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**AGRIPHOBIA IN CAREER CHOICE AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL  
STUDENTS IN PORT HARCOURT LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE**

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**Abstracts**

*The main objective of this study is to examine agriphobia in career choice among senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt local government area of Rivers State. Three research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Yaro Yemene formula was used to select a sample size of 180 from the total population of 603 SS2 students used as respondents. "One hundred and eighty copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents out of which all was completed and returned. Data were analyzed using mean and percentage for the questions. Questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. The instrument was faced and content validated by three experts from agricultural education unit of the Rivers State University Port Harcourt, and the reliability used test Re-test method to measure the consistency of the instrument which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.87. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents have a right perception towards Agriculture, students agreed that agriculture is a lucrative profession, agriculture guarantees a satisfied future if chosen as a future career. Respondents also disagreed that agriculture is a course for the low intelligent, domestic oriented course and not meant for only the poor ones in the rural areas. The study also revealed that parental and peer influence, environmental factor such as land unavailability, lack of adequate employment opportunities in agriculture, influence of teachers of agriculture, drudgery involved in agriculture among others are the causes of fear of choosing agriculture as a career. The study recommended that teachers of agriculture should imbibe teaching method that will stimulate students' interest to agriculture, use of scholarship schemes in department of agriculture, establishment of mechanized farms in secondary schools among others.*

**Keywords: Agriculture, Agriphobia, Career, and Career choice.**

**Introduction**

In the world, agriculture has been the most fundamental resource for food production, yardstick of livelihood and development. It serves as a main contributor to the gross domestic

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production over the years in developed and developing nations in the world. Agriculture is a substantial sector of the world that makes an intense contribution to the health of the world's population. It is a confirmed observation from researchers that continent with low agricultural production likely encounter the problem of malnourishment and other nutritional deficiency diseases. Many people remain undernourished, a problem accounting for 15% of global disease (Greenfact 2016). Jeff (2008) opted that an estimated 18,250,000 people around the world died from malnutrition. The health of the world population is directly or indirectly dependent on the effectiveness of agricultural sectors of the world.

The deliberate art of cultivating the soil, growing and harvesting of crops and rearing of animals for human consumption known as agriculture has made a monumental impact on the sustainability of the economy of Nigeria over the years before the emergence of oil. According to FAO,(2010) Nigeria is an agrarian country because agriculture is the main occupation, over 70% of the nation's population engages in agriculture. This is so because the nation is much endowed with resources that support agriculture.

In the early 90's in Nigeria, farming was the ultimate practice and accommodated the highest labour in the rural areas as stated by Iwena (2002) over 75 percent of the Nigerian labour force is engaged in farming and this abased unemployment mostly in the rural areas. Counting on the high potentialities and indelible contributions of agriculture to the national development Wikipedia (2016) posited that agriculture contributed 32 percent to Nigeria GDP in 2001 and also providing employment for 30 percent of the population as of 2010.

The term phobia originated from the word *phobus* with its root in Greek meaning fear, terror or panic, but phobia is more than this, since all experience fear or terror occasionally. Phobia is the fear or anxiety disorder; intense fear that is characterized by fear of a situation or object (Khalid 2001). The crucial element of phobia is that it causes frequent, severe and extreme anxiety. Phobia is of different types, common types include, Anthrophobia (fear of people), Hydrophobia (fear of water) Decidophobia (fear of making decision), ergophobia (fear of work) (Olaniyan 2007) and for this study Agriphobia (fear of agriculture) is the focus. Therefore agriphobia is an intense fear for agriculture that leads to apathy that occurs among students when making career choices.

**Statement of the Problem**

Due to the valuable contribution of agriculture to the society, knowledge of agriculture is thereby absolutely requisite for students in the secondary schools. Unfortunately, in spite of empowerment and agricultural development programmes, agricultural course still fails to attract the interest of younger generation (Adejoh 2016). Agricultural science as a subject has been taught in Nigerian schools for decades; however, there is a recent drop in the number of students that choose agricultural science among their list of subjects in senior secondary schools. Mostly in the Niger delta region of Nigeria, it is obvious that very few students deliberately choose agriculture as a course of study in the university.

It has also been generally observed that the number of students taking interest in agriculture is low as majority of farmers in the study area are adult farmers, if this problem is allowed to continue it will adversely reduce the workforce and agricultural productivity in future. Could this be as a result fear of farming? There must be some variables responsible for intense fear of agriculture among secondary school students. It is therefore necessary to

determine the causes of fear of agriculture among senior secondary school students. Hence, this research is geared towards examining the causes of agriphobia among senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this research work is to find out the fear of agriculture in career choice among senior secondary school students. Specifically, the study sought to identify:

1. Students' perception toward agriculture that leads to fear of agriculture in career choice among senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.
2. The causes of agriphobia in career choice among senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area
3. Remedies to fear of agriculture in career choice among senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area.

### **Research Questions**

For the purpose of this research work the writer poses the following research questions for appropriate guidance in the study.

1. What are the perceptions of the students towards agriculture in Port Harcourt Local Government Area?
2. What are the causes of fear of agriculture in career choice among senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area?
3. What are the remedies to agriphobia in career choice among senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area?

### **Literature Review**

Students' perception on agriculture is an intense factor that might lead to apathy in agriculture. It is thus clear that perception is a relation established between a subjective, emotional impression and external situation. It involves the participation of the entire personality and includes memory of the past as well as awareness of the present. The detail of the construal we give to the message registered by our brain depends on our past experience, our way of life, the knowledge we possess, the act of perception thus involves a series of highly complex phenomena (Mialaret 2000). Most secondary school students' perception about agriculture is absolutely cynical. The erroneous beliefs towards agriculture have totally led to fear imposition and poor attitude to agricultural course among senior secondary students. According to Rameela (2004) attitude likes or disliking of an object based on what is known about it. It is the insight one has concerning an object that creates response.

Alika (2010) opined that peer groups and parental influences are sources of pressures which induce the young adolescents into pre-determined occupation sometimes with little or no consideration on the potentials, actual needs and ego of the child. Parental influence is any opinion, attitude or action (other than direct tutoring) that somehow shapes or moulds child's personality. Educational psychologists broadly maintained that in educational development of the child parents and teachers are the twin that play complimentary roles and also towards the social upbringing of the child in the society. Ferry (2006) asserted that parental influence is one of the socio-economic factors affecting the choice of a child's subject. A study carried out in Pennsylvania by Blannie E. Brown indicated that parents and/or guardian are the individual most

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influencing students' decision to enroll in an urban agricultural education programme. Parent's socio-economic situation, educational level, culture, values and wishes has a substantial effect on the career choice of students in agriculture. The form in which parent perceive agriculture has a high tendency in imposing fear of agriculture to students.

**Teachers' Contribution to Agriphobia in Career Choice**

Teaching presupposes learning, teaching and learning are two inter-related activities. The definition of teaching may not be fully appreciated without a prior consideration of the concept of learning. Learning is a relative permanent change in an individual as a result of educational experience. Carl Rogers in Deekor and Nnodim (2006) attributes learning to change of perception of an individual positively. According to Vincent (2000) teaching is the art and science of directing learning process. Thus one can definitely conclude that learning has not taken place when individual learners still hold on to formal perspective having gone through teaching process. Benjamin (2009) posited that change in behavior revolves change in perspectives. The teachers' inability to effectively present knowledge to students in an organized and acceptable pattern has the tendency to lay phobia in students towards the subject. Agricultural science as a vocational course does not only involve the use of theories to impart knowledge but also demonstration and learning by doing for proper apprehension.

**Employment Prospects**

Students mostly make their choices of profession based on the prospects of employment in the field. According to Udoh (2013) unemployment in Nigeria has being on the tremendous increase over the last decades. Unemployment has an effect both on the individual, society and the economy of the nation. The unemployed is perpetually unhappy within the world of material consideration. He further said that the prevalence of unemployment and the frustration of job seeker cannot be overemphasized. Scholars have observed unemployment as one of the greatest challenges bedeviling Nigeria. Consequently, students prefer to choose careers with enormous prospects of employment. The fundamental factor that is commonly considered when choosing a career among secondary school students is the prospects of employment after graduation. There is extreme low prospect for employment in agriculture due to reduced establishment of agricultural firms. Other causes include environmental factors, lack of prestige, drudgery involved in agriculture and so on.

**Methodology**

The study adopted survey research design techniques to seek students' opinion on the causes of agriphobia in career choices, students' perception towards agriculture and remedies to agriphobia among secondary school students. The population consists of all the SSS 2 students in the five randomly selected secondary schools in Port Harcourt local government Area in Rivers State, which include Enitonia high school (EHS) Port Harcourt, Community Secondary School Nkpolu Oroworukwo Port Harcourt, Community Secondary School Npogwu Port Harcourt, Model Secondary School GRA Port Harcourt, and Government Girls Secondary School Rumuokwuta. The study used Yaro Yemene Formula to select 180 SS2 students out of 603 from the five secondary schools randomly selected. Thirty-six students were randomly selected from each of the five secondary schools. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data from the respondents. The instruments used for the study was a survey

questionnaire tagged “Agriphobia in Career Choice Questionnaire (APCCQ)” This instrument was partitioned into 3 sections that were structured in four point rating scale Section A, elicited information on students’ perception towards agriculture. Section B elicited information on the causes of agriphobia among senior secondary students, section C, elicited information on the remedies to fear of agriculture among senior secondary school students. However, the respondents are required to respond based on four point rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA) =4, Agree (A) =3, and Disagree (D)=2, Strongly Disagree (SD) =1. The instrument was faced and contents validated by the three experts in the vocational and technology education in Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, test and Re-test method was used to measure the consistency of the instrument which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.87. Percentage and mean were used for data analysis.

### Research Question 1

What is students’ perception towards agriculture that leads to agriphobia in career choice in senior secondary school in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Student’s perception towards agriculture:

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
1.	Agriculture is a lucrative profession	71 39.4	46 25.6	21 11.7	42 23.3	2.81	Agreed
2.	Agricultural science is a course for the low intelligent students	14 7.8	51 28.3	55 30.6	60 33.3	2.10	Disagreed
3.	Agriculture is a domestic oriented course and not capable of assuring satisfied future	10 5.6	13 7.2	88 48.9	69 38.3	1.80	Disagreed
4.	Choosing agriculture as a career will reduce your self esteem/ identity	46 25.6	32 17.8	59 32.8	45 25.0	2.48	Disagreed
5.	Agriculture is only mend for the poor ones in the rural areas	30 16.7	41 22.8	60 33.3	49 27.2	2.29	Disagreed
6.	Agriculture can guarantee a satisfactory future if chosen as a profession	65 36.1	31 17.2	40 22.2	44 24.4	2.65	Agreed
7.	Agriculture is an important aspect of the nation’s economy	92 51.1	37 20.6	21 11.7	30 16.7	3.01	Agreed

**Source: Field survey (2017) <2.50 disagreed, >2.50 agreed**

Data presented in Table 1 showed that the seven items tested four had mean rating <2.50, they are items (2) 2.10, item (3) 1.80. item (4) 2.48, and item (5) 2.29. Students perceived them as agriphobia in career choice in agriculture, while the following items had their mean rating >2.50, item (1) 2.81, item (6) 2.65 and item (7) 3.01 students perceived them as anti agriphobia

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**Research question 2**

What are the causes of agriphobia among senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Causes of agriphobia among students

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
1	Parental and peer influence causes phobia for agricultural careers	82 45.6	36 20.0	28 15.6	34 18.9	2.92	Agreed
2.	Environmental factor such as land unavailability in urban areas causes fear of agriculture among students	67 37.2	71 39.7	12 6.7	30 16.7	2.94	Agreed
3.	Lack of adequate employment opportunities in agriculture imposes agriphobia to students when choosing career	95 52.8	80 44.4	2 1.1	3 1.7	3.48	Agreed
4.	Student's poor perception towards agriculture cause agriphobia in career choice	58 32.2	88 48.9	19 10.6	15 8.3	3.05	Agreed
5.	Drudgery /laborious work involved in agriculture leads to agriphobia among students.	102 56.7	54 30.0	11 6.1	13 7.2	3.36	Agreed
6.	Students' interest and abilities imposes agriphobia among students	63 35.0	42 23.3	31 17.2	44 24.4	2.68	Agreed
7.	The influence of teachers of agriculture contributes to agriphobia among students	70 38.9	52 28.9	19 10.5	39 21.6	2.86	Agreed

**Source: Field survey (2017) <2.50 disagreed, >2.50 Agreed,**

Data presented in Table 2 showed that the seven items tested had mean rating >2.50 items (1) 2.92 (2) 2.94 (3) 3.48 (4) 3.05 (5) 3.36 (6) 2.68 (7) 2.86, students agreed that they all are causes of agriphobia in career choice in agriculture in senior secondary school in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.

**Research question 3**

What are the remedies to agriphobia among senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Remedies to agriphobia among students

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
1	Teachers' method of teaching agriculture can serve as an effective tool of producing students with a burning interest for agriculture.	82 45.6	62 34.4	7 3.9	29 16.1	3.09	Agreed
2.	Establishment of agricultural industries to create employment opportunities in the field of agriculture will boost students' courage to take up careers in agriculture.	94 52.2	38 21.1	33 18.3	15 8.3	3.17	Agreed
3.	Vocational guidance service in secondary school will help to change poor student perception towards agricultural jobs.	61 33.9	77 42.8	20 11.1	22 12.2	2.98	Agreed
4.	Use of scholarship schemes in agricultures will attract students to choose agriculture as a course of study	104 57.8	57 31.6	4 2.2	15 8.3	3.38	Agreed
5.	Establishment of mechanized school farms in secondary schools will enhance students' interest in agricultural science.	49 27.2	78 43.3	31 17.2	22 12.2	2.86	Agreed
6.	The policy of making land available for agricultural purpose can also encourage students in agriculture.	141 78.3	20 11.1	0 0	19 10.6	3.57	Agreed

Source: field survey 2017 <2.50 disagreed, >2.50 agreed

Data presented in Table 3 showed that the six items tested had mean rating >2.50, items (1) 3.09, (2) 3.17, (3) 2.98, (4) 3.38, (5) 2.86, and (6) 3.57, students agreed that they all are remedies to agriphobia in career choice in agriculture in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.

### Findings and Discussion

Based on the analysis of the research questions, the findings showed that Table 1 revealed that students perceived agriculture as a lucrative profession, agriculture can guarantee a satisfied future if chosen as a profession, agriculture is an important aspect of the Nigerian economy. This finding corroborates with the views of Nlebem (2018) that identified various fields that exist in agriculture and their possible job opportunities. Also they disagreed that; agricultural science is a course for the low intelligent students, and that agriculture is a

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domestic oriented course and not capable of assuring satisfied future, reduces self esteem if chosen as a career and agriculture is meant for poor ones in the rural areas. This agreed to the study of Maguire (2000) that the above mentioned factors contribute to the failure of agriculture to attract the best quality students from secondary schools.

The study also find out that parental and peer influence, land unavailability for agricultural practices, inadequate employment opportunities for graduates of agriculture, lack of proper motivation from agricultural science teachers,' students' wrong perception towards agriculture, drudgery/ laborious work involved in agriculture, students' interest and abilities are the causes of agoriphobia in career choice among senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area. This is in line with the findings of Samson (2004) which identified parent and peer influence, slow cash return, low prestige, agricultural science teachers influence are the factors that determine students wrong attitude towards choosing agricultural science as a career.

The study also reveals that if teachers' adopt better methods of teaching agriculture, government establish more of agricultural industries, vocational guidance services, introduce scholarship scheme for agricultural science students, establish mechanized school farms in secondary schools and the policy of making land available for agricultural purposes (land use decree) that these will act as remedy to choosing of agriculture as a career. This findings is related to the strategies proffered by Adebo and Sekunmade (2013), that award of scholarships for agricultural science students, early stimulation of students interest to by teachers of agriculture, provision of adequate employment for graduates in agriculture among others are the determinants of career choice in Agriculture

**Conclusion**

This paper have established that senior secondary schools students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area, have the right perception towards choosing agriculture as a future career but there are contradicting factors that keep students off from choosing agriculture as a career as:

- Parental and peer influence,
- Environmental factor such as land unavailability,
- Poor motivation of teachers of agriculture,
- Drudgery involved on agricultural activities,
- Abilities and interest of the student,
- Inadequate employment opportunities in the agriculture.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings the following recommendations were made;

Agriphobia can be remedied by the teacher being the pivot of learning. Interesting mode of teaching should be employed in delivering lesson in agriculture; a method of teaching that will create a burning interest for agriculture in the student should be imbibed in senior secondary schools. Parents and peer groups should give their children/friends free hand to choice their career. Government should establish more agricultural industries so as to create adequate employment opportunities in the field of agriculture.



Vocational guidance services should be provided in senior secondary schools so as to enable students to choose career with right perception.

Government should provide scholarship schemes in agriculture programmes so as to attract students' interest to agriculture.

Government should ensure that secondary schools have well functioning mechanized farms.

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