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Research Paper

Performance Assessment of Open Distance Learning Agricultural Graduates in Taraba State

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ABSTRACT
This research examined performance assessment of agricultural graduates of Distance learning Education in Taraba state. Purposeful simple questions where made available to respondents via a structure questionnaires. 125 questionnaires were sent out and 88% were filled and returned. Simple descriptive statistics and quantitative analysis were employed to analyse the outcome. Out of the total respondents 35.45% were within 41-50 years with accounted for the majority age group. Most the respondents were first degree holder (59.09%). 57% of the respondents were agricultural graduate from distance learning education program. 46.36% disagreed that face-to-face mode of study is not the same with DLE. 39.09% majority also said opportunities are not given to student. On the performance assessment, 27.27% and 24.55% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively while 20% and 22.73% strongly agreed and agreed respectively. 4.55% not decided to any of the options. Reasons were attributed to lack of practical (8.18%), No I.T. (36.36%), bulky synopsis (10.91%) and improper presentation (18.18%). Therefore, the synopsis should be revisited and presented properly, likewise, the students of distance learning be given opportunities to be involve in practical and industrial training the boost their understanding of the subject matter.

KEY WORDS: *Agricultural-Graduates, Distance-Learning, Performance, Taraba State.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Distance education is a system of education where knowledge is passed from the instructor to students without necessary meeting face-to-face. Distance Education is a system of education categorized by physical separation between the educator and the student in which instruction is delivered through a variety of media including print and other ICTs to student who may either have missed the opportunity earlier in life or have been denied the face-to-face formal education due to socio-economic, career, family and other circumstances(Ajadiet al., 2008).In another hand, distance education as education provided by a mode other than the conventional face-to-face method whose goals are similar to and just as noble and practical as those of on-campus full time face-to-face education(Aluri et al., 2014). From all the aforementioned definitions given by different scholars, it indicates that distance education does not permit one-on-one meeting of instructor with students. This system of education has helped to curtail the problems of illiteracy to a large extend in so many field of studies. However, in the field of sciences, for a student to be due for graduation he/she must meet certain requirements which includes; 167 credit load for 5 years and 132 for 4 years depending on your mode of entry and 12 months practical followed by report and seminar (NUC-BMAS, 2007).

Distance Education for agriculture

Research have shown by different scholars that distance education have impacted agricultural productivity in Nigeria and abroad. Rural Distance Education Project (RDEP) impacted significantly agricultural productivity, labour productivity and input used in Beinjing (Guo et al., 2018). The studies further indicated that RDEP used information and communication technology (ICT) platform to disseminate information and carried out training to the grassroots villagers. Mundi & Tenebe, (2013) in their quest for the role of distance education and e-learning in agricultural extension services, noted that Nigeria, African countries and the world at large, commonly make use of TV, radio, telephone and other storage devices as the form of

ICT effectively in agricultural extension delivery.Sanga et al., (2016)from Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania reported that based on experience on the use of mobile learning to bridge the gap in agricultural extension service delivery, supported blended learning system; that is, making use of m-learning (mobile learning) and e-learning (electronic learning) because it can provide innovative mobile agricultural extension services to more 380 smallholders farmer via web and mobile-based farmers advisory information systems.
Pangani, (2020)also in an interview on distance learning for agriculture also assented to facts that distance and e-learning education impacts the positively, however it has affect students in terms of power outage, which serves as bridge in the learning process. Alam et al., (2015) found out in their research on the use of ICT in agro-business that utilization of ICT facilities by farm manager was moderately okay, but that most of the managers and farmers were constraint to the use of ICT via erratic and unstable power supply, high cost ICT facilities, poor maintenance of ICT facilities and unstable network. The performance of the agricultural students graduates after graduating in office and various sectors have not been reported. This research therefore focused on the performance of agricultural graduate who obtained their degree via distance learning Education (DLE).

II. METHODOLOGY

Data sampling and collection

A target-oriented and simple random sampling techniques were used to attract respondents for the study. A 125 scale of graduates of agriculture were randomly selected and administered with a structured questionnaires via survey monkey mobile application. 110 (88%) out the total administered questionnaires were filled and returned for analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

A descriptive statistical technique and quantitative data analysis were employed to analyse the objectives of the study from the data obtained in the field.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents (n=110)

Majority of the respondents were between the age of 41 to 50 (35.45%) followed by those in the age group 31 to 40 and 51 and above (29.09%). Those within age below 30 were only 10% (see Fig. 1). Most of students below prefers face-to-face mode of study and attributes distance education to be for those who are not able to study early.

Out of the 110 respondents, 59.09% were graduates of first degree, 16.36% were those with PGD, 10% were those with master degree and Diploma and Ph.D were 7.27% each as indicated by Fig 2. Out of the total returned questionnaires, Fig 3. Showed that 57% respondents' mode of study were distance learning education and 43% were face-to-face. This shows that majority of the people (respondents) within the study area are those who acquired their education via distance learning.

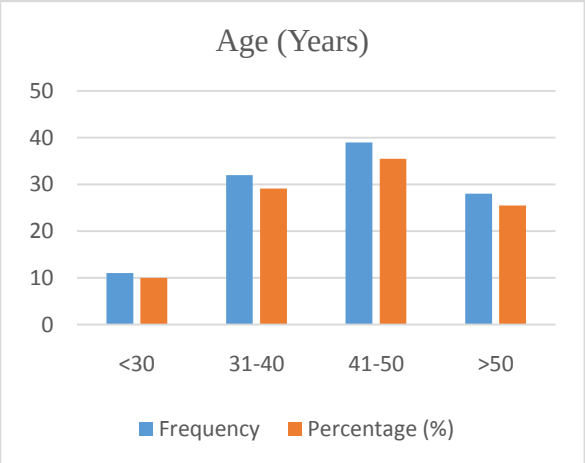

Figure 1: Age

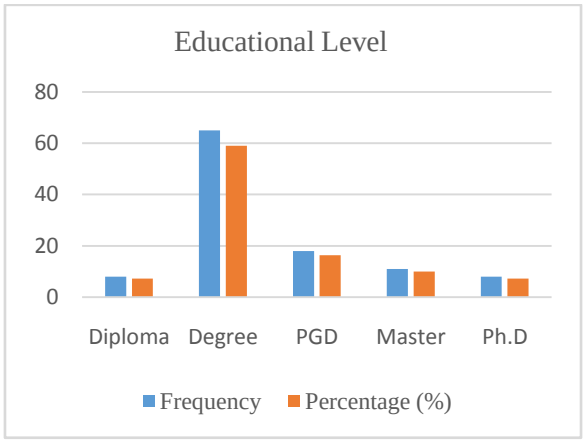

Figure 2: Educational Level

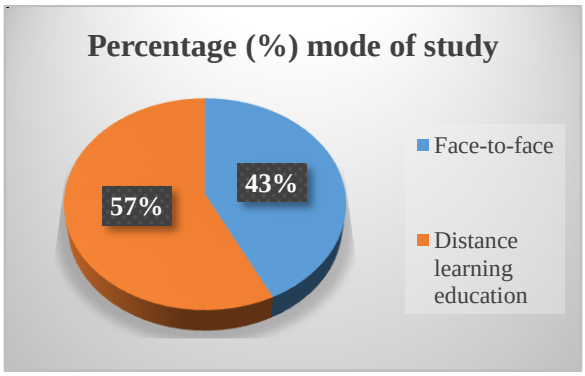

Figure 3: Mode of Study

Knowledge Acquisition by Agriculture graduates

Table 1 presents the data for knowledge acquisition by agricultural graduates while school. 46.36% of the respondents strongly disagreed that face-to-face mode study is not the same with distance learning education, 31.82% also disagreed that they are not the same while 20% and 1.82% were for agreed and not decided respectively.

Meanwhile, 39.09% of the respondents strongly disagreed that industrial training opportunities are not given to agricultural students in distance learning education program and 33.64% also disagreed. However, 23.64% and 3.64% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively.

Table 1:Knowledge acquisition by agriculture Graduates

A. The study of agriculture through distance learning is the same with face-to-face contact

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SA	-	-
A	22	20.00
ND	2	1.82
D	35	31.82
SD	51	46.36
Total	110	100.00

B. Industrial training opportunity was/is given to those who study agriculture at distance learning program

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SA	4	3.64
A	26	23.64
ND	-	-

D	37	33.64
SD	43	39.09
Total	110	100

Performance Assessment DLE agricultural graduates

Tables 2a and 2b presents the result on the performance of agricultural graduates from open distance learning institutions. The results showed that 20% and 22.75% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that graduate from distance learning institutions does well when given the opportunity whereas, 27.27%and 24.55% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that the graduate do not perform well when opportunity is given to them in agricultural sector.

However, this may have been attributed to power outage as reported by Pangani (2020), that isPower outage (8.18%), lack or inadequate practical schedule and facilities, lack of exposure to after-school pre-knowledge such as sending for industrial training, poor presentation of study materials and complexity of synopsis as indicated 2b. This therefore implies that if attention is given to distance learning students, they will do better.

Table 2: Performance Assessment of agricultural graduatesfrom DLE

A. Graduates of agriculture from distance learning program dose well when given opportunities at their job site and they perform well

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SA	22	20.00
A	25	22.73
ND	5	4.55
D	30	27.27
SD	27	24.55
Total	110	100.00

B. Tentative reason(s) for low performance

Variable	Frequency	Percentage. (%)
No practical	37	33.64
No industrial training (I.T.)	40	36.36
Bulky Synopsys	12	10.91
Improper presentation	20	18.18
Power outage	9	8.18

IV. CONCLUSION

The study aimed at checking the performance assessment of distance learning agricultural graduate in northern part Taraba. The research revealed that open distance learning education is impactful, but synopsis and methods of presentation should be made easy to ease assimilation. Practical opportunity should be given the students and graduates of agriculture from open distance learning educational institute.

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