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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS OF FARMERS' CHILDREN TO CROP PRODUCTION IN ODO-OTIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the contributions of farmers' children to crop production in Odo-otin Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria. A total of eighty farmers' children were selected using simple random sampling. Structured interview schedule was used to collect data from the respondents and statistical tools used in analyzing the data were: frequency distribution, percentages and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The result of data analysis showed that majority of the farmers' children interviewed were male (76.30%) and (76.30%) of respondents stayed with their parent. The result also showed that majority of the respondents (96.3%) claimed incentives as source of motivation for their contribution to crop production; almost half of the children interviewed (51.3%) considered no appropriate technology for farmers' children as mild problem. The result also revealed that time spent on farm activities ($r=0.844$) had a strong significant relationship with level of contribution to crop production. Farmers' children contributed greatly to crop production through their participation in farming activities mostly harvesting, fertilizer application and planting of crops. The study therefore recommends that Children should be adequately motivated to develop interest in agriculture in such a way that it will not affect their academics pursuit but choose agriculture as a career.

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INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a nation blessed with good climatic conditions that favours agricultural production and agricultural development is the basic tools for economic development. In Nigeria, agricultural production is still carried out using physical strength, which declines with age. This has therefore been observed as one of the major constraints to agricultural production in Nigeria (Okeowo *et al.*, 1999). Although children and youth have desirable qualities that can promote agriculture, most of them have strong of apathy toward it (Jibowo, 1998; Adedoyin, 2005 and Adewale *et al.*, 2005). Children are important component of farm labour supply to small holder farmers which common in rural area for the success of a farm enterprise, family labour is very necessary and so have more incentives to work than hired labour. The importance of family labour of which children's is an integral component, in small holder farmers is as important as road is to transportation (Adesimi 1988). Farmer's children are those children from infancy toddling preschool ages of five years up to school age of six to eighteen year old. They are considered to be children born or nurtured by farm families or by farmer parent in a village, which is predominantly considered as a farming community (Adegbite and Adedoyin 1999). Farmer's children perform a vital role in farm production process this among others may be responsible for the reason why Adewumi (1999) claimed that the declining number of children per family could be attributed to the reducing amount of agricultural labour supplied by farmers' families. In planning agricultural development programmes. In order to increase the present level of production and improve the citizen's standard of living, children must be properly sensitized and encouraged to take to farming. There is the perception that children were productive and contributing members of the rural community. Farmer's children are

involved in different activities ranging from farming to their vocational jobs available in the rural areas. The timing of these farming activities often conflicts with the period of formal education programme and as a result, the children that are fulltime participants in these activities are deprived of the formal education. However, there is gain saying that the proceeds from the activities of these children are highly appreciated by their parents (Farinde and Ojo 1999). It is a fact that the large population of children represents the link between present and future as well as a reservoir of labour therefore the future of agriculture in the country rest squarely on children. Therefore there is need to guide and encourage the children as to what occupation would be profitable for them and the centre nation at large so as to subdue for pending threat of famine and hunger (Agunbiade and Odeyemi 1999).

Children role in rural economy are not accorded the appropriate attention. In delivering their roles in agriculture, children lack the correct equipment for farming activities and are not normally considered in the introduction of new agricultural technologies (Adegunloye 1989). The study thus assessed the contributions of farmers' children to crop production in Odo-otin Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study described the socio-economic characteristics of farmers' children; examine factors that motivate farmers' children to involve in crop production activities; examine the problems that the farmers' children are facing while involving in crop production activities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research work was carried out in Odo-otin local government area of Osunstate Nigeria. The local government has its headquarters in the town of Okuku. It is an agrarian local government. It has an area of 294km² and a population of 134, 110 as at the 2006 population census. The local government is divided into fifteen wards. A multi

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stage sampling technique was used to select the respondents. The first stage involved random selection of eight wards, the second stage involved random selection of eight public primary schools in each wards. Based on the list of children (pupils) collected from each school, the third stage involved stratification of the list into two: farmers' children and non-farmers' children. The last stage involved random selection of ten farmers' children from each of the eight schools, thus the sample size was eighty farmers' children. Structured interview schedule was used to collect data from respondents. The dependent variable is the contributions of farmers' children to crop production which was measured by asking the respondents to state various ways in which they have contributed to crop production. Each contribution was scored on a 3points scale of always, sometimes, never and scoring was 2, 1, 0 respectively.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

Table 1 shows that 76.3% of the respondents were male while 23.7% of the respondent were female. This depicts a high level of involvement of male respondents in crop production activities than female respondents in the study area. The table also revealed that 76.3% of respondents were staying with their parents while 23.7% were staying with guardian. This depicts that most of the respondents stayed with their parent and followed their parents to farm. In addition, 62.5% of the respondents were Muslims while 37.5% were Christians. The result indicated that both religions supported children involvement in crop production. This supported Adewale *et al* (2005) that as long the children remain with their parents or guardians in the farm or village, they will be made to participate in farm activities, no matter their level of education, age, gender or religion.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to their socio-economic characteristics

n=80		
Socio-economic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	61	76.3
Female	19	23.7
Religion		
Christianity	30	37.5
Islam	50	62.5
Whom the respondents staying with		
Parent	61	76.3
Guardian	19	23.7

Source: Field survey, 2012.

Ways through which respondents contribute to crop production

Table 2 shows that harvesting ranked first (97.5%) as the commonest way through which respondents contributed to crop production.

Table 2. Ways through which respondents contribute to crop production

Contributions*	Always	Moderate	Never
Bush clearing	0	56 (70.0)	24 (30.0)
Ridging	0	34 (42.5)	46 (57.5)
Planting	0	65 (81.3)	15 (18.8)
Fertilizer application	0	77 (96.3)	3 (3.8)
Weeding	1(1.3)	74 (92.5)	5 (3.8)
Pesticide application	0	40 (50.0)	40 (50.0)
Harvesting	0	78 (97.5)	2 (2.5)
Transportation of produce	0	58 (72.5)	22 (27.5)

Source: Field survey, 2012

Parentheses representpercentage

* represents multiple response

This was followed by fertilizer application (96.3%), weeding ranked third (92.5%). The least way through which respondents contributed to crop production was ridging (42.5%). This result supported (Adegunloye 1989) that children participate in virtually all the farming activities. This implies that more than half of the respondents

do not involve in ridge making probably due to the tedious nature of the work.

Factors that motivate the respondents to be involved in crop production

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents (96.3%) claimed incentives as source of motivation. This is followed by source of income, the least motivation was leisure. This depicts that presence of incentive, fear of hunger, reward of achievement and source of income makes most of the farmers' children to be involved in crop production thus increase their contributions to crop production in the study area.

Table 3. Factors that motivate the respondents to be involved in crop production

Motivation factors*	Yes	No
Incentives	77 (96.3)	3 (3.8)
Fear of hunger	59 (73.8)	21 (26.3)
Leisure	6 (7.5)	74 (92.5)
Reward of achievement	66 (82.5)	14 (17.5)
Source of income	68 (85.0)	12 (15.0)

Source: Field survey, 2012.

Parentheses representpercentage

* represents multiple response

Problems faced by respondents while involving in crop production

In Table 4, about (36.3%) claimed that no appropriate technology for farmers' children is a serious problem. This agreed with findings of (Adegunloye 1989) that in delivering their roles in agriculture, children lack the correct equipment for farming activities and are not normally considered in the introduction of new agricultural technologies. Meanwhile (52.5%) claimed that health hazard is a mild problem. This implies that technologies used by other categories of farmers such as youths and adults still served children which can consequently affect their health status.

Table 4. Problems faced by respondents while involving in crop production

Problems*	Serious	Mild	Not
Time for school matters	7(8.8)	18 (22.5)	55 (68.8)
No appropriate technology	29 (36.3)	44 (55.0)	7 (8.8)
Health hazard	0(0)	42 (52.5)	38 (47.5)

Source: Field survey, 2012.

Parentheses representpercentage

* represents multiple response

Analysis of the relationship between contributions of farmers' children to crop production and hours spent on farm

Table 5 shows that strong significant relationship existed between contributions of farmers' children to crop production and hours spent on farm. This means that the higher the number of hours spent on farm, the better their contributions to crop production. However, time spent on farm should not affect their academic life at school

Table 5. Analysis of the relationship between contributions of farmers' children to crop production and hours spent on farm

Variable	Correlation coefficient (r)	p-value	Remark/ Decision
Contributions to crop production and Hours spent on farm	0.844*	0.000	Significant

Source: Field survey, 2012.

*correlation is significant at 0.01level

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the farmers' children contributed greatly to crop production through their participation in farming activities mostly harvesting, fertilizer application and planting of

crops. The study therefore recommends that Children should be adequately motivated to develop interest in agriculture in such a way that it will not affect their academics pursuit but choose agriculture as a career.

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