

ASSESSMENT OF AGRO ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL YOUTHS IN IKWERRE L.G.A

Harry A.T¹, Obuah, F. C.²

¹Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development,

²Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics,
Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

***Author for Correspondence:** Email: harryariamebo@yahoo.com,
ariaebo.harry@ust.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

The study examined the assessment of agro entrepreneurial activities for the development of rural youths in Ikwerre Local Government Area Rivers State. Specifically it was designed to describe socio economic characteristics of the respondents, identify the entrepreneurial activities in the study area, determine entrepreneurial skill needs for the development of rural youth, examine the effect of entrepreneurial skill needs for the development of rural youth and ascertain constraints to entrepreneurial activities for the development of rural youth in the study area. Random sampling technique was employed to select Purposive sampling technique was used to select one 120 rural youth entrepreneurs in the study area. Structured questionnaire and interview schedule were used to elicit information from the respondents. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The result showed that majority of the respondents (35.83%) were between the ages of 41-50 years, 36.67% had secondary 25.0% were single, 21.67% were self-employed and 28.33% had household size of between (4-6) persons. The result also showed the entrepreneurial activities in the study area to include, crop farmers (33.33%), Poultry Farmers (27.50) fish farmers (22.50%), agro product marketers (16.67%), Total (100%), the constraints of entrepreneurial activities in Ikwerre include high cost of doing business in the area. Two hypotheses where tested, the hypotheses on the relationship between socio economic characteristics of the rural youth and their entrepreneurial activities showed that there is a significant relationship between socio economic characteristics of the respondents and their entrepreneurial activities, except occupation and marital status The study recommends that Commercial banks and other financial houses can also promote youth's involvement in enterprises by making funds readily available for the potential entrepreneurs.

Keywords: *Assessment, Entrepreneurial, Development, Rural and Youths*

INTRODUCTION

Young people are truly viewed as the future pioneers; and are possibly the best speculation for Nations advancement (Harry and Enoch 2021). Youth fill in as decent measure of the degree to which a nation can replicate; and additionally, maintain itself. The young age is viewed as a time of developing conceivable outcomes, growing capacities on sustaining abilities. The degree of their essentialness, dependable lead and parts in the public eye is emphatically connected with the improvement of a nation (Zonal Youth summit, 2000, Olujide, 2008). According to Adesope (2007), the normal parts of adolescence incorporate recreational advancement, group farming, security, leadership, an agent of change. They are considered as the basic and vital specialists, for social change and advance particularly in the creating nations. Advancement can be accomplished when greater part of youth of a nation connect

with and contribute in socio-political financial activities (United State Agency for international development, USAID 2012). This was supported by Sitoula (2015) when he stressed that entrepreneurship has been adopted as a strategy to promote economic activities among young people. As per European commission (EC) (2003), the scholastics, expats and approach creators worldwide have elevated their dedication towards advancing entrepreneurial outlook inside society. In a worldwide point of view, there is an inert need to guarantee that the old people approach quality education, healthcare and different chances to create fundamental abilities that will empower them to be the pioneers in worldwide profitability Mbali, (2017). Of course, do youths have many needs which border on both their individual development and the development of region, the needs could be peculiar and different from the needs of youth in other parts of Nigeria (Adesope, Agumagu, Mathews-Njoku and Ukponson, 2010). This study therefore is geared towards examining the establishment of entrepreneurial activities for the development of rural youth in Ikwerre Local Government of Rivers State.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to examine the entrepreneur activities for the development of rural youth in Ikwerre Local Government Area, Rivers State. The specific objectives of the study were to:

Specific objectives of the study are:

- i. identify the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents; in the study area
- ii. identify the agro entrepreneurial activities available in the study area;
- iii. examine the effect of the agro entrepreneurial activities in the development of rural youth in the study area;
- iv. Ascertain the constraints to agro entrepreneurial activities in the development of rural youth in the study area.

Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the state objectives.

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between socio-economic characteristics of rural youths and their agro entrepreneurial activities.

HO₂: There is no significant relationship between agro entrepreneurial skill needs and the development of rural youths.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The Theory of Decentralization

The theory of decentralization will be adopted in this study. This is because for development to be achieved it has to be decentralized, which means that it has to tackle down to the communities. Decentralization is singing in different perspective depending on the goals and objectives of the programme. Decentralization can be referred to as the transfer of authority to the linked lower hierarchy, lowers tier related to local government all too some big organization. It also means the cause of changing something from being concentrated at one point to being distributed across a number of points or to reduce the authority of a government body by distributing that authority among several bodies. In contrast, Morgan (1986), a management scientist emphasized decentralization as an organizational principal for divisionalised organization, but normative values for decentralization are different. There is functional, decentralization/devolution dichotomy, political elite power administrative decisions and territorial decentralization.

Psychological Theory of Motivation

The next theoretical framework to guide the study is the psychological theory of motivation put up by David McClelland who in 1960 displayed the functionality of strong relationship between economic development and entrepreneurial activity (Onwuka, Ugwu, Itoya and Okeke, 2015). The concept of need for achievement (nAch) was formulated in the 1950s (McClelland, Clark, Roby and Atkinson, 1958). The book "The achieving society" was published by David McClelland in the year, 1961. He identified motivators that individuals in a society possess. This motivators include a need for achievement, the need for affiliation, and a need for power. According to McClelland, the need for achievement has such features as strong need to set and to accomplish challenging goals; the person must be able to take calculated risks to accomplish he/her goals and I must be willing to work. The need for affiliation the demands that the individual should have the quality of belonging to a group, once to be liked, and will often go along with whatever the rest of the group wants to be like, for collaboration over competition and doesn't like high risk or uncertainty. And the need for power is characterized by the individuals want to control and influence others, likes to win arguments, enjoy completion and winning, as well as enjoys status and recognition (Mulder, 2015).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study, Assessment of agro entrepreneurial activities in the development of rural youth was derived from the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable. The independent variable is the socio-economic characteristics of rural youth and the dependent variable is the entrepreneurial activities of the youth. The priori expectation was that there is a significant relationship between socio-economic characteristics and entrepreneurial activities of rural youth and a significant relationship between entrepreneurial skill needs of rural youth and their development the study was poised to test how entrepreneurial activities and entrepreneurial skill needs can promote rural youth in the study area.

Concept of Entrepreneurship

Diverse creators and schools of thought characterized business in light of their discernment. The meanings of business enterprise as gathered by Onwuka, Ugwu, Itoya and Okeke (2015) implies an energy that assembles different assets to take care of neglected market demand, the capacity to make and fabricate something from basically nothing (Jones and Sakong, 1980), and the way toward making an incentive by pulling together a remarkable bundle of assets to take leeway of an opportunity (Timmons, 1989 and Stevenson, 1985). It is characterized by Stevenson of Harvard University as the quest for circumstances without respect to assets at present controlled. Robert (1985) characterized it as the way toward creating something particular with the incentive by dedicating the fundamental exertion and time expecting going with money related, mental and social hazard and accepting the subsequent prizes of financial and individual fulfillment. Fulfillment and compensate and is extremely basic in business enterprise since they are essential vehicles that can drive the business person into business enterprise.

Concept of Rural Youth

The term youth depicts a specific stage in the development of human beings. Akinboye (1987) defined youth as any youngster between twenty and thirty years, The World Health Organization (WHO) viewed youth as anybody between the ages of 15 and 24. The National

Youth Development Policy (2001) defines youth as people aged 18-35. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2004) officially placed the age bracket of youths between 16—30 years. According to Nigeria's National Youth Development Policy (2001), the youth comprises all young persons of ages 18 to 35, who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria- This category represents the most active, the most volatile and yet the most vulnerable segment of the population (Olajide, 2008).

Challenges of Youth Entrepreneurship in Employment Generation in Nigeria **Inadequate Physical Infrastructural Facilities**

It is a universal belief that certain basic infrastructural facilities aid the development of the mind and body and assist productivity in any environment. These facilities have been identified as good roads, good water supply, constant power, access to information and communication technology and other tools of trade. A case where these are lacking in a country, the growth of the economy will be adversely affected. In Nigeria, these basic work tools as well as the enabling environment is lacking. This state of affairs has frustrated a lot of young people with bright ideas and the corresponding spirit to effect a change in some areas of our national life.

Inadequate Working Capital

Despite the fact that numerous researchers, for example, Onugu (2005) have contended against non-accessibility of capital as the prime issue of business enterprise advancement, the accessibility of capital, says Onwubiko (2011) is integral to the foundation and proceeded with presence of any endeavor independent of the size, center and target. It has been watched that for a business visionary in Nigeria to begin a business, he should have satisfactory assets. In a circumstance where the working capital is deficient or inaccessible, it turns into an issue. This is one of the major, if not the significant issue that youngsters experience when opening a business- Banks are before now hesitant to give out credits to aiming business people particularly when they are youngsters. The methods for getting to such credits are frequently thorough and subject to the arrangement of securities which the potential business person may not have.

Empirical Literature

Adesope, Agumagu, Matthews-Njoku and Ukpongson (2010) inspected the rural youth development needs in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. The study randomly selected 197 chosen respondents in the investigation territory. Information produced were broke down utilizing frequency, percentage and chi square. The discoveries uncovered that dominant part of the respondents are in the vicinity of 20 and 25 years; and that country adolescents have different improvement needs, for example, work openings, community development, information well-being cash making. Observationally, the result showed that occupation, sex, location and education had impact on the apparent improvement needs and in addition state of mind of rural young people towards rural advancement.

Umeh and Odom (2011) analyzed the part and limitations of Youth Associations in Agricultural and Rural Development. The example estimate for their investigation was 100 youth affiliations. Information were produced through structured questionnaire and interview schedule. They similarly utilized both distinct Statistics and mean score in information investigation. The outcome demonstrated that that young relationship in the region contribute enormously to agrarian improvement and rustic advancement In light of the discoveries, the investigation prescribed contribution of youth relationship in rustic advancement planning, and provision of funds to help young people in their exercises by benefactor offices, among different proposals.

Fadeyi, Oke, Ajagbe, Isiavwe and Adegbuyi (2015) evaluated the effect of youth entrepreneurship on nation building. The examination went for exploring the part of youth business people in country building. The example measure for the examination was 40 forthcoming entrepreneurial firms arbitrarily chose from a cross segment of a populace of Firms situated crosswise over Yaba Local Government Area (LGA) of Lagos state. The respondents were picked through a simple random sampling. Information produced were dissected with the utilization of simple percentages. This examination finds that there is a critical connection between rivalry, development and advancement of entrepreneurial firms in Nigeria.

Literature Review

From the writings surveyed in this investigation, unmistakably very little observational examinations are done on entrepreneurial activities and youth development. The main related study was that completed by Ogah, Oko and Oshi (2013) on entrepreneurship involvement of undergraduate students of Cross River State and the investigation of Adesope, Agumagu, Matthews-Njoku and Ukpangson (2010) on rural youth development needs in the Niger Delta of Nigeria.

Being that entrepreneurial activities youth improvement as recognized in the Whiting investigated, there is need to complete the examination in an alternate group in Nigeria.

Subsequently, this filled the hole in writing by inspecting the entrepreneurial activities for rural youth development in Rivers State with interested in Ikwerre Local Government Area.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study Area

The study was conducted in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. The headquarters of Ikwerre Local Government Area is Isiokpo, which is situated along Port Harcourt Owerri Road. Ikwerre L.G.A. is bounded in the North by Imo State in the West by Emohua Local Government A in the East by Etche L.G.A and in the South by Obio/Akpo L.G.A. It has a land mass of about 180sq kilometers from the (Natural Population Commission of 2007).

The people of Ikwerre L.G.A are mainly Christian and the language spoken here are Ikwerre and English languages. The major occupation of the people is farming. There are however some other occupation like fishing, petty trading and civil service. The people of Ikwerre have also remained historically, culturally economically and socially contiguous ever before the colonial rule in Nigeria. The L.G.A has twelve (12) principal historical and autonomous clans, namely Isiokpo, Igwuruta, Omagwa, Omuanwa, Omeleru, Elele, Ozuaha, Omademe, Ipo, Aluu, Apani and Ubima each of these clans have about eight to ten (8-10) communities.

Population of the Study

The population for this study involved rural youth entrepreneurs in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State, for example, poultry farmers, fish farmers, crop farmer's agro product marketers.

Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

A simple random sampling technique will be employed to select eight (8) communities from the study area. 15 respondents will be sampled from each of the communities and administered questionnaires. Consequently, the sample size will be made up of 120 respondents from the randomly selected eighth (8) communities.

Table 1: The Table below Shows the List of selected Towns and Villages in Ikwerre Local Government Area and the Number of Respondents Selected

S/N	Selected Communities	Selected Respondents
1	Elele	15
2	Isiokpo	15
3	Igwuruta	15
4	Omerelu	15
5	Ubima	15
6	Aluu	15
7	Omagwa	15
8	Apani	15
Total	8	120

Method of Data Collection

Primary and secondary sources were used to collect data from the study. The Primary sources were the information obtained from the use of the questionnaire, Personal interviews and discussions with the respondents. The secondary source of data was obtained from books journals, internet, etc.

Method of Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean score percentages, graphs and Likert Rating Scale Technique.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Respondents**

In this chapter, socio-economic characteristics of the respondents are presented in a tabular form.

Socio-Economic Characteristics**Sex of the Respondents**

The results indicated from table 2 below shows that 62.50% of the agro entrepreneurs were male, while 37.50% agro entrepreneurs were female. This implies that agro entrepreneur's activities involve more male entrepreneurs than female in the study area.

Age of the Respondents

Results also indicated that ages which ranges from <20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60 and >60 had 3.33%, 14.17%, 19.17%, 35.83%, 22.50% and 5.00% respectively. This implies that the age of the respondents plays a critical role in agro entrepreneurial activities in the development of youths in the study area. Opata (2012), made a similar observation that ages of respondents which fall within the ranges of 40 and above recorded the highest percentage. Hence, the more energetic an individual, the higher the possibility of him or her to perform better compared to the much younger or the much older producers.

Marital Status of the Respondents

For respondent's marital status, (30.83%) of the agro entrepreneurs were married. This implies how married people have more responsibility to play. The results further indicated that about (25.00%) of the respondents were single, (15.00%) were widowed, divorced (14.17%), also (15.00%) were separated. This implies that men and women who are into agro entrepreneurial

activities are responsible men and women who have family to cater for. Therefore, they require extra income to run their business.

Household Size of the Respondents

For household size, the results further indicated that (28.33%) of the respondents had 4-6 persons as their household size followed by (25.00%) of the respondents which indicated that 1-3 persons as their household size. The rest (24.17%) and (22.50%) indicated that 7-9 persons and >9 persons, respectively as their household sizes.

Educational Level of the Respondents

Respondent' educational levels indicated that (10.83%) of agro entrepreneurs had no formal education. (29.17%) of the respondents had primary education followed by the secondary education which had the majority (36.67%) of the respondents, tertiary education (23.33%) represented the respondents. This is in consonants with the findings of Agbugba and Thompson (2015) on marketing of tropical vegetables in South-Eastern Nigeria.

Occupation of the Respondents

For occupation of the respondents, the results further indicated that (41.67%) had farming as their major occupation followed by (27.50%) of the respondent which are civil/public servants, (21.67%) are self-employed and (9.16%) had other source of occupation.

Table 2: Showed Socio-Economic characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency (120)	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	75	62.50
female	45	37.50
Age (years)		
< 20	4	3.33
21-30 years	17	14.17
31-40 years	23	19.17
41-50 years	43	35.83
51-60 years	27	22.50
>60	6	5.00
Marital status		
Single	30	25.00
Married	37	30.83
Widowed	18	15.00
Separated	18	15.00
Household Size		
1-3	30	25.00
4-6	34	28.33
7-9	29	24.17
>10	27	22.50
Level of Education		
Non formal	13	10.83
Primary	35	29.17
Secondary	44	36.67

Tertiary	28	23.33
Occupation		
Farming	50	41.67
Civil/Public	33	27.50
Servant		
Self employed	26	21.67
Others	11	9.16

Agro Entrepreneurial Activities

Table 3 revealed the agro entrepreneurial activities identified in the study area, the results indicated that 33.33% of the respondents were crop farmers, followed 27.50% which were poultry farmers. 22.50% of the agro entrepreneurs affirmed that they were fish farmers while 16.67% of the respondents were agro product marketers.

Table 3: Agro Entrepreneurial Activities

S/No	Agro Entrepreneurial Activities	Freq.	Percentage
1	Crop farmers	40	33.33
2	Poultry farmers	33	27.50
3	Fish farmers	27	22.50
4	Agro product marketers	20	16.67
	Total	120	100

Effect of Entrepreneurial Activities in the Development of Rural Youths

The table 4 below presents the effects of entrepreneurial activities in the development of rural youths, the result indicated that entrepreneurial activities had very great effect as it help to provide employment and empowerment for the youth, reduce the tendencies of crime rate, and increase their livelihood of good standard of living with 37.5%, 32.5% and 33.3% respectively. Furthermore, entrepreneurial activities has a great effect in the development of rural youths in the study area as it leads to community/rural development generate income thereby reduces the rate of poverty, and drastically rural urban migration in the locality with 31.7%, 35.5% and 40.0% respectively. This implies that entrepreneurial activities are of great benefits as it helps in development of rural youths in the study area.

Table 4: Responses of Respondents on the Effect of Entrepreneurial Activities in the Development of Rural Youths

Note: VGE – Very Great Effect, GE – Great Effect, LE – Less Effect and NE – No Effect

Effect of Entrepreneurial Activities in the Development of Rural Youths	VGE.	GE	LE	NE
When entrepreneurship is given adequate consideration it helps youth employment and empowerment	45 (37.5%)	34 (28.3%)	13 (10.8%)	27 (22.5%)

Entrepreneurship leads to community development	33 (27.5))	38 (31.7))	36 (30.0))	13 (10.8)
Entrepreneurship generates income and reduces rate of poverty	31 (25.8))	43 (35.8))	26 (21.7))	20 (16.7)
There are tendency of reduce rate of crime in entrepreneurial area	39 (32.5))	35 (29.7))	(28 (23.3))	18 (15.0)
Rural urban migration is drastically reduced due to the presence of entrepreneurial activities in the area	34 (28.3))	48 (40.0))	25 (20.8))	17 (14.2)
There are likelihood of good standard of living	40 (33.3))	32 (26.7))	37 (30.8))	19 (15.8)

Constraints to Entrepreneurial Activities

The problems faced by agro entrepreneurs in the study area were ranked as shown on the table below shows items on the questionnaire were used to address the constraints. Items number 1,2,3,4,5,6,9,10,11,12,13,14 and 16 were agreed with by respondents (as they all had criterion mean score greater than 2.50) indicated that high cost of doing business, low standard of education, inadequate physical infrastructural facilities, inadequate working capital, lack of business assistance and support from mentors and support services, low agricultural output, low pricing, insecurity, high cost of equipment, high incidence of disease, high cost of land and high cost of fertilizer and other farm input were the major constraints to agro entrepreneurial activities in expanding the scale of the business. However, items numbered 3,7,8,15 and 17 which had a mean score of 2.40, 2.40, 2.30,2.36 and 2.41 (lower than the criterion mean) respectively; indicated non patronage of Nigeria goods, lack of adequate training, lack of raw materials, poor access to source of information and low quality feed were not serious constraints encountered by the respondents.

Table 5: Respondents Responses on Constraints to Entrepreneurial Activities

Items	Mean	Result	Remark
High cost of doing business	3.50	>	Agree
Low standard of education	3.50	>	Agree
Non patronage of Nigerian goods	2.40	<	Disagree
Inadequate infrastructural facilities	3.10	>	Agree
Inadequate working capital	3.50	>	Agree

Lack of business assistance and support	2.50	=	Agree
From mentors and support services	2./40	<	Disagree
Lack of adequate training	2.30	<	Disagree
Lack of raw materials	2.67	>	Agree
Low agricultural outputs	2.94	>	Agree
Low pricing	3.28	>	Agree
Insecurity	3.00	>	Agree
High cost of equipment	2.66	>	Agree
High incidence of disease	3.17	>	Agree
Poor access to source of information	2.36	<	Disagree
High cost fertilizer and other farm inputs	3.22	>	Agree
Low quality feed	2.41	<	Disagree

CONCLUSION

From the study conducted, it is observed that agro entrepreneurial enterprises is a lucrative and helps to improve the standard of living in Ikwerre Local Government Area, Rivers State with minimal risk and therefore more people should be encouraged to take carrier in the activities, as it will aid to avert some socio-economic plight in our society. It is a good business opportunity which enables creation of employment for those involved in the any of the already identified agro entrepreneurial activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above Conclusions, the Recommendations for the study include:

- The general public both male and female should be involved to take carrier in agro entrepreneurial activities as it helps to alleviate poverty level from those involved in the enterprise and provide employment for many Nigerians.
- Agro entrepreneurial activities are highly productive and needs more financial facilities and support from the government in order to the scale of the production.
- More storage/transport facilities as well as inputs should be provided at reduced cost to combat most of the challenges.
- More people should come into agro value chain business as producers, distributors, etc. to ensure increase in its enterprise on the main economy.

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