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EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (YCAD) PROGRAMME AMONG RURAL YOUTH IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study described the socio-economic characteristics of the beneficiaries of the Youth Commercial Agricultural Development (YCAD) Programme in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Specifically, it identified type of enterprises in YCAD programme and isolated the factors influencing the effectiveness of the programme in the state. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select 174 beneficiaries/respondents for the study. A validated interview schedule was used to collect data which were summarised with percentages, means and standard deviation while chi-square and correlation were used to draw inferences. Also, factor analysis was used to isolate factors influencing the programme effectiveness. Results showed that the mean age of respondents was 37 ± 5 years, mean household size was 5 ± 2 persons, mean year of formal education was 15 ± 2 years and mean monthly income was ₦41,000 \pm 23,000. Results, also, showed that arable crop enterprises (47.7%) and poultry (27%) were the most preferred enterprises by the beneficiaries in the study area followed by tree crops enterprise (12.6%) and aquaculture (12.6%) respectively. In addition, five crucial factors such as Institutional factor (26.672%), Personnel factor (16.345%), Socio-economic factor (10.626%), Experience factor (9.243%) and Constraints factor (7.506%) were isolated. Further results showed that household size ($r = 0.224$; $p \leq 0.01$) and years of formal education ($r = 0.211$; $p \leq 0.01$) had positive and significant relationship with effectiveness of the YCAD programme. It was concluded from the study that YCAD was highly effective in employment generation, provision of incentives and creation of market for agricultural produce among the beneficiaries.

Keywords: *Effectiveness, rural youth, Youth Commercial Agricultural Development, YCAD.*

INTRODUCTION

A number of programmes have been introduced in the past to stimulate the interest of youth in agricultural production and processing. These activities serve as source of empowerment and employment opportunities for the youth, thereby alleviating

poverty and ensuring youth development. The Federal Government and State in realization of the importance of youth had initiated some agricultural development strategies in the past such as National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Better Life Programme, Fadama programme, Agricultural Developments Programmes (ADPs), River Basin Development Authority (RBDA), National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA), Green Revolution Programme (GR), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) (Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe (2012). Akpan (2010) submitted that youth empowerment means involving young people in decision making processes on issues that affect them, as well as entrusting them with the knowledge and skills necessary for them to effectively and meaningfully participate in issues that concern their well-being. He further stated that Nigeria's government has attempted to stimulate youth's interest in agricultural production and processing since the late 1980s. According to Ogunmola (2013) and Ayinde and Torimiro (2014), youth can be described as a group of young people between the ages of 18 to 40. They are known to be innocent but optimistic about life. Though youths have desirable qualities that can promote agriculture, most of them have strong apathy towards it (Adedoyin, 2005). The development of the agricultural sector of the Nigerian economy therefore depends on the rural youths because the larger percentage of them serves as linkage between the present and the future as well as labour reservoir (Muhammad-Lawalet *al.*, 2009). However, a number of researchers have reported that some of the programmes initiated for this course have failed in the past (Torimiro *et al.*, 2008; Gate, 2014; Ayinde *et al.*, 2016; Ayinde *et al.*, 2017).

Assessing the effectiveness of agricultural development programmes is an invaluable tool within the agricultural sector. Decision makers require evidence of the efficient and effective use of resources. It is an invaluable tool in this regard because it allows the sector to address challenges and shortcomings in order to improve activities and programmes (Frankel-Reed, 2008). Indicators of the effectiveness of programs generally focus on measuring the changes in outcomes that reflect the objectives of the program. Effectiveness has been defined as the extents to which objectives are achieved and the extent to which targeted problems are resolved. Also, it is the degree to which a purpose is achieved. Effectiveness is one of the characteristics of the agricultural extension programme that has received a great deal of attention from education researchers and workers.

Youth Commercial Agricultural Development programme (YCAD) was established in 2012 with the objectives to systematically incentivize youth into sustainable commercial agriculture, generate employment opportunities to potential young entrepreneurs, entrench an entrepreneurial market oriented, demand driven and commercially viable programme to be run under a youth cooperative agenda and to prepare independent role model entrepreneurial youth as showcase of how enterprising youth must work (Ogunmola, 2013). Youth Commercial Agricultural Development (YCAD) programme was designed to accelerate the process of agricultural commercialization in Ekiti-State, thus helping in increasing employment opportunities for youth as well as facilitating value addition of

specific agricultural products while guaranteeing food security and increasing internally generated revenue (IGR). Potential young entrepreneurs were empowered to become employed in commercial agricultural value chain activities. According to Ogunmola (2013), YCAD programme was introduced to provide financial incentive to encourage the youth to practice commercial agriculture. The programme was designed to create rapid employment for the youth through active participation in modern agricultural practices by raising the production efficiency and productivity of the beneficiaries so as to arrest the present declining state of the Nigeria agriculture and ban of importation of agricultural produce. The foregoing arouses the quest to assess the factors influencing the effectiveness of commercial agricultural development programme among these rural youths. The main objective of the study is to identify factors influencing the effectiveness of youth commercial agricultural development programme in Ekiti State, Nigeria, with a view to describe the socio-economic characteristics of the YCAD programme beneficiaries; identify type of enterprises in the YCAD programme; and isolate factors influencing the YCAD programme effectiveness.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The study was conducted in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The state is located in south-western region of the country within coordinates $7^{\circ}40'N$ $5015'E$ / $7.667^{\circ}N$ $5.250^{\circ}E$ with a land area of $6,353 \text{ km}^2$ and population of 2,737,186 (NPC, 2006), with population projection of 3,270,800 in 2016. Ekiti State was created on 1st October, 1996 out of Ondo State. Its capital is Ado Ekiti. Ekiti State covers the former twelve local government areas that made up the Ekiti Zone of old Ondo State. Ekiti State is bounded on the South by Ondo State, on the North by Kwara State, on the East by Kogi State and on the west by Osun State. Ekiti State has 16 local government Areas, three senatorial districts (North, South and Central) with six federal constituencies. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select respondents for the study. At the first stage, stratified random sampling technique was used to select 55 percent of the 315 beneficiaries that participated in the programme enterprises from the YCAD register. Therefore, 83 respondents were selected from 150 beneficiaries in arable crop enterprise, 47 respondents from 85 beneficiaries in livestock enterprise, 22 respondents from 40 beneficiaries in nursery tree crop enterprise and 22 respondents from 40 beneficiaries in aquaculture enterprise making a total of 174 respondents. At the second stage, individual beneficiary contact was explored through the use of cell phone to locate the respondents. A well-structured and validated interview schedule was used to collect quantitative data which were summarised with percentages, means and standard deviation while chi-square and correlation were used to draw inferences. Also, factor analysis was used to isolate factors influencing the programme effectiveness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION***Socio-economic characteristics of youth***

Results in Table 1 show that the mean age of the respondents was 37 ± 5 years, majority (76.4%) of the respondents were male, majority (83.9%) were married, mean household size was 5 ± 2 persons, majority (88.5%) were Christians, their mean year of formal education was 15 ± 2 years with mean farming experience of 10 ± 3 years. These findings revealed that the respondents are still in their active age based on Ogunmola (2013) categorization of youth as a group of people that are found within the age group of 18 to 40 years of age. Also, Oladejiet *al.* (2013) observed that it is generally believed that males are often more energetic and could readily be available for energy demanding jobs like production farming.

Table 1: Socio-economic Characteristics of the respondents (n = 174)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std. Dev.
Age (years)				
20-30	19	10.9	37	5
31-40	120	69.0		
41-50	29	16.7		
Above 50	6	3.4		
Sex				
Male	133	76.4		
Female	41	23.6		
Marital Status				
Single	27	15.5		
Married	146	83.9		
Separated	1	0.6		
Household Size				
2-4	88	50.6	5	2
5-7	73	42.0		
8-10	13	7.5		
Religion				
Christianity	154	88.5		
Islam	18	10.3		
Traditional	2	1.1		
Formal Education (years)				
12-14	41	23.6	15	2
15-17	127	73.0		
18-20	6	3.4		

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Income per month

Results in Figure 1 revealed that the mean monthly income earned by the respondents was ₦41,000.00 with standard deviation of ₦23,000. This value represents the average monthly income of the respondents on their farm activities altogether and translated to ₦492,000 annually. This finding might support the findings of Ayinde (2011) that income is a difficult characteristic to measure given the fact that most rural dwellers do not keep proper record of their income and coupled with the fact that sometimes they may deliberately refuse to disclose the amount they actually realized for fear of taxation and security reasons.

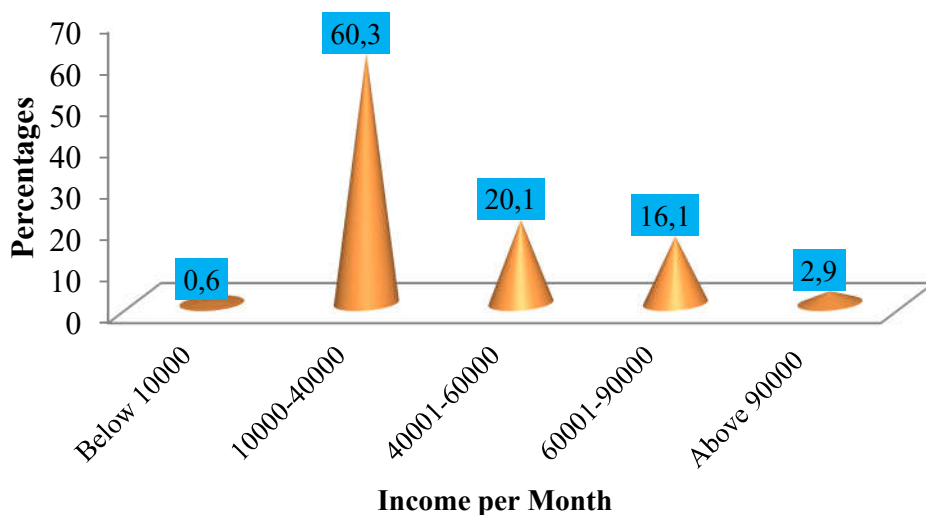


Fig. 1: Distribution of respondents based on their average income per month
 Mean Score = ₦41,000
 Standard deviation= ₦23,000
 Source: Field Survey, 2018.

YCAD Enterprises

Results in Table 2 presents the identified enterprises in YCAD programme. It shows that Arable crop enterprises (47.7%) and Poultry (27%) were the most preferred enterprises by the beneficiaries in the study area followed by Tree crops enterprise (12.6%) and Aquaculture (12.6%) respectively. The implication of arable crop enterprise (47.7%) having the highest percentage of beneficiaries may be as a result of the fact that the nature of the soil in the study area is mostly conducive for arable crop farming.

Table 2. Enterprises in YCAD programme

Enterprises	Frequency	Percentage
Arable Crop	83	47.7
Poultry	47	27.0
Tree Crops	22	12.6
Aquaculture	22	12.6

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of YCAD Programme

Table 3 shows the results of varimax factor rotation pattern with the measures that were highly loaded on each of the five factors extracted. Out of the 20 variables listed, the loading which give Eigen value of greater than one were five in number. Table 4 shows that the factors loaded explained 70.4 percent of variance in all while unknown factors explained the remaining 29.6 percent of the variance. The contribution of each of the highly loaded factors to influence the effectiveness of Youth Commercial Agricultural Development Programme were also shown as follows: Factor 1 –institutional support with 26.7percent contribution, followed by factor 2 – personnel (16.3%), factor 3 – economic (10.6%), factor 4 –experience (9.3%) and factor 5 – constraints (7.5%).

Table 3. Result of varimax rotated component matrix showing extracted factors

Contributing Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Integrity of programme facilitators		0.801**			
Constraint variables					0.903**
Membership of agricultural association			0.672**		
Credibility of service provider		0.512**			
Source of information				0.759**	
Age			-0.342	0.767**	
Marital status				-0.456	
Provision of market by the government	0.555**				
Occupation		-0.774	0.673**		
Years of farming experience				0.857**	
Household size		-0.555	-0.431		-0.381
External orientation				0.440**	
Financial empowerment by government	0.744**				
Income per month			0.891**		-0.331
Years of formal education				0.783**	

Provision of agricultural inputs by government	0.864**
Commitment of programme facilitators and service provider	0.556**
Competence of programme facilitators	0.860**
Good communication skill of programme facilitators	0.567**
Regular training of youth in different enterprises by government officials	0.602**

**Loaded variables above 0.3

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Table 4. Factor Names and percentage variation accounted for by each factor that Influences the Effectiveness of YCAD Programme

Component number	Factor label names	Eigen value	% variance	Cumulative%
1	Institutional support	4.834	26.672	26.672
2	Personnel	3.929	16.345	43.017
3	Socio-economics	1.806	10.626	53.643
4	Experience	1.971	9.243	62.886
5	Constraints	1.776	7.506	70.392
6-20	Other factors (not identified)	<1.000	29.208	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Factor 1: Institutional support

This factor was defined by four measures of loading which were also positively loaded. These were provision of market (L=0.555), financial empowerment by government (L=0.744), regular training of youth in different enterprises by government (L= 0.602) and supply of agricultural inputs by government (L=0.864). The factor was named based on criterion three. The findings imply that support from various institutions will enhance the effectiveness of YCAD programme.

Factor 2: Personnel

This factor was identified by four measures which were positively loaded. These were integrity of programme facilitators (L=0.801), credibility of service provider (L=0.512), commitment of programme facilitators and service providers (L= 0.860) and good communication skill of programme facilitators (L=0.567). The factor was named based on criterion three. This implies that the better the

programme personnel characteristics, the better equipped they are to give their best for the success of the programme; they are also the ultimate means through which all other resources needed for the programme are acquired and allocated to the beneficiaries. The findings corroborate the submission of Adeloje (2016) who found that personnel characteristics influenced programme effectiveness.

Factor 3: Socio-economics

This factor was defined by five measures of loading out of which three were positively loaded. These were membership of agricultural association (L=0.672), occupation (L=0.673) and income (L=0.891). This factor was named based on criterion one. It implies that income realized from the programme can determine youths' involvement in YCAD programme because the amount of income benefits realized could determine whether the youth would continue with the programme during implementation and after the programme has ended, thereby determining the sustainability and the effectiveness of the programme.

Factor 4: Experience

This factor was defined by four measures of loading that were all positively loaded. These were source of information (L=0.759), years of farming experience (L=0.857), external orientation (L=0.440) and years of formal education (L=0.783). This factor was named based on criteria one and two. The finding implies that involvement of youth in YCAD depends largely on level of experience of youth in different farming enterprises before introduction of YCAD programme which could influence its effectiveness.

Factor 5: Constraints

The factor was identified by three measures of loading out of which only constraints variables (L=0.903) was positively loaded. Criterion one was employed to name the factor. This implies that constraints such as political instability, conflict between service providers in terms of service rendered, delay in payment of service rendered by the government, high cost of production, political interferences, poor attitude of beneficiaries among others could have negative impact on the effectiveness of YCAD programme.

Table 5. Measures of loading of each of the five factors isolated and the percentage contribution on how each of them influences the effectiveness of YCAD programme

Contributing variables	L	L ²	Λ
1. Institutional support			
Provision of market	0.555	0.3080	
Financial empowerment by government	0.744	0.5535	
Regular training of youth in different enterprises by government	0.602	0.3624	
Supply of agricultural inputs by government	0.864	0.7464	1.9703

2. Personnel

Integrity of programme facilitators	0.801	0.6416	
Credibility of service providers	0.512	0.2621	
Commitment of programme facilitators and service providers	0.860	0.7396	
Good communication skill of programme facilitators	0.567	0.3214	1.9641

3. Socio-economics

Membership of agricultural association	0.672	0.4515	
Age	-0.342	0.1169	
Occupation	0.673	0.4529	
Household size	-0.431	0.1857	
Income	0.891	0.7938	2.0008

4. Experience

Source of information	0.759	0.5760	
Years of farming experience	0.857	0.7344	
External orientation	0.440	0.1936	
Years of formal education	0.783	0.6130	2.117

5. Constraints

Constraints variables	0.903	0.8154	
Household size	-0.381	0.1451	
Income	-0.331	0.1095	1.07

L= Loading for factors,

L²= Square of loading factors

λ = Latent root for the factor (summation of the square of loading)

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

CONCLUSIONS

In view of the findings from the study, YCAD programme was effective in employment generation, provision of incentives and creation of market for agricultural produce. However, it was less effective in agricultural production on a commercial scale. Also, the study showed that institutional support factor ranked the highest of all the factors isolated to influence the effectiveness of YCAD programme.

Therefore, it was suggested that effort should be made by stakeholders to establish YCAD beneficiaries fully into practical agriculture after the training programme while there should be provision of adequate facilities like land, inputs, machinery and so on for them to maximize the benefits of the acquired knowledge so as to enable them to carry out agricultural activities on a commercial scale. Effective policy measures for follow-up by the programme monitoring and evaluation teams; and the extension experts must be put in place to encourage the ex-trainees to continue in practicing what they have been trained for.

In conclusion, to enhance effective management of these enterprises, beneficiaries should properly operationalize the crucial factors isolated in the study in order to improve their livelihood standard.

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