

UNIVERSITY AGRICULTURAL STUDENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN AGRIBUSINESS IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA: PERCEPTIONAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the perception of university agricultural students involved in agribusiness. Specifically, it determined the characteristics of students involved in agribusiness; their perception of the agribusiness in which they are involved; and their frequency of involvement. A pretested and validated questionnaire and a focus group discussion guide were used to source quantitative and qualitative data respectively from 326 respondents selected through a two-staged sampling technique in Federal, State, and Private Universities in Osun State of Nigeria. Descriptive statistical techniques such as frequency counts and percentages were used to summarize the data, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis. The mean age and monthly income from agribusiness were 24.8 ± 4.35 years and $\text{₦}12,775 \pm 7,119$, respectively. Many (59.6%) of the respondents had an indifferent perception towards agribusiness. There was a significant relationship between the respondents' involvement in agribusiness and their perception ($r^2 = 0.899$) at a 0.01 level of significance. Also, at a 0.05 significance level, there was a significant relationship between university agricultural students' perception of agribusiness and socio-economic characteristics such as age ($r^2 = 0.115$), and household and monthly income from agribusiness ($r^2 = 0.336$). The study then concluded that there was a significant relationship between the perception of agricultural students and their involvement in agribusiness. It was recommended that respondents should be oriented and enlightened on the need to be involved in agribusiness as empowerment while in school.

Keywords: *Agribusiness; Involvement; Perception; Agricultural Students; Agriculture*

INTRODUCTION

According to Hassanzoy (2019), agribusiness consists of five subsystems, viz: the inputs subsystem in which all inputs like fertilizers, seeds, and machinery, among others, are manufactured, imported or distributed. The production subsystem in which inputs are directly used for the production of an agricultural commodity as an end-product in itself or as a raw material for the production of other products. In the processing subsystem, the commodities from the production subsystem are transformed into various products. The marketing subsystem is concerned with the transfer of goods from

source to end-user; and the last, which is the support subsystem consists of all the key players that provide services, which are very crucial to the success of an agribusiness venture.

Agribusiness is capable of making a positive impact on the economy of a nation and the quality of life of the people (Abdulaziz *et al.*, 2019). Abdulaziz *et al.*, (2019) established a positive relationship between agribusiness; and the stimulation of economic growth; employment generation; and empowerment of the disadvantaged segment of the population, most especially the women and

the poor. For many developing countries, agribusiness has been a powerful engine for economic growth and wealth creation, and it is crucial for improving the quality, number, and variety of employment opportunities for the poor (Ayoade, 2020). Because of the abundance of non-agricultural jobs, young people in Nigeria are disenchanted with agricultural pursuits. Despite good qualities that could aid agriculture, most young people are uninterested. There is a lack of long-term career options for young people as a result. The future of agriculture is in danger as fewer young people enter it. Rural locations lack attractive incentives, lucrative economic opportunities, and appealing environments for young people. Despite the abundance of possibilities, terrible laws are dissuading young people from entering the agricultural economy. Akinwekomi *et al.* (2017) state that the absence of agricultural programs, technology, agro-processing skills, and training and development workshops have all hindered young engagement in agribusiness. In Southwest Nigeria, youth are reported to forsake farming more than older generations. This trend is particularly visible among educated young people seeking work in cities. Also, fewer young people use improved input, forcing them to farm subsistence. Also, most youngsters do not own or control crucial assets in agricultural production, such as land.

Globally, scholars have studied factors affecting youth involvement in agriculture (Adeloye *et al.* (2020), Adeyanju (2020), Alabi *et al.* (2022)), however, few actual and effective approaches, institutions, and procedures exist. Youth involvement in agriculture is crucial, but experts may not regard it as a serious threat to long-term agricultural practices. With so little research on the involvement of university students' perception in agribusiness in Nigeria in the past ten years, it's tough to figure out what works. The study conducted in Delta State, Nigeria revealed that the students view

agribusiness as being for the less privileged in the society and is meant for the aged (Man *et al.*, 2017). The perception that agribusiness is a low-income earner contributes to the fact that most students have not engaged in agribusiness. Man *et al.* (2017) in their study on students in Ethiopia observed that young people are raised with career aspirations far beyond agribusiness putting the farm enterprise at risk. This leads to disinterest among students in agribusiness.

Mulema *et al.* (2021) argue that the issue should be taken seriously rather than only mainstreamed. To remedy the issue, it is important to first understand the variables that lead to inadequate university students' involvement in agriculture. As a result, this paper thus assessed the perception of university agricultural students of their involvement in agribusiness.

The specific objectives are to

1. describes the socio-economic characteristics of the university agricultural students involved in agribusiness;
2. examine the frequency of involvement in the agribusiness;
3. determine the perception of agricultural students' involvement in agribusiness;
4. determine respondents' level of involvement in agribusiness in the study area.

The hypothesis of the study

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between agricultural students' socio-economic characteristics and their involvement in agribusiness

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between selected respondents' perception and their involvement in agribusiness.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The study was conducted in Osun State of Nigeria. There are nine universities in Osun

State. The target population comprises agricultural students who are involved in agribusiness in universities in Osun State. A two-stage sampling procedure was used in the study; at the first stage, Obafemi Awolowo University, Osun State University, and BOWEN University, representing Federal, State, and Private Universities, respectively, were purposively selected based on the availability of the Faculty of Agriculture. In the second stage, proportionate random sampling technique was used to select 10% of agricultural students from agricultural faculty students' population of the selected universities, that is, 155 respondents from 1550 in Obafemi Awolowo University, 122 from 1217 in Osun State University, and 49 from 490 in BOWEN University; making a total of 326 respondents which comprises of both undergraduate and postgraduate students of Faculties/Colleges of Agriculture. Involvement was measured by allowing the respondents to react to basic agribusiness activities on a Likert scale of always involved (3 points), often involved (2 points), rarely involved (1 point), and not involved (0 points).

Perception was measured by allowing the respondents to react to 20 perceptual statements on a 5-point Likert scale of strongly agree (5 points), agree (4 points), undecided (3 points) disagree (2 points), and strongly disagree (1 point) for positive statements while negative statements were scored in reverse manner. The total obtainable maximum score was 100 and the minimum score of 20. Using mean and standard deviation, the level of perception was classified as favorable, indifferent, and unfavorable. A validated structured questionnaire and focus group discussion guide were used to elicit information from the respondents for quantitative and qualitative data respectively. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, while Pearson Product Moment Correlations and Chi-square were

used to make inferential deductions. Thematic content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data from the Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic Characteristics

Results in Table 1 revealed that the mean age of the respondents was 24.80 ± 4.35 years. This is not unexpected as young people of this age bracket are found as students of higher institutions in Nigeria. The results also revealed that the males (59.2%) were marginally more than females (40.8%). This might be because most of the agribusiness activities are often considered as being energy-sapping, naturally making them not ordinarily attractive to female students. This finding corroborates Bello *et al* (2021), and Adeyanju (2019) that males have more interest in agribusiness than their female counterparts. Also, 68.4, 25.2, and 6.4 percent of the respondents practiced Christianity, Islam, and traditional belief, respectively. The finding implies the dominance of Christianity in the studied area in Osun State, Nigeria.

The result also reveals that many (82.4%) of the respondents were single and 17.6 percent of the respondents were married. It could be inferred that the married ones were both undergraduate and postgraduate students with family responsibilities. Results also show that the mean monthly income of the respondents from agribusiness was ₦12,775 (at ₦415 to \$1) with a standard deviation of ₦7,119. This shows that the youth make far below the national minimum wage of ₦30,000 from agribusiness. This could adversely affect their involvement in agribusiness. In addition, above-average respondents were involved in agribusiness for personal interest (50.6%) and to better their lot (51.1%) however, few (13.2%) indicated that they were involved in agribusiness for leisure.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by some selected socio-economic characteristics (n = 326)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Mean± Std. Dev
Age(years)			
16-25	210	64.4	24.80±4.35
26-35	108	33.1	
36-45	8	2.5	
Sex			
Male	195	59.8	
Female	131	40.2	
Religion			
Christianity	226	69.3	
Islam	82	25.2	
Traditional	18	5.5	
Marital status			
Single	271	83.1	
Married	55	16.9	
*Reasons for involvement in agribusiness			
Better my lot in life	167	51.1	
Personal interest	165	50.5	
Keep family legacy	79	26.2	
For leisure	43	13.2	
Monthly income from agribusiness (Naira)			
<10,000	221	67.8	12,775±7,119
11,000-20,000	69	21.2	
21,000-40,000	26	8.0	
41,000-50,000	5	1.5	
51,000-60,000	4	1.2	
>60,000	1	0.3	

Source: Field Survey, 2020

***Multiple responses**

Perception of Students towards Agribusiness

Distribution of respondents' perceptual statements

The results in Table 2 show the mean scores for a set of perceptual statements that were assessed by the respondents. The grand

mean for the perceptual statements was 2.11 with a standard deviation of 0.71. The results revealed that 10 out of 20 perceptual statements were favorably disposed to by the student and were rated above the agribusiness involvement perception grand mean of 2.11, students positively respond to the following

statement, agribusiness is a poor man's option business ranked 1st (mean = 3.44) was yet decided by the respondents as a poor man business option, while they agreed to the perceptual statement that: there is no steady employment in agribusiness ranked 2nd (mean = 2.42), agribusiness should be practiced by those who are non-literates ranked 3rd (mean = 2.40), students who engage in agribusiness are seen as student who lack survival skill ranked 4th (mean = 2.39), agribusiness as a career reduce one status ranked 5th (mean = 2.38) agribusiness cannot reduce the standard of living of the students ranked 6th (mean = 2.28), agribusiness does not benefit students ranked 7th (mean = 2.25), involvement in agribusiness is laborious ranked 8th (mean = 2.20), agribusiness is less risky enterprise in Nigeria ranked 9th (mean = 2.14) and agribusiness has a lot of untapped opportunities ranked 10th (mean = 2.13) was disagreed by the respondents.

Also, the respondents agreed with the agribusiness perceptual statement; agribusiness is highly capital-intensive ranked 11th (mean = 2.10), while the respondents disagreed that agribusiness is not just profit orientated but enhances creativity ranking 12th (mean = 2.08). The respondents agreed that agribusiness does not benefit students ranked 13th (mean = 1.90), and respondents strongly disagreed that opportunities in agribusiness are unlimited ranking 14th (mean = 1.88), agribusiness is lucrative ranked 15th (mean = 1.86), many Nigerian has made a lot of fortune from agribusiness ranked 16th (mean = 1.85), agribusiness is a way to reduce poverty and hunger ranked 17th (mean = 1.83), agribusiness has a high potential for self-employment in Nigeria ranked 18th (mean = 1.67), agribusiness has a high prospect of success in Nigeria ranked 19th (mean = 1.65), and it is easy to create self-

employment in agribusiness ranked 20th (mean = 1.49). However, the students' positive perception of agribusiness has not been sufficient to influence their decision in agribusiness. This means that the students were yet to fully comprehend the importance of agribusiness and they have not yet committed themselves to it this backed by the Focus Group Discussion (FDG) session and presented as follows:

“.....Agribusiness is good, but a bit challenging to students because there is no Government and Non-Governmental Organisations support. Coping with the study also is another challenge, but it's worth venturing into after school or while in school because there is a lot of potential in agribusiness” (Report from participants in Bowen University).

“....Agribusiness in Nigeria is not encouraging, those of us that are into it didn't have Government support and the school curriculum also is part of the major problem, most of what we are being taught is theory, we didn't see agriculture as a business and a lot of opportunity embedded in it” (Report from participants in Obafemi Awolowo University)

“....Agribusiness is what we are going back into, there are proven opportunities in agribusiness and in the learning system, and it's a great opportunity for those of us in the field of Agriculture” (Report from participants in Osun State University)

From these statements, the respondents were involved in agribusiness. This finding is in agreement with Oloruntoba (2018) who found that students perceived agribusiness as contributing not only to their academic performance but to their competency level in agribusiness which is very important in agribusiness enterprise creation.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by the mean score and standard deviation of their perceptual statements (n = 287)

Perceptual statements	Mean	SD	Ranking
Agribusiness is a poor man's business	3.44	1.42	1 st
There is no steady employment in agribusiness	2.42	1.42	2 nd
Agribusiness should be practiced by those who are non-literates	2.40	1.35	3 rd
Students who engage in agribusiness are seen as students who lack survival skill	2.39	1.31	4 th
Agribusiness as a career reduces one status	2.38	1.30	5 th
Agribusiness cannot increase the standard of living of the students	2.28	1.27	6 th
Agribusiness does not benefit students	2.25	0.99	7 th
Involvement in agribusiness is laborious	2.20	0.92	8 th
Agribusiness is a less risky enterprise in Nigeria	2.14	1.00	9 th
Agribusiness has a lot of untapped potential	2.13	0.98	10 th
Agribusiness is highly capital intensive	2.10	1.08	11 th
Agribusiness is not just profit orientated but enhances creativity	2.08	1.08	12 th
Government policies does not favour agribusiness creation	1.90	1.03	13 th
Opportunities in agribusiness are unlimited	1.88	1.01	14 th
Agribusiness is lucrative	1.86	0.94	15 th
Many Nigerians has made a lot of fortune from agribusiness	1.85	0.94	16 th
Agribusiness is a way to reduce poverty and hunger	1.83	0.92	17 th
Agribusiness has a high potential for self-employment in Nigeria	1.67	0.77	18 th
Agribusiness has a high prospect of success in Nigeria	1.65	0.77	19 th
It is easy to create self-employment in agribusiness	1.49	0.74	20 th

Grand mean: 2.11

Standard deviation: 0.71

Source Field Survey, 2020

The overall level of respondents' perception of agribusiness

The result in Figure 1 shows the overall level of perception of agribusiness among university students in Osun State using mean and standard deviation. The result shows that the majority of the respondents had an indifferent perception of involvement in agribusiness. 21.6 percent of the respondents had a positive perception of involvement in agribusiness and 18.8 percent of the

respondents had a negative perception of involvement in agribusiness. This result shows that 59.6 percent of the respondents had an indifferent perception of involvement in agribusiness in the study area.

This is in line with the findings of Hudu *et al.* (2014) who reported that the majority of the respondents of agricultural students had an indifferent perception towards agribusiness.

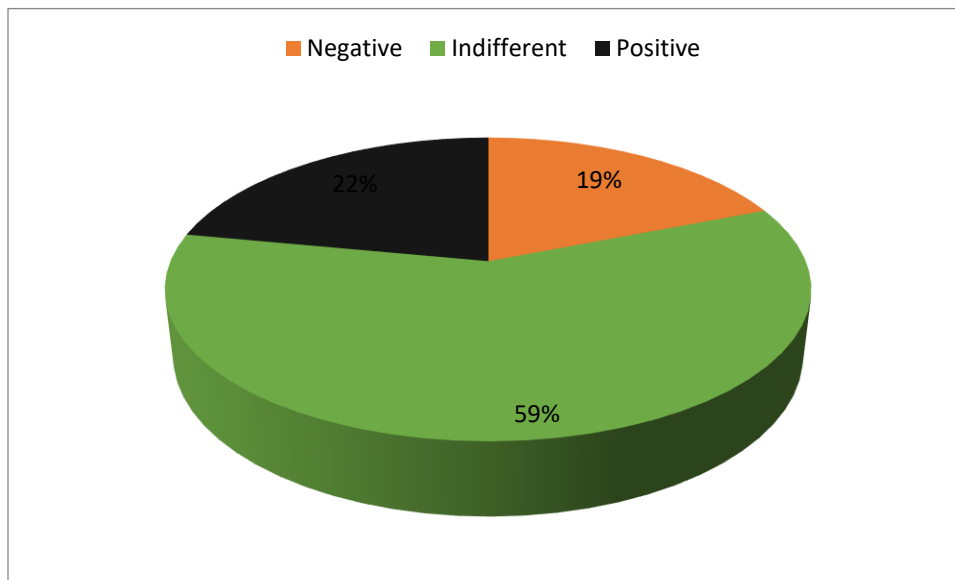


Fig 1: Overall level of respondents based on level of perception in agribusiness
Source: Field Survey, 2020

Respondents' Frequency of Involvement

Respondents' frequency of involvement was measured by the number of days involved in the agribusiness activities per week. Results in Table 3 reveal that 32.8 percent of the respondents engaged in agribusiness activities for 5 days in a week, 31.4 percent worked for 4 days in a week, 18.8 percent worked for 3 days in a week, 10.1 percent worked for 2 days in a week, 4.5 percent work for 6 days in a week, 1.4 percent work

for 7 days in a week and 1.0 for 1 day in a week. The mean of days per week was 4.03 ± 1.15 .

This implies that the majority of the students engaged in different agribusiness activities between 2 and 4 days per week. This result agrees with the findings of Afolabi *et al* (2017) which indicated that a large proportion of agricultural students operate between 2 and 4 days in a week.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents by the number of days they engaged in agribusiness activities per week n = 287

Number of days	Frequency	Percentage
1	3	1.0
2	29	10.1
3	54	18.8
4	90	31.4
5	94	32.8
6	13	4.5
7	4	1.4

Mean = 4.03, Standard deviation = 1.15

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between agricultural students' socio-economic characteristics and their involvement in agribusiness

Results in Table 4 show that at $p \leq 0.01$, there was a positive and significant relationship between the respondents' age ($r = 0.115$) and perception of their involvement in agribusiness in the study area. The implication of the positive correlation between age and perception of their involvement in agribusiness indicates that the more their age, the more favorable their perception of involvement in agribusiness and vice versa.

Furthermore, at $p \leq 0.05$, there was a positive and significant relationship between the monthly income from agribusiness ($r = 0.336$) and their perception of involvement in agribusiness in the study area. This implies that the higher the monthly income of the respondents, the more favorable their perception of involvement in agribusiness.

Also, at $p \leq 0.05$, there was a negative and significant relationship between the household size ($r = -0.646$) and their perception of involvement in agribusiness in

the study area. This is in agreement with Fidelis (2018) who found a significant relationship between household size and perception. This implies that the larger their household size, the less favorable their perception of involvement in agribusiness.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between agricultural students' perception and their involvement in agribusiness

The results in Table 5 show the correlation analysis between respondents' perception and their involvement in agribusiness. Perception ($r = 0.899$) was positively and significantly related to the respondent's involvement in agribusiness at $P \leq 0.01$ level of significance. This implies that the stronger the perception of agricultural students about agribusiness, the higher their involvement and vice versa. This was due to the fact that most of the respondents had colleague who encourage them in agribusiness. In other words, a favourable perception about agribusiness will enhance their involvement in agribusiness while an unfavourable perception will reduce their involvement in agribusiness.

Table 4. Correlation analysis showing the relationship between some selected socio-economic characteristics and the involvement of respondents in agribusiness (n = 287)

Variable	r-value	p-value	Decision
Age	0.115*	0.052	S
Household size	-0.646*	-0.020	S
Monthly income in agribusiness	0.336*	0.057	S

Source: Field Survey, 2020

***Significant at $P \leq 0.05$**

S = Significant

r = correlation co-efficient

p = probability value.

Table 5. The result of correlation analysis showing the relationship between the perception and involvement of respondents (n = 287)

Variable	r-value	P-value	Decision
Perception	0.899**	0.000	S

Source: Field Survey, 2020

****Significant at $P \leq 0.01$**

S = Significant

r = correlation co-efficient

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

University Agricultural students' involvement in agribusiness is crucial. Their involvement in Agribusiness and their perceptual analysis in Osun State Nigeria are the focus of this study. The study concluded that the majority of the respondents had an indifferent perception about involvement in agribusiness while few had a positive perception.

Based on the conclusion, it was recommended that respondents should be oriented and enlightened on the need to be involved in agribusiness as empowerment while in school. Government should endeavor to add more skill acquisition

courses synopsis to the school curriculum to enhance a favorable disposition about agribusiness among university agricultural students. Scholars can research other states in Nigeria.

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