EFFECT OF NODUMAX INOCULANT ON MORPHO-PHYSIOLOGICAL PARAMETERS, NUTRIENT CONTENT AND YIELD OF SOYBEAN (GLYCINE MAX. L.)

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ABSTRACT

The field study was carried out at the Teaching and Research Farm of Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine of Imo State University, Owerri, to investigate the effect of Nodumax inoculants on Morpho-Pysiological parameters, Nutrient content and yield of Soybean (Glycine max). The experimental design was Randomized Complete Block Design with five treatments and four replications. Treatments consist of Gum Arabic Slurry, Honey Slurry, Powdered milk Slurry, Sugar Slurry (as adhesive agents) and control. The results obtained indicated that Nodumax inoculation, with adhesive agents especially Gum Arabic improved the Morpho-Physiological parameters such as plant heights, leaf area, leaf area index, leaf area ratio, Relative Growth Rate (RGR) and Net Assimilation Rate (NAR) and shoot dry weight compare to the control. Inoculation increased soybean grain yield across the various adhesive agents ranging from 909.45kg/ha for non-inoculated control to 1002.99kg/ha for inoculated using Gum Arabic, as sticker agent. Proximate composition of inoculated seeds was significantly (P<0.05) improved compare to the control. However, it was observed that Nodumax inoculation correspond to increase in soybean growth characteristics which subsequently increased the yield and improved the nutritional status of soybean. This study has shown that the type of adhesive for coating of seed during rhizobium inoculation could impact positive change in growth parameters, Nutritional status and yield of soybean.

Key words; Adhesive, Nodumax, Inoculant, Growth parameters, Soybean

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INTRODUCTION

Soybean (Glycine max (L.) Merrill) is a special of dietary protein whose production is gaining prominence in semi-arid regions of Sub-Sahara Africa. However, yields are drastically low due to poor soil fertility, lack of improved cultivars, poor management practices and unavailability of inputs.

The rhizosphere is the soil region where activities mediated by micro-organisms are specifically influenced by the root systems. This area includes the soil connected to the plant roots and often extends a few millimeters off the root surface, being an important environment for the plant and microorganism interactions (Lynch, 1990; Gray and Smith, 2005), because plant roots release a
A wide range of compounds involved in attracting organisms which may be beneficial, neutral or detrimental to plants (Lynch, 1990; Badri and Vivanco, 2009).

Interactions between plants and bacteria occur through symbiotic, endophytic or associative processes with distinct degrees of proximity with the roots and surrounding soil. Endophytic PGPB are good inoculant candidates, because they colonize roots and create a favorable environment for development and function. Non-symbiotic endophytic relationships occur within the intercellular spaces of plant tissues, which contain high levels of carbohydrates, amino acids, and inorganic nutrients (Bacon and Hinton, 2006).

The soybean (*Glycine max*), is an annual summer legume native of South-eastern Asia, which is used as human food (Liu, 1999) and livestock feed as well as for several industrial purposes (Ali, 2010). Currently, this legume is one of the main crops cultivated for oil extraction (35.9 million tons oil and 57% global oilseed production), preceded only by the palm oil (FAO, 2011).

The success and efficiency of PGPB as inoculants for agricultural crops are influenced by various factors, among which the ability of these bacteria to colonize plant roots, the exudation by plant roots and the soil health. The root colonization efficiency of PGPB is closely associated with microbial competition and survival in the soil, as well as with the modulation of the expression of several genes and cell-cell communication via quorum sensing (Danhorn and Fuqua, 2007; Meneses *et al.*, 2011; Alquares *et al.*, 2013; Beauregard *et al.*, 2013).

Plant roots react to different environmental conditions through the secretion of a wide range of compounds which interfere with the plant-bacteria interaction, being considered as an important factor in the efficiency of the inoculants (Bais *et al.*, 2006; Cai *et al.*, 2009, 2012). Agricultural production currently depends on the large-scale use of chemical fertilizers (Adesemoye *et al.*, 2009). These fertilizers have become essential components of modern agriculture because they provide essential plant nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. However, the overuse of fertilizers can cause unanticipated environmental impacts (Adesemoye *et al.*, 2009).

To achieve maximum benefits in terms of fertilizer savings and better growth, the PGPB-based inoculation technology should be utilized. Moreover, the use of efficient inoculants can be considered an important strategy for sustainable management and for reducing environmental problems by decreasing the use of chemical fertilizers (Alves *et al.*, 2004; Adesemoye *et al.*, 2009; Hungria *et al.*, 2005).

Nodumax is a new legume inoculation technology developed at the IITA Business Incubation Platform that boosts the yield of Soybean by 30 -40%. It also serves to replace nitrogen (IITA, 2015). Nodumax is a biofertilizer, it contains 50% of culture (rhizobia) and 50% peat based carrier containing elite Bradyrhizobia. It is packaged in 100g quantities intended for 10 to 20 kg of soybean seed along with gum Arabic for distribution to agro dealers and soybean production associations in Nigeria (IITA, 2015). Nodumax is made to solve the issue of low crop productivity of most legume crops such as Beans and Soybeans.
Main objective of this study is to evaluate the use of nodumax inoculant on morph-physiological parameters, yield and proximate composition of Soybean.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Location

The experiment was conducted at the Teaching and research Farm of Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine, Imo State University, Owerri. Owerri lies between latitudes 5°20’N and 6°55’ E, and longitudes 6°35’E and 7°08’E on elevation of 71m above the sea level, within the South East Rain Forest Agricultural Zone of Nigeria. The area as reported by NIMET (2012) maintains an average annual rainfall of 2,500mm, 27°C temperature and Relative humidity of 85%.

Experimental Materials.

Seeds of soybean (TGX 1951-3f) and nodumax inoculants were procured from IITA Ibadan, Oyo State. Sugar, honey powdered milk were purchased from Ekeonunwa market in Owerri.

Stickers as Treatments

Sugar Slurry (10% in water), honey slurry (10% in water) and powdered milk Slurry (10% in water), to achieve the above treatment options, Mix 10 g of each of the stickers in 100 ml of cold water. Stir until they are dissolved. The rate of sticker solution mixed with the inoculants depends on the type of seed used. Smaller seeds require more sticker solution per seed weight than larger seeds because they have a larger surface area to be coated.

Experiment Design and Layout

The experiment was laid out in Randomized Block Complete Design (RBCD) with four replicates. 10% sugar, 10% of honey, 10% gumarabic and powdered milk formed the treatment and it was replicated four times.

Planting and Agronomic operations

Soil samples were collected randomly at 0-15cm depth from different beds in the site and bulked together for physico-chemical analysis. Soybean seeds were planted at a depth of 2-3cm in the 1mx1m beds with two seeds per hole at a planting distance of 50 x 50cm. Thinning was done at 14 days after planting to reduce the plant stand to one per hole. Weeding was done by hand picking throughout the period of research to keep the beds weed free.

Data Collection

The following parameters were collected:

1) Emergence Percentage: This was calculated 5 days after planting. It was calculated using the formula below:

\[
\text{No of seeds emerged} \times \frac{100}{\text{No of seeds sowed}}
\]

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2) **Plant Height:** This is the distance from the ground level of the plant to the Apex of the plant. It was measured using ruler (graduated in centimeter).

3) **Leaf Area per Plant (cm²):** This was calculated using the formula: 6.532 + 2.045 (Li Wi) were Li = maximum lengths of terminal leaflet of the leaf.

Wi = maximum width of terminal leaflet of the leaf.

According to Ogokeet *et al.* (2003).

4) **Leaf Area Ratio(cm²g⁻¹):** This was calculated using the formula:

\[
\text{Leaf Area Ratio} = \frac{\text{Total leaf area}}{\text{Total dry weight of the plant,}}
\]

as described by Kang and Van (2004).

5) **Leaf Area Index Per Plant:** This was obtained by a simple formular, leaf area index per plant

\[
\text{Leaf Area Index Per Plant} = \frac{\text{Leaf Area per plant}}{\text{Area covered by the leaf}}
\]

6) **Relative Growth Rate (gg⁻¹wk⁻¹):** is the growth rate relative to the size of the population. It is also called the exponential growth rate or the continuous growth rate.

It was calculated using the formular as described by Akonye and Nwauzoma, (2003)

\[
\text{RGR} = 2.303 \log \left( \frac{W_2 - W_1}{T_2 - T_1} \right) \text{ or } \log \left( \frac{W_2}{W_1} \right) \frac{1}{T_2 - T_1}
\]

\[
W_1 = \text{initial weight}
\]

\[
W_2 = \text{subsequent weight}
\]

\[
T_2 = \text{subsequent time}
\]

\[
T_1 = \text{initial time}
\]

7) **Net Assimilation Rate (NAR)(gcm⁻²wk⁻¹):**

\[
\text{NAR} = 2.303 \log \left( \frac{L_2 - L_1}{T_2 - T_1} \right) \times \frac{W_2 - W_1}{L_2 - L_1}
\]

Where,

\[
W_1 = \text{initial weight}
\]

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W₂ – subsequent weight
L₁ – initial leaf area
L₂ – subsequent leaf area
T₁ – initial time
T₂ – subsequent time

8) **Shoot Dry Weight:** It was obtained when the shoot has been dried up with weighing balance after at 80°C for 24 hours.

9) **Number of pods:** This was obtained by visual counting of pods per plot.

10) **100 seed weight:** This was calculated using 100 dried seeds of soybean.

11) **Yield:** This was calculated with the formula:

\[
\text{Seed weight (Kg)} \times \frac{10,000}{\text{Land area (m}^2\text{)}}
\]

**RESULTS**

**Effect of Treatment on the Percentage of Emergence**

Table 1 showed the effect of Nodumax inoculant on the percentage emergence. Treatments (sugar sticker slurry) recorded higher percentage emergence (82.82) which was not significantly difference (P<0.05) from the control and other treated plots. The lowest percentage emergence (54.64) was recorded from T₄ (milk slurry sticker) which was not significantly different (P<0.05) from the other treated plots and control as shown in Table I.

**Effect of Treatment on Mean Plant Height**

Plant height was significantly affected by treatment at early stage and maturity stage compared to the control. Control was found to perform better than all the treated plots at 2WAP: At 4WAP T₅ (sugar slurry sticker) recorded the highest plant height (25.825cm) which was not significantly different from the control (21.500). The lowest plant height (20.350cm) was recorded from T₄ which was not significantly different (P<0.05) from control and other treated plots, at 6 WAP T₄ (milk slurry sticker) recorded the highest plant height (37.350cm) which was significant different from control which recorded the lowest mean plant height (24.050cm). Also T₅ (sugar slurry sticker) recorded mean height of 34.150cm which was significantly different from control but not significantly different from T₃ (31.475cm) and T₂ (30.00cm).
At 8WAP T5 recorded highest mean plant height (46.675cm) which was not significantly different from the lowest (36.125cm) recorded from control. This was followed by T4, (38.200cm) and T3 (37.750cm) respectively relative to control which did not show any significant different (P<0.05). At 10WAP T5 recorded the highest plant height of 57.85cm which was significantly different from lowest (47.350cm) recorded from control. Also treatments (honey slurry sticker) recorded plant height (52.500 cm) which was higher than T4 (48.175cm) and T2 with plant height (48.575cm) which were not significantly to each other as shown in Table 2.

However, the used of sticker materials influence inoculation of Nodumax on the seed of soybeans which enhances the plant height compare to the control.

**Effect of Treatment on Leaf Area (Cm²) of Soybean**

Table 3 showed that there was no significant effect of treatment on leaf area of soybean. At 2WAP, Treatment 3 recorded the highest leaf area (183.63cm²) respectively which was not significantly different (P<0.05) from the lowest leaf area (132.77cm²) recorded from control whereas at 4WAP T3 recorded the highest leaf area (347.74 cm²) which was significantly different (P<0.05) from control (130.74 cm²). At 6WAP T5 recorded the highest mean leaf area of 289.16cm² which was not significantly different from lowest (209.67cm²) recorded from Treatment2 and control (209.32cm²). T4 recorded a higher leaf area (281.1cm²) than T3 (250.21cm²) and T2 (202.6.7cm²) respectively. At 8WAP, T5 recorded the higher leaf area (709.7cm²) which was not significantly different (P<0.05) from the lowest leaf area (303.1cm²) recorded from control. This was followed by leaf area (705.7cm²) which was not significantly different from T2 and T3 respectively. (table3). T4 recorded a higher leaf area (281.1cm²) than T3 (250.21cm²) and T2 (202.6.7cm²) respectively.

At 10WAP T5 recorded the highest leaf area (746.5cm²) which was not significantly different (P<0.05) from the lowest leaf area (303.1cm²) recorded from control. This was followed by leaf area (705.7cm²) which was not significantly different from T2 and T3 respectively. (table3). The leaf area (746.5cm²) recorded from T2 was higher than those 8WAP T4 (746.5cm²) and T3 (737.96cm²) respectively. There was no significant increase in the leaf from 6WAP to 10WAP in all treatments.

**Effect of Treatment on Leaf Area Index (LAI) of Soybean**

The result of leaf area index analysis as shown in table 4, revealed no significant different (P<0.05) among treatments except only at 8WAP.

However, at 2 and 4WAP T5 recorded the lowest leaf area index (1.0220 and 0.8433 respectively) which was not significantly different from the highest (1.6840 and 1.393) recorded from T1 and T3 treated plots respectively. Also, at 6WAP T3 recorded the highest leaf area index of 0.8918 which was not significantly different from the lowest recorded from T5 (0.5775). Similarly, at 8 and 10WAP T3 consistently recorded the highest leaf area index (0.6375 and 0.6275, respectively) which was significant only at 8WAP compared to the lowest (0.2430 and 0.3348) recorded from control as shown in Table 4.
**Effect of Treatment on Leaf Area Ratio of Soybean**

The leaf area ratio was not significantly influence by treatment throughout the period of this experiment as shown in Table 5; at 2WAP, T2 recorded the higher leaf area ratio (351.75) which was not significantly different from the lowest (271.67) from T4. However, control (T1) recorded higher leaf area ratio (299.12) which was not significantly different from those recorded from T5 (281.98) and T4 (271.67) respectively. At 4WAP and 6WAP, T3 and T4 recorded highest leaf area ratio of 231.13 and 193.56 respectively which were not significantly different (P<0.05) from those recorded from control and other treatment plots as indicated in table5, However, at 8 and 10WAP, T2 and T3 recorded highest leaf area ratio of 130.57 and 124.80 respectively which were not significantly different from the lowest 73.38 and 63.38 respectively? It was observed that there was sharp decline in the leaf area ratio from after 6WAP to 10WAP.

**Effect of Treatment on Relative Growth Rate (gg-1 day-1) of Soybean**

Table 6, revealed Relative growth rate of soybean as affected by treatments. At 2WAP, control recorded, highest relative growth rate (0.20375) which was significantly different from lowest (0.11475) recorded from T3. Relative growth rate from T4 (0.19250) was higher than those of T2 (0.18025) and T5 (0.1635).

At 4 and 6WAP, the T3 and T2 recorded the highest relative growth rate of 0.26575 and 0.16575(gg⁻¹ day⁻¹) respectively which were not significant different from the lowest (0.13735gg⁻²day⁻¹) and 0.06875gg⁻¹day⁻¹) recorded from control and T3 as shown in table6. Also at 8 and 10WAP, it was the same trend were T5 and T2 respectively recorded the highest relative growth rate of 0.20525(gg⁻¹day⁻¹) and 0.17715(gg⁻¹day⁻¹) which were not significant different from the lowest 0.19275(gg⁻¹day⁻¹) and 0.13850(gg⁻¹day⁻¹) was from control and T3 as indicated in table6. It was observed that T2 and T3 have performed better than other treatment as the time progress.

**Effect Treatment on Net Assimilation Rate (gcm⁻²day⁻¹) of Soybean**

The result of Net assimilation rate as shown in Table 6, showed that at 2WAP, The T2 recorded the highest Net Assimilation Rate (NAR) of 0.011250 g-cm⁻²/day⁻¹ which was not significantly different (P<0.05) from lowest NAR (0.008500 (gcm⁻²/day⁻¹) recorded from T5. The Net Assimilation rates recorded from control are at per with that of T4 as indicated in Table 7. Whereas at 4WAP, T5 recorded the highest value of NAR (0.006500) (gcm⁻²/day⁻¹) which was significantly different (P<0.05) from the lowest (0.001375 gcm⁻²/day⁻¹) recorded from control. T2 was found to perform better than T4 and T3 and control although statically not significant.

Similarly, at 6WAP Treatment2 recorded higher NAR (0.005000 gcm⁻²/day⁻¹) which was significantly different (P<0.05) to lowest recorded from T4 (0.000650 gcm⁻²/day⁻¹). Also, T5 was observed to record the NAR (0.002750gcm⁻²/day⁻¹) that was not significantly different (P<0.05) from control (0.000950 and T3 (0.001450g-cm⁻²/day⁻¹). At 8WAP and 10WAP, T5c recorded the highest NAR values of 0.03750 and 0.004475 cm⁻²/day⁻¹ respectively which were
Effect of Treatment on Shoot Dry Weight (G) of Soybean

The result on Table 8 revealed that there was no significant difference in shoot dry weight throughout the experiment. At 2WAP and 4WAP, T3 and T5 were found to have the highest shoot dry weight of 0.050025 (g) and 1.4693 (g) respectively which were not significantly different (P<0.05) from the shoot dry weight (0.36300 (g) and 0.7183g) recorded from controls respectively. Similarly, at 6 and 8 WAP, T2 and T3 recorded the highest shoot dry weights (2.0358g and 8.573g respectively) which were not significantly different (P<0.05) from the lowest (0.6253g and 3.3865g) respectively) recorded from T3 at both periods. However at 10 WAP, T2 recorded the highest shoot dry weight (10.117g) compare to the lowest (5.491g) recorded from control and T3, which was statistically not significant. It was observed that T2 and T3 have better shoot dry weights value towards the maturity stage than other treated plots.

Effect of Treatment on Yield and Yield Components

The result of yield analysis in Table 9 revealed that number of pod was significantly influenced by treatments regimes. T4 produced significantly (P<0.05) higher number of pods (85.750) than the number of pods from control plots (62.250). This was followed by T5, which produced 85.280 of pods. While T3 was greater than T2 in number of pods produced as indicated in Table 9.

Mean weight of 100 seeds was not statistically different among the treatments. T3 recorded the highest seed weight of 1.7571g, which was statistically different (P<0.05) compare to control and other treated plots (Table 10). Similarly, the yield result showed that T2 gave the highest yield of 1002.99kg/ha which was not statistically different (P<0.05) from the lowest (909.45kg/ha) recorded from control.

However, T5 recorded the lowest yield (934.69kg/ha) among the treated plots.

Effect of Treatment on the Proximate Composition of Soybean Seed

Moisture Content

The result presented in Table 10, shows that there was significant difference at (P<0.05) among the treatments. T5 recorded significantly higher moisture (4.125%) than control (3.855%). This was followed by T2 which have 4.0356 of moisture which was significantly different (P<0.05) compare to control and other treated plots (Table 10).

Crude Protein

In Crude Protein analysis, T3 was observed to significantly produce higher crude protein of 21.325% than the control (18.165%). Among the treated plots, T2 has the lowest crude protein.
Crude Fibre

Crude fibre was significantly higher in T3 (5.170%) than lowest recorded in T5 (4.105g) followed by 4.485g fibre recorded from control. However, T2 gave significantly higher crude fibre (4.570g) than that recorded from T4 (4.865g).

Crude Fat

Table 10, result showed that the control recorded the lowest Crude fat (16.380%) which was significantly different (P<0.05) from the highest crude fat (18.250%) recorded from T3. T2 gave greater crude fat (17.620%) than T4 (17.480%) and T5 (17.380%) which was significantly different at P<0.05.

Ash Content

It was also observed that Treatment3 which is honey sticker of inoculant significantly recorded higher Ash Content (4.820%) than the lowest (4.055%) recorded from control plots. This was followed by T2 (4.230) %, then T4 and T5 in that order. As shown in table 10.

Carbohydrate Content

In this study, percentage carbohydrate content of the seed of soybean was significantly influenced by Nodumax Sticker. Control was observed to record highest carbohydrate content (52.785g) which was significantly different (P<0.05) from the lowest recorded from T3 (46.625%). This was followed by T2 (51.385%), then T5 (50.670%) and T4 (49.150%) in that order, as indicated in Table 10.

Energy Value

Energy Value was significantly influenced by the treatments T5 was observed to give highest energy value of 437.363kcal which was significantly different (P<0.05) from the lowest (432.290 kcal) from control Energy Value (436.750 kcal) from T2 was significantly different from energy (435.825 kcal and 435.64 kcal respectively) recorded from T3 and T4.

DISCUSSION

The results showed that the used of adhesive agents influenced inoculation of soybean seeds which improved growth, nodulation and yield of soybean. However, the use of gum Arabic and sugar as adhesive agent influenced more in all the vegetative parameters measured compared to the control and other adhesive agents.

Seed inoculation enhanced seed emergence and seedling vigour of soybean. However, the rate of enhancement varied with adhesive agent used. This corresponds to work of (Lugtenberget al., 2004 and Gholamiet al., 2009) that bacterial inoculants are able to increase plant growth
germination rate, improve seedling emergence response to external stress factor and protect plant from diseases.

These finding may due to the increase in synthesis of hormones like gibberellins, which would have triggered the activity of specific enzymes that promote early germination such as -amylase, which have brought an increase in availability of starch for assimilation. Besides, significant increase in seedling vigour would have occurred by enhanced synthesis of auxins (Bharathi et al., 2004).

In this present study, carrier based Nodumax inoculation significantly improved growth and yield parameters of soybean viz, plant height, leaf area, leaf area index, leaf area ratio, Relative Growth Rate (RGR) and Net Assimilation Rate (NAR). This increment in vegetative growth parameters might be due to increased activity of rhizobia enhanced by different adhesive agents. This improvement in growth characteristics of soybean in carrier based Nodumax inoculation might be attributed to the fact that Nodumax peat inoculant contain elements that are involved in various metabolic process of Rhizobia which in turn improved microbial efficiency. This is in line with Malusaet al. (2012), and Salman et al. (2017), who reported that application of carriers that serves as growth medium for PGPR by providing optimal condition.

The increase in Leaf Area, Leaf Area Index and Leaf Area Ratio recorded in inoculated plants in this study could be attributed to the enhanced plant height growth of such plants. This result conforms with the findings of Mallik et al. (2006) and Lamptey et al. (2014), who reported that inoculation promotes growth factors such as production of larger leaves.

Plant heights was enhanced by inoculation of Nodumax on soybean seeds compare to untreated, the variation noticed in heights could be due to properties of various adhesive agents used. However, gum arabic enhanced plant height more than any other treatment this was followed by sugar. We suggest that activities of microorganism and indigenous rhizobium and other elite microbes could have been enhanced more by gum arabic and sugar, culminating in taller plant height and other growth parameters observed in this study. Plant height as influenced by inoculation with Nodumax consequently will out-compete weeds, in order to capture more light and other growth resources. This is in agreement with Hernendiez and Cuevas (2003), and Lamptey et al. (2014) who reported that inoculation increased plant height.

The obtained result showed that Relative Growth Rate (RGR), Net Assimilation Rate (NAR) and shoot dry were greatly improved by Nodumax inoculation using gum arabic as adhesive agent. This increment could be due to increase in Nitrogen Fixation, which enhanced the photosynthetic activities of inoculated plant thereby increasing assimilation of photosynthates into the matrix of plant tissue. Similar observations reported in other studies were inoculation of chick pea with rhizobia increased plant growth, ground dry matter, number of pods, seed yield and Nitrogen fixation under various climatic conditions (Fatima et al., 2008). Also, this conform with the study conducted by Stefanescu and Palanciuc, (2000) which revealed that shoot dry matter of the
inoculated treatments were significantly greater than that of control as a result of increase in nodulation.

The ultimate test for the performance of adhesive agents (gum Arabic, sugar, honey, powdered milk) is the assessment of nodulation and plant yield. Inoculation with Nodumax significantly promotes growth characteristics, increased pod number and yield of soybean. This suggests that inoculation with Nodumax inoculant could improve nitrogen nutrition, promotes vegetative growth, particularly root growth, as well as benefit root uptake of minerals and water from soil by Soybean. Similar observations reported in other studies were inoculation of chickpea with rhizobia increased plant growth, ground dry matter, number of pods, seed yield and nitrogen fixation under various climate conditions (Fatima et al., 2008; Lamptey et al., 2014)

Proximate composition was improved by Nodumax inoculation. Inoculation significantly increases fat, Fibre and protein contents, this conforms with work of Elsheikh & Ahmed (2000) who reported that inoculation with Rhizobium and/or Brady rhizobium significantly increased the fat and the crude fibre content of faba bean and reduced carbohydrate content. The decrease in the carbohydrate content in the seeds of inoculated Soybean could be attributed to the high concentration of nitrogen available to the plant which increased the protein content which resulted in reduction of the carbohydrate content

The result suggests that soybean inoculation with Nodumax inoculant can improve the seed composition and quality. (Abdelgania et al., 1999) have reported similar finding on fenugreek cultivars.

CONCLUSION

Soybean seeds inoculation with Nodumax a commercial inoculant could improve crop establishment produced more vegetative, increase higher shoot and higher relative growth rate and net assimilation rate, produced more pods, which resulted in an increase soybean yield. The study therefore recommends that for increase yield, soybean seeds should be inoculated before planting due to poor soil fertility occasion by erosion and other environmental factors. Also, for higher growth indices, nodule numbers shoot and root biomass, and increase yield, adhesive agents like gum Arabic honey, powdered milk and sugar should be used. Considering the fact that gum Arabic is not always available and expensive, local farmers should be encouraged to use honey, powered milk and sugar or any other local sticky agent that will not be harmful to the rhizobia for inoculation before planting.

Nodumax inoculant is indeed easy, eco-friendly and therefore should be encourage for use by local farmers for soybean and other legumes production in Nigeria.
Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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APPENDIX

Table 1: Effect of Treatment on the Percentage of Emergence

| Treatment       | Percentage Emergence (%) |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| T₁ - Control    | 71.88ᵃ                   |
| T₂ – Gumarabic  | 78.44ᵃ                   |
| T₃ - Honey      | 55.48ᵃ                   |
| T₄ - Powder Milk| 54.64ᵃ                   |
| T₅ – Sugar      | 82.82ᵃ                   |

Means in the same column with the same letter having the same letters are not significantly different (P<0.05)

Table 2: Effect of Treatment on Plant Height (cm)

| Treatment         | MEAN PLANT HEIGHT (cm) |
|-------------------|------------------------|
|                   | 2WAP       | 4WAP       | 6WAP       | 8WAP       | 10WAP      |
| T₁ - Control      | 15.00ᵃ     | 21.50ᵇ     | 24.05ᵇ     | 36.12ᵃ     | 47.35ᵇ     |
| T₂ – Gumarabic    | 14.12ᵃ     | 22.00ᵃ     | 30.00ᵇ     | 38.20ᵃ     | 48.57ᵇ     |
| T₃ - Honey        | 13.92ᵃ     | 24.50ᵃ     | 31.47ᵇ     | 37.75ᵃ     | 54.50ᵇ     |
| T₄ - Powder Milk  | 10.97ᵇ     | 20.35ᵃ     | 37.35ᵃ     | 43.75ᵃ     | 48.17ᵇ     |
| T₅ – Sugar        | 12.17ᵇᶜ    | 25.82ᵃ     | 34.15ᵃ     | 46.67ᵃ     | 57.85ᵃ     |

Means in the same column with the same letter having the same letters are not significantly different (P<0.05)

Table 3: Effect of Treatment on Leaf Area of Soybean (cm²)

| Treatment         | MEAN LEAF AREA (CM²) |
|-------------------|----------------------|
|                   | 2WAP     | 4WAP     | 6WAP     | 8WAP     | 10WAP    |
| T₁ - Control      | 132.77ᵃ   | 130.74ᵇ   | 209.32ᵃ  | 427.2ᵃ   | 635.8ᵃ   |
| T₂ – Gumarabic    | 154.79ᵃ   | 202.33ᵇ   | 302.7ᵃ   | 439.0ᵃ   | 794.8ᵃ   |
| T₃ - Honey        | 183.63ᵃ   | 345.74ᵃ   | 250.01ᵃ  | 303.1ᵃ   | 737.6ᵃ   |
| T₄ - Powder Milk  | 113.69ᵃ   | 239.26ᵇ   | 281.14ᵃ  | 705.7ᵃ   | 746.5ᵃ   |
| T₅ – Sugar        | 106.44ᵃ   | 228.92ᵇ   | 289.16ᵃ  | 709.7ᵃ   | 817.0ᵃ   |

Means in the same column with same letters are not significantly different (P<0.05)
Table 4: Effect of Treatment on Leaf Area Index (LAI) of Soybean

| Treatments     | 2WAP     | 4WAP     | 6WAP     | 8WAP     | 10WAP    |
|----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| T1 - Control   | 1.6840a  | 0.9403a  | 0.6878a  | 0.2430c  | 0.3348a  |
| T2 - Gumarabic | 1.5535a  | 0.9878a  | 0.7123a  | 0.5615ab | 0.480a   |
| T3 - Honey     | 1.1950a  | 1.1393a  | 0.8918a  | 0.6375a  | 0.6275a  |
| T4 - Powder Milk| 1.4675a | 0.9450a  | 0.8348a  | 0.3412bc | 0.3799a  |
| T5 – Sugar     | 1.0220a  | 0.8433a  | 0.5775a  | 0.3450bc | 0.4170a  |

Means in the same column with the same letter having the same letters are not significantly different (P<0.05)

Table 5: Effect of Treatment on Leaf Area Ratio of Soybean

| Treatment  | 2WAP   | 4WAP   | 6WAP   | 8WAP   | 10WAP   |
|------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| T1 - Control | 299.12a | 190.78a| 168.38a| 73.38a | 63.38a  |
| T2 – Gumarabic | 351.75a | 217.91a| 173.01a| 130.57a| 112.93a |
| T3 - Honey | 326.87a  | 231.13a| 145.12a| 126.22a| 124.80a |
| T4 - Powder Milk | 271.67a | 217.19a| 193.56a| 116.55a| 84.81a  |
| T5 – Sugar | 281.98a  | 176.88a| 148.77a| 109.62a| 116.36a |

Means in the same column with same letters are not significantly different (P<0.05)

Table 6: Effect of Treatment on Relative Growth Rate (gg\(^{-1}\text{day}^{-1}\)) of soybean

| TREATMENT    | 2WAP   | 4WAP   | 6WAP   | 8WAP   | 10WAP   |
|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| T1 - Control | 0.20375a | 0.13735a | 0.1150a | 0.19275a | 0.16950a |
| T2 – Gumarabic | 0.18025ab | 0.16575a | 0.16575a | 0.18750a | 0.17150a |
| T3 - Honey   | 0.11475b | 0.19175a| 0.06875a| 0.14075a| 0.13850a|
| T4 - Powder Milk | 0.19250a | 0.16885a| 0.10700a| 0.19775a| 0.16600a|
| T5 – Sugar   | 0.16325ab | 0.26575a| 0.11500a| 0.20525a| 0.15925a|

Means in the same column with the same letters are not significantly different (P<0.05)
### Table 7: Effect of Treatment on Net Assimilation Rate (g cm⁻² day⁻¹)

| Treatment      | 2WAP       | 4WAP       | 6WAP       | 8WAP       | 10WAP      |
|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| T₁ - Control   | 0.00975a   | 0.001375b  | 0.000950b  | 0.001775a  | 0.002750a  |
| T₂ – Gumarabic | 0.011250a  | 0.004250ab | 0.005000a  | 0.013750a  | 0.004500a  |
| T₃ - Honey     | 0.00900a   | 0.001750b  | 0.001450b  | 0.003250a  | 0.002500a  |
| T₄ - Powder Milk| 0.009750a  | 0.002500b  | 0.000650b  | 0.003000a  | 0.003500a  |
| T₅ – Sugar     | 0.008500a  | 0.006500a  | 0.002750ab | 0.003750a  | 0.004475a  |

Means in the same column having the same letters are not significantly different (P<0.05)

### Table 8: Effect of Treatment on Shoot Dry Weight (g) of Soybean

| Treatment      | 2WAP       | 4WAP       | 6WAP       | 8WAP       | 10WAP      |
|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| T₁ - Control   | 0.36300a   | 0.7183a    | 1.0475a    | 5.554a     | 5.491a     |
| T₂ – Gumarabic | 0.38450a   | 0.7730a    | 2.0358a    | 7.898a     | 10.117a    |
| T₃ - Honey     | 0.50025a   | 1.0713a    | 0.6253a    | 3.3865a    | 5.491a     |
| T₄ - Powder Milk| 0.36300a   | 0.8073a    | 1.3690a    | 6.500a     | 6.867a     |
| T₅ – Sugar     | 0.43125a   | 1.4693a    | 1.0210a    | 8.573a     | 8.669a     |

Means in the same column having the same letters are not significantly different

### Table 9: Effect of Treatment on Yield and Yield Component

| Treatment        | Mean No. of pod | Mean 100 seed weight(g) | Mean yield (kg/ha) |
|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| T₁ - Control     | 62.250b         | 16.006a                 | 909.45a            |
| T₂ – Gumarabic   | 73.835ab        | 17.473a                 | 1002.99a           |
| T₃ - Honey       | 77.750ab        | 17.571a                 | 998.35a            |
| T₄ - Powder Milk | 85.750a         | 17.385a                 | 987.78a            |
| T₅ – Sugar       | 85.280a         | 16.457a                 | 934.69a            |

Means in the same column with the same letter are not significantly different (P<0.05)
Table 10: Effect of Treatment on Proximate Composition

| Treatment       | M.C. (%) | Crude protein (%) | Crude Fibre (%) | Crude fat (%) | CHO (%) | Energy (kcal) | Ash (%) |
|-----------------|----------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------|---------------|---------|
| T\textsubscript{1} - Control | 3.855\textsuperscript{d} | 18.495\textsuperscript{d} | 4.485\textsuperscript{d} | 16.380\textsuperscript{c} | 52.785\textsuperscript{g} | 432.290\textsuperscript{e} | 4.055\textsuperscript{e} |
| T\textsubscript{2} – Gumarabic | 4.035\textsuperscript{d} | 18.165\textsuperscript{c} | 4.570\textsuperscript{c} | 17.620\textsuperscript{b} | 51.385\textsuperscript{b} | 436.750\textsuperscript{b} | 4.230b |
| T\textsubscript{3} - Honey | 3.835\textsuperscript{d} | 21.325\textsuperscript{a} | 5.170\textsuperscript{a} | 18.225\textsuperscript{a} | 46.625\textsuperscript{a} | 435.825\textsuperscript{a} | 4.820\textsuperscript{a} |
| T\textsubscript{4} - Powder Milk | 3.950\textsuperscript{c} | 20.065\textsuperscript{b} | 4.865\textsuperscript{b} | 17.480\textsuperscript{a} | 49.510\textsuperscript{d} | 435.64\textsuperscript{d} | 4.125\textsuperscript{d} |
| T\textsubscript{5} – Sugar | 4.125\textsuperscript{a} | 19.420\textsuperscript{c} | 4.105\textsuperscript{e} | 17.385\textsuperscript{d} | 50.670\textsuperscript{c} | 437.363\textsuperscript{a} | 4.17\textsuperscript{c} |

Means in the same column with the same letter are not significantly different (P<0.05)