

PERCEPTION OF FARMERS TOWARDS RURAL CHILDREN'S FORMAL EDUCATION IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The notion of education as a capital good is rooted in the concept of "human capital", which attaches a high premium to human skills as a factor of production in the development process. A corollary of this is that human skill or productivity is just as important an input in the process of development as finance and natural wealth. Because education plays a major important role in the creation and improvement of human capital, its relevance and importance to economic growth and development are now very well recognized in development planning. The study was carried out to determine the perception of farmers towards rural children's formal education in odo-otin local government area of Osun state. To achieve the main objective, the study identified the socio-economic characteristics of the farmers and identified the various agricultural activities carried out and the rural children's contribution to these agricultural activities. Also, the study investigated the constraints to agricultural production in the study area. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, likert- type scale and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Multistage sampling technique was used in the selection of 120 respondents in the study area. Results of findings show that 21.7% of the respondents fell within the ages of 60 – 69 years, 80% of the respondents were males and 64.2% of the respondents were married. Also, 61.7% of the respondents had 5 members in their household, Most (36.7%) of the respondents had no formal education and 85.3% of the respondents cultivated between 1 - 5 hectares of land. 50% sourced their finance through personal saving while 89.2% of the respondents obtained their major income through farming and 52.5% of the respondents had about 10 years of experience in farming. Also, 55.8% of the respondent carried out combined farming on the land, 32.6% earned between ₦21000 - ₦40000 as their monthly income. The major contributions of rural children to agricultural activities carried out were feeding of farm animals (WMS = 1.65) and weeding (1.50). A significant relationship was found between the Age, Marital status, House hold size, Level of education and perception of farmers towards their children's formal education. Based on the farmers' perception on their children's formal education, it was concluded that formal education will help their children to get ahead in life and that the knowledge gained from formal education can help in the adoption of new innovations and improved technologies on agricultural production thereby influencing the farmers' orientation positively and increasing agricultural productivity. Also the farmers were favorably and positively disposed towards their children's formal education. The most serious constraint to agricultural production in the study area is insufficient capital, and because of the advantages of

formal education to agricultural productivity, the study therefore recommends that farmers should be encouraged further to allow their children enroll for formal education and government should provide loan for the registered farmers to boost agricultural production.

Keywords: Agricultural production, Perception, Farmers, Rural Children, Constraints

1. INTRODUCTION

Parents' positive attitude towards child's education is important in determining school attendance and academic achievement of the child. Favorable attitude towards schooling and education enhances parental involvement in children's present and future studies (Bauch 1991). Parental perception is a measure or an index of parental involvement and a child, brought up with affection and care in the least restrictive environment would be able to cope up better with the sighted world. The notion of education as a capital good is rooted in the concept of "human capital", which attaches a high premium to human skills as a factor of production in the development process (World Bank, 2007). A corollary of this is that human skill or productivity is just as important an input in the process of development as finance, natural wealth and physical plant. Because education plays a major and important role in the creation and improvement of human capital, its relevance and importance to economic growth and development are now very well recognized in development planning. Experiences of developing countries during the decades have indicated that shortage of talents and skill needed for development can decisively retard economic progress (UNESCO, 2010). Nigeria as a developing country has to develop her agriculture if she is to be among the developed countries of the world. In Nigeria today, there is a decline in agricultural production because there is apparent shift of interest from agriculture to the so-called white-collar jobs such as medical practices, pharmacy, teaching, accountancy and engineering, especially among the youths. Many youths today view agriculture in Nigeria as non-status occupation, a manual and undignified one, such that only those who are not qualified for office work do it (World Bank, 2007). The development of agricultural sector must depend upon the rural young people. This is because studies by Clabrese 1990, revealed that majority of rural young people are having farming parents. The author recommended that the farming profession must be made attractive to the large number of young people if the developing nations are going to be able to feed themselves. In south western Nigeria the father gives a small portion of land to the son to practice his own independent farming during his spare time and this period is when the child has attained the age of between 10 and 12 years and lasts the age of 15 - 18 years. Similarly, studies by Daniel-white (2002) shows that majority of rural youths are literates and they have potentials and the most tendencies to continue with farming if their needs are justifiably satisfied and their interests are well motivated in the profession.

Parent's attitude towards their children's education is affected adversely by low socio-economic status and since the rural constitute the disadvantaged population, it is expected that the attitude of parents of rural children will be unfavorable towards education. However, the present study aims at examining whether the rural parents, today; exhibit a positive and favorable perception towards their children's education as a result of increasing awareness of values of education through Government Endeavour and initiatives. To achieve the main objective, the study identified the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and the various agricultural activities carried out by rural children and their contribution to these activities. Also, the study examined the constraints to agricultural production in the study area. The study further determined the relationship between the socio economic characteristics of the farmers and their perception towards rural children's education.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 The Study Area

The study was carried out in Odo-Otin Local Government Area of Osun State which has its secretariat at Okuku. Odo-Otin Local Government is 294 kilometers North East of Osogbo and situated on latitude 8-01'N and longitude 4 42'E. Based on the census, Odo-Otin Local Government is estimated to have a population of 134,110 people. Farming is the traditional and major occupation of the people in the area which entails the production of food crop like yam, cassava, vegetables, fruits and so on; also cash crop like cocoa and kolanut are grown. Apart from farming activities, people in the area also engage themselves in non-farm activities like goldsmith.

The population for this study consists of farmers in Odo-Otin Local Government. Multistage sampling technique was employed for the study. The first stage involved the purposive selection of six (6) wards from the fifteen (15) political wards due to their high degree of rurality. The second stage was random selection of one (1) village from each ward making six (6) villages namely; Igbotele, oponda, Imuleke, Opete, Aganju and Oore. Twenty (20) respondents were randomly selected from each village making a sample size of one

hundred and twenty (120) respondents as the sample size. Primary data was collected from the respondents through the use of a well structured interview schedule and all information was based on the stated objectives of the study. Descriptive statistic tools such as frequency, percentages and mean values were used for analyzing the data while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to determine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. There are two major variables in this study; these are dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable is the perception of farmers towards rural children's education which was measured on a 5 point likert scale strongly agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly disagree from which a perception index was generated. The independent variables are the socio-economic characteristics of the farmers such as, age, marital status, level of education, household size and religion.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Socio-economic characteristics

Table 1 below shows that the mean age of the farmers was calculated to be 55 years. Also, 80% of the respondents were male while 20% of them were female. 64.2% of the respondents were married while 35.8% of the respondents were single, 61.7% of the respondents had between the 1-5 members in their household. 36.7% had no formal education while 83.3% of the respondents were cultivating between 1-5 acres of land and 52.2% of the respondents had about 10 years of farming experience. It could be inferred that most of the farmers were not in their active age and this might have a negative impact on agricultural production and a high percentage (63.3) of the respondents having one formal education or the other may also have a positive influence on the adoption of new technologies.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by Socio-economic characteristics

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Age | | |
| 20-29 | 9 | 7.4 |
| 30-39 | 15 | 12.4 |
| 40-49 | 13 | 10.7 |
| 50-59 | 25 | 20.8 |
| 60-69 | 26 | 21.7 |
| 70-79 | 30 | 20.9 |
| ≥80 | 6 | 5.0 |
| Sex | | |
| Male | 94 | 80.0 |
| Female | 24 | 20.0 |
| Marital | | |
| Married | 77 | 64.2 |
| Single | 43 | 35.8 |
| Household size | | |
| 1-5 | 74 | 61.7 |
| 6-10 | 44 | 36.8 |
| ≥ 10 | 2 | 1.6 |
| Level of education | | |
| No formal | 44 | 36.7 |
| Primary school completed | 23 | 19.2 |
| Primary school uncompleted | 9 | 7.5 |
| Secondary school completed | 8 | 6.7 |
| Secondary school uncompleted | 22 | 18.3 |
| Tertiary | 14 | 11.7 |
| Farm size | | |
| 1-5 | 100 | 83.3 |
| 6-9 | 120 | 100 |
| Farm experience | | |
| 1-10 | 63 | 52.5 |
| 11-20 | 10 | 8.3 |
| 21-30 | 13 | 10.9 |

| | | |
|------------------------|----|------|
| 31-40 | 14 | 11.7 |
| 41-50 | 14 | 11.5 |
| 51-60 | 5 | 5.0 |
| Level of income | | |
| 1000-20000 | 31 | 25.9 |
| 21000-40000 | 39 | 32.6 |
| 41000-60000 | 22 | 18.2 |
| 61000-80000 | 22 | 18.3 |
| ≥ 80000 | 16 | 5 |

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

3.2 The rural children's contribution to Agricultural Production

The rural children's contributions to agricultural production were grouped under various activities. Among which feeding of farm animals was ranked first with a WMS of (1.65). Followed by weeding (1.50), checking of stored products on the regular basis (1.49), looking for buyer of produce from farm (1.48) and procure of implement and feeds for animals (1.48). Also included in the activities were marketing of harvested crop (1.42), assisting in keeping of farm record (1.33), cooking on the farm (1.28), planting of crops (1.23), fertilizer application (1.16), harvesting (1.15) and tractor driving (0.95). This finding implies that the rural children were always involved in feeding of farm animals as their major contribution to agricultural production.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by farm activities and the children's contribution

| Activities and Contribution | Always | Sometime | Never | Ms | WMS | R |
|--|---------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------|------------|----------|
| Planting | 65(54.2) | 18(15.0) | 37(30.8) | 148 | 1.23 | 9 |
| Assisting in keeping of farm production record | 69(57.5) | 22(18.3) | 29(24.2) | 160 | 1.33 | 7 |
| Fertilizer application | 59(49.2) | 22(18.3) | 39(32.5) | 140 | 1.16 | 10 |
| Marketing of harvested crop | 72(60.0) | 27(22.5) | 21(17.5) | 171 | 1.42 | 6 |
| Harvesting | 50(41.6) | 39(32.5) | 31(32.5) | 139 | 1.15 | 11 |
| Procure of implement and feeds for animals | 72(60.0) | 34(28.3) | 14(11.7) | 178 | 1.48 | 4 |
| Cooking on the farm | 57(47.5) | 40(33.3) | 23(19.2) | 154 | 1.28 | 8 |
| Driving tractors | 43(35.8) | 29(24.2) | 48(40.0) | 115 | 0.95 | 12 |
| Weeding | 72(60.00) | 37(32.5) | 11(9.2) | 181 | 1.50 | 2 |
| Checking of stored products on the regular basis | 70(58.3) | 39(32.5) | 11(9.2) | 179 | 1.49 | 3 |
| Looking for buyer of produce from your farm | 72(60.0) | 34(28.3) | 14(11.7) | 178 | 1.48 | 4 |
| Feeding of farm animals | 83(69.1) | 32(26.7) | 5(4.2) | 198 | 1.65 | 1 |

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

3.3 The constraints

The respondents constraints to agricultural production were grouped into 3 categories; Serious Constraint, Mild Constraint, Not a constraint. Insufficient capital for agricultural production was ranked first with a WMS of 2.75 followed by Lack of collateral to serve loan (2.74), lack of basic amenities (2.66), poor transportation (2.50), insufficient labor (2.49) and poor farming tools (2.44). This finding implies that the most serious constraint faced by farmers in agricultural production is insufficient capital among others.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Constraints

| Constraints | serious constraint | Mild constraint | Not a constraint | Ms | Wms | R |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|------------|----------|
| Inadequate cultivable | 60(50.0) | 40(33.3) | 20(16.7) | 280 | 2.33 | 14 |
| Insufficient capital | 95(79.2) | 21(17.5) | 4(3.3) | 331 | 2.75 | 1 |
| Insufficient labour | 73(60.8) | 33(27.5) | 14(11.7) | 299 | 2.49 | 5 |
| Lack of basic amenities | 89(74.2) | 22(18.3) | 9(7.5) | 320 | 2.66 | 3 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|-----|------|----|
| Lack of collateral to serve loan | 92(76.7) | 25(20.8) | 3(2.5) | 329 | 2.74 | 2 |
| Poor communication | 59(49.2) | 49(40.0) | 13(0.8) | 286 | 2.38 | 12 |
| Poor transportation | 70(58.3) | 40(40.8) | 10(8.3) | 300 | 2.50 | 4 |
| Poor tools | 62(51.7) | 49(40.8) | 9(7.5) | 293 | 2.44 | 6 |
| For marketing system | 73(60.8) | 43(35.8) | 12(10.0) | 293 | 2.44 | 6 |
| Poor farm machine | 58(48.3) | 27(22.5) | 20(11.7) | 293 | 2.44 | 6 |
| Poor extension activities & service | 58(58.3) | 45(37.5) | 17(14.2) | 281 | 2.34 | 13 |
| Lack of adequate knowledge about new information | 66(55.0) | 38(31.7) | 16(13.3) | 290 | 2.41 | 10 |
| Unstable policies and programmes of government | 57(47.5) | 48(40.0) | 15(12.5) | 293 | 2.35 | 15 |
| Pests and diseases problems | 62(51.7) | 49(40.8) | 9(7.5) | 294 | 2.44 | 6 |

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

3.4 Perception Statement of the farmers

The perception statements of the farmers were measured on a five point likert scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Disagree. Most of the respondents agreed that formal education will help their children to get ahead in life as it was ranked 1st with a weighted mean score of 4.80. Also, majority of the respondent agreed that formal education will help in all round development of their children (4.69). Farmers also agreed that formal education will help their children to learn important life skill at school (4.63). To some farmers, whatever is learnt in school by their children will help to improve agricultural production (4.57) and that better educational qualification will help their children in getting better jobs (4.23). Farmers' perception also disagrees that formal education is not an indispensable part of life (2.75) and that It doesn't matter whether a child starts going to school early or later in life (2.70). Also, most farmers disagreed that learning programmes in school will not teach their children the practical skills to solve farm problems (2.63). Also, a good number of the farmers disagreed that they will not face any real problem in future if their children are not registered for formal education (1.86) and that most of things their children learns at school are not relevant to real life studies (1.68). The findings of this study indicates a favorable and positive perception of farmers towards rural children's formal education, which is an indication for the replacement of aged farmers with youths that will be more venturesome and adopt better farm practices. This finding contradicts the apriori expectation of the study which explains that Parent's attitude towards their children's education is affected adversely by low socio-economic status and since the rural constitute the disadvantaged population, it is expected that the perception of farmers will be unfavorable towards formal education

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by Perception

| Statement | Strongly agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Ms | Wms | R |
|---|----------------|----------|-----------|----------|-------------------|-----|------|---|
| Formal education will help my child to get ahead in life | 98(69.2) | 21(30.8) | 1(0.8) | 0(0) | 0(0) | 577 | 4.80 | 1 |
| Formal education will help my child for his all round development | 83(69.2) | 37(30.8) | 0(0) | 0(0) | 0(0) | 563 | 4.69 | 2 |
| My child learns important life skill at school | 79(65.8) | 38(31.7) | 3(2.5) | 0(0) | 0(0) | 556 | 4.63 | 3 |
| Whatever is taught in school on be easily be used to improve agriculture production | 77(64.2) | 38(31.7) | 2(1.7) | 0(0) | 0(0) | 549 | 4.57 | 4 |
| Better educational qualification help in getting better jobs | 59(49.2) | 38(31.7) | 1(0.8) | 0(0) | 0(0) | 508 | 4.23 | 5 |
| Formal education schooling is not an indispensable part of | 25(20.8) | 45(37.5) | 10(8.3) | 26(21.7) | 25(21.7) | 331 | 2.75 | 6 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|---------|----------|----------|------|------|----|
| life | | | | | | | | |
| It does not matter whether a child starts going to school early or later in life | 25(20.8) | 16(13.3) | 5(4.2) | 24(28.3) | 24(28.3) | 321 | 2.70 | 7 |
| Learning programmes in school will not teach my child the practical skills to solve farm problems | 14(11.7) | 29(24.2) | 10(8.3) | 31(25.8) | 316 | 2.63 | 8 | |
| I will not face any real problem in future if I did not send my child to school | 6(5.0) | 0(0) | 4(3.3) | 44(36.7) | 44(36.7) | 224 | 1.86 | 9 |
| Most of the things my child learns at school are not relevant to real life studies | 0(0) | 7(5.8) | 4(3.3) | 56(46.7) | 56(46.7) | 202 | 1.68 | 10 |

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

4. HYPOTHESIS

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between the socio-economic characteristics of the farmers and their perception towards rural children's education.

A significant relationship was found between the Age, Marital status, Household size, Level of education and perception of farmers towards their children's formal education which implies that the farmers' favorable and positive perception towards their children's formal education is influenced by their age, marital status, household size and level of education.

Table 6: Relationship between socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and the perception of farmers.

| Variable | Correlation | Remark |
|--------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Age | .232 | Significant |
| Marital status | -.290 | Significant |
| Sex | .017 | Not Significant |
| Household size | -.181 | Significant |
| Level of education | .350 | Significant |

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the farmers' perception on their children's formal education, it was concluded that formal education will help their children to get ahead in life and that the knowledge gained from formal education can help in the adoption of new innovations and improved technologies on agricultural production thereby influencing the farmers' orientation positively and increasing agricultural productivity. Also the farmers were favorably and positively disposed towards their children's formal education. The most serious constraint to agricultural production in the study area is insufficient capital, and because of the advantages of formal education to agricultural productivity, the study therefore recommends that farmers should be encouraged further to allow their children enroll for formal education and government should provide loan for the registered farmers to boost agricultural production.

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