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Teachers' Personality as a Correlate of Students' Perception of Careers in Agriculture in Abia State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the agricultural science teachers' personality on perception of careers in agriculture among secondary school students in Abia state, Nigeria. A sample size of 270 students was drawn randomly from 27 senior secondary schools in the state. Primary data collected with the use of structured questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The result revealed that among the various fields in agriculture, the students were more aware of animal production option (WMS =1.68). They indicated a negative perception of the agricultural science teachers' personality (WMS =0.98) and careers in agriculture (PI =2.34). The study also showed a significant relationship between teachers' personality and students' perception of careers in agriculture ($p < 0.05$). There was no significant difference between the perception of male and female students towards careers in agriculture ($t = 0.268, p > 0.05$). The study concluded that with the prevalence of poor attitude towards agricultural careers, there is urgent need to work towards repositioning teaching as a career that would attract the interest of people with the potential to deliver the educational need of the Nation. It was recommended that teachers should see their task beyond impacting knowledge on students but also mentoring them for a befitting future by being a good example of the field they teach and represent.

Introduction

Career selection is an important decision that individuals will make in life to determine their future. Choice of a career has been identified as one of the major areas of concern for young people at the verge of completing their secondary education (Theresa, 2015; Nyamwange, 2016). Every student, at one time or the other, is faced with this challenge. The decision of making a career choice is important to both parents and the students because it will impact them throughout their lives. Most young people in Nigeria make wrong career choices due to ignorance, inexperience, wrong modelling, environmental influences, or because of the prestige attached to certain jobs without adequate guidance and counselling (Igere, 2017). Consequently, many of them are unsuited for their careers and are usually unable to contribute meaningfully to the society, and as such become liabilities to the nation. To avert this trend, secondary school being a transitional stage of education is expected to expose students to life ahead and prepare them for it.

Students may be unsure about a career path or may be unable to choose between career alternatives. Education tends to equip them in decision making that can help them throughout life (Pettrin, Schafft & Meece, 2014). The primary objective of secondary school education is to prepare individual students to have strong educational background before proceeding to higher institution where they will be trained on the career they chose. Therefore, teacher in secondary schools have critical task at hand as they pose certain influences that can affect the career choices of the students in their care (Ngussa & Charles, 2019).

Previous research investigated teacher's qualification, quality and socioeconomic background as sources of influence on students. There is dearth of literature on the influence of teachers'

personality type on career decisions of students in Abia State. Teachers differ from each other based on their personality type and experience they have acquired during teaching (Zarei & Sharifabad, 2012). Saab (2014) stated that a teacher's effectiveness comes from knowledge, skill, and personal characteristics, and an important aspect of the teacher's characteristics is his or her personality. Personality in term of characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors makes an individual unique. Positive personality can attract one person to another. In the wake of new economic realities in Nigeria, making agriculture a major alternative to solving unemployment crises is a way forward. Getting more youths to take agriculture as a career is a task that could be achieved from secondary schools. Teachers can help students see farming as a unique field with tremendous advancements and expanded opportunities in its job fields for graduating students (Onwumere, Modebelu & Chukwuka, 2016). This possibility can be expressed in the lifestyle of the teachers and their day-to-day interactions with the students. This attribute could provide more insight about the career field. Hence, this study sought to understand the correlation between agricultural science teachers' personality and career perception of students in agriculture in Abia State secondary schools.

Purpose of the Study

1. Assess the students' level of awareness of career options in agriculture,
2. Examine the students' perception of their agricultural science teachers' personality,
3. Examine the students' perception of career choice in agriculture

Research Questions

1. What are the students' level of awareness of career options in agriculture?
2. How do the students perceive the personality of their agricultural science teachers?
3. What are the students' perception of career choice in agriculture?

Hypothesis of the study

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between agricultural science teachers' personality and students' perception of careers in agriculture.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Due to the geographical and administrative vastness of Nigeria this study focused on Abia State. Abia is one of the 36 States in Nigeria, and it typifies the educational structure and practice of Nigeria. Abia State is in the Southeastern part of the country with its capital at Umuahia in the Northern part of the State. The State covers an area of 762,720 square kilometers, which is about 8.5 per cent of the total landmass of Nigeria. At present Abia State is made up of 17 local government areas. The state is divided into three educational zones (Umuahia, Aba and Ohafia). The population for the study consisted of students in all the 265 public secondary schools in the State. A three-stage sampling technique was used to select two hundred and seventy (270) students for the study. In the first stage, twenty-seven (27) secondary schools were randomly selected from the list of schools available in the Abia State Ministry of Education (that is 10% of the total school population in the state). In the second stage, ten students (5 males and 5 females) offering agricultural science in SS 3 were randomly selected from the class register in each school. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data for the study. The instrument comprised three sections. Section A assessed students' level of awareness of career options in agriculture, section B examined the students' perception of their agricultural science teachers' personality, section C identified the students' perception of careers in agriculture. The level of awareness was assessed using very aware (2), aware (1) and not aware (0). Perception on the teachers'

personality was measured using 4-point Likert-type scale of Very true (4), true (3) untrue (2) and very untrue (1) such that the values were added to obtain 10, with a mean score of 2.5. Therefore, statements with mean scores of above 2.5 was regarded as those that the students considered true while on the other hand, statements with mean scores below 2.5 were regarded as those they considered untrue. Perception on careers in agriculture was determined using 4-point likert scale of Strongly Agreed (4), Agreed (3), Disagreed (2) and Strongly Disagreed (1). The data generated was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as precision counts, percentages, means and standard deviation and inferential statistics such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and T-test. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Level of Awareness of Careers in Agriculture

Table 1: Distribution of respondents based on their awareness of careers in agriculture

SN	Career Options in Agriculture	Very Aware	Aware Freq. (%)	Not Aware Freq. (%)	WMS	Rank
1.	Veterinary medicine	100 (37.1)	110 (40.7)	60 (22.2)	1.15	5th
2.	Agricultural Economics	85 (31.5)	105 (38.9)	80 (29.6)	1.02	7th
3.	Agricultural Engineering	76 (28.2)	111 (41.1)	83 (30.7)	0.97	8th
4.	Agricultural Extension	91 (33.7)	97 (35.9)	82 (30.4)	1.03	6th
5.	Agricultural Education	133 (49.3)	98 (36.3)	39 (14.4)	1.35	3rd
6.	Plant & Soil Science	126 (46.7)	113 (41.9)	31 (11.5)	1.35	3rd
7.	Forestry	15 (5.5)	38 (14.1)	217 (80.4)	0.25	11th
8.	Food Science & Technology	09 (3.3)	20 (7.4)	241 (89.3)	0.14	14th
9.	Farm Management	149 (55.2)	99 (36.7)	22 (8.1)	1.47	2nd
10.	Hydroponics	06 (2.3)	12 (4.4)	252 (93.3)	0.09	15th
11.	Horticulture	12 (4.4)	32 (11.9)	226 (83.7)	0.21	12th
12.	Agricultural communication and Journalism	18 (6.7)	20 (7.4)	232 (85.9)	0.21	12th
13.	Animal Production (Livestock, fisheries etc)	201 (74.4)	52 (19.3)	17 (6.3)	1.68	1st
14.	Agriconsult	16 (5.9)	41 (15.2)	213 (78.9)	0.27	10th
15.	Agribusiness	69 (25.5)	48 (17.8)	153 (56.7)	0.69	9th

Cutoff point =1.00

The analysis in table 1 shows that animal production was the career options in agriculture the students were most aware of with a weighted mean score (WMS) of 1.68. This was followed by farm management (WMS =1.47) ranking second. Plant and soil science and agricultural education ranked third (WMS =1.35). The students expressed low awareness in horticulture (WMS =0.21), agricultural communication and journalism (WMS =0.21), food science and technology (WMS =0.14) and hydroponics (WMS =0.09). A lot of students go through college without knowing what career path they want. Before students can pick a career path, they need to experience what that career is like and what it involves. Esther and Bowen (2005) mentioned that there are great opportunities for advancement and job placement in agricultural field, only awareness of this can make more youth take agriculture as a career. Teachers can help students on proper choice of career through provision of awareness concerning different career options that students can choose from, depending on their areas of specialization (Ngussa & Rehema, 2019). Khan et al, (2012) in their study on the role of teachers in providing educational and career counseling to the secondary school students revealed that although providing career guidance is not obligatory for the teachers but in most cases, teachers can act as career guides considering it as their moral responsibility. With this respect, teachers can give students awareness about the various career opportunities and guidelines.

Perception of Agricultural Science Teachers Personality

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on perception of teachers' personality

SN	Perception Statements	Very True	True	Not True	WMS	Decision
1.	The agricultural teacher is friendly and receptive	68	152	50	1.07	Positive
2.	The teaching styles of the teacher makes the subject easy to understand	80	138	52	1.10	Positive
3.	The teacher is always punctual to class	93	113	64	1.11	Positive
4.	The dress sense of the teacher is worthy of emulation	35	160	75	0.85	Negative
5.	The teacher is highly motivated	54	127	89	0.87	Negative
6.	The teacher has great relationship with everyone	76	121	73	1.01	Positive
7.	The teacher makes the subject very interesting	90	121	59	1.12	Positive
8.	The teacher has good charisma and is always happy	65	125	80	0.94	Negative
9.	The teacher often shows a sense of commitment and satisfaction	59	147	64	0.98	Negative
10.	The teacher is seen as comfortable and financially stable	48	130	92	0.83	Negative
Cumulative Average					0.98	Positive

Cutoff point =1.00

Table 2 revealed that the students had negative perception of the agricultural science teachers' personality. This was indicated in the cumulative average of 0.98. While investigating personality traits and teaching style, Kothari and Pingle (2015) promoted the idea that teaching is a human interaction and the personality of the individual who is teaching influences this interaction. If the professional personnel in a school have a favorable image, then the students in the school will soon acquire a similar attitude. Chhapra, Naz, Usmani and Mohiuddin (2018) opined that teachers can bring a dynamic to alter in student career through his or her personality. Faitar and Faitar (2013) revealed that students connect their future success with the support from their teachers.

Perception on Career in Agriculture

Table 3: Distribution of respondents based on perception on career choice in agriculture

SN	Perception Statement	SA	A	D	SD	WMS	Decision
1.	To practice any career in agriculture, support from government or donors is necessary	58	81	70	61	2.50	Agreed
2.	The practical nature of agriculture makes it tedious	86	98	40	46	2.83	Agreed
3.	Agriculture is not an attractive profession	65	77	70	58	2.55	Agreed
4.	It leads to one becoming a farmer	30	27	104	109	1.92	Disagreed
5.	Agriculturalists live in the rural areas	23	45	93	109	1.93	Disagreed
6.	It is a dirty profession	30	39	142	59	2.15	Disagreed
7.	Agriculturist is not a respected position in the society	58	88	71	53	2.56	Agreed
8.	To get the best from the position, one must acquire more degrees	32	41	80	117	1.96	Disagreed
9.	Its professionals are not as well dressed as lawyers, accountants and bankers	71	80	84	35	2.69	Agreed
10.	Agriculture is not lucrative	60	96	49	65	2.56	Agreed
Cumulative Average (Perception index)						2.34	NEGATIVE

Cutoff Point =2.50

Table 3 shows that the students have a negative perception of careers in agriculture. This was indicated with a perception index of 2.34. Specifically, the students agreed with the statements that ‘to practice any career in agriculture, support from government or donors is necessary’ (WMS =2.50), ‘the practical nature of agriculture makes it tedious’ (WMS =2.83), ‘agriculture is not an attractive profession’ (WMS =2.55), ‘agriculturist is not a respected position in the society’ (WMS =2.56), ‘its professionals are not as well dressed as lawyers, accountants and bankers’ (WMS =2.69), ‘agriculture is not lucrative’ (WMS =2.56). However, they disagreed with statements that ‘career in agriculture means becoming a farmer’ (WMS =1.92). They also did not agree that ‘agriculturalists live in the rural areas’ (WMS =1.93), and disagreed that ‘it is a dirty profession’ (WMS =2.15), or ‘to get the best from the profession, one must acquire more degrees’ (WMS =1.96). Hoover and Scanlon (1991) and Agner (2012) mentioned that the image of agricultural education and agricultural profession in general were the greatest barriers affecting students enrolment in agriculture.” To configure a right mindset in children towards agriculture, mainstreaming them into agricultural venture at young age could improve their perception of the profession and knowledge gained during this period could be taken into the future when deciding career prospects.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant correlation between agricultural science teachers’ personality and students’ perception of careers in agriculture.

Table 4: Correlation analysis of teacher’s personality and students’ perception of careers in agriculture

		Teachers’ Personality	Students Perception
Teachers’ Personality	Pearson Correlation	1	0.058
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.043
	N	270	270
Students’ Perception	Pearson Correlation	0.058	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.043	
	N	270	270

p is significant at < 0.05

The analysis in Table 4 shows a significant correlation between the teacher’s personality and students’ perception of careers in agriculture at $p < 0.05$. This means that the formulated null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant correlation between teacher’s personality and students’ perception of careers in agriculture was rejected. Niranjana et al. (2018), mentioned that positive achievements from agriculture of adult figure in the life of a child could serve as both a motivation and positive influence to the child to choose a career in agriculture. A teacher’s love for the job will influence him/her to do all that is right at the expected time which invariably would enhance students’ interest.

Conclusion

Making career choices is one of the delicate and life-implicating decision a secondary student must make. Making choices from an array of alternatives requires critical discernment. To make accurate judgements students rely on information from role models (in form of observation). The study concluded that the students indicated negative perception of careers in agriculture due to the poor personality portrayed by their agricultural science teachers.

Recommendations

It was recommended that in order to change perceptions of students in regard to career in agriculture, the image and misconceptions must be addressed. This task is on the teachers who should see their duties beyond imparting knowledge on students but also mentoring them for

a befitting future by being a good example of the field they teach and represent. Additionally, lack of knowledge on fields in agriculture could prohibit students from taking career in it. Educating students about career opportunities in agriculture could increase interest in entering the field.

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