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ATTITUDE OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARDS AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES AND TRAININGS IN OGBOMOSO NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OYO STATE

**Akintonde J.O. ^{*1}, Akinboye O.A. ¹, Tihamiyu A.O. ¹, Akintaro O.S. ², Gbadamosi S.A. ³,
Bamidele B.S. ⁴, Alabi A.A. ⁵**

¹ Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, P.M.B. 4000, Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria.

² Teaching and Research Farm, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria.

³ Department of Agricultural Education, Osun State College of Education, P.M.B. 207, Ila-Orangun, Nigeria.

⁴ Department of Agricultural Extension and Management, Federal College of Agriculture, P.M.B. 5029, Moore Plantation, Ibadan, Oyo State

Abstract

The study assesses the attitude of senior secondary school students towards agriculture as a profession in some selected secondary schools in Ogbomoso North Local Government Area of Oyo State. One hundred respondents were randomly selected from five senior secondary schools purposively selected due to their questionnaire. The data obtained were analyzed with the aid of frequency count, percentages and cumulative percentage while correlation analysis was used to test the hypothesis. The findings reveal the personal characteristic of the respondents sampled as well as their level of interest in agriculture as a profession. The statistical analysis performed on the respondents' attitude towards agriculture as a profession revealed that there was significant relationship to the respondents' gender, educational level father and mother's occupation respectively while age and religion were statistically insignificant.

Keywords: Attitude; Senior Secondary School; Agricultural Science; Training.

Cite This Article: Akintonde J.O., Akinboye O.A., Tihamiyu A.O., Akintaro O.S., Gbadamosi S.A., Bamidele B.S., and Alabi A.A.. (2019). "ATTITUDE OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARDS AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES AND TRAININGS IN OGBOMOSO NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OYO STATE." *International Journal of Research - Granthaalayah*, 7(3), 130-135. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2619448>.

1. Introduction

In the early stages of economic development, agriculture plays a dominant role is the employment of resource and I the generation of income. This was the case prior to oil 600m era when agriculture

employed more than 2/3 of the labour force and contribute about 1/3 of grass domestic products (Akpokadge, 1991). Agriculture is the base through which most developed nations achieved their industrialization. Bidmus (1996) opined that there is the need for Nigeria as a country to harness all agricultural inputs in such a manner to improve farm management practices so that adequate food would be produced for the teeming population of the county.

Nigeria is predominantly an agrarian nation, to buttress the, Aribisala (2003) posited that over 75% of the country's population depends directly or indirectly on agriculture for their livelihood. However, despite the enormous importance agriculture has in the life of the population in the country, its activities are still dominated by the aged and illiterates in the rural areas, thus it is now very important for youths to be involved in agriculture squarely so as to meet the increasing food demand of the population.

Ciroma (1994) opined that Nigerian youths are dynamic, energetic, talented, aggressive, mobile and very outspoken in our society, most youths are facing the problem of unemployment and if they can venture into agriculture with their present ability, and they will boost food production and at the same time reduce unemployment. Moreover, youths can easily adapt to modernized farming systems where technology and new innovations will be practiced which may be difficult for the old hands to comprehend.

Naturally, as adults become aged, youths step in and in view of this, Styart (1992) posited that agriculture should be made more attractive to the youths for them to embrace it and if the youths are ready to exploit the agricultural resources at their disposal, they would not only be gainfully employed but the society would be devoid of most social ills bedeviling the nation of present (Badmus, 1999). The children who are brought up in the farming communities / rural areas are more susceptible to changes in behaviour as it relates to their environment and farming occupation. This is because in most cases, their parents are farmers and they too have been exposed to some aspects of farming hence there could be a change in the children's attitude toward agriculture as a career (Okunlola, 1998).

The concept "career" has been defined in different ways by various authors and none of these definitions is best or universal; they all agreed to the fact that the term denotes the profession of an individual in a field of work through the employable years of his life. Career can also be viewed as a developmental process an individual passes through from childhood to adulthood in which he involves himself in educational and vocational training which will further satisfy his/her occupational needs (Carew, 1997). Ekpere (1995) in his own view believes that a career is the occupation in which an individual finally finds himself in the process of trying to earn a living. Furthermore, career to him, is not contingent upon the occupational aspiration of an individual, he contended that there will be significant differences between the occupations young people aspire to and which they actually achieve overtime. This he said was attributed to some factors such as time, social status, parental education and the students' perception of the real world-work.

Apparently, in an effort to stimulate the youths' interest toward taking agriculture as a career in the country, agricultural science and farming were made compulsory in most primary and secondary schools; despite all these efforts, there is still a negative attitude on the part of the youths towards agriculture as a profession. Similarly, youths' interest in agriculture has been downplayed due to

some factors such as low farm income, societal views of the practice and value of agriculture so also in the government attitude towards improving agricultural production which has discourages the younger generations from going into farming. (Newwatch, 1995).

In view of this, the study intends to assess the attitude of senior secondary school students towards developing a career in agriculture. Specifically, the study intends to identify the personal characteristics of the respondents, and determine their level of interest towards agriculture as a profession. It was hypothesized that there was no significant relationship between respondents' personal characteristics and their attitude towards agriculture as a profession.

2. Methodology

The study was conducted in Ogbomosho North Local Government Area of Oyo State. The Local Government Area consist of 31 secondary schools, In the study area, five (5) secondary schools were purposively selected due to their agrarian background; in each of the selected schools, 20 respondents were randomly sampled from senior secondary 2 and 3 respectively i.e. ten students were sampled in each schools. The population of the study consists of all students in senior secondary school 2 and 3 respectively including both male and female.

The lists of students in senior secondary 2 and 3 respectively was used in the selection and in all 100 students constitute the sample size. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics used include frequency count percentages and cumulative percentages while inferential statistic used to test for relationship between the varieties (hypotheses) was person's product moment correlation (PPMC).

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Personal Characteristics of Respondents

Data presented on table 1 reveals that majority of the sampled respondents (63%) were male while remaining 37% accounted for female respondents. The implication of the result is that there more male respondents in school than the female respondents which may be as a result of the fact that few people believe in educating the girl child compare to the male child. Similarly, it can be observed on the table that the majority of the respondents (75%) were within the age group of 15 – 19 years while 20% of the respondents were within the age group of 20years and above and only 5% were below 15years of age. This indicates that the respondents were still very young and active and the right attitude towards agriculture as a career can be imbued into them. The table further reveals that 64% of the respondents practice Christianity as religion while the remaining 36% accounted for Muslim respondents.

Further perusal of the finding on the table shows that majority of the sampled respondents' fathers (36%) engaged in agriculture as their primary occupation while 26% engaged in trading and 28% were civil servant. The remaining 10% engaged in other types of primary occupation. Also, 18% of the respondents' mothers were farmers by profession while 61% were traders and 16% were civil servants. Only 5% engaged in other types of primary occupation. The implication of this result is that irrespective of the respondents parents primary occupation the right attitude can be

put into these students by their parents if really they understand the importance of agriculture to the country economy and to upliftment of their living standard because agriculture of no longer carried out with crude implements but heavy machineries thus longer scale farming can be encouraged.

3.2. Respondents Level of Interest in Agriculture as A Profession

Data presented on table 2 shows that majority of the respondents sampled (55%) indicated that they have high interest in agriculture as a profession while 35% indicated moderate interest and 10% indicated low interest in agriculture as a career.

3.3. Testing of Hypothesis

Table 3 shows that there was significant relationship between respondents level of education, gender, father's occupation and mother's occupation while age and religion were insignificantly related to the attitude of the respondents' towards agriculture as a career. This implies that educational level, gender father's occupation and mother's occupation have positive influence on the respondents' choice of future career.

4. Conclusions

This study assess the attitude of senior secondary school towards agriculture as a career on some selected secondary schools in Ogbomoso North Local Government Area of Oyo State with particular focus on five secondary schools with agrarian background. The following conclusions were made based on the findings of the study.

- 1) Majority of the sampled respondents (63%) were male, young and active (75%) within the age group of 15 – 19 years and practice Christianity (64%).
- 2) About 36% of the respondents' father engaged in agriculture as their primary occupation, 18% accounted for mothers' who primary occupation was agriculture.
- 3) A larger proportion (55%) showed high interest in taking up agriculture as a career.
- 4) There was significant relationship between respondents education, gender, father's and mother's primary occupation while age and religion were insignificantly related to their attitude toward agriculture as a profession.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) Agriculture clubs and young farmers' club should be organized in schools where they are present but not functional should be revived since His clubs/organization will expose the students to the importance of agricultural through new innovations and the technical-knowledge through agricultural shows seminars and workshops.
- 2) For further interest, the state government should mandate the principals of such schools to intensify efforts on practical agriculture on His will assist the students to have adequate practical experience.
- 3) Also, state ministry of agriculture should resuscitate farm settlement schemes for secondary school leavers where further practical experience can be obtained.

Appendix

Table 1: Personal characteristics of the respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	63	63.0
Female	37	37.0
Age (Years)		
Below 15	05	5.0
15 – 19	75	75.0
20 and above	20	20.0
Religion		
Christianity	64	64.0
Muslim	36	36.0
Father' primary occupation		
Farming	36	36.0
Civil servant	28	28.0
Trading	26	26.0
Others	10	10.0
Mothers' primary occupation		
Farming	18	18.0
Trading	16	16.0
Civil servant	61	61.0
Others	05	5.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

Table 2: Respondents level of interest on agriculture as a profession

Interest level	Frequency	Percentage
High	55	55.0
Moderate	35	35.0
Low	10	10.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

Table 3: Summary of the correlation analysis of the relationship between personal characteristics of the respondents and their attitude towards agriculture as a profession

Personal characteristics	Correlation value	Sig. level	Remark
Age	- 0.304	0.250	NS
Education	0.901	0.001	S
Gender	0.725	0.001	S
Religion	- 0.220	0.400	NS
Father's occupation	0.748	0.001	S
Mothers' occupation	0.646	0.001	S

At 5% level of significance

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*Corresponding author.

E-mail address: joakintonde@ lautech.edu.ng