Emotional Intelligence, Locus of Control and Self-Efficacy as Determinants of Graduates’ Self-Employment in Agricultural Occupations in South-East, Nigeria

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Abstract
This paper investigated emotional intelligence, locus of control and self-efficacy as determinants of graduates’ self-employment in agricultural occupations. Three research questions guided the study. The study adopted an ex-post-factor research design. The study was carried out in south-east, Nigeria which is made up of five states. The target population for the study was all graduates of schools and universities of Agriculture. The sample for the study was 250 graduates randomly selected from the five states. Three instruments were used for data collection. A Cronbach alpha reliability method was used to determine the internal consistency of the items on three sets of instruments which yielded reliability indexes of 0.87, 0.84 and 0.85 respectively. The data collected for the study were analyzed using Mean Pearson’s r, F-test and Analysis of Variance statistical tools. Findings of the study revealed a strong, positive relationship between emotional intelligence, locus of control, self-efficacy and graduates’ self-employment in agricultural occupations. It was recommended among others that a counselling psychology unit be established in schools and faculties of Agriculture to work on the psychological constructs of the students in relation to their profession before graduation.

Keywords: schools of agriculture, graduates, emotional intelligence, locus of control, self-efficacy.

INTRODUCTION
Agriculture is the only sector that provides food for man and animals. Daramola, Igboke, Mosuro, and Abdullahi (2008) described Agriculture as the act of growing crops and rearing of animals for man’s benefit and raw materials for industries. It involves storage of crop and animal products, processing and distributing them to the final consumers. Writing on the importance, Olaitan and Onomia (2009) stated that agriculture provides food for human beings, serves as a source of income, shelter and clothing, source of employment, brings rural development and foreign exchange to a nation. For these benefits, agriculture is studied at all levels of education ranging from primary, secondary to tertiary levels. In each of the levels, specific areas of agriculture such as general agriculture and development, animal science, soil science, crop production, forestry, agricultural economics, food processing and storage and Agricultural extension are included in the curriculum. The content of each area is covered either shallowly or deeply depending on the level of education, area of specialization and institution such as schools of agriculture and faculties of agriculture in universities.

A school of Agriculture is explained by Enete, Amusa and Eze (2009) as a monotechnic, with a 4-year study in Agricultural programme intervened with one or two years of work experience between Ordinary National Diploma and Higher National Diploma. A faculty of agriculture is a division in a university with a department or groups of departments running in a 5-year programme in one or more aspects of agriculture. In a school or faculty of agriculture, students specialize in one of the aforementioned areas to acquire the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitude that will enable them fit into related occupation in the society. During the programme, students are exposed to both theoretical and practical activities in specific areas of agriculture and are evaluated for competence and mastery before they are allowed to graduate. Asogwa, Okator and Olaitan (2012) wrote that graduates of schools of agriculture are those individuals who met all the requirements of agricultural approved standard and have successfully completed their 4-year study in a school of agriculture in a particular area and are awarded Higher National Diploma. It is the view of National Board of Technical Education (NBTE) that the graduates of schools of Agriculture should embark on self or paid employment in their areas of study following the approve production and occupational standard. That is, the graduates of schools of agriculture are expected to be job providers, instead of job seekers. On the contrary, Olaitan, Okeme and Asogwa (2011) found out that graduates of schools of Agriculture do not take up self employment in agricultural occupations, but instead migrate to towns and cities in search of white
collar Jobs that are very rare to secure. This is in line with the earlier observation of Adewale, Oladejo and Oguniyi (2005) which posited that there is a decline in Agricultural Production because of an apparent shift of interest from Agriculture to the so-called white collar jobs by graduates of agriculture. This implies that what determines whether the graduates take up self-employment in agricultural occupations is not only the acquisition of technical competencies in the profession but also their interest which is influenced by psychological constructs such as emotional intelligence, locus of control and self-efficacy.

Emotional intelligence is one’s ability to understand and regulate one’s own emotional responses as well as adapt and respond to others (Mayer, 2002). Specifically, it is the ability to perceive emotions, access knowledge, reflectively regulate emotions and promote emotional and intellectual growth. It could be concerned with understanding of self and others, relating to people, adapting to and coping with immediate surroundings and to be more successful in dealing with environmental demands (Salovey, 2002). In the view of Mayer and Salovey (1987), emotional intelligence comprises four broad and interrelated competencies: perception, appraisal and expression of emotion, using emotion to facilitate thinking, understanding, analyzing, implementing emotional knowledge and managing emotion. George (2002) observed that an emotionally intelligent person has the ability to understand and the emotion of others and manage their moods in the social setting. It was estimated that 80% of human success could be attributed to emotional intelligence while the remaining 20% belong to intelligence quotient (Goleman, 1995). This means that the emotional intelligence of the graduates could determine their ability to understand their competence, access their knowledge to adapt to their immediate profession and become more successful in agricultural production in their environment. The belief is that the higher the emotional intelligence of a graduate of agriculture, the higher the ability to manage his competence and emotion to take up self-employment in his profession. It would be seen that strength of this relationship may be influenced by the interaction effect of locus of control.

Locus of control means the extent to which individuals believe that they can control events and causes of their actions. Locus of control is a personality construct which refers to an individual’s perception of the locus of event as determined internally by his/her own behaviour versus fate, luck or external circumstances. That is, it refers to individually perceived sources of control over certain behaviour or events (Ogunkola, 2008). Rotter (1966) established two loci as internal and external. Individuals who make choice primarily on their own are considered having internal locus of control. Such individuals see themselves as the main cause of what happens to them and their success in their environment or profession whether positive or negative. According to Bush (2005), individuals who exhibit high degrees of internal locus of control tend to be more confident in their job and actively seek chances for achievement. This class of people (graduates) have higher level of job satisfaction, are more activated in their work and exhibit higher level of participation in the society. Perkins (2008) supported that people with internal locus of control are considered less susceptible to social influence. This indicates that graduates with internal locus of control are less susceptible to social influences to migrate to urban cities in search of white collar jobs. Such graduates are more confident in their job, highly motivated to seek better information that will enable them to adjust psychologically and technically in their profession for job satisfaction and higher achievement.

On the other hand, Igwe (1991) stated that external locus of control refer to the perception of positive or negative events as being unrelated to self-behaviour and accordingly beyond personal control. Hans (2000) emphasized that people with external locus of control believe that their behaviour or success is guided by fate, luck or other external circumstances. Such people believe that their own behaviour does not matter much and that rewards in life are generally outside their control. Vanger (2006) observed that individuals with external locus of control have predisposition to believe that they have no control over their environment than others. The graduates of schools of Agriculture with external locus of control are likely to migrate to urban cities believing that their success for employment is determined by their environment and not on their competence, actions or effort. This class of graduates in most cases seem to lack self-efficacy in their profession.

Self-efficacy is the belief in one’s capability to achieve a goal or an outcome. Bandura (1986) viewed self-efficacy as a person’s judgement about being able to perform a particular activity. It is the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to manage prospective and specific situations. More precisely, it is the self-evaluation of the degree of control that one, as an agent, has over the means in the attainment of goal. Bandura (1989) postulated that self-efficacy belief operates through cognitive, motivational and effective intervening processes. People with self-efficacy set higher goals and have firmer goal commitment. They are more likely to focus their attention and direct their effort towards attainment of a set goal especially when they face obstacles. They also attribute failure to effort. In contrast, a person with low-self efficacy distracts attention from the test.

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and ruminates on his/her deficiency. They attribute failure to chances, not ability. Siegel (2000) buttressed this assertion that people with low self-efficacy towards a task are more likely to avoid it, while those with high self-efficacy are not only more likely to attempt the task, but will also work harder and persist in the face of difficulties. According to the author, self-efficacy determines: what activities individuals select, how much effort they put forth, how persistent they are in the face of difficulties and the difficulty of the goals they set.

The assertion of Siegel indicates that the ability of the graduates of schools of agriculture to take up jobs in their field of training could be determined by their level of self-efficacy. That is, the graduates of schools of Agriculture with strong sense of self-efficacy are more likely to challenge themselves with difficult tasks and be intrinsically motivated to take up self-employment in their profession. Such graduates put forth high degree of efforts in order to meet their commitments, and attribute failure to things in their control such as knowledge, skills and attitude, rather than blaming external factors like environment, nature of job, societal influence and so on. The self-efficacious graduates of schools of Agriculture are likely to recover quickly from setbacks and adjust properly to achieve their personal and professional goals. This is evidenced in the findings of Olayona (1997) that self-efficacy is a strong predictor of students’ achievement. If all the attributes of emotional intelligence, locus of control and self-efficacy are truisms and the graduates of schools of Agriculture could not pick up self-employment in their profession while they were certified technically competent by their instructors before they were allowed to graduate, then one could ask: what is the relationship between the emotional intelligence, locus of control, self-efficacy and the graduates’ self-employment in agricultural occupations?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In South-east, Nigeria, there are many schools of Agriculture in which individuals are enrolled to study agriculture with bias to certain areas such as crop production, animal production, soil science, Agricultural engineering, and fishery among others. During this period, the individuals, now called students are equipped with knowledge, principles, skills and attitude in their different areas of specialization. After which, the students are evaluated for competence and mastery to certify them employable before they are allowed to graduate. That is to enable them take up either self or paid employment in their profession since most states in South-east are endowed with high soil fertility and good rainfall pattern to supply water supply necessary for agricultural production. Surprisingly, the researchers observed that most graduates of schools of Agriculture abandon their profession and migrate to urban cities like Abuja, Enugu, Lagos, Kano, Onitsha, Newi, Aha and Owerri in search of white collar jobs which are not easy to secure these days. As a result, many of them engage themselves in some social vices such as tuggery, armed robbery, prostitution, gang staring and cultism just to earn their daily living. A pilot study on graduates of agriculture revealed a ratio of 1:9 of self-employed to unemployed in every 10 graduates. This suggests that the aim of schools and faculties of agriculture which is to produce job providers, not job seekers is just 10% effective. A further enquiry by the researchers with the graduates revealed that many of them are distracted by mere societal sentiment; influence from parents, relations and friends; lack of interest and self-confidence and unwillingness to take risk especially in agricultural occupations. It was also ascertained that there is dearth of evidence about the influence of emotional intelligence, locus of control and self-efficacy on graduates’ self-employment in agricultural occupations. Therefore, it was to abridge this gap that this study investigated emotional intelligence, locus of control and self-efficacy as determinants of graduates’ self-employment in agricultural occupations in South-east, Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions were answered by the study.

1. To what extent will emotional intelligence, locus of control and self-efficacy predict graduate’s self-employment in agricultural occupations?
2. Is there a significant relationship between emotional intelligence, locus of control, self-efficacy and graduate’s self-employment in agricultural occupations?
3. Is there significant gender difference in graduates’ self-employment in agricultural occupations?

METHODS

This study adopted an ex-post-factor (causal comparative) research design. Nworgu (2006) explained that in an ex-post-factor research, the researcher has no direct control over the independent variables and therefore cannot manipulate them for the purpose of a study. This design is suitable for this study because the independent variable which are perceived emotional intelligence, locus of control and self-efficacy have already occurred and the researchers cannot manipulate them.

The study was carried out in South-east, Nigeria which is made up of the following five states: Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi and Imo States. The availability of schools of agriculture and faculties of Agriculture in universities that graduate students in agriculture formed the bases for selecting the states for the study. The target population for the study was all graduates of agriculture from Schools of
Agriculture and universities between 2005 and 2010 who registered with the National Directorate of Employment of each State. A total of 50 graduates who could be easily reached through their addresses were purposively selected from each state, giving a sample size of 250 graduates that participated in the study.

Three research instruments were developed from literature reviewed and used for data collection. The instruments are:

a) Graduates’ Emotional Intelligence Rating Scale (GEIRS).

b) Graduates’ Locus of Control Rating Scale (GLCRS).

c) Graduates’ Self-efficacy Rating Scale (GSERS).

Graduates’ Emotional Intelligence Rating Scale (GEIRS). This study adopted the emotional intelligent rating scale of Salovey and Mayer in Cherry (2012) to determine the emotional intelligence of the graduates. The instrument had four clusters with corresponding item statements thus: perceiving emotions (6 items), reasoning with emotions (8 items), understanding emotions (6 items) and managing emotions (6 items). The instrument had a four point response options of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. Negative items statements were reversely scored.

Graduates’ Locus of Control Rating Scale (GLCRS). In this rating scale, Igwe’s (1991) locus of control personality scale was adapted to measure the extent to which a graduate possesses internal or external locus of control or re-enforcement belief. The instrument had one cluster of 27 pairs of statements after removing two pairs of statements with 4 filler statement which were in the original scale but not suitable for the graduates. The 27 pairs of statement were organized in such a way that internal statements are arranged as option “A” while external statements are arranged as option “B”. The items on the instrument were related to response options of strongly agree (SA=4), agree (A=3), disagree (D=2) and strongly disagree (SD=1). Negative items were reversely scored.

Graduates’ Self-Efficacy Rating Scale (GSERS). This scale was developed by the researchers following Bandura’s (1988) four factors affecting self-efficacy. This gave rise to four clusters of experience (enactive attainment), modelling (vicarious experience), social persuasion and physiological factors with 5 items each amounting to 20 item statements on the instrument. This instrument had a four point response options of very sure (VS=4), somewhat sure (SS=3), somewhat unsure (SU=3) and very unsure (VU=1).

The initial versions of the instruments were face and content validated by three experts in counselling psychology in the faculties of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State University of Science and Technology and College of Agriculture and Science Education, University of Agriculture, Makurdi. Their inputs were used to produce the final versions of the instruments that were used for data collection.

The 3 sets of instruments were administered to 30 graduates of agriculture in South-south, Nigeria who were not part of the population to establish the reliability of the instruments. A Cronbach alpha reliability method was used to determine the internal consistency of the items on 3 sets of the instruments. This yielded reliability indices of 0.87, 0.84 and 0.85 respectively.

The researchers hired five research assistants, one from each state to help in administering the instruments to the respondents. The administration had 100 percent retrieval. The data collected for the study were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools like the Mean, Pearson’s r, t-test and Analysis of Variance.

RESULTS

The following findings were obtained from the study.

Research Question 1: To what extent will emotional intelligence, locus of control and self-efficacy predict graduate’s self-employment in agricultural occupations?

Table 1: Combined contribution of emotional intelligence, locus of control and self-efficacy on graduates’ self-employment in agricultural occupations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Rem.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>1443.256</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>726.15</td>
<td>15.866</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>16513.279</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>48.108</td>
<td>17956.535</td>
<td>437</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17956.535</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>48.108</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant (p < 0.05).

R= 0.242, R. square = 0.094

Adjusted R. square = 0.061,

Standard error = 6.587

Table 1 shows that emotional intelligence, locus of control and self-efficacy, when taken together, accounted for 9.4% of the total variance in graduate’s self-employment in agricultural occupations (R. square 0.094, p< 0.05). The percentage is statistically significant. Thus, the three independent variables (emotional intelligence, locus of control and self-efficacy) are relevant predictors of graduates’ self-employment in agricultural occupations.

Research Question 2: Is there a significant relationship between emotional intelligence, locus of
control, self-efficacy and graduate’s self-employment in agricultural occupations?

Table 2: Relationship between emotional intelligence, locus of control, self-efficacy and graduate’s self-employment in agricultural occupations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Pearson r</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduates’ self-employment</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Intelligence</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>53.40</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of Control</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>51.00</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>52.06</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = significant.

Findings from Table 2 revealed a strong, positive relationship between emotional intelligence, locus of control, self-efficacy and graduates’ self-employment in agricultural occupations ($r = 0.56$, $p < 0.05$; $r = 0.53$, $p < 0.05$; $r = 0.54$, $p < 0.05$). An $r$ value of 0.56, 0.53 and 0.54 respectively are indications of a strong, positive and significant relationship. Therefore, a strong, positive and significant relationship exists between emotional intelligence, locus of control, self-efficacy and graduates’ self-employment in agricultural occupations.

**Research Question 3:** Is there significant gender difference in graduates’ self-employment in agricultural occupations?

Table 3: Gender difference in graduates’ self-employment in Agricultural occupations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t-calculated</th>
<th>t-critical</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>48.72</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>50.02</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*= not significant.

The third research question confirmed that there is no gender difference in graduates’ self-employment in agricultural occupations. This result was confirmed by the findings of Tella and Tella (2003) who found out that there is no difference in students’ parental supportiveness based on gender. Adeola and Bolarinwa (2009) in a study reported that the gender of students does not significantly influence their performance in literature but rather on other factors.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Many students graduate from schools and faculties of Agriculture every year. Most of these graduates abandon their profession for which they were certified competent and skilled before graduation. Instead, they migrate to cities in search of white collar jobs that are difficult to secure. It was found out that emotional intelligence, locus of control and self-efficacy correlate positively with the graduates’ self-employment in agricultural occupations. It was therefore, recommended that:

1. A counselling psychology unit be established in schools and faculties of Agriculture to work on the psychological constructs of the students in relation to their profession before graduation.
2. Conferences, workshops and seminars should be regularly organized by the schools.
administration and psychologists for students to improve their non-cognitive variables or psychological construct.

3. Government and relevant educational agencies should provide necessary psychological inventories to enable counsellors to carry out their duties in schools and faculties of Agriculture effectively.

REFERENCES


