

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: A PANACEA FOR JOB CREATION AMONG NCE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION GRADUATES FOR SELF – RELIANCE

Dr. I. Akamobi

*Federal College of Education (Technical),
Umunze.*

And

C. O.Njoku

*Federal College of Education (Technical),
Umunze*

Abstract

Entrepreneurship is always associated with the establishment of small scale enterprises so as to achieve economic independence. To drastically reduce unemployment in the country, especially among NCE agricultural education graduates, there is the need to make them to be good entrepreneurs by equipping them with entrepreneurial skills while in school. The purpose of this study specifically was to: (1) Identify the small scale agricultural business opportunities which NCE agricultural education graduates can embark upon after graduation (2) Determine the entrepreneurial skills required by NCE agricultural education students for self empowerment. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and the area of the study was Anambra state. The population for the study was made up of 16 agricultural education lecturers from Federal College of Education (T), Umunze and 11 agricultural education lecturers at Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe and 23 NCE year 3 agricultural education students. There was no sampling. Mean and t-test statistic were used to analyse the data collected. The study identified 22 small scale agricultural business opportunities and 16 entrepreneurial skills to be acquired by the agricultural education NCE graduates. Based on the findings, some of the recommendations made included that the government should assist colleges of education to establish entrepreneurship centres, students should be encouraged to establish and manage small scale business either individually or in groups while in school, the government should give financial assistance to NCE agricultural education graduates to enable them start their own businesses.

Key words: Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, agricultural education, small scale businesses, and entrepreneur.

One of the major problems facing the country today is the unimaginable increase in the rate of unemployment. The tertiary institutions turn out thousands of graduates annually. These graduates roam the streets looking for non-existing jobs. The spate of unemployment has given rise to a lot of crimes which include: armed robbery, prostitution, ritual killings, human trafficking, fraud, cheating, cultism, kidnapping among others. The unemployment is hinged on some factors which include, (a) over dependence on one sector of the economy (oil) at the expense of other sectors especially agriculture, (b) the nature and type of education laid down for us by the colonial masters which excluded quality entrepreneurship education, among others.

There are one hundred colleges of education (100) in Nigeria (http://www.myschoolgist.com/2012/11/list-of-colleges-of-education_-in.html) and majority of these colleges offer agricultural education and the graduates of these departments are among the unemployed graduates looking for jobs. Agricultural education is all aspects of formal and informal education in relation to acquiring agricultural knowledge and skills required by the learner to become a proficient farmer. Osinem (2008) defined agricultural education as a process of imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes in agriculture to the learner at any level (primary through secondary to tertiary institutions). Egbule (2004, pointed out that in schools, agricultural education refers to the teaching of skills, values, attitudes and related knowledge in production, processing and marketing of agricultural and related products. He further stated that in such schools, students are expected to carry on short and long term practical activities and projects such as cultivation of crops; vegetables, fruits, raising of livestock for the school's consumption and for local markets. The study of agricultural education focuses on the needs of individuals and groups and in developing individually satisfying and socially responsible knowledge, skills, and occupational values of and relies heavily on, experiences as the context in which knowledge and skills are learned. (<http://www.answers.com/topic/agricultural-education>)

From the various definitions, it can be deduced that emphasis is more on acquisition of skills, knowledge and right attitude in agriculture. It is therefore focusing on the training of the learner in the improved agricultural production process and methods/techniques for teaching of agriculture. Agricultural education at the colleges of education level has its own objectives. These objectives according to the National Commission for Colleges of Education (2008) include:

1. To prepare graduates with the right attitude to, and knowledge/professional. Competence in vocational agriculture;
2. To produce teachers who will be capable of motivating students to acquire interest in and aptitude for agriculture;
3. To develop in the student-teachers the appropriate communication skills for effective transmission of agricultural information to the students in the context of their environment;
4. To equip the student-teachers with adequate knowledge and ability to establish and manage a model farm effectively;
5. To provide a sound background to enhance further academic and professional progression of the student-teachers.

There are some constraints towards achieving some of these objectives. For instance, both the federal and state governments are not employing teachers especially NCE teachers, therefore the achievement of objective 2 and 4 are not all that possible. More over, the NCE students cannot establish and manage their own farms after graduation due to lack of quality entrepreneurship education while in school.

Entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability to seek out investment opportunities, establish and run an enterprise successfully (Eneh, 2007). Entrepreneurship education is the process of developing in students entrepreneurial spirit through the development and application of relevant entrepreneurial based educational curriculum. It seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. Ogueri, (2013) pointed out that entrepreneurial education involves giving the recipient the understanding and capacity or the unique orientation, behaviour, skills and attribute to pursue entrepreneurial ventures.

Entrepreneurship education is geared towards preparing individuals especially the youths to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs and capable of creating jobs. Entrepreneurship education is therefore, a specialized training given to students to enable them acquire skills, ideas, knowledge, managerial abilities etc to be self employed and be job creators.

Entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions should be targeted at achieving certain objectives. These objectives according to Osuala (2010) include:

- To provide meaningful education for youths which could make them self reliant and subsequently encourage them to drive profit and be self independent.
- To provide graduates with the training and support necessary to help them establish a career in small and medium size business.

- To provide graduates with the training skills that will make them meet the manpower needs of the society.
- To provide graduates with enough training in risk management to make uncertainty bearing possible and easy.
- To stimulate industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed areas.
- To provide graduates with enough training that will make them to be creative and innovative in identifying new business opportunities.
- To provide small and medium sized companies with the opportunity to recruit qualified graduates who will receive training and tutoring in the skills relevant to management of the business centre.

If efforts are geared towards achieving these objectives by the institutions and the government, it is expected that the NCE agricultural education graduates who were already exposed to the various agricultural enterprises will also be equipped with entrepreneurial skills while in school. Upon graduation, the NCE graduates will not have much problems in establish their own micro businesses.

Micro or small scale agricultural businesses are those businesses or business opportunities that require small initial capital outlay depending on the level of sophistication and have short generation interval that allows quick turn over of investment.

Statement of the Problem

Some of the problems facing Nigerian government today are how to reduce the ever growing rate of unemployment, wealth creation, poverty reduction, food security, among others and they are worrisome to all well meaning Nigerians.

Annually, the tertiary institutions in the country turn out thousands of graduates who roam the streets looking for jobs. Among these tertiary institutions are one hundred Colleges of Education in Nigeria (Federal Colleges of Education 22, state College of Education – 45 and privately owned Colleges of Education - 33) (<http://www.myschoolgist.com/2012/11/list-of-collegesof-education-inhtml>) these colleges of education offer agricultural education as double major. The graduates from these colleges are also among the unemployed graduates in the country.

The agricultural education curriculum covers virtually all aspects of agriculture and agricultural enterprises. (NCCE, 2008). Immaterial of the fact that the graduates of agricultural education while in school were exposed to these aspects of agriculture and agricultural enterprises, yet they find it difficult to get paid employment or become self employed. This may be attributed to lack of entrepreneurial skills.

Based on the foregoing, this study was designed to determine micro entrepreneurial areas in agriculture which when combined with entrepreneurial skills could help the NCE agricultural education graduates to be self reliant.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of the study was to determine how entrepreneurship education could help the NCE agricultural education graduates in establishing small scale agricultural business. Specifically, this study was set out to:

1. Identify the small scale agricultural business opportunities which NCE agricultural education graduates can embark upon after graduation.
2. Determine the entrepreneurial skills required by NCE agricultural education students for self empowerment.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed for the study.

1. What are the small scale agricultural businesses opportunities available for NCE Agric education graduates?
2. What are the entrepreneurial skills required by NCE agricultural education students for self empowerment?

Hypotheses

Two Nul-hypotheses were formulated for the study and were tested at .05 level of significance.

HO.1 There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of agricultural education lecturers in Federal College of Education (Tech), Umunze and lecturers in Nwafor Orizu College of education, Nsugbe on small scale agricultural business opportunities available to NCE agricultural education graduates.

HO.2 There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of agricultural education lecturers in Federal College of Education (Tech), Umunze and Nwafor Orizu College of education, Nsugbe on entrepreneurial skills required by NCE agricultural education students for self empowerment.

Methodology

Design of the Study

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. A descriptive survey design involves gathering of information from a sample or relevant population that is familiar with the ideas relating to the objective of a study. Ezejelue, Ogwo and Nkamoebe (2008) stated that a survey usually consists of methods of gathering data from a large number of respondents who themselves constitute a sample.

Area of the Study

The area of the study is Anambra State. Anambra state has two Colleges of Education one Federal College Education and one state College of Education. Federal College of Education (Technical) located at Umunze in Orumba South LGA and Nwafor Orizu College of Education located at Nsugbe in Anambra East local Govt Area.

Population and Sample of the Study

The population for the study was made up of two groups of people, all the lecturers and years 3 NCE students in agricultural education department of the two Colleges of Education. Federal College of Education (T) Umunze has sixteen (16) agricultural education lecturers and Twenty (20) year 3 agricultural education students while Nwafor Orizu College of Education Nsugbe has eleven (11) agricultural education lectures and three (3) year 3 agricultural education students. These gave a total of fifty and this constituted the population for the study.

There was no sampling, due to the manageable size of the population.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. Only one set of questionnaire was used for the study.

Section A of the instrument dealt with background information of the respondents, section B contains 24 items and dealt with identification of small scale agricultural business opportunities which NCE agricultural education graduates can embark upon after graduation while section C on entrepreneurial skills required by NCE agricultural education students contains 16 items.

In order to answer the research questions, the questionnaire items were rated on a four (4) point response scale of strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and strongly Disagree (SD).

Validation and Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was subjected to face validation. The face validation focused on the arrangement and appropriateness of the questionnaire items. The instrument was validated by three experts from University of Nigeria Nsukka. One from department of Vocational Teacher Education (Agricultural Education), one from centre for entrepreneurship education and the other from department of measurement and evaluation.

The internal consistency of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate. This method was deemed appropriate because it has a generalized formula that deals with instruments with multiple scored items. The reliability coefficient values of section B and C of the instrument was .70 and .72. The overall reliability estimate for the entire instrument was .71.

Method of Data Collection

Personal contact approach was adopted in collecting data from the respondents. The researcher distributed and collected the questionnaire from the respondents.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using mean and t-test statistic. Specifically, mean was used to answer the research questions while t-test statistic was used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

The mean from each item was interpreted in relation to the real limit of the numbers. Therefore, for section B and C of the instrument, items that received mean scores of 3.50 and above were regarded as strongly agree, items with mean ratings 2.50 – 3.49 were regarded as agree while items with mean ratings 2.49 and below were regarded as disagree.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the small scale agricultural business opportunities available to NCE agricultural education graduates?

The data for answering research question one is presented in table 1

Table 1

Mean Ratings of Agricultural Education Lecturers and Students on Small Scale Agricultural Business Opportunities Available to NCE Agricultural Education Graduates.

S/NO	ITEMS	N = 27		N ₂ =23	
		\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	DECISION	
A	Crop production				
1	Vegetable production (leaf & fruits)	3.45	3.00	Agree	
2	Establishment of citrus orchard	3.35	2.50	Agree	
3	Establishment of pineapple orchard	4.28	3.61	Strongly agree	
4	Establishment of plantain plantation	4.67	3.62	Strongly agree	
5	Maize	3.76	3.52	Strongly agree	
6	Rice production	2.44	2.13	Disagree	
7	Wheat production	2.33	2.00	Disagree	
8	Seed yam production through miniset	2.58	2.50	Agree	
9	Production of ornamentals	2.70	2.81	Agree	
B	Animal production				
10	Snail farming	3.58	3.62	Strongly agree	
11	Cane rat farming	3.62	3.52	Strongly agree	
12	Bee keeping	3.00	3.90	Agree	
13	Rabbit production	3.51	3.51	Strongly agree	
14	Brood and sell of poultry chicks	4.44	4.51	Strongly agree	
15	Poultry egg production	2.58	3.00	Agreed	
16	Fish farming	3.71	3.61	Strongly agree	
17	Production of fish fingers/fingerlings	3.72	3.52	Strongly agree	
C	Processing & Marketing of Agric Product.				
18	Processing and marketing of gari & fufu	2.88	2.80	Agree	
19	processing and marketing of cassava floor	2.57	2.71	Agree	
20	Processing & marketing wheat floor	3.80	3.67	Strongly agree	
21	Fish feed formulation & marketing	3.52	3.88	Strongly agree	
22	Poultry feed formulation and marketing	3.00	3.28	Agree	
23	Grading and marketing of poultry eggs	3.66	3.70	Strongly agree	
24	Processing and marketing of poultry meat	3.61	3.51	Strongly agree	

N_1 number of agricultural education lecturers, N_2 number of agricultural education students, X_1 = means responses of agricultural lecturers and X_2 = means responses of agricultural education students.

Table 1 above revealed that 22 out of 24 items had mean ratings that ranged from 2.50 to 4.67 from both lecturers and students. These fall under the response categories of agree and strongly agree. Items 6 and 7 had mean ratings of 2.44 and 2.33 respectively and fall under the response category of disagree. This result shows that apart from items 6 and 7, every other item on this table was accepted by the respondents as agricultural business area which an NCE graduates can embark upon and become self-reliant.

Research Question 2: What are the entrepreneurial skills required by NCE agricultural education graduates for self empowerment

Data for answering research question 2 is presented in table 2

Table 2 Mean Ratings of Agricultural Education Lecturers and Students on Entrepreneurial Skills Required by NCE Agricultural Education Graduates for Self Empowerment.

S/N	ITEMS	$N_1= 27$	N_2	DECISION
		\bar{X}	$\bar{X} = 23$	
1	Logical thinking and creative skills	4.67	3.53	Strongly agree
2	Communication skills (written & oral)	4.27	4.00	Strongly agree
3	Interpersonal skills	3.50	3.66	Strongly agree
4	Organizational skills	3.79	3.58	Strongly agree
5	Leadership and management skills	3.78	4.20	Strongly agree
6	Practical / motor skills	4.28	3.61	Strongly agree
7	Strategic planning skills	4.21	3.60	Strongly agree
8	Innovative skills	3.79	3.50	Strongly agree
9	Decision making skills	4.00	3.72	Strongly agree
10	Problem solving skills	4.00	3.51	Strongly agree
11	ICT skills	3.76	4.20	Strongly agree
12	Financial management skills	4.29	4.10	Strongly agree
13	Documentation and record keeping skills	4.51	4.44	Strongly agree
14	Inventory management skills	4.28	4.00	Strongly agree
15	Marketing skills	4.34	4.21	Strongly agree
16	Persistent/perseverance skills	4.66	3.88	Strongly agree

N_1 number of agricultural education lecturers, N_2 number of agricultural education students, X_1 = means responses of agricultural lecturers and X_2 = means responses of agricultural education students.

Table 3 above showed that the respondents accepted the 16 items as entrepreneurial skills required by NCE agricultural education students for self empowerment. The mean ranged from 3.50 - 4.67 these fall under the response category of strongly agree. This result shows that the NCE students require to be taught these skills while in school as they would need them in the establishment and management of their own businesses upon graduation.

Hypothesis 1

There will be no significant difference in the mean ratings of agricultural education lectures in federal college of education (Tech) Umunze and Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe on small scale agricultural business opportunities available to NCE graduates.

Data showing the t-test result for hypothesis 1 are shown in table 3

Table 3 T-test analysis of the mean responses of agricultural education lecturers on small scale agricultural business opportunities available for NCE agricultural education graduates

S/N	ITEMS	N-16 \bar{X}_1	N=11 X_2	T-cal	T-critical	Decision
A	Crop production					
1	Vegetable production (leaf & fruit)	4.63	4.23	0.00	1.96	NS
2	Establishment of citrus orchard	4.64	4.30	0.06	1.96	NS
3	Establishment of pineapple orchard	4.29	3.84	0.01	1.96	NS
4	Establishment of plantain plantation	4.09	4.92	0.21	1.96	NS
5	Maize production	4.32	3.98	0.01	1.96	NS
6	Rice production	2.10	2.14	0.00	1.96	NS
7	Wheat production	2.00	2.15	0.02	1.96	NS
8	Seed yam production through miniset	2.53	2.59	0.44	1.96	NS
9	Production of ornamentals	2.55	2.50	0.04	1.96	NS
	Animal Production					
10	Snail farming	4.35	4.25	0.08	1.96	NS
11	Cane rat farming	4.33	3.90	0.42	1.96	NS

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12	Bee keeping	4.58	4.13	0.45	1.96	NS
13	Rabbit production	4.62	4.27	0.00	1.96	NS
14	Brood and sell of poultry chicks	4.61	4.29	0.45	1.96	NS
15	Poultry egg production	3.55	3.20	0.10	1.96	NS
16	Fish farming	3.58	3.11	0.01	1.96	NS
17	Production of fish fingers and fingerlings	3.70	3.15	0.02	1.96	NS
	Processing & Marketing of Agricultural Products					
18	Processing & marketing of gari	2.58	2.53	0.01	1.96	NS
19	Processing & marketing of cassava floor	2.50	2.50	0.00	1.96	NS
20	Processing & marketing of wheat floor	4.51	4.91	0.30	1.96	NS
21	Fish feed formulation and marketing	3.00	3.45	0.03	1.96	NS
22	Poultry feed formulation and marketing	3.60	3.49	0.01	1.96	NS
23	Grading and marketing of poultry eggs.	3.89	3.67	0.02	1.96	NS
24	Processing and marketing of poultry meat	4.49	4.42	0.00	1.96	NS

N-number of respondents, \bar{X}_1 = mean 1, \bar{X}_2 = Mean 2, and NS = not significant.

Table 3 above showed that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of the two groups of respondents on agricultural business opportunities available to NCE agricultural education graduates. On each item, null hypothesis was not rejected but accepted indicating that the opinions of both groups of respondents are the same on agricultural business opportunities available to NCE graduates.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of agricultural education lecturers in Federal College of Education (Tech) Umunze and Nwafor Orizu College of Education Nsugbe or entrepreneurial skills required by NCE agricultural education students for self empowerment.

Data showing the t-test result for hypothesis 2 are shown in table 4

Table 4

T-test analysis of the mean responses of agricultural education lecturers on entrepreneurial skills required by NCE agricultural education students for self empowerment

S/N	Items	N=16		N=11		Decision
		\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	T-cal	T-table	
1	Logical thinking and creative skills	3.73	3.74	0.26	1.96	NS
2	Communication skills (written & Oral)	3.55	3.63	0.76	1.96	NS
3	Interpersonal skills	3.50	3.46	0.81	1.96	NS
4	Organizational skills	3.61	3.49	0.63	1.96	NS
5	Leadership and management skills	3.55	3.15	0.57	1.96	NS
6	Practical/motor skills	3.52	3.49	0.03	1.96	NS
7	Strategic planning skills	3.58	3.60	0.87	1.96	NS
8	Innovative skills	3.66	3.55	0.12	1.96	NS
9	Decision making skills	3.64	3.61	0.69	1.96	NS
10	Problem solving skills	3.60	3.50	0.20	1.96	NS
11	ICT skills	3.60	3.46	0.10	1.96	NS
12	Financial management skills	3.49	3.64	0.05	1.96	NS
13	Documentation and record keeping skills	3.62	3.57	0.58	1.96	NS
14	Inventory management skills	3.44	3.48	0.62	1.96	NS
15	Marketing skills	3.34	3.42	0.39	1.96	NS
16	Persistent/perseverance skills	3.42	3.58	0.04	1.96	NS

N = Number of respondents, \bar{X}_1 = mean₁, \bar{X}_2 = Mean₂ and NS = not significant.

Table 4 revealed that the calculated t-value of all items ranged from 0.00 – 0.087. These were below the table value of 1.96 this is an indication that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of the two groups of respondents, meaning that Null hypothesis was not rejected on each item.

Discussion of Result

The study revealed that a lot of agricultural business opportunities are available for NCE graduates. 22 items out of 24 were identified by the respondents as agricultural business opportunities. This include crop production, animal production, processing and marketing of agricultural products. This finding is in consonance with Onu and Akamobi (2010), who enumerated some of the business opportunities in agriculture to include among others cultivation and production of crops, animal farming, processing and marketing of agricultural products. Having identified these entrepreneurial areas, the problem facing the NCE graduates is having the entrepreneurial mind and power this could only be achieved through proper and sound entrepreneurship education.

The findings on entrepreneurial skills required by NCE agricultural education students revealed that the respondents strongly agreed with the 16 items as being required. These include logical thinking and creative skills, interpersonal, organizational, leadership, management, ICT, marketing, documentation, marketing and practical skills among others. These findings are also in agreement with Akamobi (2009) who suggested that interpersonal skills, communication skills, ability to motivate, technical skills, organizational skills among others should be inculcated in the students of agricultural education. Skills is an ability in action and for the student to perform and self reliant, they have to possess these skills.

Conclusions

To reduce the high rate of unemployment in the country today, the country requires graduates who are job creators and not job seekers. Job creation among graduates depends so much on how the graduates were taught or equipped in school which is also partly dependent on the nature of entrepreneurship education provided to the students while in school.

To break away for the shackles of unemployment, quality entrepreneurship education has to be provided and made compulsory for NCE agricultural education students while in school.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government should assist the colleges of education in the establishment of entrepreneurship education centres.
2. Adequate number of qualified entrepreneurship education lecturers should be recruited for agricultural education department.
3. Colleges of education should ensure that there are adequate materials equipment for teaching of the skills required in various small scale agro-businesses.

4. Students while in school should be encouraged to establish and manage small scale businesses either individually or in groups.
5. The government should provide enough funds for teaching of entrepreneurship education in colleges of education.
6. The government should provide the necessary financial assistance to NCE agricultural education graduates to enable them to start of their own businesses.
7. The NCE agricultural education graduates should form groups and pull their resources together and establish their own businesses.

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