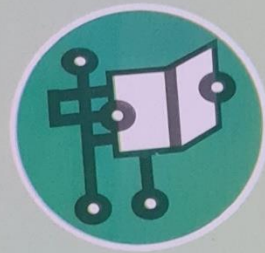


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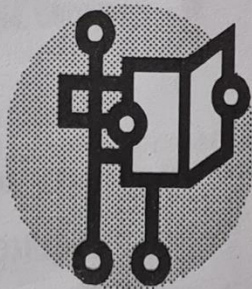
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BRIEF HISTORY OF THE JOURNAL

At the 7th Annual General Meeting of the International Research and Development Network of Children and Youth in Agriculture Programme (CY AP-Network: visit our website www.cyiapnetwork.org for more information) held at Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria on the 28th November, 2006, it was resolved that a journal named Annals of Child and Youth Studies (ACYS) of the Network be established. Dr. Dixon Olutade Torimiro, an Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria was unanimously appointed as the Editor-in-Chief and the Department was chosen as the Editorial Office of the Journal.

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FARMERS' CHILDREN INVOLVEMENT AND SAFETY GEARS USAGE IN FARM ACTIVITIES IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigates the involvement of the teenagers in agricultural activities in Kwara State, Nigeria. It further examines the interest of the children in farming activities, their level of involvement, perceived constraints that limits their involvement and the usage of safety gears in farm activities. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 2 communities each from 4 LGAs in the State while systematic random sampling was employed to select 25% of the total population of farmers' children from each of the 8 communities sampled. Hence, data were collected from 176 farmers' children in the study area. Data collected were subjected to statistical analysis such as frequency count, percentage and spearman ranking order. The mean age of the children was found to be 15 years, half of them had between 4-6 years farming experience and majority of them goes to farm between 1-2 days in a week. It was found that the children had high interest in farm activities and they confirmed that their involvement leads to an increase in farm products and livelihood sustainability. An emerging fact unveiled by this research includes the poor awareness of some farm safety gears which resulted in a very poor usage of the safety gears thus recommending the need of including farm health and safety in the curriculum for school children as it could serve as a means of arousing the interest of the children in some of the farm activities they involve in.

Keywords: Awareness, health and safety, livelihood, poverty.

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Introduction

It has been estimated that about 69.4% of Nigerian people reside in the rural areas while the primary occupation remains farming and farm related activities (Abumere, Okafor and Oluwasola, 2002). Nigeria has about 79 million hectares of arable land, of which 32 million hectares are cultivated. Smallholders, mostly subsistence producers account for 80% of all farm holdings. These subsistence farmers produce more than 90% of the food getting to the table of the populace (Nwajiuba, 2012). Despite this, Nigeria faces huge food security challenges as about 70 percent of the population live on less than N 100 (US\$ 0.28) per day, thereby suffering from hunger and poverty (Akinsanmi, 2005).

Currently, Nigeria has about 75 percent of its land suitable for agriculture but only 40 percent is being cultivated indicating that there is much more room for the country to focus on agriculture (Ayodele, Obafemi and Ebong 2013). This can address the food security and agriculture component of the country's plan along with the focus on employment for all. However, to move forward, the country must increase the low productivity of current agricultural companies, develop domestic policies and increase funding (Ayodele *et al.* 2007).

Adeniyi, Abdulrasheed and Bello (2009) reported that food security refers to a situation in which majority of the population have

access to domestically produced food at affordable prices at all times. Abdulrahman (2013) also pointed out that food insecurity is the inability of a country to provide and secure high quantity and quality of food to its people as a result of high demand, shortages in the supply of agricultural commodities and low purchasing power.

However, the contribution of children in Nigeria's agriculture cannot be overlooked. They work on family and commercial plantations. Children work on cassava farms and on cocoa and rubber plantations, in activities such as weeding, cocoa pod breaking, and mixing chemicals. Children are involved in fishing, including casting nets, unloading fish, boat repair, and trading activities (SARD, 2007). They contribute labour and skills in family subsistence or commercial agriculture (Jibowo 1992). The primary aim of practising polygamy in some cultures was to raise large number of children who could provide more labour in family farms to expand agricultural production (Ekong 2003). Children's significant contribution to household food production and income generation as members of farm families are also recognized in many developing countries (Lawal and Akintayo 2007). Jibowo (1992) maintains that children's participation in agricultural work is part of early

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socialization. Children as future adults learn valuable skills, build self-esteem and contribute to the generation of household income (Koochakan 2006).

Having highlighted the contribution of children in the agricultural sector, it is important to note that the International Labour Organization stated that the agricultural sector is one of the most hazardous to health worldwide (ILO, 2004) and ills arising from agricultural work has negative implications for agricultural productivity. Further to this, a study on farm accidents among children and adolescents carried out in the United States revealed that children who worked in agriculture suffered more than 23,000 injuries and 3,000 fatalities every year (Schulman *et al.*, 1997). There is therefore a need to ensure adequate training in farm accident prevention among children which is necessary in order to break the resultant economic cycle of disease explained by National Board of Occupational Safety and Health (NBOSH) (1982) that the ignorance of farm health and safety leads to disease and accidents on farm which results in low working capacity whose outcome is low yield and income. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) (2012), also estimated that everyday 243 agricultural workers in the United States suffer a serious lost

work time injury and in 2010, the injury rate for agricultural workers was 20% higher than the rate for all workers.

No country can truly be a sovereign nation if it is not capable of ensuring food security for its citizens. Histories have shown that no nation has actually become great without developing its agriculture and its concomitant institutions (Isife and Abert, 2009). Experts have also argued that significant food and nutrition problems exist in Nigeria (Azubike, 2012), while recent estimation put the number of hungry people in Nigeria at over 53 million and that 52 per cent of the populace lives below the poverty line (Azubike, 2012, Ahmed *et al.*, 2015, ILO, 2017). The most pressing challenge of Nigerian Agriculture in the new millennium is how to meet the food need of an ever increasing population in the face of myriads of social, cultural and economic problems. Farmers are aging and becoming less active in their involvement in agricultural production activities. Thus to improve their production, they need the participation and active involvement of their children among other supports (Fakoya *et al.*, 2011). Thus, this research sought to investigate the level of involvement of farmers' children as well as their awareness and effectiveness in farm health and safety gadgets. To

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to achieve these objectives, the study provided answers to the following research questions: What are the socio economic characteristics of the farmers' children? Are the children interested in farming? What is the level of their involvement in farm activities? What is the level of their awareness and usage of farm safety gears?

Methodology

The study was carried out in Kwara State, Nigeria. Kwara State was created on 27 May 1967. It comprises 16 administrative Local Government Areas (LGAs), divided into four agricultural zones by the Kwara State Agricultural Development Project (KWADP) in consonance with ecological characteristics, cultural practices and project administration. Edu, Baruten, Ifelodun and Asa Local Government Areas were purposively selected based on their prominence in agricultural activities (KWADP, 2015). A purposive sampling technique was also used to select 2 communities each from each LGA and a systematic random sampling was employed in selecting 30 farmers' children from each community giving rise to a total of 60 respondents from each community to make a total of 240 farmers' children in all of the 4 LGAs. The variables measured were socio-economic characteristics (age,

sex, religion, education, farming experience), interest of the children in farm activities, level of involvement in farm activities, awareness of farm safety gears and level of usage of safety gears. The interest of farmers' children in farm activities were initially measured using a four point likert type scale (high interest, moderate interest, low interest and no interest), the level of involvement in farm activities was measured on a four point likert type scale (largely involved, involved, barely involved and not involved), the awareness of farm safety and the level of usage were measured on a nominal scale of yes and no.

Results and discussions**Socio - economic characteristics of teenagers in the study area**

Finding as seen in Table 1 shows that the mean age of the teenagers was 16 years. This signifies that the children are old enough to co-participate in farm activities that their parents engage in. It was found that boys and girls were evenly distributed among the sample as both were 50% each indicating that both sex were actively involved in agricultural activities 75% of the sample were muslim and a number of them (44.2%) were in the junior secondary school. In addition, 58.8% of them goes to farm 1-2 days in a week meaning that their involvement in farm activities does

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not disturb neither their enrollment in school nor their regular attendance. This can be further explained to mean that they only go to farm during the weekends. Furthermore, 57.5% of them spends 4-6 hours on the farm when they go. Again, this can be interpreted to mean that the children engage in farm activities after school hours. It was further found that 50% of them have been involved in farm activities for 4-6 years. This therefore indicates that 50% of the children have been contributing to the productivity, food security, labour supply and the livelihood sustainability of their farm family. These results clearly show the level of engagement of farmers' children in farm activities as it would further be argued in this study that agricultural productivity cannot be sustained without the active involvement of teenagers.

Interest of children in identified farm activities.

As shown in Table 2, most of the children (88%) have high interest in processing of agricultural products, followed by marketing of agricultural produce (77.9%) and harvesting of the products (74.2%). Farm activities such as spraying and weeding (41.3% and 37.6% respectively) ranked last. This signifies that the children seem to prefer some farm activities over

others. For example, planting of crops, land preparation spraying and weeding do not seem to be liked by the children. With these research findings, a measure should be developed in order to arouse the interest of the children in the various farm activities to prevent some of the farm activities from starving as these activities are interwoven. Moreover, it goes beyond gainsaying that farmers' children need to get more involved in those activities so that the food security of the nation can be sustained.

Level of children's involvement in identified farm activities

The role of children in farm activities cannot be overlooked, as this research unveils that children play a vital role in agriculture as indicated in Table 3. Eight activities were identified, and activities such as processing of agricultural products (77.9%), livestock rearing and management (65.1%), harvesting of agricultural products (62.1%) and marketing of agricultural products (60.1%) rank highest as activities that the children are involved in. Thus justifying Ekong (2003) who asserted that in the rural areas where farming is the major occupation, adolescent children engage in some farm activities such as planting, tillage, harvesting and marketing of farm products. Farm activities such as

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planting of crops (52.5%), land preparation (47.5%), weeding (43.3%) and spraying (28.3%) ranked the last four activities that the children engage in. This indicates the interest of the children in those activities. It is evident that farmers' children still partake in those activities even though their participation is at a minimal level.

Awareness of farmers' children in the use of farm safety gears

Table 4 shows the awareness of the teenagers on farm safety gears. The result indicates that the children have a poor awareness of some farm safety gears in the study area. Safety gears such as foot wears, over all, hat and hand gloves ranked the top four safety gears the children are aware of as safety measures on the farm. This justifies the observation of OSHA (2012) that farm safety is yet to be accepted as a core concept that could contribute substantially to the successful running of any farm business and that where there is none or inadequacy in knowledge of farm safety gears, people will suffer, especially farm children. Safety gears such as rain coat, nose masks, ear muffs and eye goggles are the last four safety gears that the children are hardly aware of as they are hardly used in the farming sector in the country. This result agrees with the findings of Ajayi and Jibowo (2004) that majority of rural

children had moderate or low level of knowledge of hazards associated with farming and that they do not use safety gears in most cases. The awareness of farm safety gears will promote the sound of the children, make farm activities easier and aid a better productivity.

It was showed that the four topmost safety gears the children are aware of remains the same in the usage level, foot wears (67.9%), hat (40.0%), over all (27.1%) and hand gloves (23.3%). The results implies that farmers' children make use of the safety tools that they are aware of. This is in line with the finding by OSHA (2012) that 'if a man knows what is good, he will do it and 'how can he know what is good if he is not informed'. According to ILO (2004) workers in developing countries are especially at risk due to inadequate education, training and safety systems.

Conclusion

Recommendations

This study recognizes the crucial role children play in agriculture as it found that the children are actively involved and have a high interest in farm activities. An emerging fact by this research is the poor awareness of some farm safety gears which resulted in a very poor usage of the safety tools and incorrect usage of some that are currently being

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utilized. While children involvement in agricultural activities exists and cannot be prevented, there is a need to acquaint the children with farm safety gears to ensure their safety while on farm. The children can become acquainted with these gears when they see their farmer parent use it. These parents (farmers) need to be aware of safety gears used on farm and this can be achieved through the training by extension workers on farm safety. This will help the farmers understand the effect or influence of farm health and safety on their productivity as preventive measures against lost time due to injuries and restrictions leads to increased productivity. Educational services for rural areas and developing countries should take note of the fact that the small subsistence farmers have different learning requirement from those of the progressive commercial farmers. Since most of the farmers' children have access to formal education, there is a need to integrate farm health and safety into the agricultural curriculum if it is not there already as this could further serve as a means of arousing the interest of the children in some of the farm activities they showed a very low interest in. If the health and safety procedure is already in the curriculum, then teachers and facilitators should ensure a proper application into the curriculum, both

in theories and practicals. There is also a need for the Agricultural Development Project (ADP) to equip their workers being the closest to these farmers with the right information on farm safety to enhance the effective delivery of the information to the end users.

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FARMERS' CHILDREN INVOLVEMENT AND SAFETY GEARS USAGE IN FARM

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Zone s	LGAS	Communitie s	Populatio n	Percentag e	Sampl e size
A	Baruten	Kosubosu	240	25%	60
B	Edu	Yashikira	146	25%	36
C	Asa	Tsaraji	160	25%	40
D	Ifelodu	Lafiagi	160	25%	40
	n	Idofian	160	25%	40
Total	4	Ajase-ipo	706	100	176
		8			

Table 1: Socio- economic characteristics of teenagers in the study

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Age (years)			
8-13	26	14.8	15
14-17	150	85.2	
Sex			
Male	88	50.0	
Female	88	50.0	
Religion			
Christianity	33	18.7	
Islam	143	81.3	
Education			
Non-formal	12	6.8	
Primary	16	9.1	
Junior secondary	73	41.5	
Senior secondary	75	42.6	
No of days spent on farm per week			
1-2	97	55.1	
3-4	50	28.4	1.61
5-6	29	16.5	
No of hours spent on farm per day			
1-3	49	27.8	
4-6	101	57.4	1.87
7-9	26	14.8	
Farm experience (years)			
1-3	20	11.4	
4-6	97	55.1	5.3
7-9	53	30.1	
10-12	6	3.4	

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 2: Interest of children in identified farm activities.

Identified farm activities	High interest Freq. (%)	Moderate interest Freq. (%)	Low interest Freq. (%)	No interest Freq. (%)	Mean	Ranking
Processing of agricultural produce	92 (52.3)	67 (38.1)	12 (6.8)	5 (2.8)	3.40	1 st
Livestock rearing and management	59 (33.5)	79 (44.9)	32 (18.2)	6 (3.4)	3.09	2 nd
Harvesting of agricultural produce	63 (35.8)	71 (40.4)	32 (18.2)	10 (5.7)	3.06	3 rd
Planting of crops	50 (28.4)	68 (38.6)	45 (25.6)	13 (7.4)	2.87	4 th
Land preparation	41 (23.3)	38 (21.6)	52 (29.5)	45 (25.6)	2.43	5 th
Spraying	32 (18.2)	45 (25.6)	59 (33.5)	40 (22.7)	2.39	6 th
Weeding	26 (14.8)	44 (25.0)	68 (38.6)	38 (21.6)	2.33	7 th

Source: Field Survey, 2016 *Multiple response data

Table 3: Level of involvement of farmers' children in some identified farm activities.

Farm activities	Largely involved Freq. (%)	Involved Freq. (%)	Barely involved Freq. (%)	Not involved Freq. (%)	Mean	Ranking
Processing of agricultural produce	81 (46.0)	67 (38.1)	20 (11.4)	7 (4.0)	3.27	1 st
Livestock rearing and management	56 (31.8)	63 (39.2)	47 (26.7)	10 (5.7)	2.94	2 nd
Harvesting of agricultural produce	48 (27.3)	69 (39.2)	46 (26.1)	13 (7.4)	2.86	3 rd
Planting of crops	44 (25.0)	54 (30.7)	59 (33.5)	19 (10.8)	2.70	4 th
Land preparation	35 (19.9)	56 (31.8)	51 (29.0)	34 (19.3)	2.52	5 th
Weeding	36 (20.5)	47 (26.7)	58 (33.0)	35 (19.9)	2.48	6 th
Spraying	23 (13.1)	30 (17.0)	65 (36.9)	58 (33.0)	2.10	7 th

Source: Field Survey, 2016. *Multiple response data

Table 4: Awareness of farm safety gears among farmers' children

Farm safety gears	Awareness		Usage	
	Yes Freq. (%)	No Freq. (%)	Yes	No
Foot wears	158 (89.8)	18 (10.2)	123 (69.9)	53 (30.1)
Hand gloves	120 (68.2)	56 (31.8)	41 (23.3)	135 (76.6)
Nose masks	30 (17.0)	146 (83.0)	6 (3.4)	170 (96.6)
Eye goggles	8 (4.5)	168 (95.5)	1 (0.6)	175 (99.4)
Ear muffs	15 (8.5)	161 (91.5)	5 (2.8)	171 (97.2)
Overall/top dress	129 (73.3)	47 (26.7)	42 (23.9)	134 (76.1)
Hat	116 (65.9)	60 (34.1)	75 (42.6)	101 (57.4)
Rain coat	87 (49.4)	89 (50.6)	42 (23.9)	134 (76.1)

Source: Field Survey, 2016

*Multiple response data