



ATTITUDE OF YOUTHS TO AGRICULTURE AS CAREER IN IWO AND AIYEDIRE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

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The study determined the attitude of youths to agriculture as a career in Iwo and Aiyedire Local Government Areas of Osun State, Nigeria. The sample size of the study was 90 youths who were randomly selected from the clans of the study area. The questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. Data were analyzed with mean and t-test. Results showed that the attitude of youths to agriculture as a career in the study area was negative as indicated by grand means of 2.44 and 2.47 in Iwo and Aiyedire respectively. The variable with the highest negative response in Iwo with a mean of 2.32 was that agriculture is a gold mine for young entrepreneurs. For Aiyedire the variable with the highest negative response of 2.42 was that agriculture is attractive and decent. The major constraints of the youths to the choice of agriculture as a career in Iwo were insufficient land to start (3.02) and use of crude tools for farming (3.02). Lack of funds to begin (2.91) and insufficient career guidance by agricultural extension workers and rural sociologists (2.79) were the major constraints for youths in Aiyedire. In order to attract more youths into having a positive attitude to agriculture as a career, the study recommends provision for sufficient land and fund for young farmers and engagement of more agricultural extension workers and rural sociologists for career guidance to youths in the study area.

Contribution/Originality: This study is one of the very few studies which have investigated the attitude of youths to agriculture as a career in Iwo and Aiyedire Local Government Areas of Osun State, Nigeria. Results showed that the attitude of youths to agriculture as a career in the study area was negative.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is an agrarian country with an economy dominated by a robust agricultural sector. Agriculture was the main economic activity in Nigeria but has suffered neglect from the demographic shifts which characterized the change since the political structure of the federation was fueled by the huge revenues from crude oil exports, Iwuagu (2006).

Many of our farmers who grow the bulk of the food produced in the country are getting old, making it difficult to increase food production. It has been shown that 60-70% of the farming population is left in the hands of aged subsistence farmers soon to fade away on the account of age (Latopa and Rashid, 2015). The average age of farmers today in Nigeria is between 55 and 60 years and by 2030 will rise to between 75 – 80 years. The question that is begging for answer is what quantity and quality of food can these old farmers produce in order to meet the food

security need of the Nigeria population which is estimated to rise to 300 million people in 2030. If this problem of replacing the ageing farmers with younger farmers is not addressed, food security in the country would reach a crisis point. According to Oke (2015) the World Food Summit in 1996 defined food security as the situation when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Food security integrates stability, access to food, availability of nutritionally adequate food and the biological utilization of food. The food security of a social group like the community is important because of the following reasons: everybody has enough food to eat, food is a basic human right, food is the basis of a community's economy, dependence on others to supply the food need of another is reduced or eliminated, we can be in control over the food we eat, a community that is unable to feed her people is at the mercy of the one that can, good food is the basis of good health and cheap food is too good to be true. One of the main solutions to ensure there is food security in Nigeria is getting more youths involved in agriculture.

Explaining who the youth is, Eremie (2002) described the youth as a state or time of being young, a transition between childhood and adulthood. Similarly, Gwary *et al.* (2008) described the youth as a state of transition between childhood and adulthood which is characterized by energy, intelligence and hope. Nwachukwu (2008) defined the youth as people within the ages of 15 and 24 years, while Onuekwusi (2005) described the youth as a group still undergoing training or looking for first employment. Youth is that stage in one's life when one is agile, energetic, determined and adventurous in experimenting different perspectives of life (Ijoma and Ibezim, 2010). The youths have high enthusiasm; learn very fast, prone to innovativeness, high-risk taking and eager to change. Unemployment is a major problem for youths in Nigeria. Unemployment and underemployment in Nigeria are more among the youths, especially those of the ages of 15 – 24 years and 25 – 34 years (Yeboah and Jayne, 2016). A total of 66.07% and 65.81% of unemployed and underemployed persons respectively are youths. Agriculture would continue to remain a profession to accommodate the youth employment challenge since industrial and service sectors labour forces are already saturated. In order for this to happen, the youths would need to take up a career in agriculture as a profession. This is despite the fact that the population of the youths working in the agricultural sector, especially in the production value chain is declining (Yeboah and Jayne, 2016). Career according to Omeje (2007) means activities, traits or occupation consisting of a lifestyle of an individual, which is expressed in terms of energy or ability. Career is synonymous with a person's occupation. Agriculture is a career and therefore an occupation. Agriculture currently in tertiary institutions attract fewer students than other fields of study and the reasons for this poor attitude to agriculture are perception of the career as a less prestigious and profitable occupation, parents and guardians from both urban and rural areas advising their children not to pursue agriculture as a career because it is deemed as non-profitable as most of the farmers in the rural areas live in poverty (Connors *et al.*, 1989) insufficient land to start, unavailability of credit to farmers, poor extension service, etc.

Meanwhile, Anders and Bergs (2005) viewed attitude as a way of thinking or feeling of a person which makes him or her behave or act in a particular way. The attitude of youths toward a subject or course influence the number of content materials, they internalize and the application of the appropriate skills for the subject (Anders and Bergs, 2005). The research gap which this study intends to fill is that the study of Shireesha *et al.* (2016) Tirupati, India, analysed the attitudes of youths towards farming generally, but left out the analysis of their attitude toward accepting farming as a career. It was the desire to fill this research gap that the research problem of this study was simulated. The research problem therefore of the study was hinged on the fact that despite the desire to have the youths gainfully involved in agriculture as a career, the number employed in the agricultural sector is still declining. It is the desire to address this research problem that this study was designed to determine the attitude of youths to agriculture as a career in Iwo and Aiyedire Local Governments of Osun State, Nigeria. The research question arising from the research problem was what is the attitude of youths to agriculture as a career in the study area? In order to tackle the research question of the study, the objectives of the study determined the attitude of youths to agriculture as a career and identified the constraints to the choice of agriculture as a career by the youths.

The tested hypothesis in the study was that there is no significant difference between Iwo and Aiyedire Local Government Areas in the choice of agriculture as a career among the youths.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Iwo and Aiyedire Local Government Areas (LGA) of Osun State, Nigeria. Iwo LGA has its headquarters in Iwo town, a commercial city in Osun State. The occupation of its people is predominantly agriculture. It has an area of 245 kilometres square (km²) and a population of 191,348 people, making it the most populated LGA in the state according to 2006 census (Office of Executive Governor of Osun State, 2018). Aiyedire LGA on the hand has its headquarters in Ileogbo town. The LGA has an area of 262 km² and a population of 75,846 at the 2006 national population census. Agriculture is widely practiced as the major economic activity of the people of the LGA. The major food crops grown in the two LGAs are yam, cassava, cocoyam, soya-bean, maize, sorghum, cowpea and different vegetables. Cocoa, cotton, etc are also grown in the area. The fact that agricultural activities in the area are currently dominated by farmers who are ageing out calls for the involvement of youths in agriculture as a career. The population of the study was made up of all youths in Iwo and Aiyedire Local Government Areas of Osun State. A stratified random sampling technique was used in the selection of respondents for this study. First, in Iwo Local Government Area, three communities were randomly selected from each of the clans. The communities were Adana, Afingba and Alebiosu. From these selected communities, 15 respondents each were randomly selected from Adana and Afingba, while 17 were selected from Alebiosu to have 47 youths. Also, in Aiyedire Local Government Area, three communities each were randomly selected from its clans. The selected communities were Olupuno, Ile Ogbo and Kuta. From Olupuno and Ile Ogbo, 15 respondents each were randomly selected, while 13 were also randomly selected from Kuta to have a total of 43 youths. The total sample size of the study was therefore 90 respondents. Interview schedule and structured questionnaire were used to obtain data from the respondents. Simple descriptive and inferential statistics such as mean and t-test were used for data analyses.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result in Table 1 shows that the general attitude of youths toward agriculture as a career in the study area was negative as indicated by the grand mean of 2.44 for Iwo and 2.47 for Aiyedire as opposed to the 2.50 which is the decision means.

Table-1. Attitude of Youths Towards Agriculture as a Career in Iwo and Aiyedire Local Government Areas.

S/N	Behaviours	Iwo LGA		Attitude	Aiyedire LGA		Attitude
		Mean score (n=47)	Mean		Mean score (n=43)	Mean	
i	Easy way to fight poverty	95	2.02	Negative	91	2.12	Negative
ii	Enhances faster development	93	1.98	Negative	88	2.05	Negative
iii	Gold mine for young entrepreneurs	109	2.32	Negative	102	2.37	Negative
iv	Easy self-employment	96	2.04	Negative	96	2.23	Negative
v	Has good future in the country	126	2.68	Positive	116	2.70	Positive
vi	Reduction of youth unemployment	128	2.72	Positive	120	2.79	Positive
vii	It is lucrative	138	2.94	Positive	90	2.09	Negative
viii	Easy to have own business	108	2.30	Negative	98	2.28	Negative
ix	Attractive and decent	99	2.11	Negative	104	2.42	Negative
x	Profitable for income generation	141	3.00	Positive	129	3.00	Positive
xi	Worthy of the stress	88	1.91	Negative	125	2.91	Positive
xii	Job for schools drop-out and illiterates	142	3.02	Positive	121	2.81	Positive
xiii	Career for young and old people	135	2.87	Positive	116	2.70	Positive
xiv	Personal status and self-esteem are enhanced	105	2.23	Negative	88	2.05	Negative
	Grand Mean		2.44	Negative		2.47	Negative

Source: Field Survey 2018. Decision mean = 2.50 (Mean < 2.50 = Negative attitude; mean ≥ 2.50 = Positive attitude)

This result is in agreement with an earlier study by Ibitoye (2011) which revealed that youths in Kogi State, Nigeria, generally have a negative attitude to agriculture as a future profession. This implies that more of these youths would likely not accept agriculture as a future career. The effect of this result in the study area is that the farming population will continue to be left in the hands of aged farmers soon to fade away on the account of age as observed in the study of Latopa and Rashid (2015) in Kwara State, Nigeria. The overall sociological effect of this scenario is that Iwo and Aiyedire areas will face declining agricultural output and food insecurity since the youths who are stronger in strength and more productive are leaving agricultural production in the hands of older and weaker farmers. A concerted effort by policymakers is required to influence more youths in this study area to accept agriculture as a career.

Further result in Table 1 shows that out of the 14 attitudinal behaviours analyzed in the study, the response of the youths in the choice of agriculture as a career was negative in seven and positive in five across Iwo and Aiyedire Local Government Areas (LGAs). This means that the attitude of youths to agriculture in the two Local Government Areas was the same. The seven behaviours with negative attitudinal response were that agriculture as a career is; easy way to fight poverty (2.02 in Iwo and 2.12 in Aiyedire), for enhancing faster development (1.98 in Iwo and 2.05 in Aiyedire), gold mine for young entrepreneurs (2.35 in Iwo and 2.28 in Aiyedire), attractive and decent (2.11 in Iwo and 2.42 in Aiyedire) and for personal status and self-esteem enhancement (2.23 in Iwo and 2.05 in Aiyedire). The five behaviours which recorded positive attitudinal response were that agriculture as a career: has good future in the country (2.60 in Iwo and 2.70 in Aiyedire), is for reduction of youth unemployment (2.72 in Iwo and 2.79 in Aiyedire), is profitable for income generation (3.00 in Iwo and 3.00 in Aiyedire), is for schools drop-out and illiterates (3.02 in Iwo and 2.81 in Aiyedire) and is for young and old people (2.87 in Iwo and 2.70 in Aiyedire). The behaviour that recorded the highest negative response in Iwo LGA with 2.32 was that agriculture is a gold mine for youth entrepreneurs. This meant that the youths do not accept that agriculture is a gold mine for young entrepreneurs. For Aiyedire Local Government Area the behaviour with the highest negative response of 2.42 was that agriculture is attractive and decent. This meant that the youths do not accept that agriculture is attractive and decent.

Also, the behaviour with the highest positive response of 3.02 in Iwo Local Government Area was that agriculture is a job for schools-drop-out and illiterates. The result implies that the youths here believe that agriculture is for the never do well. This believes is erroneous because many progressives and well-educated persons are engaged in farming elsewhere. The behaviour with the highest positive response of 3.00 in Aiyedire Local Government Area was that agriculture as a career for youth is profitable for income generation. This result implies that the youths here agreed that agriculture is a desirable tool for income generation for its practitioners and as such, are willing to accept agriculture as a career. This implication agrees with the earlier assertion in the study of Abdullah and Sulaiman (2013) that agriculture is profitable and offers employment for youths.

Table-2. Result of t-test Showing Difference in Response on Attitude Towards Agriculture as a Career by Youths in Iwo and Aiyedire Local Government Areas of Osun State.

Responses	n	\bar{x}	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit (0.05,88)	Sig.t	Level of significance	Decision
Attitude of youths in Iwo	47	2.44	0.41						
				88	-0.261	1.96	0.798	0.55	Accept
Attitude of youths in Aiyedire	43	2.47	0.34						

Source: Field Survey, 2018, SPSS 20.0 output.

The summary of t-test result on the difference in attitude of youths towards agriculture as a Career in Iwo and Aiyedire Local Government Areas of Osun State in Table 2 shows that the t-calculated (t-cal) was -0.261 and the t-critical (table value at $t_{(0.05,88)}$) was 1.96. Since $t_{cal} (-0.261) < t_{crit (0.05,00)} = 1.96$, and the significant $t = 0.798 > 0.05$ level, the null hypothesis was accepted. The conclusion therefore reached was that there is no significant difference

in attitude towards agriculture as a Career by the youths in Iwo and Aiyedire Local Government Areas of Osun State. This implies that youths in both LGAs have the same negative attitude to agriculture as a future career. With this kind of attitude by the youths in this study area, the contribution of agriculture to an aggregate gross domestic product in Nigeria will continue to be low in agreement with the result of the study of Ndubuisi (2018).

Table-3. Constraints to the Choice of Agriculture as a Career in Iwo and Aiyedire Local Government Areas (LGA) of Osun State.

S/N	Constraints	Iwo LGA		Remark	Aiyedire LGA		Remark
		Mean score (n=47)	Mean		Mean score (n=43)	Mean	
1.	Insufficient land to start	142	3.02	Agreed	111	2.58	Agreed
2.	Unavailability of credit facilities	134	2.85	Agreed	109	2.53	Agreed
3.	Lack of fund to begin	128	2.72	Agreed	125	2.91	Agreed
4.	Parental rejection	95	2.02	Disagreed	99	2.30	Disagreed
5.	Insufficient knowledge in agriculture	99	2.11	Disagreed	94	2.19	Disagreed
6.	Poor linkage with social media	106	2.26	Disagreed	90	2.09	Disagreed
7.	Insufficient career guidance by extension and rural sociologists	127	2.70	Agreed	120	2.79	Agreed
8.	Use of crude farm tools	142	3.02	Agreed	119	2.77	Agreed
	Grand Mean		2.59	Agreed		2.52	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2018. Decision mean = 2.50 (Mean < 2.50 = Disagreed; mean ≥ 2.50 = Agreed).

Result in Table 3 shows that the youths had more constraints to the choice of agriculture as career as seen from the grand mean of 2.59 and 2.52 in Iwo and Aiyedire Local Government Areas respectively. This result implies that in the study area there were more factors militating against the youths' future dependence on agriculture as their primary source of occupation and livelihood. Further results in Table 3 showed that out of the eight constraint variables analyzed in the study, five were agreed as constraints in the both Local Government Areas, while three variables disagreed as constraints across the two areas.

The five variable agreed as constraints across the Local Government Areas by the youths were: insufficient land to start (3.02 in Iwo and 2.58 in Aiyedire), unavailability of credit facilities (2.85 in Iwo and 2.53 in Aiyedire), lack of fund to begin (2.72 in Iwo and 2.91 in Aiyedire), insufficient career guidance by extension agents and rural sociologist (2.70 in Iwo and 2.79 in Aiyedire) and use of crude farm tools (3.02 in Iwo and 2.77 in Aiyedire). The three variables which were disagreed as constraints to the choice of agriculture as career by the youths in the two areas were: parental rejoice (2.02 in Iwo and 2.30 in Aiyedire), insufficient knowledge in agriculture (2.11 in Iwo and 2.19 in Aiyedire) and poor linkage with social media (2.26 in Iwo and 2.09 in Aiyedire).

Specifically, in Iwo LGA, the major constraints to the choice of agriculture as a career were insufficient land to start and use of crude farm tools as in the study of Kibuuka (2011) with a mean of 3.02 each. The major constraint in Aiyedire with a mean of 2.91 was lack of fund to begin. The second major constraint in Iwo was unavailability of credit facilities with a mean of 2.85. For Aiyedire, the second major constraint was insufficient career guidance by agricultural extension workers and rural sociologists. These results connote that for more youths to be attracted into agriculture as a career in the study area, the introduction of motivational incentives as recommended by the study of Ibitoye (2011) is necessary.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The contribution of this study to existing knowledge is that it has shown that the attitude of youths to the choice of agriculture as a career in Iwo and Aiyedire Local Government Areas of Osun State was negative. This means that as it stands now, many of the youths are not willing to take agriculture as their future means of livelihood. This negative attitude is brought about by certain constraints which included insufficient land to start, use of crude tools for farming, lack of funds to begin and insufficient career guidance by agricultural extension

workers and rural sociologists. The youths, therefore, need to be encouraged into having a positive attitude to the choice of agriculture as a career in the area. The study recommends that policymakers and development agencies should make sufficient land and fund available as motivation and encouragement to youths to take up agriculture as a career. Also, the replacement of crude farming tools with modern farming equipment and provision of sufficient career guidance by extension workers and rural sociologists are recommended.

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