



Assessment of Career Ambition of Head of Farm Families for their Children: A Case of Farmers in South Western Nigeria

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Abstract

In early 60s and 70s, agriculture is one of the key sectors of the Nigerian's economy. The decline in agricultural production is attributed to the drudgery nature of traditional farming system mostly practice by farmers in the country and the influence of rural farmers on career choice of their children. The study therefore aims to assess the influence of head of farm families in career choice for their children using a descriptive statistics. Simple random sampling technique was used in selecting 120 rural farmers from Oyo State in Nigeria. Results show that 50% of the respondents were in their active age, 86.7% were married, 61.7% of the respondents had a household size of 3-6 family members, and 45.8% of the respondents had no formal education. The results of the Chi-square analysis further reveal that variables such as age, marital status, and household size, level of education, secondary occupation and membership of social organisation were statistically significant at 1% signifying that all the socio-economic variables have a significant relationship with the choice of career for the farmer's children. To unlock farmers' perspective on career choice ambition choosing for their children, the study suggests that more attention should be paid to improve traditional farming systems by several stakeholders and government, by providing farm equipment such as tractor and other farm implements which can make farming less rigorous, profitable and enjoyable to the rural youths in the rural communities.

Keywords: Career choice; Chi-square; Descriptive statistics; Rural youths.



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1. Introduction

Prior to Nigerian independence and actual discovery of crude oil in commercial quantity, agriculture was the main source of income (Ahungwa *et al.*, 2014). Its role in the economy of the world cannot be over emphasized especially, in developing countries in terms of production of food for the populace, supply of adequate basic raw materials for Agro-based industries and also a source of foreign exchange earning for the government (Diao *et al.*, 2010). Ntshangase *et al.* (2016), stressed that the continuity and stability of the agricultural sector requires that youths should choose agriculture as a career choice by dedicating themselves to the farming activities and rural life. Besides, continual accessibility of the farm often depends on at least one child from the family to take over the family farm since farmers typically inherit or marry their land (Salamon, 2014). White (2012) highlighted that choosing agriculture as a career by youths have become a persistent problem which is attributed to rural life, rural education and farm families in particular. This is as a result of the farm crisis of the 1980s which does not appeal to youth (Strange, 2008). The "rural-urban" migration of youth is as a result of the drudgery nature of traditional farming encountered by rural youth in farming, leaving agricultural production in the hands of ageing parents (Pam, 2014). This problem was compounded by some rural farmers that desire their children should opt for other profession as a career such as medicine, law, engineering, and teaching as a career, in order to earn their livelihood with less rigor than the one encountered in farming (Ball and Wiley, 2005).

Career choice of farmers for their children might also aggravate the problem faced in the agricultural sector, because the decrease in the high-yielding potential of many farmers has been attributed to the decline in the supply and utilization of farm labour (Epule and Bryant, 2016). Labour, as one of the factors of production is considered the most needed inputs for sustainability of agricultural production, and labour scarcity becomes a challenge if such careers are not agricultural oriented (Rufai *et al.*, 2018).

In Nigeria, even though the rural farmers have large families, the supply of labour is still very difficult due to ever-increasing rate of rural-urban migration of youth. Most of their family members and relatives predominantly youth have migrated to the urban cities in search of white-collar jobs or other career opportunities (Muthomi, 2017). In addition, agricultural production beyond farming is impacted by this rural-urban migration of youth. In order to achieve an optimal production in the agrarian sector, there is a need for highly skilled individuals in the food, fibre, and natural resources (Pardey and Alston, 2010). Although, much studies have not been done on career decision-making of farmers for their children to the best knowledge of these researchers in the study area. The study therefore, seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents in the study area?
2. What are the rural farmers' choices of future career for their children in the study area?

2. Review of Literature

The word career is perceived and understood differently based on individual's perspective. This dearth of conjectural simplicity maintains uncertainty and continues to prevent a common ground for reasoning in this area. This also signifies that the developing conjectural understanding is difficult. The terms occupation, career and vocation have often been used interwoven from the time of [Parsons \(1909\)](#). The old-fashioned descriptions have been criticised for their restriction of career to a professional work life. However, the broadening of this theoretical definition by several researchers was highlighted in the definition of career proposed by Super in 1980 as cited by [Sears \(1982\)](#). These researchers suggested that a career should include "pre-vocational and post-vocational" activities and other life roles and contexts. They further emphasised that a career entails the sequence of major positions that is occupied by a person throughout is "pre-occupational", "occupational" and "post-occupational" life. They regarded this occupational life as work-related roles such as those of "student", "employee", and "pensioner", together with "complementary vocational", "familial" and "civil" roles.

Several scholars have defined career in different ways. [Arthur et al. \(1989\)](#), defined career as the evolving sequence of an individual work experiences over a period of time. [Nicholson and West \(1989\)](#), termed career as the choice an individual make from work histories or job experiences. [Super et al. \(1996\)](#), these psychologists have referred to work as a medium through which individuals implement a self-concept. Furthermore, [Inkson and Elkin \(2008\)](#) described career as individual expressions of identity.

Career choosing for most rural youth is a trail of life in a long progression of engaging in a profession through choosing among employment opportunities which is made available to them at a particular time ([Hooley, 2014](#)). [Bandura et al. \(2001\)](#), categorise this progression as a process that is being influenced by factors such as educational attainment, personal aptitude and the environment in which they live. These afore-mentioned factors are said to instigate youth with the expectancy of advancement in career choosing, leading to a life-long profession. [Mtemeri \(2017\)](#), noted that the importance and the decision taken regarding career choosing by rural youth are not only influenced by development but also by the environment in which they live. However, it is important to understand the impact families and communities play in assisting rural youth in making a career choice and executing plans of action upon rural youth long-term occupational outcomes ([Wallace et al., 2011](#); [Witko et al., 2005](#)).

An unreliability context persist due to the non-supportive occurrence that prevailed among rural youth which led them to postpone their career choice-making and ultimately not to aspire to challenging career choices ([Wallace et al., 2011](#)). [Bowes et al. \(2005\)](#), highlighted that parental influences such as parents' own education and employment status have an impact in decision-making, regarding an appropriate pathway for their own children. Studies have proved that career education will only be effective with the provision of guardians in school ([CICA, 2014a;2014b](#); [Ley, 2014](#)). According to [Ferry \(2006\)](#), initial career decision-making is a cultural and developmental task that youth are expected to have accomplished by the end of their high school year. These scholars suggested that all educational programs should include career education.

3. Methodology

3.1. Study Area

The study was carried out in South-Western region of Nigeria. The region lies between 3⁰E and 6⁰E of the longitude and also between 6⁰N and 9⁰N of the latitude. It is the second largest population of the geopolitical zone of the country constituting of about 50 million people. The region spread over a number of ecological zones extending from Lagos State in the South to Ogun State in the West and to Ondo State in the East, accounting for about 20.5 percent of Nigeria's land mass. It consists mostly of rainforest belt with a small upland. The South-Western region consists of six States namely; Oyo, Osun, Ekiti, Ogun and Lagos States. The region hosts over eighty-five different ethnic groups, speaking two hundred and fifty dialects across with about three hundred communities. [Figure 1](#), shows the map of the study area.

Figure-1. Map of the Study area



3.2. Sampling Procedure

There are six states within the South-Western region. Oyo State, out of the six states was purposively selected, this is because of the large number of small-scale farmers in the area. Two local government areas (Iwajowa and Kajola) local governments were randomly selected from the state. The selected local government areas were based on their population and the high level of farming activities that take place in the area. Four villages from the two local governments that comprise Iwere-ile, Iganna, Iwere-oke and Ilero were randomly selected from the local government areas, thirty farmers were randomly selected from each village thus, making a total sample size of one hundred and twenty (120) respondents for the study.

3.3. Data Collection

Primary data was collected from the selected rural farmers. A structured questionnaire was used to get information on respondents' career ambition for their children. The questions were translated to Yoruba which is the native language of the respondents in order to avoid misinterpretation. Secondary data from journals and peer-reviewed articles was also used for literature to get information on farmers' choice of career ambition for their children.

3.4. Data Analysis

The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics such as percentage, frequency to describe the socio-economic characteristics of the rural farmers' while Chi-square analysis was used to test respondent's choice of career for their children. The Chi-square statistics is thus calculated as:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

Where f_o = the observed frequency (the observed counts in the cells) and f_e = the expected frequency if NO relationship existed between the variables.

As depicted in the formula, the Chi-Square statistic is based on the difference between what is actually observed in the data and what would be expected if there was truly no relationship between the variables.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Rural Farmers

Table-1. Distribution of rural farmers by age

Age- Group	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
40- 50	33	27.5
51-60	60	50.0
61-70	27	22.5
Total	120	100

Source: Field survey, 2018

Table 1, shows the age distribution of the respondents. It is observed that 27.5 percent of the respondents were within the age group of 40-50 years, 50 percent were also within the age group of 51-60 years, while 22.5 percent of the respondents were in the age group of 61-70 years. Majority of the respondents are a bit old as their average age was 55 years. Age is one of the factors that determine a person's decision making. In a study conducted by Nwoke (2011) observed that parents' age is one of the factors that determine vocational choice among adolescents school children in Abuja Municipal, Nigeria.

Table-2. Distribution of rural farmers by marital status

Marital status	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Married	104	86.7
Single	16	13.3
Total	120	100

Source: Field survey, 2018

Table 2, shows that 86.7 percent of the respondents were married while 13.3 percent were single. This result signifies that households that are married are likely to have higher farm labour from family members as compared to households that are single.

Table-3. Distribution of rural farmers by household size

Household size	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
3-6	74	61.7
7-10	39	32.5
11-16	7	5.8
Total	120	100

Source: Field survey, 2018

Table 3, shows the household size distribution of the respondents. About 61.7 percent of the respondents have household size within 3-6, also 32.5 percent of the respondents have household size within 7-10 while 5.8 percent of the respondents have household size within 11-16. In rural household, the major input used in agricultural production is the family labour. Household size with smaller family size is said to have a negative impact on the total income of the farmer while a larger family size will increase a farmers' income due to the large number of family labour that will be employed on the farm (Baidoo *et al.*, 2016).

Table-4. Distribution of rural farmers by educational background

Status	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
No formal education	55	45.8
Primary school	28	23.3
Secondary school	31	25.9
Adult education	6	5.0
Total	120	100

Source: Field survey, 2018

Table 4, shows the distribution of respondents by their level of education. Majority of the respondents were not educated constituting about 45.8 percent of the distribution, 23.3 percent of the respondents have attended primary school, 25.9 percent of the respondents have secondary education while 5.0 percent of the respondents have adult education. Household heads that are literate are very determined to get information and make use of it. This result concurs with the findings conducted by Nwoke (2011) that parent's educational background influences their child's career choice.

Table-5. Distribution of farmers' career choice for their children

Career chosen	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Farming	90	75.0
Law	9	7.5
Medicine	9	7.5
Engineering	3	2.5
Teaching	9	7.5
Total	120	100

Source: Field survey, 2018

Table 5, show that majority of the respondents (75.5 percent) want their children to go into farming as their career choice. About 25.0 percent of the respondents want their children to go into other professions like Law, Medicine, Engineering and Teaching. The 25.0 percent of the respondents that want their children to opt other career maybe because of their level of exposure. The result supports the findings of Tillman (2015) that parents' impact on career chosen by their children depends on their level of education. The scholars further stressed that family members, particularly parents are the most influential determinant of career plans, occupational ambitions and expectations.

Table-6. Chi-square test of significance on farmers' choice of career for their children

Variable	X ²	Df	Significance
Age	53.33 ^a	24	0.001***
Marital status	64.53 ^b	1	0.000***
Household size	123.2 ^c	11	0.000***
Level of education	61.92 ^d	4	0.000***
Secondary occupation	52.47 ^f	3	0.000***
Membership of social organisation	76.80 ^b	1	0.000***

Source: Results from Spss generated from field survey, 2018 where *** represent significance level at 1%. Std. Error = Standard Error

The results of the Chi-square analysis show that all the variables used to test respondent's choice of future career for their children have a significant relationship with the choice of career for their children as shown in the Table 6 above. The above indicates that head of farm families' socio-economic variables such as age, marital status, and household size, level of education, secondary occupation and membership of social organisation significantly influence choice of career for their children.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has shown that career ambition of head of farm families for their children have a significant impact on their socio-economic lives. Although, most of the farmers inherited farming as a career. This factor affected the choice of career for their children, in which only 2.5 percent wished that their children choose other professions apart from farming. The study further reveals that farmers are not yet satisfied with the way farming is being practiced, due to the drudgery nature of traditional farming method in farming activities. These farmers desire to have access to modern farming equipment such as tractors and its implements, Agro-chemicals such as insecticides, herbicides and pesticides which will make farming easier and lucrative for them. In order to make farming more attractive and lucrative for the target audience, the following recommendations should be considered.

1. The government should make farming less rigor by providing inputs such as tractors, fertilizers, herbicides at a subsidies rate in order to reduce drudgery in farming activities and make farming attractive to the youth.
2. Children should be encouraged in farming activities by incorporating Agricultural Science in the curriculum of all primary and secondary schools whether private or public schools.
3. Agricultural Science should also be made into general studies of all the tertiary institutions to encourage post-secondary students develop interest in farming activities.

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