
Operational Habits and Health Hazards Associated With Pesticide Usage by Cocoa Farmers in Nigeria: Lessons for Extension Work

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ABSTRACT This study was conducted to examine the operational habits and health hazards associated with pesticide usage by cocoa farmers. Specifically, the farmers' socio-economic characteristics were identified with their choice of pesticide and also, their preventive/control measure and methods of disposing the pesticide containers were identified. One hundred and twenty (120) cocoa farmers were randomly selected and interviewed through the use of a structured interview schedule. Frequency counts and percentages were used in describing the data collected, while Pearson's correlation co-efficient (r) was used to determine the relationship between the number of operational habits of the cocoa farmers and; the number of health hazards experienced and some selected characteristics. Prominent operational habits revealed in the study include: scooping or stirring pesticides with bare hand; chewing kolanut or something else when spraying.. Also, farmers experienced redness of eyes and body pain whenever they apply pesticides. Moreso, the study revealed positive and significant relationship between the number of operational habits of the cocoa farmers and age ($r=0.2557$) and period of farming ($r=0.2433$), while the level of education has a negative, but significant relationship ($r = -0.3727$). There was no significant relationship between the number of operational habits of the cocoa farmers and the number of health hazards experienced. However, the major lessons drawn for improving extension work is that training on pesticides usage must be integrated into extension practice and such training must be based on farmers' age, farming experience and level of education.

[Home](#)

[Back](#)
