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ENVIRONMENTAL INCENTIVES AND MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS FOR INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN IN AGRICULTURE

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ABSTRACT

The paper examined the importance of two primary institutions (home and school) in arousing children interest in agricultural practice for food security and poverty alleviation in Abeokuta North Local Government Area of Ogun State. The instrument used for data collection was structured interview scheduled for eighty (80) pupils selected through multistage sampling technique from four major settlements in the study area. Chi-square and analysis of variance were used in analyzing the data. The result indicated that 37.50% of the children are within ages 5 and 6 years, 25% between ages 7 and 8 years. 62% attended private primary school and belong to polygamous families. Among incentives for agricultural practices mentioned by majority of the children (62.5%) were viewing farm far away from home while 31.8% have open land beside their house free for cultivation. Interest shown by majority of the (male and female) were planting seeds and harvesting while all the girls liked taking care of plants. 70% of the boys liked taking care of animals, the same percentage 50% liked to cut grass. The chi-square values 3.52, 5.544, 3.52 and 2.840 revealed significant relationship between the children's interest and motivating factors such as: fear of hunger, leisure friendliness, presence of incentive, and display of achievement, respectively. The result of test of analysis of variance {F cal = 0.75, F tab = 2.87, P<0.05} showed no significant difference between interest shown in agriculture and sex of children.

Key words: Incentives, motivation, agriculture, children.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of food sufficiency and food security is becoming a national matter just as global food adequacy has become a topical issue. More than 800 million people throughout the developing world and some other millions in more affluent societies do not have enough food to meet their basic needs (Ladele and Ayoola, 1996). Millions of people experience prolonged hunger resulting in malnutrition, growth retardation, susceptibility to diseases and sometimes outright death due to starvation. NARP, (1997) reported that nearly half of sub-Saharan Africa's total population lives in household that are suffering from food deprivation, not because they lacked capacity to produce enough food for its rapidly growing population but rather that the wrong focus has often been applied by planners in food security strategies.

Evidence of enormous importation of foodstuffs like rice and other commonly eaten foods in Nigeria portends danger and is an evident of lower interest in local food production. The non-challance to agriculture as an occupation and means of survival may pose danger as the country will soon become foreign foodstuff market, making nonsense the enormous land space and good climate available for food crops cultivation in the country.

Previous researchers had established positive and significant relationship between rural background and participation in agriculture. Jibowo (1998) emphasized that students who grew in rural areas are more likely to show interest and participate in agricultural than those who grew up in urban centers. Now with mass emigration to urban centers by rural youths, what kind of future now holds for indigenous agriculture?

Rural children have been reported to be future role players in agricultural economy of any nation (Adedoyin, 2000). Travers (1970) described motivation as an inner restlessness that urges organisms into activity which are often variously called drivers, needs, desires, etc, which stimulates interest. Motivation assumes correct relevance when motives of behaviour are understood. Kundu and Tutoo (2002) identified six motives which underlie children's behaviour as curiosity or exploratory, acquisitive constructive self display, self-abasement and combat. Activity of behaviour in life cannot be ensured with satisfaction in the absence of an adequate environment.

Problem Statement

A close look at the way young people tried to establish their livelihoods showed how they grow with their enterprise overtime to make a stable livelihood. Also, the manner in which assets and opportunities are passed from generation to generation is of critical importance when livelihoods around farming are examined. Young people do not have same access and control over recourses such as farm land as adults except as dependents in its long-term as an enterprise undertaken by their parents. Given this scenario, continuity of practice becomes imperative while interest of the vulnerable group becomes substantially important. This paper, therefore, seeks to find out how the teaming youths are being influenced to see agriculture through correct perspective of food security and life sustenance.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of the paper is to examine how interest of children are groomed toward agriculture.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

(i) Examine the available incentives in the primary social institutions for agricultural practice.
(ii) Assess interest of children to some farm operations.
(iii) Identify the children's interest motivator.
(iv) Describe the demographic characteristics of the children explaining their behaviour.

Hypotheses

Two hypotheses stated in null form were used to test statistical relationship among variables in the study:

H○: there is no significant relationship between children interest in agriculture; and motives of behaviour like fear of hunger, curiosity/expectation, self display, presence of incentive, etc.

H○: there is no significant difference between sex of children and interest in agricultural activities.

METHODOLOGY

Study Area

The area of study was Abeokuta North Local Government which was carved out of former Abeokuta Local Government in 1991. The Local Government consists of the following settlements, namely Iberekodo, Saje, Elega, Arakanga, Adedotun, Ita-aka, Oke-ata, Olomoore, Onikolobo, Onikoko, Adigbe, and Ita-Oshin

Sources of Data

A validated interview schedule was used to collect data which was designed to elicit information on:

1. Individual characteristics of the children
2. Direction of interest toward cultural farm practices.
3. Factor that drove their interest.

Sample size and Sampling technique

Four (4) settlements were purposively selected namely Onikolobo, Onikoko, Adigbe, and Ita-Oshin because of their congruity. Twenty households were picked systematically from each settlement. One pupil whose age fall within 5 and 11 years was chosen from each of the selected households giving a total of 80 respondents.

Measurement of Variables

Personal characteristics like age, school and sex were asked directly and recorded likewise. Interest was measured as interested, and not interested against few stated farm activities. Incentives in the environment was measured by demanding from pupils facilities available either in their homes or schools attended which could aid knowledge and practice of agriculture.

Motivating factors were measured by testing the relationship that existed between identified motivators of behavior and interest of the respondent. Descriptive statistics, chi-square and analysis of variance were employed to analyse data collected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Incentives for farming at home and school

Facilities/ Activities	Available		Not Available	
	N	%	N	%
Open land beside house free for gardening	25	31.25	55	68.75
House has backyard garden	10	12.50	70	87.50
Family has farm far away from home	40	50.00	30	37.50
Tend flowers around house	15	18.95	65	81.25
School has garden	10	12.50	70	87.50
There are gardens beside school compound	10	12.50	70	87.50
Planting done in tins	15	18.75	70	87.50
See farm on television & video	50	62.50	30	37.50
Have excursions to farms	15	18.75	65	81.25

Source: Field Survey, 2007 *Multiple responses

Table 1 showed that majority lacked essential incentive at both home and school for practice of agriculture. Ninety percent of the children lived in homes without backyard garden and 12.5% attend schools that have garden. Accessibility to nearby land for agriculture is enjoyed by only 18.5% while majority 65.5% have only planted in tins. Importance of designated land for practices of agriculture whether at home or school is enormous. In gardens, children learn about different plants, seeds, seedlings and crops. They learn science by observing germination, watering plants and study soil structures. Home gardens offer the child personal experiences and nature from their own observations, instruction of parents and relatives and from information heard on radio and television.

Table 2 showed majority (96.6% females and 70.0% males) of the children liked sowing seeds; 83.3% of females liked to weed farms; while 70.0% of males liked to take care of animals, and 80.0% liked spraying on plants and harvesting. Very few females did not like processing foodstuff (6.7%); taking care of plants (3.0%) and planting seeds (3.0%).

Interests may be defined as an individual's behavior tendency to be attracted towards a certain class of activities. Attitude and interest are jointly interactive when a child has interest in a he stimulates positive disposition towards the activity.

Table 3 showed 62.5%of the children were males and 37.5% females, majority attended private primary 62.5% and belonged to polygamous family setting. About forty percent are aged 5-6 years. Half of the subjects' parents (50%) are traders. The table showed majority of the children fall within the concrete operation stage of Piaget's classification, 7-11 years. He described the stage as when the child develops logical thought by concrete operations. And that the child is able to think before he acts, he is also consider the consequences of his actions and mind.

This age is ideal in introducing interesting different dimensions to agricultural practices and allow the child have first hand encounter with nature. Successes recorded will condition him to associate agriculture with life and survival.

As shown in the table, the motivators of child's interest were: presence of incentive, display of self ability and achievement, leisure friendliness and fear of hunger, etc such variables which reflected statistical positive and significant relationship. While acquisitiveness and combat did not reflect significant values for example 0.651, 0.817, and 0.714, respectively.

The outcome of test of the hypothesis F cal -0.75; F tab- 2.866; $p < 0.05$ showed insignificant difference in interest shown by different sexes of the children. This proved that sex poised no barrier in motivating children for participating in agricultural practices for food security and also for livelihood either as a primary occupation or secondary.

Table 2: Interest of the Children to farm activities

Farming Activities	Interested				Not Interested			
	Male n=50		Female n=30		Male n=50		Female n=30	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Likes to plant seeds	35	70.0	29	96.6	15	30.0	1	3.0
Likes to weed farm	28	56.0	25	83.3	22	44.0	5	16.0
Likes to take care of plants	30	60.0	30	100.0	20	40.0	1	3.0
Likes to take care of animals	35	70.0	10	33.0	15	30.0	20	66.6
Likes processing foodstuffs	25	50.0	20	66.0	25	50.0	2	6.7
Likes packaging food for storage	30	60.0	45	50.0	20	40.0	15	50.0
Likes to cut grass	25	50.0	15	50.0	25	50.0	15	50.0
Likes to spray plants	40	80.0	1	33.0	10	20.0	20	66.6
Likes harvesting	40	80.0	25	83.3	10	20.0	5	16.0

Source: Field Survey, 2007
* Multiple responses

Table 3: Personal and Family characteristics of the Children

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentages
Age (Years)		
5 – 6	30	37.50
7 – 8	20	25.00
9 – 10	15	18.75
11	5	18.75
Total	80	100.00
School attended		
Public primary	30	37.5
Private primary	50	62.5
Total	80	100.0
Sex		
Male	50	62.5
Female	30	37.5
Total	80	100.0
Family Type		
Nuclear	20	25.0
Extended	30	37.5
Monogamous	20	25.0
Polygamous	10	12.5
Total	80	100.0
Parents Occupation		
Civil service	16	20.0
Teaching/Lecturing	14	17.5
Trading/Business	40	50.0
Agriculture/Farmer	10	12.5
Total	80	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2007
*Multiple responses

Table 4: Chi-square value of motivators of child's interest to agriculture

Variables	df	χ^2 cal	χ^2 tab	Decision
Fear of hunger	2	3.52	0.172	S
leisure friendliness	2	5.54	0.136	S
Curiosity/ exploratory	2	1.12	0.772	S
Self display/ achievement	2	2.84	0.840	S
Presence of incentive	2	3.52	0.172	S
Acquisitiveness	1	0.205	0.651	NS
Self abasement	1	0.051	0.817	NS
Combat	1	0.134	0.714	NS

Source: Field Survey, 2007
* Multiple responses

Table 5: Result of analysis of variance testing differences in interest by sex gender

Variance	Ss	df	ms	F	f-value	F-critical
Between grp	0.24	4	0.06	0.75	0.5698	2.86608
Within grp	1.6	20	0.08			
Total	1.34	24				

Source: Field Survey, 2007
* Multiple responses

Observed F Value = 0.75
Tabulated Value = 2.87; hence, F cal < F tab, therefore H_0 is accepted.

CONCLUSION

Incentives in the immediate environment of the children will facilitate children involvement in agriculture. Secondly, activities will arouse children interest if the design is appropriate for their age and stage of development. Children will identify with finding solutions to agricultural problem like food insecurity if they are involved in agricultural practices as this is one of our specific objectives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Initiatives that aim to increase capacity of children should be carefully prepared and well-planned with gradual introduction as key factors to achieving success.

2. To deal with problem of dwindling interests of youths in agriculture, efforts should be to revitalize, create structures that stimulates self-reliance and innova-

tion right from primary school.

3. There is the need to emphasize relationship between syllabus culture and the development processes in agriculture.
4. To address food security in our local communities, the up coming generation must be encouraged right from childhood in the practice of agriculture.

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