

AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF GRADUATES OF HIGHER INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed agricultural entrepreneurship education and youth development among graduates of higher institutions in Southeast Nigeria. Data were collected from 123 corps members proportionately selected in a multistage procedure. The tool used for data collection was questionnaire and the data were presented in percentage, mean score, and bar charts. Some corps members favourably perceived that there are good opportunities in Nigeria to start up own agricultural business enterprise while others perceived agriculture as a high-risk enterprise. Skills acquired from the programme include communication, team work, and interpersonal skills. Respondents showed dissatisfaction in the proportion of theory to practical exposure, feedback mechanism employed by resource persons and learning environment. Only 52% of the corps members indicated intention for agricultural entrepreneurship. Respondents' intention varied with the personal, demographic and institutional factors. Government should provide and support follow-up trainings for graduates with interest and strong aspiration for entrepreneurship in agriculture.

Key words: agriculture, entrepreneurship, graduates, Nigeria, youths

INTRODUCTION

Globally, unemployment has become a critical issue of concern (International Labor Organization, 2020) especially with the upsurge of the COVID-19 pandemic and these have serious impacts on youth development as well as the socioeconomic development of their nations. Despite the growing global youth population from one billion to 1.3 billion, youth employment has decrease from 568 million to 497 million in the last two years (International Labour Organization, 2020). This is more evident in developing countries as a result of higher population growth rate. In Africa, it is expected that many youths will be joining the labor market every year since about 60% of its population in 2019 was below 25 years old (MO Ibrahim Foundation, 2019). But the scenario is far from realistic as most countries in Africa have unimaginable records of unemployment status.

In Nigeria, graduate unemployment situation is alarming. Between 1992 and 1997, Dabalen *et al.* (2000) noted that unemployment rate increased to 32% in the country while Eneji *et al.* (2013) observed that the rate of graduate unemployment has increased to about 60%. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2016), 52 million people in the economically active age in Nigeria who do not have a job are mostly qualified university graduates. Similarly, StearsBusiness (2019) pointed out that youth with post-secondary school education in Nigeria have an unemployment

rate almost tripling from 12% to 30% in 2015 and 2018, respectively with nearly 10,000 doctorate degree holders seeking for employment. Part of the reason for unemployment is the slowness in creation of formal jobs by the government. Estimates show that 500,000 graduates are produced annually in Nigeria. However, in 2015, approximately 251,000 formal jobs were created (StearsBusiness, 2019). In a similar view, Okoh-Mesarawon (2009) reiterates that the labor demands increased by 4% between 2010 and 2017 while jobs increased at 1.6% in the same period. Paramount among the problems is that students are not trained to become entrepreneurs in order to create jobs rather they become job seekers after graduation. Out of every five adults in Nigeria one gets a job while just one graduate is employed out of every ten university (Okoh-Mesarawon, 2009). Indeed, among all the problems facing Nigeria, none is as serious as graduate unemployment and those concerned are subjects of frustration leading to vices (Afolabi *et al.*, 2014). Baku *et al.* (2008) observed that the unemployment rate of university graduates does not only discourage schooling, but could also be cause for social disruption, if not checked. This will hamper the attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) since economic development of every country has a close relationship with its workforce. This makes it imperative to reduce the problems of graduate unemployment in the country.

In response to the above scenario, Nigerian Government has developed an action plan for youth employment and development (2019-2023) which focuses on entrepreneurship, youth in agriculture, and youth and ICT (Institute of Development Studies, 2019). In addition, entrepreneurship courses have been made compulsory in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Entrepreneurship according to Psilos and Galloway (2018) refers to setting up or enlarging a growth-oriented business that produces value. Entrepreneurs pinpoint an unmet market chance and assemble financial, organizational, and other resources to utilize it, normally assuming a level of risk. Entrepreneurship education is very important in the Nigerian economy as it is a measure to achieve national development goals as well as the SDGs programme of the nation. Promoting entrepreneurship would aid in minimizing the rate of unemployment in Nigeria as graduates may not only be self-employed but also create jobs. Promoting entrepreneurship will foster national development, encourages innovation and creativity which will foster business orientation of youths in the country. Development of a nation is growth in its economic, social and political process. Rabie (2016) describes development as the implementation of some economic and technical actions to use resources at one's disposal to stimulate economic growth to improve the standard of living of the citizens. Therefore, entrepreneurial education would give graduates confidence as well as the needed income to meet their needs and support their families which will go a long way to promote national development.

Similarly, due to growing concern and support for entrepreneurial development of youth, the National Youth Service Corps, NYSC (2016) through its Department of Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship implement programmes to equip interested corps members with specific technical/vocational skills in identified skills sets based on their particular interests and realities. A corps member is a graduate, usually 30 years and below, from a Nigerian tertiary institution (university and polytechnic) who has satisfied all the conditions for graduation. The training aims to develop the business/enterprise capacities in corps members who, by virtue of their undergraduate training, have acquired competence in specific fields and those who have undergone the skills acquisition training and intend to further explore possibilities of self-reliance. The training prepares youth to be entrepreneurs and create jobs instead of being employees or job seekers (Aladekomo, 2004; Umemezia and Edobor, 2018). The skill and entrepreneurship training are in the areas of agriculture, agro-allied, construction, culture and tourism, education, environment, film and photography, food processing and preservation, ICT, beadworks and fascinators, and leather works.

However, this study focused on agricultural entrepreneurial training of the youth corps members in Nigeria. Agricultural entrepreneurship training, in addition to acquisition of soft skills and entrepreneur competences, aims to improve technical and management skills of youth to start and successfully run a business in agriculture. Having been implemented for several years now, there is need to assess: perception of youth corps members on agricultural entrepreneurship training in agriculture; areas of training on agricultural entrepreneurship; training skills and methods used; level of satisfaction of the youth with the structure and organization of the training; and determine agricultural entrepreneurship intention of youth corps members that participated in the training.

METHODOLOGY

South-East Nigeria where the study was conducted comprises five states; Anambra, Imo, Abia, Enugu, and Ebonyi States. It is estimated that the population of the zone is over 40 million people (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016), with an estimated land area of 58,214.7 km². The South-East geo-political zone is situated within latitude 4° 30' and 7° 5' N and longitude 6° 50' and 8° 30' E. The zone has 10 federal universities, 12 private universities, 8 colleges of education, 12 polytechnics, 1 college of agriculture and 1 college of land resources. The area is endowed with abundant natural resources and lots of agricultural activities.

National Youth Service Scheme has its operation in the 5 states with an orientation camp in each of the states. Usually, the camps run in two batches in a year, batch A runs between April and July, while batch B runs between November and February; and each batch is divided into streams I and II. According to NYSC's (2017) report, corps members in service have risen to 244,532 as at March 2016 and could rise up to 300,000 by the year 2020 given the increasing number of tertiary institutions. In southeast Nigeria, approximately 3000 graduates camp at each orientation camp, making it a total of 15, 000 youth corps members that pass out from each camp yearly.

The population for the study comprised corps members who participated in the agricultural entrepreneurship training conducted for youth corps members in the orientation camps in Batch B stream I, 2017. Respondents for the study were selected using multi-stage and simple random sampling procedures. In the first stage, using simple random sampling technique Anambra, and Enugu States were selected. The orientation camps used by the states were Umunya and Awgu for Anambra and Enugu States, respectively. In the second stage, a list of corps members who participated in the agricultural entrepreneurship training during the period of the study was assessed from

NYSC office. Records show that 244 and 248 corps members in Anambra and Enugu States, respectively participated in the training at the period the data was collected. In each state, 25% of corps members who participated in the training were selected using on-the spot method. A total sample size used for the study was 123 youth corps members.

The primary data were collected through face-to-face survey done using questionnaires. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined through test re-test method. The trainings were on snail farming, poultry production, fish farming, piggyery, bee keeping, horticulture, agro-processing and marketing, mushroom farming, entrepreneurship soft skills. Mean score and percentage were used to analyze the data using Statistical Package for Service Solution (SPSS). Data on the respondents' perception of the agricultural entrepreneurship training were obtained using a five-point Likert-type scale of "strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree", with weighting values of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1, respectively. The values were added and divided by 5 to obtain 3; in order to obtain a cut-off point, 0.05 was added to capture the undecided, giving 3.05 as the upper limit; while 0.05 was deducted from the mean to get 2.95, as lower limit. Any statements with mean score greater or equal to 3.05 was regarded as favorable perception, while statements with mean score equal to or less than 2.95 were regarded as unfavorable perception. However, negative statements were reversed. Data on the agricultural entrepreneurial soft skills taught during the training were also obtained on a five-point Likert-type scale of very great extent (5), great extent (4), undecided (3), low extent (2) and no extent (1). The values were again added up and divided by 5 to get 3; in order to obtain a cut-off point, 0.05 was added to the mean score of 3 to get 3.05 and used as the upper limit while 0.05 was deducted from the mean to get 2.95 which was used as lower limit. Statements with mean score greater or equal to 3.05 were considered as a major competences/skills acquired, while statements with mean score equal to or less than 2.95 were regarded as competent or skill not acquired.

Data on level of satisfaction with the structure and organization of the training; technical content of the training, entrepreneurial skills and competence content, method of teaching and learning were obtained in a 3-point Likert-type scale of very satisfied (3), satisfied (2) and not satisfied (1). The value was added and divided to obtain 2.0, statement with a mean score of 2.0 and above implied that the respondents were satisfied, while statement below 2.0 meant that the respondents were not satisfied. The data were presented in percentage, pie and bar charts. Also, mean scores and standard deviation were used to analyze information collected through scaling.

Finally, data on agricultural entrepreneurship intention were obtained on a 5-point Likert-type scale of strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1). In the same way, 3.05 and 2.95 were applied as cut off points. Statements with mean scores greater or equal to 3.05 were regarded as major reasons for or against agricultural entrepreneurship intention, while statements with mean scores equal to or less than 2.95 were considered otherwise.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perception of the Agricultural Entrepreneurship Training among Youth Corps Members

Table 1 shows that corps members perceived agricultural entrepreneurship training as a solution to the problem of unemployment in Nigeria ($\bar{x} = 3.05$), entrepreneurship in agriculture has many unexploited potentialities for youth employment ($\bar{x} = 3.07$), Nigeria has good chances for one to start its own agricultural business ($\bar{x} = 3.15$), a desirable career choice ($\bar{x} = 3.10$), innovative and interesting section of the orientation ($\bar{x} = 3.09$). On another hand, the corps members indicated that government policies do not favor agricultural enterprise creation ($\bar{x} = 2.90$), entrepreneurship in agriculture is a high-risk business enterprise and is not advisable for beginners ($\bar{x} = 2.69$), training is a waste of human and material resources ($\bar{x} = 2.60$), Nigeria agricultural environment is not suitable for viable entrepreneurship ($\bar{x} = 2.65$), training on agricultural entrepreneurship in camp is time consuming ($\bar{x} = 2.63$). Corps members' perception that entrepreneurship in agriculture has great potential for solving the problem of unemployment among youths is a pointer that they could take up agriculture as viable profession if such challenges as access to land, access to market, credit facilities, adaptation to climate change, etc. are addressed. Once they take up agricultural business and are doing well, it will be an encouragement for other youths to see entrepreneurship in agricultural as a viable business opportunity to key up. Also, it will enhance food security, poverty reduction and self-sufficiency in the country. According to Aphunu and Atoma (2010), youths make up the largest assets for a significant agricultural and rural development project for any nation.

On the other hand, the negative perception of corps members about entrepreneurship in agriculture may likely be due to poor training, unfavorable policies and support in the sector, and this is counter-productive to the realization of increasing agricultural production, youth development, self-sufficiency, food security and poverty reduction in the country. According to Diao *et al.* (2007), agriculture is the biggest sector which employs labor in the majority of African countries including Nigeria, and would continue to be the largest employer in the near future.

Areas of Training on

Agricultural Entrepreneurship

A greater proportion (83.7%) of the corps members participated in training on poultry production while 59.3%, 56.9% and 52% had training in agro-processing, fishery and aquaculture and pig production, respectively (Table 2). Also, other training areas in which corps members participated include snail production (45.5%), bee-keeping production (41.5%), horticulture/vegetables (36.6%) and mushroom production (33.3%). Less than 31% had training in small ruminant production, agricultural marketing and agro business. The youths were exposed to key areas of agricultural production. The results show that youths were more attracted to animal production compared to crop production and agro-processing. Interest shown in animal production especially in poultry could be due to its high return on investment, easy to manage, and less demand for capital. Also, it could be due

to availability of production inputs and market for the animals. The finding is in line with Nwaobiala *et al.* (2023) who found that some of the areas of youths' engagement in the N-Power agripreneurship programme trainings were fisheries and aquaculture, livestock, crop production, and agribusiness.

Participation in Training on Entrepreneurial Soft Skills and Perceived Competence Level Acquired

As presented in Table 3, the corps member received training in entrepreneurial soft skills in the following areas: General planning (78.0%), networking (74%), leadership ability (72.4%), communication (67.5%), teamwork (63.4%), interpersonal skills (58.5%), innovative (58.2%), identifying business opportunities (56.9%) among others. The results showed that corps members were exposed to both business management and interpersonal skills essential for successful entrepreneur

Table 1: Perception of agricultural entrepreneurship training among youth corps members

Perception	Mean	Std. Dev.
It is a panacea to the problem of unemployment in Nigeria	3.05	0.381
The competences and skills are very useful	3.02	0.362
Agricultural entrepreneurship has a high prospect for self-employment and the training are timely	3.01	0.395
It is fundamental for graduate employability in agriculture related fields	2.98	0.528
Entrepreneurship in agriculture has a lot of untapped prospects for youth employment	3.07	0.400
Government policies do not favor agriculture enterprise creation	2.91	0.789
Entrepreneurship in agriculture is a high-risk business enterprise and not advisable for the beginners	2.69	0.464
Agribusiness enterprise fits my status as a university graduate	3.02	0.350
It is more a rhetoric than practical	3.33	0.507
Such training is a waste of human and material resources	2.60	0.492
Government should invest more in the training	3.02	0.256
There are good opportunities in Nigeria to start my agricultural business	3.15	0.363
Agricultural entrepreneurship is a desirable career choice	3.10	0.371
It is one of the innovative and interesting section of the orientation	3.09	0.425
There should be a follow-up training to increase up take of entrepreneurship.	3.04	0.432
Nigeria agricultural environment is not suitable for viable entrepreneurship	2.65	0.479
The training is just to create awareness and to keep us busy in the camp	3.35	0.479
I had desired such trainings even before now	2.99	0.487
I just have to be in such training at least to fulfill the requirements in the camp.	2.70	0.460
Training on agricultural entrepreneurship in camp is time consuming	2.63	0.486
Every youth should engage in agricultural entrepreneurship training	3.01	0.395

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 2: Agricultural entrepreneurship training received by youth corps members

Entrepreneurship agricultural training	Percentage
Poultry production	83.7
Small ruminant production (goat, sheep etc.)	30.9
Pig production	52.0
Agro-processing	59.3
Agricultural marketing	30.9
Horticulture/vegetable	36.6
Fishery and aquaculture	56.9
Bee-keeping production	41.5
Snail production	45.5
Mushroom production	33.3
Agro business	26.0

Source: Field Survey, 2018

in agriculture. Starting, developing and managing an enterprise (business plan, financial and risk management, etc.) were the business management skills, while interpersonal skills include teamwork, networking, customer care and others. These skills acquired provide corps members the opportunity to be entrepreneurs in agriculture. This is consistent with Nwaobiala *et al.* (2023) that some of the engagement outcomes of graduate beneficiaries for participating in the N-power agripreneurship programme were psychosocial development, mastery of skills, understanding of needs, reducing risk taking, and academic achievement.

Table 3: Training on entrepreneurial soft skills received by corps members

Skills	Frequency	Percentage
Communication	83	67.5
Business plan development	64	52.0
Customer care/ management	59	48.0
Team work	78	63.4
Interpersonal skills	72	58.5
General planning	96	78.0
Human resource management	52	42.3
Financial management	44	35.8
Risk management	47	38.2
Recognizing business opportunities	70	56.9
Strategic planning	61	49.6
Strategic decision making	68	55.3
Reflection	54	43.9
Networking	91	74.0
Leadership	89	72.4
Monitoring and evaluation	28	22.8
Project management	63	51.2
SWOT analysis of business opportunity	63	51.2
Management of feed back	60	48.8

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Extent of Entrepreneurial Skills/Knowledge Acquired by the Youth Corps Members

Table 4 shows the entrepreneurial soft skills acquired by corps members during the training and these were communication ($\bar{x} = 3.31$), team work ($\bar{x} = 3.14$), interpersonal skills ($\bar{x} = 3.13$), general planning ($\bar{x} = 3.14$), recognizing business opportunities ($\bar{x} = 3.23$), strategic planning ($\bar{x} = 3.07$) and leadership ($\bar{x} = 3.18$). The result indicates that corps members gained a lot of entrepreneurial soft skills that will help them become successful entrepreneurs. Also, the acquisition of these soft skills is a confirmation that corps members actively participated in agricultural entrepreneurial training and they are willing to engage in agriculture. The skills are necessary and it will help the intending entrepreneurs to start and remain in agricultural business. This largely supports the opinion of Salgado-Banda (2005) that entrepreneurship expertise empowers an individual to be visionary and have the ability to recognize the opportunity and the desire to start up a business in agriculture. Also, Timmons and Spinelli (2004) reported that entrepreneurship training shapes a person's curiosity and willingness to think and to see change as a chance to take action.

Teaching Method Used by the Trainers on Agricultural Entrepreneurship

The majority (91.2%) of the corps members indicated that lecture method was used for the training, while 46.5% and 43.9% revealed that demonstration, and group discussion were used, respectively (Table 5). Other methods used were agricultural pamphlet (21.9%), assignment/feedback (21.1%), and ICT/internet/social media (22.8%). This training employed a good number of methods which could bring about effective learning and retention. First, lecture was the topmost method

used by trainers for teaching agricultural entrepreneurship. The use of lecture is good, but it makes learning more theoretical and less participatory. This finding is consistent with Charlton (2006), who states that lectures may be the teaching method preferred by majority of the students in most situations; particularly for transmission of abstract skills but often it makes learning more theoretical and less participatory.

Also, discussion method was used and this could make-up for the limitation of lectures if properly organized and coordinated. Group discussion encourages greater participation, creativity, innovativeness and learning, though it is more effective in solving a problem or brainstorming over a common issue identified by a group of individuals. Furthermore, demonstration (method and result) teaching method was used and this could enable people to acquire new skills; enables people to improve upon their old skills, make the learner do things more efficiently, get rid of defective practices and engage in step by step on how to do things. The good thing about method demonstration is that the instructor can transmit simple agricultural knowledge to many farmers, encourage participation which stimulates interest and action of the learner. The use of demonstration may change corps members' perception of agriculture as a poor man's activity into a business enterprise. Demonstration, discussion and lecture when properly combined and organized could serve

Table 4: Extent of entrepreneurial skills/knowledge acquired by the youth corps members

Extent of entrepreneurial skills/knowledge acquired	Mean	Std. Dev.
Communication	3.31	0.770
Business plan development	2.93	0.827
Customer care/ management	2.89	0.822
Team work	3.14	0.852
Interpersonal skills	3.13	0.809
General planning	3.14	0.852
Human resource management	3.00	0.868
Financial management	3.02	0.844
Risk management	2.98	0.896
Recognizing business opportunities	3.23	0.913
Strategic planning	3.07	0.916
Strategic decision making	3.02	0.868
Reflection	2.88	0.892
Networking	2.92	0.988
Leadership	3.18	0.897
Monitoring and evaluation	2.98	0.919
Project management	2.94	0.899
SWOT analysis of business opportunity	2.96	0.927

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 5: Teaching method used by the trainers on agricultural entrepreneurship

Method used in the training	Frequency	Percentage
Lecture	104	91.2
Group discussion	50	43.9
Demonstration	53	46.5
Agricultural pamphlet/bulletin	25	21.9
Assignment/feedback	24	21.1
ICT/internet/social media	26	22.8

Source: Field Survey, 2018

as useful tools for teaching. According to Raimi *et al.* (2010), entrepreneurship education when properly transmitted is able to motivate youths to start businesses of their own and accelerate long lasting growth of the nation’s economy. On the contrary, Ifedili and Ofoegbu (2011) noted that method of teaching entrepreneurship in Nigeria has been flawed and this has a negative effect to actualize entrepreneurship targets among youths in Nigeria.

Respondent’s Level of Satisfaction with the Training Received

Table 6 shows that corps members expressed satisfaction with language of communication (\bar{x} = 2.31), competency of resource persons (\bar{x} = 2.18), entrepreneurial soft skills (\bar{x} = 2.08), method of teaching and learning (\bar{x} = 2.05), and technical content of the training (\bar{x} = 2.02). This result implies that trainers were competent and they carried out the training very well. It also implies that corps members embraced the skills and training. This is good and it will enable corps members develop more interest in agricultural entrepreneurship, and also motivate them to start up their own businesses in the future, thereby developing themselves and the nation as well.

On the contrary, the respondents were not satisfied with the number of contact (\bar{x} = 1.81), venue for the training/learning (\bar{x} = 1.65), size of the group/class (\bar{x} = 1.93), number of resource persons in relationship to participants (\bar{x} = 1.91), feedback mechanism employed by resource persons (\bar{x} = 1.93) and others. These factors are necessary and it influences learning. According to Asiabaka (2008), good learning environment is essential for learners to attain their major objectives of studying as well as teachers to meet up with their educational goals. Also, Dikko (2008) reiterated that effective training/education requires a conducive environment to facilitate learners’ participation in the learning process directly and virtually.

Agricultural Entrepreneurial Intention of Corps Members

A greater proportion (51%) of the corps members indicated intention for agricultural entrepreneurship, while 25% did not have intention to be entrepreneurs in agriculture, and 24% of the respondents were undecided (Figure 1). The results also show that 42.6% of the respondents from university had intention for agricultural entrepreneurship compared to those from polytechnic and colleges of agriculture. The difference in higher entrepreneurial intention of university graduates compared to other institutions of learning could be explained by the earlier introduction of entrepreneurship education in universities. The universities have a major part to do in the development of entrepreneurial education (Gallup Organization, 2007; Global

Entrepreneurship Monitor, GEM, 2009) and nowadays they are challenged to develop a holistic approach to knowledge and technology (Davey *et al.*, 2016). Existing studies (Krueger *et al.*, 2000; Lüthje and Franke, 2003; Kuratko, 2005; Souitaris *et al.*, 2007; Liñán and Chen, 2009) show that educational establishments play an inevitable part in evolving entrepreneurial spirit among students through new programmes and research-oriented culture. The role of educational institution in stimulating entrepreneurial activity is further supported by Kirzner’s theory of entrepreneurship, which states that “learning and alertness are the two major characteristics that make an entrepreneur”. Students’ attitude, behaviour and knowledge acquired through entrepreneurship education spur their interest and willingness to begin a new business in future (Engle *et al.*, 2010). The knowledge and attitude gained through entrepreneurial education by corps members during the NYSC programme will invariably help them in life and when this happens the menace of juvenile delinquency will be reduced in long run.

Figure 1 also shows that a greater number of the corps members with intention for entrepreneurship in agriculture were: males (40.4%), had urban background (50.0%), married (52.1%) and within the age of 21-30 years (65.9%). From the findings, it is obvious that there are variations in entrepreneurship inclination along the personal and demographic characteristics of the respondents. It is believed that aspiration for entrepreneurship increases with age and that men are more incline to starting and managing own business than women. However, it is surprising that youths with urban background are more attracted to entrepreneurship in agriculture than rural youth. This may be because they have watched their parents do agriculture with so much drudgery and less gains, which might have discouraged them to take up a business in agriculture. This agrees with findings that entrepreneurial intention of youths are influenced

Table 6: Respondent’s level of satisfaction with the training received

Level of satisfaction with the training received	Mean	Std. Dev.
Technical content of the training	2.02	0.741
Entrepreneurial skills and competence content	2.08	0.708
Number of contacts	1.81	0.750
Venue for the training/ learning environment	1.65	0.768
Competence of resource persons used	2.18	0.678
Language of communication	2.31	0.602
Method of teaching and learning	2.05	0.688
Size of the group/class	1.93	0.737
No. of resource persons in relation to participants	1.91	0.747
Period of the training	1.70	0.789
Facilities provided for the training	1.63	0.740
The proportion of theory to practical exposure	1.70	0.809
Time allocated for the sections	1.76	0.725
Teaching aids used for teaching	1.76	0.725
Feedback mechanism used by resource persons	1.93	0.726

Source: Field Survey, 2018

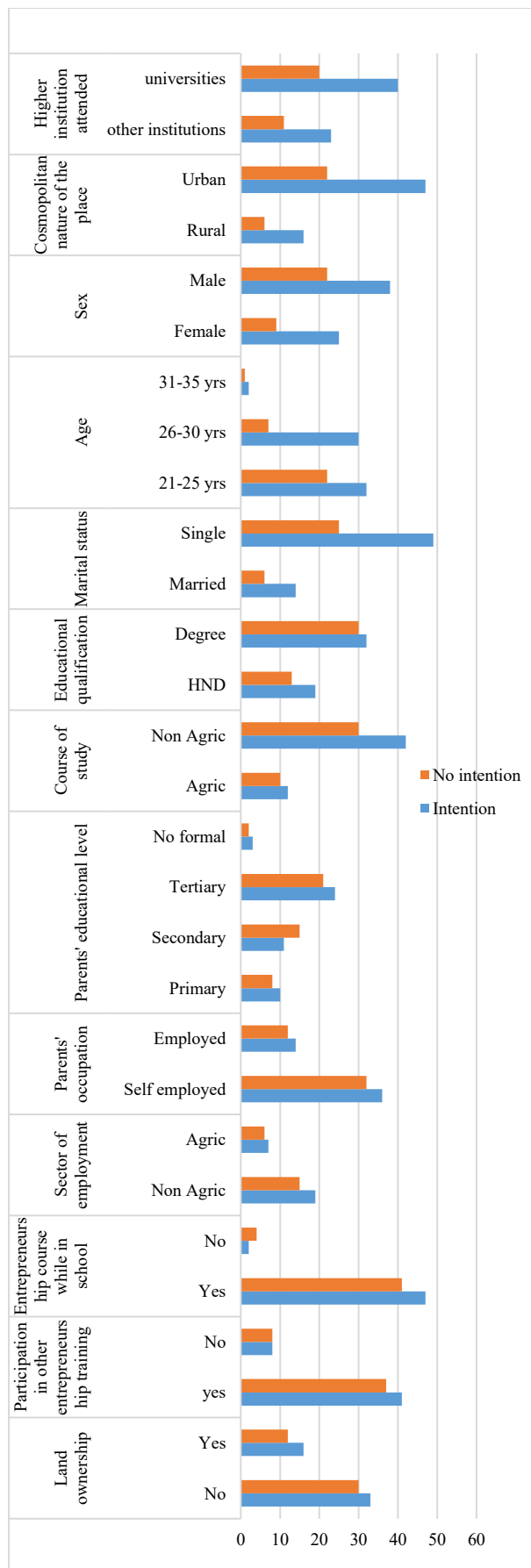


Figure 1: Agricultural entrepreneurial intention

by family background, creativity, age, gender, experience, capabilities, self-independence, self-reliance, network support (Naffziger *et al.*, 1994; Hunjra *et al.*, 2011). Also, it agrees with Devkota *et al.* (2020) that youths from rural farm families are less attracted to agricultural entrepreneurship, despite their knowledge and experience in the sector.

Results in Figure 1 further show that more corps members with entrepreneur parents (38.3%) and relations (50%) who are engaged in non-agricultural sector expressed intention for agricultural entrepreneurship. Corps members with entrepreneur parents and relations may have more interest agricultural entrepreneurship because of early exposure to entrepreneurial activities. This confirms the belief that early exposure of an individual to entrepreneurship can be a strong positive predictor of entrepreneurial intention. The finding is consistent with Delmar and Davidsson (2000) who asserted that entrepreneurs have parents who are entrepreneurs themselves. Moreover, Rajjman (2001) opined that close relatives who are entrepreneurs increase children's readiness to be self-employed.

Furthermore, results in Figure 1 indicate that about 49.0% of corps members who did not study agriculture or related courses, but were exposed to training in entrepreneurship/agricultural entrepreneurship indicated interest in going into agriculture. This implies there are differences in agricultural entrepreneurship intention across course of study and exposure to entrepreneurial education/training. It is a paradox that corps members who studied agriculture and possibly with courses in entrepreneurship, are less attracted to entrepreneurship in agriculture. The finding negates common assumption that students with educational background in agriculture are more likely to become agricultural entrepreneurs. Indeed, several factors could account for this, but the type, quality and quantity of formal/informal entrepreneurial education and training share greater blame. Entrepreneurship training is expected to equip youths with positive attitude, knowledge and skills necessary to take up successful business in agriculture. According to Wilberforce and Kofi (2012), entrepreneurship education empowers students with the awareness of self-employment and to include it in their career plan and aspirations. If the entrepreneurship training is not properly conducted, then the students will lose interest rather than motivation to start a business. Entrepreneurship education should be visualized and use as an improvement in the process of development in which youths are molder as the future of the nation laboriously rely on them. Also, the responsibility of positively changing the society into a fit and high-yielding economy depends on young people particularly by the influence of entrepreneurial education.

Reasons for Agricultural Entrepreneurship Intention

Table 7a shows that the respondents' major reasons for choice of agricultural entrepreneurship were wish for personal independence ($\bar{x} = 3.38$), opportunity for agriculture grant/incentive/subsidy ($\bar{x} = 3.37$), agriculture loans with low interest rate ($\bar{x} = 3.26$), government financial supports for agriculture ($\bar{x} = 3.25$), promising prospect for quick business set up ($\bar{x} = 3.12$) among others. The finding indicates that corps members had many reasons for their choice of agricultural entrepreneurship. This also implies that corps members have positive perception and favorable attitude towards agricultural entrepreneurship, and they will likely engage in it if given favourable opportunities and support. Indeed, youths need support like credit facilities, trainings, favourable policy among others to enable them start and sustain a business in agriculture. This finding is consistent with Nwaobiala *et al.* (2023) who found that some of the motives of graduate beneficiaries for enrolling in the N-power agripreneurship programme were acquisition of skills, self-employment, quest for sources of income and personal interest.

Reasons against Agricultural Entrepreneurship

Results in Table 7b show that the major reasons the corps members had against agricultural entrepreneurship were: lack of guarantee for fixed and regular income ($\bar{x} = 3.19$), drudgery in agricultural entrepreneurship ($\bar{x} = 3.19$), lack of finance ($\bar{x} = 3.16$) and preservation and storage problem ($\bar{x} = 3.06$). From the results, it is obvious that corps members

Table 7a: Reasons for agricultural entrepreneurship intention

Reasons	Mean	Std. Dev.
Wish for personal independence	3.38	0.842
Lack of attractive employment opportunities	2.62	0.995
Personal interest in agriculture	3.11	0.937
Agriculture loans with low interest rate	3.26	0.756
Ready market for the agricultural products	2.92	0.973
Favorable agricultural policies	3.05	0.818
Agricultural orientation/background	3.18	0.705
Govt. financial supports for agriculture	3.25	0.751
Experience/adequate skills for entrepreneur in agriculture	2.95	0.926
Availability of agricultural advisory services/extension education	2.98	0.838
Access to production assets/resources	2.86	0.808
Prospect for income diversification	3.08	0.924
Competence in agricultural business and management	2.94	0.899
Promising prospect for quick business set up	3.12	0.801
Avoidance of uncertainty related to government work	2.75	0.884
Opportunity for agriculture grant/incentive/subsidy	3.37	0.762

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 7b: Reasons against agricultural entrepreneurship

Reasons	Mean	Std. Dev.
Lack of guarantee fixed and regular income	3.12	0.707
Drudgery in agricultural entrepreneur	3.19	0.592
Lack of finance	3.16	0.515
Unfavourable Government policy	3.00	0.672
Low/unstable price of agricultural product	3.00	0.672
Fear of production failure	2.97	0.538
Inadequate technical skills	2.91	0.588
High risk in agricultural production	2.94	0.759
Traditional method of production/poor mechanization of farming activities	2.81	0.738
Lack of /Inadequate access to land	2.97	0.695
Natural/environmental disaster	2.78	0.706
Preservation and storage problems	3.06	0.716
Subsistence nature of agriculture	3.03	0.595
Poor social amenities in farming/rural areas	3.03	0.538
Lack of agricultural insurance facilities	3.00	0.508
Cost/scarcity of labor	2.97	0.538
Poor access to agricultural information	2.94	0.564
Seasonality of agricultural production	3.00	0.568

Source: Field Survey, 2018

had few reasons against the choice of agricultural entrepreneurship. It is not surprising that respondents pointed out drudgery as one of the reasons against agricultural entrepreneurship. This is because agricultural activities in developing countries including Nigeria are still largely based on manual labour, and this brings undesirable fatigue to farmers. The finding agrees with Nagler and Naudé (2014) who found seasonality of agricultural activities is a strong factor because youths often tend to exit agriculture after production season to take up off farm jobs in order to be sure of stable income during the off-season.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study shows that 51% of the corps members were favorably disposed to agricultural entrepreneurship, while others showed negative perception to its relevance, importance and viability. Although they were not satisfied with a number of issues about the programme including among others the number of contacts, venue for the training/learning, size of the group/class, number of resource persons in relationship to participants and feedback mechanism employed by resource persons, they learnt some soft skills such as communication, generally planning, networking, leadership among others. It is necessary to take a look at those areas in which respondents showed dissatisfaction by the organizers of the programme, improve on them so that subsequent corps members placed on the programme may develop interest and positive intension towards agricultural entrepreneurship. A great number of the respondents indicated intention for agricultural entrepreneurship. Their intention varied with personal, institutional and demographic characteristics. More married male graduates from

universities, urban areas, who studied non-agriculture-related courses, but had formal and informal entrepreneurship training indicated interest for agricultural entrepreneurship. However, other graduates had no intention to go into agriculture because of poor economic and traditional nature of agricultural activities in the nation.

The study recommends that the education system in Nigeria should increase the scope for entrepreneurship education to promote early exposure, attitudinal change, development of positive entrepreneur mindset, creativity and aspiration for agriculture. Higher institutions, particularly colleges of agriculture should provide opportunities for adequate entrepreneurship exposure and practical orientation of students through timely update and implementation of entrepreneurship sensitive curriculum. Also, higher institutions need to provide and support platforms for more intensive practical training for enhanced capacity building and attitudinal change among students, particularly students studying agriculture. The Government should provide and support follow-up training opportunities for graduate that indicated interest and strong aspiration for entrepreneurship in agriculture. Individuals' entrepreneurship interest should inform the place of primary assignment to encourage and foster more tailored training and enterprise in agriculture. This could mean greater collaboration and participation of the private sector in the whole process. The government and donor agencies should intensify efforts to target and encourage interested youth through inclusive, sustainable interventions. Above all, the need for enactment of favorable policy and active supports to agriculture by the government is critical to sustained interest and increase participation of youth in agriculture. It is only when interest is sustained among youths that they may consider going into entrepreneurship in agriculture. Many youths going into agricultural entrepreneurship will improve the economy of the nation and achieve the sustainable development goals to end poverty and ensure that everyone is prosperous by the year 2030.

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