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Evaluation of Farming Skills Acquisition Programme of Adamawa State Government, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study evaluated the Farming Skills Acquisition Programme of Adamawa State Government, using a survey research design. The population of the study comprised of 50 trainers and 1,367 trainees. A systematic random sampling technique, using Taro Yamane formular was used to obtain a sample of 44 trainers and 309 trainees. The study collected data using a structured questionnaire, data collected was analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while the z-Test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that facilities were available, adequate and functional at Farming Skills Acquisition Centers, time allocated for training and training duration were adequate, objectives of Farming Skills Acquisition Programme were being achieved and graduates of FSAP established and engaged in agricultural businesses. Z-Test analysis showed no significant difference between the mean responses of trainees and trainers on availability of facilities for the operation of FSAP, adequacy of training duration and graduates rate of establishing and engaging in agricultural businesses. However, the z-Test showed a significant difference between the mean responses of trainers and trainees on the extent of achievement of the objectives of FSAP. The study recommended that Government and non-governmental organizations should cooperate with the farming skills acquisition centres in the area of skill training and manpower development; farming skills acquisition programme should be adopted and implemented by other states in Nigeria to reduce the rate of unemployment and government should make nonfunctional FSACs to be functional through renovation and funding.

Keywords: Evaluation, Farming Skills Acquisition Programme and Farming Skills Acquisition Centres.

1. Introduction

The rate of unemployment in Nigeria is on the increase, unemployment in the country has contributed largely to the worsening problem of poverty among the populace. Many able bodied and highly qualified persons who could not secure gainful employment have remained economically dependent. This is because they lack the necessary occupational skills to be self-employed and to effectively function in today's world of work. Unemployment rate in Nigeria has continued to be on the increase despite the abundant human and natural resources available in the country. High rate of youth's unemployment is evident in Nigeria. Every year, thousands of graduates are produced from higher institutions but there are no jobs for majority of them. Nigerian streets are full of youth hawkers who ordinarily would have found gainful employment in some enterprise in the country (Okafor, 2011). According to Awogbenle & Iwuamadi (2010), over 6.4 million youths are unemployed and 1.6 million are under-employed. Unemployment is a global trend but it occurs mostly in the developing countries of the world, with social, economic, political and psychological dependents. Thus massive youth's unemployment in any country is an indication of far more complex problems for the country (Okafor, 2009).

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Unemployment has become a major problem tormenting the lives of Nigerian youths and this poses a serious risk to the Nigeria society. The phenomenon of youth unemployment is devastating to both the individual and the society as a whole both psychologically and economically. Unemployment causes frustration, dejection, desperation and dependency on family members and friends who also have their own problems to contend with. This precarious situation has left the youths in a vicious cycle of poverty that daily erodes their confidence and bright future.

Evaluation is generally a process that attempts to determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, effectiveness and impact of activities in the light of their objectives (Akande, 2003). Akande further stated that the basic rationale for evaluation is that, it provides information for action while its primary justification is that, it contributes to the rationalization of decision making. This implies that evaluation as an applied research is committed to the principle of utility and that carrying out evaluation is to increase the rationality of decision-making process in its target programme otherwise, the exercise may be in futility.

Skill acquisition training is an adult education programme which is designed to inculcate skills to participants in various levels and meet up with their needs in terms of jobs, self-employment, self-reliance and curb restiveness among youths (Uranta & Nlerum, 2017). Skill acquisition is an important tool can be used against youth unemployment in Nigeria. When youths acquire saleable skills, it enables them to be useful to themselves and the society at large.

Farming Skills Acquisition Programme is a Vocational Education programme that prepares the participants for self-employment. Manfred & Jennifer (2004) are of the view that vocational education is that skill-based programme designed for sub-professional level education and based on specific vocation. According to Okoro (1993) vocational education is defined as any form of education whose primary purpose is to prepare persons for employment in recognized occupation. Vocational Education promotes selfemployment and is considered a vital requirement for the attainment of the Millenniums Development Goals by Nigeria. The importance of Vocational Training Programme in any economy cannot be over emphasized. Vocational Training is one way of integrating the youth into the labour market through the acquisition of vocational skills which makes them self-employed, gain employment in the labour-market or be employer of labour. Vocational Training is that form of training whose primary purpose is to prepare an individual for employment in a recognized occupation.

In view of the above trend, the Farming Skills Acquisition Programme was introduced in Adamawa State to reduce the rate of unemployment among the general populace especially the youths in the State through training in various sections of agriculture. Farming Skills Acquisition Centers (FSACs) are located in the headquarters of all the 21 Local Government Areas in Adamawa State, commencing with the following 12, namely; Demsa, Fufore,Ganye, Guyuk, Gombi, Hong, Madagali, Maiha, Mayo Belwa, Mubi North, Yola-North and Yola-South, where intensive training is being conducted for the peasant farmers and youths in various areas of Agricultural production. According to Hasuruna, Ibrahim, Vincent, and Mohammed (2011), the programme has the following components:

- Arable Crops: Cassava, Groundnut, Soya bean, Rice, Cowpea, Sorghum, Maize, Sesame, Sugarcane and Cotton.
- Tree crops: Mango, Citrus, Cashew, Pawpaw and Palm oil.
- Vegetables: Onions, Lettuce, Tomato, Chili pepper, Cabbage, Beans, Herbs and Spices, Water melon, Carrot, Eggplant, Sweet corn, Sweet melon and Cucumber.
- Poultry Production: Layers in battery cages and broilers.
- Fish production: To produce under high-tech and harvesting in existing water bodies.
- Small and large Ruminants: To fatten at the beginning and breed later when programme is fully advanced.
- Bee keeping: production, processing and marketing.
- Training and massive public enlightenment, continuous monitoring, supervision, assessment, stakeholders meeting, report and evaluation at the end of the project.

2. Statement of The Problem

Facilities are very important in every skills acquisition programme, well equipped skill acquisition centre is of paramount importance for effective operation of the programme. Participants are exposed to different

equipment, machines and tools for acquisition of skills (Okoli, Uzoagulu, & Okoli, 2018). Availability of adequate facilities at farming skills acquisition centres creats a balance between theory and practice. Unfortunately, facilities seem to be lacking in most skills acquisition centres or inadequate where available. This research is carried out to ascertain availability and adequacy of facilities and also achievement of objectives of the programme.

2.1. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to evaluate the Farming Skills Acquisition Programme of Adamawa State Government. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- Ascertain availability of facilities for the operation of the FSAP of Adamawa State Government.
- Determine the adequacy of facilities for the operation of the FSAP of Adamawa State Government.
- Determine whether the objectives of FSAP of Adamawa State Government have been achieved.

2.2. Research Questions

The following questions were answered by the study:

- How available are facilities for the implementation of FSAP in Adamawa State?
- How adequate are facilities for the operation of the FSAP of Adamawa State Government.?
- To what extent have the objectives of FSAP been achieved?

2.3. Hypotheses

The following Null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- **HO_1:** There is no significant difference between the mean responses of trainees and trainers on the availability of facilities for the operation of FSAP of Adamawa State Government.
- **HO_2:** There is no significant difference between the mean responses of trainees and trainers on adequacy of facilities for operation of FSAP of Adamawa State Government.
- **HO_3:** There is no significant difference between the mean responses of trainees and trainers on the achievement of objectives of FSAP in Adamawa State.

3. Methodology

The design for the study was a survey research design. The study was conducted in Adamawa State Nigeria. The state is located within the North-East Geo-political zone, Adamawa State lies between latitude 7^0 and 11^0 North of the equator and between longitude 11^0 and 14^0 East (Adebayo & Tukur, 1999). The population of the study in 2014 was 50 trainers (facilitators) and 1,367 trainees in the twelve farming skills acquisition centres that are functional, out of the twenty one FSACs in Adamawa State. The sample for the study was 44 trainers and 309 trainees, making a total sample of 353. The sample was selected according to a random starting point and a fixed periodic interval. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The data collected was analysed, using grand mean to answer the research questions. The hypotheses were tested, using Z-test statistic.

4. Results and Discussions

The results of the study are presented in tables based on the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

Research Question 1

Availability of facilities for the implementation of FSAP of Adamawa State Government.

Table 1 Presented data on respondents' views on level of availability of facilities for the implementation of FSAP. The table showed that respondents agreed that facilities are available and are adequate for the implementation of FSAP. Item 5 has the highest value of grandmean (3.27) which implies that facilities for poultry production are available more than the facilities for crop, cattle, sheep and goat production. Item 2 has the lowest value of grandmean (2.59) which implies that facilities for cattle production are available at lesser quantity at FSACs.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of Trainers and Trainees on Availability of Facilities for the Implementation of FSAP of Adamawa State Government N1= 44; N2 = 301and N = 345

S/N	Items	x1	x2	xG	SD	Remark
1.	Facilities for crop production at FSACs	3.09	3.10	3.10	0. 04	Available
2.	Facilities for cattle production at FSACs	2.20	2.97	2.59	0.27	Available
3.	Facilities for sheep production at FSACs	2.45	2.93	2.69	0.17	Available
4.	Facilities for goat production at FSACs	2.34	2.93	2.60	0.18	Available
5.	Facilities for poultry production at FSACs	3.32	3.21	3.27	0.04	Available
6.	Crop irrigation facilities	3.16	3.10	3.13	0.02	Available
7.	Facilities for maintenance of farm machines and tool	3.07	2.93	3.00	0.05	Available
8.	Facilities for storage and pumping of water	2.89	2.95	2.92	0.02	Available
9.	Facilities for pests and diseases control	2.89	2.85	2.87	0.01	Available
10.	Facilities for proper keeping of farm records	3.30	3.20	3.25	0.03	Available

X1= Trainers, X2 = Trainees and XG = Grand mean. N = N1+ N2 = 345
N1 = Number of trainers, N2 = Number of trainees and N = Total number of respondents.

Research Question 2

Adequacy of facilities for the operation of the FSAP of Adamawa State Government

Table 2 Presented data on respondents' views on the adequacy of facilities for the operation of the FSAP. The table shows that respondents agreed that the facilities for training are adequate in FSAP.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of Trainers and Trainees on Adequacy of Facilities for Training in FSAP of Adamawa State Government N1= 44; N2 = 301and N = 345

S/N	Items	x1	x2	xG	SD	Remark
11.	Facilities for crop production at FSACs	3.50	3.29	3.39	0.08	Adequate
12.	Facilities for cattle production at FSACs	3.48	3.24	3.36	0.08	Adequate
13.	Facilities for sheep production at FSACs	3.34	3.12	3.23	0.08	Adequate
14.	Facilities for goat production at FSAC	3.02	3.19	3.11	0.06	Adequate
15.	Facilities for poultry production at FSACs	3.14	3.10	3.12	0.01	Adequate
16.	Crop irrigation facilities	3.11	3.14	3.13	0.01	Adequate
17.	Facilities for maintenance of farm machines and tool	3.14	3.11	3.12	0.01	Adequate
18.	Facilities for storage and pumping of water	3.05	2.98	3.01	0.02	Adequate
19.	Facilities for pests and diseases control	3.14	2.68	2.91	0.16	Adequate
20.	Facilities for proper keeping of farm records	3.07	3.07	3.07	0.02	Adequate

Research Question 3

To what extent have the objectives of FSAP been achieved?

Table 3 Presented data on respondents' views on the achievement of the objectives of FSAP. The table shows that respondents agreed that the objectives of FSAP are achieved. Item 9 has the highest value of grandmean (3.32) which implies that training of participants on modern crop and livestock production practices as part of the objectives of FSAP is achieved more than other objectives. Item 12 has the lowest value of grandmean (2.61) which implies that the distribution of agricultural inputs as part of the objectives of FSAP is the least achieved.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of Trainers and Trainees on the Achievement of the Objectives in FSAP of Adamawa State Government N1= 44; N2 = 301 and N = 345

S/N	Items	x1	x2	xG	SD	Remark
21.	Empowerment of participants economically	2.98	2.93	2.95	0.02	Achieved
22.	Teaching farmers value addition to their products	3.02	3.07	3.05	0.02	Achieved
23.	Reduction of poverty among the Communities	3.23	3.09	3.16	0.05	Achieved
24.	Creation of employment to unemployed youths	2.80	2.81	2.80	0.05	Achieved
25.	Creation of wealth among all sectors of the economy	3.05	2.84	2.94	0.07	Achieved
26.	Creation of link between communities, technical markets & financial institutions	3.36	3.16	3.26	0.07	Achieved
27.	Increase in yield of farmers as a result of participation in the programme	3.25	3.09	3.17	0.05	Achieved
28.	Training of extension agents in the state	3.36	2.97	3.17	0.03	Achieved
29.	Training of participants on modern crop And livestock production practices	3.36	3.27	3.32	0.14	Achieved
30.	Organization of participants into cooperative groups	2.66	2.67	2.67	0.05	Achieved
31.	Provision of support and advisory services by financial institutions and extension service providers to participants	3.20	2.48	2.85	0.27	Achieved
32.	Distribution of agricultural inputs	2.73	2.50	2.61	0.08	Achieved

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of trainees and trainers on the availability of facilities for the operation of FSAP of Adamawa State Government.

Table 4 presented the result obtained when hypothesis 1 was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The calculated value (Z-cal) was 0.49 was less than the table value (Z-tab) 1.96. This means that significant difference does not exist between opinions of trainers and trainees, therefore the null hypothesis $H0_1$ was accepted.

Table 4: Z-Test Analysis of Mean Responses of Trainers and Trainees on the Availability of Facilities for the Operation of FSAP

Respondent category	X	SD	N	Z-Cal	Z-Tab	Remark
Trainers	2.93	0.32	44			
				-0.49	1.96	Accept
Trainees	2.97	0.14	301			

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of trainees and trainers on the adequacy of training facilities in FSAP of Adamawa State Government.

Table 5 presented result obtained after testing hypothesis 2 at 0.05 level of significance. The calculated Z value (Z-cal) 1.0 was less than the table value (Z-tab) 1.96. This means that significant difference does not exist between opinions of trainers and trainees, therefore the null hypothesis HO_2 was accepted.

Table 5: Z-Test Analysis of Mean Responses of Trainers and Trainees on the Adequacy of Training Facilities in FSAP

Respondent category	X	SD	N	Z-Cal	Z-Tab	Remark
Trainers	3.18	0.24	44			
				1.00	1.96	Accept
Trainees	3.10	0.19	301			

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference between the means responses of trainees and trainers on the extent the objective of FSAP of Adamawa State Government have been achieved.

Table 6 presented results obtained after testing hypothesis 3 at 0.05 level of significance. The calculated Z value (Z-cal) 2.09 which was greater than the table value (Z-tab) 1.96. This means that significant difference exist between opinions of trainers and trainees, therefore the null hypothesis HO_3 was rejected.

Table 6. Z-Test Analysis of Mean Responses of Trainers and Trainees on the Achievement of Objectives of FSAP

Respondent category	X	SD	N	Z-Cal	Z-Tab	Remark
Trainers	3.12	0.24	44			
				2.09	1.96	Reject
Trainees	2.94	0.24	301			

5. Findings of the Study

The findings of this study were as follow:

- Facilities are available at FSACs and the facilities are used during training and maintenance is carried out on facilities when necessary.
- Facilities at FSACs are adequate to both trainers and trainees to achieve training objectives.
- The FSAP has created employment amongst participants thereby reducing unemployment.
- The FSAP added value to farmers' products and has exposed farmers to modern crop and livestock production practices. Findings also revealed that there is proper monitoring and supervision of programme objectives and proper record keeping.
- There was no significant difference between the mean responses of trainees and trainers on the availability of facilities for the operation of FSAP of Adamawa State Government.
- There was no significant difference between the mean responses of trainees and trainers on the adequacy of training facilities in FSAP of Adamawa State Government.
- Significant difference exists between the mean responses of trainees and trainers on the achievement of the objectives of FSAP of Adamawa State Government.

6. Conclusion

The finding of the study was concluded as follows:

The study evaluated the farming skills acquisition programme of Adamawa State Government. The present concern to alleviate the suffering of people in Adamawa State especially the unemployed and small scale farmers has resulted in farming skills acquisition initiatives. The FSAP is capable of curbing unemployment crisis. The farming skills acquisition programme is laudable but the question of effectiveness of their implementation is in doubt. However, adequate provision of loan and monitoring of loans given to the beneficiaries are imperative for effective skills acquisition.

Furthermore, it is evident in the study that the scope of the programme to cover all the local government areas in the state is not fully achieved, some of the FSACs in some local governments are not functional and there is need for the government to take adequate measures to ensure that non-functional FSACs are made functional.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made.

- Government and non-governmental organizations should cooperate with the farming skills acquisition centres in the area of skill training and manpower development.
- Government should make non-functional FSACs to be functional through renovation and funding.
- Government should strengthen the capacity of FSACs through improved budgetary allocation.
- Government should link communities with farming skills acquisition centres with technical markets and financial institutions.
- Facilitators of FSAP should be encouraged by government to visit graduands' farms to ensure that they are practicing what they have learnt.

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