

Full Length Research Paper

Factors Militating against Youth Involvement in Agricultural-based Livelihood in Bwari Area Council, Federal Capital Territory, Abuja

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Received 28 April 2020; Accepted 20 May, 2020

The realization of the agricultural transformation agenda in Nigeria could be hampered due to poor motivation, disposition and participation of youths in agriculture-based livelihoods. This study analyzed the factors limiting youth participation in agriculture-based livelihood activities in Bwari Area Council, Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria. Questionnaire and interview schedules were used to collect data from 100 respondents, Data analysis was by the use of frequency, percentage, mean and factor analysis. Results showed that the predominant agriculture-based livelihood activities identified in the study area include: Livestock farming, Crop farming, Agricultural sales and marketing. The main factors limiting youth participation in agriculture-based livelihood activities were

identified as: inadequate credit facilities (mean = 3.32), poor investment on return (mean = 3.17), No agricultural insurance (mean = 3.64) among others. Factor analysis reveals poor social values, poor agriculture support services, experience status, agricultural insurance and social values as factors limiting youth involvement. The study revealed that youth participation in agriculture-based activities is average, it is recommended that youth extension should be incorporated in each state agricultural extension intervention programmes for active youths' involvement in agricultural production and food security drive.

Keywords: Youth, agriculture, livelihood, participation

INTRODUCTION

According to Brooks *et al.* (2013) Employment and job creation remain front-page issues around the world. Policy makers and citizens in high income countries struggle with persistent unemployment associated with economic recession and recurrent financial crises. Those in middle income countries are concerned that growth has bypassed large segments of the population and resulted in increased income inequality and disaffection of key social groups. In low income countries, job creation is the key to shared prosperity and reduction of poverty (Brooks *et al.*, 2013). The need for jobs is especially acute when large numbers of young people enter the labor force and seek employment. Nigeria has a

large and growing population of young people yet little job creation in the formal sector (Brooks *et al.*, 2013). Agriculture is uniquely positioned to absorb these workers, although farming does not often occur to policy makers as a solution to the challenge of job creation (Brooks *et al.*, 2013). In Sub Saharan Africa, agriculture suffered a relative neglect in terms of government expenditure and volume of developmental assistance for two decades (World bank, 2012). The sector is seen to play a key role in poverty reduction and food security with great potential for impacting on nutrition and unemployment, but who wants to farm? Factors pushing many nations to pursue national policy goals on food

security include the rising unemployment among the youth, the dwindling prospects of the sector where much of the World's food is produced by conservative ageing small-scale farmers (Yunusa and Giroh, 2017).

Young people constitute a high and increasing population of the African continent with around 70 percent of the total population under 30 years. According to International Labour Organization, 60% of African unemployed people are youth. Nigeria is largely an agrarian society and like many countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, it has a predominantly young population much of which resides in the rural areas (Losch *et al.*, 2012). The current Nigerian unemployment rate remain high at 23.10% with the youth accounting for 75%, about three times the average for Sub-Saharan African countries and the global average of 12% (Oyekale, 2011). Agriculture possess significant untapped development and employment creation potential, but despite this ample potential to provide income generating opportunities for the youth, challenges related to their participation in this sector and more importantly, options for overcoming them are not extensively documented (FAO, 2014). Statistics indicate that about 65% of rural households involved in Agriculture-based livelihood are elderly men and women. The nation is therefore in dire need to replace the ageing farming population for sustainable agricultural development in Nigeria. This becomes more critical since the changing socio-economic, political, environmental and climatic atmosphere in Nigeria and other developing countries across the globe has continued to aggravate the living conditions of most households especially those living in the rural areas.

An empirical study of youth's involvement in food crops production is necessary because the agricultural sector is at risk, it is confronted with a critical need for new hands and use of modern techniques of farming over the current ageing farmer population that is fast depleting and the youths who are supposed to replace them are either withdrawing or reluctant to go into farming as a profession, (Alakpa and Onemolease, 2009). The main objective of this study is to analyze the factors limiting youth participation in agricultural-based livelihood activities in Bwari Area Council of Abuja, FCT Abuja, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to: examine the socio-demographic characteristics of the youths; identify the pre-dominant agriculture-based livelihood activities youth participate in; and analyze the factors limiting youth participation in agriculture-based livelihood activities in the study area.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Bwari Area Council of Abuja, FCT Abuja, Nigeria. A random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 100 youths from the 10 wards in the study area, 10 youths were selected from

each of the 10 wards that made up the Area council. Data were collected with the aid of an interview schedule. Nominal scale was used to measure the socio-demographic characteristics the respondents while frequency count was used to determine the number of youths involved in each of the various agriculture-based livelihood activities. The responses on the likely factors affecting youth participation in agriculture-based livelihood activities in the study area were weighted on a 4-point likert-type summated rating scale of agreement (strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree). The values of the scale (4, 3, 2 and 1) were summed up to obtain 10. The mean value of the sum gave 2.50, which served as the cut-off mean. This became the benchmark for accepting any item as a factor affecting youth participation in agriculture-based livelihood activities in the study area. Data analysis was carried out using descriptive tools namely: frequency, percentage and mean. Further analysis employed factor analysis to obtain and rename the major factors limiting youth participation in agriculture-based livelihood activities in the study area. The extracted variables with coefficient of ≥ 0.50 and above were used in renaming the major factors in line with Ikurekong, (2005); Nwaogwugwu and Obele, (2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description of the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

Table 1 reveals that majority of the respondents were between ages 26-35 years (47%) and 36-40 years (37%), respectively. Most of the members of the youth are in their young age where their energies could be harnessed for productive ventures. Their relatively young age may make them receptive to new innovations and have potential drive sustained agricultural activities for many years unlike the older ones who may be resistant to change and limited years for continuous/sustained agricultural activities. Table 1 shows that about 60 % were female. This result conforms to the view of Chikezie *et al.* (2012) that gender is no barrier to active involvement in agriculture production activities. However, the result is contrary to the views of Akpan (2010), that males are often more energetic and could readily be available for energy demanding jobs/activities. The low percentage of the male youth participation in agriculture-based livelihood activities could be attributed to the fact that males in the study area could be involved in other livelihood activities than agriculture. As the area council is a location very close to the seat of the national power, male resident in the study area could be involved in other non-agricultural practices like barbing, carpentry, transportation and security personnel inhibiting their involvement in agricultural practices. Marital status shows

Table 1. Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents.

Age	Frequency	Percentage
15-25	16	16
26-35	47	47
36-45	37	37
Gender		
Male	40	40
Female	60	60
Marital status		
Married	80	80
Single	20	20
Major Occupation		
Farming	53	53
Civil servant	26	26
Private enterprise	2	2
Trading	19	19
Education		
No formal Education	24	24
Primary School	38	38
Secondary School	26	26
Tertiary Education	12	12
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

80% of the respondents are married which shows the level at which people in this study area regard family and marriage ties. Being a married youth will increase the necessity to engage in one or more income generating activities so as to provide for the family and to ensure availability of food and shelter for the family. According to (Table 1), 53% of the respondents are involved in agriculture while 26 % are civil staff in the area, 19% are involved in trading activities while just 2% engage in private enterprise. This shows that, more than average respondents are majorly engaged in agricultural production and this conforms with Ajani and Igbokwe, (2013) who stated that agricultural activities is the main occupation of the rural populace and that farming profession must be made attractive for large number of young people rather than white collar jobs, if the developing nations were going to be able to feed themselves. The majority of the respondents are primary school certificate holders' representing 38 % followed by about 26% secondary education, 24 % has no formal form of education and about 12% respondents possess tertiary education as shown in (Table 1). It is obvious that most of the respondent has low educational qualifications even as close as they are to the nation's capital city and ultimately there is a considerable level of illiteracy among the youths in the study area. The implication of this result is that the respondents stand low chances of accessing agricultural information than otherwise. Akpan, (2010) noted that education will likely enhance the adoption of modern farm technologies by youth and thereby sustain a strong farming population, but with the low level of education amongst these youth will likely result in low adoption of modern agricultural techniques and thereby

causing a low level of output from their activities (Table 1).

Predominant agriculture-based livelihood activities youth participate in the study area

The results of the pre-dominant agriculture-based activities youth participate in the study area are presented in (Table 2). Livestock farming ranked 1st with a percentage count of 87, Crop Farming ranked 2nd with a percentage count of 76. This was followed by agricultural product sales and marketing with 71 percentage count and ranked 3rd. Fish Farming 46 % 4th, farm labour service ranked 5th with 36 % while seed stock business, nursery raising, livestock feed production, agricultural feed processing and farm implements hiring services ranked 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th 10th respectively. The least involved agricultural activities in the study area are hunting of wild animals, bee keeping for honey production and fuel wood gathering and sales. Generally, animal-based agricultural activities recorded higher percentage counts than crop-based agricultural activities. The overall result indicates that youths in the study area are significantly engaged in agriculture-based activities.

Factors limiting youth participation in agriculture-based livelihood activities

Factors limiting youth participation in agricultural-based livelihood activities in the study area are presented in (Table 3). The result revealed that inadequate credit

Table 2. Pre-dominant agriculturally based activities youths participate in the study area.

Agricultural Activities	Involved %	Not Involved %	Rank
Livestock Farming	87	13	1 st
Crop Farming	76	24	2 nd
Agricultural Products Sales and Marketing	71	29	3 rd
Fish Farming	46	54	4 th
Farm Labour Services	36	64	5 th
Seed Stock Business	35	65	6 th
Nursery Raising	29	71	7 th
Livestock Feed Production	25	75	8 th
Agricultural Feed Processing	25	75	9 th
Farm Implements Hiring Services	20	80	10 th
Hunting of Wild Animals	14	88	11 th
Bee Keeping and Honey Production	9	91	12 th
Fuel Wood Gathering and Sales	5	95	13 th

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 3. Respondents' rating of factors limiting youth participation in agriculture-based livelihood activities.

Constraints	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
Inadequate Credit Facility	42(42.0)	53(53.0)	0(0)	1(1)	3.32	Accept
Poor returns to Investment	32(32.0)	53(53.0)	15(15.0)	0(0)	3.17	Accept
No Agricultural Insurance	72(72.0)	20(20.0)	8(8.0)	0(0)	3.64	Accept
Poor Basic Farming Knowledge	27(27.0)	42(42.0)	19(19.0)	12(12.0)	2.84	Accept
Insufficient Access to tractors and other Farm Inputs	52(52.0)	41(41.0)	7(7.0)	0(0)	3.43	Accept
No Ready Market	19(19.0)	46(46.0)	32(32.0)	3(3.0)	2.81	Accept
It is energy sapping	46(46.0)	35(35.0)	0(0)	19(19.0)	3.08	Accept
People's Perception	40(40.0)	49(49.0)	11(11.0)	0(0)	3.29	Accept
Insufficient Initial Capital	51(51.0)	49(49.0)	0(0)	0(0)	3.51	Accept
Farmers are not Respected	38(38.0)	48(48.0)	11(11.0)	3(3.0)	3.21	Accept
Non-lucrative of Agriculture	16(16.0)	28(28.0)	47(47.0)	9(9.0)	2.51	Accept
Access to communication and internet services	24(24.0)	19(19.0)	46(46.0)	11(11.0)	2.56	Accept
Poor Storage Facilities	44(44.0)	42(42.0)	14(14.0)	0(0)	3.30	Accept
Insufficient of Land	36(36.0)	36(36.0)	23(23.0)	5(5.0)	3.03	Accept
Unpredictable Climate Change	23(23.0)	34(34.0)	38(38.0)	5(5.0)	2.75	Accept
Spouse Restriction	15(15.0)	12(12.0)	56(56.0)	17(17.0)	2.25	Reject

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Figures in parenthesis are percentages.

facilities (mean = 3.32) limits the involvement of youths in agriculture-based livelihood activities in the study area. Since majority of the youths have low formal education as indicated in (Table 1), they are most likely not aware of loan acquisition organization and process which may affect their productivity in the long run as they are limited to the level of production at which their capital can afford.

The result revealed that poor investment on return (mean = 3.17), limits youth involvement in agriculture-based activities. This becomes pertinent in view of the low pricing of agricultural goods and services, after putting in so much efforts in production but the income generated from the sales of those goods marginally return profit and the profit is lesser compared to the efforts put into the production process. No agricultural insurance (mean = 3.64). This reveals that youths in the study area do not have any form of insurance covering their agricultural assets; this can also be linked to their

low level of education. In (Table 3) it was also revealed that poor basic farming knowledge also inhibits their involvement in agriculture (mean = 2.84), good education expose individuals to better ways of carrying out activities especially agricultural based activities, Also, from (Table 3), insufficient access to tractors and other farm inputs (mean = 3.43), No ready market (mean = 2.81), Agricultural activities is energy sapping (mean = 3.08) and people's perception about agriculture (mean = 3.29) inhibits youth involvement in agricultural production this means that wrong values is placed on farming in the society. Therefore, most youths would not want to associate with agriculture since it is often seen as an untidy job. Table 3 further revealed insufficient initial capital (mean = 3.51). This result shows that youths in the study area are limited by lack of capital to increase production which will enhance output and increase food security in the area. Farmers are not respected (mean =

Table 4. Result of Varimax rotated analysis of factors limiting youth involvement in agricultural activities.

Variables	Factor 1: Poor Social Values	Factor 2: Poor Agricultural Support	Factor 3: Experience Status	Factor 4: Agricultural insurance	Factor 5: Society Values
Inadequate Credit Facility	0.371	-0.189	0.652*	0.040	0.481
Poor returns to Investment	0.609*	-0.523	0.257	0.022	-0.310
No Agricultural Insurance	0.150	0.270	0.085	0.872*	-0.026
Poor Basic Farming Knowledge	0.574*	-0.456	0.516*	-0.071	0.020
Insufficient Access to tractors and other Farm Inputs	0.693*	-0.230	0.149	0.105	-0.457
No Ready Market	0.638*	-0.509	0.087	0.131	-0.089
It is energy sapping	0.555*	-0.006	0.180	-0.103	-0.061
People's Perception	0.367	-0.683	0.472	0.068	0.144
Insufficient Initial Capital	0.459	0.580*	0.099	-0.329	-0.272
Farmers are not Respected	0.538*	-0.325	-0.162	-0.185	0.545*
Non-lucrative of Agriculture	0.668*	-0.045	-0.584	0.014	-0.005
Access to communication and internet services	0.735*	0.365	-0.202	-0.243	0.051
Poor Storage Facilities	0.512*	0.659*	-0.099	-0.024	0.233
Insufficient of Land	0.441	0.538*	0.104	0.406	0.181
Unpredictable Climate Change	0.592*	0.640*	0.154	-0.173	-0.067
Spouse Restriction	0.686*	0.095	-0.585	0.166	-0.007

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Note; Coefficients on the Table represent Regression Weights.
Coefficients of > 0.50 implies significance

3.21) ever since white-collar job abounds youth has placed low value on agricultural based activities.

Non lucrative of agriculture (mean = 2.51). Respondents would have preferred agricultural to be high income generating activities like other source of employment, the time they have to wait for an agricultural animal or plant to mature for sale is tiring for them and that time lag would have effect on their income and financial situation. Table 3 explained further that lack of access to communication (mean = 2.56) youth in this study area do not have enough access to agricultural information, since agricultural information system is a *sine qua non* to agricultural production. Table 3 shows poor storage facilities (mean = 3.30). The result reveals that agro-processing and storage facilities are inadequate and respondents cannot carry out post-harvest activities for improved value addition. Also, insufficient land (mean = 3.03), this reveals issues on scarcity of arable land perhaps due to urban encroachment and other demand for land associated with it. Unpredictable climate change (mean = 2.75). Agriculture is more vulnerable to climate change than any sector. Climate conditions are more complex due to the uncertainty and unpredictability in weather patterns, including rainfall.

Spouse restriction with mean = 2.25 does not inhibit or cause any constraint in youth involvement in agriculture, Spouse restriction from involvement in agriculture was rejected as its mean of 2.25 does not weigh up to our acceptance mean benchmark of 2.50 and therefore spouse restriction is rejected among the constraint militating against youth participation in Bwari area council of Abuja. The above findings, confirms the view of Adekunle *et al.* (2009) that there are economic, social and environmental factors reducing youth involvement in

agricultural production in Nigeria. Economic factor includes inadequate credit facilities, poor return on investment, insufficient initial capital and no agricultural insurance, social factors includes people's perception about farming while environmental factor include climate changes etc.

Further analysis on factors limiting youth participation in agriculture based livelihood activities

The results of factor analysis on the factors limiting youth participation in agriculture-based activities are presented in (Table 4). Based on the item loadings, factor 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 were renamed as poor social values, poor agriculture support services, experience status, agricultural insurance and society values respectively. The specific variables that define poor social values (factor 1) include poor returns to investment (0.609), poor basic farming knowledge (0.574), insufficient access to tractor and other inputs (0.693), no ready market (0.638), agricultural activities is energy sapping (0.555), farmers are not respected (0.538), non-lucrative of agriculture (0.668), access to communication and internet services (0.735), poor storage facilities (0.512), unpredictable climate change (0.592) and spouse restrictions (0.686). On the other hand, Poor agricultural support is dominated by insufficient initial capital (0.580), poor storage facilities (0.659), insufficient land (0.538) and unpredictable climate condition (0.640). The fourth factor named Agriculture insurance is defined by No agricultural insurance (0.872). While people's perception (0.545) dominate the 5th factor tagged society value.

Conclusion and recommendations

Agriculture based livelihood activities is obviously a productive tool for youth empowerment and sustainable development in the study area. The study revealed that youth participation in agriculture-based activities is average. Major factors identified in the study area that hinder youths from participating meaningfully in agriculture-based activities are; poor social values, poor agriculture support services, experience status, agricultural insurance and society values. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made to encourage youth's succession in agriculture-based livelihood activities in the study area;

- (i) Male youths should be encouraged to participate actively in agriculture-based livelihood activities by giving them adequate support and capital investment to participate fully as the result indicated that the percentage of males involved in agricultural activities is low.
- (ii) Youth extension should be incorporated in each State Agricultural extension intervention programmes for active youths' involvement in agricultural production and food security drive.
- (iii) Agricultural credit facilities should be made available to young people who want to venture into agriculture-based livelihood activities. The rural banking scheme as well as other micro-credit agencies should be encouraged to accommodate young people.

Authors' declaration

We declared that this study is an original research by our research team and we agree to publish it in the journal.

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