



Molecular Characterization of Fluted Pumpkin Landraces in South East Nigeria

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/APRJ/2023/v11i4215

Open Peer Review History:

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/100750>

Original Research Article

Received: 03/04/2023

Accepted: 05/06/2023

Published: 16/06/2023

ABSTRACT

The fluted pumpkin *Telfairia occidentalis* (Hook F.) is a very important vegetable, popularly cultivated in South Eastern Nigeria for its economic value and its role in nutrition. It exhibits a high degree of interspecies variability and as such enhances biodiversity. Twenty landraces of fluted pumpkin were collected from five States in southern Nigeria which include; Anambra, Ogun, Lagos, Ondo and Enugu State. The landraces were grown in the Botanical Garden of Lagos State University, Ojo during the rainy season of 2013 for phenotypic screening to determine genetic

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divergence. The experiment was laid out in randomized block design with three replications. Genetic characterization was conducted in the biotech lab of the national institute of medical research (NIMER). The genomic DNA was extracted from the samples and extracted DNA samples were amplified through the PCR techniques using four primers (RAPD – 01, OPR-02, OPC – 04 and SCAR-1 primer) to access diversity among the genotypes. The result reveals a huge genetic divergence among the genotypes studied. The genotypes were grouped into five clusters based on a 2.0(20%) level of similarity by single linkage cluster analysis, which agrees with morphological data, each containing fluted pumpkin genotypes sharing common properties and being similar to one another.

Keywords: Variability; genetic divergence; cluster analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

“It is a fact universally accepted and acknowledged that one can achieve long life, fitness and good health through eating healthy diets. Nigeria as a nation grows varieties of vegetables both fruit and leafy. The growing awareness in recent years of the health-promoting and protecting properties has directed attention to vegetables as vital components of daily diets” [1]. “This attention to vegetables reinforces the significant roles of mostly leafy vegetables. The leafy vegetable is an important feature of Nigeria’s diet after a traditional meal without it is assumed to be incomplete. In developing countries, the consumption of vegetables is generally lower than the FAO recommendation of 75kg per year inhabitants (206g per day per capita)” [2]. “In Nigeria, vegetable production has been ongoing for decades, providing employment and income for the increasing population, especially during the long dry season. Among the important indigenous vegetables, the fluted pumpkin seems to be widely eaten in Nigeria and cultivated for its edible succulent shoots and leaves as a backyard crop mainly by the Igbo tribe” [3].

“*Telfairia occidentalis* (Hook. F.) is a tropical vine grown in West Africa as a leaf vegetable and for its edible seeds. Common names for the plant include Fluted gourd, Fluted pumpkin, and Ugu. *Telfairia occidentalis* is a member of the *curcubitaceae* family. It originated from tropical West Africa” (Irvine 1969; Esiaba, 1983) and is indigenous to southern Nigeria [3]. “The fluted gourd grows in many nations of West Africa but is mainly cultivated in Nigeria, used primarily in soups and herbal medicines” [4]. “Although the fruit is inedible, the seeds produced by the gourd are high in protein and fat, and can therefore contribute to a well-balanced diet. The plant is a drought-

tolerant, perennial that is usually grown trellised. It is an herbaceous perennial crop although it is cultivated as an annual crop, especially under the traditional farming system in West Africa. The leaves are compound usually 3-5 leaflets, and the blades and petioles are covered with multicellular hairs which confer some measure of drought resistance on the plant. The fluted pumpkin is a fast-growing plant, the vines growing to 30.5m in length and it climbs by means of coiled tendril” [5]. It is a dicotyledonous plant. *T. occidentalis* is a dioecious climber, having a separate male (staminate) plant and female (pistillate) plant. *T. occidentalis* produces one of the largest-sized fruits among the cucurbits. It is also recalcitrant in nature (having poor seed storage and losing viability easily) (Akoroda, 1986). *T. occidentalis* is cultivated by seed and Southern part of Nigeria is the major area of production.

Research on the genetic variability of the plant from different accessions will be used for a better understanding of crop evolution and improvement in the quality and quantity of seeds and leaves. In addition, morphological and molecular characterization of germplasm would aid plant breeders in selecting appropriate materials for further genetic improvement of cultivars.

In Nigeria not much work has been done to access the genetic relationship in *T. occidentalis*, the bulk of the works of literature are based on the nutritional benefits and physiological characteristics, which are often influenced by the environment. Molecular biology tools are now employed for detecting variation in plants, by using polymerase chain reaction (PCR) which relies on the sequence information, to design and target specific primers [6]. There are several novel types of marker system that use PCR without prior information on the target DNA sequence. However, these sequences make use

of a universal set of short oligonucleotides that amplify the DNA fragment randomly under low stringency conditions [7]. This strategy has enabled DNA polymorphism to be detected by primers amplification such as Random amplified polymorphic DNA (RAPD) analysis [8], arbitrarily; PCR analysis, DNA, amplification and fingerprinting analysis [6]. RAPD Markers after the quick screening of different regions of the genome for genetic polymorphism have particularly been found to have intra-state application in plant molecular biology for the detection of genetic variation and construction of linkage maps in various plants and animals and in bulk segregate analysis for identifying markers linked to a gene of interest [9].

The aims and objectives of this study were;

1. To check if the collections of *T. occidentalis* from five different states are of the same line or different lines.
2. To check for inter-state and intra-state variation
3. To demonstrate the usefulness of RAPD markers in estimating the extent of genetic diversity in *T. occidentalis*.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Experimental Site: The research project was conducted at the experimental garden of the Botany Department at Lagos State University Ojo. The vegetation on the plot is a mixture of *Imperata cylindrica* and has been on fallows for four years

Germplasm Collection: Twenty landraces or genotypes (pods) of matured fluted pumpkin fruits were obtained from the five states in South East and South West regions of Nigeria.

South East: – Anambra and Enugu States.
South West: – Ondo, Lagos and Ogun States.

Land Preparation: The experimental plot was cleared. The Zero tillage method was used.

Experimental Design: 20 accessions of *Telfaria occidentalis* were grown in the 2013 planting season. The experimental design used was a randomized block design. Pods from the five states were randomized within the main plots, while the genotypes from each state were randomized within the five subplots in each main plot. The main plot measures 7m x 10m and the subplots were single-row plants of 1m x 10m.

Plot spacing was 1m each between and within rows. Alleys of 1m were created among replications.

Planting: After necessary data were collected on the pods and seeds, ten seeds were selected randomly from each pod and planted on the main and subplots allocated to each.

Cultural Practices: Manual weeding was carried out at intervals of 2 weeks while fertilizer NPK 15:15:15 at the rate of 30g per plant was applied using the ring method of application to increase the fertility of the soil.

Data Collection: Ten morphological characters were collected on each genotype for agronomic yield and trait using appropriate equipment. The data collected are as follows:

- a. Vine length two weeks after planting (cm). (from the base of the stem)
- b. Number of leaves 2 weeks after planting (all open leaves on the plant)
- c. Number of branches at harvest 6 weeks after planting (cm).
- d. The total number of branches per vine was counted four weeks after planting.
- e. Number of leaves 6 weeks after planting. The total number of leaves per vine was counted.
- f. Vine length 6 weeks after planting (cm). The vine length from the crown or collar of the tip was measured with a meter rule 6 weeks after planting.
- g. Petiole length 6 weeks after planting in (cm). The length of the petiole from point of attachment to the base of the leaf was measured with a transparent ruler four weeks after planting.
- h. Leaf length 6 weeks after planting (cm). The length of the leaf, from the point of attachment to the vine, to the tip (apex) of the leaf blade was measured with transparent ruler, at four weeks after planting.
- i. Internodes distance (cm). The length of the internodes from one node to another was measured with transparent ruler at six weeks after planting. Starting from the node.
- j. The petiole length at harvest.

Statistical Analysis: Quantitative data were subjected to single linkage cluster analysis, using sequential and hierarchical and nested(SAHN) clustering option of numerical taxonomy system

of Multivariate program (NTSYS) package, version 2.02j.

Molecular evaluation

Preparation of Reagents

1. **Extraction Buffer:-** A 250ml extraction buffer was prepared using 250ml 1M Tris HCl^{at}PH8.0, 25ml 0.5M EDTA^{at}PH8.0, 50ml 5M NaCl, 300ml sterile water, and 5g 1% polyvinyl pyrogallidone (PVP).
2. A total volume of 20% sodium dodecyl sulphate (20% SDS) was prepared by adding 30ml of distilled water to 20g of SDS. This was stirred well to mix and dissolve, and the resulting solution was made up to 50ml with distilled water.
3. Potassium Acetate (CH₃COOK): A 250ml of 5M potassium acetate was prepared by adding 100ml of distilled water, 123g of potassium acetate, and stirring well to mix and dissolve. The solution was made up to 250ml with distilled water.
4. Tris Acetic Acid (TAE Buffer): A 500ml volume of 0.5XTAE buffer was prepared by adding together in a conical flask. 5.4g of Tris base, 2.95g of Boric acid, 2ml of 0.5MTAE and 500ml of distilled water. This was autoclaved at 121°C for 15 minutes. (EDTA) Ethylene ditetra acetic acid.

A 250ml of 0.5M EDTA was prepared by adding 100ml of distilled water to 45.03g of ethylene ditetra amine acetic acid (EDTA) and mixing properly to dissolve. The pH was adjusted to 8.0 Sodium chloride (NaCl)

A 250ml volume of 5M NaCl was prepared by adding 150ml of distilled water to 5.6g of NaCl and stirring well to dissolve. The solution was then made up to 250ml with distilled water.

DNA Extraction

The DNA was extracted from the leaves using a modified protocol (Eppendorf tube centrifuge) based on procedures by Dellaporta *et al.* (1983) as outlined below;

1. 1.5g of fresh leaves of each of the samples were ground properly with mortar and pestle in 800ml of extraction buffer, preheated at 65°C
2. The properly ground paste was transferred to a 15ml Eppendorf tube

and 750ml of extraction buffer was added.

3. 50ml 20% SDS was added and mixed thoroughly with a vortex mixer. The tubes were allowed to incubate at 65°C for 10mins.
4. 250ml of 5M potassium acetate was added again and a vortex with vortex mixer. The tubes were also allowed to incubate again at 0°C for 20mins.
5. The tubes were allowed to spin at 20,000xg for 15mins in a centrifuge (13,000rpm in SS 24 rotor).
6. The supernatants were paired through miracloth and filtered into fresh tubes containing 500ml isopropanol.
7. This vortexed again with a vortex mixer and incubated at 20°C in a deep freezer for 30mins.
8. The tubes were allowed to spin at 20,000xg for 15mins (13,000rpm in SS34 rotor).

The supernatants were poured off and the tubes were allowed to drain, by inverting the tubes on a paper towel.

9. The pellets retained at the bottom of the tubes were redissolved in 350ml of 50mM Tris, 10mM EDTA, pH8, and transferred to Eppendorf tubes.

These were spun in the centrifuge for 10min to pellet insoluble debris.

10. The supernatants were transferred to fresh Eppendorf tubes and an equal volume of 1.1 phenol chloroform was added and vortexed. It was then spun in a centrifuge for 10min.

Phenol chloroform takes care of the impurities in the cell wall.

11. The aqueous phase was transferred to fresh Eppendorf tubes and 1/10 volume 3M sodium acetate (75mM) and 500ml isopropanol were added.
12. This was properly mixed, followed by brief centrifugation in a centrifuge to pellet DNA.
13. The pellet was washed with 1ml of the cold 80% ethanol and the supernatant was discarded. The pellet was dried and dissolved in 100ml, 10mM Tris, 1mM EDTA at pH 7.0.

DNA Quantification

The concentration and purity of DNA isolated by the Dellaporta protocol outlined above were checked by the absorbance at 260nm and the ratio of absorbance at 260nm/280nm using a Nanodrop spectrometer.

PCR Amplification

The DNA samples were subjected to PCR amplification using four primers

These include

RAPD 1
OPRO 02
OPC 04

And 1 SCAR primer

The major work of the PCR machine includes

1. Denaturation
2. Annealing
3. Final extension

The reaction was carried out in a 20ml reaction tube consisting of 2ml of DNA and master mix, 0.5ml of PC mol, RAPD primers and the remaining 13.5ml was made of sterile deionised water.

The PCR amplification was carried out in an Eppendorf thermal cycler or PCR machine with an initial denaturation at 95°C for 1min followed by 40 cycles of 95°C for 30 seconds, 30 seconds annealing for 1minute.

This was followed by a final extension at 72°C for 1 minute.

The PCR machine was allowed to keep the samples into fridge at the temp of 10°C before electrophoresis

The PCR products were analyzed by gel electrophoresis.

The electrophoresis is to separate the DNA in order to check its molecular weight, using markers. The process is as follows:

1. 0.5g of Agerose powder was mixed with 10ml of TAE buffer in a conical flask and melted in a microwave oven.

2. The Agarose was then cooled to 55°C – 60°C and ethidium bromide was added before pouring into a gel tray prefixed with a comb. The content is allowed for 20 – 30 minutes to solidify.
3. The types at the end of the gel tray were then removed and the tray was placed in a ring with 0.5x TAE buffer (Trice Acetic acid) poured to cover the gel by at least 0.5cm.
4. The combs were removed before the samples were loaded into the wells. There was no dye used because the master mix used for PCR contained a green dye.
5. The samples were then run into the gel at a constant voltage (65V) for 1 – 2 hours until the dye migrated towards the opposite end of the gel.
6. After electrophoresis, the gel was viewed under ultraviolet light and photographed.

IKB DNA ladder was used as a DNA molecular weight standard to estimate the molecular weight of the amplified products.

For each decametre primer, a matrix of all the bands present in different DNA was generated when the band was present and when the band was absent.

| | |
|----------|------------------------|
| RAPD 1 - | gcc aga tca g |
| OPRO 2 - | caca agc tgcc |
| OPC 04 - | ccg cat ctac |
| SCAR 1 - | tve gaa gcc ggt |
| | cat atc ga |
| | ve acc acg aat gtg tag |

Single Linkage Cluster Analysis (SLCA)

Single Linkage Cluster Analysis reduced the number of genotypes into groups with the objective to minimize loss of information [10]. Single linkage cluster analysis was performed to obtain a dendrogram and to sort genotypes into clusters based on the pattern of similarity and dissimilarity using the clustering procedure of SAS 2000. The procedure sorted the genotypes into a dendrogram at intervals of 5% level of similarity starting from a minimum distance of 0.00 to 0.99 level of similarity when all the 20 genotypes occurred in a single cluster.

The fragment sizes of the PCR amplified products were estimated from the gel by comparison of the standard molecular weight of the marker.

3. RESULTS

Morphology: qualitative characters such as leaf and stem morphology did not significantly discriminate among the twenty landraces that were studied. For quantitative characters, vine length, leaf length, width, number of leaves, and internode distance showed huge variation for the twenty genotypes.

3.1 Morphological Data Analysis

The mean squares from analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the twelve agronomic traits of twenty fluted pumpkin genotypes were used to generate a UPGMA dendrogram. The procedure sorted the genotypes into a dendrogram at intervals of 5% level of similarity starting from a

minimum distance of 0.00 to 0.99 level of similarity when all the 20 genotypes occurred in a single cluster.

Molecular data analysis: The fragment sizes of the PCR amplified products were estimated from the gel by comparison of the standard molecular weight of the marker.

The four primers used produced polymorphic band patterns.

Opc – 04 gave 34 bands

Rapd I gave 100 band

The primers generated a total of 177 bands, in the size range of 250 – 1500Bp.

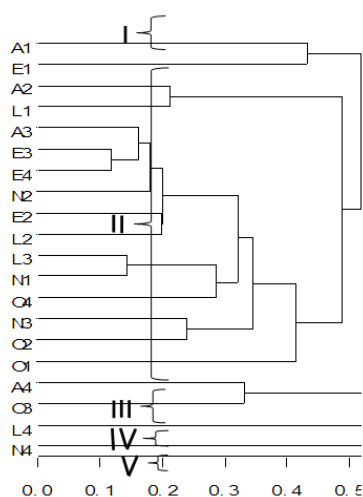
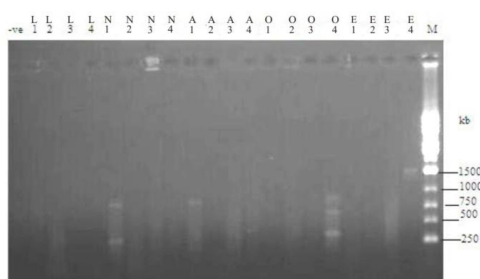


Fig. 1. Dendrogram resulting from single linkage cluster analysis of twenty genotypes of fluted pumpkin



OPC - 04

RAPD profile using primer OPC 04

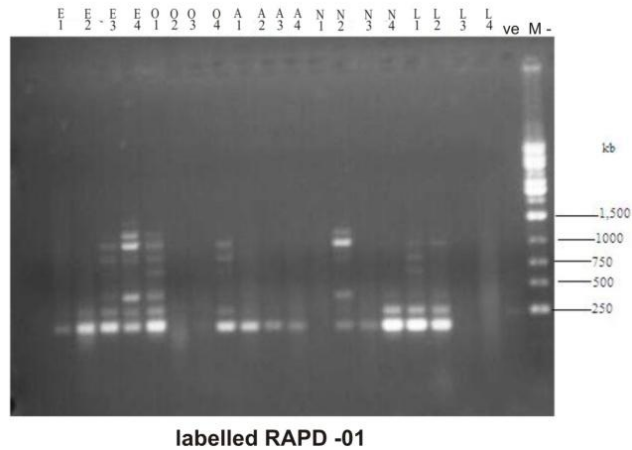
The gell lane marked M, 1kb DNA ladder

The lane E1-E4 represent Enugu, 01-04 represent Ogun, A1-A4 represent Anamabra, N1-N4 represent Ondo, L1-L4 represent Lagos.

Fig. 2. RAPD profile using primer OPC-04

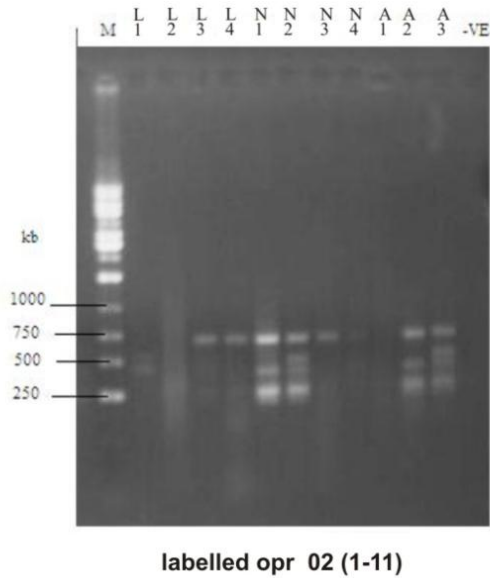
Table 1. Means of twelve agronomic characters of twenty fluted pumpkin genotypes

| Genotype | Characters | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| | Days to emergence | Vine length 2WAP (cm) | Number of leaves 2WAP | Vine length 6WAP (cm) | Number of leaves 6WAP | Number of branches 6WAP | Vine diameter 6WAP (cm) | Leaf length 6WAP (cm) | Leaf width 6WAP (cm) | Leaf area 6WAP (cm ²) | Petiole length 6WAP (cm) | Internode length 6WAP (cm) |
| A1 | 7.67e | 30.57bcd | 7.00ef | 71.90j | 26.67d-g | 1.67a | 0.28b | 12.08d | 5.10de | 153.95ef | 4.37i | 6.17i |
| A2 | 13.33a | 31.63bc | 8.67cd | 128.47fg | 31.00bcd | 1.67a | 0.48b | 12.98c | 6.10b | 197.91c | 5.10h | 8.13f |
| A3 | 13.67a | 32.83b | 7.67def | 154.33e | 26.67d-g | 0.67ab | 0.46b | 12.07d | 5.27d | 159.13e | 6.93e | 7.01g |
| A4 | 13.33a | 29.97cd | 10.33b | 179.50d | 30.67bcd | 1.33ab | 0.41b | 15.23a | 6.24ab | 237.60a | 6.67e | 7.10g |
| E1 | 7.67e | 16.17gh | 6.33f | 66.27j | 22.33fg | 0.00b | 0.18b | 10.23g | 4.53f | 116.04i | 4.97h | 4.08j |
| E2 | 8.67d | 34.17a | 7.67def | 119.43g | 27.33de | 1.33ab | 0.30b | 11.20e | 5.03de | 140.95g | 6.04c | 9.87bc |
| E3 | 12.00b | 32.23abc | 8.33cde | 147.67e | 28.67cd | 1.33ab | 0.47b | 11.18e | 4.97de | 138.88g | 5.97f | 6.23i |
| E4 | 12.00b | 34.23a | 7.67def | 153.67e | 34.33ab | 1.67a | 0.23b | 11.22e | 5.20d | 145.93fg | 7.71cd | 6.03i |
| L1 | 9.67c | 17.17fgh | 8.67cd | 120.68g | 28.67cd | 1.00ab | 0.29b | 13.17c | 5.68c | 187.10dd | 6.23f | 6.33hi |
| L2 | 10.00c | 21.24e | 10.67b | 132.77f | 27.67de | 1.33ab | 0.39b | 11.14e | 5.03de | 140.20g | 6.07f | 9.27de |
| L3 | 7.67e | 15.07h | 6.33f | 130.60fg | 23.00efg | 1.00ab | 0.25b | 10.17g | 3.70h | 94.09jk | 7.43d | 9.70cd |
| L4 | 8.00de | 32.50ab | 16.33a | 237.23b | 34.67ab | 1.33ab | 0.50b | 15.07a | 6.47a | 243.58a | 9.07b | 10.30b |
| N1 | 10.00c | 18.93ef | 8.33cde | 135.63f | 31.33bcd | 1.33ab | 1.60a | 10.07g | 4.03g | 101.50j | 5.47g | 6.97g |
| N2 | 9.67c | 20.57e | 9.67bc | 149.00e | 33.00abc | 1.33ab | 0.29b | 10.63f | 4.83ef | 128.59h | 6.13f | 11.10a |
| N3 | 13.33a | 17.57fg | 6.67f | 128.67fg | 27.17dfg | 0.00b | 0.21b | 6.90j | 3.20i | 55.15n | 7.87c | 6.70gh |
| N4 | 13.33a | 28.83d | 8.67cd | 279.83a | 36.67a | 1.33ab | 0.29b | 9.17h | 3.54h | 81.13l | 9.80a | 9.33de |
| O1 | 7.67e | 7.23i | 7.67def | 90.37i | 22.00g | 1.67a | 0.23b | 7.30i | 2.85j | 52.06n | 3.97j | 4.27j |
| O2 | 8.00de | 17.10fgh | 6.33f | 146.73e | 31.33bcd | 1.33ab | 0.31b | 9.23h | 2.90ij | 66.88m | 5.95f | 6.77gh |
| O3 | 13.00a | 31.09 | 10.33b | 196.67c | 29.00cd | 1.33ab | 0.41b | 14.17b | 5.97bc | 211.31b | 9.90a | 8.91e |
| O4 | 12.00b | 19.51ef | 8.33cde | 106.06h | 27.67de | 1.00ab | 0.31b | 9.30h | 3.67h | 85.29kl | 5.91f | 6.97g |



RAPD profile using primer radp - 01
 The gell lane marked M, 1-5kb DNA ladder
 The lane E1 - E4 represents Enugu, O1-O4 - Ogun,
 A1-A4 Anambra, N1-N4 Ondo, L1-L4 Lagos.

Fig. 3. RAPD profile using primer RAPD-01



RAPD profile using primer opr 02
 The gell labe marked M, 1kb DNA ladder
 L1-L4 represent Lagos, N1-N4 represent Ondo
 A1-A4 represent Anambra, O1-O4 represent Ogun, E1-E4
 represent Enugu

Fig. 4. Labelled opr 02 (1-11)

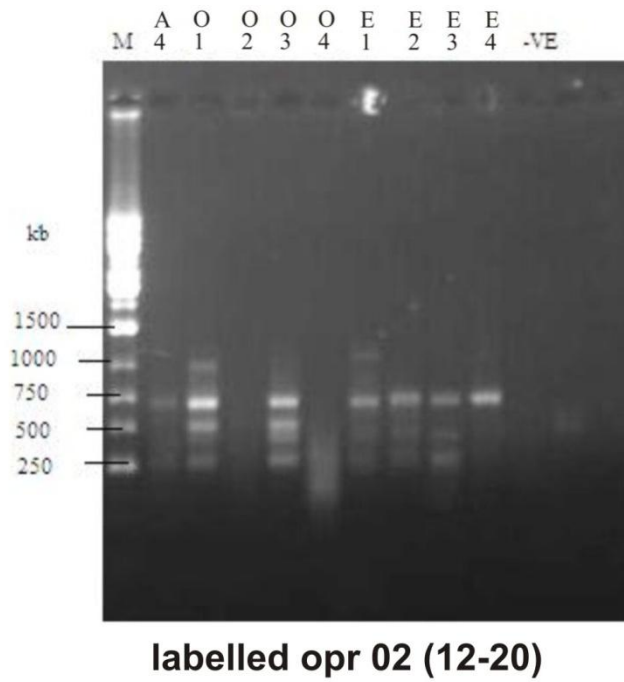
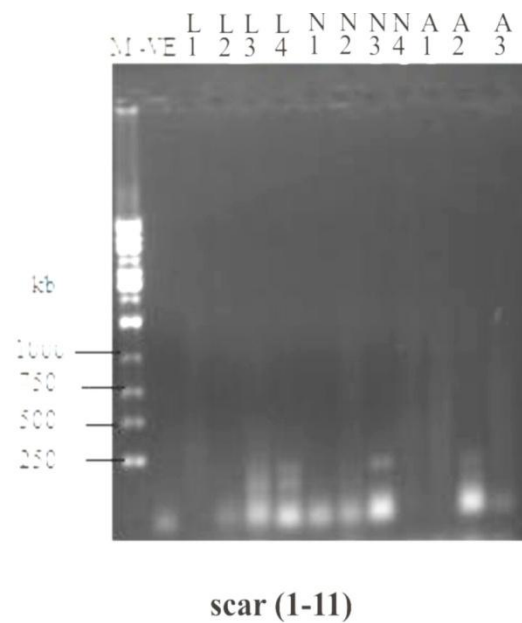


Fig. 5. Labelled opr 02 (12-20)



RAPD profile using SCAR primer

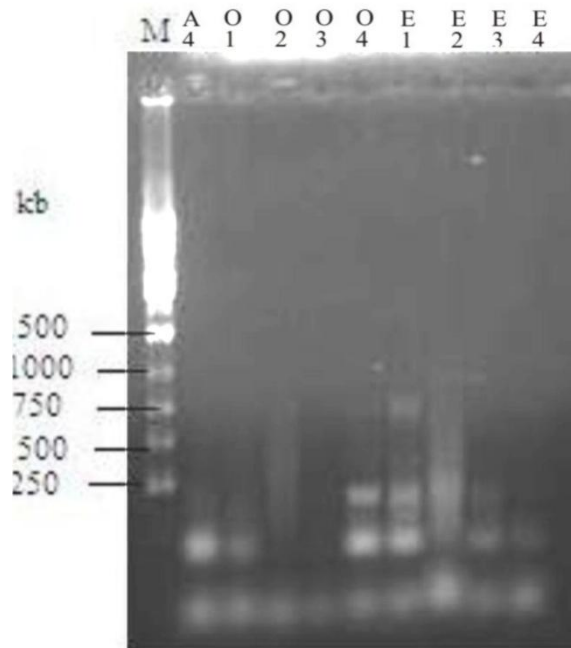
The gell lane marked M, with 1kb DNA ladder.

The Lane L1 - L4 represent Lagos N1 - N4 represent Ondo

A1 - A4 represent Anambra.

O1 - O4 represent Ogun, E1 - E4 represent Enugu

Fig. 6. RAPD profile using SCAR primer



SCAR (12-20)

Fig. 7. The RAPD profile of the plants

The RAPD profile of the plants for the four primers is shown in figure above.

The four primers had a GTC content of 30 – 70% and the primer that generated the highest number of the band had a GTC content of 40% (RAPD I)

The DNA WAS confirmed by agarose gel electrophoresis

From the DNA picture, NO two primers had the same profile.

The genotypes showed variation in their band pattern indicating that diversity exists.

But genotypes A3 and N2 in primer opr -02 and E4 and N2 in rapd – 01 had equal bands and can be said to be clonally related despite they are from different states.

4. DISCUSSION

“The existence of genetic variation can be employed as the basis for improving yield and other potentials of crop plants” [11] (Muhammad et al., 2007; Jonah et al., 2010; Makinde and Ariyo, 2013). “Therefore, knowledge of the

genetic variability of growth characters would aid in the choice of an effective and efficient breeding method that will accelerate the pace of improvement in yield traits. In this study, the 20 genotypes of fluted pumpkin collected from 5 different states of Nigeria, showed wide ranges and significant variation. The genotypes were grouped into five clusters by SLCA, each carrying fluted pumpkin genotypes sharing common properties and being similar to one another. There was no consistency in the clustering pattern of the genotypes. Some genotypes sourced from the same state were either grouped or not grouped together while others from different sources were clustered together. This has, in some cases been attributed to a lack of similarity between genetic and geographical diversity due to the movement of germplasm through seed exchange” [12,13,14]. According to Fayeun, 2011, “the exchange of seeds is a common practice among African farmers”. Odiaka et al. (2008) reported that “commercial fluted pumpkin growers in the middle belt source their fluted pumpkin seeds from the South-Eastern states of Nigeria”. Similar practices have been reported in Zambia for Zambian cucurbit (*Cucurbita moschata* Duch.) by Gwanama and Nichterien [12], and in Tanzania for Bambara groundnut [13].

“There was an obvious distinction in the mean values of characters across the clusters. Therefore, an improvement programmes in fluted pumpkins through the direct varietal selection might be easy” [14]. In addition, clusters that showed some character distinctions could be employed for hybridization purposes. Cluster I recorded the earliest days to emergence but poor in growth characters while cluster V was late in emergence but had the best performance in growth parameters, hence genotypes in cluster I may be selected for early emergence while cluster V may be selected for improved vegetative growth. In addition, a high-yielding progeny which will have a better combination of early emergence and improved vegetative growth could be selected from a cross between suitable entries in clusters I and V. A large amount of genetic variation observed among the genotypes supported the earlier observation by Odiaka [15], Fayeun et al. [14], and Odiyi et al. (2014) that abundant genetic divergence existed in fluted pumpkin germplasm. According to Makinde and Ariyo [16], “the pattern of genetic variation observed would be of great importance to germplasm collectors and plant breeders”. “The categorization of the diversity among the genotypes into groups with similar characteristics can be used to design a collection strategy” [17,16].

4.1 Molecular Studies

RAPD markers were also used to access the variation in the 20 genotypes from five states in Nigeria.

As Ogunkanmi et al. [18] opined, phenotypic markers are usually affected by environmental conditions, growth stages, and agronomic practices.

Chan and Sun [8] states that morphological variation could cause confusion or misunderstanding and RAPD analysis is a powerful tool for determining genetic relationships.

Arif et al. [7] indicated that sequence-based analysis sometimes fails to distinguish between species because of the significant similarities between their DNA sequence in the amplified region.

They reported that RADP primers distinguish below the specie level because RAPD analysis

reflects both coding and non-coding regions of the genome.

Since each 2ml of oligonucleotide primer used only covers a very limited part of the genome, important differences located on non-amplified regions could be missed.

When similar profiles (Equal band) are obtained from two different genotypes or samples using a particular primer, conclusions can be made that the two particular sample are the same. The RAPD data in this study showed that no two primers revealed identical profiles of the genotypes. E4 and N2 detected by the primer RAPD – 01 have equal bands and can be said to be identical or clonally related even though they are from different states. Also the profile of the genotypes A3 and N2 detected by the primer Opr – 02 are also similar identical. Showing or indicating that they are closely related and different from other genotypes.

5. CONCLUSION

This study has generated data on the intra species diversity among the specie of *Telfaria occidentalis* from five states in Nigeria using phenotypic and RAPD profiles.

From the results obtained in this study, conclusions can be drawn that

- ❖ RAPD profile of the four primers also showed diversity among the genotypes.
- ❖ Diversity among the genotypes is a result of the gene pool and the rest a result of environmental influence.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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