

ATTITUDE OF YOUTHS TOWARDS AGRIPRENEURSHIP IN OBIINGWA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ABIA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the attitude of youths towards agripreneurship in Obingwa Local Government Area of Abia State. Specifically, the study ascertained the types of agricultural enterprise, determined the attitude of youth towards agricultural entrepreneurship, and ascertained the factors /problems impeding agricultural entrepreneurship development of the youths. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used in selecting 120 respondents. Primary data used for the study were obtained through the use of a structured questionnaire. Frequency, percentage and means were used in analysing the data. Findings revealed that majority of the youths (76.7%) were involved in crop farming. Most of the youths lack interest in agricultural entrepreneurship ($\bar{X} = 4.12$). Relatively, the youths were shown to dispose positively towards agricultural entrepreneurship ($\bar{X} = 2.85$). The major factors impeding the agricultural entrepreneurship development of the youths were lack of start-up capital ($\bar{X} = 3.86$), high level of risk ($\bar{X} = 3.60$), lack of agricultural entrepreneurship skills ($\bar{X} = 3.56$), and lack of interest ($\bar{X} = 3.52$). From the multiple regression analysis, the co-efficient of age (0.0608) $p < 0.05$, education (0.0817) $p < 0.01$, income (5.11×10^{-6}) $p < 0.05$, and years of experience (0.0314) $p < 0.01$ were significantly related with attitude of youths towards agricultural entrepreneurship. Hence, the youths in the study area have positive attitude towards agricultural entrepreneurship. The study recommended establishment of agricultural insurance policy and programme, provision of adequate loans to willing youths, provision of subsidies for farmers on important agricultural inputs and establishment of skill acquisition centres in rural areas.

Key words: Attitude, youths, agriculture, agricultural entrepreneurship

INTRODUCTION

Agripreneurship contributes immensely to youth development and act as a source of empowerment for them. It serves as a tool for providing employment for the youths, thereby alleviating poverty and delinquencies. It is therefore, of paramount importance to encourage youth involvement in agricultural entrepreneurship. Young people can develop the attitude, knowledge and skills that enable or make them pursue active functions in the society and collaborate with adults to assess critical

issues and react favorably to finding solutions to their needs and problem (Gwary *et al.*, 2011).

Significant proportion of Nigerian population are the youths (Adesugba and Mavrotas, 2016). Today, youth account for around one-fifth of the population in many developing nations (Proctor & Lucchesi, 2012). By the year 2050, youth are expected to account for 14% of the total global population (Food and Agricultural

Organization, 2014). Youth constitute an important segment of any community. Therefore the importance of youth involvement in agriculture cannot be overemphasized. Youths are the vital source of manpower and leaders of tomorrow. They are strong and possess abundant energy that needs proper channeling and harnessing for increased agricultural production. Hence, youth involvement in agricultural activities will not only create career opportunities for them but also increase food production and to an extent reduce the gap between food production and its demand in the communities. Youths can develop skills, knowledge and attitude that will enable them to take an active role in the society and to cooperate with adults in their communities to determine critical issues and responses to solving problems. Youths are young people in the society who are characterized by ample ideas, energy and new ways to see life and face problems (Gwary *et al.*, 2011).

Giving the intriguing rate of unemployment in Nigeria, though with short decline from 20.67% in 2016, to 19.96% in 2017, and from 19.68% in 2018 to 19.58% in 2019 (Plecher, 2020), it is crystal clear that one sure gate way to reducing the increasing unemployment in the country especially among the youths is by involvement of the youths in gainful agricultural entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship is the process by which individuals become conscious of business ownership as an option or viable alternative, develop ideas for business, learn the process of becoming an entrepreneur and undertake the initiation and development of a business. Youth entrepreneurship signifies the practical application of enterprise qualities, such as initiation, creativity, innovation and risk taking into work environment, either in self-employment or employment in small start-up firms, using the appropriate skills necessary for success in that environment (Adepeju, 2009). Among the possible entrepreneurship

activities in agriculture which provides opportunities for youth are in mostly in the areas of; crop production, livestock production, orchard, fisheries, mechanization, marketing, processing and forestry (Gwary *et al.*, 2011).

According to Dioneo-Adetayo (2012), "entrepreneurship has been recognized as an important element in the dynamics of modern economies. The varied entrepreneurship ventures in agriculture could serve as veritable sources of employment and avenues for creation of new jobs for the youths thereby improving their living condition. Hence, entrepreneurship have made great contributions in introducing valuable new product and keeping the economy competitive in the world markets. This impressive and rapid growth of entrepreneurship is attributed to the power of education in promoting social, economic, political and spiritual well-being of an individual and social development. The growth of entrepreneurship programs in educational institutions is remarkable for over two decades, now aiming to change the mindset of the youth. Colleges and universities should provide entrepreneurial programs to undergraduates and graduate students, including practicing for potential entrepreneurs outside the educational institutions. Today, entrepreneurship programs are been extended to the secondary and primary levels of education and have become the focus of discussion among scholars. They believe that the introduction of entrepreneurship programs to the children at the lower levels of education will enhance children's attributes and further develop awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities and skills to form entrepreneurial venture. This timely discussion and focus of entrepreneurship programs for the youths in the economic struggle is of paramount importance in economic development in developing countries like Nigeria" (Dioneo-Adetayo, 2012).

Youths are recognized, believed and hoped to be future economic leaders. They are to build that dreamed entrepreneurial community. This means that entrepreneurship programs for the youth prepare them for early entrepreneurial involvement, this clearly means that entrepreneurship programs for the youth had yielded successful entrepreneurs whose performance have been reckoned and appreciated. The youth involvement in the economic struggle is of paramount importance. Developing them to have the spirit and drive towards entrepreneurship especially in agricultural ventures would mean preparing them to become successful and useful in the society and in the same manner making the society entrepreneurial. Therefore, economic prosperity if it is to be achieved lies in the development of youths.

Most of the youths in Nigeria and Abia State in particular believed that earning their certificates means challenging jobs either in the public and private sectors and are optimistic of getting job placement in the industry. Unfortunately, many ended up not getting their desired job, with many engaging in private firms, mostly teaching in private schools where the monthly pay does not commensurate with their qualification. Hence, the rate of underemployment among the youths in Abia state is very high. The Government in its effort to inculcate entrepreneurial drive among the youths has incorporated entrepreneurship education in its education curriculum among the students at both the secondary and tertiary level. Also, despite massive information campaign on entrepreneurship especially in agriculture, and efforts of the government on entrepreneurship programs, the realization for self-employment has remained far from reality. Most of the youths have continued to roam about in search for white collar jobs while neglecting the varied entrepreneurship opportunities abounding in agriculture. Hence, the questions that calls for answers are what might have been responsible for the attitude of youths

towards agripreneurship? What are the barriers impeding youths participation in agripreneurship? It is in light of this questions that this study was carried out. Hence, the study aimed at assessing the attitude of youths towards agripreneurship in Obingwa Local Government Area of Abia State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study ascertained the types of agricultural enterprise in the study area, determined the attitude of youth towards agripreneurship in the study area, and ascertained the factors /problems impeding agripreneurship development of the youths.

The following hypothesis was tested:

There is no significant relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics of the youths and their attitude towards agripreneurship in the study area.

Methodology

This study was carried out in Obingwa Local Government Area (LGA) of Abia State, Nigeria. Obingwa lies between latitude 4⁰ and 4.70⁰ North and longitude 5.6⁰ and 6.3⁰ East of the Greenwich Meridian. It has common boundraies with Isialangwa South, Osioma Ngwa, Ugwunabo, Aba North, Aba South, Ukwia East L.G.A. as well as Akwa Ibom State. It covers a land area of about 358, 191km sq. Presently, it has 21 autonomous communities which are made up of 223 villages. Farming is the primary occupation of the people of Obingwa L.G.A. The major crops grown in the area include cassava, yam, maize, teleferia, okra, garden egg, cocoyam, plaintain, banana, pineapple, oil palm, coconut, mango, guava and citrus. The major livestock reared in the area include sheeps, goat, cattle, pigs as well as poultry production. Obingwa L.G.A is made up of two (2) blocks, Obingwa East and Obingwa West , fifteen (15) circles, with Obingwa East nine (9) and Obingwa West six (6). It has a total of one hundred and five (105) sub-circle (Onuekwusi and Anyanwu, 2010).

A multistage sampling technique was employed in selecting the sample for the study. In the first stage, four (4) circles were randomly selected from each of the two blocks totaling eight (8) circles. The second stage involved a random selection of five (5) sub-circles. From each of the selected sub-circles, three (3) respondents were randomly selected making a total sample of one hundred and twenty (120) respondents. Primary data used for the study were obtained through the use of a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage and means were used in realizing the objectives.

The attitude of the rural youths towards agripreneurship was measured using agreement with 10 statements/indices on a 5-point Likert-type scale categorized as follows: 5 = strongly Agree (SD), 4 = agree (A), 3 = Undecided (U), 2 = disagree (D), 1 = strongly disagree (SD).

$$X_s = \sum fn/N$$

where: X_s = mean score

\sum = summation

f = frequency

n = Likert nominal value

N = Number of the respondents

$$X_s = 1+2+3+4+5/5 = 15/5 = 3$$

Since the statements were all negative, mean score below the bench mark mean of 3.0 was regarded as positive attitude, while mean score above 3.0 was regarded as negative attitude.

The relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics of the youths and their attitude towards agripreneurship was tested using multiple regression analysis.

The implicit form of the model is stated below:

$$Y = f(x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5, x_6, x_7, e)$$

Where:

Y = Dependent variable i.e. attitude towards agripreneurship(Mean score)

x_1 = Sex (female = 0, male = 1)

x_2 = Age (Years)

x_3 = Marital status (single = 0, married = 1)

x_4 = Education (Years of schooling)

x_5 = Income (Naira)

x_6 = Occupation (Farming 1, Otherwise = 0)

x_7 = Years of experience (Years)

e_i = Error term

Results and Discussion

Agripreneurship Enterprises

Table 1 reveals that the foremost agripreneurship enterprises being involved by the youths were crop farming (76.7%), palm oil business (59.2%), and poultry (55.0%). However, 22.5% of the youths were involved in flour milling, 19.7% are involved in Orchardry, 14.2% were involved in sheep and goat rearing while piggery, fishing farming, snailry and fruit juice production represented 10.8%, 9.2% and 6.7% and 3.3% respectively. The fact that crop farming is the dominant agripreneurship venture involved by the youths could be due to the fact that farming required little skill and capital. This is in line with Adebayo *et al.*, (2015) and Onuekwusi *et al.*, (2019) who noted that most of the rural youths have land but lack credit facilities and skill required to venture into some of the agripreneurship ventures. Hence crop farming is the easiest and most convenient agripreneurship venture for the youths to venture.

Table 1: Agripreneurship Enterprises n=120

*Agripreneurship enterprises	Frequency (F)	Pe
Fishing farming	11	9.2
Snailry	8	6.7
Piggery	13	10.8
Crop farming	92	76.7
Flour milling	27	22.5
Palm oil business	71	59.2

Fruit juice production	4	Being 3.3 skeptical	10 th wards	54 (54)	29(58)
Orchardry	23	agriprenurship	5 th		
Sheep and goat	17	Feeling of neglect towards	6 th	56(56)	31(62)
Poultry	66	agriprenurship	3 rd	12(12)	15(30)

Source: Field Survey, 2019

*Multiple responses recorded

Attitude of Youths towards Agriprenurship

The findings on the attitude of youths towards agriprenurship revealed that most of the youths lack interest in agriprenurship, possibly due to poor support from government and prospects of more attractive employments in other sectors (\bar{x} = 4.12). Several of the youths were also afraid of venturing in agriprenurship, probably due to the high risks and uncertainty associated with agriprenurship (\bar{x} = 3.95). Most of the youths held the view that an agriprenurship has no solution to the current economic problems faced by the country (\bar{x} = 3.79), while some are opposed to youth involvement in agriprenurship (\bar{x} = 3.73). With the grand mean of 2.85 which is below the bench mark mean of 3.0, the study showed that the youths in the study area had positive attitude towards agriprenurship. Hence, the youths in the study area have favourable disposition to agriculture (Abdullah & Sulaiman, 2013) affirmed that attitude is an important factor which affect youth involvement in agriprenurship.

Table 2: Attitude towards Agriprenurship n=120

Attitudinal Statement	SD	DA	U	A	SA	SUM	MEAN
Lack of interest in agriprenurship	6(6)	17(34)	6(18)	19(76)	72(360)	494	4.12
Negative feeling towards agriprenurship	31 (31)	21(42)	13(39)	46(184)	9(45)	341	2.84
Agriprenurship is not in agreement with our culture	64(64)	39(78)	7(18)	5(20)	3(15)	195	4.63
Agriprenurship has no solution to current economic problems	21(21)	8(16)	6(18)	25(100)	60(300)	455	3.79
					Lack of start-up capital (finance)	43 (215)	47(188)
					Lack of agriprenurship	36(180)	38(152)

Opposed to youth involvement in agriprenurship	7(7)	19(38)
Hatred towards anything agriprenurship	45(45)	37(74)
No knowledge of agriprenurship	43(43)	58(116)
Total mean		
Grand mean		
Benchmark mean		

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Key: Strongly Agree (SD) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Undecided (U) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, Strongly disagree (SD) = 1. Benchmark = 3.0

Problems Impeding Youths Involvement in Agriprenurship

From Table 3, the major problems found to impede the agriprenurship development of the youths in the study area were lack of start-up capital (\bar{x} = 3.86), high level of risk (\bar{x} = 3.60), lack of agriprenurship skills (\bar{x} = 3.56), and lack of interest (\bar{x} = 3.52).

Table 3: Problems Impeding Agriprenurship Development of the Youths

Constraints	SA	A	U	DA	SD	SUM	MEAN
Lack of start-up capital (finance)	43 (215)					47(188)	6
Lack of agriprenurship	36(180)					38(152)	1

skills			attitude towards agriprenurship in the study area. From the result, the R ² value of 0.8374 implies that 83.74% of the variations in the attitude of the youths were explained by the selected socio-economic characteristics. The t-value 4.3824 which was significant at 1% significant level indicates the goodness of fit of the model. From the results, age, education, income and years of experience were significantly related with attitude of youths towards agriprenurship.
Lack of information	19(95)	48(192)	9(27) 36(72) 8(8) 394 3.28
Access to market	18(90)	23(92)	17(51) 39(78) 554 2.78
Government policies and programmes	25(125)	29(116)	15(45) 32(64) 19(19) 369 3.01
Poor extension services	21(105)	25(100)	8(24) 45(90) 21(21) 340 2.83
Lack of interest	31(155)	44(176)	13(39) 20(40) 12(12) 422 3.51
High level of risk	34(170)	42(168)	16(48) 18(36) 10(10) 432 3.60
Proximity	19(95)	26(104)	21(63) 37(74) 17(17) 353 2.94
Lack of infrastructure	24(120)	47(188)	42(168) 19(76) 169 4.04

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Key: Strongly Agree (SD) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Undecided (U) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, Strongly disagree (SD) = 1. Benchmark = 3.0

Other problems impeding agriprenurial development among the youths include lack of infrastructure ($\bar{x} = 3.37$), lack of information ($\bar{x} = 3.28$) and government policies and programmes ($\bar{x} = 3.01$). This finding is in tandem with findings of Gwary *et al.*, (2011) who identified lack of capital and Lack of government support as the most constraining factors to youths' involvement in agriprenurship enterprises. Similarly, Onuekwusi *et al.*, (2019) also identified lack of capital and lack of equipment/ facilities as the foremost factors to youths' involvement in agricultural entrepreneurship. Ajani *et al.*, (2015) noted funding (finance) as a problem facing youth involvement in agriculture in rural areas.

Relationship between Selected Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Youths and their Attitude towards Agriprenurship

Table 4 shows the result of the multiple regression analysis of the relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics of the youths and their

tendency of showing positive disposition towards agriprenurship increase as the age of the youths increases. This entails that the older youths are likely to show more favourable disposition towards agriprenurship than the younger ones. This could attributed to maturity in reasoning and exposure among the older youths. The co-efficient of education (0.0817) was positive and significantly related to attitude at 1% significant level. This implies that the higher the educational level of the youths, the more their favourable disposition towards agriprenurship. Education helps to unlock the mental accent of individual and makes the individual more rational in reasoning. This in line with Onuekwusi *et al.*, (2019) where age and education were found to be significant and positively related to youths' attitude towards agriprenurship.

The co-efficient of income (5.11×10^{-6}) was positive and significantly related to attitude at 5%. This implies that as the income of the youths increases, their tendency to show positive disposition towards agriprenurship tend to increase. The co-efficient of years of experience in farming (0.0984) was positive and significant at 1% significant level. showed significance also, at 1% significance level. This implies that the longer the years of farming experience of the youths the more their tendency to show positive disposition to agriprenurship. This

could be due to the fact that the youths who have more years of farming experience are more likely to understand the profit and benefits accruing from agripreneurship. Hence such youths are more likely to show more favorable disposition to agripreneurship than those with no or less farming experience. This finding corroborates with Dioneo-Adetayo (2006) where experience was found to be positively associated with attitude of youths towards agricultural entrepreneurship.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Estimates of the Determinants of Youth's Attitude to Agripreneurship

Variables	Coefficients	Standard error	t-value
Constant	5.3840	1.4531	3.706**
Sex	-0.083	0.071	-1.160
Age	0.0608	0.0262	2.321*
Marital status	-0.1372	0.1620	-0.847
Education	0.0817	0.0251	3.254**
Income	5.11 x10 ⁻⁶	2.34 x10 ⁻⁶	2.184*
Occupation status	0.0582	0.0439	1.326
Years of experience	0.0984	0.0314	3.134**
R ²	0.8374		
Adjusted R ²	0.7156		
t-value	4.3824***		

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Key: ** and *** indicates significance at 5% and 1% level of probabilities respectively.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study showed that crop production and palm oil business were the foremost agripreneurship ventures being involved by the youths. Though the youths were

relatively shown to exhibit positive attitude towards agricultural entrepreneurship, it is evidence that most of the them lack interest in agricultural entrepreneurship while many of them are afraid of agricultural entrepreneurship mainly due to their lack of start-up capital, and the risks involved. Hence, lack of start-up capital, high level of risk, and lack of agripreneurship skills were major problems found to impede the agripreneurship development of the youths. Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between age, education, income and years of experience of the youths and their attitude towards agripreneurship. Base on the foregoing, there is need for government to establish agricultural insurance policy and programme whose scope of activities should include among others providing trainings on different agricultural skills and providing insurance against agricultural risks to stimulate more positive attitude of youths and encourage more of their involvement in agripreneurship. Also, government should ensure that adequate loans are made accessible to willing youths, in order to encourage them to venture into their chosen fields of agripreneurship. This would greatly ameliorate the problem of financing faced by many willing agriculturists. In addition, extension agents need to improve in their efforts to reach the people at the grassroots, so as to educate them more on new improvements in agricultural production, as well as trending equipment which will boost agricultural productivity. Lastly, skill acquisition and training centers should be provided in the rural areas, so as to improve the skills of the youths in the area.

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