

IMPACT OF YOUTH EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATION ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY AND SELF EMPLOYMENT IN ANAMBRA STATE.

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Abstract

This study was conducted in Anambra state to determine the impact of youth education and participation on Agricultural productivity and self employment. The study made use of survey research design; four research questions guided the study. A sample of 200 youths was randomly selected from four senatorial zone of the state. Structured questionnaire were used to collect data, while data collected were analysed using simple percentages, means and standard deviation. The findings revealed the twelve (12) impact of youth education on agricultural productivity to include enabling the youths to be creative and innovative in revitalizing agriculture; help them to participate in agricultural activities and production and gain knowledge about agriculture among others. Result also shows the present agricultural activities carried out by the youth in the study area while eleven (11) challenges that hinder youth education and participation on agricultural production and self employment were identified. In line with the finding, recommendations were made to include among others: elaborate youth education programme should be packaged for the youths and should be based on practical demonstrations, project, experiential learning and competency based to foster skill acquisition needed for increased participation in agriculture for self employment.

Key words: Youth Education, Agricultural Productivity, Self employment

The incidence of youth unrest is a growing concern in Nigerian as most youths are engaged by unemployment, insurgency, poverty, kidnapping, prostitution, drug use and other social vices. This ugly situation is worsened by the current economic meltdown, crash in the

price of crude oil and general inflation experienced in Nigeria. The youths being the future leaders are mostly affected by the downturn of events.

Roch and Oberholzer, (2004) sees the youth as a transition between childhood and adulthood. In his words Adeleke (2002) claimed the youth represents any person between the ages of 16 – 36 years, in same vein, Dreyfus (2008) considers the youth as individuals between the ages of 16 – 25 years who are actively involved in changing their lives and society in which they live.

They are seen as a significant force in economic development especially now that the Nigeria government is emphasizing diversification of economy into Agriculture. The need to engage the youth in agricultural activities and productivity cannot be over emphasized. Indeed, since the youth are the future leaders of any country, it is useful to develop them into patriotic citizens, future progressive farmers and better citizens (Ajayi, 2006).

The state of Agricultural productivity and low esteem associated with agricultural production is manifested in rural-urban migration, youth low interest in farming, lack of industrial firms to process agricultural products and lack of skilled labour among others has led to worsening Nigeria food deficit (NDE, 2006). It is evident that the involvement of youths in agricultural productivity through youth programmes had contributed significantly to agricultural development and

empowering the youths to meet the full needs and deep selected aspiration to be self-reliant in food production (FAO, 1990). According to Tibowo, (2005), the successive regimes at the federal and state levels had introduced various agricultural development schemes with the aim of encouraging the youths and boosting food production and farmers income through provision of agricultural infrastructure, inputs effective extension work and youth education.

Youth education is a form of education given to the youth to enable them to be worthwhile citizens and contribute positively to self reliance and national development. It is also a tool to bring a positive change in the society, gain knowledge, understand the form of proper conduct and acquire technical competency in specific work area; find avenue to pursue personal interest; venture into new fields, set reachable goals; define their career objectives and decide what they want from life.

The state and local government introduced some agricultural programmes aimed at boosting food production and participation. One of such programme youth in-Agriculture Programme (YIAP) was introduced in 2004 by the Anambra state government. It was designed to create a rapid employment for the youth through active participation in agricultural productivity by encouraging skill acquisition and production efficiency among beneficiaries.

The acquisition of skill and competencies in agricultural production by the youth will definitely lead to increased youth participation in agricultural productivity which is measured as the ratio of agricultural output to agricultural inputs. In line with this, it becomes imperative to study the impact of youth education and participation in agricultural productivity and self employment.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study lies on the theory of Existence, Resistance and Growth (ERG). The theory is a motivational

construct that contributes to individual human behaviour and learning. It considers the intrinsic factors that cause a person to specific action (Ivancherich, Konopaske and Malteson, 2008). Such understanding is useful to youth education and learners seeking to understand and improve performance in the work field.

Statement of Problem

It is common knowledge that the poor participation of youths in agricultural productivity in Nigeria has been a constant denominator in economic debates and this has become a problem to agriculturist, administrators and agricultural researchers. The current call for economic diversification into agriculture by the present federal government administration is a mere hoax if the youths are not effectively involved through youth education and increased participation in agricultural productivity.

In line with this problem, this study was conducted to determine the impact of youth education and participation in agricultural production and employment in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to determine the impact of youth education and participation on agricultural productivity and employment in Anambra State. The specific objectives include the following;

- 1) Determine the characteristic of the youths in Anambra State
- 2) Determine the impact of youth education on agricultural productivity and employment in Anambra state.
- 3) Identify the presence of agricultural activities carried out by the youths in Anambra state.
- 4) Identify the challenges that hinder youth education programmes and participation in Agricultural productivity.

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Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study;

- 1) What are the socio-metric characteristics of the youths?
- 2) What are the impacts of youth education on agricultural productivity and self employment?
- 3) What are the present agricultural activities carried out by the youth in Anambra state
- 4) What are the challenges that hinder youth education programmes and participation in agricultural productivity?

Research Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to determine the impact of youth education and participation in agricultural productivity and self employment in Anambra State. The population consists of all the youths in Anambra State. The sample was made up of 200 youths randomly selected from the four (4) senatorial district of Anambra State. A structural questionnaire was developed for the study and used for data collection. The instrument was validated by 2 lecturers from the Department of Guidance and Counseling and 2 lecturers from the Department of Agricultural Education, Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe. A test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Pearson product movement correlaiotn co-efficient was used to derive a reliability coefficient of 0.71. The instrument has a four point scale of SA = strongly agree, A – agree, D – disagree and SD = strongly disagree. A criterion mean value of 2.50 was set as a standard for acceptance or rejection. Any mean score equal or greater than 2.50 is accepted, otherwise it is rejected. Two hundred copies of the questionnaire was designed and administered using 3 research assistances who were trained for the purpose, out of two hundred questionnaires given out, only one hundred and eighty (180) was returned properly completed. The data collected

were analyzed using percentages, simple mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question. The findings of the study were derived from the research question.

Results

Research question 1: What are the socio-metric characteristics of the youths?

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of respondents on socio-metric characteristics of the youth (N = 180).

S/N	Item	F	%
1	Age of youth		
	a) 10 – 20	82	45.56
	b) 21 – 30	38	21.11
	c) 31 – 40	60	33.33
2	Gender of youth		
	Male	114	63.33
	Female	66	36.67
3	Education attainment		
	a) No formal education	16	8.89
	b) FSLC	51	28.33
	c) WAEC/SSCE	64	35.56
	d) First Degree and above	49	27.2

Result presented in Table 1 revealed that the age bracket of the majority (45.56%) of the youths fall within the range of 10 – 20 years, followed by those within the age of 31 – 40 years, (33.33%), while the youths within the range of 21 – 30 had 21.11%. Result on item 2 reveal that majority of the youths are males

(63.33%) while the population of the female youths constituted 36.67%. Result on educational attainment shows that 35.56% of the youths have WAEC/SSCE as their highest educational level, FSLC holders constituted 28.33%, First degree had 27.2% while 8.89% of the youths had no formal education.

Research question 2: What are the impacts of youth education on agricultural productivity?

Table 2: Means and standard deviations of the respondents on the impact of youth education on agricultural production and self employment (n=180)

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Youth gain knowledge about agriculture through youth education	3.00	0.91	Accepted
2	Youth acquire skills and competency in agricultural productivity	2.51	1.03	Accepted
3	Youth education creates avenues for youths to pursue their interest	2.87	0.97	Accepted
4	Help them venture into new area in agriculture	2.68	1.05	Accepted
5	Help them to participate in agricultural activities and production	3.06	0.99	Accepted
6	Help them to develop positive attitude towards agriculture.	2.62	1.03	Accepted
7	Help youths to define career objectives in agriculture.	2.84	1.01	Accepted
8	Develop positive social and environmental awareness	2.59	1.03	Accepted
9	It enables the youths to be self reliant	2.53	1.12	Accepted
10	Youth education keeps youth away from social vices	2.88	0.94	Accepted
11	Youth education made the youth to prefer white collar job to agriculture	2.13	1.08	Rejected
12	It enables the youth to be creative and innovative in	3.09	0.97	Accepted

	revitalizing agriculture.			
13	It increases the rate of rural-urban migration among youths.	2.66	1.06	Accepted

\bar{X} = Mean, SD= Standard Deviation

In Table 2, out of the thirteen (13) item statements on the impact of youth education on agricultural production, twelve (12) had their mean score equal or above 2.50 bench mark and were accepted. “It enables the youth to be creative and innovative in revitalizing agriculture” has the highest mean value of 3.09 followed by “Help them to participate in agricultural activities and production” with a mean value of 3.06 while “Youth education made the youth to prefer white collar job to agriculture” had the least mean value of 2.13 and therefore was not accepted. The other mean values ranged from 2.88-2.51. The standard deviation of all the items ranged between 0.91-1.12, this implies that the response of the respondents were accepted as the impact of youth education on agricultural productivity in the study area.

Research question 3: What are the present agricultural activities carried by the youths in Anambra state?

Table 3: Means and standard deviation of the respondents on present agricultural activities carried out by the youth in Anambra state (n = 180).

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Supply of unskilled labour	3.29	0.69	Accept
2	Goat production	2.21	1.14	Reject
3	Horticultural production	2.21	0.93	Reject
4	Dog breeding	2.16	1.02	Reject
5	Fish farming	2.58	1.17	Accept
6	Arable crop production	2.93	0.98	Accept
7	Rabbitary	2.27	1.06	Reject

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8	Piggery	2.73	1.07	Accept
9	Pest and marketing of agricultural products	2.64	1.09	Accept
10	Processing and marketing of farm products	3.16	0.76	Accept
11	Poultry production	2.98	0.87	Accept
12	Grass cutter production	2.16	1.26	Reject

\bar{X} = Mean, SD= Standard Deviation

The result in Table 3 revealed that out of twelve (12) items on the agricultural activities carried out by the youths in Anambra State only seven (7) had their mean values above the criterion value of 2.50 which indicated that the youths actually engage in them. The items with high mean values include “supply of unskilled labour, “processing and marketing of agricultural products”, poultry production” and “arable crop production” with mean values of 3.29, 3.16, 2.98 and 2.93 respectively. The items with low mean values below the criterion point of 2.50 includes “grasscutter production”, “dog breeding”, “goat production”, “horticulture”, and “rabbitory” with low mean values of 2.16, 2.16, 2.21, 2.21 and 2.27 respectively and therefore were not considered as agricultural production practiced by the youths.

Research question 4: What are challenges that hinder youth education programme and participation on agricultural productivity?

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation of the respondents on the challenges that hinder youth education programmes and participation on agricultural productivity. (n=180.)

S/N	Item	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	Poor land tenure system	2.50	1.19	Accepted
2	Inadequate technology	2.67	1.09	Accepted
3	Poor youth interest in	3.13	0.78	Accepted

agriculture

4	Inadequate infrastructure	2.89	1.04	Accepted
5	Rural-urban migration	3.73	0.99	Accepted
6	Poor processing and storage facilities	3.17	0.76	Accepted
7	Poor government policies	3.17	0.83	Accepted
8	Theoretical nature of curriculum implementation	2.79	1.06	Accepted
9	Natural disaster	3.15	0.76	Accepted
10	Ineffective extension services	2.78	1.06	Accepted
11	Inadequate farm mechanization	2.97	0.96	Accepted

\bar{X} = Mean, SD= Standard Deviation

Results in Table 4 shows that all the items on the challenges that hinder youth education programmes and participation in agricultural productivity had their mean value above the criterion value of 2.50 and therefore were accepted. This indicated that poor land tenure system, inadequate technology, poor youth interest in agriculture, rural-urban migration, poor processing and storage facilities, poor government policies on agriculture, theoretical nature of curriculum implementation, natural disaster, ineffective extension services and inadequate farm mechanization are the challenges that hinder effective youth education programme and participation in agricultural productivity in the study area.

Discussion

The result on the socio-metric characteristics revealed that majority of the youths are aged between 10 – 20 years. This in line with the assertion that youth, the state of being young is a transitional period in personality development that bridges the years between childhood and adulthood usually

between the age 10 – 20 years when the young possess unique capabilities, dynamics strength, adventure, ambition and hilanty (Udah, 2001; Waldie, 2004, Akwuiwu, Nwajiuba and Nnadi, 2005). The predominance of this age group may be attributed to the fact that majority of them at this age still depend on their parents and are likely to participate in family farming.

The result also shows that majority of the youths are WAEC holders suggesting that most of them are not gainfully employed at this level. This finding disagreed with the report of Adeniyi (1999) who reported that agricultural production thrives mostly among the highly educated farmers.

Table 2 implicated 12 impacts of youth education on agricultural productivity among youths in Anambra state and this result agreed with the opinion Soyinka (2014) who opined youth education is the answer to the challenge of Nigerian youth unemployment.

Table 3 showed seven (7) agricultural activities carried out by the youths to include; supply of unskilled labour, fish farming, arable crop production, piggery, pest control and fumigation, processing and marketing of agricultural product and poultry production. The finding is in line with report of Okwuche and Adegbeye (2001) who asserted that the youths are actively involved in agricultural development. It is also in tandem with the report of Mongeot (2005) which stated that agriculture is part of poverty alleviation programme that serve as means to mitigating the effects of poverty.

Table 4 revealed eleven (11) challenges that hinder youth education programmes and participation on agricultural productivity. The finding is in line with the report of Nwankwo (2014) that land tenure system, non-availability of capital, poor storage facilities and lack of social amenities, non-functional extension services and drudgery were the factor militating against youth education and participation in agricultural productivity. Again, the finding

agrees with the assertion of Akigbo (2007) that Nigeria agriculture is still very traditional, completely indigenous and plagued by several problems like rigid land tenure, traditional tools, ritual cultural practices, extremely low production inputs and debilitating losses from pest, diseases and inadequate storage.

Conclusion

The study investigated the impact of youth education and participation on agricultural productivity in Anambra State. Youth education being a form of education given to the youth to enable them to be worthwhile citizens and contribute positively to self reliance and national development aimed towards increased youth participation in agricultural productivity. Results revealed the socio-metric characteristics of the youth, the impact of youth education on agricultural production, the present agricultural activities carried out by the youths and the challenges that hinder youth education programmes and participation in agricultural productivity in Anambra state.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

- Appropriate career guidance should be available to youths to enable them define career objectives in agriculture.
- Government and private sector initiatives should provide basic amenities in the rural areas to forestall rural-urban migration.
- Necessary and adequate incentives as in terms of finance and agro-inputs should be made available to youths to motivate them into greater participation in agriculture.
- Elaborate youth education programmes should be packaged for the youths and should be based on practical demonstration, projects, experiential learning and competency based to

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foster the skill acquisition and appropriate attitude development.

- Formulation of appropriate policies by the stakeholders in agriculture to enhance youth participation in agricultural productivity, self employment and community development.

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