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FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SUSTAINABILITY OF AGRIPRENEURSHIP INTEREST AMONG GRADUATE YOUTH IN SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract: *The paper examined factors associated with sustainability of agriprenurship interest of graduate youth in Southwestern Nigeria. It specifically described the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents; identified their agriprenurship activities of interest and identified factors associated with their interest. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select 185 respondents from the selected the Local Government Areas in Southwestern States, quantitative and qualitative data were collected using semi structured questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) respectively. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical tool such as frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviation while factor analysis was used to isolate crucial factors associated with sustainability of agriprenurship interest of serving graduate youth in the study areas. Results showed that respondents had a mean age of 26.18 ± 2.74 years and majority (75.7%) were not graduates of agriculture. The agricultural enterprises of interest to the respondents were poultry farming (67.6%) fish farming (56.5%) and snail farming (50.9%). Crucial factors found to influence sustainability of graduate youth's interest in agriprenurship were motivational, parental influence, community asset and institutional factors among other. The study concluded that these identified factors were germane to the sustainability of graduate youth's interest in agriprenurship in Southwestern Nigeria.*

Keywords: *Agriprenurship, Interest, Graduate youth, Agro-allied SAED, Sustainability*
JEL Code: D91, Q13

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture sector has been identified as an important sector due to its several job creation and income generation opportunities. Even though the general perception of people towards agriculture is negative, there has always been the belief that agriculture sector has the ability to offer a high income if operated in the right way (MAN, 2007). In the contemporary global world, the incidence of unemployment among the youths especially graduates of tertiary institutions keep on increasing on a daily basis (BAHAMAN et al., 2010). It is a challenge that most economies are facing under the current economic circumstances (OPPONG and SACHS, 2015). Even the developed nations have not been exempted from this frightful social problem, although the up-surge is more pronounced in the developing countries like Nigeria.

The commencement of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria in a bid to tackle unemployment can be dated back to the 1980s when the economy collapsed due to political instability and inconsistencies in the social-economic policies of successive governments (AROGUNDADE, 2011). Before this era, graduates of tertiary institutions were having much problem of unemployment; hence, they were not exposed to adequate entrepreneurship knowledge and skills which would make them self-reliance. The problem of unemployment led to the introduction of entrepreneurship education with the belief that its introduction into tertiary education would lead to acquisition of skills that would enable its graduates to be self-employed and invariably reduce unemployment problems (NWANGWU, 2006).

Agriprenurship refers to the various entrepreneurship opportunities embedded in the agricultural sector (LANS

et al., 2013). In addition, BAIRWA et al. (2014) defined agripreneurship as the profitable marriage of agriculture and entrepreneurship which turns a farm into entrepreneurial establishment in agriculture and allied sector. Youth agripreneurship could be the missing link to address the challenges of poverty and unemployment experienced by the youths, especially in developing countries (ILO, 2014). This is because agripreneurship has the capability to contribute to a country's economic development by creating employment for the populace in direct and indirect ways, improving nutrition, and contributing to food security and food sovereignty (BAIRWA et al., 2014).

According to NYSC Handbook (1996), the National Youth Serving Corps (NYSC) is a scheme that was established by the Nigerian government in 1973 to involve Nigerian graduates below the age of thirty in national building and the development of the country. The scheme mandates all Nigerian graduates to serve the country in assigned state for a period of one year after graduation from universities and polytechnics both within and outside Nigeria. The scheme aimed at promoting national unity, consciousness and patriotism among Nigerian youths particularly graduates of tertiary institutions. Recently, NYSC tapped into the contemporary issue of entrepreneurship in a bid to reduce unemployment among graduate youths by equipping graduate youth with the basic skills to perform optimally as agripreneurs through the introduction of the Skill Acquisition Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) in 2013 where every corps member is expected to have acquired a skill in different enterprises including agripreneurial activities by building their capacity to create wealth for them in the face of serious unemployment in the country (OKPALA, 2015).

Previous studies conducted by FATOKI (2010) among graduate youth in South Africa revealed that youth had very low intention in engaging enterpreneurial activities. Also, ABDUL AZIZ and NORHLILMATUN (2013) revealed that family support, government support, promotion through of festivals and carnivals, attitude and acceptance were the factors that influence youth interest to become entrepreneur in agriculture in Malaysia. While ALAO et al (2018) also found out that a larger proportion of the graduate youth in Osun State, Nigeria had interest in agribusiness and were ready to set up agribusiness activities due to the reality of unemployment in Nigeria. In the same vein, many of the graduate youth have been showing interest in SAED agro-allied activities since its inception some years ago through their active participation. However, factors associated with the interest of serving graduate youth in agripreneurship in the study area have not been exhaustively investigated in Southwestern Nigeria, hence this study was conceived with the aim of isolating the crucial factors associated with sustainability of graduate youth' interest in agripreneurship in Southwestern States, Nigeria. Specifically, the study were to describe the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents; identify agripreneurship activities of interest among agro-allied SAED graduate youth; and isolate factors associated with sustainability of respondents' agripreneurship interest in the study area.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Southwestern Nigeria. Southwestern Nigeria is one of the six Geo-political Zones in Nigeria, which has six States namely Osun, Ekiti, Ondo, Ogun, Oyo and Lagos States. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select the respondents (serving graduate youths) for the study. At the first stage, one third of the states were randomly selected namely Oyo and Osun States. At the second stage, purposive sampling technique was used to select two administrative zones each from Oyo and Osun States out of five and six administrative zones respectively based on the presence of agro-allied training centers in the zones, making a total of four zones. Ibadan North zone and Oyo zone were selected in Oyo State while in Osun State, Ilesha zone and Ife zone were selected. At the third stage, one Local Government Area (LGA) was purposively selected from each of the four zones based on the presence of agro-allied training centers, making a total of four LGAs. The selected LGAs were Ibadan North LGA and Oyo East LGA from Oyo State while Ife East LGA and Ilesha East LGA from Osun State. At the fourth stage, purposive sampling technique was also used to select one functioning agro-allied SAED training center from each of the selected LGAs making a total of four training centers. At the final stage, proportionate sampling technique was used to select 60% of the total three hundred and six (306) serving graduate youth of the agro-allied SAED group in the 2018 Batch 'A' to give a total of 185 respondents for the study. Duly pretested and validated semi- structured questionnaire was used to collect the quantitative data from the respondents while qualitative data were elicited through Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The descriptive statistics used include frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviation while principal component analysis was used to isolate crucial factors associated with sustainability of graduate youth's interest in agripreneurship. Respondents reacted to twenty one variables which were later subjected to factor analysis. Variables were grouped using principal component analysis with varimax rotation. Constant loading variables with the cut-off point of 0.30 and above were retained while variables with loading less than 0.30 were rejected as recommended by ANSELM and TAOFEEQ (2010); BROOKS et al., (2006) and MADUKWE, (2004). Also, Kaiser's criterion was used to determine which factor to retain in the result of the analysis, thus factors with Eigen value greater than one were retained. The factors retained were named based on the following criteria as employed by ALABI et al. (2013), FAMAKINWA et al. (2017) and FAMAKINWA et al (2019).

- The researcher's subjective interpretation of experiences from literatures
- Picking synonyms of the highest loaded variables on each factor
- Retaining the name based on the similarity of the features of the variables contributing to each factor
- Joint explanation or interpretation of the meaning of the positive and highly loaded variables on each factor.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1 reveals that majority (60%) of the respondents were males. This implies that more male graduate youth showed interest in agro-allied SAED group in the study area. This might be due to the fact that most of the activities embedded in this SAED group are often considered as being strenuous and laborious making the females to shy away from belonging to the agro-allied SAED group. More of the respondents (62.7%) were 26 years and above with the mean age of 26.18 ± 2.74 years. This indicates that most of the respondents were in their active ages as expected and still have the strength for agripreneurial activities and consequently were potential future agripreneurs. Majority (85.4 %) of the respondents were single while 14.6 percent of the respondents were married. This implies that youth's interest in agricultural enterprises could be very high while they are still single and able to concentrate on their enterprises without marriage responsibility distractions. This is in line with CHIKEZIE et al. (2012) and OGUNREMI et al. (2012) that unmarried people had latent energy in them to be engaged in entrepreneurship without distraction from family members. More than half (57.8%) of the respondents were from Yoruba ethnic group while few (17.8%) were Igbo. Based on the NYSC vision, youths from a particular ethnic group were expected to be posted to serve in the catchment area of another ethnic group outside their own. The study area is dominated by Yoruba ethnic group and particularly implies that many of the youths in the NYSC programme were being posted to their catchment area which is not in line with one of core vision of NYSC scheme which was to foster intercultural mix of youths from different ethnic groups. Majority (69.7%) of the respondents had acquired practical agricultural experiences in one way or the other before the service year while the remaining 30.3 percent did not. This implies that the higher percentage of the respondents who had agricultural experience before being posted for NYSC stand the greater chance of having interest in agro-allied SAED group which may eventually translate to having sustainable interest in taking up career opportunities in agricultural sector. Majority (76.6%) of the respondents had between 6-10 years of agricultural experience and the mean year of agricultural experience was 8.73 ± 4.51 years implying that respondents had fairly long agricultural experience which could enhance their interests in becoming agripreneurs. The following FGD excerpts buttress the above finding

"have being following my mum and also helping her to manage her oil palm and plantain plantation since when I was in secondary school. This has really enhanced my interest in agriculture and I have determined to avail myself for any practical agricultural training anywhere I find myself" (A participant in Ilesha East agro-allied training center)

The results in Table 1 show that majority (75.7%) of

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std. Dev.
Sex				
Male	111	60		
Female	74	40		
Age				
≤ 20	5	2.7		
21 – 25	64	34.6	26.18	2.74
26+	116	62.7		
Marital status				
Single	158	85.4		
Married	27	14.6		
Ethnic group				
Yoruba	107	57.8		
Igbo	33	17.8		
Hausa	28	15.1		
Others	17	9.2		
Practical agricultural experience before NYSC				
No	56	30.3		
Yes	129	69.7		
Years of agricultural experience				
≤ 5	32	17.3		
6 – 10	138	74.6	8.73	4.51
11 – 15	9	4.9		
≥16	6	3.2		
Academic field				
Graduates of agriculture	45	24.3		
Non graduates of agriculture	140	75.7		
Educational qualification				
Higher National Diploma	47	25.4		
Bachelor degree	132	71.4		
Master degree	6	3.2		
** Sources of information on agricultural entrepreneurship				
SAED center	144	77.8		
Internet/ social media	140	75.7		
Peer/friends	132	71.4		
Television	130	70.3		
Magazine/newspaper	129	69.7		
Radio	122	65.9		
Seminar/conference	115	62.2		
Research institute	101	54.6		
Mosque/ church	96	51.9		
Extension agents	83	44.9		
Parent/guardian involvement				
Yes	107	56.8		
No	78	43.2		
Siblings/ relatives involvement				
Yes	89	48.1		
No	96	51.9		

** Multiple responses
Source: Field survey, 2018

the respondents were not graduates of agriculture while the rest 24.3 percent were graduates of agriculture. Based on the finding, it is quite interesting to note that a vast majority of the respondents that showed interests in the agro-allied SAED group were non - graduates of agriculture. This invariably implies that being a graduate of agriculture does not guarantee interest and willingness to take up career opportunities in agricultural enterprises. The finding affirms that of KENNETH et al. (2013) that majority of the youths that were involved in agribusiness were non- graduates of agriculture. Majority (71.4%) of the respondents had bachelor's degree, 25.4 percent had Higher National Diploma (HND) while 3.2 percent had master degree implying that educated youths were becoming more interested in agriculture more than ever and an indication that agricultural sector in the study area will soon be dominated by literate farmers. This is contrary to the submission of ADEOGUN and AGBENIYI (2011) that reported that agricultural enterprise was dominated with those who had either non-formal or primary education. Results in Table 1 show that respondents obtained information on agricultural entrepreneurship from multiple sources with SAED training centers (77.8%), internet (75.7%), peer and friends (71.4%) and television (70.3%) being the most prominent sources. This implies that accessibility to information from several outlets could stimulate and also enhance agriprenurship interest in the respondents. The results in Table 1 show that 56.8 percent of the respondents had parents/guardians who were involved in one agricultural enterprise or the other while 48.1 percent had siblings/relatives who were involved in agricultural enterprises. The fact that the respondents' parents or siblings were engaged in agricultural enterprises could be a source of motivation that propels their interest in harnessing the opportunities in agricultural entrepreneurship.

Agriprenurship activities of interest among agro-allied SAED graduate youth

The results in Table 2 show that respondents indicated multiple interest in their choice of proposed agricultural enterprises with poultry farming (67.6%) taking the lead followed by fish farming (56.5%), snail farming (50.9%), piggery (44.6%), cash crop production & processing (43.0%), vegetable farming (42.4%) and value addition to agricultural produce (40.3%) in that order while graduate youth showed least interest in mushroom farming (9.1%). The finding above reiterated the fact that out of all the agricultural enterprises identified, poultry farming was the most preferred among the respondents in the study areas. This is similar to the findings of ALAO et al (2018) who reported that larger percentages of undergraduate youth indicated high interest in poultry production, this could be as a result of high prospect and potentials associated with poultry production.. The implication of this finding is that efforts to sustain agricultural enterprises interest of the respondents in the study areas should focus on the most prominent enterprises however other agricultural enterprises should not be left aside.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on agricultural enterprises of interest

*Agricultural enterprises	Percentage	Rank
Poultry farming	67.6	1 st
Fish farming	56.5	2 nd
Snail farming	50.9	3 rd
Piggery	44.6	4 th
Cash crop production & processing	43.0	5 th
Vegetable farming	42.4	6 th
Value addition to agricultural produce	40.3	7 th
Plantain processing	38.1	8 th
Livestock feed mill	38.1	9 th
Cattle rearing	37.6	10 th
Rabbit rearing	37.0	11 th
Soya beans processing	27.0	12 th
Horticulture	26.5	13 th
Sheep & goat production	25.4	14 th
Quail egg farming	24.9	15 th
Beekeeping and honey production	23.9	16 th
Locust beans processing	23.3	17 th
Agricultural equipment leasing	14.3	18 th
Grass cutter farming	13.8	19 th
Agricultural consultancy	13.8	20 th
Arable crop production & processing	13.6	21 st
Sales of agrochemicals	13.2	22 nd
Groundnut processing	12.7	23 rd
Shear butter processing	12.2	24 th
Mushroom farming	9.1	25 th

* Multiple responses

Source: Field survey, 2018

Factors associated with agriprenurship interest among serving graduate youth

Results in Table 3 show the results of varimax factor rotation pattern with the measures that were highly loaded on each of the eight factors extracted that influenced graduate youth interest in agriprenurship. The contribution of each of the highly loaded factors to agriprenurship interest were shown in Table 4 as follows: Factor 1- motivational factor (12.9%) followed by factor 2 -parental influence factor (10.8%), factor 3- community asset factor (8.0%), factor 4 - institutional factor (7.6%), factor 5 - perceptual factor (6.8%), factor 6 – agricultural information factor (6.4%), factor 7 - constraint factor (5.8%) and factor 8 - household strength factor (5.7%). These eight factors accounted for 64.3 percent of variance while unknown factors explained the remaining 35.7 percent of the variance as reflected in Table 3. This implies that these variables are strong enough to determine the sustainability interest of the graduate youth in agriprenurship.

Factor one: Motivational factor

Result in Table 4 shows that motivational factor was identified by seven measures of loading in which all were positively loaded. These were extrinsic variables (L = 0.789), intrinsic variables (L = 0.789), agriprenurial characteristics (L

Table 3: Result of varimax rotated component matrix showing extracted factors associated with graduate youth' interest in agricultural entrepreneurship

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Extrinsic variables	0.789	-0.472						
Intrinsic variables	0.789	-0.472						
Agripreneurial characteristics	0.610	-0.337						
Social organisation membership	0.440	0.439						
Parent involvement in agricultural enterprise		0.576						
Years of experience	0.327	0.560	0.307					
Siblings involvement in agricultural enterprise		0.514	0.322					
Availability of infrastructure			0.622					
Community attitude				0.551	0.385			
Estimate of total income	0.333			-0.500			-0.333	
Role of government				0.855				
Age				0.441				
Availability of factors of production			0.366		0.376	0.380		
Perception					0.562		0.349	
Role of family member			0.428		-0.458		0.355	
Numbers of agricultural graduate						0.663		
Sources of agricultural information				0.401		0.440		-0.376
Constraints							0.447	
Household size				0.374				0.453
Cosmopolitaness	0.338			-0.327				0.391
Agricultural enterprises								0.427
Reasons for travelling					0.302			

Figures with bold fonts indicate variables with high loading on each factor

Source: Field survey, 2018.

= 0.610), social organisation membership (L = 0.440), years of experience (L = 0.327), estimate of total income (L = 0.333) and cosmopolitaness (L = 0.338). The factor was named based on criteria one and two. This finding implies that extrinsic variables and intrinsic variables which constitute motivational factors are germane in sustaining the interest of graduate youth that belong to agro-allied SAED programme group to set up agripreneurial enterprise beyond the service year.

Factor two: Parental influence factor

Results show factor two (parental influence) was identified by four measures of loading out of which four were positively loaded. These were parent involvement in agricultural enterprise (L = 0.576), social organisation membership (L = 0.439), years of experience (L = 0.560) and siblings involvement in agricultural enterprise (L = 0.514). Criteria two and four were employed to name the factor. This implies that reasonable years of practical agricultural experiences which are obtained from their parents and sibling's involvement in agricultural enterprises and peers in social organisation might have profound influence on the interest of graduate youth that belong to agro-allied SAED group in agripreneurship. This also conform to Abdul Aziz and Norhlilmatur (2013) report that family support could influence youth interest in agricultural entrepreneurship.

Factor three: Community asset factor

The factor was identified by eight measures of loading out of which six were positively loaded. These include availability of infrastructure (L = 0.622), years of experience (L = 0.307), siblings involvement in agricultural enterprise (L = 0.322), availability of factors of production (L = 0.366) and role of family member (L = 0.428). Criteria two and four were used to name the factor. The availability of infrastructures such as markets, motorable roads, and electricity among others coupled with the availability of factors of production such as land, capital and labour in the community could influence respondents' interest in entrepreneurship opportunities in agriculture..

Factor four: Institutional factor

Institutional factor was identified by seven measures of loading out of which five were positively loaded as illustrated by Table 4. These were community attitude (L = 0.551), role of government (L = 0.855), age (L = 0.441), sources of agricultural information (L = 0.401) and household size (L = 0.374). This factor was named based on criterion two. This implies that performance government roles as an institution or its agencies through provision of credit facilities and creation of enabling environment for young and aspiring entrepreneurs could be an impetus for sustaining their interest

in agripreneurship. This result is similar to the report of Abdul Aziz and Norhlilmatur (2013) that government support stimulate youth interest in agricultural entrepreneurship.

Factor five: Psychological factor

The factor was identified by four measures of loading out of which four were positively loaded. These were community attitude ($L = 0.385$), availability of factors of production ($L = 0.376$), perception ($L = 0.562$) and reasons for travelling ($L = 0.302$). Criterion three was employed to name the factor. A community where its members have unfavourable attitude towards agripreneurial activities would definitely have negative impact on the graduate youth interest this is similar to the findings of Abdul Aziz and Norhlilmatur (2013) that attitude is most significant factor influencing youth interest of agricultural entrepreneurship in Malaysia. And the type of perception the youth have whether positive or negative to a large extent can influence their interest in agricultural entrepreneurship. This is conform to the report of ZAKARIA et al. (2014) who reported that youth perception towards the prospects of agribusiness enterprises in Ghana significantly influence their intention to take up agribusiness in the future. Both community attitude and perception put together form psychological factor which could either sustain or dissuade the interest of graduate youth in agripreneurship.

Factor six: Agricultural information factor

Results in Table 4 shows agricultural information factor was identified by three measures of loading out of which three were positively loaded. These include availability of factors of production ($L = 0.380$), graduate of agriculture ($L = 0.663$) and sources of agricultural information ($L = 0.440$). Criteria one, two and four were employed to name this factor. Information as regards agricultural entrepreneurship acquired by the serving graduate youth from sources including friends/colleagues who are graduates of agriculture and providers of factors of production could assist in sustaining graduate youth' interest in agripreneurship.

Factor seven: Constraint factor

The factor was identified by three measures of loading out of which five were positively loaded. They include constraints ($L = 0.447$), perception ($L = 0.349$) and role of family members ($L = 0.355$). Criteria two and four were employed to name the factor. Constraints that could limit the sustainability of respondents' interest in agripreneurship could arise from their income realized from their enterprises, their perception and the roles played by their family members. Knowing this could serve as a guide to avoiding constraints from these sources.

Factor eight: Household strength factor

This factor was identified by three measures of loading out of which three were positively loaded. These were household size ($L = 0.453$), cosmopolitaness ($L = 0.391$) and agricultural enterprises ($L = 0.427$). Criterion two was employed to name the factor. It implies that the ability of households to contribute the necessary inputs such as manpower could sustain agripreneurship interest of graduate youth.

Table 4: Principal component analysis showing the initial eigen values and percentage variation in the interest of graduate youth in agricultural enterprises by each component/factor extracted

Factors Name	Eigen value	% variance	Cumm. % var
1 Motivational factor	3.849	12.95	12.950
2 Parental influence factor	2.992	10.81	22.766
3 Community asset factor	2.084	8.017	31.089
4 Institutional factor	2.068	7.601	39.460
5 Psychological factor	2.022	6.876	46.337
6 Agricultural information factor	1.880	6.374	52.710
7 Constraint factor	1.697	5.833	58.544
8 Household strength factor	1.453	5.758	64.302
Unknown factors		35.69	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2018

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it was concluded that the agricultural enterprises of interest to the graduate were poultry, fish farming, cash crop production, processing, snail farming and piggery while crucial factors influencing serving graduate youth's interest in agripreneurship include motivational, parental influence, community asset and institutional factor among others. It was therefore recommended that all these identified factors should be taken into consideration by relevant stakeholders such as governments and donor agencies when planning youth development programme especially agripreneurship to ensure that interest of youth are sustained so that they can key into relevant agricultural enterprises and improve their livelihood status.

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