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Impact Assessment of Adult Education Scheme on Agricultural Productivity in South-Western, Nigeria

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Abstract

Education is very necessary for man in order to articulate himself and achieve fullness. But the formal system, which is elitist, discriminatory and instalmental, cannot alone provide all education one needs for self-fulfillment. Adult education scheme suppose to equip farmers for better productivity. This research is designed to determine impact of the scheme on the participating farmers in relation to their agricultural productivity. On this note, the study assessed the impact of Adult Education scheme on Agricultural productivity in Southwestern Nigeria. A well structured questionnaire was used in collecting data from 60 respondents each of those that participate in adult education scheme and Non adult education respondents. Data collected was analyzed with the use of descriptive statistics as well as Chi-square and t-test to assess the impact of the scheme on respondents' productivity. The result of analyses reveals that farmers that participate in adult education programme have high productivity than Non-adult education participants. Recommendations were made to encourage adult education so as to reduce illiteracy as well as improving standard of living of the populace through increase productivity.

Keywords: adult education, vocational education, agricultural productivity, farmers and participation

INTRODUCTION

There is no gainsaying the fact that Agriculture serves as the mainstay of Nigeria economy (Odebode, 2004). Economy of Nigeria is historically based on Agriculture and about 70% of the work force is still engage in farming and farm related activities. Ogen (2007) affirms that a strong and an efficient Agricultural sector would enable the country to feed its growing population, generate employment, and earn foreign exchange as well as providing raw materials for industries. Egbugara (1990) reported that about 60% of the population is engaged in agriculture in one form or the other and this has consequently influenced the educational policy and practices of the country. There is a need to reduce importation of food commodities from other countries. Okeke 2004 reported that it is unfortunate that the food import bill has been on the increase and recently 800 million naira was approved by the Federal Government for the importation of rice. This can be reduced by increase production of rice through new or improved farming technologies.

CBN (2008) reported that value of non-oil exports stood at ₦38.2billion and 66.6 percent of this was accounted for by Agricultural produce.

However, the need for increased productivity in Agricultural sector of Nigerian economy can be achieved through effective agricultural education. O'Connor (1957:7) sees the educational system of any society as an elaborate social mechanism designed to bring about in the persons submitted to it certain skills and attitudes that are adjudged to be useful and desirable in the society. As a result of the necessity for education, there has been the view that one who ceases to learn ceases to exist although the one may be living. According to Freire (1974:3-4) to "exist" is more than to "live" because it means being in the world and at the same time with the world. Thus, one who exists has attributes of transcending, discerning, communicating and participating with others who exist whereas one who is merely living does not possess these critical attributes. Therefore, one whose development of knowledge ceases has also stopped to exist, he is merely living. One of the major problems facing Agricultural productivity in Nigeria is illiteracy. This connotes a popular saying that Illiteracy is a disease. This over the years has posed great challenges to Agricultural development as well as productivity. Agricultural practices in Nigeria are generally affected by level of literacy of those practicing it especially in rural areas of the nation. Extension and research works are more tedious with low level of literacy of farmers. Although farmers usually have rich knowledge of local conditions and valuable practical knowledge or experience of how best to successfully exploit their environment, they require innovation information generated from research and development to boost their productivity (Apata, 2010). Olawoye (1996) observed that Agricultural messages could enhance the productivity of farmers when they have access to it. This could be achieved through well equipped

Adult literacy scheme designed for farmers not only to access the information but having potency to interpret and utilize them for optimum productivity.

Adult education therefore encompasses all education and training activities undertaken by adults for professional or personal reasons. It includes general, vocational and enterprise based training within a lifelong perspective (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2003, p. 4). Adult education scheme has remained a viable tool for improving the productivity of agricultural sector in Nigeria. It is worthy of note that major step in the improvement of food production in Nigeria has been centered on increase in the number of the national and international agro-research institutes. This is designed in such a way that farmers should be informed with appropriate technologies that are economically viable and culturally acceptable. However, educated farmers who are better informed and have better sources of Agricultural information couple with capability to interpret and utilized new innovations should have produce better with the available resources at their disposal. *Adult education scheme suppose to equip farmers for better productivity. This research is designed to determine impact of the scheme on the participating farmers in relation to their agricultural productivity.* Hence, this study was designed to assess impact of Adult Education on Agricultural productivity of farmers in southwest Nigeria.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Study Area

The study was conducted in southwestern geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The zone has six (6) States which are Ekiti, Oyo, Osun, Ogun, Ondo and Lagos. The zone is characterized by tropical wet and dry climate. The mean annual rainfall varies between 1000mm and 1500mm. The major occupations of the people are farming, crafting, Dying, weaving and lumbering. The vegetation in the area favours the growth of trees and cash crops such as cocoa, coffee and arable crops such as yam, cassava, maize etc. The people of the area are mostly Yoruba and they share similar customs and beliefs.

Method of Data Collection

A multistage random sampling technique was employed in selection of 120 respondents. The first stage involved using simple random method to select two out of the total six States of the zone. These States are Osun and Ekiti; two Local Governments Areas (LGAs) were selected from each State followed by selection of 2 communities from each Local Government Area. The last stage involved selection of 15 adult education participants and 15 non-adult education participants from each community making a total of 120 respondents for the study. Field survey and farmers interview were carried out with the aid of well structured questionnaire. The questionnaire sought information on the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents such as gender, age, level of income, year of formal education, farming experience, secondary occupation, marital status, etc. Moreover, information was also collected on the total value of agricultural outputs since the farmers practiced mixed cropping. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as means, percentage and frequency counts and standard deviation. Chi-square and T- test were used to test for the hypotheses of the study.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Farmers are difficult to meet in their houses to collect information about the research from them. Enumerators have to visit the communities severally to be able to get enough sample size.
- Most rural farmers cannot read and write. This makes use of questionnaires difficult. Interview schedule was use to elicit information from the respondents.
- There is no proper record where farmers list can be used for simple random sampling procedure. So other sampling procedure was used for the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1 shows socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. The average age of the respondents is 49.5 years and the standard deviation is 9.2. This indicates that about 40% of the respondents who are involved in adult education are between the ages of 45 – 54 years of age. While about 45% of the respondents who are not involved in Adult education are between the ages of 45 – 54 years of age. Also, the Table shows that 65% of the respondents who took to adult education in the study area are males, while 75% of the respondents who don't take to adult education scheme are also male.

Households size distribution of the respondents as shown in table 1 reveals 73.3% of the respondents who embraced adult education scheme have a family size ranging from 1 - 4, while 40% of the respondents who did not take to adult education scheme have a family size ranging from 5 - 6. Also, the table indicates that about 56.7% of the respondents who participated in adult education acquired secondary and post secondary education, while 60% of the respondents who do not participate in adult education have no formal education.

Also, as religion is belief to have influence on response to education, table 1 reveals that 60% of respondents who participate in adult education

practice Christianity, while 45% of the respondents who do not participate in adult education also practice Christianity. This deduces that Christians are more into adult education. Moreover, Table 1 also reveals the involvement of the respondents in social organization which is believed to have influence on their participation in Adult education. From the Table, 73.3% of the respondents who are involved in adult education belong to a social organization, while 70% of the respondents who are not involved in adult education do not belong to a social organization. From the above result, it can be deduced that social organization serves as eye opener to the participation in adult education.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by their socio-economic characteristics

Variables	ADULT EDUCATION		NON- ADULT EDUCATION	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Age (yrs)				
25-34	9	15.0	13	21.6
35-44	23	38.3	16	26.7
45-54	24	40.0	27	45.0
55-64	4	6.70	4	6.70
Gender				
Male	39	65.0	45	75.0
Female	21	35	15	25.0
Marital status				
Single	18	30.0	15	25.0
Married	27	45.0	30	50.0
Widowed	10	16.7	6	10.0
Divorced	5	8.30	9	15.0
Household size				
1-4	44	73.3	22	36.7
5-6	14	23.3	24	40.0
>6	2	3.30	14	23.3
Educational level				
No Education	6	10.0	36	60.0
Primary Education	12	20.0	9	15.0
Secondary Education	18	30.0	-	-
Post secondary	16	26.7	-	-
Religion				
Islam	21	35.0	24	40.0
Christian	36	60.0	27	25.0
Traditional	3	5.00	9	15.0
Member of social organization				
Yes	44	73.3	18	30.0
No	16	26.7	42	70.0
Other income generating activities				
Trading	6	10.0	28	46.7
Artisan	27	45.0	29	48.3
Civil service	16	26.7	3	5.00
Others	11	18.3	-	-

Source: Field survey, 2011

Moreover, it is worthy of note that more farmers who are involved in adult education earn more incomes than those that did not participate. Table 2 shows that 36.7% of adult education participating farmers earn between ₦50, 000 – ₦99, 000, while 75% non-participating farmers earns between ₦50, 000 – ₦99, 000. About 23% of adult education participating farmers earn annual income ranging between ₦200, 000 and ₦ 350, 000 from their farming activities. It can be seen from this result that farmers participating in adult education have the tendency to earn more income. The Table also indicates that 35% of the respondents involved in adult education are into arable cropping; While, 50% of the respondents who are not involved in adult education are into arable cropping. This shows that arable cropping is more dominant in the study area.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Farming Activities and Annual Income

Variables	ADULT EDUCATION		NON- ADULT EDUCATION	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Farming activities				
Livestock	11	18.3	7	11.7
Fishing	6	10.0	3	5.00
Snailery	3	5.00	1	1.7
Floriculture	1	1.70	-	-
Bee keeping	2	3.30	-	-
Tree crop	9	15.0	17	28.3
Arable crop	21	35.0	30	50.0
Processing	7	11.7	2	3.30
Income distribution (´000) (₦)				
50-99	22	36.7	45	75.0
100-149	15	25.0	9	15.0
150-199	9	15.0	6	10.0
200-249	9	15.0	-	-
250-299	2	3.3	-	-
300-349	2	3.3	-	-
>350	1	1.7	-	-

Source: field survey, 2011

From table 3, years of experience of respondents in Adult education was revealed. The table shows that 40% of the respondents have been participating between 7-10 years, 33.4% of the respondents have been involved in adult education for about 4 - 6 years, while 23.3% of the respondents are involved for 1 - 3 years. This can be seen as the basis for efficiency. It also reveals that majority of the participants of adult education scheme do not have access to quality adult education officers chunking about 80% of the respondents.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Year of Experience and Constraints Faced in Adult Education

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Experience (years)		
1-3	14	23.3
4-6	20	33.4
7-10	24	40.0
>10	2	3.30
Constraint faced		
Lack of facilities	45	75.0
Quality of adult education officer	48	80.0
Good healthcare services	36	60.0
Un-Conducive environment	24	40.0
Others	21	35.0

Source: field survey, 2011

Chi-Squ**are** analysis shows that only level of formal education (X^2 = 22.833, P = 0.000) has significant relationship with participation in adult education scheme. This finding may be due to the fact that when an individual has a high formal education it is likely that such an individual will not need to participate in adult education scheme. This is because adult education scheme is a make up education scheme for formal education so the high the level of formal education the less the need for adult education for an individual. Adult education scheme suppose to provide opportunity for adults both men and women who do not have access to formal education to learn how to read and write.

Also t-test analysis shows that there is significant relationship between participation in adult education scheme and agricultural productivity (t = 2.673, P = 0.010). This finding is in line with findings of other researchers in that the higher the level of education of an individual the higher the productivity of such an individual. This is due to the fact that the high the level of education of an individual, the more opportunities that can lead to increase in productivity of such an individual is likely to have especially in the area of production information. Such individual will be able to read Newspapers and other prints as additional sources of agricultural information. Also, such individual will be able to understand English language in which most of manufacturers of agricultural chemicals and other innovations usually write their prescription. The significant of this study

is that adult education sheme can serve as make-up formal education. People that do not have access to formal education can make-up for it by going through adult education scheme if it is available to them. Government should make adult education scheme available in the rural communities so that adult people can have access to it.

CONCLUSION

The study assessed the impact of Adult education scheme on Agricultural productivity of farmers in southwest Nigeria. The study shows that Adult education scheme has a significant impact on agricultural productivity and standard of living. From the result gathered, one can deduce that the farmers who participate in adult education scheme earn more income/profit compared to those who do not participate. The result also shows that among the socio economic characteristics considered, only level formal education has significant relationship with participation in adult education. The farmers participating in adult education are faced with challenges such as lack of access to adult education officers, un-conducive environment, poor health services and uncomfortable classrooms which are not encouraging their involvement in adult education scheme.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made;

Government should provide basic social amenities such as primary health services, electricity, accessible roads network, competent adult education officers, conducive environments and high quality classrooms for learn.

Farmers should be encouraged to participate in adult education scheme through the provision of incentives such as subsidized agricultural inputs and good market for agricultural produce through the scheme.

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