

Agricultural Science Teachers' Perception of Factors Associated with the Dwindling Nature of Young Farmers' Clubs Programme in Ondo State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

The study ascertained the factors associated with the dwindling nature of Young Farmers' Clubs Programme in Ondo State of Nigeria. Data for the study were collected from 60 agricultural science teachers through the use of structured questionnaire schedule. Mean scores were used in analyzing the data. The findings revealed that the total levels of contribution of the Government and the School Authorities to the observed dwindling nature of YFCs programme in Ondo State were high ($\bar{X} = 2.00$ and 2.00 , respectively). While the total levels of contribution of both the Agricultural Science Teachers ($\bar{X} = 1.27$) and the Students ($\bar{X} = 1.47$) to the observed dwindling nature of YFCs programme in the state were low. The implications of the findings for the development of an effective YFCs programme in the State in the nearest future were drawn.

Introduction

Young Farmers' Clubs form an important aspect of the Rural Youth Agricultural Extension Programme (RYAEP) for boys and girls in the Secondary Schools and villages. RYAEP is a programme developed purposely to mobilize youth in order to do one particular useful work with a view to developing specific skill or career in them. A Young Farmers' Club (YFC) is an organization in which young people, approximately, 9 - 20 years of age are encouraged to learn about better farming and home-making. The members are supposed to be under the guidance of the agriculture teacher, agricultural extension personnel and a voluntary

local leader. The members of the club are allowed to elect their officers, plan their projects and execute these projects, and hold meetings regularly (at least, once in a month). They also carry out worthwhile projects or activities in farming, home-making, community development and other related areas (Mauder, 1972).

Our youth should be sent back to the 'Land', thereby rejuvenating the deserved prestige to the profession of agriculture in Nigeria (Bankole, 1986). During 1984/85 Academic session, the Military Governor of Rivers State,

made a categorical policy statement with respect to the formation and organization of Young Farmers' Clubs in all secondary schools in the State. For effective implementation of this policy statement, a set of agricultural extension personnel were sent to all secondary schools to inspect and evaluate the projects of the clubs. The prime motive of the Rivers State Government was to interest the young school boys and girls in vocational agriculture, so that, they could participate actively, in the "School - to- Land Programme" that was newly introduced in the state then. The agriculture teacher(s) in each of the secondary schools in the state was encouraged to introduce, organize and carry out YFC projects that were mainly agricultural (Ajayi, 1987).

A subjective survey of many secondary schools in Ondo State during 1994/95 academic session revealed that less attention was given to YFCs programme unlike in the early 1970s and/or what was obtainable in Rivers State of Nigeria. According to Ekong and Williams (1974), the official records of the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) in Ondo Circle (now, Ondo State) in 1969, put the number of village YFCs at 9 and the school YFCs at 16. The two types of club had a total membership of 790, out of the 116 school YFCs in the old Western State of Nigeria, Ondo Circle had 16. This fact indicates that YFCs programme was accorded a good gesture in Ondo State in the early 1970s, unlike nowadays, where it is impossible to get a Local

Government Area with about 7-14 secondary schools with YFCs. YFCs are virtually non-existent in the villages (Ajayi, 1987.).

In most countries where rural youth work has been established, it is sponsored by the government (Manzoor and Philip, 1975). According to Lloyd (1965), the school authorities and good agriculture teachers should assist members of YFCs in developing programme of activities.

The question therefore, relates to the reasons for the dwindling nature of YFCs programme in Ondo State of Nigeria. What are the reasons for the observed dwindling nature of YFCs programme in Ondo State of Nigeria?: Could this dwindling nature of YFCs programme in the State be attributed to such factors as lack of co-operation on the part of the governments, school authorities, agriculture teachers and/or the students?. In order to provide solutions to the major questions posed above, this study was designed to ascertain the factors associated with the dwindling nature of YFCs programme in Ondo State Secondary Schools. Specifically, the study was designed to :

1. ascertain the government-related factors associated with the dwindling nature of YFCs programme in Ondo State;
2. ascertain the school authorities-related factors associated with the dwindling nature of YFCs programme in the state;

3. ascertain the agriculture teachers-related factors associated with the dwindling nature of YFCs programme in the state and
4. ascertain the students-related factors associated with the dwindling nature of YFCs programme in the state.

Methodology

The six major Zonal Areas (Akoko, Akure, Ekiti, Okitipupa, Ondó and Owo) of Ondo State of Nigeria were purposively covered by the study. There were 451 secondary schools in Ondo State (Ondo State Annual Digest, 1992). Ten secondary schools were randomly selected from each of the six Zonal areas; indicating that a total of 60 secondary schools were involved in the study. In each of the 60 secondary schools, one agriculture teacher was either purposively or randomly selected depending upon the number of agriculture teacher per school. In all, a total of 60 agriculture teachers were included in the study. Structured questionnaire schedule was used to elicit information from the agriculture teachers.

To measure the government, school authorities, agriculture teachers and students-related factors associated with the dwindling nature of YFCs programme in the state, each of the agriculture teachers was asked to indicate his/her degree of perception of each of the listed factors as a contributor to the dwindling nature of YFCs in Ondo State. The response categories and their weighted scores were as

follows: high contribution = 2; low contribution = 1; no contribution at all = 0. The contribution mean(0) score for each of the factors was computed. The total level of contribution (TLC) was computed by dividing the Grand Mean Contribution Score by the number of factors being considered.

Results and Discussion

Government-Related Factors:

Data in Table 1 show that lack of initiation on the part of the government/negative attitudes of the government towards YFCs in secondary schools made a high contribution (0 = 2.00) to the observed dwindling nature of YFCs programme in Ondo State. Lack of logistic support from the government with a mean (0) score of 2.00, also made a high contribution to the dwindling nature of YFCs programme in the state. The contribution of the non-availability of the rural youth agricultural extension personnel to the dwindling nature of YFCs programme in Ondo State was high (0 = 2.00). On the other hand, the non-incorporation of YFCs programme into the school curriculum/lack of legislative law backing-up YFCs programme in secondary schools was of low contribution (0=1.32) to the current dwindling nature of YFCs programme in the state. It is also evident from Table 1, that inadequate number of agricultural science teachers in most of the secondary schools made a high contribution (0 = 2.00) to the dwindling nature of YFCs programme in the state.

The grand mean score for government's contribution to the dwindling YFCs programme in the state was computed to be 8.46, while the total level of contribution (TLC) was 1.69 (2.00). The implication of these findings is that the overall contribution of the government to the dwindling nature of YFCs programme in Ondo State was high.

School Authorities-Related Factors:

According to Table 2, lack of interest (0 = 2.00) and lack of financial support (0 = 2.00) on the part of the school principals made high contributions to the observed dwindling nature of YFCs programme in Ondo State. Lack of farm land (0 = 1.00) was of low contribution to the observed dwindling nature of YFCs programme in Ondo State. Lack of farm land (0 = 1.00) was of low contribution to the dwindling nature of YFCs programme in the state. The contribution of lack of farm input supply to the current dwindling nature of YFCs programme in the state was also low (0 = 1.36), while lack of motivation of the students to participate actively in YFCs programme in the State made a high contribution (0 = 2.00).

The grand mean score for the contribution of the school authorities to the dwindling nature of YFCs programme in Ondo State was calculated to be 8.36, while their total level of contribution (TLC) was 1.67 (2.00). This implies that the overall contribution of school authorities to the dwindling nature of

YFCs programme in Ondo State was high.

Agricultural Science Teachers-Related Factors:

Table 3 indicates that lack of time on the part of the agricultural science teachers made a high contribution (0 = 2.00) to the dwindling nature of YFCs programme in Ondo State. According to the respondents, apart from the inadequacy of agricultural science teachers in schools, majority of the available ones were fully involved in teaching various science subjects apart from agriculture. Besides, majority were appointed labour masters, games masters, heads of departments of science and house masters. Lack of interest was of low contribution (0 = 1.39) to the dwindling nature of YFCs programme in the state. The contribution of having no previous knowledge of YFCs by the agricultural science teachers to the dwindling nature of YFCs programme in Ondo State was high (0 = 2.00), while lack of farming experience by the agricultural science teachers contributed virtually nothing (0 = 0.43) to the observed dwindling YFCs programme in the state. Having no sympathy with rural life and having no attitude of friendliness toward rural farmers was of low contribution (0 = 0.54) to the prevailing dwindling YFCs programme in the state.

The grand mean score for the contribution of the agricultural science teachers to the dwindling nature of YFCs programme in Ondo

State was computed to be 6.36, while their total level of contribution (TLC) was 1.27. These findings imply that the agricultural science teachers made a low contribution to the dwindling nature of YFCs programme in the state.

Students-Related Factors:

Data in Table 4 indicate that lack of interest on the part of the students made a high contribution ($0 = 2.00$) to the experienced dwindling nature of YFCs programme in Ondo State, while parents' inability to allow their children to part-take in YFCs programme made a low contribution ($0 = 0.57$). Lack of time, especially, due to the fact that majority of the students were day students made a high contribution ($0 = 2.00$) to the dwindling nature of YFCs programme in the state. Both the development of negative attitude toward farming as a career ($0 = 1.43$) and lack of co-operation on the part of the students ($0 = 1.36$) made low contributions to the dwindling nature of YFCs in the state.

The grand mean score for the contribution of students to the dwindling YFCs programme in Ondo State was calculated to be 6.36, while their total level of contribution (TLC) was 1.47; implying that the overall contribution of the students to the dwindling nature of YFCs programme in Ondo State was low.

Conclusion

The overall contribution of the government to the dwindling nature of YFCs programme was considered high by the agricultural science teachers. The government

had negative attitude towards YFCs programme in secondary schools and hence, lack of logistic support from it. There was a dearth of rural youth agricultural extension personnel who were supposed to work co-operatively with the agricultural science teachers for the purpose of forming and organizing virile YFCs programme in schools in the state. Agricultural science teachers were inadequate in most of the schools and the available ones were involved in different non-agricultural activities.

The school authorities also made a high contribution to the dwindling nature of YFCs programme in Ondo State. The students were not motivated by the principals for the purpose of participating actively in YFCs programme. Besides, the programme was not supported morally, financially and materially by the school authorities.

The overall contribution of the agricultural science teachers was found to be low. The involvement of the agricultural science teachers in various activities other than agriculture, gave them no time to develop viable YFCs programme in the state. The fact that majority of them had no previous knowledge of YFCs programme while in school, made a high contribution to the dwindling nature of the programme in the state.

The fact that a greater proportion of the students were 'day students' could have made a high contribution to their lack of time and interest in YFCs programme in their schools. However, their overall

contribution to the dwindling nature of YFCs in the state was low.

The implications of these findings for the development of an effective YFCs programme in the state in the nearest future are:

1. Since YFCs are the nursery homes where young boys and girls could develop into future active farmers it is imperative that the government should develop positive attitude towards YFCs programme and thereby incorporating it into the school curriculum of the state. Besides, more agriculture teachers should be recruited and posted to the secondary schools. The multi-purpose Village Agricultural Extension Workers (VAEW) under the current Unified Agricultural Extension System of the state-wide ADPs, should be made to pay visits to schools for the purpose of working mutually with the agriculture teachers in the process of developing virile YFCs;
2. The school authorities should be encouraged by the government to participate actively in the formation, organization, project - design and implementation of YFCs programme in their schools;
3. The government, agriculture teachers, school authorities and the rural youth agricultural extension workers should work together for the purpose of motivating the students to part-take
4. Meaningfully in YFCs programme in their schools; and
5. Training workshops in Rural Youth Agricultural Extension Programme (RYAEP) should be organized for the agriculture teachers, the

village agricultural extension Workers, the School Principals and the Students so that they will be well enlightened about the concept of YFCs Programme.

References

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Table 1: Government – Related Factors Associated with the Dwindling Nature of YFCs Programme in Ondo State (N = 60)

Factor	Mean (0) Contribution to the Dwindling Nature of YFCs Programme in Ondo State
1.Lack of initiation on the part of the government/negative attitudes of the government toward YFCs in secondary schools	2.00**
2.Lack of logistic support from the government	2.00**
3.Rural Youth Agricultural Extension Personnel are not made available by the government	2.00**
4.Government does not incorporate YFCs programme into the school curriculum/lack of legislative law backing-up YFCs in secondary schools in the state	1.32*
5.Agriculture teachers are inadequate in most of the schools	2.00**
Grand Mean (0) Score =	8.46
al Level of Contribution (<u>8.46</u>) =	1.69 2.00**
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** = High Contribution.

* = Low Contribution.

Table 2: School Authorities – Related Factors Associated with the Dwindling nature of YFCs Programme in Ondo State (N = 60)

	(0) Contribution to the Dwindling Nature of YFCs Programme in Ondo State
1. Lack of interest on the part of the school principal	2.00**
2. Lack of farm land	1.00**
3. Lack of financial support	2.00**
4. Lack of farm input supply	1.36*
5. Lack of students' motivation	2.00**
Grand Mean (0) Score =	8.36
Total Level of Contribution $\frac{(8.36)}{5} =$	1.67 2.00**

** = High Contribution.
* = Low Contribution.

Table 3: Agriculture Teachers – Related Factors Associated with Dwindling Nature of YFCs Programme in Ondo State (N = 60).

Factor	Mean (0) Contribution to the Dwindling Nature of YFCs Programme in Ondo State
Lack of time	2.00**
Lack of interest	1.39*
Having no previous knowledge of YFCs programme	2.00**
Lack of farming experience	0.43*
Having no sympathy with rural life and having no attitude of friendliness toward rural farmers	0.54*
Grand Mean(0) Scores =	6.36
Total Level of Contribution $\frac{(6.36)}{5} =$	1.27*

** = High Contribution
* = Low Contribution.

Table 4: Students – Related Factors Associated with the Dwindling Nature of YFCs Programme in Ondo State (N = 60) = High**

Factor	Mean (0) Contribution to the Dwindling Nature of YFCs Programme in Ondo State
Lack of interest on the part of the students	2.00**
Parents do not allow their children to part-take in YFCs Programme	0.57*
Lack of time, especially, due to the fact that majority of the students are day-students	2.00**
Students have already developed negative attitude toward farming as a career	1.43*
Lack of co-operation on the part of the students	1.36*
Grand Mean(0) Score	= 7.36
Total Level of Contribution $\frac{7.36}{5}$	= 1.47*

** = High Contribution

* = Low Contribution.