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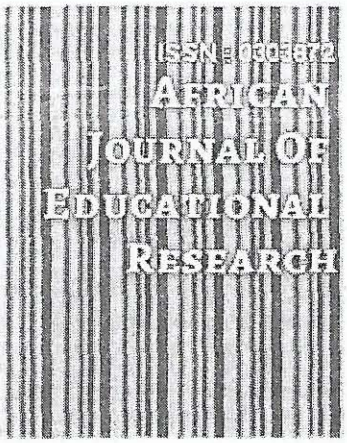

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EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

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By: Folaranmi O.O. and Laniran, P.T.

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Introduction

Agriculture has frequently been portrayed as critical to the economic development of developing nations. The role of agriculture has been further averred as the main drive responsible for employment, foreign exchange earnings, and national survival in developing countries which includes Nigeria (Abdullahi, 1986; Adebayo and Okuneye, 2005). Research work on development has repeatedly recognized agriculture as an impetus for economic emancipation often citing the role that agriculture played in the development of most industrialized countries (Abdullahi, 1986; Adebayo and Okuneye, 2005). Since agriculture has been itemised as a basic tool for economic development, it is important that more emphasis be placed on the roles that youth can play in agriculture (Fatunla, 1996). Participation of people who are creative, energetic, productive and innovative can bring about the expected development in agriculture (Arokoyo and Auta, 1992). Youth participation in agriculture, although under-represented, is a potent force which can revolutionize agriculture (Ijere, 1988 and Jibowo, 1989). Youths (secondary school students) if encouraged early enough to participate in agriculture, can influence their attitude towards practicing agriculture (Ojediran, 1997).

Today, one of the major problems facing Nigeria youth is unemployment. This is due to unfavourable attitudes of youths to agriculture as subject talk less of making in it a career. Since, the economy of many developing nations rest solely on agriculture it become imperative for adequate attention to be focused on sustainability and increased agricultural productivity (Szirmani, 2009). However, the shortage of skilled manpower is a serious obstacle to large

scale agricultural development. This manpower which is supposed to be dominated by the emerging youth is usually left in the hands of aged farmers. Evidence shows that the ageing farming population in Nigeria has an average age of 47 years and a life expectancy of 47 – 50 years (NBS 2008, 2010; Oboh and Salami, 2009). The implication of this trend is a gradual decline in available agricultural labour force and ultimately, agricultural productivity. Oladele (1991) articulated six variables in career choice and their relationship viz: subject combination, interest in subject related to the chosen career, knowledge about the work in a chosen career, academic achievement in subject related to a career aspiration, difficulty perceived in the subject required for the chosen career and finally, motive for choosing the career. Also, other factors that were found to influence youth's choice of career are perceived financial gains, prestige associated with the career, appreciation for type of work involved in specific career, motivation by secondary school experience, personal interest and place of birth (Nwezeh, 1988).

This study was conducted in Oke-Ogun Area of Oyo State. Oke-Ogun region is the northern part of Oyo State and is located on latitude 6° 081 north of the equator and 3.001 east of the Greenwich meridian. It is about 60 % of the total land mass of the present Oyo State. It comprises ten Local Governments; namely: Kajola, Iwajowa, Itesiwaju, Iseyin, Atisbo, Saki-West, Saki-East, Oorelope, Irepo and Olorunsogo. It is bounded in the north by Kwara State, in the South by Ogun State and in the West by the Republic of Benin. The major occupation of its inhabitants is farming. The land area is suitable for farming and major crops produced include cassava, cowpea, millet, yam, locust bean and shear butter. Animal husbandry is also practised in the area.

This study was set out to find out the following objectives:

- find out the socio-economic profile of students;
- identify who influences the career decisions of students;
- identify/ascertain the type of career the students are willing to choose when they leave secondary school;
- identify factors that motivate students to pursue a career in agriculture;
- find out student's attitude towards agriculture as a profession after leaving school; and
- find out the proportion of male to female students in the choice of agriculture as a career;

The following research questions informed the study.

- What is the attitude of secondary school students towards agriculture as a career choice?
- What are the effects of students' parents socio-economic characteristics on their choice of career?
- Are secondary school students interested in choosing Agriculture as a career after their secondary school education?
- What are the factors influencing students' choice of a future career?
- What is the proportion of male to female interest in choosing agriculture as a career?

The under-listed hypotheses, stated in null form were tested at $p < 0.05$ levels of significance:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between students' socio-economic background and their attitudes towards Agriculture Science.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference in the choice of agriculture career by male and female students.

Methodology

Proportionate random sampling was used to select; three local governments (Kajola, Saki-West and Atisbo). Twelve Senior Secondary Schools were selected respectively in all the three local governments while simple random sampling was used to select twenty students (10 males and 10 females) each from the selected schools. Sampling size is 240 students (respondents). The population of this study consists of secondary school students who are in Senior Secondary School 2 class.

A Total number of 250 questionnaires were prepared and distributed for the study. The questionnaires consist of both structured questionnaires and an interview guide. The research instrument used was subjected to face and content validity through the contribution of experts in Agricultural Extension Academics and Professionals. Thereafter the instrument was tested for reliability on ten students and a reliability value of 0.78 was obtained which indicated the instrument was reliable. The remaining 240 questionnaires were then administered to the selected students by the researcher and collected after filling appropriately. Data collected were analysed with frequencies, percentages, t-test and pearson product moment correlation.

Table 1: Number of Schools and Sample Selected from the 3 Local Governments

	LGA	No of senior secondary schools	No of selected senior secondary schools	No of selected students per school	Total No. of students selected
01	Kajola	18	6	20	120
02	Saki-East	9	3	20	60
03	Atisbo	7	3	20	60
Total		**34**	**12**	**60**	**240**

Relevant data was collected using the interview schedule and well-structured questionnaire on personal characteristics of respondents, respondents, perception of agricultural science and respondent's perception on level of encouragement.

Data on personal characteristics was analysed using descriptive statistics such as percentage, frequency, means and standard variation while hypotheses was analysed through inferential statistics of t-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The analysis was done using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15.

Results and discussions

The results are presented in the tables below.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of respondents on their personal characteristics

	Gender	N	Percentage (%)
(a)	Male	120	50.0
	Female	120	50.0
	Total	240	100
(b)	Religion		
	Christian	132	55
	Islam	108	45
	Total	240	100
(c)	Father's occupation		
	Civil servant	78	32.5
	Doctor	6	2.5
	Farmer	138	57.5
	Furniture	6	2.5
	Plumber	6	2.5
	Tractor Operator	6	2.5
	Total	240	100
(d)	Father's education		
	No formal education	42	17.5
	Adult education	18	7.5
	Primary school	72	30.0
	Secondary school	54	22.5
	Post-secondary school	54	22.5
	Total	240	100
(e)	Mother's occupation	Frequency	Percentage
	Civil servant	42	17.5
	Hairdresser	6	2.5
	Seamstress	6	2.5
	Trading	186	77.5
	Total	240	100
(f)	Mother's education		
	No formal education	60	25.0
	Adult education	42	17.5
	Primary school	54	22.5
	Secondary school	54	22.5
	Post-secondary school	30	12.5
	Total	240	100

Table 2 reveals that majority, (57.5%) of students' fathers made farming as their primary occupation. This could be as a result of the land availability, suitable for farming. None of the students' mothers choose farming as their primary occupation. This could be as a result of the low financial gain and drudgery often involved with low input agricultural production although, they may be involved in some forms of harvesting and low skill processing of harvested crops, 22.5% of men have post-secondary school educational qualification while 12.5% of women have post-secondary school educational qualification.

Table 3: Distribution of Student's Faculty and School Motivating/Influential factors to the choice of Agricultural Science

S/No	Item	Response	N	%
1.	Are your parents living together?	Yes	204	85
		No	36	15
		Total	240	100
2.	What is your family size?	0-5	48	20
		6-9	132	55
		10-15	30	12.5
		16-19	06	2.5
		20>	24	10
		Total	240	100
3.	Do you participate in your school's practical agriculture?	Yes	240	100
		No	000	000
		Total	240	100
4.	Do you have personal plot on the school farm?	Yes	108	45
		No	132	55
		Total	240	100
5.	What type of farming is your school engage in?	Arable crop	240	100
		Poultry	-	0
		Piggery	-	0
		Others	-	0
		Total	240	100
6.	Do you think you have benefited from you school's practical agriculture?	Yes	240	100
		No	-	0
		Total	240	100
7.	Are you motivated enough by the school's practical agriculture to have a large from in the future?	Yes	216	90
		No	24	10
		Total	240	100
8.	Do your parents derive part of their income from agricultural related source?	Yes	228	95
		No	12	5
		Total	240	100
9.	Is your family into full time or part time agriculture?	Full time	66	27.5
		Part time	162	67.5
		Total	240	100
10.	Outside the school farm activities, do you still engage in farming activities?	Yes	232	92.5
		No	18	7.5
		Total	240	100

Table 3 shows the distribution of students' family and school influential factors. There is a great indication that majority of the students' have a very greater tendency of being influenced by their family and school towards choosing agriculture as a career. As shown in Table 3, all the respondents participated in the school practical agricultural programme and all seems to have benefited from the programme, though, their response on whether the students have personal plot was not favourable. About 90% of the respondents were motivated through the practical experience gained from the school's agriculture programme towards having a large farm in the future. Also, most of the students' parents (66%) get most of their income from agriculture related sources.

Table 4: Attitudinal Response towards Choosing Agriculture as a Career

	Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1.	Agriculture is a tedious and dirty profession	12.5	17.5	2.5	47.5	20
2.	Farmers are usually illiterates and poor.	2.5	5	5	50	37.5
3.	Agriculture is not a lucrative profession	12.5	2.5	2.5	47.5	35
4.	Families and friends will laugh at me, if I choose Agriculture as career	5	15	7.5	55	17.5
5.	Farmers are not respected in the society	12.5	2.5	2.5	60	22.5
6.	Agriculture will not determine food availability	5	0	55	0	40
7.	Agriculture is too risky a profession	22.5	62.5	2.5	7.5	5.0
8.	The practical aspects of Agricultural science help to stimulate youth's interest in the career.	55.0	25.0	0	2.5	17.5
9.	If farming is made compulsory in both primary and secondary schools curricula students will have interest in agriculture	42.5	37.5	5.0	5.0	10.0
10.	Youth should succeed the ageing farming populace to make abundant foot availability	77.5	15	0	2.5	5.0
11.	Farming is only for dropout and dull students	0	17.5	0	45.0	37.5
12.	Males are more naturally better than females in Agriculture	32.5	52.5	2.5	5.0	7.5
13.	My parents will be happy with me if I choose agriculture as a career.	17.5	40.0	37.5	2.5	2.5

Table 4 shows the attitude determination of the respondents. It indicates that majority of the students have pleasant attitudes to questions, 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12 and 13 while question 7 alone attracts unpleasant attitude. This implies that about 92.3% of the respondents have favourable attitudes towards choosing agriculture as a career.

Table 5: Students' Possibility of Choosing Agriculture as a Career

	Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1.	If Agriculture science teachers are good, I will like Agriculture Science.	70.0	20.0	0	5.0	5.0
2.	I like Agricultural Science so much that I will practise farming when I leave school	15.0	70.0	2.5	10.0	2.5
3.	With proper pricing of Agriculture produce, I will practice farming.	35.0	55.0	0	5.0	5.0
4.	If infrastructures are put in place (roads, schools, hospitals, electricity and water) in rural areas, I will stay in rural areas to practice farming.	70.0	27.5	0	0	2.5
5.	With farming, I can achieve any dreams.	17.5	75.0	2.5	0	5.0
6.	Farming makes one to be self-reliant.	52.5	40.0	5.0	0	2.5
7.	I would engage in farming if I could secure enough capital to take off.	62.5	30.0	2.5	0	5.0
8.	Agriculture provides opportunity for leisure and personal enjoyment than other careers.	15.0	30.0	75.0	2.5	7.5
9.	Farming is highly rewarding.	42.5	52.5	2.5	0	2.5
10.	Farming involves working long hours in the sun	12.5	50.0	7.5	25.0	5.0

11.	Prospects in agriculture are many than other careers	42.5	52.5	0	2.5	2.5
12.	Involving in Agriculture is a way of contributing my quota to the alleviation of food problems in Nigeria.	27.5	57.5	0	10.0	5.0
13.	Agriculture takes too long time for one to achieve set objectives in life.	7.5	65.0	7.5	17.	2.5

From Table 5, it could be deduced that all the statements attracted positive or favourable responses except statements 10 and 13. This then indicates that a large percentage of the students have the possibility of choosing agriculture as a career. There is a tendency for students to choose careers that will enable them to satisfy their most important need through their work. This is based on the assumption that human needs are developed and ordered in a Maslow hierarchy style ranging from a lower order, physiological needs, through safety, affection, ego concerns and self-actualization.

Testing of hypotheses

Hypothesis one states that there is no significant relationship between students' personal characteristics and their attitude towards agriculture as a career. The result is presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Test of Relationship between Students' Personal Characteristics and Attitude towards Agriculture as a Career

		r-value	p-value	Decision
1	Sex	0.201**	0.01	Significant
2.	Father's age	-0.387**	0.01	Significant
3.	Father's income	-0.088	0.05	Not significant
4.	Father's education	-0.180**	0.01	Significant
5.	Mother's income	-0.211**	0.01	Significant
6.	Family size	0.121	0.05	Not significant

****significant at p<0.01**

Table 6 shows that there was a significant and positive relationship between gender and attitude towards agriculture as a career (r=0.201, p<.01). This indicated that made students indicated a positive attitude towards agriculture as a career than their female counterpart. The table also indicated that father's age and education; an mother's income inversely and significantly correlated with attitude towards agriculture as a career (r= -0.387, -0.180, -0.211; p<.01) respectively. This implies that students with younger fathers, with less educational qualification and mothers with less income has positive attitude towards agriculture as a career. Family size and students' attitude towards career was not significant (r=0.121, p>.05). The tested hypothesis therefore clearly shows that there is a relationship between gender and family background and attitude towards agriculture as a career. The hypothesis is therefore not confirmed and the hypothesis rejected.

Hypothesis two which posited that there is no relationship between students' perception of agricultural work and attitude towards agriculture as a career was tested using an independent sample t-test. The result is presented in table 6 below.

Table 7: Summary table of an independent sample t-test comparing student's perception of agricultural work and attitude towards agriculture as a career

Students' perception	N	Mean	Std.	Df	t-value	Sig.
Favourable	108	70.72	12.143	238	3.191	<.001
Unfavourable	132	66.41	66.41			

The result of the t-test shown in Table 7 reveals that there was significant effect of students' perception on attitude towards agriculture as a career (t=3.191, df=238, p<.001). From the result, students with favourable perception scored 70.72 on attitude towards agriculture as a career, while those with unfavourable perception scored 66.41 on attitude towards agriculture as a career with a mean difference of 4.31. This implies that students with favourable perception have positive attitude towards agriculture as a career than those with unfavourable perception. The hypothesis is therefore not confirmed.

Hypothesis three which posited that there is no relationship between students' gender and attitude towards agriculture as a career was tested using an independent sample t-test. The result is presented in tale 7 below.

Table 8: Summary table of an independent sample t-test comparing student's gender on attitude towards agriculture as a career

Gender	N	Mean	Std.	Df	t-value	Sig.
Male	120	66.30	9.972	238	-3.173	<.001
Female	120	70.40	10.05			

The result of the t-test shown in Table 8 reveals that there was significant effect of gender on attitude towards agriculture as a career (t= -3.173, df = 238, p<.001). From the result, male participants scored 66.30 on attitude towards agriculture as a career, while their female counterpart scored 70.40 on attitude towards agriculture as a career with a mean difference of -4.100. This implies that female students have positive attitude towards agriculture as a career than their male counterpart. The hypothesis is therefore not confirmed.

Conclusion

This study investigated the attitude of secondary schools students towards agricultural science in Oke-Ogun Area of Oyo State. It also assessed the

factors which influence career choice in secondary school students and the motivational factors that can influence their pursuit of career in agriculture. The results presented above shows that proper teaching and enabling environment will stimulate youth interests in agriculture. It is a well-known fact that Agriculture has been the mainstay of Nigeria's economy science the 1960s coupled with the fact that "ise agbe ni ise ile wa" which is translated that farming is the profession of our land. There have been several efforts by different administrations in Nigeria by both military and civilian regimes to improve the practice of Agriculture and to encourage and large-scale agricultural production. Notable among these efforts were agricultural development projects like "Operation Feed the Nation", "Back to the Land Initiative", Departments of Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Better-Life Rural women "BLP" Initiative, NEEDs, SEEDs and LEEDs to mention just a few. Food security has become a task that must be accomplished considering the high rate at which Nigeria's population is increasing. We all need good and balanced diet to develop and be useful to ourselves and our country. The finding of this study may therefore be of huge contribution to the development of agriculture in Nigeria.

Implication for school social work Recommendation

The government has tried in no small way in conscientising the students towards agriculture as a career and having done this, there is need for the government to put in the place appropriate machinery to ensure that the students benefit more from agriculture as a career.

Based on the research findings, the following suggestions are recommended:-

1. Collaborative efforts between social workers in schools and agricultural extension workers on the field should be promoted in other to integrate their individual competencies into their overall missions.
2. Improved agricultural practical curricula should be introduced in the secondary schools in Oyo State. A curriculum that exposes students to all sections of agriculture. Social amenities and infrastructural facilities should be provided in rural communities to reduce rural-urban migration and to encourage youths to contribute positively to agricultural production and overall development of their areas.
3. Social amenities and infrastructural facilities should be provided in rural communities to reduce rural-urban migration and to encourage youths involvement in agricultural production.
4. Federal government, state government and local government should have some agricultural schemes and support services to encourage youths who are willing to embark on a career in agriculture.

5. Secondary schools should be encouraged to have young farmers' clubs to encourage youths in participating in agricultural activities.

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