

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING: A PANACEA FOR GENERATING REVENUE BY TERTIARY INSTITUTION STUDENTS IN NIGERIA.

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Abstract

Tertiary schools have been urged to initiate income-generating projects to support their budget deficits. Although the government has tried to intervene and support financing of tertiary schools in the country, the problems of financing still exist in our schools. Thus, in this study, a descriptive survey research was conducted and questionnaires were administered to 240 students drawn from 5 tertiary institutions in South East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The data collected was analyzed using the mean (X). The findings revealed that practical Agriculture in tertiary schools could be used to generate revenue and cheap labour supplied by students can reduce the cost of farming operations. Livestock such as chickens, fish, snails, pigs etc could be raised and sold to generate revenue within a relatively short period of time. Crop produce like fruits and vegetables could be cultivated to serve as revenue. Based on the findings, recommendations were made that tertiary institutions should utilized their students to generate funds for Agricultural education programmes. Agricultural Education teachers should be trained and retrained for effective performance. Entrepreneurship and internship programmes should be adopted for students studying Agricultural education in our various institutions.

INTRODUCTION

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.

Introduction

. In the past, agriculture was primarily being taught in the primary schools as part of rural

science. This was then referred to as 'gardening'. With the present improvement being made, the subject is now being taught both in secondary schools and tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Since Agriculture is taught in tertiary institution like universities and colleges of education, it has become imperative to establish farms to cater for the needs of practical aspect of classroom instructions of the course.

Agriculture is the key to economic development of a nation. It constitutes a source of income to individuals, organizations and institutions and it serves as a means of alleviating poverty among the rural dwellers, Sowa (2002). Reference may here be made to the uneducated farmers in the rural areas who are able to make a living from agriculture. It is therefore essential that in schools where agriculture is taught through the modern and scientific method under the supervision of qualified agricultural lecturers that a substantial sum of income should be realized from the sales of products got from the school farm.

The involvement of schools in farming activities is an approach to improving food production and security. (Adu, Adejoba & Oluobaju ,2009). The source of funding and financial support for agricultural education and training in most developing countries has

been the sole responsibility of the government. However, the reliance on government alone for funding of education has been found to be inadequate and unsustainable. Agricultural education and training institutions needs sustainable funding and requires a huge capital. Therefore, in order to maintain sustainable agriculture, universities and colleges of education in Nigeria should try other ways of searching for fund apart from writing innovative proposals to private organizations and governmental donors by creating possible avenues for generating their own income in their schools Towe, (2014).

Agricultural education will continue to play major roles in achieving food sufficiency and sustainable agriculture. This is because no country can develop without well educated people and strong agricultural base which provide food security and massive income for the people. The role of agricultural education is to provide improved relevant and effective teaching, research and outreach and achievement of food security and massive income requires a critical mass of dedicated and well trained personnel (Omolero, Ekwe and Ihedinihu, 2018)

This research work is an attempt to ascertain from students of Agricultural education in Nigerian tertiary institutions the factors they

identify as revenue generation in the area. It is the belief of the researcher that those factors when finally adopted may curtail the situation in schools whereby in spite of high potentials of agriculture as revenue yielding venture will still depend on government for financial subventions. The subventions instead should be geared towards other school development projects for rapid progress.

Statement of the problem

The teaching of agricultural education as a course is carried out in the classroom and in the school farm for practical purposes. The practices on the farm result in the production of yields which are harvested and sold to generate revenue. This teaching is however made difficult due to poor and inadequate facilities and equipment.

With students' participation, two of the three primary factors of agricultural production (labour and land) are made available by the students and the school respectively. The third factor (capital) which may be absent can be derived or acquired through bankloans, school co-operative society or the subventions from government. The implementation of these factors may help the school to generate enough revenue for its

agricultural programmes and needs and become less dependent on government.

Osette (2008) indicated that one of the biggest constraints of agricultural education, training and research is that it has leaned heavily on government funding. He also opined that the inadequate funding of agriculture is well reflected on the low pace with which the tertiary institutions of learning are responding to the drive of modernization. Furthermore budgets for universities in Nigeria often run dry before the end of the semester and funding the extra money for research and training of any kind has been a big problem Idachaba (2004)

The agricultural education and training is expensive since it requires teaching aids, scientific and technical equipments as well as adequately equipped training and experimental farms. The education and training institutions in Nigeria face great difficulties in terms of equipping and maintaining functional school farms. As a result, the school rarely achieves their objectives in experimentation, teaching and agricultural production. The quality of facilities and equipment available is also a major factor in determining the quality of graduates produced. According to Osette (2008), the quality of facilities in most tertiary institutions has been inadequate

within the last decade. It is against this backdrop that the research is aimed finding the factors that can help to generate enough revenue to bring improvement and development of the school.

Purpose of the Study

On a general basis, the study will investigate into Agricultural education and training: a panacea for generating revenue by students in tertiary institution of Nigeria. Specifically the study will among other things:-

- (1). Identify factors that can be used to improve Agricultural education in order to generate revenue for tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
- (2). Ascertain the extent the farm practices are adhered to by the students learning agricultural education in tertiary institutions.
- (3). Identify the major sources of generating revenue in the teaching of agricultural education in the tertiary institutions.
- (4). Determine the factors that militate against revenue generation of the agricultural products in the tertiary institutions.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study

- (1). What are the factors that can be used to improve agricultural education in order to generate revenue in tertiary institutions of Nigeria?
- (2). To what extent are the farm practices adhered to by the students learning agricultural education in tertiary institutions of Nigeria?
- (3). What are the major sources of revenue generation by the students of agricultural education in tertiary institutions of Nigeria?
- (4). What are the factors that militate against revenue generation by tertiary institution students in Nigeria?

Research Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population for the study was ten (10) tertiary institutions in the South East geo-political zones of Nigeria. Data was collected from two hundred and forty (240) students randomly selected from the (ten) 10 tertiary institutions who were offering Agricultural Education as a course.

A research instrument (questionnaire) was used for data collection. The questionnaire comprised of thirty (30) items with each item being made up of four (4) points rating scale: Strongly Agreed (SA) – 4 points, Agreed (A) – 3 points, Disagree (D) – 2points, Strongly

Disagree (SD) -1point. The respondents were expected to select the response category they considered appropriate for each item.

The research instruments were appraised by the supervisors. The experts helped the researcher access the extent to which the items in the questionnaire are related to the research topic. The researcher implemented the corrections given by his supervisors.

The researcher with the help of research assistants administered the questionnaires to 240 students of ten (10) tertiary institutions in the zone, 24 were not returned and 16 were not properly filled thereby reducing the sample to 200.

Simple arithmetic mean (\bar{x}) was used in analyzing scores from research questions. Items that scored 2.50 and above were agreed, items that scored 3.50 and above were strongly agreed while items that scored below 2.50 were disagreed.

Data analysis and Presentation of Findings

Based on the research questions, this section presents the results of data obtained from the study using mean. The results of investigation were presented in tabular forms to aid clearer understanding.

Research Question 1.What are the factors that can be used to improve agricultural

education in order to generate revenue in tertiary institution of Nigeria?

Table 1, revealed the factors can be used to improve agricultural education for generating revenue in tertiary schools agreed with mean scores of 3.42, 3.17, 3.05, 3.45, 3.06 and 3.52, for item 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7. Item 5 with the lowest mean score of 1.90 which disagreed showed that the monopoly of agricultural products by the staff members is counterproductive. The action may weaken the active participation of students in the farm work and as well lead to parents not encouraging their children's participation in the farm activities.

Research question 2: To what extent are the farm practices adhered to by the students learning agricultural education in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

Table 2 showed that item 8 to16 agreed with mean scores of 3.46, 3.45, 3.68, 3.34, 3.38, 3.21, 3.37, 3.49 and 3.36. In item 8, the purpose of soil tillage is to prepare a suitable seedbed for seed germination, to incorporate organic matter/manure in the soil, to remove weeds and to promote soil aeration. In item 9, appropriate application of fertilizer or organic manure is vital function in crop production and yield. Item 10 and 11

indicated that farm irrigation and weeding should be adhered to in order to increase crop yield. Item 13 to 15 are worthy of note. It shows that regular vaccination of livestock, proper feeding and supply of clean water to the livestock bring about high productivity.

Research Question 3: What are the major sources of revenue generation by the students of agricultural education in tertiary institutions of Nigeria?

A closer look at table 3 revealed that all sources that can be used to generate revenue through the teaching of agricultural education harmoniously agreed. The high scores showed that the major sources of revenue include sale of broilers, layers, pigs, rabbits, snails, fruits with mean scores of 3.70, 3.58, 3.45, 3.57 and 3.53 respectively while selling of vegetables and advertisement of products only agreed with mean scores of 3.32 and 3.43 respectively.

Research Question 4: What are the factors that militates against revenue generation of agricultural products in the tertiary institutions

Table 4 indicated that all the items agreed. This implied that the above factors that militate against revenue generation in tertiary institutions.

Results and Discussion

The study revealed that there are a number of avenues by and through which revenue could be generated in the tertiary institution and used for the development of the programmes. Government subventions in this case cannot be seen to halt progress. The result also reveals that with the factors properly put in place, students can contribute in no small measure to revenue generation. This they can do by working on the school farm to acquire necessary entrepreneurship skills at the same time generate more revenue for the school.

This view has been updated by Edobanya (2013) who stated that one of the ways by

which money could be generated for vocational education is by students using direct labour in doing most of the work in the farm thereby reducing cost. Temu (2001) supported this view and also held that incentives should be given to students that participated in the fund raising activities on the farm and the bonus should be given to students after a certain number of items sold.

In item 25 on table 4, the farm manager also have to be honest and remit all the income and funds generated from the farm for proper use so that the school may not have to look for external sources. Olaitan (2015) stated that the nations over dependence on foreign products are largely responsible for the problems being encountered in Agricultural sector in the country. He also informed that lecturers of agricultural education must consider the relevance of resources he plans to use, physical qualities of materials and the benefits the students are expected to derive from the resources. The above citations point to the importance of prudent management of funds and resources in agricultural education.

Item 24 -30 on table 4 are revealed certain factors that militate against revenue generation. Schools now have to adopt the recommended measures that will help in reducing these constraints. In item 30, the school authority should ensure that quality

time of one full working day per week is set aside for farm work.

Recommendation

1. In-Service Training

Provision of in-service training can improve the performance of many extension staff. However, governments and institutions need to encourage staff by providing adequate resources for them to be informed and updated of advances and developments in their specific disciplines. Involvement with research activities and development projects is also needed for staff to keep in contact with practical developments in their fields.

2. Improvement of Teaching Methods

Agriculture education and training institutions require a re-engineering of teaching methods. However, in addition to the conventional formal teaching, inclusion of some learning activities into their programmes should be considered such as: greater emphasis on practical field work, student-conducted field surveys; training through village and farm outreach activities; and case studies and problem-solving exercises oriented to local rural development needs. There is a need to emphasize mentoring and participatory training approaches.

3. Entrepreneurial and Internship Programs

Agricultural education institutions should adopt teaching approaches that include facilitating the teaching of practical and entrepreneurial education including internship for business exposure, encouraging students to develop micro-enterprise plan while still in school, assisting students to develop business plans and provide them information on appropriate credit institutions.

4. Funding of Agricultural Education and Training

The source of funding and financial support for agricultural education and training in tertiary institutions of Nigeria has always been the national government. However, the reliance on government alone for funding of education has been found to be inadequate and unsustainable. Agricultural education and training institutions need sustainable funding. Therefore, in order to maintain sustainable agriculture, universities and colleges of agriculture in developing countries should try other ways of searching for funds apart from writing innovative proposals to private organizations and donors by setting up of consultancy services, and develop partnership with other organizations.

There is continuous need for funds in our tertiary institutions. Students active participation in farm activities in schools under the supervision of Agricultural education lecturers and farm managers should be given a greater attention. In order to increase the revenue base of tertiary schools in a shorter time, seasonal crops such as maize, yam, vegetables, cucumber etc can be grown in the farm while poultry, rabbits, snails, fish and other livestock can be reared for marketing. For modern techniques of farming and particularly improved seedlings, assistance should be sought from extension workers and veterinary services should also be employed for health of the animals.

When all these are carried out, the revenue base of the school will be improved due to increase in farm production. The students will gain by acquiring more knowledge and skills in agriculture. Agricultural education lecturers should be trained and retrained for effective performance. They should make sure that records of performance, income and expenditure in agricultural education are properly kept.

Conclusion

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Table 1: indicates the mean scores of students' opinion on each of the items

S/N0	Items					Mean (x)	Remarks
		SA	A	D	SD		
1.	The school land available should be put under cultivation	83	117	-	-	3.42	Agreed
2.	All students should take part in practical farm activities	74	98	15	13	3.17	Agreed
3.	Traditional farm tools like hoes, cutlasses should be used	52	102	30	16	3.05	Agreed
4.	Extension workers from ministry of Agriculture and veterinary services should be invited for assistance	106	82	8	4	3.45	Agreed
5.	Only staff of the school buy the agricultural products	16	31	101	52	1.90	Disagreed
6.	Records of farm income and expenditure should be kept properly	55	116	14	15	3.06	Agreed
7.	Students that perform best in the farm work should be encouraged/ rewarded adequately	124	58	16	2	3.52	Strongly agreed

Table 2: indicates the mean scores of students' opinion on each of the items

S/N0	Items					Mean (x)	Remarks
		SA	A	D	SD		
8.	Planting should be done after soil tillage	92	108	-	-	3.46	Agreed
9.	Applying fertilizer or organic manure	121	58	12	9	3.45	Agreed
10.	Irrigation should be applied on the farm during dry period	112	88	-	-	3.68	Agreed
11.	Weeding should be done at least 3 times before harvest	86	97	17	-	3.34	Agreed
12.	Timely harvesting of crops is necessary	89	98	13	-	3.38	Agreed
13.	Regular vaccination of livestock should be carried out	84	87	16	13	3.21	Agreed
14.	Adequate supply of feed and clean water to the livestock	74	126	-	-	3.37	Agreed
15.	Hygiene /good sanitation should be maintained	98	102	-	-	3.49	Agreed
16.	Storage facilities should be provided in the farm	94	89	12	5	3.36	Agreed

Table 3:indicates the mean scores of students' opinion on each of the items

S/N0	Items					Mean (x)	Remarks
		SA	A	D	SD		
17.	Sale of broilers and layers	141	57	2	-	3.70	Strongly agreed
18.	Sale of eggs from laying hens	116	84	-	-	3.58	Strongly agreed
19.	Pigs, rabbits, fish and snails are raised and sold	93	107	-	-	3.45	Agreed
20.	Maize, melon, cassava are sold in times of scarcity	114	86	-	-	3.57	Strongly Agreed
21.	Selling of fruits like orange, mango, plantain, banana etc	106	94	-	-	3.53	Strongly Agreed
22.	Selling of vegetables like pumpkin, okra, cucumber, pepper, water melon, cabbage, lettuce etc	53	137	-	-	3.32	Agreed
23.	Advertise the products on /before harvest	91	103	6	-	3.43	Agreed

Table 4: indicates the mean scores of students' opinion on each of the items

S/N0	Items					Mean (x)	Remarks
		SA	A	D	SD		
24.	Students do not work on school farm during holidays	112	54	26	6	3.36	Agreed
25.	Farm manager embezzles revenues from agricultural products	116	58	22	4	3.43	Agreed
26.	Best performing students in the farm work are not rewarded	83	104	7	6	3.45	Agreed
27.	Students do not have adequate farm tools	94	89	6	11	3.33	Agreed
28.	Lecturers wants the products free of charge	121	56	15	8	3.45	Agreed

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29.	Many people buy the products on credit	67	124	4	5	3.27	Agreed
30.	Time allocated for farm work is not adequate	28	124	41	7	2.87	Agreed