

AGRIPRENEURSHIP AWARENESS AND PERCEIVED READINESS OF TERTIARY INSTITUTION STUDENTS IN AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS: IMPLICATIONS FOR FOOD SECURITY

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INTRODUCTION

This study examines the relationship between agripreneurship awareness and students' readiness for engagement in agricultural value chain businesses, with a focus on food security enhancement.

METHODOLOGY

Using a survey research design with the aid of structured questionnaire, the study was carried out at the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro and the population comprised all the 2639 HND final year students of the Institution out of which 335 were selected through a multi-stage sampling technique. Descriptive and inferential statistics involving correlation and regression were used for data analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results indicated a significant relationship between agripreneurship awareness and students' perceived readiness for engagement in agricultural value chain businesses after graduation. This finding suggests that as students become more aware of agripreneurship opportunities, they are more likely to feel equipped and motivated to pursue entrepreneurial ventures within the agricultural sector.

This aligns with previous studies that emphasize the role of awareness and exposure in shaping entrepreneurial intentions among youth. Increased awareness may stem from formal education, participation in agripreneurship programs, or access to relevant information and role models in the agricultural industry. When students are informed about the diverse opportunities within the agricultural value chain, from production and processing to marketing and distribution, they are more likely to recognize viable career paths and develop the confidence needed to explore them.

Moreover, the significance of this relationship highlights the importance of emphasizing agripreneurship content in the entrepreneurship education of tertiary institutions' curricula. Such focus-driven emphasis could foster early interest and better prepare students with the practical skills and mindset required for successful participation in agri-based enterprises. The findings support the notion that awareness is not merely a passive state but an active enabler of entrepreneurial readiness and intent.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, agripreneurship-tailored awareness is essentially needed to stimulate prospective graduates' interest and readiness for engagement and participation in agricultural value chain businesses and activities that are necessary for achieving economic sustenance after graduation and food security for all. The study recommends, among others, that The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro and other tertiary institutions should intensify their agripreneurship drive to stimulate agripreneurship awareness among the students and steering their interest in agro-related businesses, while the National Board for Technical Education should consider a review of the Polytechnic curriculum to feature Agripreneurship at all levels.

Keywords: Agripreneurship, Food Security, Tertiary Institution, Students' Participation, Agricultural Value Chain Business

INTRODUCTION

All over the world, especially in developing and underdeveloped nations, food security has remained an important concern of discourse and policy attention as many households and individual are experiencing varying levels of food insecurity and inability to sustain regular food availability. This problem is as a result of a number of factors such as climate change, ethnic clashes and conflicts, insurgency, economic instability, poor leadership, and policy attention of governments.

The need to ensure regular food availability and sustain same make policymakers in most nation to pay more attention to the agricultural production, processing and other agric-related value chain activities (Franzo et al., 2024). The term food security is used to refer to a situation in which people have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences that are necessary to live a healthy life at all times (World Bank, 2022).

A country with abundant food tends to live a happier way of life, improves the living standard of people, reduces social ills and improves health condition of people especially the children and vulnerable ones in the society. It projects the image of people and community favourable to the

international community. It helps to create a conducive atmosphere for a healthy governance. It arrests youth restiveness because a hungry man is an angry man (Louisa, 2018).

The problem of food insecurity is not only limited to developing countries, but it is a problem faced by developed countries as well. The proportion of the prevalence of malnutrition and people who suffer from food insecurity are found more in rural areas of the developing countries (Islam & Berkes, 2016). For a country to be food sufficient there is the need to make food available, provide easy access to food at any given time, and provide households with the ability to afford staple food (Reisinger, 2014). Agriculture therefore offers huge and diverse opportunities that cannot transform the national economy and provide tremendous benefits to the personal lives of farmers, society and the nation (Ovwigbo and Ifie, 2009)

With the large percentage of youth in the Nigerian population, youth engagement in agricultural activities is expected to be a potent economic advantage (Ovwigbo and Ifie, 2009). However, with such potential to partake in agro businesses, many of the Nigerian youth are not interested in agricultural activities. The youths of these days do not like to engage in strenuous activities. They want to get everything on a gold platter. They engage in fraud (yahoo yahoo) and other criminally related activities.

Food security may easily be achieved when the youth are encouraged to participate in agricultural activities using mechanised implements, having access to agricultural credit facilities, the provision of safety nets as well as health care facilities for farmers. All these will help transform the agricultural sector, increase productivity and ensure food security (Osabohien R, Mordi A, Ogundipe A, 2020).

The agricultural sector is strategically positioned to have a high multiplier and linkage effect on any nation's quest for socio-economic and industrial development. Unfortunately, Nigeria agricultural is bedeviled with several challenges such as lack of access to markets and credits, low level of technology especially mechanization, inadequate post-harvest infrastructure (storage, processing and transport), low uptake of research findings by stakeholders and limited availability of improved technology packages especially planting materials and certified seed(ministryofAgriculture,2017). This has made agriculture unattractive and non-lucrative resulting in decline in the number of youths participating in agriculture (Muhammed et al.,2009).

Agricultural transformation is a priority in the policy agenda of African governments in their quest to meet the challenges of food and nutrition insecurity, youth unemployment and overall economic growth and development (Tsan et al., 2019). With right policies, innovation and investment, the continent's agriculture could be transformed into a powerhouse, not only to feed a growing population but to create decent employment for the youth (Oyebola, 2019).

Objectives of the study

1. Assessing students' knowledge of agripreneurial opportunities within the agricultural value chain.
2. Examining students' willingness and preparedness to venture into agribusiness activities.
3. Determining whether higher awareness of agripreneurial opportunities leads to greater willingness to participate in agricultural value chain businesses.

Hypotheses

There is no significant level of willingness and preparedness to engage in agribusiness activities

There is no positive association between higher awareness of agribusiness opportunities and willingness to participate in agricultural business

LITERATURE REVIEW

AGRIPRENEURSHIP

Agripreneurship is a new concept in global agriculture, geared towards transforming agriculture from its largely subsistence status to becoming a competitive enterprise. According to Nwibo et al. (2016), agripreneurship is a profitable fusion of agriculture and entrepreneurship whereby farmers can become determined, creative, innovative, willing to take calculated risks and always looking for opportunities to improve and expand a business. Shailesh et al. (2013), described agripreneurship as a dynamic process of creating incremental wealth from agricultural sector. The above definitions suggest that sustainable development in agriculture requires the development of agripreneurial and organizational competencies among farmers. Suffice it to say that agripreneurship is all about inventions capable of generating aggregate income, earning country's foreign exchange through value addition and community export (Mukembo and Edward, 2016)

FOOD SECURITY

Food Security: Food security is to define as "When all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." (IFPRI. 2019). Food security is an essential part of human life because it affects human health and also influences the economic and political stability of the state. Food security has four pillars: accessibility, availability, utilisation and stability (Napoli et al., 2011).

There are four dimensions of food security:

Availability: It is mainly the supply or production of food materials. “The amount of food that is present in a country or area through all forms of domestic production, imports, food stocks and food aid” (WFP. 2009).

Accessibility: The concept of accessibility in terms of food security refers to “physical, social and economic access” (FAO. 1996). This term was first introduced by the Amartya Sen in the early 1980s after the Bengal famines (Sen, 1982). Accessibility means affordability in which every household member, at all times, have access to enough food for an active, healthy life.

Utilization: It means to the proper consumption of food and nutrition. No access to clean drinking water, poor environment, lack of hygiene, poor health infrastructure, leads to reduced assimilation of the consumed food. To achieve nutritional security, environmental hygiene necessary, primary health care and clean drinking water facility should be adequately available. Cooking habits also need cautious evaluation because some methods of cooking may lead to the loss of essential nutrients Swaminathan (M. S. 2006).

Stability: Stability defines the temporal dimension of food and nutrition security, individually the time frame in which food security is being considered.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

The views of Max and David (1959) were used to drive home the message of agripreneurship development. Weber in his book titled Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism, in the year 1930, tried to establish entrepreneurship as an offspring of socio-economic behaviour. He argued that social and cultural values, ideas and beliefs prevailing in a society propel their economic development. Weber opined that the ancient capitalists were not interested in the maximizing their daily wage but in earning enough to satisfy their traditionally established needs. In the

modern capitalist system, however, Weber maintained that individuals were more concerned with the continual accumulation of wealth, by investing and reinvesting. Ahule (2018), in trying to explain Weber's approach, states that entrepreneurship can only be achieved with rational capitalism combined with the drive to accumulate wealth. Further on Weber's views, David in 1959, emphasized on the psychological motives approach, that is, people being able to exploit an opportunity to shape their destiny. David was referring to people who are willing to work hard to achieve greatness when confronted with opportunity. This desire, he called high achievement motivation or need for achievement, that is to say the desire to do well, not only for sake of social recognition or prestige but also to attain an inner feeling of personal accomplishment. On the whole, however, according to Ahule (2018), the above theories suggest that values and position of inner self are crucial to entrepreneurial position of inner self are crucial to entrepreneurial development. In other word, suffice to say that entrepreneurship or agriprenurship is not a product of hereditary, but socio-cultural, supporting the argument of Tripathi and Agarwal (2015), those agriprenurship skills are learned through formal and informal experiences.

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for the study. The instrument used for collecting data for this study is the questionnaire. The study was carried out at the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro and the population comprised all the 2639 HND final year students of the Institution out of which 335 were selected through a multi-stage sampling technique.

RESULTS

Student's Knowledge of Agripreneurial Opportunities (SKAO), Students' Willingness (SW) on Agricultural Value Chain (AVC)

Table 1: Correlations

		SKAO	SW	AVC
SKAO	Pearson Correlation	1	.232**	.110*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.045
	N	335	335	335
SW	Pearson Correlation	.232**	1	.301**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	335	335	335
AVC	Pearson Correlation	.110*	.301**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.045	.000	
	N	335	335	335

The result in table 1 shows the relationship between the variables under consideration, where Student's Knowledge of Agripreneurial Opportunities is represented as SKAO, Students' Willingness is represented as SW and Agricultural Value Chain is represented as AVC.

There is weak and significant relationship between SKAO and value chain with correlation coefficient of 0.110. similarly, there is a weak significant relationship between students' willingness and agricultural value chain with correlation coefficient of 0.301.

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.304 ^a	.092	.087	.918

The result obtained in table 2 indicates that about 30.4% variations in agricultural value chain could be attributed to the joint effects of students' knowledge of agripreneurial opportunities and students willingness to ventured into agriculture.

Table 3: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	28.505	2	14.252	16.896	.000 ^b
	Residual	280.051	332	.844		
	Total	308.555	334			

The result in table 3 shows the F-value of 16.896 and significance value that is less than 5% significance level, hence the test is significant. This result indicates that the model under estimation is sufficient and adequate at relating agricultural value chain, students' willingness to venture into agriculture and Student's Knowledge of Agripreneurial Opportunities.

Table 4: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	2.643	.282		9.370	.000
	SKAO	.039	.051	.042	.779	.436
	SW	.307	.057	.291	5.422	.000

The coefficient table as presented in table 4 indicates that in the absence of students' willingness to venture into agriculture and student's knowledge of agripreneurial opportunities, agricultural value chain stands at about 64.3% affirming there are other people involved in agriculture and they contributed about 64.3% into agricultural value chain.

In addition, in absence of students' knowledge of agripreneurial opportunities, students' willingness contributed only 30.7% into agricultural value chain with t-value of 5.422 while students' knowledge of agripreneurial opportunities contributed about 3.9% provided students willingness remain constant.

However, out of the two variables only students' willingness to venture into agriculture that is having significant effect on agricultural value chain with the p-value less than 5% significant value while students' knowledge of agripreneurial opportunities is not significant. This result implies that students knowledge is not enough but willingness to venture into agriculture that is having impact on the agricultural value chain.

CONCLUSION

Agripreneurship-tailored awareness is essentially needed to stimulate prospective graduates' interest and readiness for engagement and participation in agricultural value chain businesses and activities that are necessary for achieving economic sustenance after graduation and food security for all. The study recommends, among others, that The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro and other tertiary institutions should intensify their agripreneurship drive to stimulate agripreneurship awareness among the students and steering their interest in agro-related businesses, while the National Board for Technical Education should consider a review of the Polytechnic curriculum to feature Agripreneurship at all levels.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, and other tertiary institutions should embed agripreneurship education into the curricula of all academic programmes, not just agricultural sciences, to broaden students' exposure and interest in agricultural value chains.
- The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) should urgently review and update the polytechnic curriculum to introduce compulsory agripreneurship courses at all levels of study. This will ensure that all students, regardless of discipline, acquire entrepreneurial skills in agriculture.
- Tertiary institutions should establish agripreneurship centers or innovation hubs that provide students with hands-on training, mentorship, access to startup funding, and business incubation opportunities in agriculture-related enterprises.
- Institutions should increase the use of experiential learning methods, such as farm-based projects, agribusiness internships, and field visits to successful agripreneurs, to help students build practical skills and confidence in agro-ventures.

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