

Attitudinal Individualities Affecting Youth Participation in Agriculture: A Case of Seven Selected Counties in Kenya.

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Abstract

Youth participation in agriculture is one of the key enablers of achieving global food security and nutrition. Further if youth are engaged in agriculture there will be increase in economic growth and attainment of environmental sustainability. This is because youth account for one of the highest populated age group (24%) in the world. However, countries including Kenya continue to battle food security and nutrition as evident in the Big 4 Agenda of 2017. There are several factors contributing to this state of affairs including low participation of youth in agriculture. This research work investigated the influence of attitudinal traits on youth participation in agriculture. Five attitudinal acuties were investigated to determine how they affect youth participation in agriculture. They are; agriculture is labour intensive, agriculture is dirty enterprise and non-professional in nature, agricultural returns take too long to yield and agriculture is a domain for the elderly and school dropouts. A descriptive survey was carried out from a sample of three hundred and eighty five youth selected from seven counties in Kenya. Data was collected and analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression model. Results from the study indicated that all the attitudinal traits considered influence youth participation in agriculture to some extent (0.176 correlation coefficient). Majority (32.9%) thought that agriculture take long to yield returns while the perception that agriculture is dirty and non-professional had the least influence (16.4%) of youth participation in agriculture. Training and sensitization of youth, provision of incentives or financial support to youth and formation of youth groups were found to be the most effective ways of promoting positive attitude among the youth towards agriculture.

Keywords: Attitude Traits, Youth, Agriculture, Food Security, Big 4 Agenda

Introduction

Agriculture plays a noteworthy role in achieving global food security and nutrition, increasing economic growth, and attaining environmental sustainability. Agriculture is the world's

largest provider of jobs representing about forty percent (40%) of the global workforce (IAFN, 2019). The Government of Kenya launched the 'Big 4 Agenda' in the year 2017 in an effort to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture, as stipulated in (Sustainable Development Goal (SDG2), and feed its fast growing population. This implies up-skilling and re-tooling of the current Agricultural workforce, by attracting new personnel and expanding the range of career opportunities available in the Agriculture, food, and nutrition-environment nexus.

Globally, young people account for approximately twenty four percent (24%) of the working poor and this dynamic is particularly pronounced in Africa, where over seventy percent (70%) of the Youth subsist on two dollars per day or less. Albeit, the world's Youth population is expected to grow, employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for young women and men remain limited, particularly for those living in economically stagnant rural areas of developing countries. It is projected that the continent's share of the world's youth population will grow from one-fifth, as it was in 2012, to as high as one-third by the year 2050 (AFDB, 2015).

Agriculture is an important sector in the economy of the most countries in the world, it accounts for 25% – 40% of total Gross Domestic Product in Sub Sahara Africa. The reliance on Agriculture for food production and food security at domestic, regional, and global level depends on Youth productive force (Prosper John Kimaro, 2015). In Kenya, the percentage of Youth working in Agriculture is low compared to those migrating to urban areas (Ahaibwe et al., 2013; Bezu and Holden, 2014).

Continued growth of Africa's rural populations with decline in the percentage of the Youth working in Agriculture implies an increase in the absolute number of young people who are living in rural areas and are dependent to some degree on farming or livestock production (McMillan and Harttgen, 2014; Petesch and Caillava, 2012). This basic fact looms large in the analysis of those focused on the need for structural change in the Agricultural sector and the factors that constrain it (Filmer and Fox 2014). Therefore, it is important to focus on Youth participation in agriculture as the future of addressing food insecurity even as global Youth population increases. This is given by the fact that the Youth have the potential to overcome some major constraints in Agriculture development as they are more open to new ideas and practices than adult farmers (Prosper John Kimaro, 2015).

Agriculture in Kenya is mainly practiced by older people of about 60 years of age. Young people constitute about seventy five percent (75 %) of the total population and are below the age of 35 years (KNBS, 2019).

Nonetheless, there is a poor perception of Agriculture by the Youth in Kenya. Agriculture is perceived as an occupation that is practiced by the uneducated, poor, rural, or old people thus most of the Youth prefer white collar jobs despite the vast number of unemployed Youth (Sitawa, 2016).

A few programs and projects have been undertaken to support Youth engagement in Agriculture. For instance, the government has been committed in supporting Youth in Agriculture by introducing funding instruments like current Youth Enterprise development Fund (YEDF), Uwezo Fund and the provision of affordable state loans to subsidize fertilizer and farm equipment that can benefit the Youth (Goris, 2016). Despite this however, there is a growing concern on the level of Participation of the Youth in Agricultural activities. This is attributed to negative attitude towards agriculture among other factors. It's against this background that this study explored the attitudinal traits affecting Youth Participation in Agriculture in Kenya.

The main objectives and contributions of this paper are summarized as follows: a) identification of attitude individualities that affect Youth participation in agriculture b) investigation of how the attitude traits identified affect Youth participation in agriculture. c) Propose appropriate ways in which positive attitude toward agriculture could be promoted among Youth.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Section 2 provides a comprehensive review of related research undertaken in the area of attitude and youth participation in agriculture. Section 3 describes the methodology used in the investigation and results obtained from the research are presented in Section 4. Section 5 concludes the paper, puts forth the recommendations and proposes some future research works.

Related Works

Cognitive approach postulates that human behaviour is influenced by mental processes such as perceptions or attitudes, personality traits, and socio-economic factors. The approach emerged from the interaction of social psychology and organizational management (Díaz-Pichardo, 2012).

Social Learning Theory is one of the psychology theories in behavioral approach that was developed by Bandura (1977). The theory asserts that behavior is learnt from the environment through observation of others. It explains the interactions of behaviors formed from learnt attitudes, perceptions (individual perceptions, perceptions of economic opportunities, and socio-cultural perceptions) to decision making. The theory posits that each of these influencing factors plays a part in all career decisions that are made, but different combinations of interactions of the factors produce a multitude of different career choices. Culture for instance have been found to influence entrepreneurship both through social legitimation and through promoting positive attitudes in individuals (Liñán, Santos, and Fernández, 2011). Likewise, knowledge acquired in previous entrepreneurial experiences (tacit knowledge) often enhances the probability of becoming an entrepreneur, and furthermore allows entrepreneurs to avoid costly mistakes, thus providing an advantage of their better exploitation of business opportunities (Abdullah and Sulaiman, 2013). Perceptions play an important role in influencing the interests of the Youth in agri-preneurship. According to (Liñán, Santos and Fernández, 2011), individuals decide to start an entrepreneurial activity if it is perceived to be more desirable and feasible than other alternatives.

Other studies have found that individuals whose parents are entrepreneurs often become entrepreneurs because of their individual perceptions that will have formed through observing these role models (Arenius and Minniti, 2005). Analysts have found that this subjective interpretation of reality (perception) plays a central role because the entrepreneurial environment is often characterized by imperfect markets and incomplete information. Particularly in cases where career guidance is limited or not easily accessible, an individual's views or perceptions may become the most influential factor in decision making. Studies have shown that individuals continue to rely on their perceptions beyond the career decision-making point, as nascent entrepreneurs significantly rely on subjective and often biased perceptions, rather than on objective expectations of success (Liñán, Santos, and Fernández, 2011).

Much of what has already been reported suggests that more education and higher aspirations are associated with young people leaving Agriculture. However, no evidence that would directly link rising aspirations to Youth leaving Agriculture was discovered. Similarly, an

extensive review of the relationship between education, aspirations and attainment found little relevant literature from Africa (Leavy and Smith, 2010).

Research on young people's engagement with and interest in cocoa farming suggest that despite high aspirations, Youth were realistic about the possibilities open to them (Anyidoho et al., 2012). Thus, while many respondents pointed to 'white collar' jobs as the most desirable, they also knew that because of the skill and education requirements, these jobs were out of their reach.

Further research from Ghana suggests that the decision to remain in Agriculture could be intended or unintended, hence independent of an individual's aspirations (Ampadu, 2012). Some young people want to farm from the beginning, while others go back to farming after trying other things. Some evidence was identified that makes tentative links between education and aspirations.

In Ethiopia, young people who were still in school (at the time of the study) were more likely to later choose an urban job than those who had already left school (Bezu and Holden, 2014) and another study found a correlation between the completion of school and aspirations. Ethiopian children who aspire to be a farmer at the age of 15 are the ones who did not complete primary education (Tafere and Woldehanna, 2012).

Similarly, (Yisak and Tassew, 2012) from their study in Ethiopia, observed that individual and household characteristics have strong link with aspirations of rural youth particularly on agricultural aspirations. Further, they pointed out the strong influence of family or household on children aspiration levels.

It was reported from Nigeria that the probability of Youth working in Agriculture declines with higher levels of school attainment (Agwu et al., 2014), while in Ghana, aspirations to get involved in cocoa farming declined with 'actual or expected educational attainment' (Anyidoho et al., 2012).

Notably "youth find farming unattractive" narrative is echoed in studies suggesting resentment of the Youth against farming or under current conditions (Leavy and Hossain, 2014; Tadele and Gella, 2012; White, 2012). However, there are also studies suggesting that young people have very diverse attitudes towards farming and rural areas (Berckmoes and White 2016).

Finally, despite these studies demonstrating that in many countries young people do not aspire to farm or have other aspirations, some studies still find that some Youth are interested in farming.

In Ghana, interviews with young people suggested that some want to farm, and that 'self-satisfaction, social approval and not necessarily monetary' returns are important, even though the need to make money in order to survive is recognized (Ampadu, 2012).

Youth in Burundi who are not in school see farming as a realistic option for their futures. As one young man put it: 'Because it is the profession of our forefathers. We grew up seeing our grandparents farm and breed cattle. It is not us now who will just leave this profession like that' (Berckmoes and White, 2014).

Methods

The objectives of this study were to identify Attitudinal Traits that influence Youth participation in agriculture in Kenya, investigate how the traits affect youth participation in agriculture and propose ways of promoting positive attitude towards youth participation in agriculture. To realize these objectives, the study undertook a descriptive survey design which according to (Kothari and Guarav, 2014), is a design that obtains relevant and precise

information concerning the current status of a problem or phenomenon and whenever possible draw valid general conclusions from the facts discovered.

The study population which was the Youth, was derived from the Seven(7) Counties, namely Kitui, Tharaka Nithi, Kirinyaga, Isiolo, Nyeri, Embu and Murang'a. They were comprised 385 Youth who were engaged in Agriculture in their respective Counties.

The study used questionnaires to collect data. Good questionnaire design is crucial (Kabir, 2016) in order to generate data conducive to the goals of the research. Questionnaire format, sequence and wording, the inclusion of classification, behavioural, knowledge and perception questions, and questionnaire length and output, need to be considered to ensure reliability, validity and sustained engagement of the participant. The questionnaire had closed-ended and open-ended questions.

The closed-ended questions made use of a five-point Likert scale where respondents were required to fill according to their level of agreement with the statements. The study took an approach where data was collected using a qualitative approach in the questionnaires. Closed-ended questions are easy to analyse statistically, but they seriously limit the responses that participants can give. According to (Hale, 2012) and (Jackson, 2009), descriptive research methods fundamentally describe situations.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The descriptive analysis included the mean and percentages. This assisted in presenting the face value of the data collected for further analysis.

The study used the Correlation Analysis, a Multiple Linear Regression model. Further, Analysis of Variance method (ANOVA) was used to determine the significance of the Multiple Linear Regression Model. The analyzed data from the descriptive statistics was presented in form of figures, tables, cross-tabulation tables, pie charts and bar charts, whilst the inferential statistics were presented in the form of tables. Table 1 shows the various aspects of attitude used in the study.

Table 1

Attitudinal aspects considered in the study

Attitudinal Aspects
Agriculture is Labour intensive
Agriculture is dirty enterprise and non-professional in nature
Agricultural returns take too long to yield
Agriculture is a domain for the elderly, school dropouts and lazy

(Source: Authors, 2020)

Results

This section summarizes the findings of the study. It begins with the respondents' response rate, the respondents' demography and descriptive analysis of the study objectives using proportions. The section is concluded with the inferential statistics of the relationship between attitudinal traits and youth participation in agriculture using the ANOVA, t-test and Multiple Linear Regression Model.

Response Rate

The distribution of the targeted respondents and response rate is shown in table 2.

Table 2

Response rate

	Administered Questionnaires	Returned Questionnaires	On cleaning Questionnaires	Percentage Remaining
Respondents	385	250	194	50%

(Source: Authors, 2020)

From table 2, the study targeted three hundred and eighty-five (385) respondents. Two hundred and fifty (250) were collected. On cleaning the data one hundred and ninety-four (194) remained giving a percentage of 50.4%. This could be attributed to the fact that some respondents had certificate level education or no education at all (41%) as shown in table 4 hence difficulties in filling the questionnaires.

Respondents County

Distribution of respondents per county is shown in table 3.

Table 3

Distribution of Respondents Per County

County	Frequency	%
Kitui	11	6.0
Tharaka Nithi	43	22.0
Kirinyaga	25	13.0
Isiolo	23	12.0
Nyeri	42	21.0
Embu	31	16.0
Murang'a	19	10.0
N/%	194	100.0

(Source: SPSS Survey Data Output, 2020)

From table 3, majority of the respondents were from Tharaka Nithi County (22%), Nyeri County (21%) and Embu County (16%).

Respondents Gender

Figure 1 shows the distribution of respondents per gender.

Respondents Gender

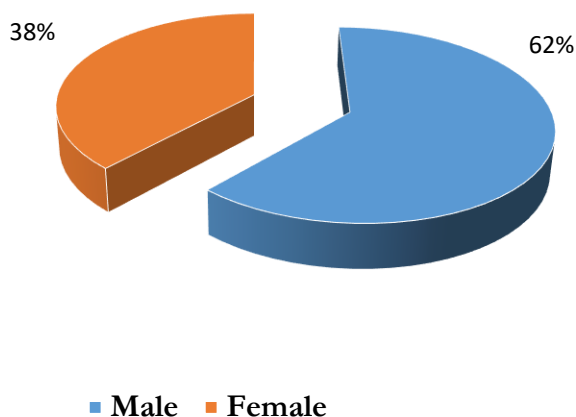


Figure 1: Respondents Gender (Source: SPSS Survey Data Output, 2020)

From figure 1, sixty two percent (62%) of the respondents were male while thirty-eight (38%) percent were female.

Respondents Age

The age distribution of the respondents was as shown in figure 2.

Respondents Age

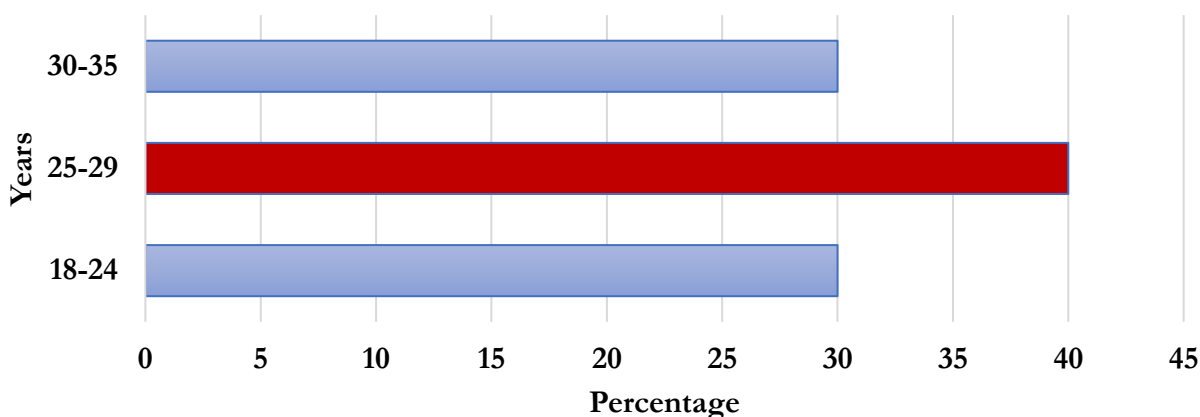


Figure 1 : Respondents Age (Source: SPSS Survey Data Output, 2020)

From figure 2, thirty percent (30%) of the respondents were aged between 18 and 24 years, forty percent (40%) were aged between 25 and 29 years and thirty percent (30%) between 30 and 35 years. The low percentage for age between 18 and 24 years could be attributed to the fact that majority of youth in this age bracket are still in post secondary colleges and universities.

Respondents Level of Education

The distribution respondents as per their levels of education was analysed and the findings represented in table 4.

Table 4

Respondents Level of Education

Level of Education	%
Post-Graduate	6.0
Degree	28.0
Diploma	25.0
Certificate	26.0
None	15.0
%	100.0

(Source: SPSS Survey Data Output, 2020)

From table 4, six percent (6%) had a Post Graduate, twenty eight percent (28%) had a Degree, twenty five percent (25%) had a Diploma, twenty six percent (26%) had a Certificate and fifteen percent (15%) did not have any level of education.

Respondents Experience in Agriculture in Years

We sought to find out the respondent's experience in agriculture and the results obtained are presented in figure 4.

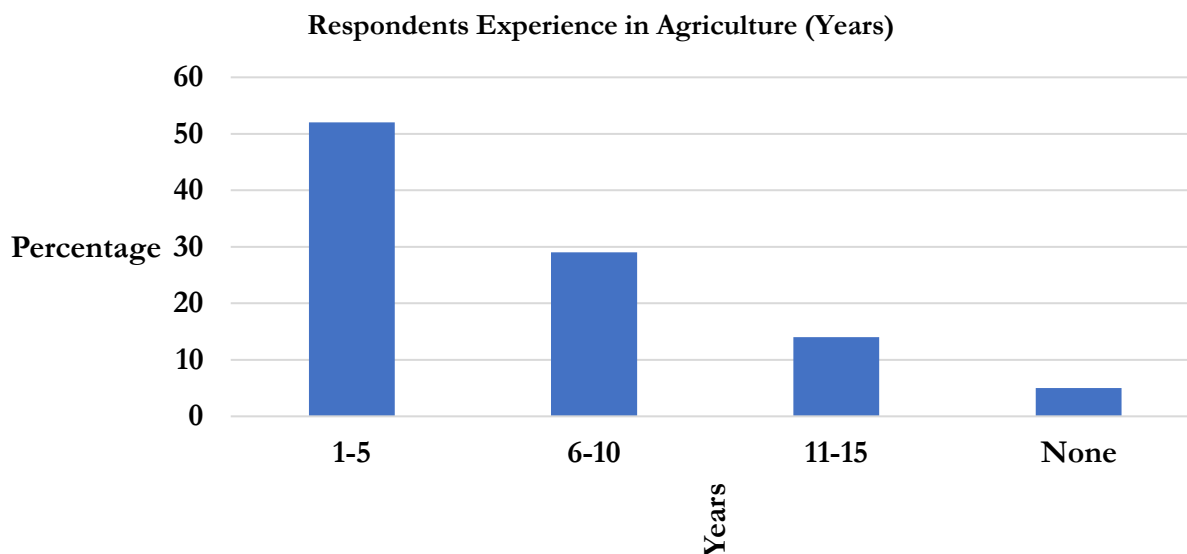


Figure 2 : Respondents Experience in Agriculture in Years (Source: SPSS Survey Data Output, 2020)

From figure 4, fifty two percent (52%) of the respondent's Agriculture experience was between 1 and 5 years, twenty nine percent (29%) had 6 and 10 years of Agricultural experience, and fourteen percent (14%), had 11 and 15 years of Agricultural experience and five percent (5%) had no Agriculture experience at all. These findings indicate that majority of the respondents (95%) had experience in agriculture of one year and above thus a pointer that the information they provided on attitudinal traits was reliable.

Respondents Nature of Engagement in Agriculture

The distribution of respondents as per the nature of engagement in agriculture was analyzed to determine whether it was full time or part time engagement. The results obtained were presented in figure 5.

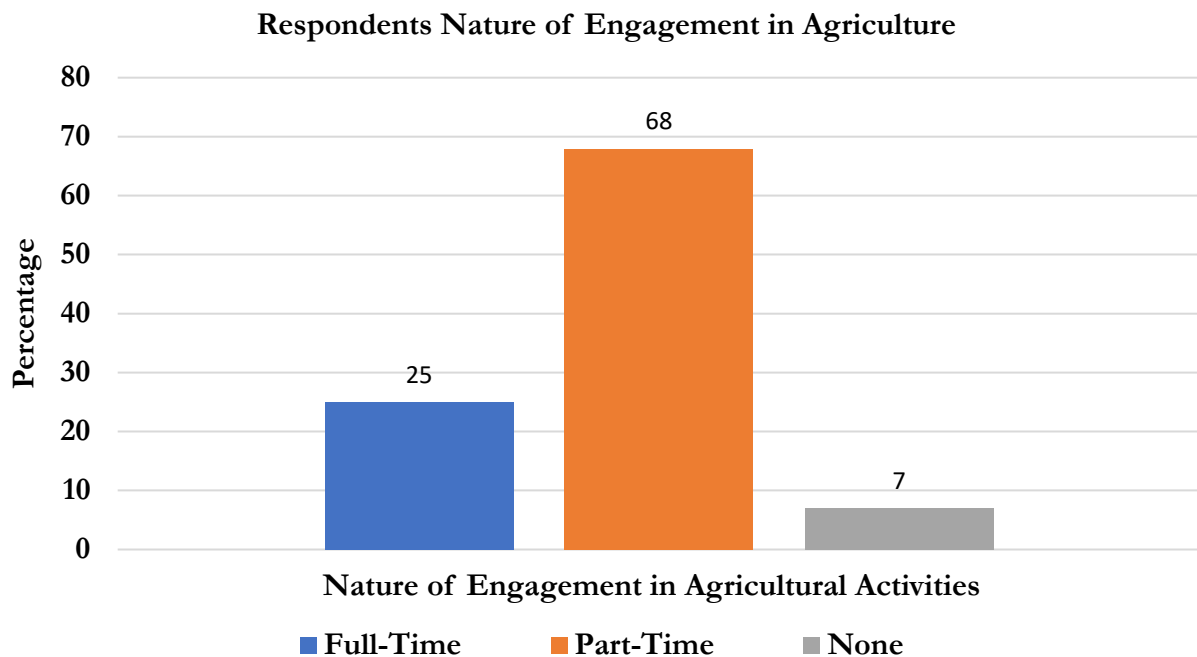


Figure 3 : Respondents Nature of Engagement in Agriculture (Source: SPSS Survey Data Output, 2020)

From figure 5 twenty five percent (25%) of the respondents were full time engaged in Agriculture, sixty eight percent (68%) part time engagement in Agriculture and seven percent (7%) never engaged in Agriculture.

Respondents Type of Farming

The type of farming in which the respondents were engaged in was categorized as large scale, medium scale and small scale. The results obtained from the analysis were presented in figure 7.

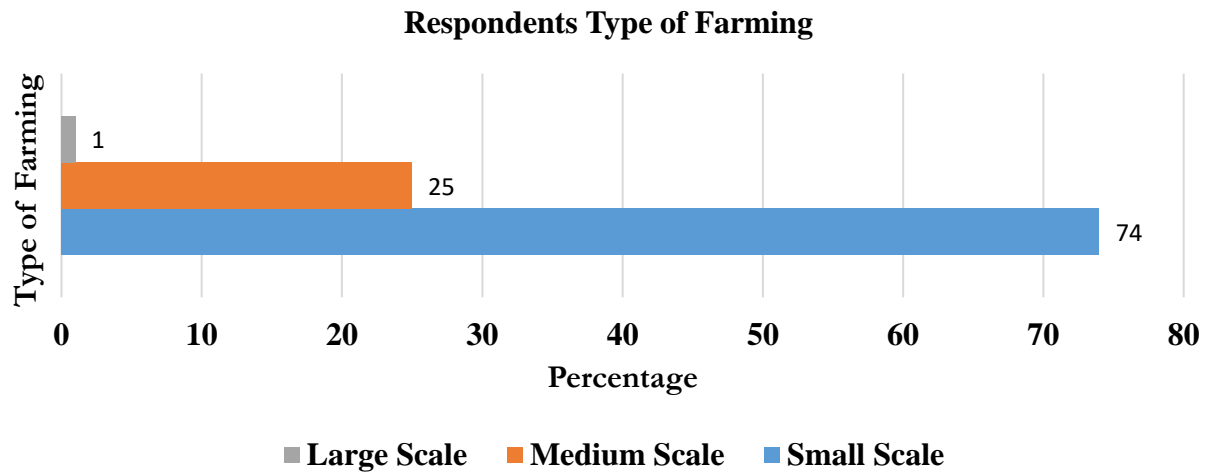


Figure 4 : Respondents Type of Farming (Source: SPSS Survey Data Output, 2020)

From Figure 7 seventy four percent (74%) of the respondents were small scale farmers, twenty five percent (25%) were medium scale farmers and one percent (1%) large scale farmers. Though there are many clues from these findings, one of the indications is that majority of youths are perceiving agriculture as a subsistence activity but not a business venture.

Attitudinal Traits influence on Youth Participation in Agriculture.

Several key indicators on attitudinal traits towards agriculture were identified and their influence on youth participation in agriculture analyzed. The results obtained were presented in Table 5

Table 5

Attitudinal Traits on the Participation of the Youth in Agriculture

Key Indicators on Attitudinal Traits	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
	%					
1. I believe that Agricultural activities are labour intensive with low returns	25.0	29.0	12.0	26.0	8.0	2.59
2. Agricultural activities do provide employment opportunities to the Youth in my County	9.0	14.0	7.0	41.0	29.0	3.92
3. I perceive Agriculture as a dirty enterprise and non-professional in nature	64.0	20.0	4.0	8.0	5.0	1.64
4. I am able to undertake formal employment alongside Agricultural activities	8.0	10.0	12.0	53.0	17.0	3.62
5. In my County, the returns from Agricultural activities take too long for the Youth to get returns	10.0	27.0	25.0	27.0	9.0	3.04
6. Agricultural activities provide a sustainable source of income for the Youth in my County	9.0	22.0	18.0	33.0	18.0	3.29
7. In my County, Agricultural activities are deemed to be a domain for the elderly, school dropouts and those with nothing else to do	19.0	30.0	12.0	27.0	12.0	2.83
8. The Youth are recognized for their efforts in participating in productive Agricultural activities in my County	31.0	24.0	16.0	22.0	7.0	2.52

Key Indicators on Attitudinal Traits	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
	%					
9. In my County the Youth have formed groups to promote Agricultural activities	14.0	19.0	23.0	35.0	9.0	3.06

(Source: SPSS Survey Data Output, 2020)

From table 5 Fifty four percent (54%) with $M=2.59$ disagreed they believe that Agricultural activities are labour intensive with low returns.

Seventy percent (70%) with $M=3.81$ agreed that Agricultural activities do provide employment opportunities to the Youth in my County.

Eighty four percent (84%) with $M=1.64$ strongly disagreed that they perceive Agriculture as a dirty enterprise and non-professional in nature.

Seventy percent (70%) with $M=3.62$ agreed that they can undertake formal employment alongside Agricultural activities.

Thirty nine percent (39%) with $M=3.04$ agreed that in their County, the returns from Agricultural activities take to long for the Youth to get returns

Fifty one percent (51%) with $M=3.29$ agreed that Agricultural activities provide a sustainable source of income for the Youth in their County

Forty nine percent (49%) with $M=2.83$ disagreed that in their County, Agricultural activities are deemed to be a domain for the elderly, school dropouts and those with nothing else to do.

Fifty four percent (54%) with $M=2.25$ disagreed that the Youth are recognized for their efforts in participating in productive Agricultural activities in their County

Forty six percent (46%) with $M=3.06$ agreed that in their County the Youth have formed groups to promote Agricultural activities.

Relationship between attitudinal traits towards agriculture and youth participation in agriculture

Inferential Statistics on how Attitudinal Traits influence Youth Participation in Agriculture were as presented in table 6.

Table 6

Model Summary^a

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	.196 ^a	.038	.033	.65329

a. Predictors: (Constant), Attitudinal Traits (X_1)

(Source: SPSS Survey Data Output, 2020)

From table 6, the simple linear regression model was statistically significant ($F(1,193) = 7.657$) $p < .05$ in predicting the Participation of the Youth in Agriculture with a goodness of fit of 3.3% (Adjusted R Square = .033). further the Anova analysis were as described in table 7.

Table 7

ANOVA^a for the Study Variable on the Participation of the Youth in Agriculture

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance (p value)
1 Regression	3.268	1	3.268	7.657	.006^b
Residual	81.944	192	.427		
Total	85.212	193			

a. Dependent Variable: Participation in Agriculture (Y)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Attitudinal Traits (X₁)

(Source: SPSS Survey Data Output, 2020)

This shows that the coefficient of determination of 3.3% was the variation in the Participation of the Youth in Agriculture (Y) that was explained by the study variable, Attitudinal Traits X₁. The coefficients of relationship of the study variables (attitudinal traits) and youth participation in agriculture were as presented in table 8.

Table 8

Coefficients^a of the Study Variables on the Participation of the Youth in Agriculture

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig. (p value)	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Standard Error				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	2.905	.183		15.918	.000	2.545	3.265
1 Attitudinal Traits (X ₁)	.176	.064	.196	2.767	.006	.051	.301

a. Dependent Variable: Participation in Agriculture (Y)

(Source: SPSS Survey Data Output, 2020)

From Table 8, the fitted simple linear regression model of this relationship was:

$$Y = 2.905 + .176X_1$$

The model indicated that Attitudinal Traits (X₁) did have a significant influence on the Participation of the Youth in Agriculture, since the findings were statistically significant ($\beta_1 = 0.176$, $t = 2.767$, $p < .05$). For one unit increase in Attitudinal Traits, the Participation of the Youth in Agriculture increased by 0.176 units. Therefore, this implies that attitudinal traits of the Youth have a statistically significant influence on the Youth Participation in Agriculture.

Ways of creating a positive attitude among the Youth towards their Participation in Agriculture.

We also sought to establish how positive attitude among the Youth could be created and promoted. Table 6 shows the suggested ways in which a positive attitude can be created.

Table 6

Suggestions on how to create a positive attitude to the Youth to Participate in Agriculture

Suggestions	%
1. Grassroots education sensitization/campaign seminars and training on Agriculture and rewards	62.0
2. Standardize price for Agricultural goods	6.0
3. Provide incentives, loans and grants	13.0
4. Encourage participation of Youth in self-help/Youth groups	14.0
5. Establish knowledge sharing platforms on Agriculture	5.0
	100.0

(Source: SPSS Survey Data Output, 2020)

From Table 6 sixty two percent (62%) suggested that grassroots education sensitization/campaign seminars and training on Agriculture and rewards be provided. Six percent (6%) suggested that there be standardized pricing of Agricultural goods. Thirteen percent (13%) suggested the provision of incentives, loans and grants. Fourteen percent (14%) suggested the encouragement of Youth in participation in self-help/Youth groups. Five percent (5%) suggested that there be the establishment of knowledge sharing platforms on Agriculture. These findings indicated that youths have inadequate knowledge on agriculture and thus this may have affected negatively their attitude towards agriculture. Thus proposing grassroots education, sensitization, campaign seminars and training on agriculture and associated rewards.

Conclusions

The study sought to investigate the effects of attitudinal individualities on youth participation in agriculture. The research was carried out in seven selected counties in Kenya. Findings from the study showed that Attitudinal Traits have a positive influence on Youth Participation in Agriculture. Hence the key indicators of Attitudinal Traits such as the belief that Agricultural activities are labour intensive with low returns, the perception that Agriculture as a dirty enterprise and non-professional in nature, and that Agricultural activities do provide employment opportunities to the Youth in their Counties is an indication that these perceived negative attitudes were apparent. This is in tandem with (Yisak and Tassew, 2012) from their study in Ethiopia, observed that individual and household characteristics have strong link with aspirations of rural youth particularly on Agricultural aspirations. Further, they pointed out the strong influence of family or household on children aspiration levels. However (Bahaman et. al, 2010) found that urban and rural Youth have similar level of acceptance, attitude, and knowledge towards contract farming. Similarly, this agrees with studies suggesting that young people have very diverse attitudes towards farming and rural areas (Berckmoes and White, 2016). Similarly (Ampadu, 2012) carried out interviews in Ghana, with young people who suggested that some want to farm, and that 'self-satisfaction, social approval and not necessarily monetary' returns are important, even though the need to make money in order to survive is recognized.

These findings confirm an earlier study (Hosenally, 2012) where it was found that minority of the youth had a positive attitude towards Agriculture. This study, however, contradicts the findings from a study (Norsida, 2007) which found that there is a negative attitude among youth towards Agriculture.

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