



**ANALYSIS OF SUBSIDY UTILIZATION AND PRODUCTIVITY AMONG MAIZE
FARMERS IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

The study analyses subsidy utilization and Productivity among maize farmers in Ekiti State. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select active 160 maize farmers using copies of well-structured questionnaires. Parametric tools such as Descriptive Statistics (DS) and Total Factor Productivity (TFP) model were used to analysis. The socioeconomic results reported that beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of subsidy had 75 years and 72.5 years of average age; 75% and 72.5% males; 7 years and 6 years of years of farming experience and 62.5% and 50% of extension services among others respectively. TFP results comparatively revealed the summary for the beneficiary and non-beneficiary groups; mean (1.89 and 0.99), standard deviation (1.96 and 0.59), and the minimum value (0.39 and 0.22) respectively. The quantile results for the beneficiary and beneficiary categories revealed that Q_1 (25%=0.99 and 0.58), Q_2 (50%=1.52 and 0.91) and Q_3 (75%=2.30 and 1.35) and the maximum of 17.09 and 3.56 respectively; revealing that the beneficiaries of subsidy among the maize farmers performed better productively than their non-beneficiary counterparts. The TFP result for the efficiency range indicated that in the high category of performance evaluation, the beneficiaries of subsidy among the maize farmers performed better. It was concluded that subsidy aids the performances of the maize farmers through price reduction that enhanced efficient resource allocation, and in turn, better performance. It was recommended that stakeholders in agriculture should make a vigorous effort towards creating subsidy awareness and make it accessible to all the maize farmers in the study area.

Keywords: Farmers, Maize Productivity, Subsidy and Utilization

INTRODUCTION

Agricultural subsidies are designed to reduce the cost of key inputs such as fertilizers, seeds, and pesticides, thereby making them more affordable to farmers. By enhancing input affordability, subsidies are intended to encourage the adoption of modern agricultural technologies, improve farm efficiency, and increase productivity (Nkonya *et al.*, 2016). The logic behind subsidy programs is that they help small-scale farmers overcome financial barriers, allowing them to access improved seeds and fertilizers that can boost yields and generate higher incomes (Dorward *et al.*, 2018). In addition to direct input subsidies, some programs offer credit schemes, insurance, and mechanization services, further supporting the agricultural value chain (World Bank, 2020). Ekiti State, located in the western region of Nigeria, is primarily an agrarian state with a significant portion of its population engaged in farming activities. The state is known for the production of staple crops such as maize, cassava, and cocoa, with maize being a key crop for both consumption and income generation (Adebayo and Oyetunde, 2019).

Maize production in the state, however, is hindered by a range of constraints, including high input costs, poor access to improved seed varieties, limited extension services, and market volatility (Olayemi *et al.*, 2020). These challenges often result in low yields, high production costs, and reduced profitability for small-scale maize farmers. Agricultural subsidies have the potential to mitigate some of these challenges by lowering the cost of inputs and promoting the use of more productive technologies. According to Ayinde *et al.* (2015), subsidies on fertilizers and improved seeds have been shown to significantly enhance maize productivity in other



regions of Nigeria. However, the extent to which these subsidies impact the productivity and income of small-scale farmers in Ekiti State has not been thoroughly examined. Given the critical role that maize plays in both food security and household incomes, understanding the specific effects of government subsidy programs in this context is essential for evidence-based policymaking (Olayemi *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, agricultural subsidies are not without their controversies. Critics argue that subsidies can lead to inefficiencies, such as over-reliance on government support, distortion of market prices, and misallocation of resources (Jayne and Rashid, 2013).

Additionally, corruption and bureaucratic delays in subsidy distribution often undermine the effectiveness of these programs, with intended beneficiaries frequently missing out on the benefits (Olomola and Nwafor, 2018). In Ekiti State, maize is a major staple crop that is widely cultivated by small-scale farmers. Maize production plays a significant role in the livelihoods of these farmers and contributes to local food security. However, the productivity of maize farming in Ekiti State remains low due to several constraints, including poor access to inputs, inadequate extension services, and fluctuating market prices (Olayemi *et al.*, 2020). Agricultural subsidies are expected to alleviate some of these challenges by reducing input costs and encouraging the adoption of improved farming practices (Ayinde *et al.*, 2015). Based on the forgoing, the following specific objectives are stated, to: (a) identify the socioeconomic characteristics of the maize farmers in the study area and (b) estimate the productivity of the maize farmers in the beneficiary and non-beneficiary maize farmers' categories.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Study Area

The study was conducted in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The state was created on the 1st of October 1996 with a total land area of 6,353Km². The State is blessed with 2,210,957 people, hence ranked 31st in Nigeria population (NPC 2006). The State has annual rainfall range between 2000 - 2400mm and consist of sixteen (16) Local Government Areas. It is located within south western part of Nigeria. It has indicating land surface with characteristics landscape that consist of old plants broken by top sided slopes. Temperature in the State ranges between 21-28°C with high humidity. Tropical forest exists in the south while guinea savannah occupies the northern part. The major occupation of people in the study area is farming while their major food crops are yam, cassava, plantain and maize with cash crop such as cocoa, oil palm etc.

Sampling technique

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed in the selection of respondents to be accessed and interviewed. The first stage involved the selection of two (2) local government area which are Ado- Ekiti and Moba local government. The second stage involved the random selection of two (2) communities from each of the two (2) local government forming four (4) communities which are Irasa and Ifesowapo in Ado-Ekiti and Otun- Ekiti and Ikun-Ekiti in Moba Local government. The third stage involved the use of snowballing selection of twenty (20) farmers from the four (4) communities who are subsidy beneficiaries making eighty (80) farmers and twenty (20) farmers from the four (4) communities who are non- beneficiaries of the subsidy which will also be eighty (80) farmers. In total, we have one hundred and sixty (160) respondents needed for the study.

Analytical Technique

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and to identify the conditions for benefiting subsidy among the respondents. Total

Factor Productivity (TFP) was used to estimate the productivity of individual small scale maize farmers.

Total Factor Productivity (TFP)

Productivity can be calculated by getting the Total factor productivity from Cobb-Douglas function (Manias, 2023)

$$\text{Function} = Y = A \times L^{\beta} \times K^{\alpha} \quad \dots(1)$$

Where;

Y = total production or output of the goods

A = total factor productivity. It is a positive constant and is used to show the change in output that is not the result of main production factors.

L = labour input, indicating the total number of labour that went into production

K = capital input, which shows the quantity of capital that was used during production

α = output elasticity of capital

β = output elasticity of labour.

Model Specification

Total Factor Productivity was used to estimate the level of productivity in the study area. The model can be expressed as:

$$TFP = \frac{Y_i}{\sum p_i x_i} \quad \dots(2)$$

Where;

TFP = Total factor productivity of i^{th} farmer; (1-n)

Y_i = Value of maize produced by the i^{th} farmer (N); (1-n)

P_i = Unit price of i^{th} variable input (N); (1-n)

X_i = Quality of the i^{th} variable input used; and (1-n)

Where X_1 = fertilizer, X_2 = Seeds, X_3 = Agrochemicals

$\sum$ = Summation

Tornqvist Equation

$$\ln \left(\frac{Q_t}{Q_{t-1}} \right) = \frac{1}{2} \sum_j (R_{j,t} + R_{j,t-1}) \ln \left(\frac{Q_{j,t}}{Q_{j,t-1}} \right) \quad \dots(3)$$

Input index

$$\ln \left(\frac{TFP_t}{TFP_{t-1}} \right) = \ln \left(\frac{Q_t}{Q_{t-1}} \right) - \ln \left(\frac{X_t}{X_{t-1}} \right) \quad \dots(4)$$

$$\ln \left(\frac{Q_t}{Q_{t-1}} \right) = \frac{1}{2} \sum_t (S_{i,t} + S_{i,t-1}) \ln \left(\frac{X_{i,t}}{X_{i,t-1}} \right) \quad \dots(5)$$

Where;

$R_{j,t}$ = the share of output (j) in total revenue in time (t)

$Q_{j,t}$ = the output (j) in time (t)

$S_{i,t}$ = the share of input (i) in total input cost; and

$X_{i,t}$ = the input (i) in time (t)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents

The results as shown in Table 1 showed that the highest number of beneficiaries (37.5%) and non-beneficiaries (35.0%) fell within the age bracket of 31–40 years while the least of 16.2% and 15% were recorded for the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries respectively. The mean age for the two categories of the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries was of 34.0% and 36.0% respectively. The result indicates that maize farming is dominated by young and middle-aged farmers who are still in their active and productive years. The result agrees with

Adepoju and Obayelu (2019), who reported that farmers in their thirties and forties are in their most active age in Nigerian agriculture.

Majority of the male beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of agricultural input subsidy were 75% and 72.5% respectively while their female counterparts who were beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries were in the respective proportions of 25.0% and 27.5%. This result suggests that maize production in the study area is male-dominated. This finding agrees with Olaoye (2014), who reported that men are more involved in staple crop farming in southwest Nigeria. The beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries married maize farmers formed the majority with 65.0% and 67.5%, respectively. The divorced, single and widowed in the two categories had close to or slightly higher than 20% maize farmers. It could be inferred from this result that the maize farmers in the study area are well cultured and traditionally inclined in terms of placing a high premium on marriage, probably for procreation which produces a larger household member for family labour or a show of being responsible.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Socio-economic Characteristics

Household Characteristics	Beneficiary		Non- beneficiary	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Age(years)	Mean= 34 years		Mean= 36 years	
≤30	15	18.8	20	25.0
31- 40	30	37.5	28	35.0
41 – 50	22	27.5	20	25.0
> 50	13	16.2	12	15.0
Sex				
Male	60	75.0	58	72.5
Female	20	25.0	22	27.5
Marital Status				
Single	18	22.5	15	18.8
Married	52	65.0	54	67.5
Widowed	5	6.2	6	7.5
Divorced	5	6.2	5	6.2
Level of Education				
NFE	16	20.0	20	25.0
Primary	32	40.0	29	36.3
Secondary	20	25.0	20	25.0
Tertiary	12	15.0	11	13.7
Farm Experience	Mean= 7 years		Mean= 6 years	
≤4	12	15.0	10	12.5
5 – 7	20	25.0	18	22.5
8 – 12	28	35.0	30	37.5
> 12	20	25.0	22	27.5
Household Size	Mean= 6 persons		Mean= 6 persons	
≤5	28	35.0	25	31.2
6 –10	42	52.5	45	56.3
10 – 15	10	12.5	10	12.5
Primary Occupation				
Farming	55	68.8	50	62.5
Trading	10	12.5	12	15.0
Civil Service	8	10.0	10	12.5
Artisan	7	8.7	8	10.0
Seasonal Income(₦)	Mean= ₦520,000		Mean= ₦410,000	
≤ 250,000	12	15.0	22	27.5
251,000 - 500,000	25	31.2	30	37.5
501,000 - 750,000	28	35.0	20	25.0
751,000 - 1,000,000	10	12.5	6	7.5
>1,000,000	5	6.3	2	2.5

Source: Field Survey (2025). NB: Number of Observation = 160



This outcome agrees with Adeoye (2020) who submitted that the basis for marriage among the farming households is the production of family labour in order to address the rural farm labour shortage that is occasioned by rural-urban drift.

The highest educational attainment among the beneficiaries was primary education (40.0%), while the least was tertiary education (15.0%). For non-beneficiaries, the highest was also primary education (36.3%), while the least was tertiary education (13.7%). However, the result revealed that the highest years of experience among beneficiaries were 8–12 years (35.0%) with an average of 7 years, while the least was less than or equal to 4 years (15.0%). For non-beneficiaries, the highest was also 8–12 years (37.5%) with an average of 6 years, while the least was less than or equal to 4 years (12.5%). The result showed that both categories had a relatively high farming experience, which implies that they possess practical knowledge of maize production. The result agrees with Akinola and Akintoye (2020) who noted that farming experience enhances farmers' decision-making and productivity. The highest household size among beneficiaries was 6–10 members (52.5%) with a mean of 6 persons, while the least was 10–15 members (12.5%). For non-beneficiaries, the highest was also 6–10 members (56.3%) with a mean of 7 persons, while the least was 10–15 members (12.5%). The result showed that most respondents had moderately large household sizes, which may serve as family labour for maize farming. The result agrees with Yusuf *et al.* (2022), who reported that household size contributes significantly to farm labour supply in small-scale farming systems.

The highest occupation among beneficiaries was farming (68.8%), while the least was artisan (8.7%). For non-beneficiaries, the highest was also farming (62.5%), while the least was artisan (10.0%). The result suggests that farming was the major occupation in the study area, which indicates the dependence of rural households on agriculture for livelihood. The findings agree with Ibrahim and Usman (2021) who found that the majority of rural households in Nigeria are engaged in farming as their main occupation. 62.5% of beneficiaries had access to extension services, while 37.5% did not. For non-beneficiaries, 50.0% had access while 50.0% did not.

The highest proportion of beneficiaries earned between ₦501,000 and ₦750,000 (35.0%) with an average income of ₦520,000, while the least earned above ₦1,000,000 (6.3%). For non-beneficiaries, the highest proportion earned between ₦251,000 and ₦500,000 (37.5%) with an average income of ₦410,000, while the least earned above ₦1,000,000 (2.5%). The result suggest that beneficiaries generally had higher seasonal income compared to non-beneficiaries, suggesting that subsidies may have positively influenced their productivity. The findings agree with Afolabi (2022) who stated that subsidy interventions improve farmers' income through reduced cost of production.

Conditions for Benefiting from Subsidy among the Respondents

Table 2 shows conditions for benefiting from subsidy among the respondents. The result revealed that the highest proportion of beneficiaries had farm sizes between 2.1–4.9 hectares (43.8%) with an average of 2.8 hectares, while the least had above 4.9 hectares (18.7%). For non-beneficiaries, the highest was less than or equal to 2 hectares (43.7%) with an average of 2.5 hectares, while the least was above 4.9 hectares (18.8%). The result showed that beneficiaries cultivated slightly larger farm sizes compared to non-beneficiaries, which may influence their productivity positively. The result agrees with Bello and Lawal (2021) who emphasized that farm size is a determinant of output among smallholder farmers.

The result revealed that 68.8% of beneficiaries belonged to associations, while 31.2% did not. For non-beneficiaries, 41.2% belonged to associations, while 58.8% did not. The results indicate that beneficiaries had higher participation in associations which may have facilitated their access to subsidies and improved practices. This finding agrees with Adepoju

et al. (2022) who noted that group membership enhances access to information, inputs, and government programs. The result revealed that 85.0% of beneficiaries were indigenes of the study area, while 15.0% were non-indigenes. For non-beneficiaries, 30.0% were indigenes, while 70.0% were non-indigenes. The result showed that being an indigene could have influenced access to subsidy programs, as most beneficiaries were natives of the area. The result agrees with Eze and Chukwu (2021) who observed that local farmers often have more access to community-based support and government programs compared to non-indigenes.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Conditions for Benefiting from Subsidy

Household Characteristics	Beneficiary		Non- beneficiary	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Farm Size (hectares)	Mean=2.8 hectares		Mean=2.8hectares	
≤ 2	30	37.5	35	43.7
2.1 – 4.9	35	43.8	30	37.5
> 4.9	15	18.7	15	18.8
Membership of Association				
No	25	31.2	47	58.8
Yes	55	68.8	33	41.2
Indigenous				
No	12	15.0	56	70.0
Yes	68	85.0	24	30.0

Source: Field Survey (2025). NB: Number of Observation = 160

Estimate the Productivity of the Respondents

The analysis in Table 3 compares total factor productivity (TFP) between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of subsidies, using 80 observations in each group. The findings highlight clear differences in both central tendency and variability. On average, beneficiaries record a significantly higher mean TFP (1.89) at 1% level of probability compared to non-beneficiaries (1.00). Similarly, the median TFP is greater among beneficiaries (1.52) than non-beneficiaries (0.91), indicating that typical beneficiary farms consistently outperform their counterparts. This suggests that subsidies may positively influence firm productivity levels. The distribution of productivity is more dispersed among beneficiaries. The standard deviation of their TFP (1.96) is over three times larger than that of non-beneficiaries (0.59). This pattern is reinforced by the interquartile ranges, which show that beneficiaries exhibit a wider spread between the 25th and 75th percentiles (0.99 to 2.30) compared to non-beneficiaries (0.58 to 1.35). These results suggest that while subsidies increase overall productivity, they also yield heterogeneous outcomes, with some firms benefiting disproportionately more than others. Examining the extremes further underscores this divergence. Beneficiaries exhibit a minimum TFP of 0.37 and a maximum of 17.09, with the latter representing an extreme outlier. In contrast, non-beneficiaries range from 0.22 to 3.56, a narrower and more modest span. The exceptionally high maximum value among beneficiary points to a small subset of firms that may have leveraged subsidies to achieve unusually high levels of efficiency.

Table 3: Summary of the TFP for Beneficiaries and Non-beneficiaries of Subsidy

Statistic	Beneficiary	Non-Beneficiary
Observations	80.00	80.00
Mean	1.89	0.99
Standard deviation	1.96	0.59
Minimum value	0.37	0.22
Q1 (25%)	0.99	0.58
Q2 (Median (50%))	1.52	0.91
Q3 (75%)	2.30	1.35
Maximum value	17.09	3.56
Paired Samples Test (df= 79; t = 3.953***)		

Source: Field Survey (2025).

Distribution by the Efficiency Range of the Farms

Table 4 presents the distribution of farms across different efficiency ranges, comparing subsidy beneficiaries with non-beneficiaries following Van Beveren (2012) and Costa *et al.* (2019). The results reveal marked differences in how farms are spread across productivity categories. A majority of non-beneficiaries are concentrated in the low-efficiency category (<1), where more than half of them (55%) operate. In contrast, only 25% of beneficiaries fall into this range, indicating that subsidies substantially reduce the proportion of farms performing at very low efficiency levels. The moderate range (1–2) accommodates the largest share of both groups, but beneficiaries are more represented (43.75%) compared to non-beneficiaries (40%). This suggests that subsidies help shift a larger proportion of farms into the moderate productivity bracket. The differences become sharper in the higher efficiency categories. Among beneficiaries, 20% achieve high efficiency (2–3) compared to only 3.75% of non-beneficiaries.

Similarly, 10% of beneficiaries reach very high efficiency (3–5) compared to only 1.25% of non-beneficiaries. These results highlight that beneficiaries are much more likely to achieve advanced productivity levels. Finally, the extremely high efficiency category (>5) is reached by only 1.25% of beneficiaries and none of the non-beneficiaries. This result reveals the potential of subsidies to enable exceptional gains in efficiency, even if only for a small fraction of farms.

Table 4: Distribution by the Efficiency Range of the Farms

Efficiency Range	Beneficiaries		Non-Beneficiaries	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<1 (Low)	20	25.00	44	55.00
1-2 (Moderate)	35	43.75	32	40.00
2-3 (High)	16	20.00	3	3.75
3-5 (Very High)	8	10.00	1	1.25
>5 (Extremely High)	1	1.25	-	-
Total	80	100.00	80	100.00

Source: Field Survey (2025).

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings provide clear evidence that input subsidies significantly enhance the income of maize farmers in Ekiti State. Beneficiaries of subsidies demonstrated higher efficiency, better resource utilization, and improved earnings compared to non-beneficiaries. However, the benefits of these programmes are undermined by poor implementation practices, late delivery of inputs, and limited institutional support. Strengthening the design and management of subsidy initiatives, alongside improved access to credit, extension services, and infrastructure, will be essential for achieving sustainable agricultural growth. Some other challenges such as delayed subsidy distribution, poor market access, and limited credit facilities also remain major obstacles. The study established that input subsidies play a vital role in enhancing productivity maize farmers in Ekiti State. Nevertheless, inefficiencies in program implementation and persistent structural challenges hinder the full realization of benefits.

Policy Recommendations

- (i) Strengthen and streamline subsidy distribution: Government should ensure that subsidy inputs (fertilizer, seeds, agrochemicals) are delivered on time to prevent delays that reduce their effectiveness.
- (ii) Enhance extension services: Access to extension significantly improved productivity and income. Government and NGOs should increase funding for agricultural extension services, employ more agents, and provide training on modern maize production practices.



- (iii) Improve access to rural credit: Non-beneficiaries in particular identified limited access to credit as a major challenge. Policies should prioritize affordable and farmer-friendly credit schemes, possibly linked to cooperative societies and microfinance institutions.

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