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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Perceptions of Akwa Ibom state university agricultural students on practical year programme

Ekanem, J.T.[1], O. Yusuf [2], G.E. Akpan [3]* and J. Edet [1]

[1] *Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, Faculty of Agriculture, Akwa Ibom State University, 52001 Ikot Akpaden, Nigeria.*
[2] *Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension Services Kwara State University, 52001 Malete, Nigeria.*
[3] *Department of Agricultural Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, Akwa Ibom State University, 52001 Ikot Akpaden, Nigeria.*

Abstract

The agricultural undergraduate curriculum in Nigeria was restructured by the introduction of a practical year program (PYP) for students. This study investigated Students' perspectives, constraints, and strategies for enhancing PYP, as well as the impact of PYP on future career choices. A standardized questionnaire was used to obtain data from students. The data was analyzed with the help of frequency distribution and mean. Students had a favorable (sufficient) opinion of PYP, and they formed a positive attitude toward agriculture as a source of income, according to the findings. Delay in payment of allowances (3.48), difficulties combining agricultural work with lectures (3.08), and insufficient safety equipment to be used by students were among the perceived constraints and mean scores (2.95). The conclusion was reached that addressing undergraduate skill acquisition through the PYP would ensure youth employment in extension organizations and efficient extension service delivery to farmers. This would allow for long-term agricultural development.

Keywords: Agricultural Students; Perceptions; Practical Year Programme.

1. Introduction

Higher education researchers and stakeholders are increasingly paying attention to the concept of holistic education systems, which focuses on producing competent and versatile graduates (Karunaratne and Perera, 2019). Human and natural resource development, individual behavioral and attitudinal transformation, and the development of participative abilities in individuals all require holistic education (Kipkeme, *et al.*, 2015). According to Richmond (2018), there is a growing need to enhance and equip agricultural students with specific professions in order to facilitate occupational aptitude and relevant certification for specific occupation activities. Williams (2015) also stated that it is critical to improve university curricula in order to accommodate comprehensive and extensive practical learnings that provide strong support for theories taught within the four walls of classrooms. As Richmond (2018) points out, knowledge learned without sufficient structure to connect it all together is likely to be forgotten. Some pupils benefit from direct or practical encounters in order to improve their learning capacities (Reece and Walker, 2016). For those studying agriculture, such hands-on exposure is essential.

Agricultural transformation would not occur in developing nations like Nigeria until technical knowledge and youth willingness to work in the field increase. Approximately 810 million people

***Corresponding author: Godwin Edem Akpan**
Email: godwinakpan@aksu.edu.ng
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worldwide are food insecure today (Apolo, 2001; FAO, 2021). The 2020 Vision Initiative has worked hard to ensure that everyone has access to healthy food by the year 2020. As a result, if agricultural output is to be sustainable, youth must be equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge, and a shift in attitude toward farming so that young graduates may take over from older farmers (Fapojuwo *et al.*, 2011). On a long-term, medium-term, and short-term basis, this will increase agricultural productivity and food security for all. This influenced the National University Commission's (NUC) policy, which requires agricultural undergraduates in their fourth year of a five-year degree program to complete Practical Year Programme (PYP). This strategy would allow us to create a favorable climate for producing adequate food in a sustainable manner in the medium or long term (Fapojuwo *et al.*, 2011).

The Faculty of Agriculture, Akwa Ibom State University, Nigeria, stresses this technique to provide opportunities for students to gain practical skills in supervised real-life scenarios as a response to the need for practical experiences. Since 2014, the faculty has offered a practical agricultural experience program known as the 'Practical Year Programme (PYP)' to all fourth-year (Practical year) undergraduate agriculture students. It allows students to have hands-on experience with farming activities. Agricultural students participate in PYP for three months, with different duties allocated to them on a daily basis and supervision provided by both industry-based supervisors and faculty coordinators on scheduled but unannounced visits. Students return to school at the end of the three months to showcase the knowledge and abilities they have obtained to the teachers (Ekanem *et al.*, 2018). The students continued their practical activities on the school farms under the strict supervision of the coordinators, gained work experience with agricultural outfits (e.g. Akwa Ibom State Agricultural Development Programme (AKADEP), and were assigned to contact farmers to avail themselves of extension work for the remaining months of the program, which usually lasts a year (Ekanem *et al*, 2018). Students produce a report on their internship experience and take oral and written exams at the end of the internship year.

The link between the skills that companies seek and the skills that internships provide may provide a solution for supplying prepared and qualified students to fill the agriculture industry's expanding requirement for future workers (Henderson, 2018). As a result, conducting research that focuses on a PYP participant's perspective, examining how PYP completers describe their overall internship experience, and how the internship experience influenced their perceived career preparedness, could be instructive in gaining a better understanding of PYP programming.

Since the introduction of PYP into the faculty's curriculum, there hasn't been much written in the literature to show how students feel about the training program in the study field. This information would be especially useful in light of young people in Akwa Ibom State's typically negative opinions regarding agriculture. There have been a few researches in this area that has proven consistent over the world. According to Subbiah, Kannan, Koiyu, and Monama (2017), industrial training was relevant and provided students with the essential skills to meet job market needs. Yusuf *et al.* (2019) found that more than half of the respondents in a South African study had favorable perceptions of practical farm experience. However, in the study of Karunaratne and Perera (2019), despite the fact that students' perceptions of the internship programme were positive, with the claim that they were exposed to learning experiences and the opportunity to develop a relationship with the industry, acquire industry work culture, develop self-confidence, execute problem-solving activities, develop social interaction skill, and aspire future education and career, the students negatively ranked the internship programme in providing

opportunities to develop social interaction skills and aspire future education and career. They expressed dissatisfaction with the internship program's overall structure, claiming that it failed to offer them comprehensive training that covered all of the company's areas. The respondents proposed that the internship program be extended to twelve months rather than six months (Karunaratne and Perera, 2019).

Previously, agriculture was thought to include a great deal of drudgery, deterring young people from entering the field because it is a dirty work with little pay. As a result, agriculture continues to be unappealing to the youth, leading to their migration to other sectors of the economy in search of a better living (Yusuf *et al.,* 2019). Many farmers with limited resources rely only on family labor. The young and dynamic youths, who are expected to make up the labor force, have, nevertheless, gone to the cities. Agriculture can serve as a source of productive employment for the youth if they find it worthwhile. This will go a long way toward stemming the tide of youth migrating from the countryside to the cities in pursuit of greener pastures (Ekanem *et al.,* 2018). Sustainable development and the high percentage of agriculture graduate unemployment are major challenges in many developing countries, as governments are unable to employ all graduates as a result of economic slump in many countries (Fapojuwo *et al.,* 2011). Documenting a greater knowledge of the PYP experience from the participants' perspective could provide valuable insight into PYP programming, student learning, and future job preparedness. The study evaluated the Practical Year Programme performed by agriculture students at Akwa Ibom State University in Nigeria in this context. The study's specific aims were to :

- Determine the perspectives of the Practical Year Programme (PYP) by the students
- Explore perceived constraints of PYP implementation
- Ascertain perceived strategies for enhancing the PYP
- Identify the perceived influence of the Practical Year Programme on career choices of agricultural students in AKSU.

2. Materials and methods

The research was carried out at the Obio Akpa Campus of Akwa Ibom State University's Faculty of Agriculture. Akwa Ibom State University is a multi-campus university with campuses in the center and southern regions of the Nigerian state of Akwa Ibom. The Oruk Anam Local Government Area in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, is home to the Obio Akpa Campus. Agricultural Economics and Extension, Animal Science, Soil Science, and Crop Science are the four departments that make up the Faculty of Agriculture. Fisheries is a new department that has just been established. One hundred and ten (110) final year undergraduate students who participated in the 2017/2018 practical year program were chosen using a purposive sampling technique. The majority of the data for the study were primarily sourced. The 110 students were given a structured questionnaire. Students' perspectives and satisfaction ratings of the Practical Year Programme (PYP) were elicited in Section A. Section B looked into the challenges respondents had during the PYP, while Section C looked into measures to improve PYP implementation, and Section D looked into the perceived impact of the PYP on agriculture students' career choices at AKSU. The students were asked to agree or disagree with the statements that were developed to measure the variables of the study's objectives. Possible restricting aspects were presented for the participants to tick on a 4-point Likert type scale ranging from strongly disagreed (SD) = 1 point, disagreed (D) = 2 points, agreed (A) = 3 points, and strongly agreed (SA) = 4 points in order to determine the constraints to PYP, for example. For example, to get the mean score for each constraining factor, multiply highly agreed (4 points) with the frequency plus agreed (3) multiplied by the frequency plus disagreed (2) multiplied by the frequency plus severely

disagreed (1) multiplied by the frequency. On the Likert scale, the mean score was matched to the maximum value (4). A mean score of 2.0 or above was deemed an essential constraint that needed to be handled, whilst a mean score of less than 2.0 was considered a weak constraint that needed to be addressed. The mean score provided insight into the restricting element's significance or strength, as well as the prioritization of alternatives to be proposed. This method was used to determine the amount of satisfaction, restrictions, and methods to improve the PYP, as well as the scheme's perceived influence on students' future career choices. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, and the incidence index were used to analyze the data .

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Analysis of the Perspectives of PYP by the Respondents

Table 1 shows the results of the investigation on respondents' perceptions of the Practical Year program. The standard deviation and frequency distribution were calculated. The table shows that the majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed to some extent with most of the claims. Their level of agreement with these statements reflects their perception of the Practical Year Programme (PYP). The number of those who objected or strongly disapproved was small. A greater mean response, also known as mean Perspective, should result from more respondents agreeing with a given statement. As a result, the respondents' mean responses were determined as well (Table 1). Since the maximum answer score for each item was 4 and the minimum was 1, any mean score between 2.0 and above was viewed as a positive perspective and any mean score below 2.0 was treated as a negative perspective of that statement. Only six statements (items 7, 10, 14, 15, 17, and 19) received a mean less than 2.0, according to a rigorous examination of the results in Table 1. All other statements had a mean perception greater than 2.0, indicating that respondents in the practical year program in the study area had a positive attitude.

The participants agreed that the knowledge gained during the session was useful. The respondents agreed that information gained during the program can help them succeed in any agribusiness enterprise they pursue after graduation ($\bar{X}$= 3.30), and they also expressed a good opinion of their decision to pursue Agriculture as a discipline ($\bar{X}$=3.32). This supports the findings of Akpochafo & Alika, (2016) and Faralu (2011), who concluded that a practical year program will improve graduates' self-employment and enable them to be active actors and problem-solvers after graduation. The students also thought PYP was a worthwhile program and not a waste of time ($\bar{X}$= 3.12), and that the training they received was relevant to their classroom lectures ($\bar{X}$=3.11), which could explain why their CGPA improved. The instructors were knowledgeable about their subjects, which resulted in a thorough understanding of what they were taught during the program ($\bar{X}$= 3.00). Kolb's (2005) findings on experiential learning theory are supported by this. Students thought the training provided industrial skills relevant to their course of study ($\bar{X}$= 2.96) because the instructors were knowledgeable about their subject, had good interpersonal skills and were always available and accessible to the students ($\bar{X}$= 2.99). This encouraged learning and improved students' performance because they had frequent contact with their lecturers ($\bar{X}$=2.92), and the training time was appropriate for experiential learning ($\bar{X}$= 2.86).

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents based on Perspective of Practical Year Programme.

S/N	Perspective of the Respondents on PYP. Statement	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	Std. D
1	PYP instructors made adequate planning and informed decisions regarding the programme.	10.0	9.1	62.7	18.2	2.89	0.82
2	The students were given adequate orientation about the programme.	5.5	5.5	56.4	32.7	3.16	0.76
3	The instructors were apt in their subject matter.	2.7	10.0	70.9	16.4	3.00	0.61
4	The training provided industrial skills relevant to my course of study	6.4	9.1	66.4	18.2	2.96	0.73
5	The instructors related well, always available and accessible to the students	3.6	16.4	62.7	17.3	2.94	0.69
6	I had a clear understanding of what I was taught	7.3	10.9	55.5	26.4	3.00	0.82
7	We were not satisfied with our non-exposure to commercial farms outside the university	52.7	30.0	14.5	2.7	1.03	0.98
8	A combination of lectures and practical has exposed me to real problems in the field	5.5	10.9	51.8	31.8	3.10	0.80
9	PYP was a good programme, not a time-waster	7.3	10.0	47.3	34.5	3.12	0.88
10	I was provided with adequate working tools	29.1	48.2	17.3	5.5	1.99	0.83
11	The time of the training was appropriate for experiential learning to take place	6.4	18.2	58.2	17.3	2.86	0.77
12	The training relates to classroom lectures	3.6	5.5	67.3	23.6	3.11	0.65
13	The training focuses on real practical rather than a "talk shop"	10.0	23.6	45.5	20.9	2.77	0.90
14	Methods of teaching and practical skills demonstrated were not laborious	22.7	28.2	37.3	11.8	1.99	0.97
15	We were exposed to all sectors of Agriculture equitably	21.8	35.5	30.9	11.8	1.93	0.95
16	Frequent contact with lecturers during PYP encourages learning and improves performance	6.4	12.7	63.6	17.3	2.92	0.74
17	PYP did not encourage drudgery	28.2	19.1	42.7	10.0	1.98	1.00
18	I think our predecessors were exposed to more skills than us	7.3	25.5	28.2	39.1	2.99	0.97
19	We visited some farms outside the university	60.0	16.4	16.4	7.3	1.71	0.99
20	PYP will enhance my CGPA	6.4	13.6	42.7	37.3	3.11	0.87
21	Knowledge acquired` at PYP will contribute to my success in Agribusiness upon graduation	3.6	3.6	52.7	40.0	3.30	0.71
22	My experience in PYP was adequate	11.8	20.0	49.1	19.1	2.75	0.90
23	PYP made me convinced that Agriculture was a right choice	4.5	10.0	43.6	41.8	3.22	0.80

Source: Field survey (2019). Grand mean= 2.84

Key: SD= strongly disagree, D= disagree, A= agree, SA= strongly agree. Std. D= standard deviation.

The respondents also thought the training was more of a "talk shop" than a "real world" experience ($\bar{x}$= 2.77). This supports Yusuf et al (2019)'s findings on undergraduate students' impressions of the Practical Agriculture Experience (PAE) at the University of Forte Hare in South Africa, which indicated that 67.4 percent of respondents believed that the training was more practical than theoretical. The students, on the other hand, concurred that they were dissatisfied with their lack of exposure to commercial farms outside of the institution ($\bar{x}$= 1.03). This resulted in a poor or unfavorable impression of the program. Exposure to commercial farms outside of the institution, they claim, will improve the hands-on experience, cross-cultural competencies, and skill polishing after graduation. This research supports the findings of Nielwolny *et al.*, (2016), who discovered that exposing interns to commercial farms outside of their university will help them gain pleasure and sharpen their abilities after graduation. Students had a negative impression of the teaching methods, believing that the practical skills demonstrated were laborious ($\bar{x}$= 2.38) and that the program was drudgery ($\bar{x}$= 2.35); they also believed that they were not equally exposed to all sectors of agriculture ($\bar{x}$= 2.33), implying that some students were behind in learning some skills in some farm units. Only a small percentage of students stated that they were given suitable working tools. Furthermore, few students ($\bar{x}$=1.71) acknowledged that they visited farms outside of the university, which contradicts Yusuf *et al.* (2019) findings, which claim that exposing students to commercial farms outside of the university will improve their hands-on experience and expose them to new skills. In total, 72% of students favored PYP, while 28% did not. The grand mean of 2.84 suggested that respondents thought the practical year program was a good idea.

3.2. Constraints faced by the Respondents during Practical Year Programme

Table 2 shows the findings of the respondents' perceptions of and experiences with restrictions during the Practical Year Programme. Almost all of the indicated limitations (13 out of 15) were viewed as constraints by the respondents, according to the findings. The statement was highlighted as a constraint facing the Practical year program by the respondents with a mean score above 2.0. The limitations were also ranked by the degree of their effects, with higher means suggesting more severe effects. The respondents agreed that the greatest form of restraint they faced in the program was the delay in payment of allowances by the relevant authorities ($\bar{x}$=3.48). The stipend is vital to the students because it allows them to meet their physiological (eating) and security (housing) demands. This reaction could be explained by the importance placed on these basic needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. It would be impossible for people to reach higher goals such as self-actualization, which is, in this case, sound academic accomplishment in agriculture, unless these basic requirements were met. The inference is that if these basic needs are not satisfied, the PYP activities will be ineffective. Other issues that respondents faced included non-exposure to excursions and field trips ($\bar{x}$=3.47).

The students will benefit from the excursion and field trip since they will be exposed to practical training and will gain an appreciation for agriculture. This supports Abrudan, Lazar, and Munteanu's work (2012). Students also felt that mixing agricultural labor with lectures was difficult ($\bar{x}$= 3.08) and that there were insufficient machinery and equipment for quick execution of their obligations ($\bar{x}$=2.99). This supports Odo *et al.*, (2011) findings that the research area's main difficulty was a lack of machines and equipment. The program was also hampered by the lack of motivation of the practical year students ($\bar{x}$=2.85), in line with Umeh and Odom (2011), who concluded that a lack of desire led to a fall in the number of youths in agriculture. In addition, respondents believed that the University's

execution of the Program was inadequate ($\bar{x}$=2.75) due to a lack of processing and storage facilities. Similar findings were found by Akpochafo & Alika (2016). More than half of the respondents also stated that the program was poorly planned ($\bar{x}$= 2.74) and that the focus was on theories rather than practical applications ($\bar{x}$=2.63). In total, 60% of respondents classified all 15 assertions as restrictions, while 40% said they were not. The grand mean of 2.82 suggested that the respondents' practical year program was significantly limited.

Table 2. Constraints faced during the PYP by the students

S/N	Constraints	Mean	Std.D	Rank
1.	Inadequate machinery and equipment.	2.99	0.94	4th
2.	Lack of motivation by the practical year students resulting in a lack of commitment	2.85	0.98	6th
3.	Lack of funds for excursions or field trips.	3.47	0.85	2nd
4.	Supervision is not carried out by expert personnel.	2.11	1.03	15th
5.	Inadequate safety equipment to be used by students in some farm units	2.95	0.98	5th
6.	Assignment of too many tasks at the same time	2.81	1.03	8th
7.	Non-conductive environment for training	2.55	1.10	13th
8.	Inadequate instructors to cope with teaching and supervision	2.33	1.04	14th
9.	Delay in payment of allowances is demoralizing	3.48	0.86	1st
10.	Methods used in teaching practicals were laborious	2.85	1.05	6th
11.	Lack of processing and storage facilities	2.75	1.04	9th
12.	Difficulties in combining farm work with lectures	3.08	1.01	3rd
13.	Poor implementation of the programme by the university	2.75	1.01	9th
14.	Poor programme planning	2.74	1.11	11th
15	The PYP was much of theories rather than practical	2.63	1.14	12th

3.3. Perceived Strategies for Enhancing the Practical Year Programme

The perceived means of improving the Practical Year Programme (PYP) in the study area were measured using a four-point Likert scale. From the literature and personal experience, a list of statements describing the perceived approaches to improve PYP was compiled. Almost the majority of the respondents agreed with the eight (8) statements listed as potential approaches to improving the study area's program. The standard deviation and mean scores of their responses were also calculated (as shown in Table 3). Perceived ways of Improving the Practical Year Program in the study area were defined as any mean score of 2.0 or higher**.**

The respondents believed that the program could be greatly improved if students were given the opportunity to visit other commercial farms rather than staying on the University farm ($\bar{x}$=3.71) and that the University should make provisions for excursions and field trips ($\bar{x}$= 3.70) as well as prioritizing their welfare ($\bar{x}$=3.55). They also believed that effective communication between instructors and students might improve program efficacy ($\bar{x}$=3.41) by facilitating rapid knowledge transfer and feedback systems. They also agreed that providing safety equipment to Practical year students can lessen the impact of the weather and some risks they encountered during the program on some farm units ($\bar{x}$=3.38). Students should also be given proper orientation about the program on time to quell their anxieties and unfavorable perceptions ($\bar{x}$=3.37). They also

agreed that the timely availability of machines, equipment, and tools required for the Program will help to maintain the respondents' enthusiasm as well as reduce the drudgery that comes with manual labor ($\bar{x}$=3.20).

Table 3. Distribution of the Respondents on the Perceived Ways of Improving PYP.

	Perceived solutions	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	Std.D	Rank
1	Proper orientation of students prior to commencement of PYP.	3.6	3.6	44.5	48.2	3.37	0.73	6th
2	Timely provision of machines, equipment, and tools necessary for the progamme.	9.1	10.9	30.9	49.1	3.20	O.97	8th
3	The welfare of the students involved in the PYP should be given adequate priority.	0.9	3.6	35.5	60.0	3.55	0.62	3rd
4	Effective Communication between instructors and the learners.	1.8	5.5	42.7	50.0	3.41	0.68	4th
5	Proper programme planning	3.6	5.5	45.5	45.5	3.32	0.74	7th
6	Provision of safety equipment for the students	9.1	5.5	23.6	61.8	3.38	0.95	5th
7	Students should be given the opportunity to visit commercial farms	1.8	25.5	-------	72.7	3.71	0.49	1st
8	Excursions and field trips should be made available to the students.	0.9	1.8	23.6	73.6	3.70	0.55	2nd

Source: Field survey (2019). **Likert type scale:** SD= Strongly disagree, D= Disagree, A= Agree, SA= Strongly agree. **Grand mean**= 3.5

3.4. Perceived Influence of Practical Year Programme on Career Choices of Agricultural Students in AKSU

Table 4 shows the results of the data analysis conducted to establish the perceived influence of the practical year program on the future profession choices of final-year Agriculture students at Akwa Ibom State University (AKSU) in Nigeria. The majority of respondents expressed a perceived favorable influence of the practical year program, according to a critical examination of individual comments as well as their mean responses. The first indication in the table shows that the majority of respondents (57%) strongly agreed that PYP bridges the gap between theoretical and practical parts of agriculture, with 38 percent agreeing, 1% disagreeing, and 8% severely disagreeing, for a mean response of 3.38. The mean scores of the replies were also calculated in order to truly establish the perceived influence of the PYP program on the future job choices of the final year agricultural students (Table 4). Since the maximum response score for each item was 4 and the minimum was 1, any statement with a mean score of 2.0 and above was treated as a positive perception of that statement, and vice versa if the mean score was below 2.

The second indication in the table shows that 24% of respondents highly agreed that PYP steers students to their preferred field of expertise within the college of agriculture, while 38% agreed, 30% disagreed, and 11% severely disagreed, with a mean of 2.72. The third indication showed that 15 percent of respondents highly agreed with the view that insufficient skills acquired during the PYP hindered their choice of agriculture as a vocation, 22 percent agreed, 49 percent disagreed, 18 percent strongly disagreed,

and the mean was 2.32. The fourth indicator shows that 13% of respondents strongly agreed that learning how to operate farm machinery during their practical year exposure helped them pursue a career in agriculture. The majority of 41 percent agreed, 27 percent disagreed, and 23 percent strongly disagreed, with a mean of 3.42. The fifth indication shows that 10% of respondents highly agreed that PYP was arduous and less helpful to interns, deterring them from pursuing an agricultural-based profession, 26% agreed, 51% disagreed, and 17% strongly disagreed, with a mean of 2.28. The sixth indicator reveals that 34% of respondents strongly agreed that PYP displayed their own strength in the subject of agriculture, with a majority of 47% agreeing, 13% disagreeing, and 10% severely disagreeing, with a mean of 3.01. The eighth indicator shows that the majority of respondents strongly agreed that PYP exposed them to new experiences in the subject of agriculture, with 41% strongly agreeing, 37% agreeing, 17% disagreeing, and only 9% strongly disagreeing, with a mean of 3.06. The ninth indicator shows that 28% of respondents strongly agreed that the knowledge gained on the PYP will inspire them to pursue an agricultural-based career after graduation, with a majority of 51% agreeing, 14% disagreeing, and 11% severely disagreeing, for a mean of 2.92.

Table 4. Perceived Influences of PYP on respondents' Future Career Choices

S/N	PYPs Influence	SD	D	A	SA	Mean
1.	PYP bridges the gap between theoretical and practical aspects of Agriculture.	8(7.7)	1(1.0)	38(36.5)	57(54.8)	3.38
2.	PYP directed us to our favourite area of specialty within the faculty of Agriculture.	11(10.6)	30(28.8)	39(37.5)	24(23.1)	2.73
3.	Inadequate skills acquired during PYP discouraged my choice of career in Agriculture.	18(17.3)	49(47.1)	22(21.1)	15(14.4)	2.32
4.	I learned how to make use of farm machinery during the period of internship as this encourages my career in Agriculture.	23(22.1)	27(26.0)	41(39.4)	13(12.5)	3.42
5.	PYP was laborious and less beneficial to the interns thus discouraging my choice of an Agricultural-based career.	17(16.3)	51(49.0)	26(25.0)	10(9.6)	2.28
6.	PYP revealed my personal strength in the field of agriculture.	10(9.6)	13(12.5)	47(45.2)	34(32.7)	3.01
7.	PYP gave me a sense of satisfaction towards an Agricultural-based career through the provision of industrial skills relevant to Agriculture.	13(12.5)	19(18.3)	39(37.5)	33(31.7)	2.88
8.	PYP exposed me to new experiences in the field of Agriculture.	9(8.7)	17(16.3)	37(35.6)	41(39.4)	3.06
9.	The knowledge acquired at PYP encouraged my choice of an Agricultural-based career after graduation.	11(10.6)	14(13.5)	51(49.0)	28(26.9)	2.92
10.	PYP gave me the capacity to be more productive in creating employment.	14(13.5)	16(15.4)	42(40.4)	32(30.8)	2.88
11.	PYP revealed my personal weaknesses in the field of agriculture.	13(12.5)	19(18.3)	42(40.4)	30(28.8)	2.86

Field Survey, 2021. Values in parenthesis are percentages while values outside are frequencies
SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree.

The tenth indicator shows that 32 percent of respondents strongly agreed that PYP enabled them to be more productive in creating jobs, with a majority of 42 percent agreeing, 16 percent disagreeing, 16 percent severely disagreeing, and a mean of 2.88. The eleventh and last indication reveals that 30% of respondents highly agreed that PYP highlighted their personal inadequacies in the subject of agriculture, with a majority of 42 percent agreeing, 19 percent disagreeing, and 13 percent severely disagreeing, with a mean of 2.86. The findings here support those of Opolot *et al.* (2016), who found that students benefit from the PYP in terms of gaining practical technical and soft skills. Ekanem, Inyang, and Umoh (2018) are also in agreement.

A population T-test, also known as a one-sample t-test, was used to see if there were any significant variations in the respondents' perceptions of PYP's influence on their future job choices. The estimated t-value of 0.502 is determined to be lower than the crucial t-value of 1.972 at the 0.05 level of significance with 103 degrees of freedom, as shown in Table 5. The null hypothesis is maintained as a result of this finding. This indicates that there is no discernible difference in the respondents' perceptions of the impact of PYP on their future job choices.

It should be remembered that the majority of respondents in this study stated that after graduation, they would pursue an agricultural degree. Because the observed mean of perceived influences is lower than the expected mean, the finding is further demonstrated. It also means that almost all of the respondents agreed that the practical year program had a positive impact on their future job choices.

Table 5. Population t-test (test of one sample mean) Analysis of the Perceived Influences of Practical Year Programme on the Future Career Choices

Variable	Expected mean (μ)	Observed mean (X)	Df	SD	t	Sig.
Perception of Influences	31	30.8	103	4.88	0.502	0.617

Computed from Field Survey, 2021.

3.5. Categorization of Respondents based on Perceptions, Constraints, and ways of Improving Practical Year Programme.

The result indicates that respondents had a favourable impression of the program ($\bar{x}$= 2.84) despite the fact that substantial constraints were encountered during its implementation ($\bar{x}$= 2.82). However, respondents also make suggestions for how to improve the program so that it achieves its goal ($\bar{x}$=3.50).

Table 6. Categorization of Respondents based on Perceptions, Constraints, and ways of Improving Practical Year Programme.

Categories	Percentage	Mean	SD
Perceptions			
Unfavorable	28%	2.84	0.79
Favourable	72%		
Constraints			
Not severe	40%	2.82	1.01
Severe	60%		
Ways of improving PYP			
Not perceived	12%	3.50	0.72
Perceived.	88%		

Source: Field survey (2019). **SD**= Standard deviation

4. Conclusion

The responders had a more positive impression of the Practical Year Program, but they had major difficulties implementing it. The program might be considerably enhanced, according to the respondents, if students were given the option to tour other commercial farms instead of sticking on the University farm. To add value to the program and ensure youth employment in extension organizations and agribusiness services, respondents should be given the opportunity to practice on farms outside of the university. This would allow agricultural development to thrive in a long-term way.

5. Recommendation

If the students' passion for agriculture is to be sustained and impacted on sustainable agricultural development in Akwa Ibom State University's immediate surrounding communities, Akwa Ibom State, and Nigeria at large, the constraints, particularly combining lectures with agricultural work and providing a welfare package for students during PYP implementation, must be addressed.

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