

Approaches in Boosting Youths' Engagement in Animal Agriculture for Employment and Sustainable Development in Oyo Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

A high population of youth has a lot of advantages if properly managed and engaged in productive activities. This study focuses on the approaches in boosting youths' involvement in animal agriculture for employment and sustainable development in Oyo metropolis. Two research questions and two hypotheses were used for the study and survey research design was adopted. A multistage random sampling technique was employed and 620 respondents comprised of 600 youths, 150 from each of the four local government areas and 20 extension agents 5 from each local government area were used for the study. Data was collected using a 25 items questionnaire known as Youths' Involvement in Animal Agriculture Questionnaire (YIAAQ). Face validation of the instrument was done by three experts. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability and a coefficient of 0.88 was obtained. 620 copies of the instrument were distributed to the respondents and were retrieved. Mean, standard deviational and t-test statistical tools were employed. The results showed that all the 10 items were factors discouraging youths' engagement in animal agricultural production while all 15 items were accepted as approaches to boost youths' participation in animal agriculture. It was recommended that youths should be motivated, mentored and encouraged through provision of funding and financial support, animal fairs and exhibitions among others. Also, agricultural production should be tailored to social media to communicate innovations and opportunities in agriculture to youths.

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Introduction

Animal agriculture plays multiple roles in supporting livelihoods and one of the most important is as a source of household income. According to nationally representative data from across the developing world, 68% of households earn income from animal agriculture (Nchanji, *et al.*, 2023) and Amao *et al.* (2022a) put animal agriculture as practice of rearing numbers of animals together in extremely small spaces, all to exploit the products from the animals and especially for human consumption and for creation of employment opportunities for the masses.

The farm animals are critical to a sustainable agricultural system and especially for smallholders who comprise most of the World's farmers (Amao *et al.*, 2022b). Farm animals contribute not only a source of high-quality food that improves nutritional status but also additional resources such as manure for fertilizer, on-farm power, and other by-products, and, in addition, provide employment, economic diversification and risk distribution (Herrero *et al.*, 2010).

Agricultural extension agents refer to individuals who are professionals who educate farmers in the use of improved farming methods and techniques, increased productivity and income, thereby improving their levels of living and uplift their social and educational standard (Lan *et al.*, 2019). Agricultural extension agents in this context refers to trained individuals who are professionals, possess skills and knowledge in animal agriculture and work with youths and farmers.

Youth is defined by United Nations Youth Agenda (2004) as persons within 15-24 years while Salam (2013) put youth as persons within 15-35 years and whose definitions differ by country, Agbulu *et al.* (2013) in Nigeria put youths as young adults between the age of 12-25 that have energy and vigor for work while such as those between 18-34 years in Kenya, form the largest part of the population in Sub-Sahara Africa (Nchanji *et al.*, 2023).

Employment is a condition of having a paid job and a person is employed if he/she is engaged in the production of goods or services

thus, he/she contributes to the GDP in a legitimate manner and receives some form of compensation for the activity. Employment in this study refers to any person who is engaged in any agricultural production enterprise to produce goods and services and in turn get compensation for it (Lan *et al.*, 2019).

Unemployment is a condition of being without a job or a vocation as defined by Olukundun *et al.* (2014). International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2022) refers unemployment to be a statistic of the population who are active, willing and are available but without a job. A report by Education Development Centre (2002) shows a high rate of youth unemployment compared to adult unemployment especially the underdeveloped countries like Nigeria. However, a wide range of agricultural production enterprises exist in Oyo metropolis coupled with the favourable climatic conditions, very few youths are engaged in these enterprises. The consequence of this is increased poverty, low productivity or output, restiveness and several other social vices in and around towns in Oyo township. All these hinder the development of any state or nation (Eriba 2011).

One major solution to the consequences of the youth unemployment rate is to create jobs for the youth. It is believed that increased youth employment could play an essential role in addressing these problems (AFDB 2016; ILO 2017). It is also important to bear in mind that the kind of job to be created for the youth should be the type that can push them out of poverty and also improve their livelihoods. This means that the youth must be “gainfully employed”. This is because, according to ILO, (2020), over one-third of young (15–24 years) workers (employed) in under developed and developed countries lived in poverty in the year 2018.

One sector that has over the years been identified to have the needed capacity to provide employment opportunities to the youth is agriculture (World Bank, 2019). Agriculture has been a leading sector for employment opportunities in Nigeria over several decades. The agricultural sector is observably significant over other sectors such as manufacturing, service, and oil industry due to its uniqueness in entrepreneurship and self-employment. The profession’s requirement for energy, creativity, and innovation makes it suitable for the 15–35 age group (Brooks *et al.*, 2013). However, in a study

conducted by Naamwintome and Bagson (2013), they found a movement away from farming resulting in limited youth participation in agriculture. The same study found that minimal access to productive resources such as land hinders young people's agriculture engagement even though farming was perceived to be profitable. People's attempts at making youth to be employed through agriculture will require other initiatives/approaches.

Development is viewed in terms of a nation's ability to meet the indices on the Human Development Index which are; longevity of life expectancy, gender equality and empowerment, security, peace and stability, communications and environmental protection (Eriba, 2011). Sustainable development is conceptualized as paths of human progress which meets the needs and aspirations of the present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their social, political, economic and cultural needs in an environment that can meet the needs of future generations (Lan *et al.*, 2019; Bello *et al.*, 2020). All these cannot be met where there is high rate of unemployed youths who are unable to satisfy their basic needs of food, shelter and clothing as is the case with youths in Oyo metropolis. For sustainable development to be achieved in the state, youths should be gainfully employed in various animal agricultural enterprises available in the metropolis in order to meet their social, economic, political and cultural needs in a conserved and protected environment to meet the needs of future generation.

Statement of Problem

Youth involvement in animal agriculture is extremely low in many cities of Nigeria as documented by Yusuf *et al.* (2021) and Oyo cities, Oyo State inclusive (Adigun *et al.*, 2017), despite the industry's potential to create large job opportunities and support sustainable development. A number of issues, such as restricted access to contemporary farming methods, a lack of training and educational opportunities, and the general belief that agriculture is an unappealing or unproductive career path, all contribute to this lack of interest. Because of this, the area is losing out on the opportunity to use animal agriculture to create economic growth and sustainability by fully using the potential of its youthful population. In order to

protect young people's livelihoods and the long-term sustainability of agricultural practices in the area, it is crucial to find and put into practice efficient strategies that can inspire and prepare them to actively engage in this industry.

Objective of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine approaches in boosting youths' engagement in animal agriculture for employability and sustainability development in Oyo Metropolis. The following objectives were posed to guide the study; (i) Identify factors discouraging youths' activeness in animal agriculture (ii) determine approaches for boosting youths' engagement in animal agriculture.

Research questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What are the factors discouraging youths' activeness in animal agriculture?
2. What are the approaches for boosting youths' engagement in animal agriculture for employment and sustainable development?

Research hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of responses of youths and agricultural extension agents on factors discouraging youths' participation in animal agriculture in Oyo metropolis.
2. There is no significant difference between mean ratings of youths and agricultural extension agents on approaches for boosting youths' engagements/participation in animal production in Oyo metropolis.

Methodology

Study Area

The study was carried out around the Oyo township, Oyo State, Nigeria and Oyo lies on the longitude 3°5' East of the Greenwich meridian and Latitudes 7° 3' North eastwards from Ibadan, the capital of Oyo State. The altitude is between 300m and 600m above level. The mean annual temperature and rainfall are 27°C and 1,165mm

respectively. The vegetation of the area is Southern Guinea Savanna zone of Nigeria (Google Earth, 2023).

Research Design

The study adopted survey research design because the researcher collected data from a sample of youths and extension agents considered to be representative of the entire population, analyzed the data and generalized the findings to the entire population.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises of all 4000 youths engaging in animal agriculture in Oyo West, Oyo East, Atiba and Afijio local government areas of Oyo state that formed the Oyo metropolis.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A multistage random sampling technique was employed and six-hundred and twenty (620) respondents, 150 from each of the four local government areas and twenty (20) extension agents were used for the study. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select the number of youths that responded to the questionnaire while the extension agents were employed because the number could be effectively managed.

Research Instrument

The instrument for the study was a structured questionnaire titled “Youths’ Involvement in Animal Agriculture Questionnaire” (YIAAQ) made up of 25 items constructed by the researcher through literature review. The instrument was divided into two sections. Sections A and B. Section A sought information about factors that encourage youths’ participation in animal agriculture production enterprises while section B solicited information on approaches in encouraging youths’ participation in animal agriculture. All the items had a 4-point response options of strongly agree (SA 4), Agree (S 3) Strongly Disagree (SD 2) Disagree (D 1). The instrument was face validated by three experts, two from Agricultural Education department of Emmanuel Alayande University of Education and one

from Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu, Enugu State, Nigeria

Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability of the items of the questionnaire was ascertained through Cronbach Alpha and a coefficient of 0.88 was obtained.

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected by the researchers and the extension agents. The 620 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents and all were retrieved. The benchmark for accepting any of the items was 2.50 and items whose mean was below 2.50 were rejected.

Method of Data Analysis

The statistics used for data analysis were mean, standard deviation while t-test statistics for testing the hypotheses. The null hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test statistics. The null hypothesis was calculated as level of significance that was greater than 0.05 was upheld and rejected when otherwise.

Results

Research Question One

What are the factors discouraging youths' activeness in animal agriculture in Oyo metropolis?

The mean and standard deviation of respondents on inhibiting factors on youth engagement in animal agriculture is presented in Table 1. The results revealed that all the ten (10) items were agreed by the respondents as the factors inhibiting youths' participation in animal agricultural production in Oyo metropolis. The mean values varied from 3.23 to 4.34, indicating that their mean values were above the cut-off point of 2.50 as the decision rule. The standard deviations of the items ranged from 0.265 to 0.641, this implies that the respondents were not too far from the mean and from the opinion of

one another in their responses on the factors inhibiting youths' participation in animal agricultural production in Oyo metropolis.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on inhibiting factors on Youth Engagement in Animal Agriculture

S/N	Factors	Mean	Std	Decision
1	Lack of access to financial resources, such as loan and grant	2.88	0.345	Accepted
2	Problem of land ownership and access to land	3.23	0.265	Accepted
3	Inadequate existence of educational and training programs in equipping youth with the skills and knowledge required in animal agriculture	4.12	0.367	Accepted
4	Technologies barriers and barriers impacts on productivity and sustainability in animal agriculture	3.67	0.456	Accepted
5	Inadequate government policies and institutional support	3.34	0.345	Accepted
6	Lack of market accessibility to sell animal products	3.55	0.543	Accepted
7	Numerous social and cultural factors contributions	3.78	0.641	Accepted
8	The belief of lower income associated with animal agriculture	3.90	0.301	Accepted
9	The fear of hard labour associated with animal agriculture	3.61	0.309	Accepted
10	Lack of mentorship and role models on youth participation in animal agriculture	4.34	0.453	Accepted

Std: Standard Deviation

Research Question 2

What are the approaches for boosting youths' engagement in animal agriculture for employment and sustainable development?

Table 2 depicted the mean and standard deviation of respondents on approaches for boosting youth engagement in animal agriculture.

The results indicated that the respondents agreed that all the fifteen (15) items of approaches boosting the youths' engagement in animal agriculture in Oyo metropolis and the mean values varied from 3.80 to 4.78, implies that their mean values were above the decision rule of 2.50 cut-off point. The standard deviation of the items varied from 0.429 to 0.897, revealing less that there was less variability in the opinion of the respondents on approaches for boosting youth engagement in animal agriculture in Oyo metropolis.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Approaches for boosting Youth Engagement in Animal Agriculture

S/N	Approaches	Mean	Std	Decision
1	Educational programs can be implemented to increase youth interest in animal agriculture	4.05	0.429	Accepted
2	Schools integrated animal agriculture into their curricula to promote student involvement	3.89	0.635	Accepted
3	Social media plays a role in creating awareness about opportunities in animal agriculture for young people	4.68	0.894	Accepted
4	Mentorship programs should be developed to connect experienced farmers with aspiring young agriculturists	4.32	0.657	Accepted
5	Governments can provide Incentives to encourage youth participation in animal agriculture	4.69	0.865	Accepted
6	Technology and innovation should be utilized to make animal agriculture more appealing to the younger generation	4.02	0.564	Accepted
7	Partnerships between educational institutions and agricultural businesses can enhance youth engagement in animal agriculture	3.99	0.675	Accepted
8	Access to funding and financial support for young farmers can be improved	4.03	0.642	Accepted
9	Agricultural extension services play a role in supporting youth involvement in animal agriculture	4.55	0.564	Accepted

10	Training and skill development programs are essential for preparing youth for careers in animal agriculture	4.23	0.743	Accepted
11	International organizations contribute to enhancing youth participation in animal agriculture	3.80	0.567	Accepted
12	Agricultural fairs and exhibitions should be used to promote youth involvement in animal agriculture	4.02	0.453	Accepted
13	Policies can be implemented to ensure equal opportunities for young women in animal agriculture	4.38	0.865	Accepted
14	Animal agriculture should be made more environmentally sustainable to attract eco-conscious young people	4.09	0.456	Accepted
15	Collaborations between government, private sector, and NGOs are needed to enhance youth involvement in animal agriculture	4.78	0.897	Accepted

Std = Standard Deviation

Hypothesis one

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of responses of youths and extension agents on factors discouraging youths' participation in animal agriculture in Oyo metropolis.

The t-test analysis of mean ratings of responses of youths and agricultural extension agents on factors inhibiting youths' engagement in animal agricultural production in Oyo metropolis is presented in Table 3. The results indicated that p-value of 0.678 which is greater than the alpha value of 0.05 level of significance. This depicted that there was no statistical significant difference in the mean ratings of responses of youths and agricultural extension agents on factors inhibiting youth participation in animal agricultural production in Oyo metropolis. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant difference for the two groups of respondents (youths and agricultural extension agents) on factors inhibiting youths' participation in animal agricultural production in Oyo metropolis was accepted.

Table 3: The t-test Analysis of Mean Ratings of Responses of Youths and Agricultural Extension Agents on Factors Inhibiting Youths' Engagement in Animal Agricultural Production in Oyo Metropolis

Treatment	N	Mean	Std	SEM	Df	Sig	Decision
Youth	600	4.678	0.4565	0.0421	618	0.678	NS
Extension agent	20	4.823	0.2344	0.0278			

N = Number of Observation, Std = Standard Deviation, SEM = Standard Error of Mean, Df = Degree of freedom, Sig = Significant level at 0.05, NS = No significant

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference between mean ratings of youths and agricultural extension agents on approaches for boosting youths' engagements/participation in animal production in Oyo metropolis.

Table 4 depicted the t-test analysis of mean ratings of responses of youths and agricultural extension agents on approaches for encouraging youths' engagement in animal agricultural production in Oyo metropolis. The result shows a p-value of 0.643 which is greater than the alpha value of 0.05 significant levels. This indicates that there was no statistical significant difference in the mean ratings of responses of youths and agricultural extension agents on approaches for enhancing youth engagement in animal agricultural production in Oyo metropolis. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant difference for the two groups of respondents (youths and agricultural extension agents) on approaches for enhancing youths' engagement in Agricultural production enterprises in Oyo metropolis was accepted.

Table 4: The t-test Analysis of Mean Ratings of Responses of Youths and Agricultural Extension Agents on approaches for encouraging Youths' Engagement in Animal Agricultural Production in Oyo Metropolis

Treatment	N	Mean	Std	SEM	Df	Sig	Decision
Youth	600	4.234	0.6218	0.0534	618	0.6439	NS
Extension agent	20	4.435	0.6343	0.0621			

N = Number of Observation, Std = Standard Deviation, SEM = Standard Error of Mean, Df = Degree of freedom, Sig = Significant level at 0.05, NS = No significant

Discussion

The pattern of result on the factors that discourage youths engagement on animal agriculture revealed that lack of financial resources, land ownership disputes, technologies barriers, government policies, social and cultural factors among other all. Thus this observation was in line with the study of Lan *et al.* (2019) who found that 13 factors inhibited youths' participation in agricultural production enterprises in Benue state. The current result also agreed with earlier findings of Lyocks *et al.* (2013) in their study on mobilizing youth for participation in Nigerian agricultural transformation agenda. A grassroots' approach who asserted that poor image of persons involved in agricultural production, non-involvement of youths in agricultural policies among others as limiting factors for youth participation in agricultural production. This present study also corroborated the findings of Mbah *et al.* (2016) that major factors militating against youth participation in agricultural production in family farming in Benue State where it was discovered that lack of modern technology, finance and other factors inhibit youths' participation in agricultural production enterprises. Bello *et al.* (2021) opined numerous setbacks on youths' participation in agribusiness programmes on employment creation in Nigeria that were similar to these current findings. Ouko *et al.* (2022) also reported numerous factors that reduced the involvement of youth in agripreneurship for poverty and rural employment in Kenya that corroborated the current findings. The present results on factors

reducing youth engagement in animal agriculture was also in consonance with the work of Maritim *et al.* (2019) who assessed the strategies to enhance youths' involvement in agricultural production enterprises for employment and sustainable development in Benue State, Nigeria.

The present result showed that all the 15 approaches can enhance youths' participation in animal agricultural production. These findings are consistent with studies of Lan *et al.* (2019) and Mutua *et al.* (2017) in their study on identifying the causes of decline in youth participation in smallholder livestock production and marketing, and agricultural empowerment programme of youth and integrated training farm mandate respectively. They discovered that youths can be encouraged through provision of funds, guidance, and counseling among others to participate in agricultural production. The study further aligns with Twumasi *et al.* (2019) in Ghana who enunciated that vocational guidance and use of innovative technologies are strategies that can encourage youth participation in agricultural production enterprises. Nchanji *et al.* (2023) findings supported these approaches with their thematic evidencing of youth-empowering interventions in livestock production systems in Sub-Sahara Africa. Muller *et al.* (2017) found that job creations among youth are thematic approaches by encouraging them with a lot of factors similar to the current findings. The ECOWAS Commission, (2019) also affirmed various strategies that can enhance the participation of youths' in agricultural production practices that were aligned with this recent findings such as educational, mentorship and training and skill programs, incentives and financial supports.

Conclusion

Based on the result of the study, it was observed that several factors inhibit youths from taking to animal agricultural production in Oyo metropolis, Oyo State. However, the study also identified 15 approaches that can enhance youth involvement in animal agricultural production. This will create employment opportunities for the youth, sustainable practices, social and economic development, reduce social vices and encourage food security in the Oyo metropolis, state and Nigeria as a whole.

Recommendations

It was therefore recommended that

1. Youths should be motivated, mentored and encouraged through provision of loans with less stringent repayment conditions.
2. Animal agricultural production should be linked to the social media to broadcast the communication of innovations in agriculture to youths.
3. Improved training and education will enable youth to implement sustainable and innovative animal agricultural practices.
4. Encouraging youth engagement in animal agriculture will boost productivity and stimulate economic growth.
5. The development of comprehensive policies will provide a supportive environment for young entrepreneurs in animal agriculture.

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