



## IMPACT OF THE COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE CREDIT SCHEME ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE IN YOBE STATE, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

The study examined the impact of the Commercial Agriculture Credit Scheme (CACS) on the performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Yobe State, Nigeria. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 259 respondents and data were collected through the administration of structured questionnaires. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results revealed that 30.1% of the respondents fell within the age range of 40–49 years, with a mean age of 44. Similarly, majority (76.4%) were male, 64.5% were married, and 35.1% had attained secondary education. The average household size, years of business operation and Number of employees were 6 people, 5.3 years and 6 employees respectively. The finding revealed that 43.6% of the respondents were small scale business owners and 54% had monthly income increase of ₦120,000 from ₦50,000. Furthermore, the business output changes with CACS increased significantly with 40.6%. The result further revealed that, relationship between access to CACS and business growth were positive and significant at ( $P < 0.01$ ) and profitability were positive and significant at ( $P < 0.01$ ) respectively. The major constraints accessing to CACS in the study area were lack of collateral requirement (36.8%) and complex application process (32.1%) while poor infrastructure (38.4%) and inadequate technical skills were factors constraining utilization. The study concluded that CACS has a significant impact on the performance SME in the study area. Base on this results it is recommended that government and relevant financial institutions should expand sensitization efforts, particularly in rural communities to improve awareness and correct misconceptions about the scheme.

**Keywords:** Impact, Commercial, Agriculture, Credit, Scheme, Performance.

### INTRODUCTION

The agricultural sector faces several structural challenges, including limited access to finance, poor infrastructure, and climatic uncertainties that hinder optimal performance. A study found that targeted credit interventions that include training programs, low-interest loans, and flexible repayment schedules can greatly enhance the performance of small and medium agribusinesses. By improving access to modern farming equipment, seeds, fertilizers, and marketing opportunities, these schemes can lead to increased productivity, greater market participation, and improved profitability for SMEs in agriculture. Commercial agriculture credit schemes have the potential to boost the performance of SMEs in Nigeria, understanding the interplay between these financial interventions and the unique challenges of the region is crucial (Ogunlela & Mukhtar, 2022). The study was therefore carried out to examine the impact of the Commercial Agriculture Credit Scheme (CACS) on the performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Yobe State. The specific objectives of the study were to; describe the socio-economic characteristics of respondents in the study area; examine the contribution of the Commercial Agriculture Credit Scheme to the productivity of SMEs in the study area; determine the relationship between access to credit and business growth among SMEs and identify the constraints to accessing and utilizing the Commercial Agriculture Credit Scheme in the study area.

### METHODOLOGY

#### The Study Area

Yobe State is located in the northeastern region of Nigeria, positioned between latitude 10°30'N and 13°25'N, and longitude 9°35'E and 12°25'E. The state shares borders with Borno State to the east, Gombe and Bauchi States to the west, Jigawa State to the northwest, and the Republic of



Niger to the north. It was created in 1991 from the former Borno State and has Damaturu as its capital city.

Yobe State occupies a total land area of approximately 45,502 square kilometers, making it one of the largest states in Nigeria in terms of land mass. Based on the 2006 National Population and Housing Census, the population of Yobe State was estimated at 2,321,339. Using the national average annual population growth rate of 2.6%, the projected population for 2024 is approximately 3,479,615 and for 2025 is 3,570,069. The climate of Yobe State is classified as tropical continental, characterized by a distinct dry and wet season. The rainy season generally begins in May and ends around September, with average annual rainfall ranging from 500 mm in the north to about 1,000 mm in the southern parts of the state. The dry season is dominated by the harmattan wind, which often brings dry and dusty conditions. Average daily temperatures fluctuate between 30°C and 42°C, with higher temperatures typically recorded between March and May, while the coolest period occurs from December to February.

### **Sampling Techniques and Sample Size**

This study adopted a multi-stage sampling technique to ensure a systematic and representative selection of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) engaged in agricultural production and related activities in Yobe State. The first stage involved the purposive selection of 10 Local Government Areas (LGAs) based on their high concentration of agriculture-based SMEs and active participation in the Commercial Agriculture Credit Scheme (CACCS). These LGAs include: Potiskum, Nangere, Fika, Fune, Damaturu, Gaidam, Gashu'a, Gulani, Tarmuwa, and Yusufari. In the second stage, two major agricultural districts or communities were randomly selected from each of the chosen LGAs, resulting in 20 districts for the study. This stage enabled the capture of variation in enterprise types and agricultural activities across the state's agro-ecological zones. The target population comprised registered and informal SMEs operating within the selected districts and engaged in agriculture-related ventures, such as crop production, livestock, agro-processing, and input supply services. The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane (1967) formula for finite populations: In the second stage, two major agricultural districts or communities were randomly selected from each of the chosen LGAs, resulting in 20 districts for the study. This stage enabled the capture of variation in enterprise types and agricultural activities across the state's agro-ecological zones.

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

Where:

- $n$  = sample size
- $N$  = population (estimated total number of SMEs in selected districts = 735)
- $e$  = margin of error (5% or 0.05)

$$n = \frac{735}{1 + 735(0.05)^2} = \frac{735}{1 + 1.8375} \approx \frac{735}{2.8375} \approx 259$$

A final sample size of 259 SMEs was selected, and the sample was distributed proportionally across the 20 districts based on their estimated SME population. Proportional allocation ensured equitable representation from each district relative to the density of SMEs engaged in agricultural production.



**Table 1: Sample Size Distribution Across Selected Districts/Communities in Yobe State**

Local Government	Estimated SMEs	Sampling Size
<b>Potiskum</b>		
Garin Daye	50	18
Hausari	45	16
<b>Nangere</b>		
Dawasa	35	12
Sabon Garin Nangere	30	10
<b>Fika</b>		
Daya	33	12
Maluri	30	11
<b>Fune</b>		
Ngelzarma	28	10
Jajere	27	9
<b>Damaturu</b>		
Pompomari	40	14
Bindigari	35	12
<b>Geidam</b>		
Ashekri	25	9
Hausari Geidam	22	8
<b>Gashua</b>		
Dogon Kuka	26	9
Katuzu	24	8
<b>Gulani</b>		
Bularafa	27	9
Bara	23	8
<b>Tarmuwa</b>		
Babangida	25	9
Koriyel	20	7
<b>Yusufari</b>		
Yusufari Central	26	9
Gumsa	24	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>735</b>	<b>259</b>

### Method of Data Collection

Data were collected through the administration of a structured questionnaire to respondents, randomly selected from the identified districts within Yobe State. The questionnaire was designed to collect data on various aspects of the Commercial Agriculture Credit Scheme (CACS) and its impact on the performance of SMEs. The questionnaire included the following sections: Questions focused on the age, gender, educational level, household size, and farming experience of the respondents. These socio-economic factors is crucial for understanding how they might influence awareness of the CACS and the ability to access and utilize agricultural credit effectively.

### Method of Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics were applied to analyze objectives i, ii, iii, and v, which involved calculating frequencies, means, and percentages to summarize the socio-economic characteristics of respondents, assess the contribution of the CACS, and examine the constraints faced by SMEs. Bar charts and tables were also used to present the findings visually.

For objective iv, which investigates the impact of the CACS on the performance of SMEs, inferential statistics will be employed. Specifically, logit regression analysis was used to explore the



relationships between various factors and the perceived impacts of CACS on SME performance. This technique allowed for the examination of the statistical significance of factors influencing SME performance after accessing credit from CACS.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive statistics were used to address objectives i, ii, iii and iv. A Likert-type scale will be used for questions related to the respondents' perceptions and experiences with the CACS. The Likert scale used for responses ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The mean score was calculated for each statement to assess the overall level of agreement.

The validity of the result were measured using mean. Considering the Liker Type Rating Scale of 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 mean was then calculated thus:

$$X = \frac{\sum (Nf)}{Nr}$$

X	=	Mean
$\sum$	=	Summation
Nf	=	Frequency of responses under each mode
Nr	=	Number of respondents to an item
$= \frac{(5+4+3+2+1)}{5} = \frac{15}{5} = \text{Mean} = 3 \text{ (Threshold)}$		

Decision Rule: Any response from 3.0 and above is agreed and any response below 3.0 is disagreed.

### **Inferential Statistics**

Inferential statistics was employed to address Objective iii, which seeks to determine the relationship between access to credit and business growth among SMEs in the study area. Specifically, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to assess the strength and direction of the linear relationship between key independent variables (such as access to credit, age, education level, and farm size) and the dependent variable (business growth).

$$r = \frac{n \sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][n \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

Where:

- $r$  = Pearson correlation coefficient
- $n$  = number of paired observations
- $x$  = independent variable (e.g., access to credit)
- $y$  = dependent variable (e.g., business growth)
- $\sum xy$  = sum of the products of paired scores Skip to content
- $\sum x$  = sum of x scores
- $\sum y$  = sum of y scores
- $\sum x^2$  = sum of squared x scores
- $\sum y^2$  = sum of squared y scores

The value of  $r$  ranges between -1 and +1:

- $r = +1$ : Perfect positive correlation
- $r = -1$ : Perfect negative correlation
- $r = 0$ : No correlation



### Decision Rule

A positive and statistically significant value of  $r$  indicates a direct relationship between access to credit and business growth. A negative and statistically significant  $r$  suggests an inverse relationship. A significance level of 0.05 (5%) will be used to determine statistical significance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

The socio-economic characteristics of the respondents reflect diverse demographic attributes of SME operators in Yobe State. The results revealed that average age of the respondents was 44 years, with the dominant age category being 40–49 years (30.1%), indicating that SMEs are mostly owned by mature and experienced individuals. This finding supports the view of Lawal and Yusuf (2021), who argued that middle-aged entrepreneurs are more likely to possess the physical capacity, decision-making skills, and experience necessary for managing agribusiness ventures effectively. The results also revealed that (76.4%), of the respondents were male. This implies that SMEs in the study area are dominated by male. Finding us in the line with that of Abubakar *et al.* (2020), who emphasized that agricultural SMEs in northern Nigeria remain largely male-dominated due to cultural norms, land ownership rights, and access to financial services. Similarly, Nnadi and Akwiwu (2017) observed that male farmers tend to access credit and land more easily than their female counterparts.

the results further revealed that majority, (64.5%) of respondents were married, while 19.3%, 8.9 and 7.3% were single, divorced and widowed, respectively. This finding reinforces the assertion by Ojo and Salawu (2022) that marital responsibilities encourage engagement in income-generating activities to support household welfare. The results also showed that half (50.6%) of the respondents and income hold size 5-7 members 30.5% and 19.3% has 1-4 and above 8 person with average of household size of 6 members., This finding is consistent with the findings of Ibrahim *et al.* (2019), who noted that northern Nigerian farming households are typically large, offering a ready pool of labor for small-scale agricultural activities. The results also revealed that (35.1%), a significant portion of the respondents had secondary education (35.1%) while 33.6%, 20.6% and 10.4% had tertiary, primary and no formal education respectively. This implies that the respondents are fairly literate group. This observation is in agreement with Eze *et al.* (2020), who found that literacy enhances farmers' access to extension services, comprehension of credit guidelines, and adoption of innovations. Furthermore, Yahaya and Bello (2018) noted that educated SME owners are more likely to manage resources efficiently and keep accurate financial records, thereby improving their creditworthiness.

The results further showed that 43.6% of respondents were as business owners and 39.0% were farmers. This supports the findings of Okonkwo *et al.* (2021), who reported a growing trend of diversification among rural households, combining farming with business to manage risks and boost household income. Similarly, the results revealed an income rise from ₦50,000 to ₦120,000 post-intervention, which is in line with the findings of Oladipo and Oni (2022), who observed that access to institutional credit schemes such as the CACS significantly improves farm output and earnings. Similarly, Adebayo (2019) established a positive relationship between credit utilization and profit margins among agricultural entrepreneurs in Nigeria.

The results revealed an average business operation duration of 5.3 years indicates that most respondents have reasonable experience, a factor which, according to Adisa and Adekunle (2020), contributes to better risk assessment, enterprise planning, and credit management. Finally, the fact that most SMEs employed 1–5 people confirms the classification of these businesses as micro to small-scale enterprises, which, as reported by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN, 2021), constitute the backbone of rural economic activity and play a significant role in reducing unemployment.





**Table 2:** Distribution of Respondents According to Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 259)

Socio-Economic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
<b>Age</b>			
20–29 years	50	19.3	<b>44</b>
30–39 years	65	25.1	
40–49 years	78	30.1	
50–59 years	42	16.2	
60 years and above	24	9.3	
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	198	76.4	
Female	61	23.6	
<b>Marital Status</b>			
Single	50	19.3	
Married	167	64.5	
Divorced	23	8.9	
Widowed	19	7.3	
<b>Household Size</b>			
1–4 members	79	30.5	<b>6</b>
5–7 members	130	50.2	
8 and above	50	19.3	
<b>Educational Level</b>			
No formal	27	10.4	
Primary	54	20.8	
Secondary	91	35.1	
Tertiary	87	33.6	
<b>Occupation</b>			
Farmer	101	39.0	
Business Owner	113	43.6	
Employee	45	17.4	
<b>Monthly Income (₦)</b>			
Before: ₦50,000 average	119	46	
After: ₦120,000 average	140	54	
<b>Years of Business Operation</b>			
<1 Year	10	3.9	<b>5.3</b>
1–3 Years	72	27.8	
4–6 Years	92	35.5	
Above 6 Years	85	32.8	
<b>Number of Employees</b>			
1–5	152	58.7	<b>6</b>
6–10	68	26.3	
11 and above	39	15.1	

**Source:** Field survey, 2025



### Impact of CACS on Business Productivity

The results in Table 5 showed that 40.6% of respondents experienced a significant increase in business output after accessing the Commercial Agriculture Credit Scheme (CACS), while 32.1% reported a slight increase, indicating that nearly three-quarters (72.7%) of SMEs benefited positively. This affirms the assertion by Akinola and Yusuf (2020) that agricultural credit schemes, when effectively implemented, can stimulate enterprise growth through capital injection. The 14.8% of respondents who reported no change in productivity may reflect barriers such as delayed disbursement, lack of market access, or ineffective use of funds, consistent with the findings of Okon and Edem (2019). Additionally, a small percentage (12.6%) reported a decline in productivity, which could be attributed to poor credit utilization, insufficient technical support, or external economic shocks. According to Adeoye *et al.* (2021), positive productivity outcomes from credit schemes are more pronounced when beneficiaries receive ongoing technical guidance and business monitoring. These results suggest that while CACS has largely succeeded in improving SME output in Yobe State, a more comprehensive support structure could reduce negative outcomes. Moreover, this trend is consistent with international findings, such as those from FAO (2021), which emphasize the synergy between credit and non-financial interventions in ensuring sustained agricultural productivity growth. Thus, optimizing both access and support services is vital for maximizing the scheme's long-term developmental impact.

**Table 3:** Distribution of Respondents According to Impact of CACS on Business Productivity  
(n = 259)

Business Output Change Since CACS	Frequency	Percentage
Increased Significantly	105	40.6
Increased Slightly	83	32.1
No Change	38	14.8
Decreased Slightly	20	7.9
Decreased Significantly	13	4.7

Source: Field survey, 2025

### Relationship Between Access to Credit and Business Growth

To determine the relationship between access to credit under the Commercial Agriculture Credit Scheme (CACS) and various dimensions of SME growth, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was employed. This statistical technique measured the strength and direction of linear associations between access to CACS and four key business performance indicators: overall growth, expansion, employment creation, and profitability.

The results in Table 6 indicated a statistically significant and positive correlations between access to CACS and all four business performance indicators, underscoring the substantial role of credit in driving SME development in Yobe State. Notably, the correlation between access to credit and overall business growth ( $r = 0.641$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) is strong and significant, confirming the findings of Oboh and Ekpebu (2019), who emphasized that access to formal agricultural credit enhances investment, technology adoption, and scaling among rural enterprises.

A similarly strong correlation exists between access to credit and profitability ( $r = 0.612$ ), suggesting that the infusion of capital through CACS enables reinvestment into value-adding activities. This result supports Akinola and Yusuf (2020), who argued that profitability among agribusinesses increases substantially when they can access structured credit and technical support. Business expansion also showed a significant correlation ( $r = 0.583$ ), validating the position of Adeoye *et al.* (2021), who reported that credit-enabled SMEs tend to expand operations through procurement of assets and hiring of additional labor.

Employment creation, while exhibiting a slightly weaker relationship ( $r = 0.528$ ), still reflects a moderate and statistically significant correlation. This suggests that while access to credit promotes job creation, it may also be mediated by other factors such as operational scale, labor costs, and



market dynamics. In line with findings by Yusuf *et al.* (2021), these results emphasize that credit alone does not guarantee employment growth without concurrent market access and infrastructure improvements.

**Table 4:** Relationship between Access to CACS and Business Growth Indicators

Variables	r-value	p-value
Access to CACS vs Business Growth	0.641	0.000***
Access to CACS vs Business Expansion	0.583	0.001***
Access to CACS vs Employment Creation	0.528	0.003**
Access to CACS vs Profitability	0.612	0.000***

Source: Field Survey, (2025) \*\*\* (P < 0.01) \*\* (P < 0.05)

### Constraints to Accessing and Utilizing CACS

The findings in Table 9 reveal several critical barriers affecting access to the Commercial Agriculture Credit Scheme (CACS) among SMEs in Yobe State. The results revealed that (36.8%) of the respondents identified collateral requirements as the most prominent constraint, reflecting longstanding structural impediments in Nigeria's agricultural credit system, where many small-scale operators lack formal assets to pledge as security (Oboh & Ekpebu, 2019). Additionally, 32.1% of respondents reported the complexity of the application process as a challenge, while 28.0% cited delays in disbursement, both of which align with Olaitan and Iniodu's (2020) findings that bureaucratic red tape discourages potential beneficiaries, especially those from informal enterprises.

High interest rates were also mentioned 25.2%, supporting Adebayo's (2019) assertion that affordability remains a major barrier even within government-backed schemes. Interestingly, despite extensive promotional efforts. Also (20.1%) of the respondents still reported lack of awareness, as a constraint to accessing CAC suggesting that sensitization campaigns have not fully reached rural and underserved communities. These constraints collectively underscore that while CACS has a positive impact when accessed, institutional bottlenecks and procedural complexities continue to limit its full effectiveness. As Yusuf *et al.* (2021) emphasize, for credit programs to drive inclusive growth, issues of accessibility, timeliness, and affordability must be addressed through reforms and better outreach mechanisms.

**Table 5:** Challenges in Accessing CACS (n = 259)

Constraint	*Frequency	Percentage
Lack of Awareness	64	20.1
Collateral Requirements	117	36.8
Complex Application Process	102	32.1
Delay in Disbursement	89	28.0
High Interest Rates	80	25.2

Source: Field survey, 2025

\*Multiple responses

### Constraints to Utilizing CACS

The results in Table 10 highlight the primary constraints faced by SMEs in utilizing the Commercial Agriculture Credit Scheme (CACS) after accessing it. The results revealed that (38.4%) of respondents indicating that inadequate road networks, insufficient storage facilities, and irregular power supply continue to impede the productive deployment of agricultural credit. This is consistent with the observations of Adeoye *et al.* (2021), who noted that infrastructural bottlenecks undermine the effectiveness of agricultural financing programs in Nigeria's rural regions. A substantial proportion 30.2% also reported lack of technical skills, reinforcing the findings of Akinola and Yusuf (2020), who emphasized that without adequate training and capacity building, loan recipients often struggle to optimize their use of credit facilities.





Additionally, 26.4% admitted to mismanaging the funds received, suggesting the presence of weak financial literacy, a point also raised by Oboh and Ekpebu (2019) in their study on the risks of unmonitored credit access. Low market demand, cited 23.3% of the respondents reflects external economic pressures and insufficient market linkage mechanisms that affect the return on investment, even when financing is available. Yusuf *et al.* (2021) argue that financial interventions must be coupled with guaranteed market access to ensure long-term success for SMEs. These constraints collectively point to the need for integrated policy design—combining credit delivery with infrastructure investment, business development training, and market access facilitation—to fully unlock the transformative potential of CACS.

**Table 6:** Constraints in Utilizing CACS (n = 259)

Constraint	Frequency	Percentage
Poor Infrastructure	122	38.4
Mismanagement of Funds	84	26.4
Lack of Technical Skills	96	30.2
Low Market Demand	74	23.3

Source: Field survey, 2025

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that CACS has a significant impact on the performance SME in the study area. Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that there is need for public investment in rural infrastructure such as roads, storage facilities, irrigation systems, and market structures.

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