O. Okoronwa (eds.), *Australian Journal of Business and Management Research*, 2(4), 33-40.
- Akanmi, A. A., Salisu, U. O., Fasina, S. O. & Okunubi, S. A. (2019). An assessment of the local empowerment and environmental management programme (LEEMP) for poverty alleviation in Oyo State, Nigeria. *Environmental & Socio-economic Studies*, 7, 3: 38-53
- Akhuemonkhan, I. A., Raimi, L. & Sofoluwe, A. (2013). Entrepreneurship Education and Employment Stimulation in Nigeria. *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences*. 3(1); 55-79
- Angioha, P. U., Nwagboso, S. N., Ironbar, A. E. & Ishie, E. U. (2018). Underemployment: A Sociological and Policy Analysis of Workers Well-Being in Hospitality Industry in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 23(6), PP 57-66.
- CUSO Annual Report (2020). Annual Report 2019–2020 skills to share. Futures to build. https://cusointernational.org/wp-content/uploads/Cuso-AnnualReport-2019_2020.pdf
- Dzini, S. & Obeng, F. (2013). Microfinance and the Socio-economic Wellbeing of Women Entrepreneurs in Ghana. *International Journal of Business and Social Research (IJBSR)*, 3(11), 45-62
- Egye, A. U., & Muhammad, H. (2015). Analysis of poverty reduction strategies as mechanism for development in Nigeria from 1999-2014. *World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology*, 9(11), 3974–3978.
- Ering, S.O, Otu, J.E. & Archibong, E.P. (2014) "Rural development policies in Nigeria: A critical appraisal. *International Journal of Education and Research*.2 (9). Pp 308-320
- Eteng, F. O., & Agbor, U. I. (2006). Local governments and poverty reduction in cross river state. *Global Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(2), 123–128. <https://doi.org/10.4314/gjss.v5i2.22815>
- Gichuru, W., Ojha, S., Smith, S., Smyth, A. R., & Szatkowski, L. (2019). Is microfinance associated with changes in women's well-being and children's nutrition? A systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMJ open*, 9(1), e023658.
- Hallet, G. (1996). Development policy in subSaharan Africa after 15 years of structural adjustment. *American Rural Development Review*, 4(2). 22-24.
- Ibiam, A. A, Bekomson, E. M. & Angioha, P. U. (2020). Socio-Environmental Factors as Determinants of Social Wellbeing of Adolescents in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. *European Journal of Public Health Studies*, 1(2). <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3597522>
- Iji, M. E., Ojong, F. & Angioha, P. U. (2018). Microfinance Credit Programmes: Implications on Poverty Reduction in Southern Cross River State, Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* Volume 23, Issue 6, Ver. 6 (June. 2018) PP 38-45.
- Lateh, M., Hussai, M. D., & Bin Abdullah, M.S. (2018). Social Entrepreneurship Development and Poverty Alleviation. *Journal of Business and Management*, Vol. 2, 1-11.
- Mathew, O. A., Osabohien, R., Ogunlusi, T. O., & Edafe, O. (2019). Agriculture and social protection for poverty reduction in ECOWAS. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 6(1), 1682107. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2019.1682107>
- National Population Commission. (2006). Enumerators manual. Abuja: Government Printing Press.
- Ndem, M. A., Angioha, P. U. & Dike, E. (2020). Improving the Socio-Economic Wellbeing of Rural People: Analysis of the Impact of the Community and Social Development Project (CSDP) tn

- Odukpani Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. *Asian Journal of Applied Sciences*.8 (2), 88-94
- Ogundipe, A. A., Ogunniji, A., Olagunju, K. S., & Asaleye, A. J. (2019). Poverty and Income Inequality in Rural Agrarian Household of Southwestern Nigeria: The Gender Perspective. *The Open Agriculture Journal*, 13, 51-57. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2174/1874331501913010051>
- Ojong-Ejoh, M. U., Angioha, P. U., Agba, R. U., Aniah, E. A., Salimon, M. G., & Akintola, A. (2021). Operating SMEs in the Face of the Covid-19 Pandemic in Calabar. *Quantitative Economics and Management Studies*, 2(4), 272–280. <https://doi.org/10.35877/454RI.qems305>
- Okafor, I. G., Ezeaku, H. C. & Ugwuegbe S. (2016). Microcredit and poverty reduction: A case of Nigeria. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Information*, 1(1), 13-19.
- Okoi, N. O. & Omang, T. A. (2018). Empirical Analysis of Poverty and Well-Being of Rural Dwellers in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. *European Journal of Social Sciences Studies*. 3 (2), 126-137.
- Olatubosun, D. (1975). *Nigerian Neglected Rural Majority*. Ibadan; Oxford University Press.
- Oloruntoba, E. O., Folarin, T. B. & Ayede, A. I. (2014). Hygiene and sanitation risk factors of diarrhoeal disease among under-five children in Ibadan, Nigeria. *Afr Health Sci.*; 14:1001–11
- Omang, T., Liu, Y., Wang, Y., Eneji, R., Makundi, J., & Eneji, A. (2011). Impacts of Poverty Reduction Programmes in Nigeria: The Case of the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) in Cross River State. *Annals of Humanities and Development Studies* 2 (1), 33-50
- Omang, T.A., Angioha, P.U., Ojong-Ejoh, M.U. & Abang, T. (2020). COVID-19 Measures and the Exacerbation of Intimate Partner Violence in Calabar, *Ijo-International Journal Of Social Science And Humanities Research.*, 3(12)83-94
- Onugu, C.U. & Onyekachi C. (2015). Non-government organizations as agents of poverty eradication: The case of LAPO in Niger-Delta communities of Nigeria. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (Nigerian Chapter)*, 3(7), 7-20
- Tende, S. B. A. (2014). Government Initiatives Toward Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Business Research*. Vol. 8, No. 1. Page 109-120
- Ukwai, J. K., Angioha, P. U. & Ojong-Ejoh, M. U. (2018). Youth empowerment: A criminological approach for crime prevention and control in Cross River State, Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 22 (11), 73-81.
- Wahab, H. A., Bunyau, W. & Islam, M.R. (2017). Microcredit for rural poverty alleviation and social well-being: A study of Sabah, Malaysia. *Asian Social work and Policy Review*. 21(1), 4-16
- Wakili, F., (2014). Impact assessment of local empowerment and environmental management programme (LEEMP) projects in Adamawa State. *An Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, Geography Department, Modibbo Adama University of Technology, MAUTECH, Yola*
- World Bank (2019). Cross River State Commercial Agriculture Development Project (World Bank Assisted) Financial Statements at 31 December 2015
- Zaidi, H.H. (2017). Impact of microfinance on socio-economic conditions of the borrowers: A case study of Akhuwat foundation (Lahore). *European Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 6(2), 239-248