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EVALUATION OF GROUNDNUT HAULMS ON GROWTH PERFORMANCE AND HEMATOLOGICAL INDICES OF BROILER FINISHER IN SEMI-ARID ZONE OF BORNO STATE

*A. Mustapha, A. A. Makinta, A.A. Muhammad, B. Adamu, I. Sani and A.A. Benisheikh.....91*

ASSESSMENT OF CAMEL (*Camelus dromedaries*) MILK AND URINE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF DIABETES MELLITUS IN THE SEMI - ARID BORNO STATE, NIGERIA

*A. Mustapha, B. Adamu, M. Jibir, A.A. Benisheikh, A. A. Makinta and I. Sani.....99*

EFFECT OF GRADED LEVELS OF ALKALI TREATED NEEM KERNEL CAKE ON HAEMATOLOGY AND BIOCHEMICAL PARAMETERS OF BORNO WHITE GOATS

*T.A. Jibrin, AA. Makinta, A.M. Marte and H. Husa.....105*

EVALUATION OF WATERMELON RESPONSE TO POPULATION DENSITIES AND COW DUNG MANURE IN AN ULTISOLS

*S.K. Ogundare, A.S. Hinmikaiye and O.O. Etukudo.....113*

AGRO-PHYSIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF LETTUCE (*Lactuca sativa* L.) CULTIVARS AS INFLUENCED BY IRRIGATION AND MULCHING IN A SEMI-ARID REGION OF NIGERIA

*J.O. Ichi, H. Ibrahim, A.O. Osunde, A.J. Odojin and H.E. Igbadun.....123*

PRODUCTIVITY OF WATERMELON (*Citrullus lanatus* Thunb Mansf.) AS AFFECTED BY SEED HARDENING WITH SALICYLIC ACID UNDER RAIN-FED CONDITION

*S.U. Yahaya and F.S. Mohammed.....141*

INFLUENCE OF DIFFERENT TILLAGE PRACTICES ON SOIL PROPERTIES AND GROWTH OF MAIZE VARIETIES ON TYPIC PLINTHUSTALF SOIL

*A.A. Wahab, K.O. Alabi, O.O. Lawal, I.A. Aderolu and A.D. Zubair.....149*

EFFECT OF IRRIGATION INTERVAL, NITROGEN LEVELS AND INTRA ROW SPACING ON GROWTH AND YIELD OF CARROT (*Daucus carota* L.) AT DADINKOWA, GOMBE STATE

*B.A. Mahmoud, B.B. Jakusko and U. Ibrahim.....163*

EFFECT OF FRUIT AGE ON THE SEED QUALITY OF FOUR PEPPER (*Capsicum annuum* L.) GENOTYPES IN MINNA, NIGER STATE-NIGERIA

H. Ibrahim, O.A. Adewumi, O.A. Adediran, A.N. Muhammad and A.Y. Mamudu .....173

EVALUATION OF FOUR RICE (*Oryzasativa* L.) VARIETIES UNDER DRY SEASON PRODUCTION IN JEGA, KEBBI STATE- NIGERIA

E.A. Manasseh, S.E. Abimiku, E.J. Zidafamor and O.K. Ishiak.....187

REPRODUCTIVE BEHAVIOR AND HATCHABILITY OF *Tilapia guineensis* IN PLASTIC TANKS IN LAGOS, NIGERIA

M.M. Abdullahi, M.R. Ajijo and M.A. Matanmi.....193

EFFECT OF DIFFERENT PROCESSING METHODS ON THE CHEMICAL COMPOSITION OF *Mangifera indica* LEAVES

R. Ibrahim, A.B. Gana, T. Iriobe and S.A. Hassan.....201

OCCURRENCE AND DISTRIBUTION OF WOODY TREE SPECIES IN KUWAKKA – BANZA FOREST RESERVE OF KEBBI STATE, NIGERIA

A.S. Ambursa, A.G. Bello and M.M. Aliero.....209

EVALUATION OF NUTRITIONAL COMPOSITION OF TWO DATE PALM (*Phoenixdactylifera* L.) VARIETIES AS INFLUENCED BY PACKAGING MATERIALS IN SOKOTO STATE-NIGERIA

S. Abdullahi, M.B. Abdulazeez and B. Ahmed.....217

EFFECT OF PRE-GERMINATION TREATMENTS AND POTTING MIXTURES ON GERMINATION AND SEEDLING EMERGENCE OF FOUR CULTIVARS OF DATE PALM IN SOKOTO STATE, NIGERIA

S. Abdullahi, S.A. Yahaya and B. Ahmed.....225

ASSESSMENT OF PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE OF CITY DWELLERS ON URBAN FORESTRY IN SOKOTO METROPOLIS

I.M. Dankani .....233



## EFFECT OF FRUIT AGE ON THE SEED QUALITY OF FOUR PEPPER (*Capsicum annuum* L.) GENOTYPES IN MINNA, NIGER STATE-NIGERIA

H. Ibrahim, O.A. Adewumi, O.A. Adediran, A.N. Muhammad and A.Y. Mamudu

Department of Crop Production, Federal University of Technology, Minna

### ABSTRACT

The appropriate fruit harvest stage for optimum seed quality in four pepper genotypes usually grown in Minna, Niger State was determined. Mass transplanting of pepper seedlings was carried out on beds at 50 and 75 cm intra and inter row spacings respectively. Flowers were date-tagged as they opened for about 40 days. Fruits of different ages (24, 28, 32, 36, 40, 44, 48 and 52 DAA) were harvested at once. Data were taken on fruit colour, seed dry matter, germination percentage (GP), germination rate index (GRI) and germination index (GI). Data collected were subjected to analysis of variance (ANOVA) using Minitab 17.0 version; means were separated using Tukey's Honest Significant Different Test. Fruit colour remained green up till 28 DAA. At 32 DAA, red colouration became noticeable in a small proportion of the fruit. This continued gradually until fruits became completely red outside at 52 DAA. No significant differences were recorded among the dry matter of seeds of the four genotypes while its values increase significantly from 19.67% to 64.03% from 24 to 52 DAA respectively. Seeds of 'Shombo' genotypes (V4) is superior in both viability and longevity than all the 'Tatashe' genotypes (V 1, 2 and 3); genotype V2 of 'Tatashe' however maintain viability longer than V 1 and 3. GP increased significantly from 8.00% to 79.25% from seeds harvested at 28 to 52 DAA respectively prior to storage with slight increase to 81.50% at 52 DAA when seeds were 14 days in storage. The trends recorded in GRI and GI were similar to that of GP. The general decreases in the values of GP, GRI and GI when seeds were beyond 14 days in storage was an indication that deterioration has set in. It is concluded from this study that pepper seeds reached maximum quality at 52 DAA when fruits were completely red outside.

**Keywords:** Pepper; seed; germination percentage; vigour; dormancy

### INTRODUCTION

Red bell pepper called "Tatashe" (*Capsicum annuum* L.) belongs to the family Solanaceae (Kabura *et al.*, 2008). The crop is said to have originated from southern tropical America and probably domesticated in Mexico around 2000BC. Pepper is a well-recognised crop in the tropics and it is the world's second most important vegetable after tomatoes (Olaniyi and Ojetayo, 2010). The crop has been grown for many years by peasant farmers in the northern part of Nigeria (Olawajaju and Showemino, 2003). It is reported to be rich in vitamins, important antioxidants, flavonoids and phytochemicals (Maria *et al.*, 2010). In Nigeria, it accounts for about 20% of the average daily vegetable consumption per person (Alegbejo, 2002). This according to Adesina *et al.* (2014) makes it an important part of the diet of millions of Nigerians, thus, its increase in popularity and demand. Peppers are used

fresh in vegetable salads or used as spice in the preparation of soup and stew amongst Nigerians (Benson *et al.*, 2014). Peppers are also linked with the prevention of certain types of cardiovascular diseases, atherosclerosis, cancer, haemorrhage, delaying of ageing process, preventing cholesterol build up, improving physical resistance and increasing appetite (Marin *et al.*, 2004).

Despite the numerous benefits and uses of this crop, availability of quality seeds to farmers in Nigeria particularly in Minna Niger State is a major problem limiting its production. Seed is a primary and essential starting point for a wide range of horticultural and arable crops, including many annual and biennial ornamentals (Demir and Balkaya, 2005). Most resource poor farmers obtain seeds from fruits that have been left to weather on the field which are most likely to be of poor quality. Such seeds are known to germinate and store poorly when used (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2017). The production and distribution of seeds by seed companies and enterprises in Nigeria is more in the area of cereal and grain legumes. This explains why vegetable farmers source their seeds locally and this has great negative effects on seed quality. However, some low input technologies such as good cultural practices are known to result in high quality seed yield from mother-plants on farmers' fields. Among several cultural practices, harvesting of the fruit at the right stage of maturity is of great importance for obtaining high quality seeds (Ali and Singh, 2015). Though several works have been done on when fruits of pepper should be harvested in order to obtain seeds of high quality, results revealed that variations exist even among cultivars or genotypes within same species. The work done by Oladiran and Kortse (2002) revealed that fruits of pepper harvested at 44 days after anthesis (DAA) yielded seeds of highest quality while Vidigal *et al.* (2011) reported 75 DAA as the optimum harvest time for seeds of high quality in '*Amarela comprida*' cultivar of sweet pepper. Lady's Finger pepper is reported to be physiologically mature when the fruits are intense red in colour at about 45 DAA and a 10-day after-ripening of fruits improves the physiological potential of the seeds (Periera *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, seeds of pepper have been considered to have poor longevity (Basak *et al.*, 2006). "Tatashe" seed in particular is reported to be an excellent poor storer (Oladiran and Kortse, 2002). The aim of this study was to determine the appropriate fruit harvest time for the production of high-quality seeds in the four pepper genotypes usually grown in Minna, Niger State.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Study Area

The experiment was carried out at the Teaching and Research Farm of Federal University of Technology, Minna (9° 40' N and 6° 30' E) in the Southern Guinea Savanna region of Nigeria. The site experiences two seasons, Rainy beginning from April to October and Dry starting from November and stops in March. The vegetation cover is mostly grasses and shrubs with scattered trees. The soil is sandy loam in composition.

### Sample Collection and Field Trial

Fresh red ripe fruits of four genotypes ('Tatashe' Dan Kano (V 1), 'Tatashe' Dan Kaduna (V2), 'Tatashe' Dan Zaria (V 3) and 'Shombo' (V 4) of *Capsicum annum* L. were obtained from Kure Market, Minna. The fruits were carefully sliced with the aid of sharp knife and seeds were extracted from them. The extracted seeds were air dried at room temperature

(ca 30 °C) for 2 weeks. In the nursery, the seeds were sown by drilling in 5 kg topsoil in plastic buckets with perforated bottom to enhance proper drainage and watering was done as found necessary. Seedlings that emerged were nursed for five weeks. Matured seedlings were mass-transplanted in three rows on each bed with inter and intra-row spacings of 70 cm and 50 cm respectively. Water was applied at interval of five days till the end of harvesting. The plots were manually weeded using hoe as found necessary. NPK 15:15:15 at the rate of 300 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> was applied to the plants four weeks after transplanting to supply 45 kg each of N, P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> and K<sub>2</sub>O ha<sup>-1</sup> at first application. A second application of N at 50% flowering (using urea 46% as source) to the plants at the rate of 76 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> was done to supply the balance of 35 kg N. The total application resulted to 80 kg N, 45 kg P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> and 45 kg K<sub>2</sub>O ha<sup>-1</sup>.

### Data Collection

Flowers were date-tagged as they opened for about 40 days and fruits of the different ages (24, 28, 32, 36, 40, 44, 48 and 52 DAA) were harvested at once. Soon after each harvest, fruits were cut open with a sharp knife to extract the seeds. The moisture content of the seeds of each of the treatments was determined using the high temperature oven drying method at 130 °C for one hour as described by (International Seed Testing Association, 2005). Thereafter, seed dry matter was determined by subtracting the percentage moisture content from 100. The rest of the seeds were air-dried at ambient condition (ca 30 °C) for 14 days and then packaged in screw-cap plastic bottles.

For longevity studies, seeds from fruits of all the different ages were stored at 37 °C and 75% relative humidity in open plastic plates; to accelerate ageing of the seeds (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2013). Germination tests were carried out on all the seed lots prior to storage and at two-week intervals afterwards for six weeks (i.e. 0, 2, 4, and 6 (WAS). This was done by placing four replicates of 50 seeds each of the different harvesting stages on distilled water-moistened-filter paper in plastic Petri-dishes. Germination counts were taken every-other-day and the results were expressed in percentage.

### Data Analysis

Germination rate index (Kader, 2005) and germination index (GI) were calculated and used to estimate the vigour of the seeds. Data in percentages were transformed to arcsine values before statistical analysis and data were analysed using analysis of variance (ANOVA). Where significant differences exist between treatments, the Tukey's Honesty Significant Difference test was used to separate the means. All the analysis was carried out using Minitab 17.0 version

## RESULTS

Physical observations of the test fruits for the duration of the experiment shows that fruit colour remained green up till 28 DAA and at 32 DAA, red colouration became noticeable in a small proportion of the fruit flesh. The displacement of green colouration by the red continued gradually until fruits became completely red outside at 52 DAA (Plates 1 and 2).

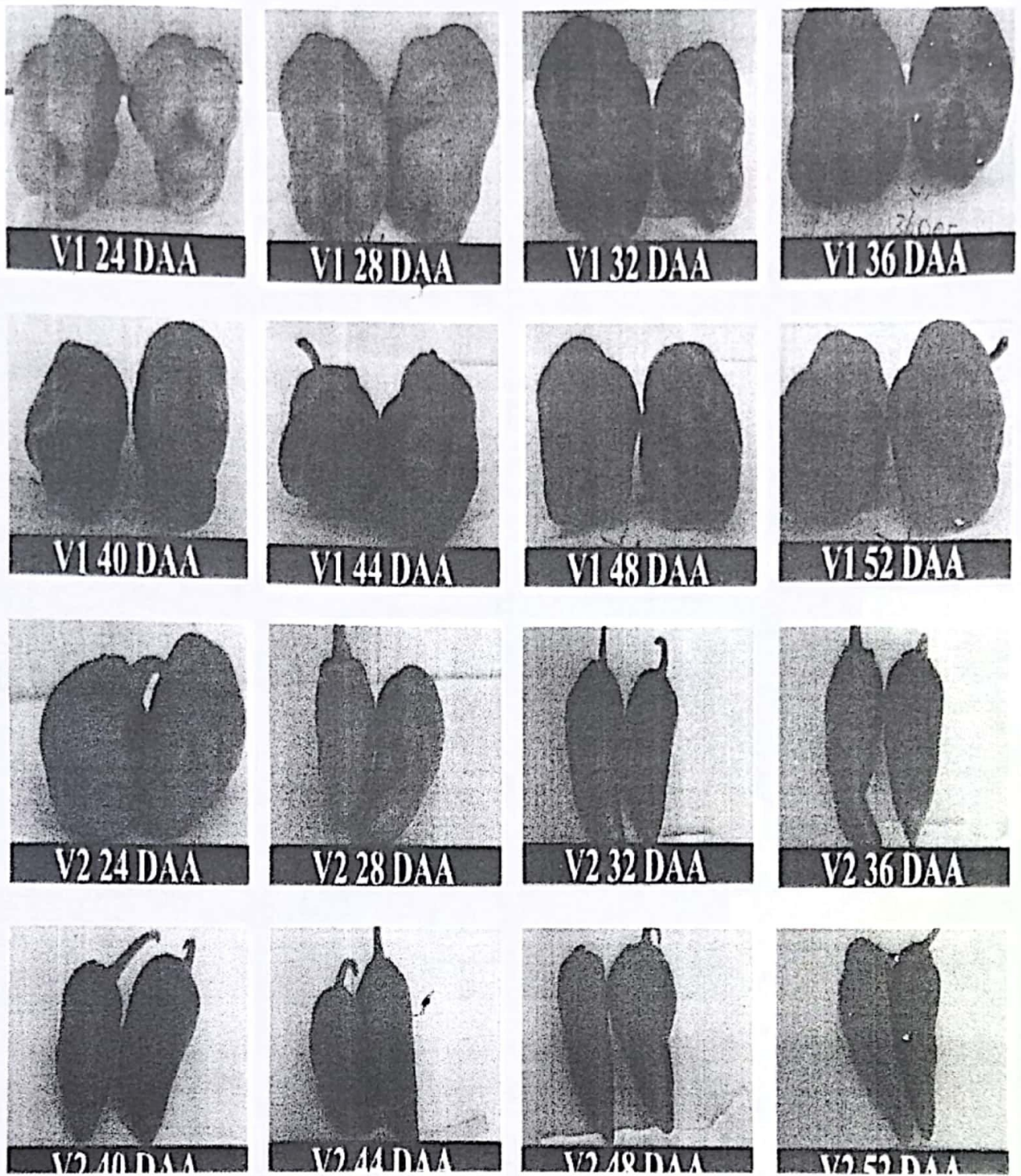


Plate 1: Changes in fruit colour with age in V1 and V2 accessions of pepper



Effect of fruit age on the seed quality of four pepper (*Capsicum annuum* L.) genotypes

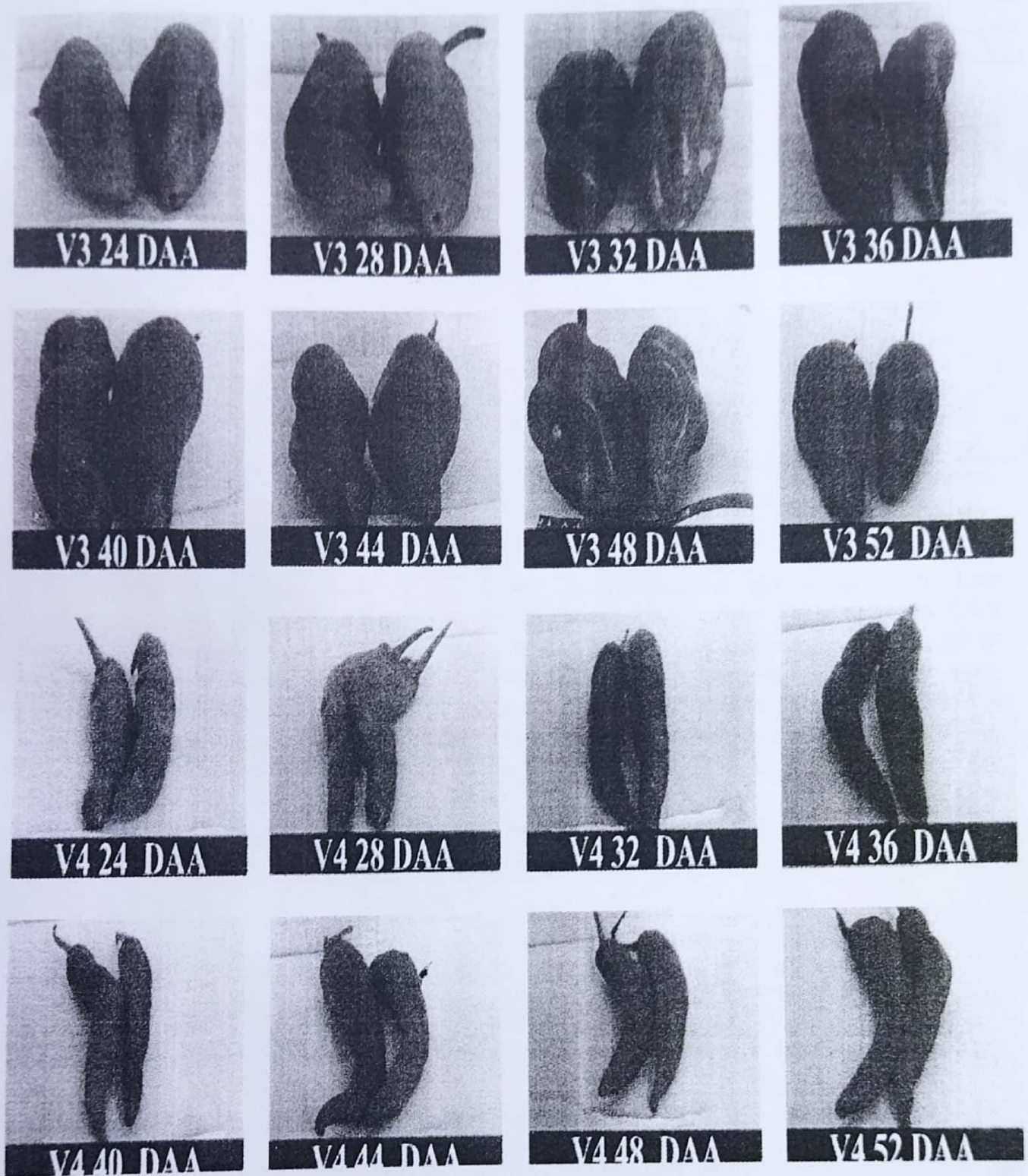


Plate 2: Changes in fruit colour with age in V3 and V4 accessions of pepper

Seeds germination of genotype V4 was significantly higher than those of other genotypes throughout the storage. Germination in seeds of V 1, 2 and 3 were statistically

similar prior to storage and up till 14 days of storage after which V2 germinated significantly higher than those of V 1 and 3 (Table 1).

Table 1: Effect of variety and fruit age on seed germination percentage at different storage periods

| Variety (V) | Storage periods (days) |        |         |         |
|-------------|------------------------|--------|---------|---------|
|             | 0                      | 14     | 28      | 42      |
| 1           | 38.38b                 | 41.25b | 12.44d  | 8.81c   |
| 2           | 40.50b                 | 45.75b | 20.94b  | 11.37b  |
| 3           | 37.75b                 | 39.98b | 14.44c  | 5.31d   |
| 4           | 59.06a                 | 64.69a | 32.00a  | 16.38a  |
| DAA         |                        |        |         |         |
| 24          | 0.00e                  | 0.00e  | 0.00f   | 0.00f   |
| 28          | 8.00d                  | 4.75d  | 1.13f   | 0.00f   |
| 32          | 31.88c                 | 30.50c | 9.88e   | 3.75e   |
| 36          | 51.50b                 | 59.38b | 20.63d  | 9.75d   |
| 40          | 58.75b                 | 65.25b | 26.13cd | 11.88cd |
| 44          | 59.50b                 | 66.25b | 28.88bc | 15.75bc |
| 48          | 62.50b                 | 75.70a | 35.00ab | 19.75ab |
| 52          | 79.25a                 | 81.50a | 38.00a  | 22.88a  |
| V*DAA       | *                      | *      | *       | *       |

Means followed by the same letter (s) for the same factor in a column are not significantly different at 5% level of probability by Tukey test. V1 = Tatashe Dan Kano, V2 = Tatashe Dan Kaduna, V3 = Tatashe Dan Zaria, V4 = Shombo, DAA= Days after anthesis

Germination did not occur in any of the seeds harvested before 28 DAA. Poor germination (8.00%) was recorded prior to storage when seeds were harvested at 28 DAA (Table 1). Germination increased with increase in the fruit age reaching a maximum of 79.25% at 52 DAA and this value was significantly greater than those of lower ages. Similarly, the maximum germination percentage of 81.50% was attained in seeds harvested at 52 DAA when seeds were 14 days in storage. However, the value is not significantly higher than the 75.70% recorded in seeds from fruits harvested at 48 DAA. Maximum seed dry matter of 64.03% was also recorded at 52 DAA (Figure 1), coinciding with the fruit age at which maximum seed viability and longevity was expressed. Seeds of V2 however stood out among the other 'Tatashe' genotypes in terms of longevity.

Effect of fruit age on the seed quality of four pepper (*Capsicum annum* L.) genotypes

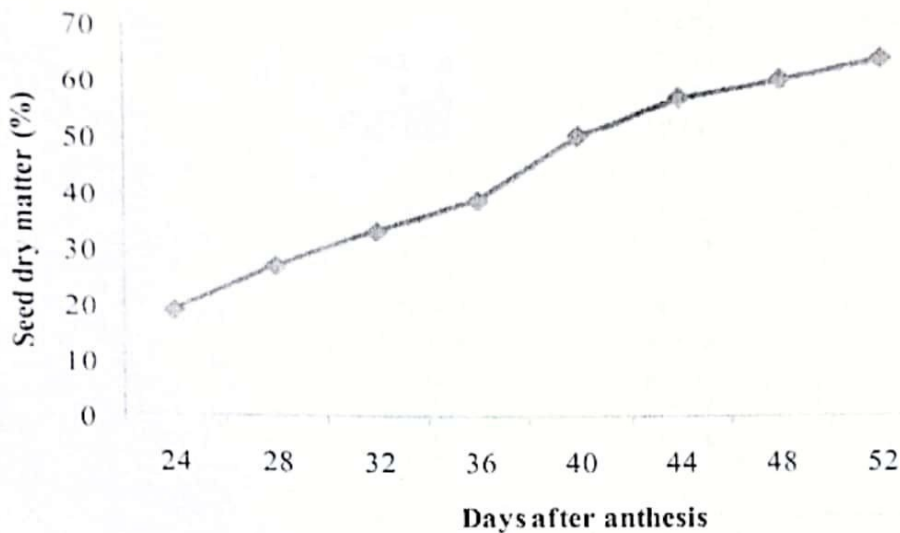


Figure 1: Seed dry matter at different fruit ages

Table 2: Interaction effect of variety and fruit age on germination percentage at different storage periods

| Variety      | Days after anthesis |         |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|--------------|---------------------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|              | 24                  | 28      | 32       | 36       | 40       | 44       | 48       | 52       |
| Zero storage |                     |         |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| 1            | 0.00i               | 1.00hi  | 13.50g   | 50.50c-f | 51.50c-f | 52.00c-f | 65.00a-e | 73.50a-d |
| 2            | 0.00i               | 7.00g-i | 7.5g-i   | 43.00ef  | 56.00b-e | 59.50a-e | 69.00a-e | 82.00a   |
| 3            | 0.00i               | 10.50gh | 28.00fg  | 43.50ef  | 46.00d-f | 44.5c-f  | 53.00c-f | 76.50a-c |
| 4            | 0.00i               | 13.50g  | 78.50a   | 69.00a-e | 81.50a   | 82ab     | 63.00a-e | 85.00a   |
| 14 DAS       |                     |         |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| 1            | 0.001               | 0.001   | 13.00jk  | 56.50gh  | 58.00gh  | 61.00f-g | 65.50c-g | 76.00a-g |
| 2            | 0.001               | 4.00kl  | 7.50kl   | 58.00gh  | 65.00d-g | 67.00c-g | 82.50a-e | 82.00a-f |
| 3            | 0.001               | 9.50jk  | 28.00ij  | 37.00hi  | 53.50g-i | 53.00g-i | 63.30e-g | 75.50b-g |
| 4            | 0.001               | 5.5kl   | 73.5c-g  | 86.00a-d | 84.5a-e  | 84.00a-c | 91.50a   | 92.50ab  |
| 28 DAS       |                     |         |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| 1            | 0.001               | 0.001   | 0.001    | 11.00g-j | 13.50f-l | 19.00f-h | 26.50d-g | 29.50a-f |
| 2            | 0.001               | 0.001   | 4.00i-l  | 18.00f-h | 27.50b-g | 30.00a-f | 41.50a-d | 46.50ab  |
| 3            | 0.001               | 1.50kl  | 5.50h-k  | 14.50f-i | 19.50e-g | 22.50d-g | 25.00c-g | 27.00b-g |
| 4            | 0.001               | 3.00jkl | 30.00a-f | 39.00a-e | 44.00a-c | 44.00a-c | 47.00ab  | 49.00a   |
| 42 DAS       |                     |         |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| 1            | 0.00j               | 0.00j   | 1.50ij   | 7.50e-h  | 8.50e-h  | 14.00b-f | 18.00a-e | 21.00b-d |
| 2            | 0.00j               | 0.00j   | 3.50h-j  | 10.50d-g | 12.50c-f | 17.50b-e | 23.00a-c | 24.00a-c |
| 3            | 0.00j               | 0.00j   | 0.00j    | 3.50g-i  | 5.00f-i  | 8.50e-h  | 11.00d-g | 14.50b-e |
| 4            | 0.00j               | 0.00j   | 10.00d-h | 17.50b-e | 21.50a-d | 23.00a-c | 27.00ab  | 32.00a   |

Means followed by the same letter (s) for the same factor in a column and a row are not significantly different at 5% level of probability by Tukey test. V1 = Tatashe Dan Kano, V2 = Tatashe Dan Kaduna, V3 = Tatashe Dan Zaria, V4 = Shombo, DAS= Days after storage.

Seed vigour as measured by germination rate index and germination index followed a similar trend with the values obtained in germination percentages. The values were highest in seeds of V 4 followed by those of V 2 (Tables 3 and 5).

Table 3: Effect of variety and fruit age on germination rate index (%day<sup>-1</sup>) at different storage periods

| Variety (V) | Storage periods (days) |        |        |        |
|-------------|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
|             | 0                      | 14     | 28     | 42     |
| 1           | 2.66b                  | 3.10b  | 0.79c  | 0.43c  |
| 2           | 3.26b                  | 2.87b  | 1.43b  | 0.62b  |
| 3           | 2.73b                  | 2.49b  | 1.02c  | 0.30d  |
| 4           | 5.36a                  | 5.89a  | 2.32a  | 0.90a  |
| SE±         | 0.51                   | 0.18   | 0.1    | 0.04   |
| DAA         |                        |        |        |        |
| 24          | 0.00c                  | 0.00e  | 0.00f  | 0.00d  |
| 28          | 0.54c                  | 0.29e  | 0.08f  | 0.00d  |
| 32          | 2.27bc                 | 2.12d  | 0.77c  | 0.17c  |
| 36          | 3.79ab                 | 4.01c  | 1.38de | 0.50c  |
| 40          | 4.60ab                 | 5.09bc | 1.74cd | 0.63bc |
| 44          | 6.43a                  | 5.09bc | 2.02bc | 0.82b  |
| 48          | 4.34ab                 | 5.62ab | 2.43ab | 1.12a  |
| 52          | 6.03a                  | 6.67a  | 2.69a  | 1.28a  |
| SE±         | 0.72                   | 0.26   | 0.14   | 0.05   |
| V*DAA       | *                      | *      | *      | *      |

Means followed by the same letter (s) for the same factor in a column are not significantly different at 5% level of probability by Tukey test. V1 = Tatashe Dan Kano, V2 = Tatashe Dan Kaduna, V3 = Tatashe Dan Zaria, V4 = Shombo, DAA= Days after anthesis

Table 4: Interaction effect of variety and fruit age on germination rate index (%day<sup>-1</sup>) at different storage periods

| Variety | Days after anthesis |        |         |         |         |         |         |         |
|---------|---------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|         | 24                  | 28     | 32      | 36      | 40      | 44      | 48      | 52      |
|         | 0 Storage           |        |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| 1       | 0.00b               | 0.04b  | 1.04b   | 4.05b   | 2.75b   | 3.45b   | 4.57b   | 5.35b   |
| 2       | 0.00b               | 0.36b  | 0.41b   | 2.68b   | 5.50b   | 4.74b   | 5.90b   | 6.46b   |
| 3       | 0.00b               | 0.84b  | 2.16b   | 3.58b   | 3.27b   | 2.76b   | 2.76b   | 6.46b   |
| 4       | 0.00b               | 0.94b  | 5.44b   | 4.84b   | 6.89ab  | 14.79a  | 4.13b   | 5.88b   |
| SE±     |                     |        |         | 1.45    |         |         |         |         |
|         | 14 DAS              |        |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| 1       | 0.00i               | 0.00i  | 0.73i   | 4.09c-f | 4.72c-f | 4.00c-g | 5.34b-e | 5.91b-d |
| 2       | 0.00i               | 0.20i  | 0.32i   | 3.76c-g | 3.62c-g | 5.51b-e | 5.04b-f | 4.51c-f |
| 3       | 0.00i               | 0.64i  | 1.19g-i | 2.34f-i | 2.81e-i | 3.22d-h | 4.47c-f | 5.22b-e |
| 4       | 0.00i               | 0.33i  | 6.24bc  | 5.83b-d | 9.21a   | 7.63ab  | 7.61ab  | 10.24a  |
| SE±     |                     |        |         | 0.51    |         |         |         |         |
|         | 28 DAS              |        |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| 1       | 0.00f               | 0.00f  | 0.00f   | 0.63d-f | 0.71d-f | 1.28c-f | 1.74b-e | 1.97b-d |
| 2       | 0.00f               | 0.00f  | 0.21ef  | 1.14c-f | 1.96b-d | 2.11a-d | 2.92ab  | 3.12ab  |
| 3       | 0.00f               | 0.08f  | 0.29ef  | 0.90d-f | 1.19c-f | 1.65b-e | 1.91b-d | 2.12a-d |
| 4       | 0.00f               | 0.22ef | 2.58a-c | 2.86ab  | 3.12ab  | 3.03ab  | 3.16ab  | 3.56a   |
| SE±     |                     |        |         | 0.28    |         |         |         |         |
|         | 42 DAS              |        |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| 1       | 0.00j               | 0.00j  | 0.06j   | 0.39g-j | 0.41g-j | 0.66e-i | 0.88c-g | 1.07b-f |
| 2       | 0.00j               | 0.00j  | 0.14ij  | 0.52f-j | 0.71d-i | 0.93c-g | 1.28a-d | 1.40a-c |
| 3       | 0.00j               | 0.00j  | 0.00j   | 0.15h-j | 0.22h-i | 0.44g-j | 0.72d-h | 0.84c-g |
| 4       | 0.00j               | 0.00j  | 0.48g-j | 0.93c-g | 1.17b-e | 1.23b-e | 1.59ab  | 1.80a   |
| SE±     |                     |        |         | 0.1     |         |         |         |         |

Means followed by the same letter (s) for the same factor in a column are not significantly different at 5% level of probability by Tukey test. V1 = Tatashe Dan Kano, V2 = Tatashe Dan Kaduna, V3 = Tatashe Dan Zaria, V4 = Shombo, DAS= Days after storage

Effect of fruit age on the seed quality of four pepper (*Capsicum annum* L.) genotypes

Table 5: Effect of variety and fruit age on seed germination index at different storage periods

| Variety (V) | Storage periods (days) |          |          |         |
|-------------|------------------------|----------|----------|---------|
|             | 0                      | 14       | 28       | 42      |
| 1           | 213.75b                | 236.75b  | 67.81c   | 38.31c  |
| 2           | 255.88b                | 237.81b  | 116.15b  | 56.25b  |
| 3           | 211.81b                | 193.75b  | 85.25c   | 25.88d  |
| 4           | 342.38a                | 376.13a  | 186.25a  | 81.38a  |
| SE±         | 13.1                   | 12       | 7.4      | 3.34    |
| DAA         |                        |          |          |         |
| 24          | 0.00d                  | 0.00e    | 0.00f    | 0.00d   |
| 28          | 34.13d                 | 21.50e   | 6.25f    | 0.00d   |
| 32          | 184.75c                | 160.75d  | 62.25e   | 15.00d  |
| 36          | 306.13b                | 319.38c  | 115.50d  | 44.63c  |
| 40          | 356.13b                | 371.25bc | 144.63cd | 56.50bc |
| 44          | 323.00b                | 339.25c  | 164.38bc | 72.50b  |
| 48          | 354.25b                | 427.88ab | 197.25ab | 101.13a |
| 52          | 489.25a                | 448.88a  | 220.63a  | 113.88a |
| SE±         | 18.5                   | 16.9     | 10       | 4.73    |
| V*DAA       | *                      | *        | *        | *       |

Means followed by the same letter (s) for the same factor in a column are not significantly different at 5% level of probability by Tukey test. V1 = Tatashe Dan Kano, V2 = Tatashe Dan Kaduna, V3 = Tatashe Dan Zaria, V4 = Shombo, DAS= Days after storage

Table 6: Interaction effect of variety and fruit age on germination index at different storage periods

| Variety | Days after anthesis |          |           |           |           |           |           |           |
|---------|---------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|         | 24                  | 28       | 32        | 36        | 40        | 44        | 48        | 52        |
|         | 0 Storage           |          |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| 1       | 0.00m               | 4.00m    | 76.50h-m  | 311.00b-g | 233.00c-k | 276.50c-h | 374.00a-f | 435.00a-e |
| 2       | 0.00m               | 28.00lm  | 37.50k-m  | 242.50d-j | 407.00a-f | 365.00a-g | 444.00a-d | 523.00a   |
| 3       | 0.00m               | 47.00j-m | 167.00g-m | 270.00c-h | 252.50d-i | 226.00f-l | 243.50d-j | 488ab     |
| 4       | 0.00m               | 57.50i-m | 458.00a-c | 401.00a-f | 532.00a   | 424.50a-f | 355.50a-g | 510.50ab  |
| SE±     |                     |          |           | 37.1      |           |           |           |           |
|         | 14 DAS              |          |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| 1       | 0.00j               | 0.00j    | 62.50ij   | 319.50d-g | 373.50b-f | 311.50d-g | 393.50b-f | 433.50a-e |
| 2       | 0.00j               | 18.50j   | 30.00j    | 312.50d-g | 331.00c-g | 386.00b-f | 438.00a-e | 386.50b-f |
| 3       | 0.00j               | 46.50j   | 99.00h-j  | 181.50g-j | 241.00f-i | 252.00e-h | 363.50b-g | 366.50b-g |
| 4       | 0.00j               | 21.00j   | 451.50a-d | 464.00a-d | 539.50ab  | 407.50b-f | 516.50a-c | 609.00a   |
| SE±     |                     |          |           | 33.9      |           |           |           |           |
|         | 28 DAS              |          |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| 1       | 0.00h               | 0.00h    | 0.00h     | 56.50f-h  | 67.00e-h  | 106.50d-h | 144.50b-f | 168.00a-f |
| 2       | 0.00h               | 0.00h    | 19.50gh   | 92.50d-h  | 157.50b-f | 168.50a-f | 236.00a-c | 255.00ab  |
| 3       | 0.00h               | 8.00h    | 24.50gh   | 81.00e-h  | 104.00d-h | 133.00c-g | 153.00b-f | 178.50a-e |
| 4       | 0.00h               | 17.00h   | 205.00a-d | 232.00a-c | 250.00ab  | 249.50ab  | 255.50ab  | 281.00a   |
| SE±     |                     |          |           | 20.9      |           |           |           |           |
|         | 42 DAS              |          |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| 1       | 0.00j               | 0.00j    | 5.00j     | 34.50g-j  | 34.00g-j  | 60.50e-i  | 79.00c-g  | 93.50b-f  |
| 2       | 0.00j               | 0.00j    | 12.00ij   | 46.00f-j  | 63.50e-i  | 84.00c-g  | 118.00a-d | 126.50a-c |
| 3       | 0.00j               | 0.00j    | 0.00j     | 13.00ij   | 21.00h-j  | 37.50g-j  | 62.50e-i  | 73.00d-h  |
| 4       | 0.00j               | 0.00j    | 43.00f-j  | 85.00c-g  | 107.50b-c | 108.00b-c | 145.00ab  | 162.50a   |
| SE±     |                     |          |           | 9.45      |           |           |           |           |

Means followed by the same letter (s) are not significantly different at 5% level of probability by Tukey test.

V1 = Tatashe Dan Kano, V2 = Tatashe Dan Kaduna, V3 = Tatashe Dan Zaria, V4 = Shombo, DAS= Days after storage

## DISCUSSION

The changes in colour through various hues until red colour was maintained may not be unconnected with the process of fruit maturation. Similar changes had been observed in previous studies. Ibrahim *et al.* (2017) observed colour changes from green through several hues up till when brown colouration was attained and they attributed such changes to progressive fruit maturation in *Solanum macrocarpon*. Changes in colour of catingueira (*Caesalpinia pyramidalis* Tul.) was also attributed to evolution of maturation of fruit internal tissue and the attained red colouration in the opinion of the authors could be associated to chlorophyll degradation and synthesis of pre-existing pigments specific to species (Lima *et al.*, 2012). Barroso *et al.* (2017) also observed decreases in chlorophyll content with progress in fruit maturation which resulted in changes in colour from yellowish-green through to light-yellowish brown and crumbly appearance in *Physalis ixocarpa*.

The significantly higher germination percentages recorded in seeds of V4 over those of V 1, 2 and 3 in this study may be due to genetic superiority. This is similar to what was reported by Aloui *et al.* (2014) on three cultivars of pepper which showed that Anaheim Chili germinated better than Beldi and Baklouti cultivars. The work of Seyed and Naser (2012) has also shown significant differences among 10 cultivars of *Solanum lycopersicum* in all parameters including germination percentage.

In this study, longevity of seeds was poor in V1, V2 and V3. This trend suggests the inherent differences known in varieties. This has previously been reported by Dharwad (2007) who stated that pepper varieties may vary greatly in their potential for retaining germinability and vigour of seed under storage conditions and that this is tied to inherent differences in varieties. Oladiran and Kortse (2002) also reported that pepper seeds of 'Rodo' cultivar-maintained viability better than 'Tatashe' cultivar. Ahmed *et al.* (2002) also recorded variation in the rate of deterioration among species of cucumber seeds.

The 0% germination recorded in seeds of all the genotypes harvested before 28 DAA suggests that the seeds were immature and showed that the capacity to germinate had not been developed prior to this point. This was similar to what was reported by Barroso *et al.* (2017) in *Physalis ixocarpa* where seeds harvested prior to 25 DAA recorded no germination. Yisa *et al.* (2013) reported that the stage of fruit development at harvest has a profound influence on the ability of pepper seeds to germinate and that seeds from fully ripe fruits resulted in the highest germination. When seeds of pepper were harvested earlier than 36 days after anthesis, germination did not occur.

In this study, maximum seed dry matter was attained at 52 DAA, when maximum seed germination and storability were achieved. This fruit maturity stage is called the physiological maturity stage. This therefore means that both mass and physiological maturity were attained at 52 DAA in this study. This is similar to the observations by Vidigal *et al.* (2011) in pepper and Dias *et al.* (2006) in tomato who reported that both the maximum germination and dry matter were obtained at 75 DAA. This confirms the earlier hypothesis of Harrington (1972) that mass and physiological maturity occur at the same time in crop species. However, this is contrary to report by Demir *et al.* (2002) that maximum quality occurred between 8 and 24 days after maximum dry weight in aubergine (*Solanum melongena*) seeds. Kortse and Oladiran (2002) also recorded the highest germination percentage at 10-25 days after seed-filling phase in 'Egusi-Ito' melon (*Cucumeropsis mannii* Naudin.). This suggests that mass and physiological maturity time may be crop dependent.

Increases in germination in seeds extracted from fruits harvested from 36 to 52 DAA when seeds were 14 days in storage in this study is an indication of the presence of dormancy. Dormancy was reported in stored seeds of habenero pepper which was broken after four months of storage (Caxeita *et al.*, 2013). Ibrahim *et al.* (2017) also recorded improvement in germination after 7 and 14 days of storage in *Solanum macrocarpon*. Seed dormancy has been reported to be a problem in *Solanum macrocarpon* and it could take up to 12 months for it to be naturally lost (Yogeesha *et al.*, 2008).

Result of this study showed higher vigour in seeds of V4 than those of V 1, 2 and 3. The reason for this observation may be genetic which is known to occur amongst crop species. This was similar to what had been reported in other studies. Mustapha *et al.* (2017) reported that seeds of FUTMSm-1 cultivar of *Solanum macrocarpon* exhibited superior vigour using GRI and GI as indices. This agrees with the work of Seyed and Naser (2012) which showed significant variations in seed germination rate among selected cultivars of *Solanum lycopersicum*. Moghanibashi *et al.* (2012) also reported that Urfloar cultivar of sunflower recorded higher germination index and germination rate index than Blazar cultivar.

Seed vigour indices were also higher in more mature seeds in this study and this is also in agreement with previously documented works. Demir *et al.* (2002) recorded lower values of normal germination, germination after cold test, emergence and seedling dry weight and these increased as maturity progressed in *S. melongena*. Similar results were obtained by Sowmya *et al.* (2012) who also recorded higher germination percentages, germination at first and final count, mean seedling length and dry weight as well as other vigour indices in seeds extracted from yellow fruits (60 DAA) and lowest in those from green fruits (45 DAA), attributing this to physiological maturity of the seeds at yellow fruit stage.

The general decline in germination percentage, germination rate index and germination index as storage period progressed might be due to deterioration.

## CONCLUSION

It is concluded from this study that both mass and physiological maturity of seeds was attained in the four genotypes of pepper at 52 DAA. Seeds of 'Shombo' (V4) germinated and stored better than all the 'Tatashe' genotypes (V1, V2 and V3); however, genotype 2 of 'Tatashe' maintain viability longer than varieties 1 and 2. It is therefore recommended that fruits of these pepper genotypes be harvested at 52 DAA to obtain seeds of high quality.

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Effect of fruit age on the seed quality of four pepper (*Capsicum annuum* L.) genotypes

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