

## DEVELOPING ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS: A PANACEA TO UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*The endeavours for the eradication of unemployment and economic development in Nigeria will be difficult if individuals who are employable and seeking for jobs are not directed or trained in areas where they will acquire entrepreneurial skills and to become self-employed. Therefore, this paper focuses on entrepreneurial skills in agricultural production as a panacea to unemployment. The paper highlighted areas of agricultural production where entrepreneurial skills can be developed; Strategies for developing entrepreneurial skills in agricultural production and human interest and capability in Entrepreneurial Development. Finally the paper recommended among other things that curriculum planners should ensure that entrepreneurial education is taught as part of agricultural education.*

**Keywords:** Skills, entrepreneurial skills, Agricultural production, human capabilities

### Introduction

The rate of unemployment among the Nigerian young people and even the middle aged is on the increase. Unemployment is defined as a situation where someone of working age is not able to get a job but would like to be in full employment (<http://www.economics.help.org>blog2019>). Hornby (2010) simply puts it as number of people not having or without jobs. Unemployment is also defined as a term referring to individuals who are employable and seeking jobs but are unable to find such, that is those people who are available for work that do not have jobs (<http://corporatefinanceinstitute.com>UN> 2019). This implies that these employable people seeking for jobs wish to be engaged in areas where they will use their skills and become self-reliant.

Skill is the proficiency, facility or dexterity that is acquired or developed through training or experience (Mifflin, 2009). Mifflin also defined it as an art, trade or technique particularly one requiring the use of the hands or body. (Adeyemo, 2009) puts it as a quality of performance which does not depend solely upon a person's fundamental, innate capabilities but must be developed through training, practice and experience. This means that skills can be seen as an ability by which man adjust to life; one of such skills is the entrepreneurial skills.

Entrepreneurial skills according to Hisrich and Micheal (2002) is the ability to create something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychics and social risk and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary, personal satisfaction and independence. Olagunju (2004) saw it as the ability of an individual to exploit an idea and create an enterprise (small or big) not only for personal gains but also for social and developmental gains. Adeyemo (2009) summed it up by stating that entrepreneurial skills are skills necessary to enable one start, develop and succeed in home enterprise. Such skills are having good leadership qualities, ability to take risk, good knowledge of decision making, effective business planner and being entrepreneurial. Nelson and Neck in Nwosu, (2015). In the context of this study, entrepreneurship is for people who have the right level of interest that

would make them pursue their dreams, improve their lives and create businesses. It is the creation of some combinations that did not previously exist. It is often equated with small business ownership and management (Ezedum, Agbo & Odigbo, 2011). They maintained that entrepreneurship is not just an academic discipline, it is a way of life. Entrepreneurship is a vibrant assertion of the fact that individuals can be developed, then their outlooks changed and their ideas be converted into actions through organized and systematic programme entrepreneurs. These assertions will not be proved right if individuals are not directed towards areas they would develop their entrepreneurial skills. With reference to this study, one of such areas where individuals can be developed, their outlook changed and ideas converted into actions is agricultural productions.

Agriculture, according to Iwena (2008) and Akinsanmo, Akinsanmi, Adebisi and Olumakaiye (2011) is the production of crops (plants) and animals (livestock) for human use. Production in the view of Jinghan (cited in Nwosu 2015) involves the use of factors of production such as land, labour, capital and entrepreneur to produce outputs needed to satisfy consumers. Iwena (2008) saw it as all activities which results in the creation of goods and services. This implies that production is the process of changing or transforming input into output.

In the context of this study, Production means all the activities involved in the creation of different produce (plants and animals) and services from agriculture. Areas of agricultural production include food enterprises, horticulture, plantation agriculture, animal production, production of agro allied equipment, food processing and cottage agricultural business and distribution of foodstuffs (Olatoye 2012).

Views of the various areas of agricultural productions and contributions to economic growth, Abayomi (1992) observed that the rising agricultural productivities had been most important concomitant of successful industrialization. A retrospective view into the Nigerian economy and its development would reveal that agriculture was both the mainstay of the Nigerian economy and the chief foreign exchange earner (Chigbu, 2005). This was why Timmer in (2003) stated that the role of agriculture in economic development of most countries can hardly be over emphasized. Infact, the 1960s agriculture accounted for well over 80% of the export earnings and employs about 70% of the population. This contributions have however gradually declined over the years. This calls for improving agricultural production through developing entrepreneurial skills that will give rise to new methods and improving existing practices in agricultural production for reduction of unemployment.

### **Agricultural Productions Where Entrepreneurial Skills Can Be Developed**

Production is defined by Hornby (2010) as the process of growing or making food, goods or materials especially in large quantities. It is the act or process of making something naturally. This implies that production is a process of transforming (converting) inputs (raw materials) into outputs (finished products). Business Dictionary (2010) defines production as the process and method employed to transform tangible (raw materials) and semi-finished goods and intangible inputs (ideas, information and knowledge) into goods and services. From these definitions, production also applies to agriculture. Agriculture according to Webster (2011) is the science, art or practice of cultivating the soil, producing crops and raising livestock and marketing of the resulting product. Secla (2010) gave a more comprehensive definition thus "Farming" or "Agriculture" shall include farming in all of its branches and the cultivation and tillage of the soil, the airy production, growing and harvesting of any agricultural, floricultural or horticultural commodities, the growing and harvesting of forest products upon forest land, raising of livestock including horses, keeping of Horses as commercial enterprises, the keeping

and raising of poultry, swine cattle and other domesticated animals used for food purposes, bees, fur bearing animals and any forestry or lumbering operations performed by a farmer.

Agriculture is an enterprise, activity or practice. It is based on systematic body of knowledge (Science) and required skills (art). It is practiced for the purpose of producing food, other human uses or for economical gain (Bareja 2011). There are broad areas in agricultural productions where skills can be developed for improved food productivity. This, according to Wikipedia(2011) include animal husbandry, agro-forestry agronomy, horticulture, soil science, entomology plant pathology, animal pathology, food technology, plant breeding and genetics, agricultural extension, agricultural engineering, agricultural economics, crop science, veterinary medicine and crop farming etc. Olatoye (2012) supporting the above itemized yet other areas of agricultural investment and broke them down thus.

- Food Enterprise: This involves the growing of food crops such as cassava, yam, cocoyam, potatoes, corn, millet, soya beans, groundnut etc.
- Horticulture: Production of vegetables, herbs, fruits, flowers, dry season vegetable production etc.
- Plantation agriculture: Plantation of tea, Oil palm, cocoa, rice, millet, moringa, Jatropha, Pineapple, Sour sop, cashew, orchads etc.
- Animals: Production of grass cutters, goats, cattle, sheep, rabbits, snails, bees, dog, fish, Poultry, hatchery business, selling of six weeks old chicks, quails, etc
- agro-allied equipment: production of factors of production, sprinklers, fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides etc.
- Food Processing/ Cottage agric businesses: Food stuff processing and packaging (garri, yam flower, starch, beans, Tomato, pepper, rice etc), Catfish smoking, frozen food, chicken, snails, grasscutter, quail meat, prawns, palm oil, milking business, Moringa powder and oil production, cashew nut processing and packaging, feed formulation for catfish, poultry, quails, dogs etc.
- Distribution of Foodstuffs: Buying and selling to consumers. You don't have to be a producer. Olatoye made a conclusive remarks by opining that investment in agriculture will be the best in the 21<sup>st</sup> century because of the increase in world population and the demand for food

### **Strategies for Developing Entrepreneurial Skills in Agricultural Production**

Strategy is a plan that is intended to achieve a particular purpose. It is the process of planning something or putting a plan into operation in a skilful way (Hornby, 2010). Therefore, the following are the strategies for developing agricultural skills:

1. Planning: Planning is something you intend to achieve. Russell (2006) opined that entrepreneurial activity requires a paradigm shift and there are many techniques available to help the entrepreneur to see things in different perspectives, to come up with new ideas. These windows of new ideas are continuously opening and closing and strategic planning is required to access if the opportunity is worthwhile for the entrepreneur and how it should be successfully exploited. Onuoha (cited in Nwosu, 2015) stipulated that planning skills involves devising methods or procedures for doing something. It entails designs and scheming which demands the use of solving skills to determine existing problems, goals to be attained and ways of reaching those goals. This implies that strategic planning is essential to ensure successful operations

2. **Organization:** Next to planning is organization which involves putting the plan into action. It involves arranging the activities within the plan in a logical sequence, the purpose of reaching goals (Onuoha cited in Nwosu 2015). Adeyemo (2009) added that a learner of a new skill does not jump into operation without first receiving the necessary verbal instructions. Skilful elaboration and execution of the instructions serve to get the acts safely done. This instruction, the author continued perhaps given in bits, units, modules or stages must be fused together to form a skilled performance
3. **Implementation:** Theresa and Maria (2000) asserted that implementation involves using the resources one has assembled, following the task list according to schedule and monitoring the planned activities and progress. During implementation stage, the person that has acquired entrepreneurial skills put into effect all the production activities

Pleshette (2009) summarized the process of acquisition and development of entrepreneurial skills in four main stages namely:

- To objectively analyse and identify the current and foreseeable needs to the business, in terms of management, administrative and technical skills and the relative importance of these.
- To identify the entrepreneurs goals and objectives and accurately analyse and evaluate their skills and resources in relation to objectives.
- To produce a realistic personal development plan for the potential entrepreneur
- To monitor the ongoing performances of the entrepreneur once the business has started and progress made towards developing new skills that has been previously identified as necessary for the success of the business

From the above, one may deduce that real entrepreneurial skills is a kind of practical things, it is learned.

Adeyemo (2009) highlighted some pedagogical strategies for acquisition of entrepreneurial skills in agriculture in classroom situation. These are:

- **Classroom Assessment Techniques (CAT):** This is a way to monitor and facilitate students entrepreneurial skills. Here, the teachers ask the students to write a “minute paper” responding to questions such as “what was the most important thing you learned in today’s class?” “What question related to this session remains uppermost in your mind?” From these, the researcher selects some of the papers and prepare responses for the next class meeting. This strategy if well utilized is capable of developing entrepreneurial skills such as risk taking, as it will empower students to try new methods as opposed to the traditional approach they are used to in learning situations, he maintained.
- **Co-operative Learning Strategies:** In this method, the students are put in group learning situations to foster the development of entrepreneurial skills. This is because in properly structured co-operative learning environments, students gain support and feedback from other students and the teacher (Okebukola, 1984). Adeyemo further added that this will invariably develop entrepreneurial skills in the teaching and learning of science in both teachers and students by giving them ample opportunities to wisdom from their colleagues and to listen to the opinions of those who know some basic science concepts and principles. Again, it will develop in them the ability to learn from their mistakes.

- **Case Study/Discussion Method:** This approach involves a science teacher presenting a case (or story) to the class without a conclusion. Using prepared question, the teacher then leads the students through a discussion allowing students to construct a conclusion for the case. This strategy will develop entrepreneurial skills in both the teachers and their students as it will give them opportunity to: evaluate all reasonable inferences, consider a variety of possible viewpoints or perspectives remain open to alternative interpretations, accept new explanations, model or paradigms because they explain the evidence better, is simple, or have fewer constituencies or covers more data, accept new priorities in response to re-evaluations of the evidences or re-assessments of our real interests and do not reject unpopular views out of hand
- **Using Questions:** This strategy identifies ways of using questions in the classroom. For example
  - I. **Reciprocal peer questioning:** Following lecture, the teacher displays a list of question stems (such as what are the strengths and weaknesses of...). Students must write questions about the lecture materials. In small groups, the students ask each other the questions. Then the whole class discusses some of the questions from each small group.
  - II. **Readers' Questions:** Require students to write questions as assigned reading and turn them in at the beginning of the class. Select a few of the questions as the impetus for class discussion
- **Conference Style Learning:** The teacher does not “teach” the class in the sense of lecturing. The teacher is a facilitator of a conference. Students must thoroughly read all required materials before class. Assigned readings should be in the zone of proximal development. That is readings should not only be able to be understand it but also challenge it. The class consists of the students asking questions of each other and discussing these questions. The teacher does not remain passive but rather, helps “direct and mode discussion by posing strategic questions and helping students build on each others “ideas” (Grayson, 1997)

### **Facilities needed for Development of Entrepreneurial Skills**

Facilities refers to buildings, services, equipment etc that are provided for a particular purpose. It is a special feature of the machine, service etc that makes it possible to do something extra. It is also a natural ability to learn or do something easily (Hornby, 2010).

Based on the above definitions, Onwuka (1981) stressed the importance of facilities (resource materials) when he stated that facilities result in more effective learning of factual information and skills in less time than more verbalization. He further opined that when resource materials (facilities) are effectively used, the supply concrete basis for conceptual reasoning and reduce meaningless word responses of the learner. It equally makes learning more permanent and provides experiences not easily obtained through other materials and contributes to the efficiency, depth and variety of learning. This means that human beings learn more easily and faster with the aid of facilities. For development of entrepreneurial skills, there have to be availability of facilities.

Essia (2012) stipulated that developing entrepreneurial skills must start from the institutions where these farmers are trained. For him, formal education is a core component of enterprise development because the larger proportion of the population go through it to actualize their career goals. This tend to imply that development of entrepreneurs and

entrepreneurial skills can be stimulated through a set of supporting institutions and through deliberate innovative actions which stimulate changes and fully support capable individuals or groups.

In the view of Emelue (2010), to develop entrepreneurial skills, a well-equipped laboratory or workshops are needed. Hence Uzoagulu (1993) emphasized the importance of tools and equipment and opined that equipment must be utilized in order to give training and impart the required skills to people.

Still stressing on the need to use adequate facilities for entrepreneurial development, especially in agricultural production, Olaitan (1998) maintained that it must through agricultural education. To him, agricultural education is the training of the learner in agricultural production as well as the technique to inculcate it into the learner. Esuruoso (1997) supporting Olaitan viewed agricultural education as a special field of study which focuses on the training of the human body and the mind that will make the individual fit into the organization through the acquisition of the right skills, behaviour and attitude. To Egbule (2004), agricultural education is the type of education for training learners in the fields of agricultural productions including the techniques of delivering the agricultural subject matter. Egbule also noted that agricultural education teaches skills including entrepreneurial skills in the general fields of agriculture including its teaching methods. It is an occupational education designed to develop a particular knowledge, skills including entrepreneurial skills associated with various farming designs. Agricultural education as an occupational education trains engineers, sometimes known as natural resource engineers who help in developing entrepreneurial skills by applying engineering principles of science and technology as well as knowledge of agricultural practices to solve problems relating to sustainable agricultural production. These engineers design equipment, buildings and dams which can utilize the environment and resources more effectively while ensuring their renewability and sustainability. Furthermore, Tyson, Petrin and Rogers (1994) is of the view that the creation of conducive environment promotes entrepreneurship and stated that National agricultural policies such as price subsidies to guarantee minimum farm income and the keeping of land in production when over productions already exists are definitely counterproductive to entrepreneurship. They therefore asserted that the long run solution for sustainable agricultural development is competitive agriculture. While prices can set the direction, entrepreneurs who will meet the challenge of increasingly demanding international markets and who will find profitable alternative land, alternative business opportunities and so on are needed.

This implies that policies to increase the supply of entrepreneurs, policies for developing the markets for other inputs into successful entrepreneurship, policies for increasing the effectiveness of entrepreneurs and policies for increasing demand for entrepreneurial activities at National, Regional and Community level should be targeted

### **Human interests and capabilities in Entrepreneurial development**

Interest can be seen as an energizing factor in human endeavour which directs the mind onto something and leaving everything else (Adeyemo, 1978). Hornby (2010) also defined interest as the feeling that one has when he/she wants to know or learn more about something or somebody. This implies that interest impels a person to seek out particular objects, activities, skills understanding or goals for attention and acquisition. Interest provides a derive in broad direction.

Interest in the context of entrepreneurial development is a key factor. This is why Kimmons (2006) stated that what makes a successful entrepreneur is interest and vision. An entrepreneur must work in an area that interests him/her since entrepreneurship pays off according to performances rather than time spent on a particular job. This implies that without interest, real progress at work is not achieved and that interest is rooted as the instinctive drive of man and gives such vitality to these activities.

Commenting on individuals who can become entrepreneurs, Ezedum, et al (2011) stated that entrepreneurship is for people who have the right level of interest that could make them pursue their dreams, improve their lives and create a business. This is because entrepreneurship denotes the creation of some combinations that did not previously exist. They maintained that entrepreneurship is not just an academic discipline, it is a way of life. Johnrud (1991) stipulated that entrepreneurship is usually about very determined people who make their own circumstances, break and succeed. It is lot more about inner drive than outward trappings and appearances.

In the light of the above, one can deduce that examining what are your interest may help one a lot in deciding the kind of business you want to start. Indeed, you would be able to put absolute dedication into your business only if you have a true interest in its core, independently from any financial motivation.

Capability on the other hand is defined by Hornby (2010) as the ability or qualities necessary to do something. Following from this, Kimmons (2006) stated that entrepreneurship is the act of setting out on your own and starting business instead of working for someone else in his business. This implies that an entrepreneur is a person who is ready to take risks. He emphasized that his/her behaviours reflect the kind of person willing to put his/her career and financial security on the line and take risks in the name of an idea, spending much time as well as capital on the venture. Ezedum et al (2011) opined that entrepreneur is someone who actually searches for change, responds to it and exploits change as an opportunity. According to this perception, entrepreneurial traits such as the need to achieve, risk taking propensity, self-esteem and internal locus of control, creating an innovative behaviour, the need for independence, occupational primacy, fixation upon goals and dominance are all inborn. One can deduce now that an entrepreneur is one who is creative, innovative, risk taker, one who has the ability to translate ideas into actions. This indicates that all these characteristics are necessary for an entrepreneur in agricultural productions.

## **Conclusion**

Skill can be seen as a quality of performance which does not depend solely upon a person's fundamental, innate capacities but must be developed through training, practice and experiences. People need broad range of skills in order to contribute to modern economy and take their places in the technological society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This means that skill is an ability by which man adjust to life; such skill is entrepreneurial skill. Entrepreneurship is for people who have the right level of interest that could pursue their dreams, improve their lives and create a business. Entrepreneurship is a vibrant assertion of the fact that individuals can be developed, their outlooks changed and their ideas can be converted into actions through an organized and systematic programmes for entrepreneurs.

## Recommendations

In order to solve the problem of unemployment through developing entrepreneurial skills in agricultural productions, the following recommendations are made:

1. Curriculum planners should ensure that entrepreneurship education is taught as part of agricultural education
2. Skills acquisition centers should include entrepreneurship education in training and retraining of students and farmers.
3. Government should provide funds necessary for teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education in schools.

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