

## **Competencies for Improved Employment growth and Agricultural Development**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examines competency potential of the College of Agriculture Zuru graduates for employment growth and agricultural development. The objectives of this study are to measure the respondents' levels of training's effects on agricultural development, employment prospects and job satisfaction. A snowball sampling method was utilized in this study, which had a sample size of 200 participants. To analyze the data acquired, percentages, means, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation were employed. The findings revealed that most respondents felt their perceived training program covered program design and assessment, extension teaching, communication skills, resource management, research methodological skills, problem-solving skill, value addition, and professionalism. The results also show how that training affect both their employability and quality of respondents' life. The findings indicate that factors such as pay benefit access, promotion rates that are constant, involvement in unique projects or programs, accessibility to training opportunities such as workshops and seminars, and a pleasant work environment are all associated with perceived job satisfaction. Therefore, it is evident from the findings that some of the problems impeding agricultural development include unstable government policies, bad pay, poor transportation, insufficient hazard allowances, inadequate work facilities, and weak ICT skills. The study also reveals a significant relationship between socioeconomic characteristics and self-reported levels of education. The results of the study showed that graduates of College Agriculture in Zuru had acquired knowledge that improves agriculture. The study suggests that agricultural students be supported for risk tolerance; prompt advancement, and enough work facilities for better agricultural development.*

**KEYWORDS:** Graduates, Agriculture, Competencies, Training, Employment

**Introduction:** The most valuable legacy a nation can leave its people is education. A human right that should be granted to every person just because they are a human was mentioned when emphasizing the value of education. Oyesola (2016) has previously voiced his belief that education enhances the growth of any society and that young people who hold important positions in that nation should receive a proper education in order to advance that society. In order to properly cultivate, harvest, and process crops, suitable farming conditions must be promoted (Manjula, 2000). This can ultimately reduce poverty and save lives. The relationship that a person has with his employer as a whole and for which he is compensated is what is meant by job satisfaction. As stated by Zembere and Chinyama (2006), job discontent results in a lack of drive at work. As a result, a corporation must provide opportunities for employment satisfaction (Atchison, 2009). Pay, work, advancement, supervision, work environment, and coworkers are all aspects that might affect how satisfied you are with your job (Manjula, 2000).

Because of the world's current rapid development, current difficulties in education require the serious attention of the government, researchers, businesses, and universities. Learning is the process of learning the abilities, information, and other attributes that keep people employed. Agricultural education is typically concentrated on creating seasoned skilled labor that will build and expand agricultural industries worldwide. According to Freddie (2004), the number of students majoring in agriculture has been declining over time. In Nigerian tertiary institutions, fewer students are enrolling in agriculture education programs. Students' perceptions of agriculture as a labor-intensive and socially-disadvantaged career are one factor contributing to this drop.

In order to follow up with and retain records of their students after they graduate, most organizations, particularly agricultural educational institutions, adopt the tracer study approach. By learning about the placements and positions of their graduates in society, tracer studies enable institutions to assess the quality of education they provide, which may then be used as a standard to produce graduates who are more

educated and competitive. Additionally, graduate tracer studies offer crucial data that could assist these institutions in determining the degree to which their vision, mission, and goals have been attained (Banawan and Ereies, 2014). Higher National Diploma (HND) programs have improved agriculture and livestock productivity in Zuru. This might significantly affect how the research area's agriculture develops. It is impossible to overstate the importance of agricultural tertiary institutions in a region. This study thinks it vital to look at the competences for better employment growth and agricultural development linkage to graduates of College of Agriculture Zuru, Kebbi State, Nigeria.

#### **Objectives of the Study:**

- i. Assess the levels of training programme received on agricultural development in the study area.
- ii. Evaluate the effect of training received on employability of the respondents in the study area.
- iii. Determine the job satisfaction of the respondents in the study area.
- iv. Identify the problems hindering the achievement of agricultural development in the study area.

#### **1.3 Hypothesis of the Study**

There is no significant relationship between the socio-economic characteristics of respondents and the perceived training programme received.

#### **3METHODOLOGY**

**Study Area:** The study was conducted in the Zuru Local Government Area of Kebbi State, Nigeria, which has a total area of around 1,220 kilometers square (Km<sup>2</sup>) and is situated between latitudes 11°35'' and 11°55'' north and 4°25'' and 5°25'' east of the equator. The National Population Commission [NPC] (2022) projected that there was 282,500 people living in the area by 2022.

With 950mm of annual rainfall, temperatures ranging from 27 °C to 38 °C, and relative humidity varied from 40% in the dry season to 85% in the rainy season, the area is blessed with

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good climatic conditions for extensive agricultural productions. Zuru is an agricultural community with plenty of fertile soil suited for cultivating a range of products, including cereals, legumes, vegetables, and tree crops. Continuous grasses that are white and dried during the dry season and greenish during the rainy season define the vegetation. Rikoto, Rafin Zuru, Manga, Dabai, Ushe, and Senchi are the six administrative districts of Zuru (Kebbi State Government, 2022).

**Sample and Sampling Technique:** A sample size of 200 respondents was used for this investigation, and the target respondents were chosen using the snow ball sampling method. Academic sessions from 1999 to 2009, the relevant time frame, were covered.

**Procedures for Data Collection:** The schedule questionnaire served as the major data collection tool and had both open-ended and closed-ended items. As opposed to this, secondary information was gathered through periodicals, websites, journals, conferences, and books.

**Procedures for Data Analysis:** Using descriptive (such as frequency counts and percentages) and inferential (Pearson Products Moment Correlation Coefficient) statistics, the information gathered from the administered questionnaire was examined.

**Specification of Model: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC)**

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N\sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{N\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2} \cdot \sqrt{N\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2}} \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

Where,

r = Correlation Coefficient

N = Number of Observation

∑ = Summation

Y = perceived training programme received

X<sub>1</sub> = Age

X<sub>2</sub> = Education Level

X<sub>3</sub> = Household Size

X<sub>4</sub> = Income Level

X<sub>5</sub> = Years working Experience

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:** This section provides details on the respondents' levels of training in agricultural development, how that training affected their employability, how happy they were in their jobs, and what obstacles were in the way of agricultural growth in the study area. A null hypothesis was also examined.

**Table 1: Perceived level of Training received on Agricultural Development**

Competencies	Perceived Training level Received						
	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low	Mean	SD	Decision
Program Planning and Evaluation	88	56	48	8	3.1	0.91	Agree
Extension teaching and comm. Skills	76	72	47	5	3	0.84	Agree
Information Communication Tech.	4	60	84	52	2	0.79	Disagree
Resource Management	31	80	57	32	2.5	0.93	Agree
Research Methodology skills	70	85	41	4	3.1	0.79	Agree
Problem solving skill	49	60	61	30	2.6	1.01	Agree
Entrepreneurship skills	5	58	98	39	2.1	0.75	Disagree
Value addition	72	35	63	30	2.7	1.1	Agree

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Group dynamic skills	9	44	113	34	2.1	0.74	Disagree
Professionalism	30	72	74	24	2.5	0.89	Agree

Source: Field Survey, (2022).

From Table 1, items 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10 with mean scores above the threshold of 2.5 respondents concur that the perceived level of training program they received on agricultural development sustainability during their academic studies was in accordance with the following categories: resource management, extension teaching and communication skills, problem solving, research methodology skills, value addition, and professionalism. However, items 3, 7, and 9 with mean scores below 2.5 disagree with the perception that information and communication technology, entrepreneurship

skills, and group dynamics skills were the perceived levels of training programs received on agricultural development and sustainability during their study in school. This finding is in line with those of Bavendam (2000), who stated that among the major perceived training obtained from studying agricultural courses in Colleges and Universities in Nigeria were program planning and evaluation, extension teaching and communication skills, resource management, research methodology skills, problem solving skill, value addition, and professionalism.

Table 2: Effect of Training Received on Employability growth

Variables	YES	OTHERWISE
	Percentage	Percentage
Increase income level	76.5 (153)	23.5 (47)
Increase Standard of living	71(142)	29 (58)
Skills development	68 (136)	32 (64)
Ease promotion	48 (96)	52 (104)
Much employment opportunity	47 (94)	53 (106)

Source: Field Survey, (2022).

According to the data in Table 2 above, the majority of respondents (76.6%) believe that receiving training has increased their income level, improved their standard of living, and helped them develop their skills, while only (52%) and (53%) believe that they have experienced easy promotion and a lot of employment opportunity, respectively. Because

the majority of respondents worked in the agricultural education sector, Banawan and Ereies' (2014) studies produced comparable results. Ajayi (2007) also noted that the main impact of perceived training obtained on employability was a high employment rate among agricultural graduates of regular Nigerian institutions and universities.

Table 3: Perceived Level of Job Satisfaction

Variables	Perceived Job Satisfaction Level				Mean	SD	Decision
	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low			
Working Environment	2	12	116	70	1.7	0.61	Disagree
Remunerations	83	28	69	20	2.8	1.07	Agree
Access to job allowance	61	57	55	27	2.7	1.03	Agree
Consistent rate of promotion	80	74	29	17	3	0.93	Agree
Participation in Training programme	45	55	63	37	2.5	1.03	Agree
Access to Training programme	51	81	51	17	2.8	0.9	Agree
Conducive office facility	78	63	42	17	3	0.97	Agree

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Sponsorship development	for	career	7	57	88	48	2.1	0.8	Disagree
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Source: Field Survey, (2022).

From Table 3, items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 with mean scores above the threshold of 2.5 respondents agree that compensation, access to job allowance, consistency in rate of promotion, participation in special programs/projects, access to training/workshops/seminars, and favorable office facilities, respectively, were the respondents' perceived levels of job satisfaction after graduation. However, items 1 and 8 with mean scores below 2.5 contradict each other on how much they value the working environment

and financial support for post-graduate study, respectively.

This research is also consistent with that of Okiror and Otabong (2015), who found that among agricultural graduates, compensation, access to job benefits, a steady rate of promotion, participation in special programs and projects, availability of training opportunities, workshops, and seminars, and comfortable working conditions all contribute to how satisfied they are with their jobs.

Table 4: Problems Hindering the Achievement of Agricultural Development

Variables	YES	OTHERWISE
	Percentage	Percentage
Lack of stable government policies	87 (174)	13 (26)
Inadequate remunerations	85.5 (171)	14.5 (29)
Lack of hazard allowances	80 (160)	20 (40)
Inadequate transportation facilities	71.5 (143)	28.5 (57)
Lack of in-service training	64.5 (129)	35.5 (71)
Inadequate staffing	78.5 (157)	21.5 (43)
Lack of sufficient work facilities	79.5 (159)	20.5 (41)
Inadequate ICT training	73 (146)	27 (54)

Source: Field Survey, (2022).

The results of Table 4 showed that the majority (87%) of respondents believed that unstable government policies were the main obstacle to agricultural development and sustainability. The majority (85.5%) of respondents also believed that inadequate compensation was a problem, while the majority (80%) believed that there should be more hazard allowances. The majority (71.5%) also believed that inadequate transportation facilities, insufficient in-service training, and insufficient staffing were problems. The finding of this study is in agreement with the finding presented by Dai Kosi A., Tsadidey S., Isaac A., and Millicent D. B. (2008), who list a

number of factors that hinder agricultural development and sustainability in Nigeria, including a lack of in-service training, unstable government policies, insufficient transportation infrastructure, insufficient compensation, and a lack of hazard allowances.

**Hypothesis tested:** The stated hypothesis “There is no significance relationship between socio-economic characteristics of the respondent and perceived training received by respondents” was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The result is presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Relationship between the Socio-economic characteristics and Perceived Training Received

Variables	R-value	P-value	Decision
Age	-0.045	0.525	Not Sign
Educational Level	-0.270**	0.000	Sign
Household Size	-0.177*	0.000	Sign

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Income Level	0.245**	0.000	Sign
Years of working experience	0.299**	0.000	Sign

Years of working experience (0.299\*\*) and income level (0.245\*\*) were determined to be favorably and significantly associated at (0.01) probability level, according to Table 4.4. At the (0.01) and (0.05) probability levels, respectively, it was discovered that household size (-0.177\*) and educational level (-0.270\*\*) were both negative and not statistically significant. Age, on the other hand, was found to be negative and insignificant (-0.045). As a result, the PPMC data support the hypothesis that there is a substantial correlation between the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondent and their perception of the training program they got in the research area.

**Conclusion:** According to the study's findings, it can be deduced that the program planning, evaluation, extension teaching, and communication skills, resource management, research methodology skills, problem-solving ability, value addition, and professionalism were the areas of training that participants felt they received at a level that was appropriate for their jobs. The graduates' performance, however, and overall agricultural development were enhanced.

**Recommendations:** The following recommendations are made in light of the study's findings:

- i. Agricultural staff should have access to suitable and comfortable working environments as well as proper ICT training.
- ii. To keep agricultural workers motivated at their numerous places of employment, there should be enough pay and risk allowances.

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