

Agricultural Undergraduates' Perception of Farm Based Self Employment in Osun State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed agricultural undergraduates' perception of farm based self-employment in Osun state. Multistage stage sampling technique was used to select one hundred and twenty (120) respondents while structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The collected data were described with frequency and percentages and analyzed with Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Results showed that most of the respondents agreed that agricultural related enterprise is lucrative (93.4%), has high potentials for self-employment (95.0%), and high prospects of success (87.5%) with lots of untapped potentials (80.9%). Implement repairs (71.2%), government policies (70.3%), start -up capital (67.8%), marketing problem (64.4%), poor access to market (64.4%), theft and poor access to equipment (57.6%) and spoilage due to poor amenities and provision of social extension consultancy services (56.8%) were major constraints identified. Majority (87.2%) of the respondents would not engage in entrepreneurship farm based self-employment because of fear of access to grant credit and soft loan, followed by market risk (80.3%). The correlation matrix between fear score and perception aggregate showed that fear score ($r= 1$; $p= 0.000$), perception aggregate ($r=-0.192$; $p=0.042$), constraints score ($r= -0.285$; $p=0.002$), suggestion score ($r=0.592$; $p= 0.000$) were significant at either 0.05 or 0.01. It is recommended that tertiary students pursuing agriculture and agricultural related programmes should be exposed to practical training on repair of implement and be properly oriented regarding the prospects of agriculture as self-employed job creation. Also, government policies capable of motivating undergraduates to embark on farm based self employment be formulated without further delay such should include provision of credit facilities and marketing strategies for sales of their products

Keywords: Assessment, Agriculture, Undergraduates, Perception, Self employment

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Agriculture occupies a central position in Nigeria's economy, however its growth and productivity is still considered low in spite of adequate and available natural resources necessary for any economic development in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Ogunleye, Oni and Popoola, 2018). The 3/4 population of Nigeria livelihood is dependent on agriculture (Cervantes-Godoy and Dewbre, 2010), and with the transformation of agriculture from subsistence to commercial

and its globalization, the challenges facing agriculture is unprecedented. As relative proportion of graduates seeking employment in the public sector increases continually, more jobs should thereby be created in the private sector. This however, necessitates fine tuning the entrepreneurial skills of the graduates (Akram-Lodhi, 2008).

According to UN report, (2017), there are over 5 million undergraduates today said to be studying, this number is expected to phenomenally increase in the

foreseeable future, as the global population surges to eight billion perhaps by 2030. The positive aspect of this increase is that young graduates provide Nigeria with abundant human capital but also pose a negative aspect of absorbing the new entrants into the labor market.

Recent developments in economy field have led to a renewed interest in entrepreneurship. Many governments and policy-makers around the world consider the entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial drives as primary for economic growth and development (Vanguard newspaper 2017). The entrepreneurship is a very old concept according to which anyone who runs business is called an entrepreneur.

The prosperity and progress of a nation depends on the entrepreneurial quality of its people. If they are enterprising, ambitious and courageous enough to bear entrepreneurial risk the community/society will develop quickly. Such people are identified as entrepreneurs and their character reflects in entrepreneurships. Entrepreneurship is no monopoly of any religion or community. Entrepreneurial potential can be found and developed anywhere irrespective of age, qualification, experience or socio - economic background. Entrepreneurs are people who realize new opportunities and channel their efforts in the proper direction (Herrington, Kew and Kew, 2008).

The skill and entrepreneurship development for school educated youth is essentially required to increase income and employment opportunities particularly in rural areas. Their interest needs to be rejuvenated to take up agriculture as profession, business and way of earning for better livelihood. Undergraduates can be brought in by making agriculture profitable and prestigious business. It is possible only through adaptation of modern technologies of precision farming, poly house, green

house, hydroponics, modern dairy and fishery enterprises.

In Nigeria today, a large number of graduates are produced yearly and found in job market without placement. Most of these teaming graduates enter the job market looking for a formal sector to engage them. The growth rate of formal sector is not the same as the rate at which graduates are produced and this has led to more graduates roaming around still looking for what to do. According to Brooks, Zorya, Gautam and Goyal (2013), agriculture is currently the employer of most of African youth, and the trend may likely continue due to the importance of the sector to human existence. For a generation of young people entering adulthood, agriculture offers the best opportunity to move out of poverty and build satisfying lives. However, there are strong indications suggesting that youth involvement in the agriculture sector is very low, mainly because the sector is mostly seen to be unattractive (Baah, 2014). Young people reportedly regard farming as a 'dirty activity' without proper facilities (Leavy and Smith, 2010) and also most are not willing to engage in agriculture as their primary occupation because they perceive its of a low income. They also hold the perception that agriculture is meant for the rural poor, the uneducated and unskilled (MoFA, 2011). Based on the aforementioned problem, the study was conducted to examine undergraduates' perception to farm-based self employment and identified constraints to their participation in Osun state, Nigeria. Also, relationship between the fear to engage in agricultural related enterprise after graduation and their perception was analyzed.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Osun State; an inland in south-western Nigeria. Its capital is Osogbo, with a population of approximately 3,416,959 (NPC 2006). It is

bounded in the north by Kwara State, in the east partly by Ekiti State and partly by Ondo State, in the south by Ogun State and in the west by Oyo State. Primary data were obtained from field survey with the use of self-designed, structured and pre-tested questionnaires which was personally administered and interpreted. The target populations for this study were respondents who fall into the undergraduates' category in the selected Universities. Multistage sampling procedure was used to sample respondents for this study. This involved the following stages. First, purposive sampling technique was used to select Obafemi Awolowo and Osun State Universities, being the only public institutions where faculty and college of agriculture exist. Second, purposive sampling procedure was also employed to select 500 level students based on their experience in their 400 level farm practical year. List of 500 level students was obtained across the various departments within the two universities and Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula to determine the sample size from the study population was used to calculate the sample size that is representative of the population. This formula is explained below:

$$S = \frac{X^2NP(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + X^2P(1-P)}$$

Where:

S = required sample size

X^2 = the table value of chi-square for one degree of freedom at the desired confidence level

N = the population size

P = the population proportion (assumed to be .05, however, 0.10 will be adopted for this study since this would provide a good representative sample size)

d^2 = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.05).

Lastly, 120 undergraduates were randomly selected using simple random sampling. All the data collected were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, ranking and percentages

were used to arrange and describe the socio-economic characteristics of the undergraduates' while inferential statistical tool: Correlation matrix analytical technique was used to test the relationship between the fear to engage in agriculture and their perception to farm-based self-employment in Osun State.

The dependent variable for the study is students' perception to farm based self employment. The respondents indicated their interest in response to six declarative statements which were rated on a five-point Likert scale and were scored 5 points for Strongly Agree (SA), 4 points for Agree (A), 3 point for Undecided (U), 2 point for Disagree (D) and 1 point for Strongly Disagree (SD) as used by Sultan (2017) and Alao, Alabi, Oketoyini and Famakinwa (2018) which was modified to suit the research purpose. The study was carried out in Osun State between January and August 2019.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results in Table 1 indicate that majority (96.7%) of the respondents were within the age range of 20-30 years with the mean age of 23.23 ± 2.002 years. This implies that respondents were mainly youths, going by definition of youth as person aged between 18 and 35 years by the Nigeria National Youth Policy (2009). This means that participants were at the productive age. This may be useful in coping with the rigour associated with farm based activities. Moreover, their relatively young age would make them more receptive to new innovations unlike older farmers who are usually resistant to changing their old systems of farming. The age is also an incentive for lasting development of sustainable cultural practice that can enhance production (Fakoya, Banmeke, Ashimolowo and Fapojuwo, 2010). In term of gender, the study showed that 58.3% and 41.7% of the youth sampled were male and female respectively. The low number of

female respondents could be as a result of the fact that agriculture is seen as an energy demanding course and tend not to attract females. Practical aspects of the course like ridge making, planting and post-emergence weed control require some physical fitness. This finding is confirmed by Ogunremi, Ogunremi and Faleyimu(2012) whose study on the relevance and benefits of agricultural youth empowerment programmes revealed that most of the respondents were males. He further believes that practical agriculture requires physical fitness and so males can withstand more rigorous works than females. It is evident from the results that most of the respondents were single (85%). This means that the respondents are mostly dependent; hence they may likely take perception in line of their parents/guidance direction. It also was found that most of the respondents were Christians (63.3%). Majority 50% lived in the city while 35.8% and 14.2% lived in towns and villages respectively. The results also showed that 63.3% of the students were of Christian religion, 35% were Muslim while 1.7% were traditional worshippers.

Tables 2 showed that majority (72.5%) of the respondents were from nuclear family while 27.5% were from extended family. With respect to parental occupation, majority of the respondent's father's were civil servants owing for a proportion of 61.7% followed by 23.3%, 7.5%, and 7.5% whom were artisans, traders and farmers respectively while majority of mother's occupation were civil servants owing for a proportion of 58.4% followed by 20.8% whom were traders and 20% whom were artisans while 0.8% were into farming. This is expected to affect the students' perception on agriculture based self employment. This supports the findings of Jeffrey, Marcia and Susan (2004) cited by Ayanda, Olooto, Motunrayo, Abolaji, Yusuf and Subair (2012) who noted that parents and guardians play a significant role in the occupational aspirations of their children.

Also, the level of education is generally high among the student's parents, respondent's father's had university education owing for a proportion of 70% while mothers also had university education owing for a proportion of 65%. The generally high level of educational attainment among the parents also explains why they sponsored their children's to university because according to Keng (2004), only parents who are well educated themselves will cater for their children's education. The table further showed that 70.8% and 53.3% of the students belonged Nigerian Association of Agricultural Students and other agricultural association apart from the students' association. This is an indication that some of the students have acquired knowledge that can make them established on their own.

Perception of Agricultural undergraduates about farm based self employment

Based on the mean values in Table 3, the most important factor responsible for agricultural undergraduate students' perception on farm based self employment is that Agricultural related enterprises are very lucrative ($\bar{x} = 4.60$). This is followed by Agriculture has a high potential for self-employment in Osun state ($\bar{x} = 4.31$) and Agriculture has a lot of untapped potential ($\bar{x} = 4.20$). Other identified reasons were Agriculture has high prospects of success in Osun state ($\bar{x} = 4.16$), Many students have made a lot of fortune from Agriculture ($\bar{x} = 3.50$). This implies that training received during agriculture degree programme and their exposure to the rate at which unemployed graduates are roaming round the streets has awakened the agriculture students to the reality that they need to be self employed. The perception of the students towards Government policies on agriculture with the least mean score of 2.89 is in line with Sultan (2017) who submitted

that negative government policies such as difficulty in obtaining legal license and insufficient subsidies are discouraging to pursue entrepreneurial career.

Table 4 showed that majority (71.2%) of the respondent constraints is repairing of implement. Also poor government policies (70.3%) is the second most experienced constraint followed by capital to begin (67.8%) , problem of marketing and poor access to market has the same effect (64.4%), theft and poor access to equipment (57.6%), spoilage due to poor amenities and provision of social extension consultancy services (56.8%), climate change (51.7%), in adequate storage facilities (50.8%), while agriculture dependent on climate makes the lowest constraints that will be experienced by the respondents (32.2%)

Table 5 showed the correlation matrix between fear score of the undergraduates and their perception aggregate. The result revealed that fear score ($r= 1$; $p= 0.000$), perception aggregate ($r=-0.192$; $p=0.042$), constraints score ($r= -0.285$; $p=0.002$), suggestion score ($r=0.592$; $p= 0.000$) which clearly states that perception aggregate and constraints score have a negative significant relationship with their fear score while the suggestion score have a positive significant relationship. This implies that the above mentioned variables have significant influence on the undergraduates' perception. The higher the fear scores the lower their perception aggregate. Perception score is significant at 0.05 levels while constraints core and suggestion score is significant at 0.01 levels which implies that the above mentioned variables have significant influence on the undergraduate's perception. The higher the fear scores the lower their constraints and suggestion score.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above findings, it could be concluded that majority of the students expressed their willingness to create farm based self-employment in agriculture after graduation from school. The preferred perceptions of interest on farm based employment are mainly that agriculture is lucrative, it has high potential for self employment and lots of untapped potentials among others. The major identified constraints to farm based self employment were repair of implement, poor government policies, huge starting capital, problem of marketing, poor access to market and equipment. It is recommended that tertiary students pursuing agriculture and agricultural related programmes should be exposed to practical training on repair of agricultural implement and be properly oriented regarding the prospects of agriculture as self-employed job creation. Also, government policies capable of motivating undergraduates to embark on farm based self employment be formulated without further delay such should include provision of credit facilities and marketing strategies for sales of their products

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Table 1: Results of socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean/S.D
Age (years)			
< 20	3	2.5	
20 – 30	116	96.7	23.23±2.002
>30	1	0.8	
Gender			
Male	70	58.3	
Female	50	41.7	
Marital Status			
Single	102	85.0	
Married	18	15.0	
Family Locality Area			
Village	17	14.2	
Town	43	35.8	
City	60	50.0	
Religion			
Christian	76	63.3	
Muslim	42	35.0	
Traditional	2	1.7	

Source: Field study 2019

Table 2: Results of Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Labels	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Family Type	Nuclear	87	72.5
	Extended	13	27.5
Father's Occupation	Farming	9	7.5
	Artisan	28	23.3
	Civil Servant	74	61.7
	Trader	9	7.5
Fathers Education	Primary	24	20.0
	Secondary	12	10.0
	University	84	70.0
Mother's Occupation	Farming	1	0.8

	Artisan	24	20.0
	Civil Servant	70	58.4
	Trader	25	20.8
Mother's Education	Primary	17	14.2
	Secondary	25	20.8
	University	78	65.0
Do you belong to Nigerian Association of Agricultural Students?	Yes	85	70.8
	No	35	29.2
Do you belong to any other agricultural Association?	Yes	64	53.3
	No	56	46.7

Source: Field study 2019

Table 3: Perception of Agricultural undergraduates' about farm based self employment

Variables	Weighted Mean	Rank
Agricultural related enterprises are very lucrative	4.60	1 st
Agriculture has a high potential for self-employment in Osun state	4.31	2 nd
Agriculture has a lot of untapped potential	4.20	3 rd
Agriculture has high prospects of success in Osun state	4.16	4 th
Many students have made a lot of fortune from Agriculture	3.50	5 th
Government polices favor agriculture enterprise creation	2.89	6 th

Source: Field study, 2019

Table 4: Perceived constraints to Farm Based Self Employment

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Ranking
Repairing of implement	84	71.2	1 st
Seed processing	47	39.8	14 th
Provision of extension Consultancy services	67	56.8	6 th
Facilitation and agency Of agricultural and Insurance savings	58	49.2	10 th
Value addition centers	53	44.9	12 th
Dairy enterprises	45	38.1	15 th
Poultry enterprise	40	33.9	17 th
Problem of marketing	76	64.4	4 th
Poor government policies	83	70.3	2 nd
Poor access to market	76	64.4	4 th
Poor access to credit And grants	51	43.2	13 th
Poor access to equipment	68	57.6	5 th
Price insatiability	59	50.0	9 th
Huge capital to begin	80	67.8	3 rd

Risk of pest and diseases			
Infestation	57	48.3	11 th
Inadequate access to Storage facilities	60	50.8	8 th
Theft	68	57.6	5 th
Spoilage due to poor amenities	67	56.8	6 th
Inadequate amenities	51	43.2	13 th
Inadequate information accessibility	43	36.4	16 th
Agriculture dependent On climate	38	32.2	18 th
Climate change	61	51.7	7 th

Source: Field study, 2019

Table 5: Relationship between the fear of engaging in entrepreneur of the respondents and their perception regarding farm based self-employment in Osun State.

Variables	Correlation coefficient(r)	P-value	Decision
Fear score	1	0.000	NS
Perception score	-0.192*	0.042	S
Constraints score	-0.285**	0.002	S
Suggestion score	0.592**	0.000	S

Source: Field survey 2019

S=SIGNIFICANT, NS= NOT SIGNIFICANT

** CORRELATION IS SIGNIFICANT AT THE 0.01 LEVEL (2-TAILED)

*CORRELATION IS SIGNIFICANT AT THE 0.05LEVEL (2-TAILED)