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Factors associated with land accessibility among rural farm youth in Kebbi State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: The study assessed the factors associated with land accessibility among rural farm youth. Specifically, it described the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, identified respondents' access to land, and isolated factors influencing respondents' access to land. A multistage sampling technique was used to select 200 respondents for the study. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics, including percentages, charts, mean scores, and standard deviation. Principal components analysis was used to isolate crucial factors influencing respondents' access to land. The study shows that the mean age of respondents was 29.46±4.89 years. The majority (68.0%) of the respondents were males; the majority (76.5%) were married; 47.2% of the respondents had no form of formal education, with an average number of children of 5±4.31 and an average annual income of ₦269,560.72±113,289.34. Access to land through inheritance was the primary access to land by the respondents, with a mean of M=3.7250 ±0.71550. Significant factors influencing respondents' access to land are socio-demographic factors, culture-related, social, community-related, and education-related factors. It is recommended, among others, that any form of barrier to access to land by the respondents should be removed to encourage food production.

Keywords: Accessibility, factors, land, rural, youth.

INTRODUCTION

Land access is crucial to efficient agricultural production, food security, and poverty alleviation in Sub-Sahara Africa, where rural households have limited access to productive land (Giller *et al*., 2021). Land's vital role in food production is linked to most African countries' social, political, and economic life, where agriculture, natural resources, and other related land-based activities are critical to livelihoods, food security, income, and employment (Meyfroidt, 2018). Empirical research in many developing areas has demonstrated that relatively egalitarian land distribution patterns often foster higher economic growth rates than highly concentrated ones (Deininger *et al*., 2017). It is usually due to widespread agricultural growth that mostly brings about second-round expenditures supporting locally produced non-tradable goods and services in rural areas and towns (Jayne *et al*., 2008). The multiplier effects brought about by this growth are usually less when the source of agricultural development is confined to relatively few hands. This is particularly true of land, which is a limited agrarian resource. Therefore, the growth rate is likely to influence land distribution in the agricultural sector, particularly among rural households.

In rural communities of Africa, the land is at the centre of rural life and a property that has religious, cultural, economic, and political importance. It also has inherent values, a basis of identity and status within a family and community (Hanstad and Nielsen 2004). The land is a cohesive force that unites people since it is believed that

land is communally owned (Famakinwa *et al*., 2017a). The land is regarded as a heritage or legacy bequeathed by ancestors to future generations. In Nigeria, land is not just a factor of production but a significant determinant of the people's livelihoods. It is an important vehicle that provides access to economic opportunities, accumulates wealth, and transfers it from one generation to another, especially in rural areas (Baye, 2003). Land provides rural households with the essential means for subsistence and market production. It offers a secure base to shelter and nurture families and develop livelihood strategies (Food and Agriculture Organisation, 2010).

Furthermore, Yeboah *et al*. (2019) posited that access to land and the associated security of property is fundamental for young Africans to engage in agriculture and will significantly impact their livelihoods. Contrary to popular perceptions of land affluence, evidence points to increasing costs associated with young people's access to land in Africa. African rural youth have traditionally acquired land through inheritance in common tenure relationships. Nevertheless, allocable land is becoming increasingly scarce in areas of longstanding settlement as populations continue to grow amid fixed land resources (Jayne *et al*., 2014). The struggle for land from urban investors further limits the youth's scope for further inheritance in many areas (Jayne *et al*., 2016).

As noted by Yeboah *et al.* (2019), most of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa is still rural. Africa is still the region of the globe where the rural population and the figure of rural youth will increasingly supersede by 2050 (United Nations, 2017). Farming constitutes a significant source of employment and income for many African rural dwellers (Davis *et al*., 2017; Yeboah and Jayne, 2018). Filmer and Fox (2014) argued that about eleven million able-bodied men in Africa would enter the labour force year over the next 50 years. Losch (2016) contended that under hopeful situations, assessments still indicate that less than a quarter of the new entrants into the region's labour force will find wage employment in the formal sector. Yeboah and Jayne (2018) maintained that Agriculture and informal enterprise, which in most African countries are primarily linked to agriculture through its far-reaching forward and backward linkages with the rest of the economy, need to attract a substantial proportion of these young people into paid employment to sustain the region's economic transformation process.

Additionally, in Kebbi State, agriculture remains the largest employer of labour and is still practised on a small scale. Agriculture in the State faces many challenges ranging from the low level of technology, lack of access to credit, increasing and low duration of rainfall, land fragmentation resulting from inheritance, and population growth, which continuously reduced household size and individual farmland. Others include the lack of ability of farm families to secure farm inputs at the right time and the non-availability of improved seeds and animal breeds, accompanied by low soil fertility, which in turn reduces yield per hectare and recently rural banditry has added to the problem of some of the farming households in some parts of the State. A lot of work has been done in this field of research; for instance, Daudu *et al*. (2022), Famakinwa *et al*. (2017a), and Famakinwa *et al*. (2017b). Most of these concentrate more on how older farmers access land and factors associated with land accessibility among these older farmers. There is a need to research factors that influence land accessibility among rural farm youth; the reason is that they are the next generation of farmers, and the future of agriculture and food security is in their hands. It is against this background this paper seeks answers to the following questions;

1. What are the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents in the study area?
2. What are the methods of accessing land for farming among the respondents, and
3. What factors influence respondents' access to land in the study area?

One hypothesis was stated in a null form thus;

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between respondents' socio-economic characteristics and land accessibility.

The theoretical framework upon which this study is based is the capability approach (C.A.) developed by Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2011). However, it originated in the works of Aristotle, Adam Smith, and Karl Marx. However, Amartya Sen founded the approach, and Nussbaum and other humanities and social sciences scholars developed it. The capability approach proposed that freedom to realise well-being concerns what humans can do and be and the kind of life they can effectively lead.

The capability approach stems from various articles Sen wrote (1974, 1979a, and 1979b). where he criticises the traditional economic models such as utilitarianism and resourcim, Sen maintained that the gap between these conventional economic models is "the conception that we can undertake as a people (doing) and the kind of individuals we want to be (beings). He called this conception capabilities. Therefore, capabilities are individuals' absolute freedom to achieve their potential doings and beings. Real freedom entails that one has the mandatory means of attaining those doings and beings if one desires such. According to the capability approach, this freedom is not just the freedom to do or be something but the ample opportunity to achieve it.

Additionally, the focus of the capability approach changes from means (i.e., the resources individuals have at their disposal and the public goods they can access) to ends (what they can do and be with those resources and goods). Sen did not develop the capability approach list.

He only discussed it, and Nussbaum (2011) expanded the capability approach list to contain 10 items. The list contained life, body integrity, sense of imagination and thought, emotions, practical reason, and affiliations. Other species; play and control one's environment.

Equally, control over one's environment, the last item on Nussbaum's capabilities list, is paramount to this work. According to the capabilities approach as expanded by Nussbaum, the rural farm youth should have control over their environment, which is the fundamental freedom to own property such as land, irrespective of their social class, gender, education, and location. It is not just the freedom to do farming or be farmers, but the substantial opportunity to own land and be real farmers.

Additionally, Kosec *et al*. (2018) studied the effects of youth employment and migration decisions: evidence from rural Ethiopia. The study found out that the decision to migrate is hinged on the following: a large expanse of land inheritance, which critically reduced the likelihood of long-distance permanent migration and of permanent migration to urban areas; the possibility of employment in agriculture is influenced by the amount of land inherited and a reduction in the likelihood of employment in non-agriculture. Similarly, Famakinwa *et al*. (2017a) examined factors associated with land accessibility among rural dwellers in Osun State, Nigeria. The study sample comprised 260 respondents, and the study revealed that 12 factors influence rural dwellers' access to land; the mean age of the respondents was 50.77% years, and none of these studies looked at factors associated with land accessibility among rural farm youths in Kebbi State, Nigeria. Despite the importance of agriculture to Nigeria's rural economy, access to land remains a critical challenge for rural youth in Kebbi State. The research examined the complex factors that influence access to land for these youth, considering issues such as land tenure systems, socio-cultural norms, government policies, and economic constraints. By identifying and analysing these factors, the study provided insights into strategies to improve land access and increase youth participation in agricultural activities, thereby contributing to rural development efforts in Nigeria and Kebbi State. The gap that necessitated this study was a lack of deep understanding regarding the specific mechanisms through which socio-cultural factors influence land accessibility for rural farm youths in Kebbi State, Nigeria. While existing literature may acknowledge the importance of socio-cultural norms in shaping land tenure systems and access to agricultural resources, there is often limited empirical evidence or detailed analysis of how these norms manifest in practice and interact with other factors such as government policies and economic constraints.

Therefore, a research gap exists in the need for in-depth research investigating the distinct ways socio-cultural factors influence land accessibility, including the role of customary practices, gender dynamics, intergenerational relations, and community perceptions of youth involvement in agriculture. The research has provided valuable insights into the socio-cultural barriers faced by rural farm youths in accessing land and inform the development of contextually appropriate interventions to address these barriers and promote youth involvement in agriculture and rural development initiatives. To fill this noticeable gap, there is a need to investigate the factors associated with land accessibility among rural farm youth in Kebbi state, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Kebbi State, Northwestern Nigeria, and the study population comprises rural farm youth. Kebbi state is between latitudes 10°8' N - 13°15'N and longitudes 3° 30'E - 6°30'E. Sokoto and Zamfara border the State to the east, Niger to the south, the Benin Republic to the west, and the Republic of Niger to the north. With a total landmass of about 37,699 square kilometres, 36.44 per cent comprises arable land.

The State comprises four agricultural zones, namely, Argungu, Bunza, Zuru, and Yauri zones, respectively. The rural farm youth were selected through a multistage sampling procedure. Two Local Government Areas (L.G.A.) were selected at the first stage in each zone. The selected L. G. A. are Birnin Kebbi, Kalgo in Argungu zone, Bunza, Dandi in Bunza zones, Fakai and Danko/Wasagu in Zuru, and Ngaski and Shanga in Yauri zones, respectively. In the second stage, five per cent of the rural communities in each of the eight L.G.A. were selected proportionately. At the final stage, 0.65% of the rural farm youth were randomly selected from each rural community. In all, two hundred rural farm youth were used for this study. A pretested and validated questionnaire with a Cronbach alpha of 0.75 reliability was accepted.

Descriptive statistical techniques such as frequency, percentages, means, and standard deviation were used to summarise the data collected. Factor analysis was used to isolate crucial factors influencing land accessibility among rural farm youth; the essential variables were inter-correlated and ran with a varimax factor rotation matrix. The suitability of the sample size for factor analysis was determined using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measures of sample adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity (BTS), and it was deduced that the K.M.O. Coefficient was 0.769, greater than 0.55, and 0.000, significant at 0.01. Therefore, according to Kaiser (1974), the sample size met the criteria for factor analysis. The cut-off point for constant loading was 0.50, and the continuous loading less than 0.50 was discarded.

Furthermore, Kaiser's criterion was used to determine which factor to retain in the result of factor analysis. Thus, factors with an Eigenvalue greater than one were retained. The factors were named based on the following criteria

employed by Ibrahim *et al*. (2020).

1. The researcher's subjective interpretation of the experience from the literature.
2. Picking synonymous the highest loaded variables on each factor.
3. Retaining the name based on the similarity of features reposed in the variables contributing to the factor and
4. Joint explanation or interpretation of measuring each factor's positive and highly loaded variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The socio-economic variables considered in the study include age, sex, marital status, level of education, number of children, household size, number of wives, annual income, years of farming experience, membership in a social organisation, land owned, community membership, and indigene status.

Distribution of respondents according to personal and socio-economic characteristics

Results in Table 1 show that the majority (77.0%) of the respondents fell within 26 years and above, with an average of 29.46±4.89 years. The result further revealed that the majority (68.0%) were males, and only (32.0%) were females. This implies that males dominate the agricultural sector in the study area. The findings gave credence to Famakinwa *et al.* (2017a) and Ibrahim *et al.* (2020), who reported similar findings. The majority (76.5%) of the rural farm youth are married; this finding conformed with the work of Daudu *et al.* (2022), which shows that most male land owners were married. Nearly half (42.0%) of the respondents had no education, and the result is not in conformity with the work of Famakinwa *et al.* (2017b), which states that the mean years of schooling is 7.9±4.70 years. Close to half (48.5%) of the rural farm youth had between 1 and 5 children, with an average of 5 children. Conversely, the table further indicates that nearly half (45.5%) of the respondents had a household of 1-9 members, with an average of 8 members per household. Half (52.0%) of the rural farm youth had at least one wife. Furthermore, the results indicate that the majority (85.5%) of the respondent's annual income fell between ₦35,701.00 and ₦367,850.00, with an average of ₦269,560.72. The majority (80.5%) of respondents had more than or equal to 17.51 years of farming experience and an average of 21.44±4.54 years. The above shows that rural farm youth are at their most productive age, implying they are ready to explore their immediate environment and beyond. The findings agree with that of Issa *et al.* (2014), who posited that most of the youth in Sabon Gari are young, agile, and married.

Mean scores and standard deviation of respondents' access to land

Rural farm youth were asked to rate the statements that relate to methods of acquiring land using the following scale: Not at all (0), rarely (1), sometimes (2), and always (3). It was discovered that acquiring land through inheritance happens to be the standard method of acquiring with Mean = 3.7250±0.71550, followed by purchase with Mean = 3.0750±0.97165, pledge with Mean = 2.9400±1.00571, through a loan with Mean = 2.9300±1.09595, through a lease with Mean = 2.8550±1.16221 (Table 2). The implication of acquiring or accessing land through inheritance is that it hinders rural youth who do not inherit or might have inherited a small fragment of the land from their parents. This hindrance is not suitable for agriculture and food security. The result is in tandem with Adamu (2014) and(Famakinwa *et al*. (2017a), who reported that inheritance was the most common way to access land among Osun State rural dwellers.

Factors associated with land accessibility among rural farm youth

Table 3 shows the varimax factor rotation pattern output with highly loaded measures of the five extracted factors. The cut-off point for constant factor loading was 0.40, and the continuous loading of less than 0.40 was discarded. Out of the sixteen variables listed, the loading that gives an Eigenvalue of greater than one was five in number. Furthermore, Kaiser's criterion was used to determine which factors to retain, albeit factors with an Eigenvalue greater than one were retained. The contributions of highly loaded factors to land accessibility among rural farm youth are shown in Table 3. The contribution of the highly loaded variables to land accessibility were five factors: (4) institutional factors, which accounted for 67.350 per cent, followed by community-related factors, 60.901 per cent; social factors accounted for 53.031 per cent; followed by cultural factors accounted for 42.736 per cent, and lastly, socio-demographic factor accounted for 31.094 per cent.

Socio-demographic factor: Data presented in Table 3 show that age (L=0.896), marital status (L= -0.746), number of children (L=0.891), household size (L=0.891), number of wives (L=0.741), annual income (L=0.592), and years of farming experience (L=0.863) were variables that contributed to the socio-demographic variable. These findings imply that socio-demographic factors determine land accessibility among rural farm youth in the study area. Consequently, respondents' age, marital status, number of children, household size, number of wives, annual income, and years of farming experience were factors influencing land accessibility among the respondents. These findings agree with the findings of Famakinwa et al. (2017a), who

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to socio-economic characteristics (N=200).

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard deviation
Age				
≤15.00	2	1.0		
16.00-25.00	44	22.0	29.46	4.89
≥26.00	154	77.0		
Sex				
Female	64	32.0		
Male	136	68.0		
Marital status				
Married	153	76.5		
Divorced	11	5.5		
Widow/widower	10	5.0		
Single	26	13.0		
Level of education				
None	84	42.0		
Primary	32	16.0		
Secondary	39	19.5		
Tertiary	21	10.5		
Islamic education	24	12.0		
Number of children				
≤.00	26	13.0		
1.00-5.00	97	48.5	4.59	2.49
≥16.00	77	38.5		
Household size				
≤.00	26	13.0		
1.00-9.00	91	45.5	8.37	4.31
≥10.00	83	41.5		
Number of wives				
≤.00	51	25.5		
1.00-1.50	105	52.0	1.00	0.766
≥1.51	45	22.5		
Annual income				
≤N35,700.00	1	0.5		
35,701-367,850.00	171	85.5	269,560.72	113,289.34
≥N367,851.00	28	14.0		
Years of farming experience				
≤7.00	1	0.5		
8.00-17.00	38	19.0	21.44	4.54
≥17.51	161	80.5		

Source: Field survey, 2022.

posited that married farmers who stayed longer in the community and are highly placed within the community power structure are likely to have better access to land.

Culture-related factor: Results in Table 4 show two variables were found to contribute to culture-related factors, one positively loaded and the other negatively

Table 2. Mean score and Standard Deviation of respondents' access to land (n=200).

Land accessibility methods	Mean	Standard Deviation
Through inheritance	3.7250**	0.71550
Through purchase	3.0750**	0.097165
Through the pledge, which always involves land under farming	2.9400*	0.1.00571
Through loan	2.9300*	1.09595
Through lease	2.8550*	1.16221
Through sharecropping	1.9850	1.23385
It is a gift given to the existing holder who might want to move to another place	1.9250	0.94010
Allocation of an uncleared bush by the village head.	1.3200	0.65555

Must significant methods of accessing or acquiring land; *Significant methods of accessing or acquiring land (Source:** Field survey, 2022).

Table 3. The principal component analysis results show the initial Eigenvalues and percentage of variation in land accessibility among rural farm youth by each component and the factors extracted.

Factors	Initial Eigenvalue	Percentage variance	Cumulative percentage
Socio-demographic	4.975	31.094	31.094
Cultural	1.863	11.642	42.736
Social	1.647	10.295	53.031
Community-related	1.259	7.871	60.901
Institutional	1.0332	6.449	67.350

Source: Computed from the result of factor analysis, 2022.

Table 4. Factor analysis showing variables contributing to extracted factors influencing land accessibility among rural farm youth.

Factors(variables)	L	L^2	$\sum L^2=X$
Factor 1 (socio-demographic)			
Age	0.869	0.755	
Marital status	-0.746	-0.556	
Number of children	0.891	0.793	
Household size	0.891	0.793	3.428
Number of wives	0.741	0.549	
Annual income	0.592	0.350	
Years of farming experience	0.863	0.744	
Factor 2 (Culture related)			
Access to credit	0.752	0.565	0.19
Cosmopoliteness	-0.613	-0.375	
Factor 3 (social)			
Sex of respondents	0.636	0.404	0.455
Indigene status	-0.426	-0.181	
Factor 4 (Community-related)			
Occupation of respondents	0.504	0.254	0.535
Land own	0.531	0.281	
Factor 5 (Educational)			
Level of education	-0.512	-0.262	-0.074
Membership in social organisation	-0.580	0.336	

L= loading for factor, L^2=Square of the factor loading, X=Latent root for the factor.

Table 5. Correlation showing the relationship between respondents' selected socio-economic characteristics and land accessibility.

Socio-economic variables	r	Coeff. of determination	p-value	Decision
Age	0.131	0.017161	0.064	NS
Number of children	0.781**	0.609961	0.000	S
Household size	0.852**	0.725904	0.000	S
Number of wives	0.591**	0.349281	0.000	S
Annual income	0.508**	0.258064	0.000	S
Years of farming experience	0.469**	0.219961	0.000	S

******Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2-tailed); *Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2-tailed) (**Source:** Field survey, 2022).

Table 6. Chi-square analysis showing the association between the respondents' land access and some selected socio-economic characteristics.

Variables	X^2	d.f	CC	p-value	Decision
Sex	54.29	41	0.462	.080	N.S.
Marital status	117.86	123	0.609	0.614	NS
Level of education	153.49	164	0.659	0.711	NS
Community Membership	36.35	41	0.392	0.677	NS
Occupation	216.05	164	0.721	0.004	S
Indigene status	72.48	41	0.516	0.002	S
Access to credit	62.73	41	0.489	0.016	S

Significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed); *Significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed) (Source:** Field survey, 2022).

loaded. It was access to credit (L=0.752) and cosmopoliteness (L= -0.613). The factor was named based on criterion 4. It implies that access to credit and cosmopoliteness are determinants of land accessibility among the respondents in the study area.

Social factor: Data in Table 4 show that two variables contributed significantly to social factors, one positive and the other negative. These were respondents' sex (L=0.636) and indigene status (L= -0.426). The factor was named based on criterion 4. It implies that male respondents who are indigenes of the community could have better chances for land accessibility.

Community-related factor: Results in Table 4 also show that two variables contributed significantly to the community-related factor, out of which all were positively loaded. These variables are occupation (L=0.504) and land owned (L=0.531). The factor was named based on criterion 2. It indicates that respondents with occupation and already owned some land would clamour for more land.

Educational factor: The result in Table 4 further shows that two variables contributed significantly to the education factor. And all loaded negatively. These were level of education (L= --0.512) and membership in social organisation (L= -0.580). The factor was named based on criterion 3. It implies that educational level and membership in the social organisation could greatly influence respondents' land accessibility.

Conclusively, rural farm youth were within 29 years, male, married, with children, with at least a wife with reasonable income and good years of experience, would have better access to land.

Correlation between socio-economic characteristics of rural farm youth and accessibility land in the study area

The result in Table 5 showed that at p≤0.01, there was a positive and significant relationship between respondents' number of children (r=0.781), household size(r=0.852), number of wives (r=0.591), annual income (r=0.508) and years of farming experience (r=0.409) and their access to land. It implies that as the number of children, household size, number of wives, annual income, and years of farming experience increase, they will have a better chance to access land for farming. The level of access to land by the rural farm youth as determined by the coefficient of determination(r^2), as shown in Table 5, could be further explained by this number of children (78.1%),

household size (85.2%), number of wives (59.1%), annual income (50.8%) and years of farming experience (40.9%). It also confirmed that household size and the number of children have the highest contribution to land accessibility of the rural farm youth. In contrast, the contribution of years of farming experience is relatively low in the study area.

Chi-square analysis showing the association between land accessibility and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents'

The result in Table 6 shows that at $p \leq 0.01$, there was a significant association between respondents' occupation ($X^2=216.05$) and indigene status ($X^2=72.48$), and at $p \leq 0.05$ there was a significant and strong association between access to credit ($X^2=62.732$). The findings revealed a higher association between respondents' occupation and indigene status. It infers that any change in these variables could affect land accessibility among respondents in the study area.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this study has addressed the complex factors influencing land accessibility for rural youth in Kebbi State, Nigeria. Through a comprehensive analysis of socio-demographic, cultural, social, communal, and educational factors, it became clear that access to land is not just a matter of physical availability but is closely linked to historical legacies, socio-cultural norms, and government policies.

The findings of this research highlight the significant challenges young rural farmers face in accessing land for agricultural activities. Land tenure systems characterised by complexity and ambiguity and entrenched socio-cultural practices often prove to be barriers to young people's agricultural involvement. Furthermore, limited implementation of supportive government policies (such as the Land Use Act of 1978) and inadequate access to credit and resources further exacerbate the situation and hinder the potential for youth-led agricultural development in the State.

But amidst these challenges, there are also opportunities for intervention and positive change. Initiatives aimed at reforming land tenure systems to make them more inclusive and transparent, coupled with efforts to provide targeted support and resources for rural youth, promise to improve land accessibility and promote youth involvement in agriculture. Furthermore, fostering partnerships between government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and local communities can facilitate the implementation of sustainable solutions and create an environment that empowers young people in the agricultural sector. Given the findings, policymakers, community leaders, and development professionals must prioritise the issue of land accessibility for young rural farmers in Kebbi State and beyond. By addressing the underlying factors that impede land access and promoting youth-friendly agricultural policies and programmes, we can unlock the untapped potential of the youth population, thereby advancing rural development, food security, and economic prosperity in Nigeria's agricultural sector.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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