



DETERMINANTS OF RURAL YOUTH'S DECISION TO PARTICIPATE IN AGRICULTURAL
ACTIVITIES IN NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study analyzed the determinants of rural youth's decision to participate in agricultural activities in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Multistage sampling technique was used to sample 277 youths. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaire and data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage, mean and inferential statistics such as logit regression model and pairwise correlation. The result shows greater percentage of the youths (68.23%) had no interest (unfavourable attitude) in agriculture. The major determinants of youth's decision to participate in agriculture were age ($p > /z = 0.084$), household size ($p > /z = 0.087$), farming experience ($p > /z = 0.000$), land ownership ($p > /z = 0.011$), access to credit ($p > /z = 0.062$) and awareness on agricultural opportunities ($p > /z = 0.003$). Perceptions correlates positively and significant to participation in agricultural activities ($r = 0.8729$) and influenced youths interest in agricultural activities. It is recommended that there should be proper orientation and public enlightenment on the importance and the opportunities in agriculture for better youths' involvement. Age, household size, farming experience, land ownership, access to credit and awareness should be the major determinants in considering what will draw the attention of youths in agricultural activities.

Keywords: Determinants, Rural youth, Participation, Agriculture, Nasarawa State.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is one of the most viable sectors in the Nigerian economy particularly in terms of its employment potentials. It is the foundation for the development of stable human communities, both in rural and urban communities. It provides environmental benefits such as conservation, guaranteed sustainable management of renewable natural resources and preserved biodiversity (Preshstore, 2013). The agricultural sector is strategically positioned to have a high multiplier and linkage effect on any nation's quest for socioeconomic and industrial development. Unfortunately, Nigeria's agricultural sector is bedeviled with several challenges such as inadequate access to markets and credits, low level of technology especially mechanization, inadequate improved post-harvest infrastructure (storage, processing, transport), low uptake of research findings by stakeholders and limited availability of improved technological packages especially planting materials and certified seeds (Ministry of Agriculture, 2007). This has made agriculture unattractive and non-lucrative resulting in decline in the number of youth participation in agriculture (Muhammad-lawal, Omotoesho and Falola, 2009). Nigeria farming population is ageing. It is practically impossible for this aged generation dominating agricultural sector to deliver the expected productivity to meet food needs of the ever growing population (Aphunu and Atoma, 2010).

Against the background of the significance of youths to the agricultural development process and the significant roles of institutionalized framework to

enhance youth's participation in agricultural activities, this study was conceived to achieve the following objectives:

1. ascertain the perceptions of youths towards agriculture in the study area,
2. examine the determinants of rural youths decision to participate in agricultural activities in the study area.

The hypothesis started in the null form is that: There is no significant relationship between youth's perceptions of agriculture and their level of participation in agricultural activities in the study area.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The area is centrally located in the middle-belt region of Nigeria. A multi stage sampling procedure was used to sampled 277 youths in the study. Primary data was collected through the use of structure questionnaire and interview schedule. Descriptive statistics involving the use of frequency, percentage mean score and logit regression analysis were used. Pairwise correlation was used to test the stated hypothesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION Level of rural youths participation in agricultural activities

Table I shows the level of rural youth's participation in agricultural activities. The result revealed that youths participation in agricultural activities is high (70.40%). This may be attributed due to absence of desirable job opportunities and for the fact that agriculture is the major source of income in rural communities. The findings agreed with Thomas

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and Eforuoku (2016) who also found high Youth's perceptions towards agriculture participation of youth in agricultural programme.



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Perception statements	Frequency	SA	A	UD	D	SD	WS	WM
Level of participation		Percentage	Maximum	Minimum	Score	Score		
Agriculture for school dropouts and illiterate	82	78.40 (29.00)	81 (29.2)	60 (24.2)	67 (17.7)	42 (7.9)	935	3.38
Agriculture should be practiced by the less privileged	90	90 (32.5)	94 (33.9)	38 (13.7)	10 (3.6)	953	3.44	
Agriculture promote enough incentives to rural youths	16	16 (5.8)	32 (11.6)	49 (17.7)	88 (31.8)	92 (33.2)	623	2.25
Farming reduces someone status in the Society	48	48 (17.3)	79 (28.5)	85 (30.7)	51 (18.4)	14	927	3.35
Agriculture is a profitable enterprise	24	24 (8.7)	42 (15.2)	58 (20.9)	83 (30.0)	70 (25.3)	698	2.52
Farming promote poverty	20	20 (7.2)	38 (13.7)	86 (31.0)	81 (29.2)	52 (18.8)	724	2.61
Farming is stressful and energy sapping	104	104 (37.5)	95 (34.3)	69 (24.9)	9 (3.2)	0 (0.0)	128	4.06
Agriculture improve standard of living	9	9 (3.2)	29 (10.5)	81 (29.2)	123 (44.4)	35 (12.6)	685	3.60
Agriculture is meant for the aged	71	71 (25.6)	93 (33.6)	64 (23.1)	29 (10.5)	20 (7.2)	997	3.27
Farming generate low income	76	76 (27.4)	101 (36.5)	101 (36.5)	51 (18.4)	12 (4.3)	906	2.45
I like agriculture as primary occupation	36	36 (13.4)	96 (34.7)	94 (34.7)	101 (36.5)	44 (15.9)	678	2.44
Farming is a bad business	12	12 (4.3)	33 (11.9)	79 (28.5)	94 (33.9)	59 (21.3)	676	

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to their perceptions on agriculture

Source: Field survey, 2018

*Values in Parenthesis are percentages

SA=Strongly agreed, A=Agreed, UD=Undecided, D=Disagree, SD= Strongly disagree.

WS= Weighted Sum; WM=Weighted Mean

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Table 2 shows the mean response on rural youth's perceptions towards agriculture. Youths' perceived that agriculture is for the school dropouts and illiterates (Mean=3.38), agriculture is for the less privileged in the society (Mean=3.44), farming Determinants of rural youths decision to participate in agricultural activities

From the results, age of respondent, household size, farming experience, access to credit facilities, land ownership and awareness on agricultural opportunities were found to be significant and hence influenced youth's participation in agricultural activities. Sex, marital status, education level, employment status, interest in agriculture, having role model, membership of youth base organization and decision to migrate to urban centres were all found not to be significant.

Age of respondent was significant at 10% with a negative coefficient and it implies that age is negatively associated with participation in agriculture by the youths. The negative association implies that an increase in the age of respondent by one year will decrease the probability of youths to participate in agriculture. Likewise household size variable was significant at 10%. The coefficient is negative and implies that it is negatively associated to the probability of youths participation in agriculture. This implies that an increase in the household size of respondents by one person will decrease the probability of participation in agriculture by the youth in the study area. This result conforms to the findings by Abdul-Hakim and Che-Mat (2011) that posited a negative relationship and was attributed to the unwillingness to participate in off-farm activities as the family

size increases. The coefficient of farming experience was positive and statistically significant at 1%. This implies that increase in the farming experience increases the probability of high level of youth performance in agriculture. This buttress the fact that as youths participate in agricultural productions over time they acquire enough experience that will enable them to cope with challenges in farming.

reduces someone status in the society (Mean=3.35), farming is stressful and energy sapping (Mean=4.06), agriculture is meant for the aged (Mean=3.60), and that farming generates low income (Mean=23.27). Overall, majority of the youths perceived agriculture negative.

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Access to credit variable was significant at 10%. The coefficient for youth's access to credit is negative and implies that access to credit is negatively associated with the probability of participation in agriculture by the rural youths. This implies that having access to credit facilities will decrease the probability of rural youths decision to participate in agriculture. This means those rural youths who have access to credit

occur for a unit increase in farm land owned by rural youth compared to those who do not owned farm lands. This implies increase ownership of farm land, increases the probability of youth engagement in agricultural activities in the rural areas of the state. Awareness on agricultural activities is significant at 1% with positive coefficient. This indicates that a unit increase in the level of youths awareness on agriculture will

Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error	Z-values	P>/z/
Age	-0.1565	0.4784	0.0906	0.084
Sex			0.6611	0.469
Marital status	-1.4155		1.0447	0.175
Education	-0.0379		0.1262	0.764
Employment	-1.5204		0.9684	0.116
Household size	-0.2363		0.1382	0.087
Interest in Agriculture	0.3117		0.8213	0.704
Farming Experience	1.1935		0.2019	0.000
Access to credit	-2.7921		1.4979	0.062
Land ownership	2.2779		0.8923	0.011
Having role model	0.5663		0.9329	0.544
Cooperative membership	-1.1362		0.9892	0.251
Awareness on agriculture	2.7512		0.9279	0.003
Decision to migrate	-0.2759		0.7174	0.700
Constant	2.7098		2.5684	0.291

Table 3: Determinants of rural youths decision to participate in agriculture

Source: Field Survey, 2018

***= significant at 1% level of probability *=significant at 10% level of probability. NS= Not significant



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facilities have a lesser probability of participating in agricultural activities than their counterparts who do not. Land ownership is significant at 5% with positive coefficient. Increase in youths decision to engage in agricultural activities will Correlation relationship between youths perceptions and their level of participation in agricultural activities

result to increase in the probability of rural youths participation in agriculture. This implies that as youths becomes more aware of the opportunities in agriculture, the greater will be their participation.

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Table 4 shows the correlation analysis between youths perceptions of agriculture and their level of participation in agriculture. The result shows that youth's perception towards agriculture correlated positively and significantly with participation in agricultural production activities ($r = 0.8729$). We therefore reject the null hypothesis

Table 4: Correlation result of the relationship between youths' perceptions towards agriculture and their level of

Variable	Correlation coefficient	p-value	Remark
Perception toward agriculture	0.8729	0.0097	Significant

participation and indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship between youths perceptions of agriculture since it dominantly influenced their participation in agricultural activities in the study area. This finding agrees with those of Dalla Valle (2012) and Noorani (2015) who revealed that though there is recognition of the potential of agriculture internationally and nationally, there is a decline of youths interest and engagement in the sector.



CONCLUSION

The study revealed that youths are involved in some agricultural activities in the study area but majority of the youths perceived agricultural activities negatively which influences their participation in agriculture. The implication of the findings is that youths are unfavourably disposed to participation in agricultural productivity and hence the massive drift to other sectors of the economy. Age, household size, farming experience, access to credit facilities, land ownership and awareness on the opportunities embedded in agriculture were the main determinants of youths participation in agricultural production. Therefore, these variables should be targeted for improvement in order to further increase participation of youths in agriculture.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Youths should be given the necessary orientation on agricultural production which will enlighten them on the opportunities embedded in agriculture, which should be backed up with production resources and services to enable the youths to embark on agricultural activities in a sustainable manner.
2. Intervention strategies for youths in agricultural improvement should be guided by their age, household size, farming experience, access to credit facilities, land ownership and awareness on agricultural opportunities.

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