

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN DELTA STATE

Dr (Mrs.) Imobighe Mabel Uleburin

Department of Vocational Education,
Delta State University, Abraka

Abstract

The study examined agricultural education for entrepreneurial skills development among university students in Delta State. The study was guided by two research questions. The review was undertaken in line with the objectives of the study. The study was a descriptive survey with a target population of 402 (19 lecturers and 383 students) agricultural education lecturers and students respectively from two Universities in the state (Delta State University, Abraka and University of Delta, Agbor) respectively. A random sampling technique was used to select 200 students and 10 lecturers for the study. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire that was designed in a 4-point rating scale of agreement and validated to elicit information on each of the research questions. The reliability coefficient (r) of 0.81 was obtained using test-retest method. Data generated were analysed using the Mean and Standard Deviation. Findings revealed that agricultural education enables students overcome obstacles in farm management and that participation in agriculture enable students generate knowledge to solve challenges. The study concluded that agricultural education programme would improve university students' managerial skills in agricultural businesses, and expands their knowledge in food production if practically implemented. The paper recommended amongst others that government should ensure that agricultural education is directed towards integrating the needed skills that will propel students in managing and bringing new ideas in agricultural production.

Keywords: Agricultural Education, Entrepreneurial Skill, Managerial Skills, Leadership Skills

Introduction

Nigeria as a nation is rapidly growing in population. The demand for food, shelter, clothing and health care is seriously on the increase. Agricultural Education is a systematic programme of learning that is made available for learners desiring to acquire skills in business, science and technology of plant and animal production and the environmental and natural resources needed for such business (Oke & Fabamise, 2018). Agricultural education is designed to provide students with competencies to make them aware of and prepare them for the world of work.

Agricultural learners are those attending an educational institution and are ambitious and actively seeking for knowledge through research to solve problems relating to the field of agriculture. These problems in agricultural production may include leadership skill, managerial skill, critical and creative thinking skills, innovative skill development etc. These skills can only be achieved through vocational agricultural education and training since it creates business and employment opportunities for the youths. In critical and creative thinking skills, an entrepreneur needs to come up with fresh ideas and make good decisions about opportunities and potential projects.

Agricultural Education offers numerous opportunities for youth to be economically and socially empowered but they require the right skills to be efficient and productive (Nnodim & Johnwest, 2016). Agricultural education is the study of the interrelationship between agriculture as a discipline also referred to the teaching of skills, knowledge, values and attitude in production of goods, processing and marketing of agricultural and related products (Arokoyu & Ndeobi, 2014). The new agricultural education curricular emphasized on the acquisition of

productive work skills for paid and self-employment through prescribed activities and projects which are inherent aspects of agriculture. Thus, the relevance of agricultural education programme depends on the suitability of the impacts that its graduates make in relation to requirements of the world of work and socio-economic development in general. Work skills are a key outcome of education and high quality training. Effective agricultural education for students can contribute to developing work skills for employment. Enhancing graduates of agricultural education work skills is a double-edged sword. They are empowered to engage in their own livelihoods, while at the same time, they can also provide these skills to the rest of the community as barefoot extension workers.

The opportunities in the assessment of white collar jobs are very slim for youths after graduation from higher institution. This menace has increased the level of unemployment in Nigeria. The mass unemployment situation has led to series of vices in the society. This state of affairs according to Ebenehi and Oguche (2012) and Ruškytė, Barkauskaitė and Navickas (2017) has resulted in instability and insecurity in this country. For this reasons, there is the need to integrate vocational and technical education in the Nigerian educational system with a view to emphasize on the acquisition of practical and applied skills including scientific knowledge for job creation and self-reliant among school leavers. Ojidu (2011) stressed that vocational agricultural education exposes the learners to the acquisition of demonstrative skills which could be transformed into economic benefit.

Development of skills in agriculture is a key to eradicating poverty, promoting equitable economic, social development and sustaining our environment. According to Yusuf and Soyemi (2012), vocational skills are vital to the economic and entrepreneurial development of any State. The skills are needed for enterprise productivity and profitability as well as individual prosperity. Students require acquisition of intellectual competencies and skills in entrepreneurship that can be utilized in building agricultural industries that will absorb human capital to create wealth for the nation by increasing both her Gross National Product (GNP) and per capita income.

Entrepreneurship is individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objective. It is seen as vital to promoting innovation, competitiveness and economic growth (Oke & Fabamise, 2018). Entrepreneurship skills also provide benefits regardless of whether a person sees their future as starting a business. Nnodim and Aleru (2020) defined entrepreneurship as being enthusiastic and having the capacity to hunt for investment opportunities within an environment and be skilled in establishing and running an enterprise successfully based on the identifiable opportunities.

Entrepreneurship in agriculture is that which bring innovations; satisfaction and new consumer demand (Nnodim & Aleru, 2020). In this regard, Oke and Fabamise (2018) opined that entrepreneurial skills in agriculture are simply the necessary set of skills necessary to become an entrepreneur and successfully run a business or add value to an existing one. Entrepreneurial skills linked to agricultural businesses include: communication skills; creative/innovative skills; decision-making skills; problem-solving skills and leadership skills. Precision consultancy as cited by Solomon, Ramani and Alabduljader (2017) posited that these employable skills enable graduates to work in private business enterprises and also to be managers of their own businesses.

For students to engage in agricultural entrepreneurship they must possess the leadership skills. This can only be actualized through agricultural education programme. Manz and Neck (2013) posited that agricultural education develops student's self-leadership skills. The context of agricultural education programme enhances learners' research capacity to understand and control the emotions of self and others. The essential idea behind self-leadership is that leadership in business becomes easy if you can successfully lead yourself. Students in

agricultural education programme gain knowledge on leadership skills such as local, state, regional, national, and international issues affecting agricultural industries and methods to solve such issues. Beyond this students gain increased self-confidence, broadened horizons, enhanced understanding of community and/or society (Syam, Akib, Patonangi, and Guntur, 2018).

Howell, Weir and Cook as cited in Amadi and Gibson (2020) opined that agricultural training improved interpersonal relationships and improves other leadership skills on participants. Agricultural education according to Udoeye and Mba (2018) increases students' involvement in organizations, activities, broadening their perspectives on agriculture and sharpening their critical thinking skills and becoming more aware of people's differences. Agricultural education develops among students an understanding of the economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions of public problems that will propel them with the required skills in handling and controlling agribusiness enterprise. Mohsin, Halim and Farhana (2017) stated that training in agricultural production increase the ability of students to solve public problems by improving their leadership and group participation skills. On-the-job training develops students' leadership skills in agribusiness. Oke et al as cited by Ng, Kee, and Ramayah (2016) posited that agricultural education programme improves students' decision making abilities in production, marketing of products and budgeting.

Managerial skills are the right knowledge and competence of an individual in a position to fulfill some specific management activities. These skills include Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting and Budgeting. However, these knowledge and competence can be acquired through practical implementation of agricultural activities. This raised the concern of Amadi and Aleru (2016) who asserts that practical agriculture if implemented develops students' production and entrepreneurship skills. This programme enables students to device means of tackling barriers in farm management. Involving students into practical work in agricultural education inculcate them with the ability to think and conceptualize abstract situations in any position they found themselves. Assigning farm plots to students in school develop their coordination and planning skill. Practical agriculture enhance students/trainees with organizing, staffing, directing and controlling skills to manage sizeable farms for economic development. Eassy (2018) asserts that engaging students in field work improves their ability to set budget and production target when they eventually start-up their own farm.

Advance in technology are key to the future of agriculture as farmers strive to feed the world with limited resources. Innovation is the creation of better or more effective products, processes, technologies, or ideas that gives a distinctive value. The skills developed in agricultural education programmes are very essential in carrying out the full realization of entrepreneurship abilities in the learners. Learners improve in their capacity of innovativeness, creativity, and productivity in the field of agriculture through the substantial skills developed in the programme (Amadi & Nnodim, 2018). As entrepreneurship is regarded as developing a business enterprise, agricultural education provides deep innovative skills where entrepreneurship is being displayed. Teaching new skills in agricultural education encourages new ideas and strengthening networking abilities. Students become creative on the basis of practical they are exposed to.

According to RezaeiZadeh, Hogan, O'Reilly, Cunningham, and Murphy (2017), learners' device new way of doing things when given work on crop or animal production. The ability of students to be creative in agricultural production depends on the level practical exposure giving to them. Albert (2017) asserts that agricultural training prepare students minds to think creatively and ideate.

Statement of the Problem

Agricultural education programme is targeted at developing individuals' skills in food production and make students self-reliance through establishment of agribusinesses. This target has not been adequately achieved as most graduates lack the necessary skills to startup small and medium scale enterprise for income generation. However, students would be able to become employer of labour and create wealth for themselves if agricultural education will focus mainly on hands-on experience. Hence, this study sought to find out the role of agricultural education programme for entrepreneurship skills development among university students in Delta State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the role of agricultural education programme for entrepreneurship skill development among university students. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. how agricultural education programme developed leadership skill among university students in Delta State; and
2. how agricultural education programme develop managerial skill among university students in Delta State.

Research Questions

The following research question were raised to guide the study

1. How does agricultural education programmes develop leadership skill among university students in Delta State?
2. How does agricultural education programmes develop managerial skill among university students in Delta State?

Methodology

The study was a descriptive survey. The target population was 402 (19 lecturers and 383 students) agricultural education lecturers and students respectively from two universities (Delta State University, Abraka and University of Delta, Agbor) respectively. A random sampling technique was used to select 200 students and 19 lecturers for the study. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire that was designed in a 4-point rating scale of agreement and validated to elicit information on each of the research questions. The reliability coefficient (r) of 0.87 was obtained using test-retest method. The data were analyzed descriptively using Mean and Standard Deviation.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1 How does agricultural education programmes develop leadership skill among university students in Delta State? Result is presented in Table 1

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis on how Agricultural Education programme develop Leadership Skill (N=219)

S/N	Statements	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
1.	Hands-on experience in agricultural education enhance students self confidence	3.21	0.70	Agreed	3.00	1.10	Agreed
2.	Improves students ability in problem solving	3.19	0.58	Agreed	3.02	0.61	Agreed

3.	Gives students in-depth knowledge on the value of planning in agricultural enterprise	3.11	0.73	Agreed	2.97	0.72	Agreed
4.	Enhance students competence in decision making	3.04	0.81	Agreed	3.10	0.54	Agreed
5.	Develops students analytical ability in agricultural businesses	2.76	0.69	Agreed	3.12	0.75	Agreed
6.	Students' attachment in production agriculture enhance their evaluative ability	3.56	0.83	Agreed	3.22	0.61	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.13	0.85	Agreed	2.95	0.86	Agreed

Result in Table 1 revealed the mean response of lecturers and students on how agricultural education programme develop leadership skills among university students in Delta State. The respondents agreed that hands-on experience in agricultural education enhance students' self-confidence (3.21 and 3.00), improves students' ability in problem solving (3.19 and 3.02) and gives students in-depth knowledge on planning in agricultural enterprise (3.11 and 2.97). The study is in agreement with Howell, et al., (2009) who opined that students' ability to solve production problems develops through their involvement in agricultural production. The finding also corresponds to Hustedde and Woodward (1996) who asserted that leadership skills in agribusiness can only be achieved if students are placed on-the-job. The study also revealed that agricultural education programme enhances students' competence in decision making (3.04 and 3.10), develops students' analytical ability in agricultural businesses (2.76 and 3.12) and enhance their evaluative ability (3.56 and 3.22). The study corroborate with Oke et al. (2009) who posited that agricultural education programme improves students' decision making abilities in production, marketing of products and farm budgeting.

Research Question 2 How does agricultural education programmes develop managerial skill among university students in Delta State? Result is presented in Table 2

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis on how Agricultural Education programme develop Managerial Skill (N=219)

S/n	Statements	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
1.	Practical agriculture motivate students' planning and coordinating aptitude	2.98	0.83	Agreed	3.23	0.76	Agreed
2.	Improves students' production skills	3.11	0.54	Agreed	3.22	0.56	Agreed
3.	Enhance students skills in controlling farm affairs	3.10	0.63	Agreed	3.01	0.72	Agreed
4.	Enables students overcome obstacles in farm management	3.19	0.51	Agreed	3.11	0.61	Agreed
5.	Participation in agriculture enable students generate innovative solutions to solve challenges	3.04	0.73	Agreed	2.99	0.59	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.13	0.85	Agreed	2.95	0.86	Agreed

Result in Table 2 revealed the mean response of lecturers and students on how agricultural education programme develop managerial skills among university students in Delta State. The respondents agreed that practical agriculture motivate students' planning and coordinating aptitude (2.98 and 3.23), improves students' production skills (3.11 and 3.22) and enhance students skills in controlling farm affairs (3.10 and 3.01). The finding is in compliance with Amadi and Aleru (2016) who asserts that practical agriculture if implemented develops students' production and entrepreneurship skills. The study also revealed that agricultural education enables students overcome obstacles in farm management (3.19 and 3.11) and that participation in agriculture enable students generate innovative solutions to solve challenges (3.04 & 2.99). The findings are in line with Eassy (2018) who asserted that engaging students in field work improves their ability to set budget and production target when they eventually start-up their own farm.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was therefore deduced that agricultural education programme would improve university students' managerial skills in agricultural businesses, and expands their knowledge in food production if practically implemented.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the study therefore recommended that:

1. Government should ensure agricultural education is directed towards integrating the needed skills that will propel students in managing and bringing new ideas in agricultural production.
2. Teachers should endeavor to inculcate students with the practical experience in setting up agri-business venture and boost their income after graduation; and curriculum planners should enforce the implementation of practical work into agricultural education programmes to prepare students for employment in the field of agriculture.

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