



System Approaches for Understanding Rural Women's Entrepreneurship in Oyo State Nigeria

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Introduction

Rural women engage in entrepreneurial activities such as food processing and trade as a means of earning additional income in order to better meet the food and other household requirements of the family. Their businesses face a number of constraints in the context of their rural settings and so analytical tools are investigated with rural entrepreneurs for improving understanding and elucidating actions. A systems approach is then used for the conceptualization of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) in a case study focused on cocoyam processing.

Aims of the study:

- Understanding the motivations behind rural individual and group business decisions
- Use of systems approach to understand how they regulate and control their processing business
- Strengthening the entrepreneurial capacities through the design and implementation of PM&E

Conclusions

Rural entrepreneurs showed a high tendency to be extrinsically motivated, opportunity-, and socially driven entrepreneurs.

Systems approaches show promise as an analytical lens for understanding why these actors do what they do, and this could be useful in transforming tacit business management skills into explicit knowledge.

PM&E design aims for the support of the women's group to observe, reflect and problem-solve to improve their production processes.

Incorporating systems thinking into the design of the PM&E system is a valuable way to enhance the adaptive capacity of the rural entrepreneurs.

Results

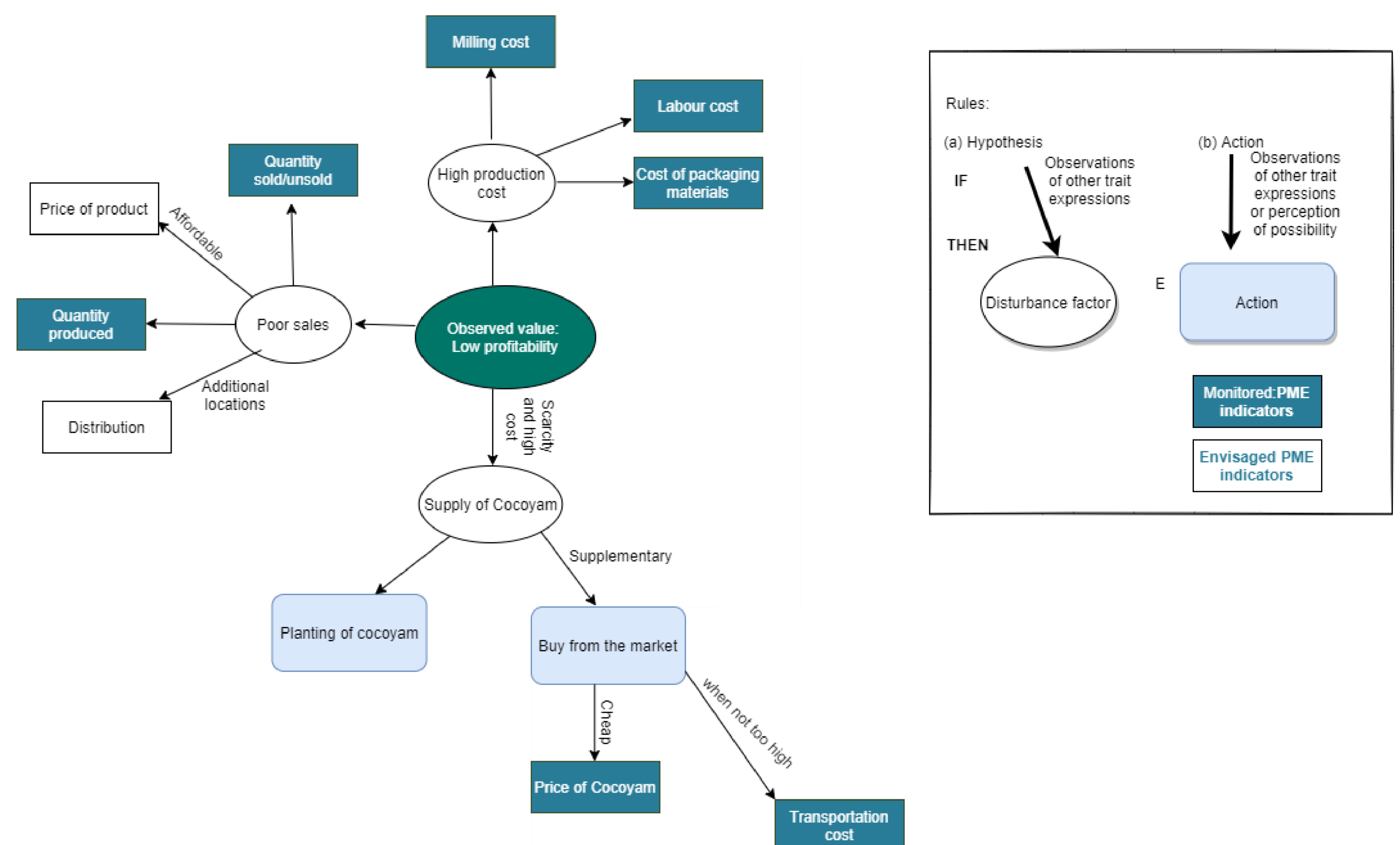
Entrepreneurial motivations of individual rural entrepreneurs

- Need-based entrepreneurs** ---- "When I needed an extra source of income, I decided to go into this business" (ITe2).
- Opportunity entrepreneurs** ---- "the thing with business is that I buy what I see is surplus in the market to resell, I don't always stick to a particular product, I follow the market trend. It can be gaari, it can be yam flour; it can be palm oil, I buy" (ITe5).
- Family entrepreneurs** ---- "It's my mother's work" (ITe3)
- Peer influenced** ---- "When I saw that all my friends had acquired one skill or the other and I did not, I was pained, so I thought very deeply about it and determined to learn a skill" (ITe7)

Case study women's group motivations for starting PM&E

Recognition, Innovation, Community Role models, Opportunity entrepreneurship, Food security, Profitability

PM&E indicators & the control loop model



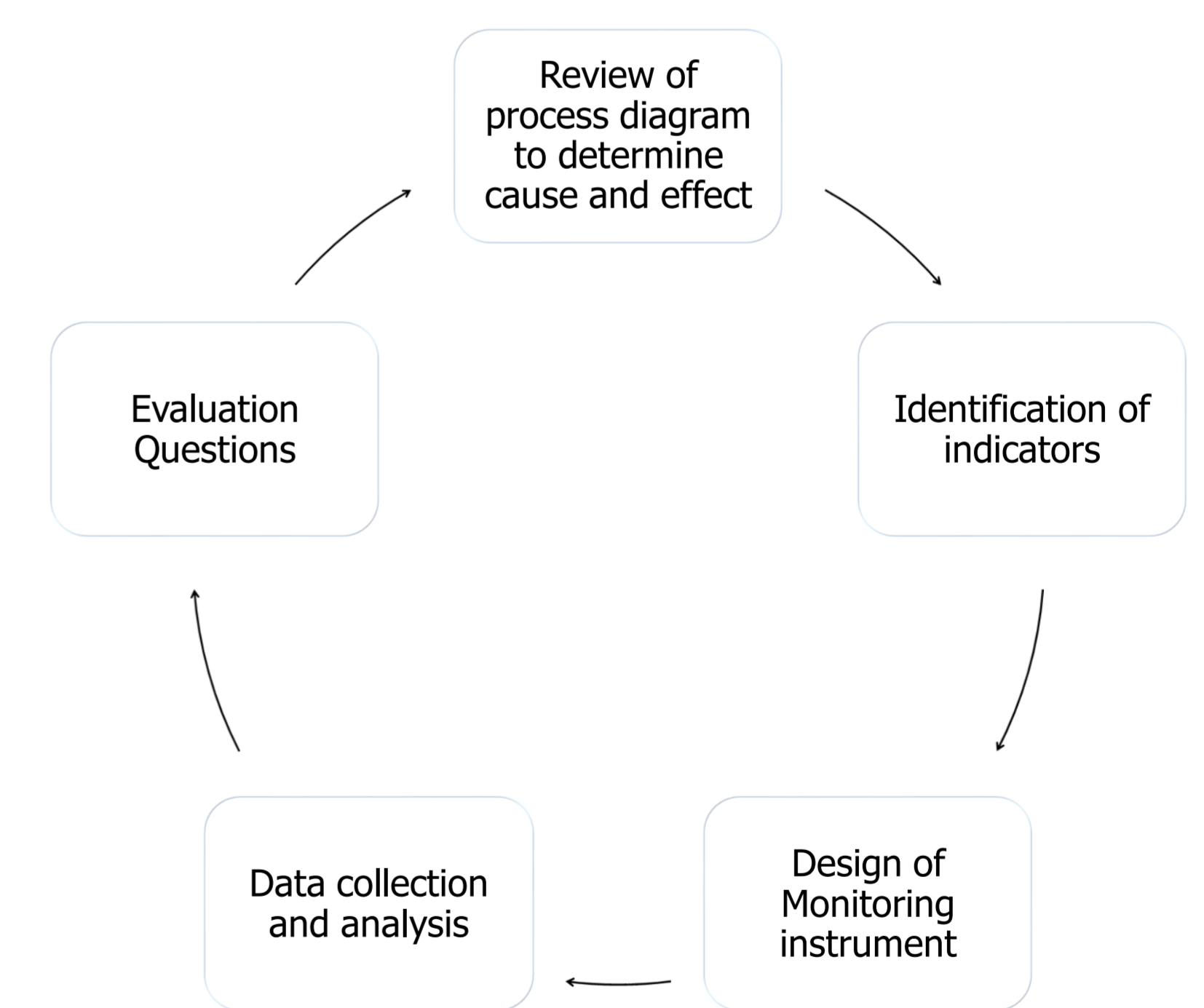
Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E)

Guiding questions	PM&E focus activities
Q1 What information do we need to track over time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs of raw materials Transportation and labour costs Amount of cocoyam <i>amala</i> flour produced and sold
Q2 What do we want to get out of the PM&E?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased profitability Reduced cost of production
Q3 Why do we want to achieve this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product affordability Product acceptability Market fit

Women's group members reviewing the process control diagram (Photo: Akalonu, 2020)



PM&E System development



Study location and Selected research participants

- Oyo State, Nigeria (Atisbo, Iseyin & Akinyele Areas)**
- Osanetu women's group focused on processing cocoyam into *amala* flour**
- Rural entrepreneurs (palm oil, soy cheese, locust bean condiment, shea butter, and cassava processing and agro trading)**



Methods of data collection and analysis

Participatory methods including role play and visual aids.

8 Group sessions with the Osanetu women's group (4 to 10 women in attendance for each session)

Semi-structured interviews with small scale rural entrepreneurs (n=9)

Data was audio recorded, translated, transcribed and coded into themes and categories for content analysis with MAXQDA software.

Fieldwork lasted for a period of 10 weeks from January 2020 to March 2020