



Effect of Leventis Foundation Nigeria Agripreneurship Programme on Selected Livelihood Outcomes of Beneficiaries in Kano State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study assessed the effect of the Leventis Foundation Nigeria (LFN) Agripreneurship programme on beneficiaries' selected livelihood outcomes in Kano State, Nigeria. The study deployed a multi-stage sampling procedure to select 109 LFN agripreneurship programme beneficiaries. Data collected were analysed using percentages, means, standard deviation and t-tests. Results showed that community leaders, radio and the internet were the main sources of information for respondents on LFN. The results also showed that respondents

majorly specialized in livestock and crop production. There was a significant difference between the income of beneficiaries before and after the programme. Furthermore, the effect of the programme on the food security status of the beneficiaries was moderate (WMA=2.7). Economic instability, inadequate finance, and poor state of infrastructure were the major constraints encountered during and after the programme. The study concluded that the LFN agripreneurship programme had a positive effect on the beneficiaries. It is recommended that similar programmes such as this be established and supported by non-governmental organizations and the government across the country.

Introduction

Agriculture is a major contributor to the Nigerian economy, providing food for a large chunk of her population as well as employment. Most African nations including Nigeria have a 60 -70% young population, most of whom are unemployed or underemployed (Adeyanju et al. 2021). According to Owunka & Udeze (2023), the rate of youth unemployment has continued to remain a challenge for Nigeria. Agriculture is a veritable venture that can mop up this population and reduce poverty (Ouko et al., 2022; Onu et al., 2024).

However, the nature of agriculture is still subsistence and its associated challenges which are not limited to lack of funds, poor access to the market, poor technology, poor transportation network, high cost of inputs, and drudgery associated with farm work have also made the sector unattractive for youths who are supposed to drive production thereby relegating its practice to the older population. Aside from these well-established challenges of the sector, Maisule et al. (2023) identified among other factors, the perceived doubt among young people in agriculture to provide the 21st century lifestyle they crave. Furthermore, Coker et al. (2021) averred that the lack of skill acquisition in the agricultural sector restricts youth employment in the economy even when there is a preference for agro-based jobs.

Youth entrepreneurship development is recognized in policy papers as a crucial tool for agricultural and rural transformation (Babu & Zhou, 2020). This underscores the importance of youths in nation building which of course includes involvement in agricultural enterprises. Although several efforts have been made by governments to develop and improve the agricultural sector in Nigeria, little success have been made; this according to Osabohien et al. (2021) is largely tied to inconsistency in the programme, poor implementation, and poor targeting mechanisms for vulnerable groups among others. These features only succeed in strangulating the overall intent and purpose of policy programmes. This line of argument suggests that proactive commitments are required both from the government and non-governmental organisations to change this narrative, and one organization that is pursuing this course is Leventis Foundation Nigeria (LFN).

According to LFN, (2023a) the initiative to attract and empower youths into agriculture and make them the focal point of nation progress through training programmes is a pathway the foundation is exploring with the Agripreneurship Programme. This is achieved through yearly recruitment of youths to participate in a school training programme on modern and sustainable agriculture in agro forestry and crop production, enterprise development, livestock production, and farm mechanization. Since 1988, LFN has provided regular one-year training for more than 27,000 trainees and trainees are provided with free room and board, work, and school uniforms as well as monthly stipends. The school in Kano State was set up by A.G Leventis in

collaboration with the Kano State Government in 1998 in the Panda area of the state, and exclusively accepts male trainees, and has the capacity to accommodate 100 to 150 trainees annually (LFN, 2023b). The training curriculum is two-fold, comprising of 20% theory and 80% practical (LFN, 2023a).

The Leventis Foundation Nigeria Agricultural School intends to close the gap in unemployment and food insecurity by equipping young men and women with positive work ethics and culture, and ensuring livelihood and environmental sustainability (Gbede et al., 2021). It is a fact the ex-agricultural trainees of the school have acquired some skills because of the programme to be entrepreneurs in agricultural enterprises (Oyebode et al., 2022). The programme promises to generate income and improve the standard of living of trainees. It is therefore imperative to check how this programme has effected these changes on the beneficiaries.

Although several studies (Osokoya & Adekunle, 2007; Adeloye et al., 2020; Oyebode et al., 2022) have been carried out with respect to LFN, these studies focused on evaluating the trainability of enrollee on LFN programme, assessing the effects of the LFN training programmes on ex-trainees' food outputs and the sustained use of LFN ex-trainees' skill sets. However, there is a dearth of information on the effect of the Leventis Foundation Nigeria Agripreneurship Programme on selected livelihood outcomes of beneficiaries in Kano State. This study was therefore designed to achieve this purpose.

The broad objective of the study was to assess the effect of the Leventis Foundation Nigeria agripreneurship programme on selected livelihood outcomes of beneficiaries.

The specific objectives were to:

- i. identify areas of skill sets acquisition by beneficiaries;
- ii. determine the effect of LFN agripreneurship programme on beneficiaries' income level;
- iii. assess the beneficiaries' perception of the programme on food security status; and
- iv. identify the constraints encountered by beneficiaries.

Hypothesis

H₀1: There is no significant difference in beneficiaries' income before and after the agripreneurship programme

Methodology

The study was carried out in Kano State, between September, 2023 and January, 2024. The state is located between latitudes 10°30'N and 12°38'N, and longitudes 7°45'E and 9°29'E in the northwest geopolitical area. It is a semi-arid environment with three to four months of rainfall that supports agricultural activities.

The population for this study constitutes beneficiaries of the LFN programme in the state. A two-stage sampling procedure was used to select the respondents for the study. The first stage involved a purposive selection of beneficiaries who participated in the programme in the year 2021, this is because beneficiaries' records were readily accessible and there was ease of information recall. In stage two, A simple random

sampling was thereafter employed to select 109 beneficiaries for the study from the population of 150 beneficiaries identified in programme for that year.

A structured questionnaire was deployed to gather primary data from the respondents. An expert panel validate the instrument for data collection. A pilot study was done to determine the reliability of the scales used in the questionnaire and a Cronbach's alpha. of 0.79 was obtained. Data were collected on specialized skills, income level before and after the programme, perceived food security status and constraints encountered during and after the programme. Perceived food security status was measured using the four dimensions of food; availability, access, utilization, and stability of food (Onumah et al., 2020). Statement items under each dimension were used to probe respondents' perception of their food security status after the programme.

Perception was measured on a 4-point Likert-like scale of strongly agree, agree disagree and strongly disagree with scores of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively for all positive statement items in favour of food security status and reversed for negative statement items. The maximum score achievable by a respondent was 112 and the minimum was 28. Weighted Mean Scores (WMS) were computed to make decisions on the respondents' perception of the programme on food security status. The weighted mean in the range of the cut-off of 2.50 - 2.99 was categorized as moderate, 3.00 - 4.00 as high, while the weighted mean of ≤ 2.49 was categorized as low. Beneficiaries' constraints were measured on a three-point Likert-type scale of severe, mild, and not a constraint with scores of 3, 2 and 1, respectively. Thereafter mean scores were computed and used to rank the constraints.

The data were analysed using percentages, means, standard deviation and student t-tests. The income values taken from the beneficiaries before and after the programme were nominal income values that were deflation to real income (RI) to reflect the prevailing realities.

Results and Discussion

Beneficiaries' Skill Sets Acquisition

The result in Table 1 shows that the majority (69.7%) of the respondents acquired skill sets in livestock production. followed by crop production (64.2%) with rural enterprise development (RED) and agricultural engineering coming third and fourth respectively. The high number observed in livestock and crop production could be attributed to their proficiency in farming given that the state is an agrarian state and high demands for products from these ventures. In addition, it can also be due to their zeal to become self-sufficient and improve their livelihood. This assertion agrees with the position Adeloje et al. (2020) who reported that beneficiaries participate in agricultural intervention programmes and specialize in agricultural ventures to better their lot in life.

Table 1: Skill sets acquisition

Skill category	Percentage
Livestock production	69.7
Crop production	64.2
Rural enterprise development (RED)	29.4
Agricultural engineering	5.5

*Multiple Responses

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Effect of Agripreneurship Programme on Beneficiaries' Income

Table 2 shows that the deflated incomes of beneficiaries before and after the programme were statistically different. This result suggests an increase in the income of beneficiaries. It can therefore be said that the programme had a positive effect on beneficiaries' income. This assertion agrees with the position of Sanusi & Gado (2021) who reported that intervention programmes bring about an increment in beneficiaries' income levels.

Table 2: Income before and after the programme

Variable	n	Mean	Mean diff	Std error mean	t-value
Deflated income before	109	161,547.1496	-123404.80	7049.38	-15.540***
Deflated income after		271,146.5092			

* $P \leq 0.05$ df = 108

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Beneficiaries' Perception of Present Food Security Status

The beneficiaries' perception of their food security status using the four dimensions of food security: availability, access, utilization, and stability. It reveals that the availability dimension had the highest perception with a 3.07 weighted mean. This was followed by stability (2.78), and access (2.69) dimensions. The overall weighted mean average of 2.7 implies that beneficiaries' food security status is perceived to be moderate. The result on the categorisation of the respondents shows that about half (53.2%) of the beneficiaries perceived food security status to be moderate. While 35.8% had a high perception, thus suggesting that the programme had impacted positively on the beneficiaries (Table 3). The result aligns with the finding of Adeloje et al. (2020) who reported increases in beneficiaries' output for the programme.

Table 3: Perception of food security status

Food security dimensions and perception statements	WM	SD
Availability dimension	3.07	0.51
The kind of food consumed is readily available in my household	3.71	0.55
Get food anytime I want to buy	3.52	0.81
Most of the food consumed is locally produced	3.54	0.66
Sometimes I consume imported food	2.30	0.98
Charity agencies provide food for us always	2.29	1.15
Get a sufficient quantity of food all year	2.63	1.02
Access dimension	2.69	0.45
Can get food for consumption by purchasing	3.25	0.76
Can get food for consumption by farming	3.25	0.97
Get food for consumption through gifts	2.82	0.96
There are times not able to eat due to lack of money	1.59	0.88
Eat what feel like eating anytime	3.03	0.86
Always get to consume enough food that satisfy my hunger	2.88	0.84
Sometimes my household is not able to eat due to a lack of money	2.00	0.42
Utilization dimension	2.59	0.79
Consume carbohydrates mostly	1.70	0.67
Consume proteins mostly	1.93	0.89
Consume vegetables mostly	2.01	0.80
Consume a combination of all the above classes of food	2.82	0.92
Prepare food in a clean and proper environment	3.02	0.87
Put into consideration sanitation of the food preparation area	3.07	0.85
Have access to clean water	2.79	0.77
Could afford to eat balanced meals	2.82	0.82
Have access to safe and nutritious food items	2.89	0.82
Do not fall sick often in the household from food-related ailments.	2.80	0.88
Stability dimension	2.78	0.49
Chances of not always having food is reduced	3.04	0.88
There is a steady flow of food all the time	3.10	0.83
Nutritional requirement is always met	2.99	0.76
There is usually shortage of food during emergencies	1.89	0.79
Food need situation does not always fluctuate.	2.88	0.82
Weighted mean sum	76.55	
Weighted mean average (WMA)	2.73	
Perception Level	category	percentage
Low	1.00-2.49	11.00
Moderate	2.50-2.99	53.20
High	3.00-4.00	35.80

***WM= Weighted Mean, *SD =Standard Deviation**

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Constraints Encountered by Beneficiaries

Table 4 shows that the poor state of infrastructure (\bar{x} = 2.81), economic instability (\bar{x} = 2.83) and inadequate finance (\bar{x} = 2.82) ranked the most severe among the list of constraints encountered by beneficiaries during and after the programme. This was followed by inadequate storage facilities (\bar{x} = 2.77), inadequate access to agricultural land (\bar{x} = 2.73), difficulty in securing loan (\bar{x} = 2.77), problems of farm inputs (\bar{x} = 2.72), poor extension visit and support (\bar{x} = 2.72) with inadequate market (\bar{x} = 2.64) being the least of the constraints encountered by the beneficiaries. This result is consistent with the findings of Oyebode et al. (2022) who reported that inadequate finance, economic

instability and poor state of infrastructure were the major constraints encountered by beneficiaries.

Table 4: Constraints encountered

Constraints	Mean score	Standard deviation
Inadequate finance	2.82	0.39
Economic instability	2.83	0.38
Poor extension agent visits and supports	2.72	0.52
Inadequate access to agriculture land	2.73	0.56
Difficulty in securing loan	2.77	0.44
Problems of farm inputs	2.72	0.55
Inadequate market	2.64	0.65
High cost of transportation/production	2.75	0.45
Inadequate storage facilities	2.77	0.46
Poor state of infrastructure	2.81	0.46

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Conclusion and Recommendations

The programme exerted positive impact on participants livelihood outcome (income and food security status). Nonetheless, the programme is constrained by poor state of infrastructure, economic instability and inadequate finance.

Similar skills development programmes should be encouraged and supported in the field of agriculture to increase employment opportunities and tend towards self-sufficiency among the youth.

The LFN Kano should encourage the participation of females in its programme given that the programme in Kano only accommodates males, this is to ensure equality and to also exert its benefits across the gender space for a positive impact in communities and the nation at large.

The government should make credit available to beneficiaries to support agri-preneurship practices among beneficiaries.

The LFN agricultural school should ensure infrastructural improvement in their establishments.

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