

## Agricultural Entrepreneurship as a Platform for Self Reliance and Security among Youths in Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State – Nigeria

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### Abstract

This paper examined agricultural entrepreneurship as a means for ensuring self-reliance and security among youths in Njikoka Local Government of Anambra State, Nigeria. The objective of the paper is to underscore the relevance of agricultural entrepreneurship engagement among youths in providing the needed employment among youths thereby ensuring self-reliance and security among youths in Nigeria. The paper adopted an empirical approach. Purposive random sampling was used to determine a sample of 350 youths while a five-point likert scale on structured questionnaires was used to elicit information from the respondents. Data was analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM). Results showed that there was strong relationship between agricultural entrepreneurship and self-reliance. Similarly, the result revealed a strong relationship between agricultural entrepreneurship and security among youths in Njikoka Local Government of Anambra State. The paper therefore concluded that agricultural entrepreneurship engagement among youths in Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State is a sure way for the attainment of self-reliance and provision of security among various communities. The paper, therefore, makes recommendations for increased impetus in entrepreneurship development by different arms of government as well as involvement of private agencies in the sponsorship of youth trainings in entrepreneurship as well as provision of startup capitals for the youths, among others.

### Keywords:

Entrepreneur,  
Agricultural  
Entrepreneurship,  
Self-reliance,  
Security and  
Economic  
development

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### **Background to the Study**

Agriculture originated from two latin words “Ager” meaning field and “cultura” which means cultivation (Akamobi, 2016). It is the cultivation of crops, rising of livestock, processing, packaging, storage, distribution and marketing of agricultural products and the application of generic principles for the improvement of economic qualities in local species of plants, and domestic animals for the benefit of mankind.

The agricultural sector is essential in the economic development and poverty alleviation drive of many nations. The importance of this sector is more pronounced in developing countries where it constitutes the main thrust of national survival hence huge investments have been made in agricultural extension of such nations. However, in Nigeria, the discovery of crude oil and attendant shift from agricultural revenue to oil revenue on which our country's budgetary provisions are based have caused more harm than good to our economic development. After the squandermania arising from the oil boom of the 1970s, less emphasis have been placed on agricultural entrepreneurship by succeeding governments since they have continued to pay lip service to the resuscitation of agriculture as alternate source of revenue.

Learning the hard way, the present administration arising from recession in 2015 swung into action realizing that any country that cannot produce what its citizens can eat is in serious trouble! Giving the bitter experience of the recession, the present government has since swung into action by encouraging citizens to embrace agriculture. Apart from the support of financing to farmers, government has also encouraged farmers with improved seedlings, provision of fertilizers, herbicides, tractor and allied machinery services at reduced prices, among others.

In all these efforts, agricultural engagement appears to still remain in the hands of the old farmers. It is imperative, therefore to state that the state of affairs relating to depleting economic resources leading to regular shortfalls in budgetary provisions requires radical approach towards economic diversification. The sure way for this radical approach requires the involvement of youths in agricultural entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship has its root from the word “entrependra” which according to Hossain (2015) means to undertake, to pursue opportunities, to fulfill needs and wants through innovation to undertake business.

Entrepreneurship is an undertaking in which one is involved in the task of creating and managing an enterprise for a purpose. It entails planning, organizing and coordinating activities and resources necessary to manage an enterprise (Olagunju, 2014). Today entrepreneurship has become an important issue because of the quest of government to develop the economy. Because many people lack the necessary technical and management skills to manage an enterprise successfully, many governments are now making efforts along with other concerned agencies to train people on simple techniques to manage successful enterprises. To this end agricultural entrepreneurship has become

one platform in which the youths in various local governments in Nigeria are encouraged to venture into in order to create employment for themselves as well as creating wealth and boosting economic development as well as ensuring the security and welfare of the nation. It is against the above backdrop that this paper focuses on the Agricultural Entrepreneurship as a platform for self-reliance and security among youths in Njioka LGA of Anambra State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It is no longer news that Nigeria went into recession in 2015/2016 under the administration of Mohammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. During the recession, our naira fell to an all-time low that it could not stand with the other currencies, let alone buy meaningful items in the market. Agricultural products were scarce and as such the prices were at exorbitant rates. A cup of garri sold for N100/ N200. Rice and other commodities were also sold at cut-throat prices. The reason for the recession was attributed to low production. Our country was unable to produce what the country can consume; thereby depending heavily on importation!

Nigeria's experience therefore, revealed that our succeeding governments were paying lip service to agriculture. No concerted efforts were made to match action with words in agricultural financing. There was no strong policy on agricultural entrepreneurship. Our youths roam the streets after graduation with no job to eke a living. More worrisome is the fact that they lack basic skills to start something on their own. Even some youths that attempt small businesses of their own are frustrated due to lack of funding (Maduka, 2017).

It is disheartening to state that these youths, most of who are in the productive age-brackets, instead of embracing agricultural entrepreneurship or other productive ventures are recruited by politicians as thugs and canvassers during elections.

It is against the backdrop of Nigeria's recession experience and governments' insensitiveness towards development of skilled youths that this paper focuses on agricultural entrepreneurship as a platform for self-reliance and security among youths in Njikoka LGA of Anambra State.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions for this paper include:

- i) To what extent does agricultural entrepreneurship offer youths in Njikoka LGA with opportunities for self-reliance?
- ii) To what extent does agricultural entrepreneurship ensure security among youths in Njikoka LGA?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study is to underscore the benefits of youths' engagement in Agricultural entrepreneurship as a means for self-reliance and security among youths in Njikoka Local Government of Anambra State.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i) Find out the extent agricultural entrepreneurship provides self-reliance to youths in Njikoka Local Government Area.
- ii) To investigate the extent agricultural entrepreneurship offers security to youths in Njikoka Local Government Area.

### **Significance of the Study**

It is significant to carry a study in this area for several reasons. Agriculture is the only occupation that can provide over 50% employment to Nigerians given our vast resources. It is therefore, pertinent to state that this study will be significant to government because it will enable the Federal and state ministries of agriculture to understand the basic needs of the youth in agricultural entrepreneurship and need for the provision of agricultural inputs like fertilizer, improved seedlings and funding;

The policy makers in agriculture will find the work useful in repositioning the various institutions involved in agricultural programmes planning and development. Similarly, entrepreneurs/business men will find the work useful in recognizing appropriate benefits in investment in agricultural goods and services. The students in the tertiary institutions of learning as well as lecturers in agricultural entrepreneurship will find the work useful since apart from contributing to literature it sure makes contributions to learning.

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **Conceptual Clarification**

An entrepreneur is one who is capable of utilizing scarce resources to provide something beneficial to the market place (Udu, 20008). An entrepreneur is one who is also capable of taking calculable risk. He invests where others fear to go into. He initiates and nurtures a new business.

#### **Concept of Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities in an environment and be able to establish and manage such enterprise successfully within the limits of resources available. Entrepreneurship is often viewed as a function which is most commonly associated with direction and combination of productive input (Sparrow, 2007). Entrepreneurship is a process of change where innovation is the most vital function of the entrepreneur (Schumpeter, 2008).

Encouraging youth entrepreneurial interest and spirit in agriculture is quite necessary. This means that supporting core ideologies, respect for individual's initiatives and personal growth and encouraging each individual's ability and creativity are all necessary to build entrepreneurial economy. (Okocha, 1999) stated that skilled persons are useful both at home and in the society at large. Entrepreneurial skill acquisitions, particularly, in agriculture, ensures that people possess specific, saleable skills, thus increasing the chances and opportunities of getting jobs or becoming self reliant.

### **Entrepreneurship and Agriculture**

The European commission in its sixth framework research of 2008 documented the relevance of entrepreneurship to agriculture and concluded with a list of skills farmers need to succeed in agribusiness and more specifically, entrepreneurial skills needed in view of the ongoing developments taking place in and around agriculture. This in precise term is agribusiness which was coined in 1957 by Davis and Goldberg. Agribusiness is the business of agricultural production which according to Wikipedia (2016) refers to agriculture conducted strictly on commercial principles.

The European Commission Sixth Framework Research Report therefore highlighted technical and production skills, business management skills, business opportunity skills, business strategy skills, and networking skills as five (5) categories of skills farmers need today in order to succeed in business without production of the product (Deekor, 2019)

### **Agricultural Entrepreneurship and Employment Generation**

Agriculture has a wide variety of occupational areas ranging from on- farm, to off- farm agricultural service occupations. The on- farm covers the occupational areas of crop production, animal production and fisheries culture while the off- farm refers to those agricultural inputs and equipment manufacturing, processing, and service occupations. When people are trained to own their farm business as an enterprise using the principles of vocational education, the sky will be the limit in employment generation and opportunities.

Ekele, Abdullahi and Anjor (2016), stated that citrus production is a lucrative business and that capacity building of the youth in citrus production will help create job and at the same time improve production output that was below the market output.

Adetunji, Olaniyi and Raufu (2007), believe that employment opportunities created through the cocoa production industry is capable of engaging all the youths in Oyo state. They further stated that engagement of youths in agricultural entrepreneurship is a sure fire for self-employment/ self reliance, income generation and security.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on Resource Based Theory. This theory originated by E. Ecnrose in her 1959 work "The theory of the Growth of the Firm" (New York Wiley) began to be employed and developed in management terms in mid 1980s by J. Barnery and K. Conner (Dollinger, 2006). The theory in entrepreneurship context holds that entrepreneurship is facilitated when there are capabilities and resources which the entrepreneur either possesses or can acquire and deploy in sustainable manner over a long term can an entrepreneurial firm achieve sustainable competitive advantage and success.

This theory proposes that through a good understanding of the resource potentials; through good vision, intuition and creative act, an entrepreneur chooses a particular industry (such as agriculture), where resources that are valuable, rare, hard to copy (or

inimitable) and resources that are non-substitutable, the entrepreneur, will not only be able to succeed, he will above all, be able to enjoy long term competitive advantage and economic success.

Without sustainable competitive advantage entrepreneurial successes are ephemeral as competitors quickly obliterate the successful outcome of the initial effort. Sustainable competitive advantage comes when entrepreneurs possess and utilize resources and capabilities that are:

- (1) Valuable- because these resources occurring within the environment as opportunity, effectively and efficiently facilitate the implementation of the strategy.
- (2) Rare- because the resources are not enough to go round among competitors or those wishing to enter into competition.
- (3) Hard to copy- because those who are competitors as well as those wishing to compete, cannot duplicate the resources.
- (4) Non- substitutable- because no other resource can be used successfully as alternative.

Resources that are useful in entrepreneurial context include:

1. Physical resources
2. Reputational resources
3. Organizational resources
4. Financial resources
5. Intellectual and Human resources
6. Technological resources.

Armed with these resources in appropriate mix, an entrepreneur as well as an entrepreneurial organization will achieve success and enjoy sustainable advantage in choosing areas of effort.

This theory is relevant because the key concepts of vision, intuition and creativity are involved in youth agricultural entrepreneurship. Hence, the management of valuable, rare and hard-to copy (or inimitable) resources by the youths will not only ensure success, but above all long term competitive advantage and permanent success in employment and wealth creation.

### **Empirical Review**

Entrepreneurship engagement in Agriculture has been variously studied by authors. Nzeribe T.A.K. & Ofordile, S. N. (2015) carried out a study on Agricultural Entrepreneurship and Wealth Creation among youths in Orumba South Local government of Anambra State. The methodology was survey design. A sample of 500 youths were drawn out of the youth population of 16430 through Taro Yamane formula. By adopting structural equation modeling (SEM) in the analysis of data, the study revealed that agricultural entrepreneurship has strong positive correlation with self



employment, provision of income and permanent employment. The researchers therefore concluded that Agricultural entrepreneurship is a key ingredient of self employment among youths in Orumba South Local Government. It also provides needed skills for self-reliance as well as a major provider of income for the youths in national development. The authors therefore, recommended among other things, the adoption of entrepreneurial training, particularly in agriculture among youths in various local governments in Nigeria. This step, they suggested will engage most idle youths in the community towards contributing to wealth creation and economic development and security of the nation.

Maduka (2017) studied youth entrepreneurship in agriculture as a source of self-employment. He adopted a survey design. 215 Youths were randomly selected through purposive sampling out of 5600 registered youths in various skill acquisition and entrepreneurship centres in Awgu Local Government of Enugu State. By adopting means and standard deviation to analyse the responses based on the research questions, the author submitted that agricultural entrepreneurship is strongly related to self-employment. It was also discovered that the youths embraced agricultural entrepreneurship as a major source of income and independence.

The study therefore concluded that agricultural entrepreneurship has strong relationship with self-employment as well as provision of income and security among youths in Awgu local government area of Enugu state. The study, therefore recommended for the institution of laws that will make agricultural entrepreneurship compulsory among all youths between the ages of 18-35 in institutions of learning as well as school drop outs in the villages, among others.

Nzeribe and Nnabuike (2016), also investigated agricultural entrepreneurship as a means to economic development and self-reliance: A study of selected agro-based skill acquisition programmes in Nsukka west Local Government Area of Enugu State. The study adopted survey design. 118 respondents were randomly selected among the different skill acquisition and entrepreneurship groups in the local government. Hence, structured questionnaires were issued to the selected respondents, while analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the data.

The study revealed that there is strong positive relationship between agricultural entrepreneurship and economic development as well as self-employment.

The study therefore concludes that entrepreneurship in agriculture provides economic development as well as self-employment to the youths in Nsukka West Local Government Area.

The study therefore concludes that investment in various agricultural entrepreneurships should be encouraged at all tiers of government to create meaningful engagement of youths in economic development and self-employment in Nigeria.

Similarly, other literature has largely reported consistent findings on agricultural entrepreneurship and self-employment among youths. In a study by Kruegar (1993), agricultural entrepreneurship was found to have significant effect on self-employment among youths. Fitzsimons and Douglas (2011) found self-employment intentions to be positively related to agricultural entrepreneurship. Other studies that have reported positive effects of agricultural entrepreneurship include Muhammed (2013); Suitaris, Xerbinate and Andreas (2007); Ewemi, Oyenuga and Owoyede (2012); Idogho and Ainabo (2011).

### **Methodology**

This study was carried out in Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State. Njikoka Local Government Area is one of the 21 Local Government Areas in Anambra State of Nigeria. There are 7 major towns in Njikoka comprising of Abagana, Enugwu Agidi, Enugwu Ukwu, Nawfia, Etitie Nimo, Abba town and Umuariam-Nawfia.

The population of Njikoka is put at 196,300 according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) projection of 2016; with a youth population of 80,239 in the age bracket of 18-35 years. Data for this study was sought via primary method with structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to 350 youths across 7 towns of Njikoka Local Government Area. The nature of the questionnaire used for this study was a five-point likert-scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". (5 = strongly agree, 4 = "Agree" 3 = "undecided", 2 = "Disagree, 1 = "Strongly Disagree).

The sampled youths of 350 were drawn using purposive sampling procedure. This method was adopted because the records available in the local government show those 50 youths were each selected for the skill acquisition and agricultural entrepreneurship programme in Njikoka Local Government. Hence, all the 50 registered youths in each of the seven (7) towns were drawn to make up 350 out of the youth population of 80,239.

### **Analytical Techniques**

The structural equation model (SEM) was used to analyze the data for this study. The SEM is an extension of the general linear model (GLM) that enables a researcher to test a set of regression equations simultaneously. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and the Covariance Based Structural Equation Modelling (C-SEM) (Esposito, 2009). While the VB-SEM also known as partial least square structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) requires small sample size and little or no fitness tests, the CB-SEM requires large sample size of at least 200 and produces many fitness indexes which reflect the appropriateness of a measurement model. This study adopted the Covariance Based Structural Equation Modelling (CB-SEM) given that the sample size for this study is above 200.

Table 1 shows the indices for testing the model fit and the benchmark.



**Table 1.**

Indices	Benchmark	Result
Root mean square of Error Approximations (RMSEA)	<0.05	Value less than 0.5 is accepted
Normal fit/Index (NFI)	..	Very close to 1 is a good fit
Turker-Lewis Fit/Index (TLI)	≥0.95	Very close to 1 is a good fit
Comparative Fit/Index	≥0.95	Very close to 1 is a good fit
Chisq/df	>2	Between 1 and 5

## Results and Discussion

**Table 2:** Regression estimates of direct latent constructs

Hypotheses	Construct	Standardized estimates	P-value	Remark
H1	AE <sub>sr</sub>	1.054	0.00	Supported
H2	AE <sub>s</sub>	1.032	0.001	Supported

Table 2 shows the result of the relationship between Agricultural Entrepreneurship, self-reliance and security. Agricultural entrepreneurship was found to have positive effect on self-reliance among youths in Njikoka LG with coefficient values of ( $\beta = 1.654$ , and P-value = 0.00).

Similarly, Agricultural Entrepreneurship was found to have positive effect on security with coefficient values of ( $\beta = 1.032$  P-value = 0.001)

### Summary of Findings

From the results indicated above, it was found that youth engagement in agricultural entrepreneurship has strong positive effect on self-reliance and security.

### Conclusions

From the results and summary of findings, it can therefore be concluded that agricultural entrepreneurship is a strong indicator of self-reliance for youths in Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State. Stimulating entrepreneurship requires a good understanding of the reasons leading people to become self-employed.

This study ventures to establish the relationship between Agricultural entrepreneurship, self-reliance and security among youths in Njikoka Local Government Area. The positive effect of agricultural entrepreneurship with self-reliance and security means that the youths in Njikoka can make meaningful contribution to the economy and security of the communities as well as the state and nation in general. This study is consistent with that of Deckor (2019) , Ekele, Abdullahi and Anjor (2016) studies which showed strong positive relationship between Agricultural entrepreneurship with wealth creation, employment generation, self-sustenance and economic development, among others.

## Recommendations

- (i) Entrepreneurship at all levels of youth education is very important and should be tailored more towards stimulating youths' interest towards self reliance.
- (ii) Given that entrepreneurship offers the entrepreneur skills, knowledge and basic necessities to cope with self-reliance, government should ensure that practical steps are adopted when teaching entrepreneurship at all levels.
- (iii) The Local Governments in Nigeria, particularly, Njikoka local government should increase the tempo in youth training concerning skill acquisitions, particularly in agricultural entrepreneurship programmes.
- (iv) The issue of entrepreneurship development should not be left for government alone; private organizations and individuals should join hands with government to set up entrepreneurship centres that can offer the youths the needed skills to embark on self-employment ventures to ensure security of lives and properties in their host communities.

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