



Socio-Cultural Perceptions of Agriculture and Primary School Enrolment in Rural Areas, Vo Prefecture, Togo

Ako Kossi Sowah¹, Mariah Ngutu², Violet Simiyu³ & Mary Mutisya⁴

^{1,2,4}The Catholic University of Eastern Africa

³University of Nairobi, Kenya

Email: lzlazare@gmail.com

Abstract: *Within the ever-expanding global literature on primary school enrolment, studies integrating socio-cultural perceptions of agriculture as determining factors are rare or non-existent. An inclusive discussion of this topic has revealed the necessity to extend research to primary school enrolment in rural regions. This study sought to investigate the impact of socio-cultural perceptions of agriculture on primary school enrolment in rural areas of Vo prefecture, Togo. The study adopted a purely qualitative approach, employing phenomenological research design, guided by cultural capital theory. Primary data were collected through interviews involving 27 members of farming households, and four focus group discussions with community leaders. The purposive sampling techniques were deployed. The iterative process of data collection and analysis were conducted until data saturation, utilizing QDA Miner Lite software for thematic analysis. Results indicated that agriculture is a stable linchpin for livelihoods and local traditions link it to cultural requirement for household leadership. Moreover, agriculture, not only nurtures cultural identity, but also serves as a source of immediate income due to its tangible benefits. The findings revealed that these socio-cultural perceptions are ingrained among uneducated, elderly, and followers of traditional religions, and their influences persist in parental decisions regarding children's school enrolment. However, those with some education and alternative income challenge these views, emphasizing the importance of education. Aligning educational policies with cultural values, the study's findings may profit farmers, children, government agencies, and educational institutions. The results may be extended beyond academic circles, contributing to the broader body of knowledge.*

Keywords: *Socio-cultural perceptions, Agriculture, Cultural identity, Primary school enrolment, Rural areas, Vo prefecture, Togo.*

How cite this work (APA):

Sowah, A. K., Ngutu, M., Simiyu, V. & Mutisya, M. (2024). Socio cultural perceptions of agriculture and primary school enrolment in rural areas, Vo Prefecture, Togo. *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education*, 8(2), 17 – 29. <https://doi.org/10.59765/grve4596>.

1. Introduction

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), proclaimed on the 10th December 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), enforced on the 2nd September 1990, have made of primary school education, a right for all children, as posited by Zandy (2019), and concurred by Campbell (2023). In

addition, the United Nations, in its fourth sustainable development goals has made of inclusive, equitable quality education, and lifelong learning opportunities for all, a priority to be achieved by the year 2030 (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, 2015).

The gross enrolment rates (GER) in developed countries, including North America and Western Europe have reached an estimated 99.3% in 2021. In East Asia and the Pacific, an estimated 97.2% were reported in 2021, and

96.8% in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2021. In South and West Asia an estimated 91.1% were recorded in 2021, and at the same time, countries with low income, especially from Sub-Saharan Africa have an estimated 72.7% , as reported by UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2022), unveiling significant rural-urban disparities.

The general trend is that developing countries are still behind, as regard to enrolment rates, and this results mainly from their low income, as confirmed by the World Bank's report on education (2023). As matter of fact, the studies led by Herrera et al. (2021) in Madagascar have revealed that, due to insufficient food, agricultural practices are given more priority, and oftentimes, at the expense of primary school education of children in rural areas, as it is seen in Vo prefecture, Togo, according to the investigations of Ezeanya-Esiobu (2019).

The estimated enrolment rates in Togo were 96.2% in 2019, according to the World Bank (2022), while the report from UNESCO (2021) has shown a decrease in these enrolment rates to 92% in 2021, with significant disparities in enrolment rates between rural settings and urban areas, which are better off. Even though these enrolment rates look very high for the whole country, the reality in rural settings are very worrying. According to the analysis of the Education Sector Plan (ESP) of the Togolese republic (2014) for the period 2014-2025, the rural areas alone, including Vo prefecture, register nearly 88.1% of non-enrolled children, while in urban areas there are barely 11.9%.

Other statistical data from the National Institute of Statistics and Economic and Demographic Studies (2021), indicate that, the probability for completing successfully primary school curriculum is 15.3% for children from rural settings against 54.9% in urban areas. One could argue that primary school enrolment rates in Togo have improved over the past years. However, there are still challenges to ensure that all children, especially those in rural areas, remain in school after their enrolment.

In rural areas of Vo prefecture, the collective beliefs, customs, and social constructs are so important that, they impact the whole lives of the ruralites, including their agricultural production, which is vital for their livelihoods, as referred to by Kibler (2021). Some cultural beliefs held by individuals and communities advocate that agriculture is a secure livelihood, because it offers opportunities for food security and ensures employment to all. In the same line, agriculture is considered a cultural requirement for household leadership. For the farming population of Vo prefecture, agriculture represents the main solution for their basic needs; therefore, any potential house head is compelled to show proficiency in agricultural activities in accordance with the local customs, in order to become eligible for marriage.

In addition, according to the local cultures, more than the simple act of farming, which involves cultivating the soil, growing crops, and rearing animals to provide food and other benefits for the subsistence of the families, agriculture is for rural people of Vo prefecture, one of the marks of cultural identity, as advocated by Burton et al. (2020). Finally, one of the social constructs that shape ruralites' perceptions is the consideration of agriculture as a source of short-term income, because of the periodical farming cycles and the stable income generation opportunities that it offers. On the basis of these socio-cultural perceptions of agriculture, some parents agree with Caplan (2018) that, school education is just a waste of time and human resources, since children have to learn practical agricultural skills from an early age in order to align with the expectations of their society, as conceived by Rymanowicz et al. (2020).

Therefore, out of obedience to their parents, some children go late to school, some miss classes very frequently, while others drop out of school, as they have to join their parents in the fields and help them sow, harvest, or carry out other agricultural activities that are in line with their livelihoods, as observed by Spier et al. (2019). According to Cook et al. (2021), the beliefs in traditional agricultural practices as opportunity to ensure employment for children, has caused some parents to be convinced that primary school enrolment is neither important, nor necessary.

Despite the free public primary school education, the right to education for all, and other government policies, 80.5% of non-enrolled children come from 40% of poor farming households of rural areas of the country, including Vo prefecture, as reported in the ESP of the Togolese republic (2014) for the period 2014-2025, and confirmed by UNICEF (2019). Unfortunately, these socio-cultural perceptions of agriculture have not yet been considered as variables in any previous studies about primary school enrolment in rural areas of Vo prefecture.

1.1 Study's Theory

The study applied the cultural capital theory to examine how parents' cultural perceptions of agriculture influence primary school enrolment in rural Vo prefecture, Togo. This theory, developed by Pierre Bourdieu, explores the impact of cultural factors on an individual's life chances. In this context, it highlighted the belief in agriculture as a significant aspect of local culture, passed down through generations, often at the expense of formal education. The theory's concept of "Habitus" illustrated how children in rural areas observed the social value placed on individuals deeply involved in agriculture.

The cultural capital theory served as a comprehensive framework, revealing the intricate connection between

cultural perceptions of agriculture and primary school enrolment in Vo prefecture. Despite its insights, the theory faces criticism for its complexity, potential bias, and limitations in addressing intersectionality, as noted by Guillory (2023).

2. Literature Review

Generally, according to Hammett (2021), people identify themselves with places where they come from, with the community in which they live, with their national flag or anthem, with their cultural beliefs or traditional customs, with their political affiliation, with their economic activities, or with their social position or responsibility, and so on. Storry and Childs (2022) shared this opinion while referring to British cultural identities. They sustained that, even given names reflect a sense of cultural identity and belonging to a particular community. In Australia, for instance, black Africans had to conquer and assert their identity by relating themselves to their experiences of being African immigrants living in Australia, including the social constructs they met, how they felt, how people defined them and related with them, their own socio-economic well-being and sense of belonging in a multicultural context, as emphasized by Uдах and Singh, (2019)

In Kenya, like in other African countries, the existence of different tribes has made the national identity not enough for distinguishing one Kenyan from the other. It is still necessary to refer to the dynamics of ethnicity and clanship in a way to shed better light on cultural identity and community belonging that characterize Kenyans, as mentioned by Fortes (2018). This opinion was confirmed later by Kisaka and Nyadera (2019), as they discussed the role of ethnicity in Kenyan politics and how this cultural element continues to affect the country's democratic progress.

In the republic of Togo, as sustained by Hill (2018), there are social constructs, cultural beliefs, customs, and traditional practices and rituals that define and characterize cultural identity and community belonging among the different ethnic groups that form the national population. For example, the initiation and festival wrestling called "Evala" gives a cultural identity to those who belong to the Kabyè tribe in North Togo, and the festival of "Epé Ekpé" defines and identifies the Gain-Mina from the South, as highlighted by Hill (2022).

Likewise, in rural areas of Vo prefecture in Togo, agriculture is considered as one of the marks of cultural identity and difference among peoples, according to the explanations given by Woodward (2018), who stated that identities receive meaning through symbolic values they represent. In this line of thoughts, in rural areas of Vo

prefecture, agriculture is not only crucial for livelihoods, but also carries significant cultural norms, local customs and rituals, and it creates in the ruralites a strong connection with their environment and their divinities. McNamara and Purzycki (2020) shared this view as they contended that socio-ecological contexts contribute in shaping people's beliefs. Therefore, the symbolic impact of agriculture on the lives of individuals in rural communities of Vo prefecture in Togo has led farmers to perceive agriculture as a mark of cultural identity.

The cultural capital theory recognized the role of symbolic capital, which referred to the value of cultural practices, beliefs, and knowledge within a particular social context, according to Bourdieu (2018). In this line of thoughts, the practice of agriculture is not just a means of making a living, as conceived by Vicol et al. (2022), but also a source of pride, identity, and belonging, according to the reflections of Brannon and Lin (2021) upon pathways to inclusive diversity practices within communities and institutions.

Likewise, in rural areas of Vo prefecture, agriculture plays a central role in cultural celebrations and rituals. For instance, "ADZINUKUZAN", the annual festival of harvests, which is celebrated in the month of August by the people of Vo prefecture, derived from agriculture and is dedicated to the god of fertility for having allowed abundant harvests and the sustainability of the community. This agricultural festival includes ceremonies to honour the land and the crops, as reported by Ayissou (2019). In fact, the empirical evidence has shown that, the rural population of Vo prefecture in Togo, have placed high values on agriculture as means of cultural expression and identity, to the extent that, being member of their community implies necessarily being farmer, as referred to by Zossou et al. (2020), while investigating factors that influence farmers' worldview. For this reason, in order to enjoy social approval, people from rural areas of Vo prefecture had to align with cultural norms, customs, and community expectations related to agriculture, as emphasized by Fortes (2018).

Consequently, this belief in agriculture as a mark of cultural identity exerted significant pressure on parents, as well as on children, and compelled them to prioritize agriculture over primary school enrolment. A failure to associate cultural values to agriculture was often seen as a deviation from cultural identity and thus, the individuals may be considered as outsiders or outcasts, as it resulted from the empirical investigation led by Zugravu-Soilita et al. (2021) on tribal agriculture in New Caledonia. Consequently, this belief in agriculture as a mark of cultural identity influenced ruralites' life choices about their status, who they were, and who they would like to become, including their decisions regarding children's primary school enrolment. Thus, this perception of

agriculture as a mark of cultural identity negatively affects primary school enrolment, which is characterized by small number of pupils enrolled, poor school retention, chronic absenteeism, and frequent school dropouts, as highlighted by Hoogeveen and Rossi (2019), while assessing the education outcomes in Togo.

While establishing the relationship between agriculture as a mark of cultural identity and primary school enrolment in rural areas of Vo prefecture, Togo, the researcher found a gap within the existing literature. The review showed a lack of research that considered the variable of agriculture as a mark of cultural identity in studies about primary school enrolment in rural areas of Vo prefecture, Togo.

The cultural capital theory, through the concept of “Habitus” emphasized that individuals acquire ingrained habits, skills, dispositions, and cultural tastes from their cultural environment, as asserted by Huang (2019). This means that people, not only respond to their environment, but also influence and shape it through their actions (Nickerson, 2022; Vahedi, 2020). Therefore, following the suggestions of Brannon and Lin (2021), an inclusive diversity practices that takes into consideration cultural values, agriculture, and primary school enrolment is

needed for a comprehensive rural development in Vo prefecture, Togo.

3. Methodology

The study employed a phenomenological research design, utilizing a qualitative approach. Data collection involved interviews with participants who were members of farming households in rural areas of Vo prefecture, Togo. Purposive sampling was used, focusing on individuals coming from farming households, where children having problem with primary school enrolment were reported through the discretion of community leaders and key informants. These participants also fulfilled the criteria of being familiar with traditional agricultural practices and socio-cultural beliefs that influenced their understanding of agriculture. Maximum variation sampling was employed to capture diverse socio-cultural perceptions from key informants. The researcher sought data saturation, ultimately involving 27 participants. Rural areas were selected through simple random sampling, ensuring a representative sample of the target population. The sampling process is visually depicted in a diagram and a table illustrating respectively the sampling framework and the sample size below:

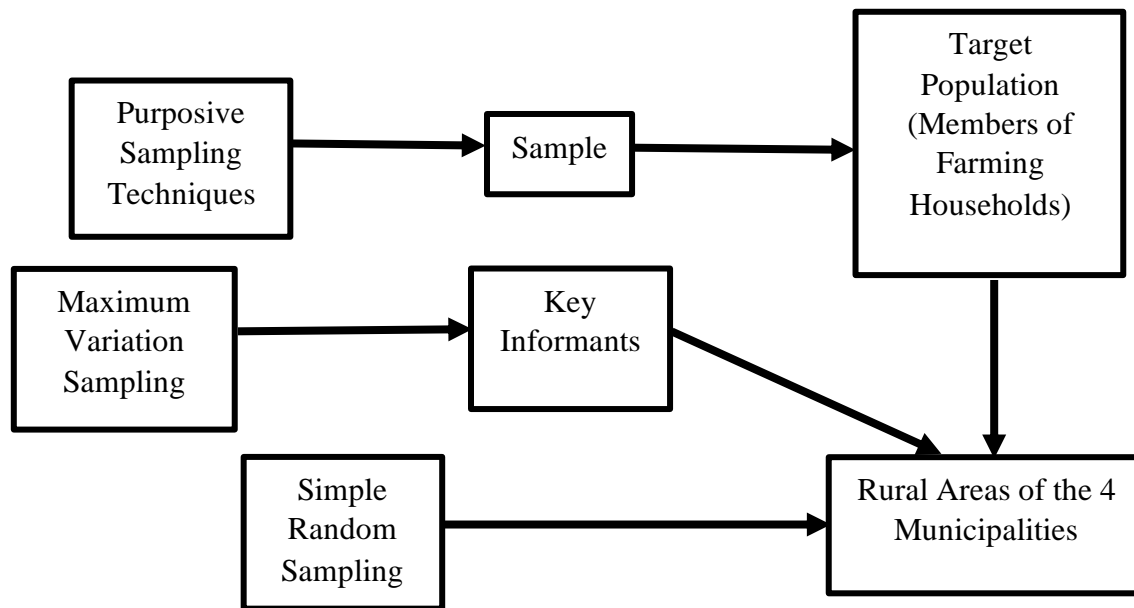


Figure 1: Sampling Framework (Researcher, 2024)

Table 1: Sampling Size

Target Population	Sampling Techniques	Sampling Size at Data Saturation
Members of Farming Households from Municipality 1	Purposive Sampling Techniques	6
Members of Farming Households from Municipality 2	Purposive Sampling Techniques	7
Members of Farming Households from Municipality 3	Purposive Sampling Techniques	7
Members of Farming Households from Municipality 4	Purposive Sampling Techniques	7
Total		27

Qualitative data collection tools included an interview guide for members of farming household, another for key informants. Four focus group discussions took place with community leaders. The researcher recorded notes, audio, and non-verbal cues during interactions. The interview and discussion guides featured open-ended questions, subjected to pilot testing a week before the actual data collection. Pre-testing data underwent critical comparison, applying the Test-Retest reliability technique. All collected data, both written and recorded, were transcribed and translated into English before being coded by means of QDA Miner Lite software. Analysis was guided by cultural capital theory and relevant literature. Triangulation of data was performed to enhance trustworthiness, and thematic

analysis results were interpreted based on research questions and objectives. Ethical considerations were paramount, with the researcher obtaining a research permit from Togo's competent authority. Data collection adhered to all ethical norms, informed consent, respect and safeguard of participants' privacy, rights, opinions, anonymity, confidentiality, and well-being throughout the process.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

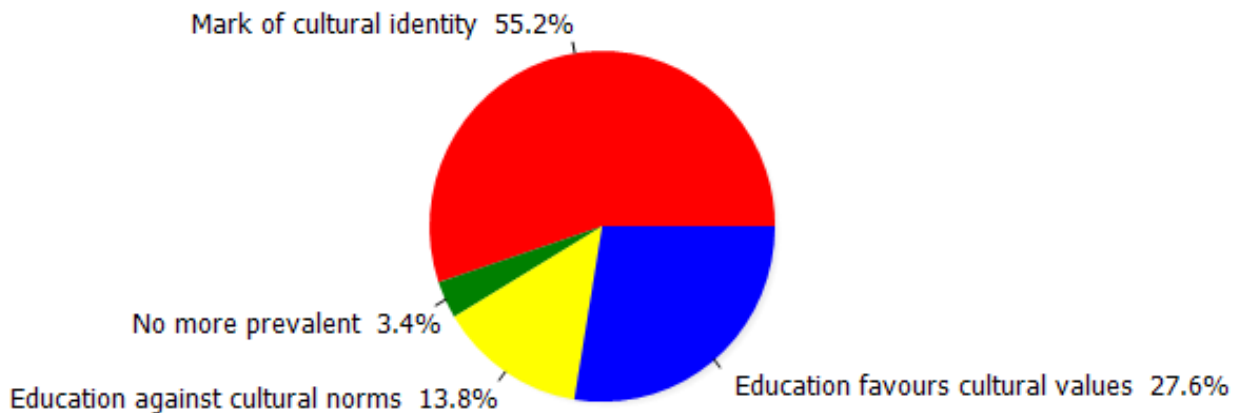


Figure 2: Perception of Agriculture as a Mark of Cultural Identity and Primary school Enrolment (Researcher 2024)

The research focused on examining the correlation between the perception of agriculture as a cultural identity marker and primary school enrolment in rural areas of Vo prefecture, Togo. The findings revealed that the notion of agriculture as a cultural identity marker is deeply ingrained among members of farming households in the rural regions of Vo prefecture. The local population defines themselves through their agricultural occupations, wearing sackcloth as a symbol of their identity as farmers.

Agriculture is seen as a cultural and ancestral inheritance, establishing a "spiritual pact of oneness" that connects farmers to the soil, ancestors, and deities. Agricultural activities play a crucial role in traditional religious practices, ceremonies, and rituals, shaping the cultural identity of the community and serving as a means of honouring deities and ancestors. Traditional farming involves specific rituals before and after activities such as weeding, sowing, and harvesting.

The study identified a decline in the respect for traditional farming practices inherited from ancestors, attributing it to out-of-season crops and the neglect of appropriate rituals, leading to land deterioration. An annual harvest festival called ADZINUKUZAN is organized in August to honour ancestors and deities, emphasizing the cultural heritage rooted in agricultural production.

Based on the belief that agriculture signifies cultural identity, members of farming households in rural Vo prefecture express concerns that formal education, particularly through schools, may cause children to neglect traditional practices, customs, and rituals, labelling them as wild and barbaric. While acknowledging that school education imparts cultural values and societal norms, the introduction of imported religions like Christianity through education is seen as a factor contributing to the erosion of cultural identity.

The study found that engaging in agriculture alongside parents instils values of humility and submission in children, which are considered essential cultural values in their community. There is fear among farming households that, school education may lead children to become lazy, arrogant, or engage in delinquent behaviour. However, a child exhibiting humility, hard work, obedience, and adherence to local customs can attend school without issues. Although the belief in agriculture as a cultural identity marker no longer solely determines children's enrolment, its influence persists among some parents.

The findings revealed that the belief in agriculture as a cultural identity marker is particularly entrenched among uneducated individuals, the elderly, and followers of traditional religions. For these groups, the interconnectedness of agriculture, cultural identity, and community belonging continues to influence parental

decisions regarding children's enrolment, especially among traditionalist and conservative rural populations. However, this belief is contested by more enlightened participants, who do not see it as the primary reason for the non-enrolment of children in primary school. Therefore, this category of participants supports the idea that school education favours cultural values.

4.2 Discussion

In line with its objectives, this research aimed to explore the relationship between the perception of agriculture as marker of cultural identity and primary school enrolment in rural areas of Vo prefecture, Togo. During the interactions, the researcher inquired about the opinion of the participants, whether agricultural activities bestow on them cultural identity or not. From all the municipalities, the majority's response was affirmative at 55.2% and one of the participants from Vo 2, who was a community leader, emphasized that:

We identify ourselves through and with our works or occupations, which are all related to agriculture; that is why we call ourselves farmers. Being farmer is our life and our existence. For this reason, we wear sackcloth to work in the field so that, once you see us in this garment, you will know immediately who we are and the community to which we belong.

This worldview of the participants showed that there are several socio-cultural factors and beliefs that shape people's identity, as asserted by Charles-Galley (2018). Hence, for members of farming households in rural areas of Vo prefecture, agriculture, cultural identity, and community belonging are interconnected, as advocated by Storry and Childs (2022). So, in line with this discussion, the researcher invited the participants to shed light on the specific ways in which agricultural practices are tied to cultural identity and community belonging. Some of the very active participants, especially those aged 68 and above underlined the bond between agriculture and cultural identity and what it means to them. An old participant, who happened to be a priest of traditional religion "Vodou" gave the following explanation:

Agriculture is a cultural and ancestral inheritance that cannot be left aside, because there is a kind of "spiritual pact of oneness" that connects the farmer, the soil he cultivates, as well as his ancestors and the deities. We will deny our cultural identity if we stop practicing agriculture.

This statement aligned with the studies of Brennan (2023) who emphasized the role of cultural beliefs and practices in shaping individual and group identities. This opinion confirms that members of farming households in rural

areas of Vo prefecture were convinced that agricultural practices bestow on them cultural identity, as underlined by Burton et al. (2020). In order to gather in-depth insights into this belief, the researcher sought out whether there were particular rituals, ceremonies, or traditions, which were associated with agricultural productions, and which play a significant role in maintaining cultural identity. This question brought one of the participants, who happened to be a priest of one of the traditional religions to make a valuable contribution:

Agricultural productions are crucial in the practice of our traditional religions, ceremonies, and rituals, which define our cultural identity. Therefore, we need agricultural products that are works of our hands, in order to be able to honour and worship our deities and ancestors.

This perception brought members of farming households to place high values on preserving their cultural heritage and identity, as asserted by Holtorf (2018). In this line of thoughts, another male participant who was a follower of traditional religion revealed that:

There are traditional rituals and practices that we perform before starting weeding, sowing, and harvesting crops, and also after the harvests. It is by following these ancestral practices in honour of the deities that we achieve the desired results from the farms, regardless of the weather patterns of each agricultural season, regardless of whether the rains are regular or not.

These new findings brought the researcher to understand that, for members of farming households from rural areas of Vo prefecture, agriculture and cultural identity are intertwined. This concept was supported by Forney and Sutherland (2021), who argued that the identity of families and households, both socially and culturally, is influenced by agriculture as an activity. For this reason, a middle age male participant said that: “We are agricultural communities”.

In line with the rituals, ceremonies, and traditions associated with agricultural productions and cultural identity, an old male participant from Vo 1 affirmed that:

We perform several traditional rituals in favour of the growth of our different crops until harvest; and at the end of the agricultural seasons, that is in the month of August, we organize annual festival of harvest in honour of ancestors and deities.

Following up with the annual festivals, mentioned by participants from all municipalities, the researcher sought to understand the interplay between those annual festive

celebrations, agricultural productions, and cultural identity. An elderly community leader explained that:

Annual festivals are established on the basis of agricultural productions, which determine and characterize people, who belong to the same tribe and culture. For instance, the construction of attics in a visible place in the house as a sign of abundance and gratitude to the god of fertility and the ancestors characterizes farmers from the municipalities of Vo 1 and Vo 4; the production of palm, tomato, and sweet potato gives farmers of the municipality of Vo 3 a sense of cultural identity and defines them as members of their community; and the members of framing households from the municipality of Vo 2 are specialised in fishing, which attributes to them a cultural identity.

This view was confirmed by Hill (2022), while referring to cultural identity and community belonging. A prominent community leader shared a compelling insight, offering a vivid illustration of an annual festival held in the municipality of Vo 1:

Our annual cultural festival is known as ADZINUKUZAN, a celebration deeply rooted in the rich tapestry of our agricultural heritage. The festival derives its name from the bountiful agricultural productions that form the backbone of our community. The etymology of the word ADZINUKUZAN reflects not only our commitment to honouring our agricultural roots but also symbolizes the spirit of unity, abundance, and cultural pride that permeates the festivities.

Adzi: This term embodies the essence of motherhood and the nurturing figure who brings forth new life.

Nuku: This word refers to the fruitful bounty cultivated from our fields, encompassing the diverse array of crops and agricultural products that sustain us.

Zan or Azan: This expression signifies a joyous and communal feast that brings people together in celebration.

In combination, these linguistic elements seamlessly weave together the profound connection between the maternal source, the agricultural abundance, and the festive gatherings that define our cultural identity. The interplay of Adzi, Nuku, and Zan encapsulates the harmonious cycle of life, sustenance, and communal revelry embedded in the fabric of our annual festival, ADZINUKUZAN, established officially in 1985.

These insights from cultural rituals and festivals were supported by Forney and Sutherland (2021), who confirmed the crucial role of agriculture in shaping and preserving cultural identity.

Furthermore, the participants were asked to share their opinion about cultural identity based on agricultural productions and children's primary school enrolment. The findings presented a significant number of 13.8% of participants, who were convinced that school education is against cultural norms and practices. Some male participants over 58 years old maintained that:

School causes children to forget about local cultures and traditions. Consequently, children undermine traditional practices, customs, and rituals that they describe as wild and barbaric. For example, enrolling children in primary school, prevents them from learning ancestral wisdom and knowledge, they become hostile to traditional ceremonies, so they are cut off from their cultural identity.

This point of view, which opposes school education to cultural values was concurred by Morinaj et al. (2019). In contrast, an alternative perspective emerged from another group of male participants aged 38 to 47 years, who fervently advocated for the importance of children's school enrolment. 27.6% of participants supported the idea that school education favours cultural values. These enlightened participants believed that:

School education alone does not alienate children from their cultural identity, because school teaches them cultural values and societal norms. It is rather their encounter with imported religions like Christianity, through school education and modern civilization that causes them to despise their culture identity.

McNamara and Purzycki (2020) shared this view as they contended that socio-ecological contexts contribute in shaping people's beliefs. This is to say that, a priori, there is no conflict of interests between agricultural production and formal education, as highlighted by Zossou et al. (2020). The apparent problem lies in some parents' desire to prioritize agriculture production over the education of their children. Therefore, some educated participants suggested that: "The only thing necessary is, to distinguish between formal education at school and religious indoctrination".

This view was sustained by Alberts (2019). To enrich the discussions, another category of participants from Vo 2, aged 48 to 57 years, also expressed their opinions and concerns based on their worldview and certain empirical evidence. Those middle-aged participants stated that:

The practice of agriculture alongside parents teaches children humility and submission, which are cultural values required in our community. We are afraid that children in school, may become lazy, arrogant, or may engage themselves in delinquency. For this reason, we are reluctant to enrol them. But a child who is humble, hardworking, obedient, and who does not rebel against his parents, the local customs, culture, and tradition, can go to school without any problem or condition.

This balanced opinion confirmed the fact that, school education in itself is not a problem, but the characters, attitudes, and manners children might develop in the future, after being educated in school, as pointed out by Cicourel and Kitsuse (2020), are what is creating the gaps between agricultural activities and primary school enrolment in rural areas of Vo prefecture. To bring the discussion to an end, two male participants who were school teachers argued that:

Ignorance is the basis for the non-enrolment of children in school. We all know that, cultural norms, customs, traditional practices and knowledge can be acquired without being a farmer. Nowadays, an unschooled child is a public danger, because he is unaware of the rules of the modern society, as regard to the use of technology, for instance. Despite everything, school education is indispensable today.

This last opinion brought 3.4% of participants to admit that the perception of agriculture as a mark of cultural identity is no more prevalent in rural areas of Vo prefecture. Instead, the exhortation addressed to parents is to respect children right to education, as advocated by the UDHR and the UNCRC (Campbell, 2023; Zandy, 2019).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The researcher arrived at the following conclusions by extrapolating insights from the comprehensive summary of the study findings. In synthesizing the data, the researcher deployed the cultural capital theory to discern key patterns and trends, and ultimately to draw this insightful and evidence-based conclusions that contribute to a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

Considering the relationship between the perception of agriculture as a cultural identity marker and primary school enrolment, the study concluded that in rural Vo prefecture, agriculture is held as a symbol of cultural identity. The cultural capital theory claims that individuals are shaped by their social experiences and cultural resources. With this

principle, the research found out that members of farming households consider agriculture not just as an occupation, but as a cultural and ancestral inheritance, with spiritual connections to the land, ancestors, and deities.

Though traditional farming rituals define cultural identity, the study noted a decline in respect for ancestral practices leading to land deterioration according to farmers. The annual harvest festival, ADZINUKUZAN, symbolizes the cultural heritage tied to agricultural productions. The belief in agriculture as a cultural identity marker raises concerns about schools, leading children away from traditions, customs, and rituals, with fears of imported religions eroding cultural identity.

The study indicated that, while the belief in agriculture as a mark of cultural identity is no longer the primary reason for non-enrolment, its influence persists in parental decisions. Despite this, the study underscored the importance of school education in modern society. Demographically, the perception of agriculture as a cultural identity marker is prevalent among the uneducated, the elderly, and followers of traditional religions, influencing their decisions about children's enrolment. However, enlightened members of farming households challenge this notion, recognizing the importance of education and disputing the idea that agriculture should solely determine cultural identity.

5.2 Recommendations

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of socio-cultural perceptions of agriculture on primary school enrolment in rural areas of Vo prefecture, Togo. In light of the challenges revealed in the research findings and in alignment with the research questions and objectives, the ensuing recommendations should be taken into account.

1. Recommendation targeted at Knowledge: The national government should conduct thorough studies with a focus on the role of agriculture in shaping ruralites' cultural identity. This approach can help in gaining deep understanding of the daily lives, practices, and values associated with agriculture as a cultural identity marker.
2. Recommendation targeted at Policy: The educational institutions should ensure that educational policies are aligned with cultural values, promoting a harmonious coexistence between cultural practices and education. This can help students see the relevance of their cultural heritage in the context of formal education.

3. Recommendation targeted at Research: The educational institutions should conduct a review of research literature and field experiences to identify best practices for integrating cultural values and agricultural activities into educational systems.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Research

The study investigated the impact of socio-cultural perceptions of agriculture on primary school enrolment in rural areas of Vo prefecture, Togo. The researcher acknowledged that this study did not exhaust all the matters related to the research topic, as it opens up various avenues for further investigations. Therefore, deploying the broader framework of cultural capital theory, the following recommendations are made for further research:

1. To investigate the impact of agricultural education programmes on primary school enrolment in rural areas. This suggestion of study will investigate the effectiveness of agricultural education programmes in promoting primary school enrolment in rural areas. It will assess how integrating agricultural knowledge into the curriculum influences students' and parents' perceptions of the importance of education.
2. To assess the role of community engagement and primary school enrolment in rural areas. This suggestion of study will contribute to examine the role of community engagement in shaping socio-cultural perceptions of agriculture and its impact on primary school enrolment in rural areas. It will evaluate the effectiveness of community-led initiatives in promoting education and challenging traditional views regarding the compatibility of agriculture and schooling.

References

BOOKS

- Burton, R. J., Forney, J., Stock, P., & Sutherland, L.-A. (2020). *The good farmer: Culture and identity in food and agriculture*. Routledge.
- Caplan, B. (2018). *The case against education: Why the education system is a waste of time and money*. Princeton University Press.
- Ezeanya-Esiobu, C. (2019). *Indigenous knowledge and education in Africa*. Springer Nature.

Fortes, M. (2018). *The dynamics of clanship among the Tallensi: Being the first part of an analysis of the social structure of a Trans-Volta tribe*. Routledge.

Guillory, J. (2023). *Cultural capital: The problem of literary canon formation*. University of Chicago Press.

Hill, E. J. (2018). *Spirited Choreographies: Ritual, Identity, and History-Making in Ewe Performance*. University of California.

Storry, M., & Childs, P. (Eds.). (2022). *British cultural identities*. Taylor & Francis.

BOOK CHAPTERS

Arnot, M. (2021). Schools and families. In *Reproducing Gender* (pp.139–156). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203994344-10>

Cicourel, A. V., & Kitsuse, J. I. (2020). Educational decision makers. In *Toward a Sociology of Education* (pp. 197–205). Routledge.

Forney, J., & Sutherland, L.-A. (2021). Identities on the family farm: Agrarianism, materiality and the “good farmer.” In *Handbook on the Human Impact of Agriculture* (pp. 65–84). Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781839101748.00013>

Hoogeveen, J., & Rossi, M. (2019). Primary Education in Togo. In *Transforming Education Outcomes in Africa: Learning from Togo* (pp. 9–29).

Morinaj, J., Marcin, K., & Hascher, T. (2019). School alienation and its association with student learning and social behavior in challenging times. In *Motivation in education at a time of global change: Theory, research, and implications for practice* (pp. 205–224). Emerald Publishing Limited.

Reddy, Y. S. (2021). Transforming lives through education. In *Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development* (pp. 206–226). Routledge India. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429295997-17>

Woodward, K. (2018). Concepts of identity and difference. In *A Museum Studies Approach to Heritage* (pp. 429–440). Routledge.

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Alberts, W. (2019). Religious education as

small'i'indoctrination: How European countries struggle with a secular approach to religion in schools. *CEPS Journal*, 9(4), 53–72.

Ayissou, K. E. S. (2019). *Le tourisme au Togo.(esposizione presentazione contenuti prova finale in lingua ITALIANA)*.

Bourdieu, P. (2018). Cultural reproduction and social reproduction. In *Knowledge, education, and cultural change* (pp. 71–112). Routledge.

Brannon, T. N., & Lin, A. (2021). “Pride and prejudice” pathways to belonging: Implications for inclusive diversity practices within mainstream institutions. *American Psychologist*, 76(3), 488.

Brennan, M. A. (2023). *Importance of Incorporating Local Culture into Community Development*. <https://extension.psu.edu/importance-of-incorporating-local-culture-into-community-development>

Burton, R. J., Forney, J., Stock, P., & Sutherland, L.-A. (2020). *The good farmer: Culture and identity in food and agriculture*. Routledge.

Campbell, L. (2023). *Why is education important and how does it affect one's future?* World Vision. <https://www.worldvision.ca/stories/education/why-is-education-important>

Caplan, B. (2018). *The case against education: Why the education system is a waste of time and money*. Princeton University Press.

Charles-Galley, M. L. J. (2018). *A Glimpse of African Identity Through the Lens of Togolese Literature*. University of Missouri-Columbia.

Cicourel, A. V., & Kitsuse, J. I. (2020). Educational decision makers. In *Toward a Sociology of Education* (pp. 197–205). Routledge.

Cook, B. R., Satizábal, P., & Curnow, J. (2021). Humanising agricultural extension: A review. *World Development*, 140, 105337. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.105337>

Ezeanya-Esiobu, C. (2019). *Indigenous knowledge and education in Africa*. Springer Nature.

Forney, J., & Sutherland, L.-A. (2021). Identities on the family farm: Agrarianism, materiality and the “good

- farmer.” In *Handbook on the Human Impact of Agriculture* (pp. 65–84). Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781839101748.00013>
- Fortes, M. (2018). *The dynamics of clanship among the Tallensi: Being the first part of an analysis of the social structure of a Trans-Volta tribe*. Routledge.
- Guillory, J. (2023). *Cultural capital: The problem of literary canon formation*. University of Chicago Press.
- Hammett, D. (2021). From banal to everyday nationalism: narrations of nationhood. *Geography*, 106(1), 16–24.
- Herrera, J. P., Rabezara, J. Y., Ravelomanantsoa, N. A. F., Metz, M., France, C., Owens, A., Pender, M., Nunn, C. L., & Kramer, R. A. (2021). Food insecurity related to agricultural practices and household characteristics in rural communities of northeast Madagascar. *Food Security*, 13(6), 1393–1405.
- Hill, E. J. (2018). *Spirited Choreographies: Ritual, Identity, and History-Making in Ewe Performance*. University of California.
- Hill, E. J. (2022). Dancing Altars: Carnavalesque Performance in a Festival in Togo. *African Arts*, 55(4), 54–67.
- Holtorf, C. (2018). Embracing change: how cultural resilience is increased through cultural heritage. *World Archaeology*, 50(4), 639–650.
- Hoogeveen, J., & Rossi, M. (2019). Primary Education in Togo. In *Transforming Education Outcomes in Africa: Learning from Togo* (pp. 9–29).
- Huang, X. (2019). Understanding Bourdieu-cultural capital and habitus. *Review of European Studies*, 11(3), 45. <https://doi.org/10.5539/res.v11n3p45>
- Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques et Demographiques, I. (2021). *Annuaire Statistique National 2014-2019*.
- Kibler, K. M. (2021). *Decolonizing Food Systems Research: The Case of Household Agricultural Food Access in Bikotiba, Togo*. Antioch University.
- Kisaka, M. O., & Nyadera, I. N. (2019). Ethnicity and politics in Kenya’s turbulent path to democracy and development. In *Journal of Social Policy Conferences* (pp. 159–180). Istanbul University.
- McNamara, R. A., & Purzycki, B. G. (2020). Minds of gods and human cognitive constraints: Socio-ecological context shapes belief. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 10(3), 223–238.
- Morinaj, J., Marcin, K., & Hascher, T. (2019). School alienation and its association with student learning and social behavior in challenging times. In *Motivation in education at a time of global change: Theory, research, and implications for practice* (pp. 205–224). Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Nickerson, C. (2022). *Albert Bandura’s social cognitive theory: Definition & examples*.
- République Togolaise, M. de l’Éducation N. (2014). *Plan Sectoriel de l’Éducation 2014-2025, Amélioration de l’accès, de l’équité et de la qualité de l’éducation au Togo*.
- Rymanowicz, K., Hetherington, C., & Larm, B. (2020). Planting the Seeds for Nature-Based Learning: Impacts of a Farm-and Nature-Based Early Childhood Education Program. *International Journal of Early Childhood Environmental Education*, 8(1), 44–63.
- Spier, E., Leenknecht, F., Carson, K., Bichay, K., & Faria, A.-M. (2019). Tipping the scales: overcoming obstacles to support school readiness for all in low- and middle-income countries. *Early Years*, 39(3), 229–242. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09575146.2019.1576031>
- Storry, M., & Childs, P. (Eds.). (2022). *British cultural identities*. Taylor & Francis.
- Udah, H., & Singh, P. (2019). Identity, othering and belonging: Toward an understanding of difference and the experiences of African immigrants to Australia. *Social Identities*, 25(6), 843–859.
- UNESCO. (2021). *Education in Togo*. <https://en.unesco.org/countries/togo/education>
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics, U. (2022). *Education data release for SDG 4 and other relevant policy indicators*. <http://uis.unesco.org/>
- UNICEF. (2019). *Education: Sectoral and OR+ SC189904 Report, January - December 2018*:

UNICEF Togo.

- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, U. (2015). *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda/> retrieve 6 March 2023
- Vahedi, Z. (2020). Social learning theory/social cognitive theory. *The Wiley Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences: Models and Theories*, 401–405.
- Vicol, M., Fold, N., Hambloch, C., Narayanan, S., & Niño, H. P. (2022). Twenty-five years of Living Under Contract: Contract farming and agrarian change in the developing world. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 22(1), 3–18.
- Woodward, K. (2018). Concepts of identity and difference. In *A Museum Studies Approach to Heritage* (pp. 429–440). Routledge.
- World Bank, W. B. (2022). *The World Bank in Togo*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/togo/overview>
- World Bank, W. B. (2023). *Education Overview: Development news, research, data | World Bank*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/overview>
- Zandy, J. (2019). Universal declaration of human rights. *Radical Teacher*, 113(December), 54–55. <https://doi.org/10.5195/rt.2019.591>
- Zossou, E., Arouna, A., Diagne, A., & Agboh-Noameshie, R. A. (2020). Learning agriculture in rural areas: the drivers of knowledge acquisition and farming practices by rice farmers in West Africa. *The Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension*, 26(3), 291–306.
- Zugravu-Soilita, N., Kafrouni, R., Bouard, S., & Apithy, L. (2021). Do cultural capital and social capital matter for economic performance? An empirical investigation of tribal agriculture in New Caledonia. *Ecological Economics*, 182.

REPORTS

- American Public Media, A. (2019). *The children in the fields*. <https://www.apmreports.org/episode/2019/08/14/the>

-children-in-the-fields

- Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques et Demographiques, I. (2021). *Annuaire Statistique National 2014-2019*.
- International Labour Organization, I. (2019). *Decent work for food security and resilient rural livelihoods*. https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/economic-and-social-development/rural-development/WCMS_437170/lang--en/index.htm
- République Togolaise, M. de l'Éducation N. (2014). *Plan Sectoriel de l'Éducation 2014-2025, Amélioration de l'accès, de l'équité et de la qualité de l'éducation au Togo*.
- Togo First. (2020). *An overview of agriculture in Togo: present and future...* Agriculture Panorama. <https://www.togofirst.com/en/agriculture-panorama/2502-5007-an-overview-of-agriculture-in-togo-present-and-future>.
- UNESCO. (2021). *Education in Togo*. <https://en.unesco.org/countries/togo/education>
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics, U. (2022). *Education data release for SDG 4 and other relevant policy indicators*. <http://uis.unesco.org/>
- UNICEF. (2019). *Education: Sectoral and OR+ SCI89904 Report, January - December 2018: UNICEF Togo*.
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, U. (2015). *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda/> retrieve 6 March 2023
- World Bank, W. B. (2022). *The World Bank in Togo*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/togo/overview>
- World Bank, W. B. (2023). *Education Overview: Development news, research, data | World Bank*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/overview>
- ## THESES
- Ayissou, K. E. S. (2019). *Le tourisme au Togo. (esposizione presentazione contenuti prova finale in lingua ITALIANA)*.
- Charles-Galley, M. L. J. (2018). *A Glimpse of African Identity Through the Lens of Togolese Literature*. University of Missouri-Columbia.
- Kibler, K. M. (2021). *Decolonizing Food Systems*

Research: The Case of Household Agricultural Food Access in Bikotiba, Togo. Antioch University.

INTERNET SOURCES

Campbell, L. (2023). *Why is education important and how does it affect one's future?* World Vision.
<https://www.worldvision.ca/stories/education/why-is-education-important>

Harneis, J. (2018). *13 challenges children face just to be able to go to school.* Theirworld.
<https://theirworld.org/news/challenges-children-face-just-to-go-to-school/>

IvyPanda. (2023). *School as an Agent of Socialization.*
<https://ivypanda.com/essays/school-as-an-agent-of-socialization/>