

An Evaluation of the Determinants Influencing Student's Enrollment into Agricultural Education Programme in Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria



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Abstract

This study evaluated the determinants influencing student's enrollment into Agricultural Education programme in College of Education in South Eastern Nigeria. Agricultural Education plays a critical role in the productions of qualified agricultural science teachers, promotion of sustainable agriculture, youth empowerment and national food security. Despite its importance, Students' enrollment into Agricultural Education programme in Colleges of Education across South Eastern Nigeria has remained persistently low, necessitating an empirical investigation into the determinants responsible for this trend. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and was conducted in five selected Colleges of Education in the region, namely Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe, Abia State College of Education Arochukwu, Imo State College of Education Ihitte Uboma, Federal College of Education, Eha, Amufu, Enugu State and Ebonyi State College of Education, Ikwo. The population of the study comprised 60 lecturers, 150 students and 30 administrators, totally 240 respondents drawn from five Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria. A sample size of 120 respondents, consisting of 30 lecturers, 75 students and 15 administrators was selected using proportionate stratified random sampling techniques. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Determinants of Enrollment into Agricultural Education Questionnaire (DEAEQ). The instrument was validated by experts in Agricultural Education and Measurement and Evaluation, while its reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics specifically mean and standard deviation. Findings revealed that personal factors such as students' interest, career aspirations and academic ability significantly influenced Enrolled into the programme. Family and peer factors, including parental encouragement, peer influence and family background, were also found to be significant determinants. Furthermore, socio-economic and societal factors such as job prospects, societal perception of agriculture, income potential and government support significantly affected students' enrollment decision. The study equally established that institutional factors, including availability of facilities, quality of instruction, institutional reputation and admission policies, significantly influenced students' enrollment into Agricultural Education Programme. The study concluded that enrollment into Agricultural Education is a multifactorial decision influenced by personal, social, economic and institutional variables. It was recommended that stakeholders address these determinants holistically to improve students' enrollment and participation in Agricultural Education Programme in South Eastern Nigeria.

Keywords: Agricultural Education, Student's Enrollment, Determinants, Colleges of Education South Eastern Nigeria.

Introduction

Background of the study Agricultural Education occupies a strategic position in Nigeria's tertiary education system as it prepares skilled manpower for agricultural based teaching, extension services, research and agribusiness enterprises

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that are vital for national food security and sustainable economic growth (Arubalueze, 2026). Agricultural Education Programmes in Colleges of Education. Specifically equip teachers with theories and pedagogical skills to teach Agriculture at the basic and post basic levels thereby supporting the national drive for technological and agricultural transformation. Despite this critical role, there has been persistent concern about low student enrollment in Agricultural Education Programmes across tertiary institutions in Nigeria, including Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria, which undermines the supply of qualified agricultural educators and weakens human resource capacity in the agricultural sector (Arubalueze, 2026).

Several studies point to a range of factors that may account for this trend. Students' personal attitudes, interests and perceptions of agriculture significantly influence their educational and career choices. For example, students often view agriculture as tedious, low prestige, and lacking in modern opportunities, which reduces their interest in enrolling in agricultural related programmes (Adejoh, Edoka & Shaibu, 2016; Nwankwo, 2015). Research in Nigeria has shown that poor perceptions reduces students' interest, which overtime lowers enrollment in agricultural programmes (Nwankwo, 2015).

Apart from personal factors, family and peer influences are widely cited in educational research as determinants of students' academic choices. Parental expectations, socioeconomic status and peer groups can either encourage or discourage students from enrolling in certain programme (Ester, 2007). Family support often predicts interest in a programme, while lack of encouragement or negative family perceptions can inhibit enrollment decisions. In addition to individual and social factors, institutional and systemic determinants such as the availability of qualified instructors, instructional facilities, learning environment and programme funding also affect students' willingness to enroll. The educational environment and quality of academic programmes signal, credibility and future opportunities to prospective students, influencing their choices (Oladele, Jegede & Liasu, 2021).

Understanding these determinants in the specific context of South Eastern Nigeria is crucial because of the region's unique socio-cultural dynamics, historical, patterns of enrollment, and developmental challenges. Without a comprehensive analysis of these factors, policy and programme responses remain inadequate, potentially widening gaps in agricultural education and limiting its contribution to national development.

Statement of the Problem

Despite numerous efforts by educational authorities and stakeholders to promote agricultural education as a viable career path, enrollment into Agricultural Education Programmes in Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria remains low. Recent empirical evidence shows that some Colleges of Education in the region register fewer than a dozen of students for Agricultural Education in each academic session, a figure far below required thresholds for programme sustainability and quality. The low enrollment trend threatens the production of qualified agricultural educators, undermines the teaching of agriculture at lower educational levels and weakens the capacity to support agricultural innovation and productivity.

Moreover, the problem is compounded by conflicting findings in existing literature on why students avoid

agriculture: while some studies emphasise negative perceptions of agriculture, others highlight socio-economic barriers, family expectations, institutional limitations and gender norms as contributing factors. Nevertheless, much of the available research does not adequately focus on Colleges of education in the South Eastern region, nor does it integrate a holistic evaluation of personal; family, societal, and institutional determinants collectively. This knowledge gap constrains local policy formulation and limits targeted interventions to improve enrollment. Hence, there is a need for a comprehensive evaluation of these determinants within the South Eastern Nigeria context.

Objectives of the Study

The general objectives of the study is to evaluate the determinants influencing students' enrollment into Agricultural Education Programme in Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria. Specifically the study seeks to:

- Assess the influence of personal factors on students' enrollment into Agricultural Education Programme in Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria.
- Examine the influence family and peer factors on students' enrollment decisions into Agricultural Education Programme in Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria.
- Determine the effects of socioeconomic and societal factors on students' enrollment into Agricultural Education Programme in Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria.
- Evaluate the role of institutional factors in influencing students' enrollment into Agricultural Education Programme in Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant to various stakeholders:

- i. The findings will provide evidence to inform policy interventors aimed at enhancing students' interest and participation in Agricultural Education, including scholarship allocation, curriculum adjustments, and targeted awareness campaigns.
- ii. Insights from the study will aid institutional leaders in understanding the barriers and facilitators of enrollment, enabling them to improve facilities, academic support and student engagement strategies.
- iii. The research will assist guidance counselors in identifying key factors that shape students' academic choices and in developing targeted counselling programmes to promote agricultural careers among youths.
- iv. The study will raise awareness among students and parents about the opportunities and challenges associated with Agricultural Education, helping families make informed decisions about career paths.
- v. The study will extend existing literature on educational determinants and offer an empirical basis for

future research, particularly within the Nigerian context.

Scope of the Study

They study was restricted to evaluate the determinants influencing student's enrollment into Agricultural Education Programme in Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do personal factors influence student' enrollmednt into Agricultural Education Programme in Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria?
2. How do family and peer factors affects students' decisions to enroll in Agricultural Education Programme in Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria?
3. What is the influence of Socio- economic and societal factors on students' enrollment into Agricultural Education Programme in Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria?
4. How did institutional factors influence students' enrollment into Agricultural Education Programme in Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria?

Research Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The study was carriedout in South Eastern Nigeria. The South East is one of the six geo-political zones in Nigeria consisting of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo state. The population for the study comprised 60 lecturers ,150 students and 30 administrators, totalling 240 respondents drawn from five Collegess of Education in South Eastern Nigeria namely Abia State Colleges of Education (Technical) Arochukwu , Nwafor Orizu Colleges of Education Nsugbe, Anambra State, Ebonyi State Colleges of Education Ikwo, Federal Colleges of Education, Eha-Amufu Enugu State and Imo State Colleges of Education, Ihitte Uboma. A sample Size of 120 respondents was selected using proportionate stratified random sampling to ensure full representation of the three strata (Lecturers, Students and Administrative officers). The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled. "Determinants of enrollment into Agricultural Education Questionnaire (DEAEQ)". The questionnaire was divided into five sections (A-E).A. Focused on demographic Information such as Institution, role, gender etc., B. Focused on personal factors influencing students' enrollment into Agricultural Education, C. Focused on family and peer factors influencing students' enrollment into Agricultural Education, D. Focused on socio- economic and societal factors influencing students' enrollment into Agricultural Education E. Focused on Institutional factors influencing student enrollment into Agricultural Education. Items in section B-E were structured on a 4 point likert scale.

To ensure the validity of the instrument, the draft questionnaire was submitted to three experts, two from the Department of Agricultural Education and One from Measurement and Evaluation. Their suggestions on clarity, content coverage and language were used to revise the final version of the questionnaire. Reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach Alpha Reliability Method after administering 20 copies of the questionnaire to respondents outside the main study area. The internal consistency coefficient obtained was 0.87, indicating a highly reliable instrument. The researcher personally distributed and retrieved the questionnaire with the help of departmental heads, research assistant and student leaders in each Colleges. All data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools such as frequency counts, mean and standard deviation.

Presentation of Result

Research Question 1:

To what extent do personal factors influence student' enrollment into Agricultural Education Programme in Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Respondents on Personal factors influencing student' enrollment into Agricultural Education Programme in Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	N120	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
1	My personal interest in agriculture made me enroll	120	50	45	15	10	3.13	Agreed
2	My career ambition influenced my decision	120	48	46	17	9	3.11	Agreed
3	I enrolled because agriculture offers self employment	120	52	40	18	10	3.12	Agreed
4	Previous exposure to farming influenced me	120	46	43	21	10	3.04	Agreed
5	My confidence in succeeding in agriculture encouraged enrollment	120	49	44	17	10	3.10	Agreed

The results in Table 1 showed that all personal factor items recorded mean values above the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicated that respondents generally agreed that personal interest, occupational aspirations, confidence, perceived profitability and earlier exposure to agriculture are strong motivators of enrollment.

Research Question 2:

How do family and peer factors influence students' enrollment into Agricultural Education Programme in Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Respondents on family and peer factors influencing students' enrollment into Agricultural Education Programme in Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria.

S/N	ITEMS	N120	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
6	My parents encouraged me to study agriculture	120	51	39	20	10	3.09	Agreed
7	Family financial support influenced my enrollment	120	53	38	18	11	3.11	Agreed
8	My family occupation shaped interest	120	45	42	22	11	3.01	Agreed
9	Friends influenced my decision to enroll.	120	44	43	22	11	3.00	Agreed
10	Success stories of peers motivated me	120	47	41	21	11	3.03	Agreed

All the items exceeded the 2.50 benchmark, meaning that respondents acknowledged the importance of parental advice, economic backing, occupational background, and peer encouragement. Hence, family structure and peer groups play a substantial role in shaping enrollment behaviour.

Research Questions 3

What is the influence of Socio- economic and societal factors on students' enrollment into Agricultural Education Programme in Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean Ratings of Respondents on Socio- economic and societal factors on students' enrollment into Agricultural Education Programme in Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria.

S/N	ITEMS	N120	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
11	Cost of education affects enrollment decision	120	55	38	17	10	3.15	Agreed
12	Scholarship opportunities encourage students	120	52	40	18	10	3.12	Agreed
13	Society places higher value on other profession	120	49	44	17	10	3.10	Agreed
14	Expected income from agriculture influenced me	120	50	41	19	10	3.09	Agreed
15	Community perception of agriculture affects enrollment	120	48	42	20	10	3.07	Agreed

With all mean values above 2.50, respondents agreed that financial capability, scholarship availability, labour market expectations, and societal prestige are strong determinants. This means that economic realities and social valuation of agriculture strongly drive student's choices.

Research Question 4

How do institutional factors influence students' enrollment into Agricultural Education Programme in Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria?

Table 4: Mean Ratings of respondents on institutional factors influencing students' enrollment into Agricultural Education Programme in Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	N120	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
16	Availability of farm facilities influenced my choice	120	54	40	16	10	3.15	Agreed
17	Qualified lecturers at tract students to the programme	120	56	37	17	10	3.16	Agreed
18	Quality of teaching encouraged enrollment	120	52	42	16	10	3.13	Agreed
19	A good learning environment influenced me	120	50	43	17	10	3.11	Agreed
20	Career guidance services helped my decision	120	48	44	18	10	3.08	Agreed

Table 4 revealed strong agreement that adequate facilities, competent lecturers, effective teaching and institutional support systems enhance enrollment. Thus, institutional readiness and attractiveness significantly determine programme choice.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the research question one, revealed that personal factors such as students' intrinsic interest in agriculture, perceived relevance of agricultural education to their career goals, personal motivation, and prior exposure to agriculture significantly influenced enrollment decisions. Participants generally agreed that students who held strong personal interests and positive attitudes toward agriculture were more likely to enroll. This findings is consistent with contemporary research that identifies personal interests and attitude as crucial predictors of educational choice. For example in a study of Nigerian Secondary School Students, Oluwatayo, Afolabi, & Oladimeji (2021), reported that positive attitude towards agricultural science significantly predicted students' willingness to pursue further learning in the field, indicating that interest developed early increases later enrollment in agricultural- related programmes. Similarly Omotosho et al. (2025), found that personal motivation and early exposure to agricultural activities strongly influenced students' decision to pursue agricultural education at higher levels.

Research Question two, revealed that family support, parental expectations, socio-economic status of the family, sibling influence and peer encouragement were significant determinants of students' programme enrollment. Respondents agreed that parental guidance and positive peer influence supported decision to enroll in Agricultural Education Programme. This conclusion echoes findings from multiple recent studies.

Semambo et al.(2021) found that parental involvement and family expectations significantly shaped students' educational pathways. Their work suggests that when parents value agricultural career or have agricultural backgrounds, students are more likely to enroll in agricultural related programmes. Similarly, Adewuyi & Opaleye (2022), reported that family socio-economic status and parental encouragement were significant predictors of science students' choice of career direction, including agricultural science pathways. In a cross national study including Nigeria contexts, Akinyemi & Adebayo (2023), demonstrated that peer groups influence students' subject selection by serving as key social referents. Positive peer attitude towards a programme increase the likelihood of enrollment. Duku, Akoto & Mensah(2020), also found that peer influence within students networks significantly affected career aspirations and agricultural subject uptake in tertiary institutions.

In a recent Nigeria survey, Lawal & Adebisi (2024), found out that parental expectations often outweighs individual preference- especially where parents see agriculture as viable and this significantly affects enrollment decisions in teacher education programmes like Agricultural Education. Furthermore, Bello & Ahmed(2021), identified that supportive family networks and siblings influence significantly improve commitment to agricultural careers. Taken together, these studies confirm that family dynamics and peer relationships are powerful determinants of students' enrollment decisions in Agricultural Education Programmes.

Findings from the research question three indicated that socio-economic status, community norms, societal perception of agriculture, access to financial support and expectations of job prospects strongly influenced students' decisions. Students from supportive backgrounds or communities that view agriculture positively were more likely to enroll. Research evidence supports this findings. Aremu & Adeyemi(2021), found that low socio-economic family backgrounds often discourage students from choosing agriculture, as families may prioritize perceived higher status careers such as medicine or engineering for their children. Udoh & Asuquo(2022), reported that economic incentives and scholarship opportunities were significant determinants of students' intention to enroll in vocational and agricultural programmes.

The result from research question four showed that institutional readiness such as quality of facilities, availability of qualified lecturers, practical training opportunities, career guidance and programme reputations were significant determinants. Recent research corroborates this. Oladele, Jegede, & Alabi (2021), reported that quality teaching resources and agricultural laboratories significantly attract students to agriculture and related fields because they enhance practical competence and confidence. Igbokwe & Bosah (2023), found that institutional reputation and visibility of successful alumni increased student enrollment in teacher education courses.

Conclusion

This study evaluated the determinants influencing students' enrollment into Agricultural Education Programme in Colleges of Education in South Eastern Nigeria. Evidence from the findings showed that

enrollment decisions are not shaped by a single factor but by a combination of personal, family and peer, socio-economics, societal, and institutional determinants.

The study concluded that:

- Students with strong interest in agriculture, clear career goals, positive attitudes and confidence in their abilities are more willing to enroll.
- Family encouragement, parental expectations, and peer group orientation significantly affect students' willingness either positively or negatively.
- Societal perception of agriculture, economic background and awareness of employment opportunities play major roles in determining attractiveness of the programme.
- Institutional issues such as availability of facilities, quality of lecturers, career guidance services and the general image of the programme strongly influence students' final enrollment decisions.

Therefore, improving enrollment into Agricultural Education requires simultaneous attention to student orientation, family engagement, societal re-branding of agriculture and strengthening institutional capacity.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. **Personal Factors:** Institutions should intensify career awareness programmes, mentorship and orientation activities that build students' interest, motivation, and confidence in agricultural careers. Exposure through school farms, practical demonstrations, and success stories of graduates should be expanded.
2. **Family and Peer Factors:** Colleges and Education authorities should design parent student engagement strategies including guidance forums, and community outreach, to educate families on the value and opportunities within agricultural education. Positive peer ambassadors and student role models should also be used to influence perceptions.
3. **Socio- Economic and Societal Factors:** Government and stakeholders should improve scholarship schemes, financial incentives and employment visibility in agriculture. Public campaigns are needed to change negative societal stereotypes and promote agriculture as modern, profitable and technology driven.
4. **Institutional Factors:** Colleges of Education should upgrade teaching facilities, laboratories, farms and instructional materials, while ensuring the presence of competent lecturers and effective career guidance services. Strong linkages with industries for internship and employment pathways should be strengthened to make the programme more attractive.

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