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Rural Youth Participation in Agriculture-Based livelihood Activities in Abuja, Nigeria

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Abstract:- The study examined the factors affecting rural youth participation in agriculture-based livelihood activities in Bwari Area Council Abuja, Nigeria. The study was conducted in Ushafa, Peyi, Jigo and Pambara in Bwari. four objectives guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive research design. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select the communities in which youth are predominant for the study. Focus groups, in-depth interviews, and a structured interview schedule were used to gather primary data. Data were analyzed using frequency and percentages. The sample size of the study was 100 rural youth made up of 25 youths from each of the communities which were purposively selected. The result pointed out that this high low level of participation was due to a lack of finance (90%), a lack of inputs (88%), a lack of production and management skills (60%), environmental issues (74%), market access (58%), and market unavailability (57%) which are the major challenges that the youth face when opting for a profession in agriculturee. However, The study discovered that the majority of youth aspired to non-agricultural occupations such as skilled jobs and business rather than agricultural occupations despite having a mixed perception towards it. Hence, it is recommended that, adequate support and capital investment should be made available and Youth extension should be included in each state's agricultural extension intervention programs to encourage active youth participation in agricultural production and food security efforts etc. Finally all stakeholders must make efforts to create favourable environment for increasing youth participation in agriculture-based livelihood activities through the Ministry of Agriculture, should consider a strategies to encourage, educate, as well as help the youth who want to work and have interest in agriculture**.**

Key Words: Youth, participation, agricultural, extension

I. Introduction

Economic growth, increased food security, the abolition of destitution, and rural development are all dependent on agriculture. It is the main source of income for roughly 2.5 billion people in the developing globe. (Sennuga, Fadiji and Thaddeus, 2020). According to Research Training Program (RTP), the proportion of farmer homes (RTP) to all families has tended to decrease over the past ten years. (Jabal, Zul and Fithri, 2021). The decrease in agricultural families indicates that there are fewer farmers and farmworkers overall. Aging rural populations and urbanization both have an impact on the availability of qualified workers in agriculture worldwide, according to (Kidido, Bugri, and Kasanga, 2017). This autumn serves as a stark reminder of the declining demand for jobs in the agricultural sector. Food availability, especially as the number of farmer families decreases along with farmer productivity and agricultural land productivity, will become a more difficult issue in Nigeria. In developing countries, youth are encouraged to embrace a mix of agricultural principles, technology, and entrepreneurship that will strengthen food security (Jabal, Zul and Fithri, 2021). According to a study by Thomas and Eforuoku (2020), Nigeria's farmer community is aging. The agricultural industry, which is dominated by an older group, is basically unable to reach the production levels required to feed the world's expanding population. There are many opportunities in agriculture that have the potential to greatly enhance both the national income and the personal lives of farmers, particularly young ones.

Although the majority of Nigerian adolescents are uninterested in agricultural endeavors, Thomas and Eforuoku (2020) also claimed that they have the power to advance agriculture. Ajay and Umesh (2021) noted that rural youth make up a significant portion of rural society and are essential to agriculture and rural development. They will be held accountable for the development of the rural and agricultural sectors in the future. Youth is the most significant segment of the population because of their enthusiasm, vibrancy,

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ingenuity, and dynamic character. As the job potential of agriculture-based livelihood activities among rural youth becomes more apparent, interest in this area is growing (Chibuike et al., 2022). The centrality of agriculture in the rural economy makes it possible to use the terms "rural development" and "agricultural development" interchangeably. However, young individuals who relocate to urban areas from rural ones in quest of jobs and a better standard of life still find agriculture unappealing. (Gangwar and Kameswari, 2016). However, Adella, Alloyce, Mastewa, and Victor's research from 2020 indicates that a number of factors make the business less appealing to young people. These challenges can be economic, such as limited access to credit, limited access to the market, limited access to land, and poor profit margins. Social factors include things like parental impact, lack of interaction with extension workers, hostility toward agriculture, and low educational attainment. Environmental problems include things like unfavorable weather patterns, pests, and diseases that impact horticultural crops.

The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement defines youth engagement as "a meaningful and persistent engagement in a task that has a goal other than self." (as cited in Udemezue, 2019). This definition of youth participation has been used as the main word in many study papers and other pieces of literature. Other terms relating to youth engagement include inclusion, involvement, neighborhood youth development, volunteering, and civic youth engagement. (Francis, William and Mathenge, 2015). The low level of youth involvement in agricultural activities in Kenya has caused great worry among agriculturalists, agricultural researchers, and agricultural administrators.This is because there are currently few opportunities to increase agricultural productivity in order to ensure long-term food security for Kenya's quickly expanding population. One of the most significant shortcomings of agricultural development programs is the federal government's failure to include children in the majority of the various programs created over the years. (Nxumalo and Oladele,2013). Agriculture must be booming for a nation to attain economic stability and young people must be inspired to consider farming to be honorable vocation. (Thomas and David, 2016). Youths have the potential to surmount some of the major challenges to increasing animal production in developing countries, such as pest control, feeding, genetic enhancement, and predator protection, because they are frequently more open to new ideas and practices than adult farmers. They are vital in bringing about general awareness of a variety of issues (Francis, William and Mathenge, 2015). Both developed and developing countries frequently engage in youth mobilization for national growth. In nations like Great Britain, Demark, the Netherlands, Tanzania, the United States of America, and Germany, youth engagement in agricultural production through youth programs has significantly aided in agricultural development and given citizens' and youths' deep-seated aspirations to be independent a boost sufficient in food production (Udemezue, 2019). Young people are the future of a country, so it is crucial to support them in becoming patriotic citizens, future progressive producers, and better citizens. Their nurseries are the youth organizations. (Thomas and David, 2016). Low agricultural output, low regard for agriculture, rural-urban migration, young people's disinterest in farming, a lack of industrial businesses to process agricultural products, a lack of qualified labor, and other factors contribute to a growing food shortage in Africa (Udemezue and Anedo, 2015).

A country's capacity to advance economically depends on the viability of its agricultural sector and the effective engagement of its youth, according to the findings of (Kimaro, Towo, and Moshi, 2015). This is because they are resources that every nation can have and because maintaining agricultural output, which is important for economic development, depends on them. (Afande, Maina, and Maina, 2015). Due to their capacity for resilience, persistence, and resourcefulness as participants in the process of growth, they are among the most productive individuals in any society (Sichone, and Kwenye, 2018). Youths are the ideal change catalysts for agricultural development because they are more able and willing to embrace new ideas, concepts, and technology than the older population. These components are all required for improving the agriculture industry (Afande et al., 2015). Youth possess characteristics that, when enhanced and put to use, are invaluable resources for the development of rural and agricultural areas. Although youth participation in agriculture is essential for economic growth and the reduction of poverty, most developing nations, particularly Nigeria, still lack a thorough understanding of the importance and challenges of rural youth participation in agriculture (Omabuwa *et al*., 2022). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to find out the factors affecting rural youth participation in agriculture -based livelihood activities in Bwari Area Council Abuja, Nigeria.

The specific objectives of this study are to:

i. describe the socio-economic characteristic of the youths in the study area
ii. identify perception of youths towards agricultural production in the study area
iii. identify the key factors affecting the rural youth's participation in agriculture -based livelihood activities
iv. determine the constraints and opportunities for the youth in agriculture

Youth in Agriculture

Youth involvement in smallholder farming is crucial for the growth and development of the industry (Kimaro *et al*., 2015). This is due to the adolescents' enthusiasm, vitality, inventiveness, and openness to new concepts and technologies (Alao, Torimiro and Ayinde, 2015). Although young people have desired traits that can address farming issues and ensure agriculture production is sustainable, the majority of them are abandoning and losing interest in farming (Kimaro, *et al*., 2015). This has led to a shortage of

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labor, ideas, and farming skills, which has an impact on food security and agricultural production (Mbah, Ezeano, and Agadu, 2016). Additionally, this has resulted in a high unemployment rate and a lack of viable career options for young people (Kimaro, *et al*., 2015). The long-term viability of the agriculture sector is in doubt because the majority of young people are moving away and losing interest in farming. According to (Folefack, 2015), a lack of youth in agriculture diminishes the sector's potential to modernize and become productive in order to feed the world's expanding population now and in the future. The agricultural industry of the continent has long been characterized by small farms, low yields, and few prospects for innovation. Industrial and cutting-edge agriculture has the potential to spur economic growth, help ensure food security, and bring in money for millions of small-scale farmers.

According to (Akintobi and Aimienoho, 2020), employment and job creation are still major global news stories. High income countries deal with protracted unemployment brought on by economic slump and ongoing financial crises, which affects both policymakers and citizens. People in middle-income countries are worried that expansion has left out significant portions of the population, increasing income inequality and alienating important social groupings.The key to shared prosperity and the eradication of poverty in low-income nations is the creation of jobs. When a lot of young individuals join the labor force and look for work, the need for jobs is particularly pressing (Sennuga et al., 2021)

The young people with rural roots can easily handle professional and technical employment in agriculture. 80 percent of Ugandans live in rural regions where farming is the main source of income. The majority of children in Uganda are exposed to agricultural pursuits in this type of setting. Udemezue, (2019) points out that rural youth's effective participation in agriculture can be limited if there isn't a viable institutional framework for mobilizing, developing, and directing the special talents, experiences, and aspirations of rural youths towards agriculture, despite their (youths') rich rural life, farming background, and experience. The hand hoe and other basic tools used in traditional cultivation make subsistence farming unattractive to young people. Due to the circumstances not being improved, agriculture in Uganda has lost its appeal to young people. Where opportunity and a desire to contribute are present, young people have significantly added to economic advancement and social development. (Haruna, Asogwa and Ezhim, 2019).

Study conducted by (Njeru, 2017) also emphasizes the need to change people's negative perceptions of those who work in agriculture, and that young people are the best change agents because they are more likely and willing to embrace novel concepts, ideas, and technologies, all of which are crucial for changing how agriculture is practiced and viewed. To further entice young people into the industry, agricultural support organizations should make an intentional effort to make agricultural market knowledge, good seed, fertilizers, basic mechanization, and other inputs accessible and affordable. (Njeru, 2017). According to (Nwaogwugwu and Obele, 2017), the rapid population development and rising proportion of young people in the population should not be viewed as disadvantages but rather as opportunities to transform Ugandan agriculture. Young people have unique qualities that are advantageous for agriculture, including dynamism, strength, excitement, and desire. Young people are the most active demographic and the driving force behind society's most fruitful work. Furthermore, it has been noted that the young are a nation's primary source of resources for undertaking any sizeable agricultural and rural development projects (Udemezue, 2019).

According to Oduwole *et al.,* (2022) youths are a significant contributor to agricultural output, particularly in rural areas, and they will likely make up a large portion of the next generation of progressive farmers and better citizens. Because they have more energy, potential, and workforce than anyone else and can therefore effect positive change, youth present a chance for a sustained effort to add to Kenya's development process. In most developing countries, increases in agricultural output may result in the creation of more and better jobs, and in countries with significant agricultural sectors, encouraging employment growth in the agricultural sector is still important.

Nature and Extent of Youth Engagement in Agriculture

Nations can gain greatly from its youth, especially in maintaining agricultural output, which is a vital sector for growth. Due to their many strengths, including resilience, creativity, and tenacity, youth play a significant part in the development process. Unfortunately, this group of individuals is largely ignored by policies and program considerations. (FAO, 2017). despite the fact that this is an important time for this set of individuals as it is a period of maturation (The Future of Food and Agriculture-Trends and Challenges). For instance, according to the United Nations (2015), the unemployment rate for this category was 12.6% worldwide in 2010 compared to 4.8% for adults. Given that doing so makes it simpler for them to access employment opportunities, this may tempt the majority of youth to migrate, especially to metropolitan areas and beyond. In today's world, there are more than 1.8 billion of them, 90% of whom live in developing countries where they usually make up a sizable portion of the population. They need more authority because doing so will improve jobs, youth livelihoods, and food security. Despite the fact that this population is the most productive in any society because it consists of people who are in the height of their physical and mental powers, there aren't enough young people working in agriculture. (Mangal, 2009). Agriculture, one of the core tenets of any civilization, can only

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continue to operate as such if this low level of youth participation is corrected. In the agriculture sector, for instance, it is essential to research efficient livelihood diversification and boost young productivity.

Additionally, we must engage in the next generation by promoting healthy habits if we want them to reach their greatest potential. The reason behind this is that older people are increasingly more prevalent and numerous than individuals of any other age group (United Nation, 2015). Development programs should ensure that youth who are dynamic and adaptable have the ability to be agents of positive change. Youth are remarkably resilient and adaptable, even in the most difficult and hazardous situations. Rural youth actively engage in family livelihood activities and play significant supportive roles within their families, in addition to managing the financial returns from their activities. Typically, they seek emotional and monetary compensation for their efforts and for the supportive roles they performed in their families. (Felicia, Emmanuel and Olaseinde, 2016).

Leaders in especially need to be aware of this in order to take advantage of the opportunities and challenges it presents. Young people's exposure to the modern cash economy and their access to global information is made possible by evolving technology. In Africa, there are more than 20% of people who are between the ages of 15 and 24. This group primarily resides in rural regions. 37% of people of working age are from rural areas, yet because they have not been given enough consideration as potential farmers in Africa, they are at a disadvantage. They will be the primary force behind economic development in the upcoming decades, driving up their opportunities, if laws and programs are put in place to assist this group of people.

Limitations to Youth Agriculture Participation

The numerous factors working against this can be divided into two main categories: exogenous and endogenous. Endogenous causes are those that the youth themselves attribute to their lack of interest in agriculture. Francis and others (2015).

a. **Disinterest**: A common misconception is that agriculture doesn't give the kinds of lives and social standing that young people want and expect. These are significant factors in determining whether farming (always farming) is attractive as a profession. The 21st century lifestyles that young people need, expect, and desire are not considered to be something that agriculture can provide in terms of wages and working conditions. These lifestyles are becoming increasingly visible thanks to revolutionary advancements in networking technology that are available to (almost) everyone, including those living in the most isolated rural areas. In this sense, agriculture is seen as a low-class occupation that affects people's feeling of pride and self-respect in addition to their standard of living. These are significant aspects of welfare that go beyond our limited, one-dimensional ideas of what it means to be underprivileged, marginalized, and disadvantaged. Youth are unlikely to be drawn into or kept in agriculture if the industry is unable to provide either the desired living standards or the opportunities for upward mobility.
b. **Doubt:** Young people do not strongly think that an agriculture-related career can provide for all of their needs and wants. As a result, despite having the education or experience needed to pursue a job in it, they opt to keep a distance and avoid getting involved. The majority of youth don't have any intentions to work in agriculture in the future. This is frequently reaffirmed by their parents. People immediately envision farming when they think of agriculture: 365 days a year of arduous labor, little input, and little to no reward. Those who do think farming will survive say it needs to become "smarter," "more reliable, and "more fruitful.
c. **Negative Perception**: Young people hold a negative view of agribusiness. For immigrants coming from within the country or abroad, as an alternative to dropping out of education, or in conjunction with other non-farm businesses Young people face substantial entrance barriers due to the pressure on resources, especially the scarcity of land, so it might not even be an option. The perceived insecurity surrounding farming, which is related to unexpected climate variability, fluctuating food prices, and rising costs, is the third obstacle. Exogenous elements include those that the children cannot influence and that limit their abilities and capacity to practice agriculture. The following is one of them: (a) Lack of facilities very thin body of relevant research; (b) generalizing about the youth population; (c) land tenure system; (d) finance/capital (e) lack of knowledge about agriculture opportunities (f) poor media relations and marketing (g) ineffective career guidance; (h) youth excluded from decision-making processes (i) agriculture education and practice are not aligned and (j) lack of effective plans or programs
d. **Dearth of infrastructure**: Rural areas have notably worse physical and social infrastructure than urban areas, which leads to rural-urban migration and the subsequent exodus of youth from the rural areas where agriculture is primarily done most often. Youth are aware of how people live in different parts of their own country and around the globe. As long as metropolitan areas continue to offer more appealing destinations for their desired lifestyles, more young people will continue to leave rural areas. It is crucial to have good roads, dependable electricity, leisure activities, internet access, potable water, and affordable housing options available to keep young people in rural areas and increase their participation in agriculture.
e. **Lack of research base**: The first challenge to be overcome is the obvious lack of data on which to build policies and initiatives. There is shockingly little data on the conditions under which different categories of young people choose to

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work in agriculture or not. What are the effects of variables like gender, degree of schooling, household characteristics, proximity to markets, resource quality, availability of land, tenure systems, access to finance, etc..

f. **Generalizing about the youth population**: One of the main obstacles to youth participation in agriculture on a sustainable basis is policymakers' generalization of the "young" population. The location and who owns the land are important factors in deciding how young people feel about agriculture. Even in attempts to pique interest or increase knowledge of agriculture's bright future, the "young" must be segmented in order to reach the appropriate group with the pertinent message. The truth is that youth who have been exposed to agriculture, particularly those from rural areas where subsistence farming is largely dominant, will probably understand the value of agriculture and its role as a key component of food security, but they may also feel that it is not very progressive because the majority of people in their communities may still be subsistence farmers who are struggling to not only meet their basic needs but also advance from subsistence farming to a more sophisticated form of production. The marketing strategy must be different for young people who live in urban areas because they may have little to no exposure to agriculture.

g. **Land tenure and access**:Most African countries have a system of land tenure that makes it challenging to obtain property for agricultural use. Agriculture, a land-based activity, prevents young people from having simple access to suitable and acceptable land. In doing so, they are successfully dissuaded from interacting with the sector.

h. **Exclusion of youth from policy-making processes**:
It is essential that youth participate in discussions of agricultural strategies. In order to create and implement policies that will affect their future, we must include them if we are to take into account their huge population dynamics. Furthermore, it is crucial to think about new policies that best represent the current social, political, and economic climate, but equally important is their implementation because, in some instances, many policies are yet to be put into practice.

i. **Capital, finance and collateral:**
The majority of young people do not have recourse to financial support for agriculture. Because they lack acceptable collateral for banks and other financial institutions, they typically cannot receive financing from those institutions.

j. **Ineffective career guidance**:
One significant factor that hinders young people's involvement in agriculture is the lack of effective job guidance in schools. Another important factor contributing to the low interest is the subpar promotion of agriculture in schools as a field of study for higher education. What can be done to remedy this? To promote agriculture as a study unit, institutions that support it must conduct career expos in both rural and urban areas and provide youth with access to print and electronic media.

k. **Agriculture education and practice are not connected:**
Higher levels of schooling across the board suggest that young people are learning about the local and global agriculture systems in use. With increased education, people search for careers demanding more skill than the neighborhood smallholder farming enterprise. However, rising unemployment rates, especially among young people, suggest that work and education are failing to fulfill their roles as crucial bridges between economic advancement and the eradication of poverty and as vital means of assisting people escape poverty.

More kids than ever attend school, but it seems like little of what they learn is relevant to the skills required in the twenty-first century. The same applies to skills in the agriculture sector as in any other.

According to research by Udemezue and Anedo (2015), the following factors prevent young people from becoming involved in agriculture: Farmers clubs reportedly lack sufficient funding, coordination, and harmonization for these projects; negative perceptions, restricted access to resources for production, and a dearth of institutional incentives and support for agriculture; It was observed that the industry lacked political will, accountability, and support systems for youth concerns. When compared to other formal and informal forms of work, young people believe that farmers are physical laborers who are uneducated, unskilled, and receive low pay; Institutional problems were also noted, such as the absence of a sector youth policy, the National Youth Policy's failure to include agriculture among its thematic areas, and the present educational system's neglect of the subject. and Additionally, there are no role models in the industry, and the majority of unschooled youth interested in agriculture encounter numerous barriers to accessing and having control over the resources necessary to operate a profitable agribusiness.

Strategies to Improve Youth Involvement in Agriculture

Agriculture has a problem with its image and needs to alter it. The Young Professionals Platform on Agricultural Research for Development (www.ypard.net) states that sharing success stories of young role models in agriculture, bringing the voice of the youth to the table, disseminating information on opportunities in agricultural development, and advocating for increased youth representation and inclusion in policy development are all positive steps. Building media relationships is crucial for presenting agricultural jobs in a more alluring and glamorous light. Furthermore, it's critical to convey to youth that social media, ICT, and agriculture can all coexist. (Felicia, *et al.*, 2016).

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Making investments in education from the elementary to the university level is the second strategy. The developments in the agricultural sector and ongoing policy debates ought to be included in education curricula. The agricultural curriculum must be changed with the participation of the young and other significant stakeholders. More opportunities for farm training and business growth training should be made available to young people, particularly in value-added sectors like food processing, packaging, and trading. In addition to technical farming skills, education in soft skills like leadership, marketing, and communication is necessary.

Thirdly, funds should be allocated to expanding young Africans' access to knowledge and technology. It is important to create and disseminate databases of organizations that can give young people access to knowledge, training, and opportunities in agriculture. Young entrepreneurs' main and value-added agricultural products should be identified and supported for targeted marketing possibilities.

Fourthly, funds must be invested in collateral-free microcredit systems that can provide incentives specific to the requirements of young farmers in terms of money. Financial institutions should create loan programs and funding options for agriculture that are geared toward young people, who are frequently viewed as high-risk customers because they have little to no collateral. Young people need to be inspired and instructed in collective action processes in order to obtain financing. (Karunakaran and Gebru, 2015).

There is also a critical need for a body of cross-functional and interdisciplinary study to close the knowledge gap. Policymakers should encourage in-depth research into the motivations for and tactics for youth involvement in sustainable agriculture. Last but not least, decision-makers need to develop and support the development of workable plans and initiatives that involve numerous partners, acknowledge and address the particular problems of each country, and, most importantly, solicit feedback from the very teenagers they are meant to assist. Based on my extensive experience in Nigeria, I have provided idea rules for a workable program that is certain to initiate and sustain youth participation in agriculture in the United States.

Theoretical Framework

General Cognitive Career Theory

In 1986, Bandura developed the broad cognitive career theory. The theory contends that a person's vocation outcomes or decisions are influenced by a combination of their cognitive traits, environmental factors, and other behaviors. The theory places a strong emphasis on a person's self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals. Self-efficacy is the best predictor of human behavior, and one's views can be used to evaluate how much power they have over their environment and behavior. The start of copying behavior, the results of attempts, and the quantity of time an effort will be sustained while overcoming obstacles are all governed by self-efficacy. The theory placed a lot of emphasis on how a person presents their abilities and potential for entering the workforce in dynamic ways and how those ways interact. The theory also emphasizes the importance of expected outcomes and how probable a person perceives a result or performance to be. It also emphasizes the specific objectives, principles, and strategies individuals use to achieve a particular set of objectives. All are highlighted by centering the occupational choices of the individuals.

The success of career development also relies on how a person views or responds to the opportunities and challenges that are presently available because the future is uncertain. A study by Pelzom and Katel (2017) used a social cognitive career framework to examine how youth in rural Ghana developed an interest in farming and made adjustments to their farming practices from the perspective of the contextual factors, barriers, and opportunities that either facilitated or constrained their individual choices. The ability to stick with a particular career path relies on how each individual reacts to the obstacles or resources they face. As a consequence, it is believed that taking action in the event of a particular unanticipated incident is necessary. Models of occupation choices presuppose that decisions are lifelong processes that start in childhood and continue into maturity. (Udemezue and Anedo, 2015). The theory assumes that the most influential factors (variables) of the outcome expectations and self-efficacy and personal goals are gender, race, contextual factors such as family, geography and culture, learning experience, job opportunities, financial resources and accessibility to opportunities on training, disability status and social structural barriers and supports.

The Holland Theory of Career Choices

John Holland is the author of this hypothesis. According to Holland, when choosing a profession, people favor jobs that are more similar to other jobs that look like them. People look for jobs where they can use their talents and abilities. The theory goes on to say that the interaction between a person's surroundings and personality shapes how they behave. The behavioural style and personal types have received the most focus in this theory as the main determinants of occupational choice growth. The theory is further explained in terms of the following topics.First, rather than being arbitrary, the decision of occupation is a reflection of personality. Second, people who work in the same profession tend to have similar personalities. Third, each group's members will react to circumstances identically. Fourth, success, stability, and satisfaction in the workplace rely on a person's personality meshing well with their workplace.

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The six personality types Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Convectional are said to describe the majority of individuals. A realistic personality includes professions like truck driving postal carrier, farming, building, and architecture. Investigative types include people who work as biologists, chemists, and other related professions. It encompasses musicians, interior designers, and other creatives under the heading of artistic. Jobs requiring a social disposition include those in the police, counseling, and social work, among others. Jobs like those of a lawyer, business leader, and others are included in the enterprising personality type, while jobs like those of a bank teller, clerk, and data entry are included in the conventional personality type. The Holland career choice theory postulated that a person's personality, work environment, peers in a comparable group, behavioral preferences, and personality types all have an impact on their choice of occupation.

This theory also has the benefit of being helpful in recognizing and comprehending different working environments for young people and assisting students in becoming acquainted with the realistic aspects of the workplace. This theory's major flaw is that it does little to help employers understand the evolution of the kind or direction of working with young people. Holland also overlooked other elements like family and the labor market that could affect career decisions. (Twumasi, Jiang and Acheampong, 2019).

Empirical Review

It is suggested that entrepreneurship, technology, and agriculture value chains can be used to find a sweet spot for young jobs in sub-Saharan Africa. In their study on rural transformations and youth in Africa, Ripoll, Andersson, Badstue, Büttner, Chamberlin, Erenstein, and Sumberg (2017) argued that youth will not leave agriculture occupations but rather will stay in rural areas and depend on agriculture. However, their research highlights that a mix of entrepreneurial abilities, technology, and the agriculture value chain is essential for young people to use the available rural farming resources in an efficient manner. Since poor yields are typically the cause of dropouts, the emergence of specialized, market-driven arable farming and livestock production encourages young people to pursue careers in agriculture even though they are surrounded by other non-farming opportunities in rural and periurban areas. Therefore, market opportunities, social interactions, geographic location, and social structures all affect the young generation's choice of employment.

Additionally, Mabiso and Benfica (2019) asserted that it is a misconception that youth are leaving agriculture and moving into other non-farming work opportunities. The rural change is to blame for the temporary dropout. Adam and Quinhentos (2018) argued that the absence of other alternative jobs in rural areas has been cited as one reason for youth involvement in agriculture in their study of Interests and Perceptions of Agriculture Among Rural Youth in Mozambique. Many youths engage in petty trades that involve selling of non-farm products but do not last long.Before the third year of operation, their business fails, and ultimately they return to farming. This demonstrates the lack of entrepreneurial skills and the scarcity of non-farming employment options among young people in rural villages. Some African rural youth view agriculture as a tedious work with no obvious source of revenue that is best suited for the elderly.

Felicia, *et al*., (2016) examined the perception of rural youth toward agriculture as a profession in their research on the assessment of future agriculture in the hands of rural youth in Nigeria. The results show that because of its unpredictable income stream, agriculture is not regarded as a career. Young people with higher levels of education thus prefer to take advantage of other chances that they view as professional work.This was backed up by (Nelson, 2021) who argued that youth leave farmland and focus on non-farming economies because yields are unpredictable. However, the issue may be caused by the majority of rural residents' subpar farming practices, which make farming a taxing and underpaying work that is not appealing to most young people, especially those who have access to some levels of education. It is advised that farm equipment and some basic social services, such as improved water systems, electricity, and water supply, be provided in order to ease the marketing of agricultural products.

II. Materials and Methods

The study was carried out in the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja's Bwari Area Council. The Municipal Area Council and Gwagwalada Area Council form its borders. The area council is located at 9°16'60"N and 7°22'60"W. It is one of the area councils in Abuja that is expanding the quickest, and it is home to organizations like Dorben Polytechnic, Veritas University, the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) headquarters, and the Nigerian Law School. More than 1.3 million people call Bwari home, and the Gbagyi-speaking people who speak that language are thought to have been among the first settlers in the region. The local council experiences alternating dry and wet seasons, with a mean annual rainfall of about 1500 mm. The ten (10) wards that make up Bwari Area Council are Bwari Central, Byazhin, Dutse Alhaji, Igu, Kawu, Kubwa, Kuduru, Shere, Ushafa, and Usuma (Egboduku, Sennuga and Okpala, 2021).

Population of the Study and Research Design

The research was conducted in Bwari Area Council which has vibrant and enabling youths that have the capacity to transform Agricultural practices in the research area. The study touches various youth across Bwari who are similar in agro climatic, ethnic

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group, religion and cultural settings. The study employed descriptive research design (Akintobi and Aimienoho, 2020) in order to explore and obtain in-depth information related to factors affecting rural youth participation in agriculture -based livelihood activities in study area.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

With the use of questionnaires, the primary data for this study was gathered from the rural youth living in the study Area. As was previously mentioned, this investigation was conducted by the researchers in Bwari Area Council (FCT). The study was carried out in Bwari's Kuduru, Shere, Ushafa, and Usuma. The communities with the highest concentration of youth were chosen for the study using a purposeful sampling strategy. The study had 100 rural teenagers as respondents, of whom 25 were drawn randomly from each of the communities and chosen on purpose using carefully constructed questionnaires. Thus, the study used a total of 100 sampled respondents.

Method of Data Collection

Primary data were used for the study; the data was collected with the aid of well-structured questionnaire which was administered to the local processor, three per household. Data were collected based on socio-economic characteristic of the youths, key factors affecting the rural youth's participation in agriculture-based livelihood activities, challenges and opportunities for the youth in agriculture and the pre-dominant agriculture-based livelihood activities youth participate in the stated objectives.

Method of Analysis

The data collected for the study was analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage). With aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24 the data were analysed and the descriptive statistics were used to present the results. Descriptive statistic is used to summarize data in an organized manner by describing the relationship between variable in a sample or population.

III. Results and Discussion

The study used a quantitative approach to data analysis, which included descriptive statistics for analyzing quantitative data. To summarize and present the data, frequency distribution tables were used. The study is divided into four sections, which are as follows: socio-demographic characteristics of rural youth respondents, factors affecting rural youth engagement in agriculture-based livelihood, constraints and opportunities for youths in agriculture, and rural youth perceptions of agriculture production.

Social- Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1 shows the results of the socio-demographic characteristics of the youths in the study area. Gender, age, marital status, educational level, occupation, monthly income, and household size are among the socio-demographic variables.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Sex	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Male	40	40
Female	60	60
Age		
15-25 years	16	16
26-35 years	47	47
36-45 years	37	37
Marital status		
Single	42	42
Married	56	56
Widow	1	1
Divorced	1	1

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Level of Education		
Secondary education	29	29.5
NCE	7	6.5
OND/HSC	10	9.5
B.Sc/HND	51	52.5
M.Sc	3	2.0
PhD	-	-
Household size		
1-3 persons	38	55.5
4-6 persons	20	30.9
7-9	10	12.2
10 and above	2	1.4
Monthly income		
Below 30,000	25	30.6
31,000-60,000	21	28.1
61,000-90,000	19	22.0
91,000-120,000	9	10.3
120,000 and above	7	9.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

According to Table 1, 40% were male and about 60% were female. This finding supports the view of Chikezie *et al.,* (2012) that gender is not a barrier to active participation in agricultural production activities. The results, however, refute Akpan's (2010) claim that men are typically more active and thus more readily accessible for jobs or activities requiring a lot of energy. Males in the study region may be engaged in livelihood activities other than agriculture, which may account for the low percentage of male youth participation in agriculture-based livelihood activities. Male youths in the study area may be less involved in agricultural practices because the area council is so near to the center of government. These activities include barbering, carpentry, transportation, and security.

According to Table 1, the majority of respondents were between the ages of 26 and 35 (47%) and 36-40 (37%). The majority of the youth are at an age where their energies can be channeled into productive endeavors. Their young age may make them receptive to new innovations and have the potential to drive sustained agricultural activities for many years, as opposed to older ones, who may be resistant to change and have fewer years for continuous/sustained agricultural activities. The higher percentage in the 26-35 age group may be explained by the age at which most youth in Bwari Area Council complete secondary school. School leavers are mostly available at home, as opposed to those under the age of 26, who are mostly still in school, and those over the age of 25, who mostly migrate to look for other job opportunities.

Marital status reveals that 56% of respondents are married, demonstrating the importance that people in this study area place on family and marriage ties. Because the majority of today's youth are not married, they are not distracted by family responsibilities and can thus make informed decisions about the career path they want to pursue. Being a married youth increases the need to engage in one or more income-generating activities in order to provide for the family and ensure the availability of food and shelter.

Table 1 reveals that the majority of the correspondents (55.5%) lived in households with 1-3 persons, while 30.9% had households with 4-6 people. The majority of respondents had restricted access to resources, such as land, capital, water, and other resources, to assist agriculture value chain projects performed by the youth, which is not surprising considering that the majority of correspondents were not married.

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The majority (96%) of the teenagers in the research area had at least a secondary school education, as shown by the results for the respondents' educational level in Table 1. Sennuga et al. (2020a) assert that a person's level of education significantly affects their knowledge and understanding, and ultimately their capacity to make wise decisions. According to Akpan (2010), education will likely increase youth adoption of modern farm technologies, thereby sustaining a strong farming population; however, low levels of education among these youth will likely result in low adoption of modern agricultural techniques, resulting in a low level of output from their activities

Factors Affecting the Rural Youth's Participation in Agriculture-Based Livelihood

The factors affecting rural youth participation in agriculture are indicated in Table 2 which are based on their level of agreement with the factors (as expressed in statements). The level of agreement was measured using a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating strongly disagree, 2 indicating disagree, 3 indicating neutral, 4 indicating agree, and 5 indicating strongly agree. Mean scores greater than 3 indicated that the youth tended to agree with the statement, whereas mean scores less than 3 indicated that the youth tended to disagree with the statement. It is also worth noting that a neutral score of 3 could indicate youth neutrality or unawareness of the factors.

Table 2: Distribution of respondent's reactions to climate change as a factor

Factor (climate change)	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Remark
Undesirable climatic conditions	72(72.0)	20(20.0)	8(8.0)	0(0)	0(0)	3.64	Accept
Decision influenced through such vulnerability	52(52.0)	41(41)	7(7.0)	0(0)	0(0)	3.43	Accept
Decision influenced if the risk of climate conditions is mitigated	36(36.0)	36(36.0)	5(5.0)	23(23.0)	0(0)	3.03	Accept

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Figures in parenthesis are percentages.

Youth with mean scores greater than 3 (3.64) believed agriculture was vulnerable to unfavorable weather conditions and that there were numerous readily available and accessible non-agricultural opportunities. Because of the uncertainty and unpredictability of weather patterns, including rainfall, climate conditions are more complex. These findings corroborated the findings of the AFA (2014) and NEDA (2019) studies, which identified climate risks and non-agricultural opportunities as threats to youth involvement in agriculture. These results also indicated that the youth were aware of the limitations and circumstances in regional development.

Other factors that Discourages Rural Youth in Practicing Agriculture

Rural youth with limited or no market access (10%) indicate that more than half of the respondents do not rely on agriculture as a dependable source of income. The findings are consistent with the Government of Nigeria's (2016) recognition that access to agricultural markets, particularly among youth, remains a critical challenge in Nigeria. Access to markets for youth is becoming increasingly difficult due to supermarkets' growing international influence and the stringent standards of their distribution networks (FAO, 2014).

Table 3 indicates that a lack of water (5%) caused by a deficiency in water pumps was another factor preventing young people from pursuing careers in agriculture.This is comparable to Sumberg, Anyidoho, Leavy, Lintelo, and Wellard, (2012), who revealed that most students lacked access to training for agricultural skills gained in irrigation schemes, and even the few youths involved in farming were traditional farmers, lowering the increase in water availability to improve high participation of youths in agriculture. With the accessibility of fertile land and irrigation water, rural youth are expected to become more involved in agricultural activities.

The results of the research showed that respondents thought that pest and disease outbreaks (7.0%) were the biggest obstacles to youth involvement in agriculture. Youth have the potential to surmount some of the major obstacles to agricultural growth, such as pest control and genetic improvement, because they are frequently more receptive to new ideas and practices. (Gitau, 2011). According to sources, the council has recently experienced disasters such as dry periods, storms, and pest infestation. The disasters

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have resulted in low production in various agricultural enterprises, affecting income for rural youth farmers and discouraging youth from farming.

The study's findings also revealed that respondents (15%) agreed that labour shortage is a factor influencing youth participation in agriculture. This is in alignment with the findings of Ball and Wiley (2010), who found that young people involved in rain-fed farming had a more negative perception of agriculture, complaining that farming was portrayed as a non-labor intensive, unattractive, strenuous occupation with little reward that does not guarantee a consistent income.

According to the study findings (Table 3), another factor discouraging youth from pursuing careers in agriculture was the high cost of agricultural inputs (21%). This means that individuals who are not in agriculture are discouraged by low agricultural income, a lack of agricultural training support, and the high cost of agricultural inputs. According to Chinsinga and Chasukwa (2017), government programs, particularly the Farm Input Subsidy Program (FISP), have focused on the ageing farmer population, with no special interest in the youth. A lower proportion of youth use improved inputs; with such a low adoption rate of appropriate inputs, production is likely to remain low, limiting the youth to subsistence agriculture (Gemma et al., 2013). On the other hand, rural adolescents without access to land observed that because they were either still in school or were not married, their family had not yet given them their own farmland. According to FAO (2014), land access is especially important for young people whose living standards in rural areas rely on agriculture. It is a requirement for young people who want to work in agriculture. As a result, the 33.0% of respondents who do not have access to land cannot be forced to work in the sector.

In their decision to participate in agriculture, the youth (3%) considered transportation infrastructure and social amenities. The findings were consistent with Trevor and Kwenye's (2018) study, which recognized infrastructure constraints as a factor influencing youth participation in the sector. There was infrastructure support, but it may not be enough, especially if it is not provided in the most in need areas. Moreover, social amenities influenced young people's decision to work in agriculture. In their decision to work in agriculture, rural youth (6%) considered crop or livestock theft. One of the factors that contributed to this factor was grazing. The actions of livestock and crop thieves have increased public awareness, affecting youth participation in agriculture.

Table 3: Other factors that limits youth participation in agriculture

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Poor markets	10	10.0
Poor water availability	5	5.0
Pests and diseases	7	7.0
Shortage of labour	15	15.0
High inputs cost (fertilizers, seeds etc.)	21	21.0
Land ownership	33	33.0
Poor transport infrastructure	3	3.0
Crop or livestock theft	6	6.0

Source: Field survey, 2023

Constraints and Opportunities for the Youth in Agriculture

One of the fundamental assumptions in the definition of independent variables is that youth participation in agriculture-based job opportunities is positively influenced by access to finance. As shown in Table 4, approximately 10% of respondents had access to credit from financial institutions, while 90% had no access to credit and participated in agricultural-based job opportunities. This demonstrates unequivocally that increasing access to productive inputs and important agricultural assets is important for improving farm output and return, and it may facilitate farmers to purchase inputs or obtain physical capital required for technology adoption. This also implies that the credit supplied as startup capital is indeed very limited, even inadequate for preliminary work. Furthermore, there may be a high rate of interest to pay back, which reduces the borrowers' profit margin. In general, data show that limited credit sources, small credit amounts, high interest rates, and short repayment terms make it difficult for rural youth to obtain credit to participate in agriculture-based livelihoods. Access to agricultural land may ensure that youths have land for agricultural activities and have greater financial security.

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According to information gathered from respondents, access to land is currently deteriorating in the study area due to fragmentation. However, there is still open land access in their area, and the majority of parents have relatively larger land sizes, which their children can inherit, particularly in the study area. This comparative advantage was not fully utilized in order to distribute fairly for the youth. According to table 4, approximately 15% of youths have access to land, while 75% do not. In general, the results show that the majority of rural youth suffer from land inaccessibility, despite the relative availability of open land and parental land inheritance in the study area. The access of agricultural inputs (21%) was another factor that deterred young people from pursuing careers in agriculture, according to study results (Table 3). This indicates that the low income, lack of support for agricultural training, and high cost of agricultural inputs discourage those who are not in agriculture. According to Chinsinga and Chasukwa (2017), government initiatives, particularly the Farm Input Subsidy Program (FISP), have largely ignored the needs of young farmers in favor of an aging farmer population.

Youth use improved inputs at a relatively low rate; as a result, productivity is likely to remain low and the youth will be forced to practice subsistence farming (Gemma et al., 2013). As shown in Table 4, agriculture is enveloped by a production and management skill constraint (60%) by youth, and they lack technical know-how because they are not inclined to take part in opportunities that can ramp up their knowledge and skills that could be gained through technical assistance, i.e., trainings and capability building provided by agricultural enablers. In order to participate in the green economy, young people from rural areas may not have the essential skills or access to chances for skill development and upgrading, according to FAO (2014). The study's findings, as displayed in table 4, indicate that environmental issues serve as a constraint limiting rural youth participation in agriculture-based livelihood. The findings are consistent with the observation made by the International Labour Organization (2012) that agriculture is subject to environmental variables such as climate, soil water, biotic factors, and soil properties. Respondents who are rural youth (10%) do not depend on agriculture as a reliable source of income. The findings are consistent with Government of Nigeria (2016), which acknowledges that youth access to agricultural markets remains a major challenge in Nigeria. Due to supermarkets' expanding global influence and the strict standards of their distribution networks, access to markets for youth has grown increasingly challenging (FAO, 2014).

Table 4: Distribution of the respondent's constraints to participate in agriculture

Constraints	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Access to finance		
Easy	10	10
Difficult	90	90
Access to land		
Easy	15	15
Difficult	75	75
Access to inputs		
Easy	12	12
Difficult	88	88
Prod. and Mgt. skills		
Easy	40	40
Difficult	60	60
Environmental issues		
Easy	16	16
Difficult	74	74
Market access		
Easy	42	42
Difficult	58	58
Market availability		
Easy	43	10.3
Difficult	57	9.0

Source: Field survey, 2023

According to the respondents, there are numerous non-agricultural opportunities available and accessible (mean=3.54), such as crafting, hairdressing, hawking or vending, operating grocery stores, operating taxis, working as house help or ground laborers. The

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findings support ILO (2012) observation of apparently readily available and accessible non-agricultural opportunities and other sources of income for rural youth. According to Chinsinga and Chasukwa (2017), while the government continues to make concerted efforts to improve youth access to non-agricultural opportunities, the problem of youth involvement lingers because most of these efforts are disconnected from the agricultural industry. It should be noted, however, that many of those involved in agriculture remained in the custody of their parents, implying that they were working on family farms. They are compelled to work on the family farm for food due to family responsibilities, which are not their goals, but they have no choice. The findings are consistent with the findings of Kimaro et al. (2015), who reported that the majority of youth who participate in agriculture by working on their family farms are younger, as younger youth are more dependent on their families. To better understand occupational aspirations, respondents were asked if the availability of non-agricultural opportunities to engage in agriculture would influence their decision, and the response was evidence with a mean of 3.59.

Reasons why people strived to non-agricultural occupations include higher pay and more consistent income (Noorani, 2015). That is, youth take part in an occupation that provides them with a higher level of income; otherwise, they would not pursue it as a source of income. Respondents were asked if the availability of non-agricultural opportunities would influence their decision, and their response was evidenced by a mean of 3.23. This is in support with the research of Noorani (2015) and Sergo (2014), who reported that youth believe they must become richer quickly, which they believe is not possible by working in agriculture but by engaging in professional occupations such as doctor, teacher, and lucrative business. The current finding, it however, contradicts that of Muhammad (2009), who stated that those youths with a background in agriculture, who have no other option, engage in agricultural production as a way to earn a living.

Table 5: Distribution of the opportunities of the youth in agriculture

	SA F. (%)	A F. (%)	N F. (%)	D F. (%)	SD F. (%)	Mean	Remark
Availability and accessibility	34(38)	26(29)	25(28)	3(3)	1 (1.1)	3.54	Accepted
Decision influenced through the availability of non-agricultural opportunities to engage in agriculture	53(59)	20(22)	9(10)	5(6)	3(3.3)	3.59	Accepted
Decision influenced if agricultural opportunities are available	10(10)	41(41)	7(7.0)	42(42.0)	0(0)	3.23	Accepted

Source: Field survey, 2023

Perceptions of Youth towards Agricultural Production

The study assessed rural youth perceptions of agricultural participation in to find out whether rural youth had a positive or negative attitude toward agriculture. Perception was assumed to be a factor influencing their agricultural participation. As a result, the study used a five-point Likert scale rating for the statements to assess respondents' attitudes toward agricultural activities. There are two positive statements.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents according to their response to perception statements score

Statements	SA F (%)	A F (%)	N F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)	Mean
Public perception of agricultural profession as a poor man's job	39(43)	29(32)	17(19)	10(3.5)	5(2.5)	3.64
Personal and family influences matter	35(39)	39(43)	15(17)	1(1)	0(0)	3.20

Source: Field survey, 2023

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Table 7: Distribution of respondents according to if these statements influence their decision

Statements	SA F (%)	A F (%)	N F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)	Mean
Public perception of agricultural profession as a poor man's job	37(43)	28(32)	15(19)	15(3.5)	5(2.5)	3.10
Personal and family influences matter	35(39)	39(43)	15(17)	1(1)	0(0)	3.20

Source: Field survey, 2023

Table 8: Distribution of respondents if the statement preferences changes by the agricultural sector improving

Statements	SA F (%)	A F (%)	N F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)	Mean
Public perception of agricultural profession as a poor man's job	37(43)	28(32)	15(19)	15(3.5)	5(2.5)	3.30
Personal and family influences matter	39(43)	29(32)	17(19)	10(3.5)	5(2.5)	3.64

Source: Field survey, 2023

Table 6 shows the score of respondents on an attitudinal statement that 'agriculture as a poor man's job' which the youth tended to agree with as evidenced by the mean score of 3.64. Implying that, respondents did not associate agriculture occupation with the social status of a family. This contradicts with Sergo (2014) who reported that youth perceive agriculture as an occupation for those who have no education and from low families. Table 7 shows that majority of respondents (3.10) stating that the public perception of agriculture influences their decision that discourages them from agriculture-related activities meaning that respondents did not perceive agriculture as something for the poor but for both educated and uneducated people. The score of respondents on an attitudinal statement that "aspiring for agriculture as an occupation is not for sons and daughters of low-income families" reinforces this position. According to Table 8, the majority of respondents (mean=3.30) stated that if such perception is improved or removed, their decision will be changed.

Table 6 also shows respondents' scores on an attitudinal statement that 'personal and family influences engaging in agriculture,' with which the youth did tend to agree, as evidenced by the mean score of 3.20. This shows that the vast majority of respondents seemed to have no self-motivation for agriculture, were discouraged by their parents, were discouraged by their friends, and less than 1% were discouraged by their teachers. According to Table 7, the majority of respondents (Mean = 3.20) stated that the family and individual have a significant influence on their decision, while 19% were undecided. This is in line with studies demonstrating that parents have the greatest influence on their children's decisions. Table 8 shows that a majority of respondents (Mean =3.64) stated that as agriculture improves, personal and family preferences change.

However, schooling experiences and friends may play an important role here because the child mindset is formed at an early stage of development and the people who teach or shape their mind through what is good and bad are parents and teachers. For example, the youth indicated that their parents expected them to work hard in school. Otherwise, agriculture will be a tough experience for them. According to Ball and Wiley (2010), some parents supported farming as a career choice for their children by telling them about the benefits of farming, whereas those who discouraged farming focused on notifying children about the disadvantages of farming as a profession and encouraged them to discover activities that would take them away from farming. Teachers referred to agriculture as a disciplinary activity performed by failures. As a result, rural youth's aspirations have been significantly influenced by their parents' and relatives' views on agriculture.

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IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study's summary, findings, and recommendations are presented in this chapter. The chapter's first section contains a summary of the research. The study's conclusions are then presented in accordance with its objectives and based on the research's findings. The study's findings were transformed into particular recommendation. The study makes both policy and further research recommendations. The study was based on the factors affecting youth participation in agriculture-based livelihood activities in Bwari Area Council, Abuja, Nigeria. The factors that were examined include: age, sex, marital status, education level, rural youth's perceptions towards agriculture, factors affecting youth participation in agriculture and constraints limiting youth's participation in agriculture. The specific objectives of the study were to: describe the socio-economic characteristic of the youths in the study area; identify the key factors affecting the rural youth's participation in agriculture-based livelihood activities; identify perception of youths towards Agricultural production in the study area and to determine the constraints and opportunities for the youth in agriculture.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to identify the factors influencing youth participation in agriculture-based livelihood activities in the Bwari Area Council. Age, gender, marital status, education level, rural youth perceptions of agriculture, factors influencing youth participation in agriculture, and constraints limiting youth participation in agriculture are among the factors investigated. The questionnaire was filled out by 100 purrposively selected respondents made up of 25 youths from Ushafa, Peyi, Jigo and Pambara each in Bwari, and the data was analyzed using frequency, percentage, and mean scores. The study findings have led to the following conclusions:

Rural youth participation in agriculture is very low in Bwari Area Council. The extremely low levels of participation indicate a lack of involvement of rural youth in agriculture. Agriculture-based livelihood activities are clearly a beneficial tool for youth development and long-term development in the study area.

Furthermore, high agricultural input costs (88%), a lack of finance (90%), a lack of inputs (88%), a lack of production and management skills (60%), environmental issues (74%), market access (58%), and market unavailability (57%) are among the barriers that young people face when opting for a profession in agriculture. Rural youths' perceptions of agriculture influence their participation in agriculture slightly and positively. The study discovered that the majority of youth aspired to non-agricultural occupations such as skilled jobs and business rather than agricultural occupations. Youth, on the other hand, had positive perceptions of agricultural activities, but only a minority aspired to and took part in agricultural activities. The youth strongly agreed that agriculture was a poor man's job, with a mean score of 3.64. They see agriculture as a profession for the elderly and retired who have made a living in other fields.

Similarly, parents were discovered to be one of the most influential influences on youth's decisions and aspirational occupations, with a mean 3.20. This is due to the fact that many farmers' parents encourage their children to pursue other, more lucrative careers rather than tough jobs like theirs. Demographic characteristics have a significant influence on rural youth agriculture participation in Bwari Area Council. Age, marital status, and educational level are more likely to positively influence rural youth agriculture participation. Socio-demographic factors have a significant impact on rural youth agricultural participation. Access to land and markets have a positive impact on participation. Access to alternative jobs and other sources of income has a negative impact on rural youth participation in agriculture.

According to the study findings, if the limiting factors that the youth are currently experiencing are not addressed, they may create a "stumbling block" for the youth who want to pursue farming as a job. On the other hand, if these issues are addressed, it may provide a platform for the youth to engage in agriculture as a source of income to improve their livelihoods as well as the food security of their households, the Bwari Area Council, and Nigeria at large.

Recommendations

According to the study, youth are perceived to be more important and open to new ideas and practices than adult farmers, and they also have a greater chance of overcoming some major constraints in agricultural development. As a result, there is a need for planning to establish a suitable environment for youths to pursue agriculture as a career. Based on the study's findings, recommendations for policy direction and future research have been made.

The following recommendations have been stated for policy guidance in agriculture sector:

Male youths should be urged to take part in agriculture-based livelihood activities by providing adequate support and capital investment, as the results show that the percentage of males involved in agricultural activities is minimal.

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Youth extension should be included in each state's agricultural extension intervention programs to encourage active youth participation in agricultural production and food security efforts.

The Nigerian government should consider establishing an agricultural youth fund, championed by the youth themselves as partners, with the goal of improving access to financial credit and loans to allow rural youth to acquire land and other resources for meaningful commercial farming.

The Ministry of Agriculture should consider implementing youth-specific market-oriented agricultural intervention strategies, with a focus on profitable value chains, in order to re-engage and enhance rural youth participation in the sector.

The Nigerian government should consider establishing an agricultural training center for this sizable and increasing demographic.

The government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, should consider strategies to encourage, educate, as well as support young people who want to work in agriculture. For example, creating clubs that teachers and extension workers can use to not only change the attitudes and mindsets of youth and parents toward agriculture, but also to offer additional appropriate agricultural information.

The government, through the Ministry of Education, should investigate the possibility of reinstating agriculture as a mandatory subject in the curriculum. To facilitate work and provide a high yield, the syllabus should be supported by a positive attitude and sophisticated equipments. This will give teachers a great opportunity to tell their students about the importance of agriculture as a profession and the profits that come with it. This may also change the parents' attitudes toward agriculture and make it seem more important to their children. Similarly, the government should work to change parents' attitudes toward agriculture so that they can engage and orient their children in farming activities.

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