DEVELOPING PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS' ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILL IN AGRICULTURE FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION

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Abstract
This study focuses on developing pupils entrepreneurial skills in agriculture for sustainable food production. The paper stresses the need for a functional and proper education of students in the area of agricultural skills with regard to skills development. The study discussed the skills in promoting students' interest in practical agriculture. Major challenges militating against the effective teaching of agriculture as an instructional material required in Nigeria schools were outlined which include: inadequate and incompetence teachers, lack of agricultural facilities in schools, inadequate/lack of farm lands in schools, lack of funds and non-involvement of Non-governmental agencies. Ways of mitigating the challenges through effective provision of education on practical agricultural programme were offered. The conclusion was that there is need for Nigerian schools to be fully equipped with facilities and well trained and knowledgeable agricultural education teachers for knowledge creation and quality learning and performance.

Keywords: Agriculture, schools farm, sustainable development and food production.

Introduction

The rate at which agriculture has developed and its development has affected its sustainability. The means of agricultural packaging and delivering seems to be changing from time to time as a result of innovations in the world. In the same vein, the behavioural attitudes of the users of the farm tools are fast changing. No doubt, the emergence of mechanization has brought about changes in work practices and business operations. In the past twenty years, the operations of many farm cultural organizations have changed due to the achievement recorded in the field. In view of this, educational institutions, primary, secondary and higher learning have imbibed the application of these new technologies in their academic programmes. It is in this perspective that vocational subjects teachers need to adopt these innovative technologies in their course designs and pedagogical approaches to meet the needs of graduates who must be prepared to adequately fit into the entrepreneurial skills which have permeated the environment. There is no doubt that today, the wealth or poverty of many nations depends on the quality of education offered to its citizens. Thus, those nations that are able to provide the necessary skills and capacity of learning to its teaming population stand a better chance of attaining economic development while those of the poorly educated nations remain underdeveloped and dependent on the more developed or advanced nations with superior and more relevant skills.

Agricultural Education

Agricultural Education is one area that most students tend to shy away from studying despite the fact that it plays a major role in the economic life of a nation. Students who are expected to take up agriculture shy away from it as they live in a state of hopelessness; in search of white collar jobs which are not readily available while those left in this field are mostly farmers of between the ages of forty and above. These categories of farmers in most cases lack the relevant information and technical know - how required for modern agricultural practices.

A knowledge driven society is a society in which the economy is knowledge driven while a "knowledge- driven economy" is an economy in which the generation and exploitation of knowledge play the predominant part in the creation of wealth. To this end, developing pupils' entrepreneurial skills in practical agriculture for sustainable food production becomes imperative. Obioma (2011) asserts that a knowledge driven economy involves a more effective use of all types of knowledge and creativity in all manner of economic activity. Furthermore, in the advanced economies "knowledge" is fast becoming a strategic asset for economic development. For countries tapping into the new ideas, innovations and technologies that proliferate in a knowledge driven economy, there is an abundance of wealth and opportunities for their citizens.

The challenge for school systems all over the world is that of providing qualitative and effective education for children and youths which will prepare them for participation in the work place (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO 2010).

Developing and sustaining pupils' entrepreneurial skills in the area of agriculture for sustainable food production is very vital to the economic development of a nation. Mustapha and Greennan (2002) stated that Vocational Agriculture Education (VAE) is a tool for addressing the economic, political and social crises that are threatening the political and economic stability of some nations such as Nigeria.

State of School Farms

The state of the school farms has been a major problem of agricultural education in the secondary schools and tertiary institutions. Thus the present agricultural education programmes in most of the secondary and tertiary institutions centre on theoretical work while little or no emphasis is given to practical agriculture. Students tend to shy away from practical work. Agricultural Science education teachers, do not help matters as most of them also do not take the practical aspect of the subject serious. The implication of this is that students' assessment is centred on the cognitive domain while the Affective and Psychomotor domain are given little or no attention, such approach can hardly bring career awareness and improved productivity. The National Policy on Education (4th Edition, 2004), clearly spelt out that "school programmes need to be relevant, practical and comprehensive, while interest and ability should determine individual's direction in education". This simply put implies that practical work should form the basis for preparing in this subject (Agricultural Science). From observations, this is not so with majority of the schools where Agricultural Science Education is taught.

According to Ikeoji, Agwubuike and Disi (2007), instead of discovery learning, problem solving, project and competency based learning, textbook reading, teacher telling and achievement test is what characterize the vocational Agricultural Education delivery in Nigeria schools.

Strategy for Developing Pupils' Entrepreneurial skills in Agriculture

Entrepreneurial skills is learning in which learners are made to access education curriculum outside of a traditional classroom. Educational courses are specifically delivered to them somewhere other than the classroom where the teacher is teaching. Aladejana (2008) defines agriculture as the combination of multiple approaches to learning which can be achieved by having equipment and materials and practical sessions used together to deliver instruction.

With regards to practical agriculture, pupils can learn through practical sessions. By providing several materials concerning agriculture related practices, pupils can learn in addition to classroom training. The use of modern equipment based tutorial methods can be effectively applied by agricultural education teachers for pupils to acquire knowledge and skills which will stimulate their interest in the subject. Following the introduction of agricultural education, teaching is not limited to the use of chalk boards, as various types of

software like tutorials, drill and practice are available for use.

Agricultural Science teachers should be able to make use of video camera, video discs, video cassette recorder in their teaching and learning. In doing this, as the students are taken out for the practical work on the school farm, their interest are already developed, having observed the practice through the video films presented. According to Ikeoji and Kayoma (2011), the video technologies could be used for guided and independent learning of skills such as in poultry, rabbits and pig production; crop production, and land/soil management practices etc. Agricultural Science education teachers are thus expected to arouse the interest of their pupils in the area of practical agriculture. The incorporation of some specific instructional materials would go a long way in developing the pupils interest. Entrepreneurial skills which are carefully structured for teaching specific topic/contents and demonstration of ideas and concepts, visually or through educational activities.

Challenges to the Application of Entrepreneurial skills in Promoting pupil's Interest in Practical Agriculture

A number of challenges tend to make the application of these strategies in schools difficult some of the challenges are presented here under:

1. Most of Agricultural Education teachers are not trained or knowledgeable in the use of entrepreneurship facilities for teaching and learning process.
2. Teachers' resistance to change from the traditional pedagogical methods to more innovative technology-based teaching and learning methods is another major challenge (Ifuedo, 2007).
3. Most of the schools where the teachers are not knowledgeable do not also have agriculture experts, system managers or support staff, who can be of assistance.
4. Most pupils do not have access to the infrastructure that will support the integration of entrepreneurial education.
5. Limited resources in terms of funds available to most of the schools are a great hindrance to the practical teaching and learning process of agriculture in the primary schools.
6. Most schools located in the rural areas do not have access to mechanized facilities. Pupils who could have therefore shown interest in entrepreneurial are not offered the opportunities. Such pupils develop negative attitude to agricultural practices.

Conclusion

The ability of pupils to have access to good equipment as well as their ability to acquire and utilize the knowledge and skills effectively in the field of practical agriculture would go a long way in promoting their interest in agriculture and sharpen their entrepreneurial spirit. Agricultural Education teachers need to be given the opportunities to update their knowledge in the area of modern farming application. Thus, there is need to expedite action to make the use of good equipment a necessity as a way of promoting pupils' interest in the teaching/learning of practical agriculture. As the pupils have access to modern farming and are able to observe some forms of agricultural practices like, poultry production, crop production etc. they can develop their interest in getting involved in some form of agricultural entrepreneurial activities at graduation.

Recommendations

Based on the discovery, the following recommendations were made:

1. Agricultural Education teachers need to update themselves in the use of modern equipment. This can be done through in-service training, seminars, workshops etc.
2. Government should facilitate the process of providing high breeding crops in primary schools
3. There should be private sector driven programme to provide schools with modern facilities for agriculture.
4. Government should try to bring

development in the rural areas through provision of agricultural facilities

5. Adequate funds need to be provided in schools by the government and other non-government agencies to support entrepreneurship in school agriculture.
6. School administrators should on their part, show interest in the provision of facilities in their schools for entrepreneurial skills development
7. Companies or industries that operate or produce agricultural facilities could be approached by school Administrators for assistance in the form of donating some facilities to the schools.

When these recommendations are implemented, it will go a long way in promoting pupils' interest in entrepreneurial agricultural practices after their graduation. This will help to increase agricultural production, and sustainable food production.

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