

# Factors Influencing Students' Interest in Agriculture as a Career in Voinjama City



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## Article Info

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## Abstract

This study examines factors contributing to declining interest in agricultural careers among 12th-grade students in Voinjama City, Liberia. A quantitative research design was employed, with data collected through structured questionnaires administered to senior high school students. Statistical analyses, including chi-square tests and correlation analysis, were used to examine the relationships between students' demographic characteristics, awareness, and interest in agricultural careers. The findings indicate that gender and family background significantly influence students' awareness of agriculture-related professions, with male students and those from agricultural households demonstrating higher levels of familiarity. However, increased awareness does not necessarily translate into stronger career interest. The results further reveal that outdated curricula, perceived economic challenges, limited career prospects, and the absence of mentorship opportunities are major factors discouraging students from pursuing agriculture as a career. Despite these challenges, many students express willingness to consider agricultural professions if provided with improved career guidance, financial support, and access to modern agricultural resources. The study underscores the need for curriculum reform, structured mentorship programs, and institutional support to enhance students' interest in agriculture.

## Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji faktor-faktor yang berkontribusi terhadap menurunnya minat siswa kelas XII untuk berkarier di bidang pertanian di Kota Voinjama, Liberia. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan pengumpulan data melalui kuesioner terstruktur yang diberikan kepada siswa sekolah menengah atas. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan teknik statistik, meliputi uji chi-square dan analisis korelasi, untuk mengidentifikasi hubungan antara karakteristik demografis siswa, tingkat kesadaran, dan minat terhadap karier di bidang pertanian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa jenis kelamin dan latar belakang keluarga berpengaruh signifikan terhadap tingkat kesadaran siswa mengenai profesi di bidang pertanian, di mana siswa laki-laki dan siswa yang berasal dari keluarga petani memiliki tingkat kesadaran yang lebih tinggi. Namun demikian, peningkatan kesadaran tidak secara langsung berbanding lurus dengan meningkatnya minat berkarier di bidang pertanian. Temuan penelitian juga mengungkap bahwa kurikulum yang kurang relevan, tantangan ekonomi, terbatasnya prospek karier, serta ketiadaan program pendampingan menjadi faktor utama yang menghambat



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*minat siswa terhadap bidang pertanian. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya reformasi kurikulum, pengembangan program pendampingan yang terstruktur, serta penguatan dukungan institusional untuk meningkatkan minat siswa terhadap sektor pertanian.*

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

The agrarian sector is a key factor in promoting economic progress in less developed nations, supporting food safety, creating employment prospects, and delivering fundamental raw materials for multiple industries (Efimova, 2022). Nonetheless, in areas such as Voinjama City, Liberia, there is a discernible reduction in the interest of 12th-grade students in selecting agriculture as a career path. This phenomenon is shaped by societal attitudes, educational methodologies, and economic considerations, all of which contribute to a waning enthusiasm for agricultural professions among the youth. Analyzing these determinants is crucial for formulating strategies that enhance the appeal of agriculture as a career option.

In spite of agriculture's fundamental significance to economic development, a diminishing number of students in Voinjama City are contemplating it as a feasible career choice, underscoring the urgency of investigating the factors influencing their vocational decisions. The career choices made during high school carry enduring implications for both individuals and the overarching economy (Saragatsi et al., 2023). In regions where agriculture is indispensable, this dwindling interest presents challenges for the sustainability of the workforce and agricultural practices. Comprehending these factors is necessary for achieving the lasting sustainability of agriculture in the vicinity.

A key reason for students' indifference toward agriculture is the prevailing notion that agricultural work is low-paying and labor-intensive. Numerous students correlate agriculture with poverty and a diminished social standing, prompting them to gravitate toward careers in medicine, engineering, or business (Ochieng, 2020; Sumo et al., 2023). These perceptions are bolstered by societal norms that prioritize white-collar professions over agricultural careers, thereby further stigmatizing farming and related industries (Mulei et al., 2023). Moreover, students frequently lack knowledge of lucrative career opportunities within agribusiness, agricultural engineering, and environmental management, which are often neglected (Bukola & Oniye, 2024). The educational framework significantly influences students' vocational preferences. Agricultural education is frequently marginalized, characterized by outdated curricula and pedagogical approaches that fail to engage learners (Okoye et al., 2022). Many students perceive agriculture as less enticing compared to other subjects presented in more stimulating formats (Elliott et al., 2017). This disconnect between the educational system and student interests contributes to the declining appeal of agricultural careers (Sennuga et al., 2024).

Economic considerations further intensify this dilemma. The agricultural sector is perceived as precarious, beset by challenges such as fluctuating market prices, climate variability, and resource scarcity (Laveti et al., 2022). Such uncertainties compel

students to prefer professions they regard as more stable and financially advantageous (Girdžiūtė et al., 2022). Additionally, the absence of visible role models in agriculture, coupled with a lack of mentorship opportunities, hampers students' ability to envision a successful career within the field (Shayo, 2020; Obayelu & Fadele, 2019). Parental guidance also exerts a significant influence, as numerous parents advocate for their children to pursue careers in medicine, engineering, or business, thereby reinforcing the perception that agricultural careers are devoid of prestige and financial viability (Ajayi et al., 2022; Esseh et al., 2024). Furthermore, the limited availability of agricultural education programs, mentorship, and financial assistance in Voinjama City constrains students' capacity to pursue careers in agriculture (Ochieng, 2023).

In order to tackle these obstacles, it is essential to implement specific initiatives that advocate for agriculture as a feasible vocational pathway. This encompasses the modernization of agricultural curricula, facilitating mentorship opportunities with accomplished professionals in the field, and enhancing awareness regarding the variety of career possibilities available within the agricultural sector (Bukola & Oniye, 2024). Involving parents and community stakeholders in conversations about the significance of agriculture can further assist in altering perceptions and fostering a more encouraging atmosphere for students contemplating careers in this domain (Ekanem & Asuquo, 2024). The objective of this study is to identify and scrutinize the determinants contributing to the declining interest in agricultural vocations among secondary school students in Voinjama City, with the intent to formulate strategies that render agriculture a more appealing career choice and bolster local economic development.

## **B. METHOD**

The study employed a descriptive survey methodology, which is deemed suitable for comprehensively understanding and dissecting the elements that lead to the diminished interest in agricultural studies among 12th-grade students. This approach enables the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data from a representative sample of the target demographic (Lingott, 2022).

The population targeted included all 12th-grade students in Voinjama City, distributed among the following educational institutions: Multilateral High School: 320 students, Catholic School: 71 students, Public School: 57 students, Japan School: 21 students, Komah Shepherd School: 37 students, Akoi Loyal Academy School: 39 students, Swedish School: 62 students, Lutheran School: 12 students, culminating in a total student population of 619 students. Given the somewhat limited population size, a method of stratified random sampling was utilized. This method ensured that each educational institution (acting as a stratum) was sufficiently represented within the sample, reflecting the distribution of students across all schools. The research sample comprised 243 students selected from an overall population of 619 students. The determination of the sample size was conducted using the Yamane formula (Chander, 2017) for sample size calculation purposes.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n= sample size

N= total population

e = sample error (usually, 5% or 0.05)

Hence,  $n = \frac{619}{1+619(0,05)^2} = \frac{619}{2,55} = 242,7 = 243$

To ensure equitable representation, the sample size designated for each educational institution is determined based on the proportion of students within the complete demographic. The allocation of the sample among various high schools was as follows: Voinjama Multilateral High School with 126 students, Catholic School with 28 students, Public School with 22 students, Japan School with 8 students, Kormah Shepherd School with 15 students, Akoi Loyal School with 15 students, Voinjama Free Pentecostal High School with 24 students, and Lutheran Mission School with 5 students. Participants were chosen from the sampling frame utilizing a fundamental random sampling technique. A meticulously structured questionnaire and interview protocol were utilized to gather data pertinent to the research.

The research questionnaire was disseminated to students using Google Forms at the different high schools in Voinjama City. All 243 questionnaires distributed were deemed valid for analysis, constituting a total of 100%. The findings compiled for the analysis were subjected to scrutiny via the 22nd release of the SPSS tool for social science statistics. Frequency counts, basic percentages, chi-square tests, and correlation analyses were utilized during the data analysis.

**A. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**Demographic Analysis of Participants**

The demographic composition of the participants was evaluated concerning gender, age, and familial employment. The subsequent table encapsulates the principal demographic variables.

**Table1. Demographic Analysis of Respondents**

Variable	Category	Count	Percentage
Gender	Male	151	62.14
Gender	Female	92	37.86
Age	18-20	95	39.09
Age	15-17	76	31.28
Age	Above 20	72	29.63
Family Occupation	Farming	138	56.79
Family Occupation	Business/Trading	40	16.46
Family Occupation	Civil Service	36	14.81
Family Occupation	Teaching	29	11.93

**Gender Distribution**

This research highlights a noteworthy gender imbalance, evidencing that a

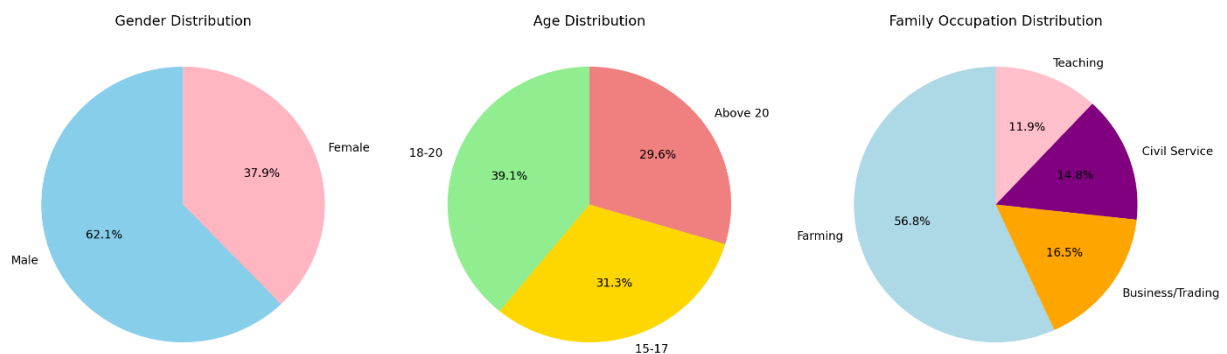
prominent 62.14% of the participants were identified as male (n=151), while 37.86% were acknowledged as female (n=92). This predominance of male participants may be indicative of gender-specific enrollment patterns or cultural norms that influence educational and vocational opportunities. The disproportionate representation of males could have a notable impact on the shared attitudes and decision-making processes related to agricultural professions, given that males might exhibit a higher level of engagement with or interest in agriculture stemming from established gender norms.

**Age Distribution**

The analysis classifies the population into three unique age ranges, with the primary group being young adults from 18 to 20 years old (39.09%, n=95), succeeded by those aged 15 to 17 (31.28%, n=76), and concluding with individuals above 20 years (29.63%, n=72). This distribution underscores that the majority of participants are situated within the late adolescence to early adulthood phase, which corresponds with the anticipated age demographic for secondary education. The relatively uniform distribution among the age categories suggests a diversity of academic experiences and external factors that may influence students' recognition and interest in agricultural professions. The elevated representation of the 18–20 age cohort indicates that a significant number of students are navigating a pivotal developmental period pertinent to career selection.

**Family Occupation**

The analysis of family occupational backgrounds reveals that farming is the predominant occupation (56.79%, n=138), followed by business/trading (16.46%, n=40), civil service (14.81%, n=36), and teaching (11.93%, n=29). The high proportion of respondents from farming families suggests a strong connection to agriculture within the sample. However, the lack of interest in pursuing agriculture as a career, despite this familial background, indicates that other factors such as perceived career prospects, modernization of the field, or exposure to alternative career pathways may play a more significant role in shaping career preferences.



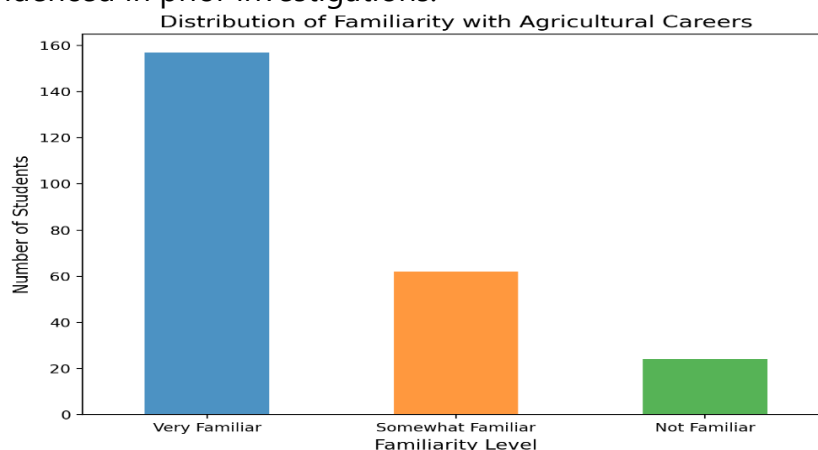
**Familiarity with Agricultural Careers**

The research further assessed the extent of students' familiarity with agricultural careers. The findings indicated that:

**Table 2. Familiarity with Agricultural Careers**

Category	Count	Percentage
Very Familiar	157	64.61
Somewhat Familiar	62	25.51
Not Familiar	24	9.88

The examination of students' awareness pertaining to agricultural professions indicates that a substantial majority (64.61%) categorize themselves as "Very Familiar" with the various career prospects within the agricultural sector. A lesser fraction of the student population (25.51%) identifies as "Somewhat Familiar," whilst a mere 9.88% classify themselves as "Not Familiar." These outcomes imply that a predominant number of students possess a considerable level of cognizance regarding agricultural career alternatives, although a significant minority remains inadequately informed. The elevated proportion of students declaring themselves as "Very Familiar" suggests that initiatives aimed at the promotion of agricultural careers such as educational programs, community outreach, or familial influence are likely effective in engaging a substantial segment of the student body. Nevertheless, the existence of students who fall within the "Somewhat Familiar" and "Not Familiar" classifications underscores notable deficiencies in awareness that warrant rectification. This observation aligns with the apprehensions articulated by Ochieng (2023) concerning the imperative for enhanced advocacy and comprehension of agricultural careers. Such awareness gaps may be influenced by demographic variables, including familial occupation, age, and gender, as evidenced in prior investigations.



**Familiarity with Agricultural Careers and Its Correlation with Demographic Variables**

**Table 3. The Influence of Gender on Familiarity with Agricultural Careers**

Gender	Not Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	Very Familiar
Female	14.13	33.7	52.17
Male	7.28	20.53	72.19
<b>Chi-Square statistics</b>	10.1400		
<b>P-Value</b>	0.0063		

The examination of gender concerning familiarity with agricultural careers indicates notable differences. Males exhibit a higher likelihood of being "Very

Familiar" (72.19%) with agricultural careers than females (52.17%). Conversely, females demonstrate a greater prevalence of "Somewhat Familiar" (33.7%) and "Not Familiar" (14.13%) responses in comparison to males. The elevated familiarity among males may signify societal norms or gender roles that traditionally link agriculture with men, resulting in increased exposure or interest among male students. Conversely, the higher incidence of females in the "Somewhat Familiar" and "Not Familiar" categories implies a potential deficit in awareness or access to information regarding agricultural careers for females. This disparity may be shaped by cultural perceptions, inadequate representation of women in agriculture, or restricted opportunities for females to participate in agricultural endeavors. This observation aligns with the findings of (Chinyamurindi, et al., 2021), which emphasized that societal views deeming agriculture as undervalued and associated with low achievement may contribute to diminished familiarity among females.

The Chi-square computation returned a statistic of 10.1400 along with a p-value of 0.0063, reflecting a significant correlation between gender and awareness of careers in agriculture. This implies that gender significantly influences students' awareness and comprehension of agricultural prospects.

**Table 4. The Role of Age in Students' Familiarity with Agricultural Careers**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Not Familiar</b>	<b>Somewhat Familiar</b>	<b>Very Familiar</b>
<b>15-17</b>	9.21	11.84	78.95
<b>18-20</b>	14.74	28.42	56.84
<b>Above 20</b>	4.17	36.11	59.72
<b>Chi-Square statistics</b>	17.3060		
<b>P-value</b>	0.0017		

The examination of age in conjunction with its correlation to awareness of agricultural professions elucidates substantial variances among different age cohorts. Individuals within the 15–17 age bracket predominantly identify as "Very Familiar" (78.95%) with agricultural professions, whereas those in the 18–20 (56.84%) and over 20 (59.72%) categories exhibit a more equitable distribution across varying levels of familiarity. It is particularly noteworthy that older individuals (over 20) demonstrate the highest proportion of "Somewhat Familiar" responses (36.11%).

The pronounced degree of familiarity observed among younger individuals (15–17 years) may be indicative of recent engagement with agricultural subjects through educational curricula, community initiatives, or extracurricular programs. Conversely, familiarity experiences a slight decline within the 18–20 age demographic, potentially attributable to a pivot in attention towards alternative career pathways as students near graduation and contemplate broader professional avenues. This observation is consistent with the conclusions of (Mulei et al., 2023), who emphasized that societal perceptions significantly impact students' familiarity and interest in agricultural professions, particularly as they advance in age and evaluate their vocational options. The transition in focus towards diverse professional prospects as students approach graduation is evident; older individuals (over 20) display a more equitable distribution, coupled with a significant increase in "Somewhat Familiar"

responses, a phenomenon that may be linked to a wider array of life experiences or deferred exposure to agricultural prospects.

The Chi-square analysis produced a statistic of 17.3060 alongside a p-value of 0.0017, thereby denoting a statistically significant association between age and familiarity with agricultural careers. This finding implies that levels of familiarity exhibit meaningful variations across distinct age groups.

**Table 5. The Influence of Family Occupation on Familiarity with Agricultural Careers**

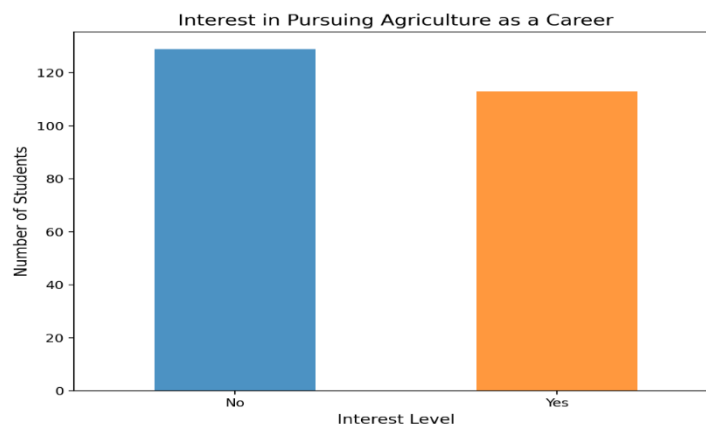
Family Occupation	Not Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	Very Familiar
Business/Trading	20	42.5	37.5
Civil Service	27.78	50	22.22
Farming	2.17	7.97	89.86
Teaching	10.34	55.17	34.48
Chi-Square statistics	96.0021		
P-value	1.71e-18		

The examination of familial occupational backgrounds and their association with students' awareness of agricultural professions unveils considerable variances among demographic cohorts. Pupils originating from agricultural lineage demonstrate an overwhelming "Very Familiar" rate of 89.86% concerning agricultural careers, presumably attributable to their direct engagement and immersion in agrarian practices. This observation is consistent with the findings articulated by Sennuga et al. (2021), who observed in their research that individuals from agrarian families exhibit elevated levels of familiarity with agricultural careers owing to their direct participation in agricultural endeavors. Conversely, students hailing from civil service backgrounds (50%) and educational families (55.17%) are more inclined to categorize themselves as "Somewhat Familiar," whereas those from business or trading backgrounds display a more equitable distribution across all levels of familiarity. This observation aligns with the results presented by Bukola and Oniye (2024), who emphasized that students from civil service and educational families manifest diminished levels of familiarity.

The application of the Chi-square statistical test produced a value of 96.0021 alongside a p-value of 1.71e-18, signifying a profoundly significant correlation between familial occupation and familiarity with agricultural careers. This robust association accentuates the paramount influence of familial background in shaping students' cognizance and comprehension of agricultural prospects.

**Table 6. Interest in Pursuing Agriculture as a Career**

Category	Count	Percentage
No	129	53.31
Yes	113	46.69



The examination of student feedback pertaining to their inclination towards a career in agriculture reveals a predominantly equilibrated viewpoint. Among the participants in the study, 53.31% articulated that they have not contemplated a profession in agriculture, whereas 46.69% conveyed an enthusiasm for the discipline. This distribution underscores a substantial segment of students who remain receptive to the exploration of agriculture as a vocational trajectory, notwithstanding the adversities and impediments frequently linked with the field. These results correspond with what Mulei et al. (2020) found, as their research highlighted that a substantial share of students (54%) envision agriculture playing a vital role in their prospects, thus implying a potential readiness for agricultural jobs despite the negative associations that exist.

**Table 7. Gender and Interest in Pursuing Agricultural Careers**

Gender	No	Yes
Female	54.35	45.65
Male	52.67	47.33
Chi-Square statistics	0.0148	
P-value	0.9031	

The analysis of student feedback regarding career aspirations in agriculture indicates a balanced perspective. From the cohort of respondents in the study, 53.31% have not given thought to agricultural employment, juxtaposed with 46.69% who indicated a strong interest in this domain. This distribution highlights a significant number of students open to considering agriculture as a career path, despite the challenges commonly associated with the sector. These findings align with Mulei et al. (2020), whose research revealed that a notable portion of students (54%) sees agriculture as crucial to their future, suggesting a potential willingness to pursue agricultural careers despite prevailing negative perceptions.

**Table 8. The Role of Age in Students' Interest in Agriculture**

Age	No	Yes
15-17	53.95	46.05
18-20	58.51	41.49
Above 20	45.83	54.17
Chi-Square statistics	2.6508	
P-value	0.2657	

The analysis of age demographics and their propensity towards agriculture uncovers significant trends. Individuals aged over 20 demonstrate the greatest inclination towards agriculture at 54.17%. In contrast, those in the 18–20 age range exhibit the least enthusiasm, with merely 41.49% contemplating agricultural careers. Students aged 15–17 represent a moderate position, with 46.05% expressing interest. This finding corroborates the conclusions of (Sennuga et al., 2021), which suggest that perceptions regarding the feasibility of agriculture as a career vary markedly by age, with older students showing a heightened preference for agricultural occupations.

During our Chi-square evaluation, we discerned a statistic value of 2.6508 paired with a p-value of 0.2657, suggesting that it transcends the traditional significance threshold of 0.05. This implies a lack of a statistically significant relationship between age and interest in agricultural careers. While the observed trends suggest a potential age-related impact, the absence of statistical significance indicates that these discrepancies may arise from random variation.

**Table 9. The Influence of Family Occupation on Students' Interest in Agriculture**

Family Occupation	No	Yes
Business/Trading	60	40
Civil Service	69.44	30.56
Farming	47.1	52.9
Teaching	53.57	46.43
Chi-Square statistics	6.6222	
P-value	0.0850	

The examination of familial occupational backgrounds and their correlation to students' inclination towards agricultural careers uncovers significant patterns. Students hailing from agricultural family backgrounds demonstrate the highest proclivity towards agriculture (52.9%), succeeded by those originating from educational family settings (46.43%) and commercial/trading family environments (40%). In contrast, students from civil service familial backgrounds exhibit the lowest inclination, with merely 30.56% contemplating agriculture as a viable career option. This result aligns with the findings of (Sennuga, et al. 2021) who reported that students from agricultural backgrounds are more likely to pursue agricultural careers compared to their peers from other occupational backgrounds.

The application of the Chi-square test produced a statistic of 6.6222 alongside a p-value of 0.0850, which marginally exceeds the conventional benchmark of 0.05 indicative of statistical significance. This outcome implies a slightly non-significant correlation between familial occupation and interest in agricultural pursuits. Although the findings do not furnish compelling evidence of a definitive relationship, the observed trends merit further scholarly exploration.

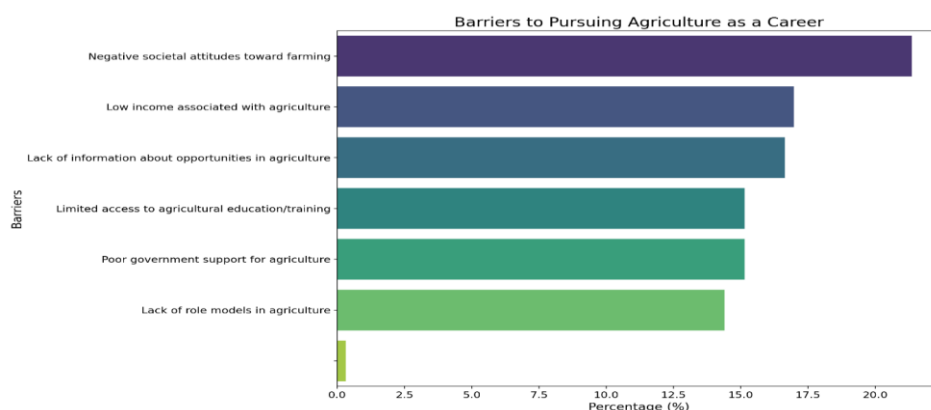
### **Factors Influencing Interest in Agriculture**

The research furthermore investigated an array of determinants that impacted students' interest in pursuing agriculture as a career.. These determinants

encompassed social perceptions, economic factors, educational resources, and familial background.

**Table 10. Barriers to Pursuing Agriculture**

Barrier	Count	Percentage
Negative societal attitudes toward farming	199	21.37
Low income associated with agriculture	158	16.97
Lack of information about opportunities in agriculture	155	16.65
Limited access to agricultural education/training	141	15.15
Poor government support for agriculture	141	15.15
Lack of role models in agriculture	134	14.39
others	3	0.32



The examination of impediments to engaging in agriculture as a vocational path uncovers numerous pivotal elements that dissuade students, as illustrated in the aforementioned chart. The predominant obstacle, identified by 21.4% of participants, pertains to adverse societal perceptions regarding farming, which signifies a deeply entrenched cultural stigma that characterizes agriculture as a low-prestige, labor-intensive occupation. This observation is consistent with the research conducted by Osuntade et al. (2020), which underscores that societal attitudes and perceptions significantly influence the career aspirations of students, with a considerable number of students perceiving agriculture as inferior in prestige relative to other professions. The second major barrier, low agricultural income (17.0%), highlights the sector's economic difficulties. This aligns with Osuntade et al. (2020), indicating that economic barriers, such as low income and absent financial incentives, significantly affect students' perceptions of agricultural careers. The absence of financial incentives may deter students from considering agriculture a sustainable career choice.

The deficiency of information regarding agricultural opportunities (16.6%) underscores the necessity for improved career guidance and awareness campaigns. This situation indicates that students might not be fully aware of the diverse modern agricultural prospects available, such as agribusiness and sustainable practices. This is consistent with Ramtahal et al. (2020), who assert that a lack of information on agricultural careers can lead to misconceptions and a lack of interest, emphasizing the importance of enhanced outreach and educational programs. Other significant obstacles consist of restricted access to agricultural education and training (15.1%)

along with inadequate governmental support for agriculture (15.1%), both highlighting structural and policy-related difficulties. These results indicate the necessity for targeted actions, such as enhanced educational initiatives and more robust government programs, to tackle these systemic challenges. This aligns with the assertions made by Okoye et al. (2021), which emphasize that effective educational initiatives and supportive governmental policies are essential for overcoming the hurdles faced by students aspiring to enter agricultural careers, thus fostering sustainable agricultural practices.

Ultimately, the deficiency of role models within the agricultural sector (14.4%) underscores the necessity of prominent success narratives to inspire and engage students. Role models are pivotal in shaping professional ambitions, especially in disciplines that are regarded as having diminished prestige. This observation aligns with the conclusions drawn by Ajayi et al. (2021), which indicate that the availability of role models has a substantial impact on students' professional decisions, particularly in domains perceived to lack societal esteem. Their study elucidates that accomplished figures within agriculture can act as compelling sources of motivation for students contemplating this vocational trajectory.

**Influence of Family Opinion and School Support**

**Table 11. Factors influencing students' career choices**

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Influence of Family Opinion on Career Choices	Very influential	179	75.21
Influence of Family Opinion on Career Choices	Somewhat influential	40	16.81
Influence of Family Opinion on Career Choices	Not influential	19	7.98
Role Played by Schools in Promoting Agriculture	Very supportive	155	64.32
Role Played by Schools in Promoting Agriculture	Somewhat supportive	61	25.31
Role Played by Schools in Promoting Agriculture	Not supportive	25	10.37
Lack of Resources Deterring Agriculture Consideration	Yes	218	90.46
Lack of Resources Deterring Agriculture Consideration	No	23	9.54
Exposure to Agricultural Career Counseling or Programs	No	179	74.27
Exposure to Agricultural Career Counseling or Programs	Yes	62	25.73

The findings yield significant insights into the determinants affecting students' vocational selections, particularly within the realm of agriculture.

Influence of Familial Perspectives on Vocational Selections: Familial perspectives are identified as a primary factor, with 75.21% of respondents rating it as "Highly influential." This underscores the pivotal function of familial guidance in shaping vocational aspirations, particularly in cultures where family significantly affects decision-making. Only 7.98% of participants deemed familial perspectives as "Not influential," emphasizing its pervasive influence. This aligns with the findings of Fouad et al. (2015), which assert that familial determinants, encompassing parental guidance and expectations, are vital in directing children's career trajectories, thereby reinforcing the necessity of familial support in the decision-making process. Schools significantly influence agricultural career perceptions, with 64.32% of students viewing their institutions as "Very supportive." Conversely, 10.37% of students deemed their schools as "Not supportive," highlighting the need for enhanced institutional encouragement. This finding aligns with Ramtahal et al. (2020), demonstrating that perceived school support for agricultural education correlates positively with students' career interests in agriculture, suggesting that improved school backing could foster greater student involvement in the sector.

Lack of Resources Deterring Agriculture Consideration: A significant 90.46% of students cited inadequate resources, including equipment and financial support, as a barrier to pursuing agriculture careers. This underscores the structural impediments and resource deficiencies that must be addressed to enhance the appeal of agricultural professions. This aligns with the findings of Sennuga et al. (2021), which indicate that the perception of agriculture as a low-income career is intensified by resource scarcity, dissuading students from exploring this career avenue.

Exposure to Agricultural Career Counseling or Programs: A substantial 74.27% of students lack exposure to agricultural career counseling, highlighting a critical deficit in awareness and guidance. This deficiency may hinder interest in agricultural careers, underscoring the necessity for strategic interventions and outreach initiatives. This aligns with Ochieng's (2020) findings that youth commonly view agriculture as an unappealing career choice due to insufficient counseling and negative stereotypes surrounding agricultural employment.

**Opportunities for Enrollment at Lofa County University**

**Table 12. Awareness of Agricultural Programs at Lofa County University**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	230	94.65
<b>No</b>	13	5.35

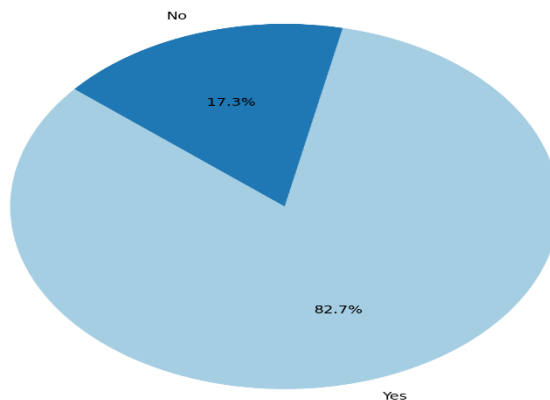
The data indicates that a notable majority of students (94.65%) recognize the agricultural programs at Lofa County University, while a mere 5.35% reported unawareness. This substantial awareness level signifies the university's effective dissemination of information regarding its agricultural offerings. Such extensive awareness serves as a favorable indicator of the institution's successful communication and outreach strategies. Nonetheless, the minority of unaware students underscores the necessity for ongoing and focused efforts to engage all prospective students, especially those in marginalized or remote regions. This aligns

with Sennuga et al. (2021), who identified persistent barriers to information access for students in isolated areas, emphasizing the importance of targeted outreach efforts.

**Table 13. Consideration of Enrollment in Agricultural Programs with Financial Aid**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	201	82.72
No	42	17.28

Consideration of Enrollment in Agricultural Programs with Financial Aid



**Consideration of Enrollment in Agricultural Programs with Financial Aid**

The data emphasizes the significant impact of financial aid on students' enrollment choices in agricultural programs. A notable 82.72% of participants expressed willingness to enroll if financial support was accessible. This emphasizes the necessity of mitigating financial obstacles in higher education, especially in agriculture, which often lacks significant interest. This aligns with Ramtahal et al. (2020), who asserted that scholarships and financial support are vital for motivating students toward agricultural careers by alleviating perceived financial risks. Conversely, 17.28% of students reported that they would not consider enrolling even with financial aid. This minority may reflect other underlying factors, such as a lack of interest in agriculture, limited awareness of career opportunities, or perceptions of agriculture as a less desirable career path.

**B. DISCUSSION**

The qualitative analysis identifies themes that underscore the impediments to career pursuits in agriculture. These findings elucidate the challenges and perceptions that dissuade students from viewing agriculture as a legitimate professional option.

1. Labor Intensity

A prevalent theme in the feedback is the view of agriculture as a laborious and physically taxing domain. Terminology such as "hard labor," "intensive labor," and "drudgery" was commonly referenced, indicating a belief that agriculture necessitates considerable physical exertion, deterring students from career pursuits in this field. The adverse connotation linked to the physical requirements of agricultural labor seems to overshadow the potential advantages and prospects within the industry. Numerous students articulated apprehensions that the

arduous nature of agricultural work does not align with the anticipated economic rewards, further exacerbating their hesitance to engage in agricultural careers. This perception aligns with research findings that underscore the difficulties in attracting youth to agricultural vocations due to the challenging nature of the associated labor (Ochieng, 2020; Mulei et al., 2020; Bello et al., 2015).

## 2. Lack of Job Opportunities

Numerous scholars articulated apprehensions regarding the scarce employment prospects present within the agricultural domain. Terminology such as "absence of job opportunities" and "lack of job provisions" was prevalent, signifying a deficiency of confidence in agriculture as a viable and rewarding professional pathway. This assertion is corroborated by Sennuga et al. (2020), who elucidate that the perception of constrained job opportunities in agriculture markedly impacts students' vocational decisions, prompting many to seek alternative sectors that are regarded as more financially beneficial.

## 3. Lack of Financial Support

A notable obstacle highlighted by participants was the lack of financial support, often expressed as "no financial help," "no resources," and "lack of financial aid." This concern underscores a wider apprehension among students about the economic feasibility of pursuing a career in agriculture, as insufficient financial backing may dissuade them from exploring this profession. The deficiency of financial backing not only hinders students' access to crucial learning tools but also encourages the perception that agriculture is an unfeasible profession. This observation is consistent with previous research, which confirms that financial limitations significantly hinder youth interest in agricultural education and careers (Ochieng, 2020; Sennuga et al., 2021; Ramtahal et al., 2020).

## 4. Negative Perception of Agriculture

The study reveals a widespread negative perception of agriculture among students, who describe it as "primitive" and "just about farming." This stigma fosters the notion that agriculture is an antiquated and undesirable career. These perceptions reflect societal attitudes and underscore a gap between modern agricultural practices and youth perspectives. The results align with earlier studies regarding how societal views impact career decisions. Research indicates that negative stereotypes about agricultural careers dissuade students from pursuing related education and employment (Ofuoku & Ugbechie, 2017; Osuntade et al., 2020). The belief that agriculture equates to laborious work with low financial returns further diminishes its attractiveness compared to esteemed professions like medicine or engineering.

## 5. Lack of Awareness and Exposure

Many respondents indicated a lack of awareness and promotion of agriculture as a career, underscoring a significant gap in information dissemination regarding agricultural career opportunities. This deficit poses a considerable obstacle that may dissuade students from exploring agriculture as a viable profession. The findings corroborate prior studies that highlight the necessity of

effective communication and educational programs in advocating for agricultural careers. According to Osuntade et al. (2020), limited insights into agricultural professions greatly shape students' opinions and decisions, steering them towards more respected fields like medicine and engineering.

#### 6. Market and Profitability Concerns

Many respondents expressed skepticism about agricultural careers, citing "no profitable market" and "no money in agriculture." This perception serves as a significant impediment, dissuading students from entering the agricultural sector due to associations with low economic returns and market instability. The concerns regarding agricultural profitability correspond with prior research indicating economic hardships faced by youth in agriculture. Ochieng (2020) observed that unstable income and limited market access heavily impact youth choices towards non-agricultural professions, viewed as providing greater financial stability. As stated by Bello et al. (2015), a gloomy perspective on future agricultural earnings weakens the ambition of the youth, guiding them to seek more lucrative career options.

### **Promoting Agriculture Among Students**

Qualitative analysis of student recommendations for agricultural promotion identifies various strategies to mitigate barriers and stimulate interest in agricultural professions. The results are organized into five principal themes:

#### 1. Government Support

A considerable portion of students advocated for governmental support in agriculture. Recommendations encompassed financial assistance, scholarships, and loans for agricultural students. Furthermore, participants underscored the necessity of modernizing the agricultural sector and formulating policies to enhance employment for graduates. This aligns with the assertions of Osuntade et al. (2020), who emphasize the pivotal role of government financial support in fostering agricultural education, indicating that such aid can significantly affect students' career choices in agriculture.

#### 2. Awareness and Education

Many students advocated for the incorporation of agriculture into the educational framework to enhance awareness. Suggestions included mandating agriculture as a core subject, creating agricultural clubs, and implementing campaigns to illustrate the sector's benefits and opportunities. These initiatives seek to establish agriculture as a legitimate and esteemed career option. This aligns with the recommendations of Osuntade et al. (2020), which stress the necessity of embedding agricultural education within the curriculum to elevate student awareness and interest in agricultural professions, positing that such integration can markedly affect career trajectories.

#### 3. Practical Training and Skill Development

A persistent theme emerged regarding the necessity of experiential training and skill enhancement. Students called for the implementation of workshops, training initiatives, and access to contemporary agricultural methodologies. Practical

engagement was deemed crucial for reconciling theoretical understanding with practical agricultural applications. This is consistent with Ramtahal et al. (2020), who assert that experiential training is essential for agricultural education students, enabling the application of theoretical insights in practical contexts, thereby augmenting their educational experience.

#### 4. Market and Infrastructure Support

Respondents emphasized the necessity of improving agricultural market access and infrastructure. Recommendations included ensuring equitable pricing for farmers, enhancing storage capabilities, and upgrading transportation networks to bolster the agricultural supply chain. This aligns with Bello et al. (2015), who advocate for policymakers to focus on infrastructure development that facilitates agricultural operations, including market access and transportation, to improve the sector's competitiveness.

#### 5. Collaboration and Partnerships

Some students suggested creating collaborations among educational institutions, private entities, and NGOs to enhance agricultural initiatives. Such partnerships were regarded as beneficial for offering supplementary resources, guidance, and opportunities to students pursuing agriculture. This aligns with Bello et al. (2015), who contend that mentorship initiatives supported by private partnerships are instrumental in influencing students' views of agriculture as a legitimate career option.

### C. CONCLUSION

This research elucidates the principal determinants that affect the disinterest in agriculture as a career choice among 12th-grade pupils in Voinjama City. While it is evident that students possess a commendable degree of awareness concerning agricultural careers, societal attitudes, economic impediments, the absence of career guidance, and inadequate exposure to contemporary agricultural methodologies substantially contribute to their disinterest.

In order to address these obstacles, it is advisable to modernize agricultural curricula to reflect current practices, establish mentorship initiatives, and implement financial assistance frameworks to enhance the attractiveness of agriculture as a career option. Additionally, governmental initiatives aimed at enhancing agricultural infrastructure and market accessibility, alongside targeted awareness campaigns, are imperative to transform the adverse perceptions associated with agriculture.

Subsequent investigations should examine the socio-economic and regional variables that shape students' vocational choices to further elucidate these impediments and formulate more precise interventions to advocate for agricultural careers among the youth.

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