

Full Length Research Paper

Willingness of Kebbi State University Undergraduate Students Engagement in Agricultural Activities after Graduation

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study was to determine the willingness of undergraduate students at Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, Aliero (KSUSTA) to engage in agricultural activities following graduation. The study sampled 150 undergraduate students using a multistage sampling technique. For data analysis, frequency counts and %ages are used. The study's findings indicate that there is no difference between male and female students in terms of their interest in agricultural-related enterprises following graduation. According to undergraduate students' satisfaction with their choice of agriculture as a career after graduation, personal interest was ranked first, while chance entry into the profession was ranked second. The most significant factor influencing

KSUSTA students' willingness to enter agriculture-related businesses is their desire to be job creators, with a mean value of 3.70. This is followed by a mean value of 3.31 for their desire to be self-employed. The study concluded that the majority of students desired to practice agriculture-related businesses following graduation and recommended that stakeholders in the agriculture sector make additional efforts to arrange for special credit loan facilities for graduates in order to alleviate the teeming population of graduates facing unemployment problems following graduation.

Keywords: Willingness, undergraduate, engagement, activities, enterprise

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture was important to Nigeria's economy during the 1960s (Omorogiuwa et al., 2014). During this time period, Nigeria was a leading exporter of crops such as shelled groundnuts, cocoa, palm oil, and cotton. Apart from the revenue generated by the export of cash crops, an average Nigerian appeared to be well fed, as food production was adequate despite the use of traditional methods (hoes and cutlasses) by local producers of these crops (Edoka et al., 2011).

To bolster the preceding point, Adesina (2012) noted that Nigeria exported 42% of the world's total shelled groundnuts in 1961, with a total export volume of 502,000 metric tonnes (MT). According to him, Nigeria was the largest producer of palm oil in 1961, with 167,000MT accounting for 27% of global exports. In discussions of

Nigerian agriculture's glory years in the 1960s, cocoa farmers were lauded for their wealth in the early years of independence, as Nigeria accounted for 18 % of global cocoa exports in 1961. (Adesina, 2012). This enviable position enjoyed by Nigerian agriculture was lost as a result of the sector's neglect following the country's oil discovery. Nigeria can no longer boast of significant exports of these crops. Indeed, local food production is insufficient to meet the needs of her burgeoning population. Nigeria's palm oil exports fell to 25,000MT in 2008, leaving Nigeria far behind Malaysia, which imported oil palm seedlings from Nigeria, while Nigeria's share of the global market for cocoa exports also fell to 8% by 2008.

Apart from Nigeria's loss of glory in cash crop exports,

local production of food crops could no longer meet Nigerians' food demand, and thus importation appears to be the adopted alternative to ensure that citizens' right to food is not violated. Nigeria imports food crops such as rice, wheat, fish, and sugar in the modern era. Nigeria imported rice, wheat, fish, and sugar for a total of 1.3 trillion dollars (CBN, 2019). According to the bureau's report, imports of foodstuffs and other items increased by 47 % in the first half of 2019 when compared to the same period in 2018. Imports of prepared foodstuffs, beverages, spirits, and vinegar tobacco were valued at N227.1 billion in the first half of 2018, but increased to N334.3 billion in the second half.

This is a pity for a country like Nigeria, which is endowed with vast natural and human resources. Nigeria has an arable land potential of 98 million hectares (ha), of which 84 million ha (86%) is cultivable and 40% (34 million ha) of the cultivatable land area is currently used for agriculture (Adesina, 2012). As a result, approximately 60% of total cultivatable land area is currently untapped. Apart from land, the country is endowed with marine resources, rivers, lakes, and creeks that are ideal for fish production. Additionally, the country's climatic conditions support and encourage agricultural production activities.

Despite this development, rural areas are still dominated by elderly farmers who are unable to keep up with the growing population's food demand. To reclaim Nigeria's agricultural glory of ensuring food security and relevance in the global economy through exports, aged farmers must be replaced by vibrant and educated youth capable of keeping pace with global technological advancements that result in increased agricultural productivity. According to Ekoja (2004), education plays a significant role in farmers adopting innovations. Age has also been identified as a barrier to farmers' willingness to adopt new technologies and work on farms (Ismaila et al., 2010). Additionally, through agricultural development initiatives, successive Nigerian governments have attempted to improve rural livelihoods, create jobs, and ensure food security.

In light of this, agriculture's focus should be shifted away from development programs/projects and toward business. That is, it should be viewed as a profession, not as a recreational activity open to all, but only to professionals. It should be regarded as prestigious, similar to medicine, law, and engineering, with which the majority of youths wish to associate. Recognizing the critical role of education in agricultural development and the need to professionalize agriculture, the Nigerian government took a strong stand by incorporating agricultural science education into the country's primary and secondary school curricula. Additionally, Universities and Colleges of Agriculture were institutionalized at both the state and federal levels of government to produce graduates with the necessary manpower for agricultural development. There are currently numerous federal universities of agriculture located throughout the country,

some of which include Abeokuta, Makurdi, and Umudiketo, to name a few, with the tripod objective of agricultural research, teaching, and extension. Additionally, agriculture faculties and departments were established at other state and federal universities, polytechnics, and colleges. Private institutions also offer agricultural faculties as part of their academic programs. It is surprising, however, that graduates from various fields of agriculture, such as agricultural economics, agricultural extension, crop production, animal science/production, and soil science, are currently seeking scarce white-collar jobs in the banking, oil, and gas sectors, among others, abandoning the subjects they spent several years studying in universities, polytechnics, and colleges.

According to Ayanda et al. (2012), graduates of these institutions who studied agriculture are expected to develop a passion for agriculture and serve as an active work force to replace the aged population, thereby increasing agricultural productivity. In accordance with this assertion, the purpose of this research was to ascertain young KSUSTA undergraduate students' willingness to engage in agricultural activities following graduation.

A Theoretical framework for assessing willingness to engage in agriculture-related business

The Intrinsic Motivation Inventory was used in this study to ascertain participant interest in agriculture-related enterprise. Self-determination theory informed the development of the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation, which is generated by an internal drive, is distinguished from extrinsic motivation, which is generated by a desire to secure an external outcome. According to self-determination theory, intrinsic motivation is influenced by autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Scherer, 2016). External motivation is associated with decreased interest, effort, and value (Scherer, 2016). Four scales from the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory were used in this study to infer participant interest in agriculture-related enterprise.

METHODOLOGY

Description of the study area

The study was carried out in Kebbi State University of Science and Technology Aliero, (KSUSTA). Ksusta is one of the 79th State Universities of Science and technology in Nigeria, located in the south east of Kebbi State, with latitude of 12°16'42"N and longitude of 4°27'6"E / 12.2783°N 4.45167°E, The State University (KSUSTA) was established in 2006, It is a nonprofit public higher education institution located in Aliero,

officially accredited and/ or recognized by the National Universities commission. KSUSTA offers courses and programs leading to officially recognized higher education degrees such as bachelor degrees, Master's degree and Doctorate degree programmes. The university which initially started with two faculties now has about six faculties. Six of these are, Faculty of Life Science, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Physical Science, Faculty of Environmental Science, Faculty of Engineering and Faculty of Agriculture (Wikipedia, 2020).

Sampling procedure and sample size

Multi-stage sampling technique was used for the study. First stage is the purposive selection of five faculties from Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, Aliero (KSUSTA). Second stage is the randomly selection of 30 Students from each of the selected faculty. The sample size will therefore constitute 150 respondents.

Data collection

A structured questionnaire schedule was designed and used to elicit information from the respondents on their demographic characteristics, factors influencing their choice of agriculture as a career and the possibility of staying on the job after completing the course of study. Frequency counts, %ages were used in data analysis.

Data analysis

Data obtained through the questionnaires was subjected to descriptive statistics. Objectives of the study were described using frequency counts, percentage, mean and standard deviation

Students' willingness to practice Agriculture as a career among undergraduates

This was measured nominally as Yes or No. Those whose responses were "Yes" are those willing to practice agriculture as a career, while those who responded otherwise were unwilling.

Career in agriculture

Career in agriculture was identified nominally as crop production, livestock production, aquaculture, bee keeping and others from those willing to venture into agriculture as a career.

Reasons for willingness

This was measured with an item self-developed scale on 5-point Likert type ratings of Major reason, Minor reason,

Neutral, a reason and not a reason with scores of 4, 3, 2, 1 and 0 respectively. The scores were summed for each item and then divided by the number of respondent to gate the mean score.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study's findings, as shown in (Table 1), show that 50.0% of the students were males and 50.0 % of the students were females; this indicates that there is no difference between male and female students who have an equal chance of participating in agricultural related enterprises of interest. In terms of age, 87.3 % of students between the ages of 18 and 25 are generally active and willing to engage in agricultural-related enterprises. According to (Table 1), approximately 53.3 % of respondents' childhood homes are in urban areas, while 46.7% are in rural areas. This simplifies the fact that people living in cities have greater access to agricultural practices such as information about improved agricultural technology than those living in rural areas. In terms of parents/guidance occupation, Table 1 shows that approximately 43.3 % of the students' parents were civil servants, while approximately 33.3% of the parents were farmers. Only about 21.3% and 2.0% were involved in various private businesses, respectively. This is expected to influence the student's career choice in agriculture-related enterprises. This supports the findings of Markowitz (2004), as cited by Ayanda et al. (2013), who stated that parents and guardians play a significant role in their children's occupational aspirations. As shown in (Table 1), approximately 62.7% of students had farming experience prior to enrolling in university. The majority of the students were members of various farmer organizations. This indicates that some of the students are already involved in agricultural-related businesses.

The importance of work experience, ranked fifth, and personal interest, ranked first, could be attributed to the knowledge already acquired in agriculture and the prospects for increased livelihood in the profession. The decision to enter the profession by chance ranked second occurs as students are desperate to begin working after graduation in order to meet their financial needs (Table 2). Contrary to observations that parents are strong factors determining their children's career choice, the influence of parents' background ranked third in career choice (Esters and Bowen, 2004; Rogers et al., 2008; Azuibike, 2011). In addition, advice from my mentor influence ranked fourth in terms of career guidance. My previous educational performance, which ranked sixth, contributes to respondents' level of satisfaction with their career choice. The media was ranked seventh in terms of job satisfaction. On the other hand, media is the least influential factor in respondents' willingness to pursue agriculture as a career after graduation. According to the findings, respondents'

Table1: Socio Economic Characteristic of KSUSTA Undergraduate Students (N=150).

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Age		
18 -25 years	131	87.3
26 -35 years	19	12.7
Total	150	100.0
Gender		
Male	75	50.0
Female	75	50.0
Childhood Home		
Rural area	70	46.7
Urban area/city	80	53.3
Total	150	100.0
Occupation		
Farming	50	33.3
Trading	32	21.3
Civil servant	65	43.3
Others	3	2.0
Total	150	100.0
Experience in Farming		
Yes	94	62.7
No	56	37.3
Total	150	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 2: Level of Satisfaction of Undergraduate Students on the Choice of Agriculture as a Career after Graduation (n=150).

Variable statement	Extent of opinion (frequency and percentage)					STD	MEA	MR
	SD	D	N	A	SA			
Parents background made me more comfortable to take agriculture as a career after graduation	40 (26.7)	23 (17.3)	11 (7.3)	23 (15.3)	53 (35.3)	1.666	3.17	3 rd
Advice from my mentor influences my decision to take agriculture as a career after graduation	16 (10.7)	40 (26.7)	30 (20.0)	39 (26.0)	25 (16.7)	1.272	3.11	4 th
My personal interest influences me to for taking agriculture as a career after graduation	26 (17.3)	22 (14.7)	18 (12.0)	35 (23.3)	49 (32.7)	1.497	3.39	1 st
The level of my working experience made me to take agriculture as a career even after graduation	27 (18.0)	34 (22.7)	22 (14.7)	33 (20.0)	34 (22.7)	1.442	3.09	5 th
I was opportune to be in Agricultural activities by chance	25 (16.7)	25 (16.7)	30 (20.0)	31 (20.7)	39 (26.0)	1.429	3.23	2 nd
I take agriculture as a career because of my previous educational performance	35 (23.3)	21 (14.0)	28 (18.7)	31 (20.7)	35 (23.3)	1.491	3.07	6 th
The media influence my decision to take agriculture as a career even after graduation	32 (21.3)	34 (24.7)	24 (16.0)	19 (12.7)	38 (25.3)	1.501	2.96	7 th

SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N= Neutral, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree, STD= Standard Deviation, MEA= Mean Average, MR= Mean Rank.

willingness to pursue a career in agriculture is unaffected by their family background. These findings are consistent with Russell's (1993) opinion that, despite the agricultural

sector's significant role and its intriguing transformation program, most youth lack the motivation and willingness to engage in agricultural activities. According to Jackson

Table 3: Reasons for student's willingness to venture into agriculture enterprises (N=150).

Reasons	Minor reason	Not a reason	Neutral	A reason	Major reason	Mean value	Ranking
Number of training received encouraged my decision to practice agriculture	38(25.3)	25(16.7)	19(12.7)	29(19.3)	39(26.0)	3.0	7th
Being my parents as farmers, is the reason for choosing agriculture	29(19.3)	38(25.3)	27(18.0)	27(18.0)	29(19.0)	2.93	8th
Being agriculture a profitable/ lucrative enterprise	26(17.3)	28(18.7)	28(18.7)	30(20.0)	38(25.3)	3.17	4th
Persuasion by parents and relatives made me choose to practice agriculture	26(17.3)	43(28.7)	31(20.7)	23(15.3)	27(18.0)	2.88	9th
I choose to practice agriculture because it is simple and easy to start up	24(16.0)	32(21.3)	35(23.3)	28(18.7)	31(20.7)	3.07	6th
I choose to practice agriculture because of high unemployment rate	29(19.3)	28(18.7)	27(18.0)	26(17.3)	40(26.7)	3.13	5th
My desire to be self-employed made me choose to practice agriculture	25(16.7)	27(18.0)	17(11.3)	39(26.0)	42(28.0)	3.31	2nd
I choose to practice agriculture because of my desire to be a job creator not a job seeker	20(13.3)	17(11.3)	16(10.70)	32(21.3)	65(43.3)	3.70	1st
Land availability made me choose to practice agriculture	21(14.0)	33(22.0)	28(18.7)	25(16.7)	43(28.7)	3.24	3rd

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 4: Student's Willingness to Venture into Agriculture Enterprises (N=150).

Students willingness	Frequency	Percent
Willingness to venture into Agriculture enterprises(n=92)		
Willing	92	61.3
Not willing	58	38.7
If not willing, what is your dream job? (n=58)		
Banking	11	7.3
Entrepreneurship	22	14.7
Oil and gas	10	6.7
Lecturing	15	10.0

Source: Field Survey, 2020

and Williams (2003), agriculture is more than just subsistence farming; today, young people can pursue careers in permaculture design, biodynamic farming, communication technologies, forecasting, marketing, quality assurance, urban agriculture projects, food preparation, environmental sciences, advanced technologies, and other fields. Farmers, businesses, policymakers, and educators must promote agriculture as an intellectually stimulating and economically sustainable career path, as well as make jobs in agriculture and the food system more appealing to young people.

The reason for students' interest in agriculture enterprises

According to the mean values in (Table 3), the students' desire to be job creators (mean value = 3.70) is the most important factor influencing KSUSTA students' willingness to venture into agriculture-related enterprises. This is followed by their desire to work for themselves (mean value = 3.31) and the availability of land (mean value = 3.24). Other factors identified included the lucrative nature of agricultural-based enterprises (mean

value = 3.17), as well as a high unemployment rate (mean value = 3.13). This implies that the country's alarming unemployment rate has awakened undergraduate students to the reality that they must be job creators and self-employed because agriculture is a lucrative business. Some prefer agriculture due to parental and relative persuasion (mean value = 2.88) and the ease and simplicity of starting an agribusiness (mean value = 3.07). According to (Table 4), the majority of students (61.3%) were eager to start agricultural businesses after graduation. This implies that a higher proportion of KSUSTA graduates will work in agriculture after graduation. This is consistent with the findings of Ayanda et al. (2013), who found that 84.6 % of final-year students at Kwara State University (KWASU) were satisfied with the farm practical training program and were willing to provide needed manpower in the agriculture sector after graduation. This suggests that Nigerian agriculture can continue to lead in terms of contribution to the country's gross domestic product (GDP), and that Nigeria can be among the top 20 economies in the world by 2028. Students who are unwilling to work in agriculture are more likely to pursue careers in banking (7.3%) and entrepreneurship (14.7%). Approximately 6.7 % and 10.0 % prefer jobs in the oil and gas industry and lecturing, respectively. 77.8 % of agriculture students at KWASU expressed a preference for the banking sector (Ayanda et al., 2012).

Conclusion

Most of the students see agriculture as a sector with many untapped potentials, and their parents were mostly educated civil servants. The majority of the students expressed an interest in working in agriculture-related businesses after graduation. As a result, the study concluded that more undergraduate students will pursue agricultural-related businesses after graduation.

Recommendation

As a result, the study recommended that stakeholders in the agriculture sector make more efforts to arrange for special credit loan facilities for graduates in order to reduce the teeming population of graduates who are unemployed. In rural areas where key agricultural activities take place, infrastructure (storage, processing, and marketing) should also be provided. These will entice those who were previously hesitant to enter agriculture-related businesses while maintaining the interest of those who are already interested in farming.

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