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Effect of School Agricultural Programme of Oyo State on Career Choice of School Students in Ibadan South West Local Government Area Of Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The importance of youth succeeding the aged farming populace cannot be over emphasized. This succession depends largely on the youths' perception about agricultural knowledge and exposure to agricultural practices. It was for these reasons that Oyo State Government initiated Schools Agricultural Programme in various secondary schools in the state. Therefore, this study set out to investigate effect of School Agricultural Programme of Oyo State (SAPOS) on career choice of secondary school students in the study area. Ninety-Eight respondents out 816 students were randomly selected from 4 schools that were purposely selected out of 26 in Ibadan South West Local Government Area of Oyo State, using multi-stage sampl0oing technique. Primary data was collected through the use of structured pre-tested questionnaire and then analyzed. Variables obtained in the questionnaire include; respondents personal characteristics, parent's primary occupation, students exposure to farming activities, performance in JSS III Agricultural Science Examination, Level of particip0ation in SAPOS and their perception about the activities of SAPOS .The study revealed that 43.9% of the respondents were males and 56.1% were female it was also shown that most of the respondents (93.9%) were 15 years and above. It was discovered that majority of respondents' parent (90.8% of father and 88.8% of mothers) occupation were non farming occupation while only a few (9.3% of fathers and 11.2% of mothers) were involved in farming occupation. From the study, it was observed that more than half of the respondents (52.1%) ranked "No interest in anything dealing with agriculture" first, investing in agricultural stocks came second (40.8%) while to engage mainly in agricultural career (37.7%) and running a small farm along major career (43.9%) were ranked third and fourth, respectively. There was no significant difference among performance of respondents in the selected secondary schools. Also, there was no significant relationship between selected personal characteristics of respondents and their performance in JSSIII Agricultural Science Examination. Recommendation from the study include; expansion of SAPOS activities, provision of effective agricultural instructors, release of adequate capital support by the government and making SAPOS activities more interesting through provision of incentives.

Key words: Agricultural programme, career choice secondary schools, JSS, SAPOS, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Journey back to the history of Agriculture in Nigeria, there is now a trend that is bringing a great concern to the future of agriculture and food production. It is necessary to educate and make the young generation to be conversant with agriculture in order to encourage them to contribute to food production and distribution of the country. Students who are in the post primary education stage were thought, in the classroom about modern methods of farming with practical training on the school. Agricultural education and training in high school require professional teachers who understand the psychology, principles techniques of teaching and learning processes for proper and adequate transfer of information to ensure change in knowledge skill and attitude towards progressive agricultural practices (Agidi, 2004).

Oyo State Government, after consultation with expert in agriculture to ensure increase in agriculture productivity and improved performance of her students in practical agriculture, initiated an agricultural programme to focus on agricultural education and training of the young generations in secondary school called the School Agricultural Programme of Oyo State (SAPOS). It is a programme of formulated, planned and well arranged list of activities, items, events, coded collection of information, materials and instructions on improved agricultural practices and operations. It includes basically

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education, training and supervision of participants to ensure improved practical agricultural skills among the secondary schools in Oyo State. The fundamental responsibility associated with the development of a more qualitative agriculture has been put into three broad categories by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO, 1996) as development, education and regulatory. Among these, Nigeria had laid emphasis on the educational responsibility which has linked with the birth of a more productive agriculture.

School Agriculture Programme of Oyo State (SAPOS) started in the year 2001, with the introduction of poultry, piggery, snail keeping, gardening, sheep and goat and fishery. The schools in the state were given a particular unit from the above based on availability of land. The materials needed for any given unit were supplied to each school. While, some schools responded with enthusiasm to the programme, some bowed out of participation, based on various reasons such as insecurity of the farms products and inability to ensure proper upkeep.

It is necessary to educate and make the young generation to be conversant with agriculture in order to encourage them to contribute to food production and distribution of the country. Students who are in their post-primary education stage were taught in the classrooms about modern methods of farming with some practical training on the school farms (Mayer and Onazi, 1996). Also, through personal communication with West African Examination Council (WAEC) Practical Agricultural Examination Markers', it was noticed that most students do not perform well in the practical examination of Agricultural Science.

Agricultural education and training on high schools require professional teachers who understand the psychology, principles and techniques of teaching and learning processes for proper and adequate transfer of information to ensure change in knowledge, skills and attitudes towards progressive agricultural practices (Rao *et al*., 1995).

Chiefly, the aims of the School Agricultural Programme according to Lyson (1981) are to:

- Promote interest and pleasure in agriculture among students so that they can take agriculture as a career,
- Train the students in modern agricultural methods to enable them perform well in their practical examination,
- Train members in leadership and encourage leadership abilities and promoting sense of responsibilities among the student the students and,
- Develop attitudes of self-help and cooperation among the students.

These aims are particularly useful because according to Okigbo (1992), because she said, "The future of increased food production rests on giving support to the education and training of young generations who are students of agriculture.

Statement of the problem: Today, one of the major problems facing Nigeria is unemployment among the youths. This is due to an unfavourable disposition of youths to agriculture as a career and all efforts by government and non government agencies to encourage youths to take agriculture as a career have proved abortive. Since, agriculture plays an important role in the development of the economy of many developing nations, it becomes imperative for adequate attention to be focused on sustainability and increased agricultural productivity. However, the shortage of skilled manpower is by far, a serious obstacle to a large scale agricultural development. This manpower which is supposed to be dominated by the young generation is usually left in the hands of aged farmers. Hence, for the young generation participation, there should be a positive perception of agriculture as progressive and reliable career in order to reverse the drifting towards non agricultural profession.

Based on this, this study attempts to determine the effect of the newly introduced agricultural programme on Oyo State Secondary Schools known as SAPOS and students perception about the programme on their career choice.

The study therefore, seeks to answer the following research questions:

- What are the personal characteristics of the students participating in the programme?
- What are the parent's occupations of the respondents?
- What are the types of agricultural activities carried out in the farms of the selected secondary schools?
- What are the benefits derived from participating in the programme activities?
- What are the SAPOS effects on students' performance in agricultural science?

Objectives: The general objective of the study, is to determine the effect of Schools Agricultural Programme of Oyo State on career choice in selected secondary schools of Ibadan South West Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Specific objectives are to:

- Determine the personal characteristics of the students participating in the SAPOS.

- Determine parent's primary occupation of the respondents.
- Determine the type of agricultural activities carried out in the farms of the selected secondary schools.
- Identify the benefits derived from participating in SAPOS activities.

Hypotheses: Hypotheses of the study are:

$H0_1$:- There are no significant relationship between selected personal characteristic (e.g. age, sex and religion) of respondents and their performance in Agricultural science in JSS III

$H0_2$:- There is no significant difference among the respondents' performance in JSS III Agricultural science examination in the selected secondary schools.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Multi-stage sampling method was used. All the secondary schools were stratified into three: Girls' school, boys' schools and mixed schools. Simple random sampling of one out of two boys schools, one out of five girls schools and two out of remaining nineteen mixed schools were selected. The four selected schools represent 15.4 percent of the public schools in the study area. Only SS3 students were purposively selected for the study. A total of 98 respondents were randomly selected from the 4 selected schools. Primary data were collected through the use of pre-tested questionnaire include; respondents personal characteristics. Parent's primary occupation, students exposure to farming activities, performance in JSSIII Agricultural Science Examination, level of participation in SAPOS and their perception about the activities of SAPOS.

Data were described using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages, while inferential statistics was used for the testing of hypotheses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study revealed (Table 1) that 43.9% of the respondents were males and 56.1% were females. This shows that the student population offering agricultural science has more females than males in the selected secondary school contrary to the wide belief that males are more dominant in agriculture activities compared to the females. It was also shown that most of the respondent (93.9%) were 15years and above. This age distribution reflects the educational system of the country which stipulates secondary school to be for children between 12 and 18 years. This is the time when they can be effectively tutored and guided towards choosing a career. The result further shows that Christian students population is higher (76.5%) compared to Islam students (23.5%), while traditional religion has none in the selected secondary schools. The religion distribution depicts that Christian students' participation in agriculture is greater than Islam students. It was discovered that majority of respondents' parent (90.8% of father and 88.8% of mothers) occupation were non farming occupation while only a few (9.2% of fathers and 11.2% of mothers) were involved in farming occupation. In developing countries of the world where there is inadequate career guidance, the young ones tend to choose their career line of their parents most especially their fathers' occupation. Based on the finding this will influence the choice of respondents' career to be non farming occupation.

Table 1: Personal characteristics of the respondents

Variable	Frequency	(%)
Age interval (Years)		
≤15	6	6.1
≥15	6.1	93.9
Gender		
Male	43	43.9
Female	55	56.1
Religion		
Christian	75	76.5
Islam	23	23.5
Parents'occupation		
Farming	9	9.2
Trading	39	39.8
Others (Doctors, Artisans) etc.	50	51.0
Occupation		
Farming	11	11.2
Trading	62	63.3
Others (Doctors, Artisans) etc.	25	25.5
Total	98	100

Source: Field survey 2006

Table 2: Respondents' farming systems involvement

Farming systems	Frequency	(%)
Crops production	35	35.7
Livestock production	43	43.9
Mixed farming	20	20.4
Total	98	100

Source: Field survey 2006

Farming systems involvement: The students were requested to indicate the farming systems they were involved in within the school and the results in Table 2 show that crops production has 35.7% and 43.9% respectively. Only a few (20.4%) of the respondents are engaged in mixed farming. This is due to the fact that most of the farms exposed to the respondents are operating on a single farming system basis, except for a few of them. Therefore, this tends to create interest on a single farming system operation in the respondents at the advantage of the mixed farming which is more economical.

Table 3: Future interest for agricultural practices

Interest area	1st choice	2nd choice	3rd choice	4th choice
Engage mainly in agricultural career	12 (12.2)	29 (29.6)	33 (37.7)	20 (20.4)
Run a small farm along my major career	20 (20.4)	16 (16.8)	19 (19.4)	43 (43.9)
Investing in agriculture stocks	15 (15.3)	40 (40.8)	28 (28.6)	18 (18.4)
No interest in any of the above	51 (52.1)	13 (13.3)	17 (17.3)	7 (17.3)
Total	98 (100)	98 (100)	98 (100)	98 (100)

Source: Field survey 2006

Table 4: Grades of respondents in JSSIII agricultural science examination

Grades	Frequency	(%)
A	18	18.4
B	15	15.3
C	65	66.3
Total	98	100

Source: Field survey 2006

Areas of interest for future agricultural practices: From the study as shown in Table 3, it was observed that more than half of the respondents (52.1%) ranked. "No interesting in anything dealing with agriculture" first, investing in agricultural stocks came second (40.8%) while to engage mainly in agricultural career (37.7%) and running a small farm along major career (43.9%) was ranked third and fourth, respectively.

The result showed that the respondents were not interested in taking up practical agriculture as career. This is most probably due to the present day higher monetary rewards from non-agricultural sectors such as oil business, buying and selling, etc. This is unfortunate because government realize this trend, yet nothing is being done to avert it.

Performance in JSSIII agricultural science examination: It can be seen from Table 4 that more than half (66.3%) of the respondent have credit while about one third (33.7%) share grade A and B. The average performance of the respondents in the study area might have led to their dislike for practical agricultural career . Before the advent of SAPOS, agricultural science education in secondary schools was basically theoretical, but changed drastically after SAPOS. This is very important because it will increase the level of understanding of agricultural science as a course as well as the professional skills it builds up in students of the study area. In the JSS III agricultural science examination, A grade stands for distinction, B stands for good result, while C grade is for credit which is ordinary pass.

Testing of hypotheses: HO_1: There was no significant difference among performances of respondents in the selected secondary schools. The results showed one-way analysis of variance relationship that exist between and within groups on the performance of respondents in JSSIII Agricultural Science examination (Table 5). Based on the results there is no significant difference in the performance ($p = 0.630$, $F = 0.579$). It means that the performance of the respondents in the selected secondary school were not significantly different, notwithstanding whether only boys, girls or mixed school.

Table 5: ANOVA analysis of differences in the respondents performance in JSSIII agricultural science examination

Performance in JSSIII agricultural science examination	Sum of square	Df.	3rd choice	F P P
Between groups	1.098	3	0.366	.57 .63
Within groups		94	0.632	
Total	60.459	97		

Source: Field survey 2006

Table 6: Chi-square analysis of the relationship between selected personal characteristics of respondents and their performance in JSSIII Agricultural Science Examination

Variable	df	Chi-square	p	Decision
Age	2	1.044	0.593	Not significant
Gender	2	1.243	0.537	Not significant
Religion	2	0.406	0.816	Not significant

Source: Field survey 2006

HO_2: There is no significant relationship between selected personal characteristics of respondents and their performance in JSSIII Agricultural Science Examination.

The finding showed that there is no significant relationship between age($X^2 = 1.044$, $p = 0.593$); gender ($X^2 = 1.243$, $p = 0.537$) and Religion ($X^2 = 0.406$, $p = 0.816$). This means that age, gender and religion do not affect their performance in JSSIII Agricultural Science Examination Table 6.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of the study, was to examine the effect of school agricultural programme of Oyo State on the career choice of students in Ibadan. South West Local Government Area of Oyo State has shown that the SAPOS activities has increased the interest of the respondents on agricultural profession. The study shows that the performance of respondents in JSS III Agricultural Science Examination is the same among the selected secondary schools. The personal characteristic of respondents does not affect their performance in JSSIII Agricultural Science Examination. The performance of respondents in JSSIII Agricultural Science Examination was not affected by their exposure to agricultural activities; while on the other hand, there was relationship between parents' primary occupation and their performance in JSSIII Agricultural Science Examination.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the available facts and findings in the study area and from analysis of the various SAPOS activities and respondents' perception of career in agricultural profession. It appears that there are still unfavorable perception and disposition to choice of career in agricultural profession which have to be changed, if the dream of sustainable agricultural production is to be realized. Therefore, the following recommendations are made:

- There should be expansion of the SAPOS activities to embrace adequately mixed farming which is profitable agricultural production practices and increase supply of production inputs to the SAPOS to meet the necessary demands of student population.
- There should be adequate and proper education on practical agriculture with provision of effective agricultural instructors who can help to guide and direct the students' interest in agricultural career.
- Effective and efficient methods and process of agro business management must be taught. So, as to influence the students' perception towards making agricultural profession as befitting and profitable venture.
- More capital support should be released by the government to the concerned authority to ensure prompt and adequate attention and reaction to meet the needs of each SAPOS farms operation.
- Regular evaluation and appraisal of SAPOS activities in each secondary school, if is still within the objectives and aims of their institutionalization and or there is need for modification in the programme.
- The activities in SAPOS programme should be made more interesting and encouraging through provision of incentives to the participant to act as stimulant.

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