

Industrial Skills and Development of Agro Based Industries in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated industrial skills and development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study operationalized the independent variable of industrial skills into dimensions of communication, conceptualization and marketing skills for the development of agro-based industries in Rivers State. The research design for the study was correlational. The population of the study was 250 staff of 10 agro based companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study sample was 100. The study adopted stratified random sampling technique in which 10 staff were chosen from each of the 10 agro based companies. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire, adapted in the modified likert scale of very high extent (4), high extent (3), low extent (2) and very low extent (1). The questionnaire was validated by a senior lecturer in Measurement and evaluation from Rivers State University, Nigeria. The reliability of the instrument was tested using Crombach Alpha and obtained .933>/71 which showed that the instrument was reliable. The study found that the three variables used in the study showed significant relationship with the development of agro based industries in Rivers State. The study concluded that communication, conceptualization and marketing skills significantly relate to development of agro based industries in Rivers State. The study recommended that among others, that teachers of Vocational and Technical Education Training (TVET) should emphasize to students the need to invest or conceptualize agro business plans in agro based businesses.

Keywords: *Agro-based industries, Industrial skills, Development, Rivers State, Nigeria.*

Introduction

Industrial skills are veritable tools in harnessing or sustaining any development of any sector of the economy. One of such industries that require skills for effective management for the purpose of development is the agricultural sector. Agro businesses appear not to have measured up like other industries due to apparent neglect of human talents in the form of skills. This study targeted proven skills that have helped develop other industrial sectors. According to Nweke (2015) industrial skills such as communication, conceptual and marketing have not only grown other sectors such power and energy, manufacturing, service but also have the tendency of developing agro based industries in Africa and beyond. The study therefore limited itself to the investigation of the aforesaid skills on agro based industries in Rivers State. The development of communication skills is of utmost importance to developing the next generation of business entrepreneurs who should all be skilled and confident in the design,

conduct, and reporting of their research. Communication skills development will also help them become effective communicators in all aspects of their lives. This study advocates communication strategies that involve participants in a wide range of interactive activities. Agro dealers are expected to draw from their own and each other's experiences and cultural backgrounds to interact in business activities.

Conceptualization skill is linked to the ideation of various units of business available in the agro business. Every business comes up in the mind before actualization. Whether it is diversification, business enlargement or expansion, profiting or any other business development plan, Okoro, (2016) argued that conceptualization comes first. Rice milling, fish farming, crop and animal based businesses come from concepts. There have been arguments for example for the conceptualization of cattle rearing in the South belt of Nigeria to reduce the issues of herders' clash with crop farmers but it seems agro business men and women have not conceptualized in that regard. Conceptualization plays a leading role in the development of agricultural business not minding the region (Ade, 2019).

Marketing skill is a classified skill of any business operator. It tells the world about the products and services. Without marketing efforts or skills no product or service could be bought and thereby hampering development. Agricultural marketing techniques are used in every corner of "agribusiness," including small farms, corporate farms, and collectives; distributors; manufacturers of farm equipment, pesticides, and genetic enhancements for crops and livestock; feed and seed sellers; and more. Additionally, there are also government agencies which monitor and direct agribusiness practices. Agricultural products are perishable; therefore, a failure to sell on time results in wasted harvest. All wasted harvest represents a cost of land, water, labor, storage and no income to show for it. Agricultural prices can be quite variable, impacted by changes in weather and harvests in far corners of the world (Morgan, 2013).

Different production methods mean that not all food is the same but this information is meaningful only if the consumer knows about it. Farmers seek higher prices for their produce, and protection from price fluctuations. They try to reduce the amount of post-harvest waste, and secure guarantees for the sale of their produce. They may also work to open up new markets or channels, such as selling directly to consumers instead of through producers. Agrichemical companies promote solutions to farm problems, offering farmers higher yields and protection from pests. However, many solutions would be more strongly resisted by consumers, if it weren't for effective public relations. Marketing skills are required to foster development in the agro based industries in Rivers State.

Some scholars have carried out studies in line with the present study, such as Morgan (2013) who carried out a study in Free-Town on Farmers skills required and business development. Nwile (2014) carried out a research on the business skills to grow effi Igbo in Anambra State, Nigeria. However, no study has been carried out on industrial skills and development of agro based businesses in Rivers State; which is what the present study seeks to achieve.

Statement of the Problem

Agro businesses are without dispute one of the most critical industries in the human existence. It is so because man requires food before embarking on other activities. Agriculture is a global business which has become the economic mainstay of countries and continents. However, it seems otherwise in Rivers State, Nigeria, West Africa which seems to have played down in the

agro axis for other industries. There seems not to be sufficient industrial skills such as communication, conceptualization and marketing in agricultural industries which is demonstrated in palpable slow pace in the development of agro based industries in the scope of study. Communication skills which may involve internal and external process to fine-tune business operations appear lacking in the identified agro companies operating in Rivers State. The need for conceptualization of business scope such as growing supply chain of raw materials appear not to be viable. Agro based products appear the least advertised or marketed in Rivers State, Nigeria, West Africa and this may not lead to the required development in the sector. This study is therefore geared to investigate why these factors occur and proffer possible ways forward.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to investigate industrial skills and development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria; with the following specific objectives:

1. to determine the relationship between conceptualization skill and development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. to determine the relationship between marketing skills and development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria
3. to investigate the relationship between communication skills and development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does conceptualization skill relates to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria?
2. To what extent does marketing skills relate to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria?
3. To what extent does communication skills relate to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between conceptualization skill and development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria?
2. There is no significant relationship between marketing skills and to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria?
3. There is no significant relationship between communication skills relate to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Conceptual Clarifications

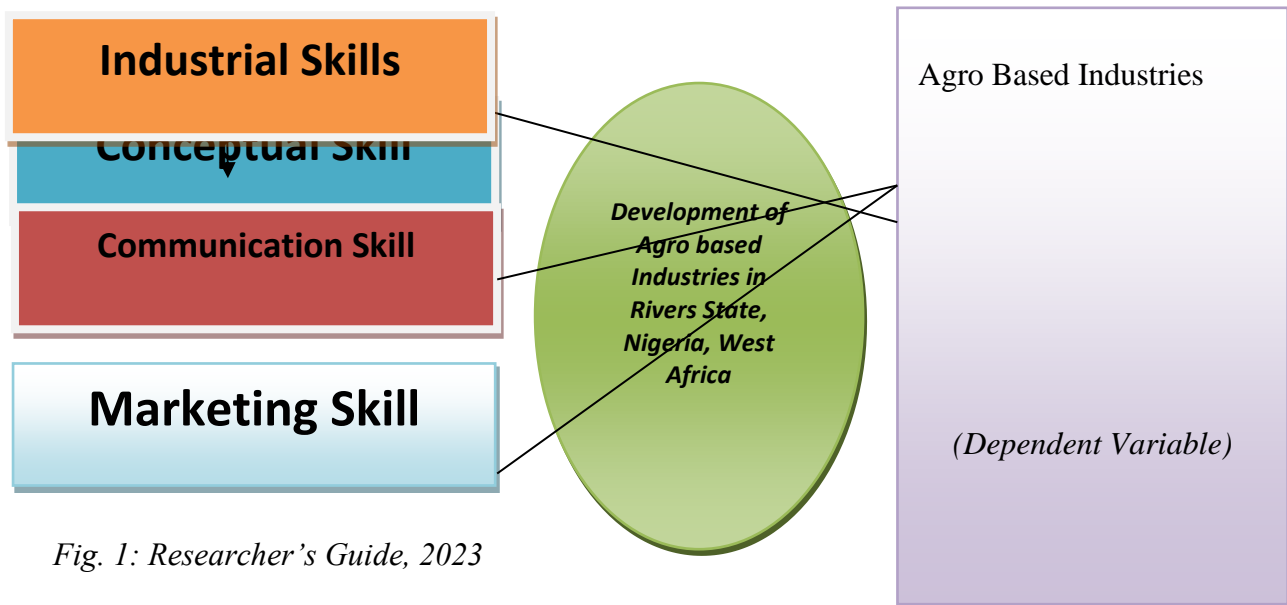


Fig. 1: Researcher's Guide, 2023

Literature Review

Concept of Agro Business

Nwafor (2012) explained that the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting sector comprises establishments primarily engaged in the business of growing crops, raising animals, harvesting timber, and harvesting fish and other animals from a farm, ranch, or their natural habitats. The establishments in this sector are often described as farms, ranches, dairies, greenhouses, nurseries, orchards, or hatcheries. A farm may consist of a single tract of land or a number of separate tracts which may be held under different tenures. For example, one tract may be owned by the farm operator and another rented. It may be operated by the operator alone or with the assistance of members of the household or hired employees, or it may be operated by a partnership, corporation, or other type of organization.

The sector distinguishes two basic activities: agricultural production and agricultural support activities. Agricultural production includes establishments performing the complete farm or ranch operation, such as farm owner-operators and tenant farm operators. Agricultural support activities include establishments that perform one or more activities associated with farm operation, such as soil preparation, planting, harvesting, and management, on a contract or fee basis (Nakopedia, 2012).

Excluded from the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting sector are establishments primarily engaged in agricultural research and establishments primarily engaged in administering programs for regulating and conserving land, mineral, wildlife, and forest use. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2019. Improving Data Collection and Measurement of Complex Farms. (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25260>).

Conceptual Skills and Development of Agro based Industries

Management of agro business is not about individuals born with managerial traits about effective business owners, thinkers and expansionists. It is truly about the skills that give an individual the potential to become a business owner from their experience through skills, test, and development acquired. According to Northouse (2010) and Yukl (2012) citing Katz (1955),

conceptual also referred to as cognitive skills involve good judgment, foresight, intuition, creativity, and the ability to find meaning and order in ambiguous or certain events, ability to convey meaning by developing models and the ability to develop creative solutions as well as new insight into problems, ability to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information, detect deviations from plans, analyze situations and perceive trends, anticipate changes, recognize opportunities and potential threats. Conceptual skills are central to the entrepreneurs's ability in creating strategic plan of the business. This means that conceptual skills has to do with the mental aspect of shaping the meaning of organizational policy issues relating to likely line of agro based business by understanding what the organization stands for, where it is and where it should be going. For example, it would take conceptual skills for a business owner in a struggling and underperforming organization to articulate a vision for a new line of action that would steer the school out from the sinking bout of underperformance. In like manner, it would take the conceptual skills of the business man or woman with same resources to create a strategic plan that could make his/her school compete successfully with others in same business line. Achua and Lussier (2010) add that conceptual skills are vital in shaping the managerial skills of leaders and rising the organization to a higher level. How can entrepreneurs develop conceptual skills? To develop conceptual skills, an individual needs to look at a picture as a whole rather than just part of it. It involves thinking critically about a subject and analyzing the ways that an action would affect the outcome. Here are some ways to develop conceptual skills:

1. **Observation:** closely observe leaders on how they analyses any situation and takes actions. What factors have they considered while taking decisions? Analyses outcome of their action.
2. Identify problems within the organization and treat them as case studies. Study the situation and have solution for them discuss them with people to get different perspective.
3. Attend seminars/training on managerial and management and people from within and outside the organization. Discuss their managerial scenarios to gain better understanding.
4. Read about successful leader/new technology and processes and how they will affect the future.
5. Find a mentor a person with more experience to discuss ideas.
6. Discuss ideas with people. It helps to fill in the gaps of our own thinking and come out with new ideas.

Conceptual skills are very significant at the top management level of organizations (Achua and Lussier, 2010; Northouse, 2010; Yukl, 2002). Northouse (2010) stated that when upper-level leaders do not have strong conceptual skills, they can endanger the whole organization. Conceptual skills are also vital in any business management. As one moves down to lower management levels, conceptual skills become less significant. This implies that conceptual skills are needed highly for graduates because they occupy the highest echelons in the society. As such, they are required to shape the vision, business policy and strategic or competitive positioning of the school (Northouse, 2010).

Communication Skill and Development of Agro based Business

Nweke (2018), sees communication skill as relating to the internal and external processes required to carry out routine operations of any organization. It may come in the form of verbal, written, telephone calls, letters, smiles, gestures to either internal customers (staff) or external public (customer, partners, vendors). Communication is a veritable skill in any agro business

to fine production and service delivery. People need to communicate, understand each other before undertaking business or working together.

The right business to venture into could be a source of worry to any young business graduate, particularly in these days of uncertainty in the business environment. No matter how meager the initial capital maybe, the thought of throwing it away to uncertainty has been a major concern. This is the reason why technologist who wish to dabble into business for financial survival (self-employment) need to do a lot of research in their chosen area. It is necessary to approach those that have succeeded in the field for guidance (Aliu 2007), cited in Nweke (2015). In setting up an business at all, the first thing to consider is the life span of the business. Yemi (2010), computer technologist advises beginners to ask the following questions before starting business: “It is a business that can last for a very long time or that can be handed over to the children?” • Will the patronage continue to increase or will it decrease by the day? Patronage is a very vital factor because when a business that is set up with huge capital eventually attracts low returns for the owner as a result of low patronage, then one becomes frustrated which may lead to total business collapse. The question should therefore come to mind of any prospective technologist/technician who wants to go into self-employable business continued Yemi is: “will people require the services or products of the company on a daily basis? The most rewarding of business is that it affords the people the opportunity of having what they cannot provide for themselves but cannot do without”. It is on this regard that the Rivers State Government over the years has supported the Federal Government of Nigeria in recognizing business education as forming the basis for Nigeria’s technological development, and the need for adequate provisions to develop the necessary business/vocational skills (Nweke, 2015). However, the success for any educational programme hinges on the availability of adequate number of professionally trained, committed, motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers, as no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers. In spite of government’s numerous efforts like establishment of more business teachers colleges, encouragement of universities to mount business teacher education programmes and even training of business teachers abroad through bi-lateral co-operation agreements with countries like Italy, U.S.A. and Canada (Osokoya, 2009), the problem of lack of adequate business teachers still persists.

This is important because it is through the improvement of business or vocational trainers that the role of business education as a tool for self-employment in Rivers State can be actualized. In this era of massive un-employment business education has come to play a more conspicuous role.

Marketing Skills and Development of Agro based Industries

Marketing skill according to Nwangwu (2015) refers to as the core, marketing is about communicating to an audience, so it's no surprise that communication is the top skill those in the field need to have, Being able to express yourself and convey concepts to others in a clear, engaging way will be essential to your work as a marketer. Marketing skill is a lot of problem solving skill. Agro business operators in Rivers State have not shown sufficient presence in the state through any noticed marketing force. This calls for urgent attention of the operators in the agro industry to scale up their marketing skills or strategies (Nwaokol, 2013). The ability of the business owners or potential business owners to market their ideas, or created services or products requires a huge contemporary skill. agro business marketing in agricultural business is less about a single marketing strategy and more about a marketing spirit that differentiates itself from traditional marketing practices. It eschews many of the fundamental principles of marketing because they are typically designed for large, well established firms.

agro business marketing utilizes a toolkit of new and unorthodox marketing practices to help emerging agro firms gain a foothold in crowded markets (Aliu, 2015).

In competitive markets, it can be easy to get lost in the crowd. One of the biggest challenges for entrepreneurs, as revealed by Ellis (2014) is standing out from their competitors. Marketing in new, unusual, or aggressive ways is the best way to illustrate what makes a business unique. Below are some marketing strategies that entrepreneurs have used successfully in the past. A company can direct all of its marketing efforts towards one strategy, or use several of them at once.

- **Relationship Marketing** – Focuses on creating a strong link between the brand and the customer.
- **Expeditionary Marketing** – Involves creating markets and developing innovative products. Companies act as leaders rather than followers.
- **One to One Marketing** – Customers are marketed to as individuals. All marketing efforts are personalized.
- **Real Time Marketing** – Uses the power of technology to interact with a customer in a real time.
- **Viral Marketing** – Places marketing messages on the Internet so they can be shared and expanded on by customers.
- **Digital Marketing** – Leverages the power of Internet tools like email and social networking to support marketing efforts

Many agro business marketing strategies are born out of necessity. New businesses might have 10, five, or just one person working on their marketing efforts. They work within limited budgets and have access to a fraction of the resources that their major competitors have. Luxuries like graphic design teams and advertising consultants are often outside the means of agro business start-ups, requiring them to find ways to make the maximum impact with limited resources.

The most common features of agro business marketing include innovation, risk taking, and being proactive. agro business marketing campaigns try to highlight the company's greatest strengths while emphasizing their value to the customer. Focusing on innovative products or exemplary customer service is a way to stand out from competitors and business operators in the agro sector may take advantage of these innovations. They make this pitch using cheap and accessible tools including viral videos, Tweets, Facebook pages, and email marketing. Any and all marketing strategies can be considered as long as they produce results (Nweke, 2015).

agro business marketing is best defined by the types of companies that use it. The easiest way to identify an agro business marketing effort is to look at the company doing the marketing. Start ups and emerging companies use agro business marketing to help establish themselves in emerging industries.

It is important to distinguish these businesses from small businesses. While they do start small, their goal is to grow rapidly and to become major players in their industry as quickly as possible. This is drastically different from a restaurant or machine shop that may be content to stay small forever. Growth is the primary goal of business, and marketing is the primary means for growth. (Ebong, 2012)

Eno-Obong, (2016) revealed that marketing strategies used by emerging business are not unique to them though. In fact, many major companies use some of the same strategies. Nike and Burger King have both used viral marketing to great effect. Major businesses use these strategies out of opportunity while entrepreneurs use them out of necessity. Marketing plans can only develop after a company determines several aspects about their business model. They must understand the core mission of the company, which customers they will target, and who their competitors are. Making a careful self-analysis can help emerging businesses define their place in the market and set realistic goals. The type of business a start-up strives to be will also affect its marketing decisions. If a company decides that it will market to professional business customers, it probably won't use funny viral videos on Youtube.

Theoretical Review

The study anchored its theoretical base from on the Human Capital Theory as propounded by Adams Smith in 1776 and developed by Gary Becker in 1964 as cited in Kpee (2015), the theory focuses on skills and knowledge possessed by man and their application in production economics. It emphasizes man's capacity to perform different labour tasks as a function of the skills and knowledge inherent in him as well as external factors such as education and training which highlight his innate potential. Kpee (2015) thus states that the theory sees formal education as a very vital tool that should be used in training and developing man's latent trait. It regards people as assets and stresses that investment by institutions or organizations in people will generate worthwhile returns. Human capital theory anchors on the assumption that formal education and continuous training are highly instrumental and indispensable in improving the production capacity of a population. In the contributions of Ebong (2006), and Sakamota (2014), the theory of human capital stresses that the greater investments by individuals and the public in education or indeed any form of learning activities which leads directly to greater economic benefits for the individual and society at large. Gbosi (2013), views human capital theory as referring to the productive skills and degree of knowledge possessed by an individual. These skills and knowledge make him more productive at work or in any economic productive venture Nwile (2014). Therefore investing in the right development programmes influences the workers productivity which will in turn encourage customer loyalty and build market share that will lead to gain in set goals and revenue growth. This constitutes the line of thought of this work.

Methodology

The study adopted the correlational survey design. The population of the study was 410 which consisted staff of ten (10) agro based companies operating in Rivers State. The study adopted the stratified random technique in which 41 staff were chosen from the senatorial clusters of Rivers State viz, Rivers South East Senatorial district, 32, South West 32 and Rivers East, 32 totaling 320. The researcher used a self-designed instrument titled "Industrial Skill and Development of Agro Based Industries Questionnaire ((ISDAQ). The instrument was coded in line with modified 4-point Likert Scale of Very High Extent (VHE) = 4 points, High Extent (HE) =3 points, Low Extent (LE) =2 points and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1 points where applicable. Validation questionnaire instrument was done by two experts in the department of Measurement and Evaluation, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Rivers State, Nigeria and their corrections were effected in the final copy of the questionnaire.

The scores from the instrument were analyzed and the reliability was determined using Cronbach Alpha the reliability coefficient of .933.71 was obtained, indicating that the instrument was reliable and can measure what it was purports to measure.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.933	25

The researcher and two research assistants were involved in the administration and retrieval of the instrument of study. Out of 320 copies of questionnaires distributed 280 representing 87% of the total copies of questionnaire distributed. The five research questions were answered using mean score, mean and standard deviation. While the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does conceptualization skill relates to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on the extent conceptualization skill relates to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria

Descriptive Statistics

S/N Items	N=280	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remark
1. Soft skills such as managing people can aid new agro business		2.7571	.48002	HE
2. Critical thinking, ability to see the big picture motivates agro business in agro business		2.8929	1.32089	HE
3. Creative thinking abilities lead to agro business		3.9071	1.14157	VHE
4. Hard skills competence can aid agro business		2.8429	1.15824	HE
5. Handling or tackling big initiatives encourages agro business		2.3929	.48926	LE
Grand Mean		2.95	.912	HE

Table 1 above showed in item 1 mean score of 2.75 and SD of .48 which implied high extent that soft skills such as managing people can aid new agro business. In item 2 mean score of 2.89 and SD 1.32 showed high extent that critical thinking, ability to see the big picture motivates agro business. Item 3 with mean score of 3.90 and SD 1.14 showed very high extent that creative thinking abilities lead to agro business initiative. Item 4 showed high extent that Hard skills competence can aid agro business with mean score of 2.84 and SD 1.15. Item 5 implied low extent that handling or tackling big initiatives encourages agro business with mean score of 2.39 and SD .48 that handling or tackling big initiatives encourages agro business.

Thus grand mean score of $2.95 > 2.5$ showed that high extent that conceptualization skill relates to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Question 2: To what extent does communication skills relate to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of extent communication skills relate to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria

Descriptive Statistics

S/N Items	N=280	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remark
6. Networking with people is prerequisite to business ownership		3.1786	.38368	VHE
7. Communication and negotiation skill are required in opening of a business		2.7000	1.24146	HE
8. Leadership abilities to manage men and materials are necessary for new business		2.9643	1.15104	HE
9. Problem solving skill is essential to run a business		2.6357	1.21172	HE
10. Project management and planning skills are business essentials		1.3929	.48926	VLE
Grand Mean		2.58	.895	HE

Table 5 above showed in item 6 mean score of 3.17 and SD .38 which implied very high extent that Networking with people is prerequisite to business ownership. In item 7 mean score of 2.70 and SD 1.24 implied high extent that Communication and negotiation skill are required in opening of a business. Item 8 showed high extent that Leadership abilities to manage men and materials are necessary for new business with mean score of 2.96 and SD 1.15. Item 9 with mean score of 2.63 and SD 1.21 showed high extent that Problem solving skill is essential to run a business. Item 10 with mean score of 1.39 and SD .48 implied very low extent that Project management and planning skills are business essentials,

Thus aggregate mean score of $2.58 > 2.50$ showed high extent that high extent that communication skills relates to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Question 3: To what extent does marketing skills relate to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of the extent marketing skills relate to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria

Descriptive Statistics

S/N Items	N=280	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remark
11. Content writing of business needs can promote agro business		2.6357	1.21172	HE
12. Knowing how to use email marketing could lead to agro business development		3.4643	.68167	VHE
13. Having understanding of video marketing encourages agro business		2.9286	1.19523	HE
14. Market segmentation skills of knowing how product design attract a particular demographics is needed for agro business		3.3571	.71913	VHE
15. Marketing selves and having clear vision is essential for entrepreneurial growth.		2.6000	1.24146	HE
Grand Mean		2.99	1.00	HE

Table 3 above showed in item 16 mean score of 2.63 and SD 1.2 which implied high extent that content writing of business needs can promote agro business. In item 17 mean score of 3.46 and SD .68 showed very high extent that Knowing how to use email marketing could lead to agro business development. In item 18 mean score of 2.92 and SD 1.19 showed high extent that having understanding of video marketing encourages agro business. Item 19 with mean score of 3.35 and SD .71 implied very high extent that market segmentation skills of knowing how product design attract a particular demographics is needed for agro business. Item 20 with mean score score of 2.60 and SD 1.24 showed high extent that marketing selves and having clear vision is essential for agro business growth.

Thus grand mean score of 2.99>2.5 implied high extent that marketing skills relate to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Test of Null Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant relationship between conceptualization skill and development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Test of significant relationship between conceptualization skill and development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria

Variables	Development of Agro based Industries				
Conceptual Skill	Pearson Correlation	1	.083**	-.151**	.544**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002	.000	.000
	N	280	280	280	280
	Pearson Correlation	.083**	1	.600**	.475**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002		.000	.000
	N	280	280	280	280
	Pearson Correlation	-.151**	.600**	1	.039

Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.150
N	280	280	280	280
Pearson Correlation	.544**	.475**	.039	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
N	280	280	280	280

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 10 above showed N-value of 280, correlation coefficient (Spearman rho) value of .039, p-value of $.002 < .05$ which showed that there is significant relationship between significant relationship between conceptualization skill and development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between communication skills relate to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria

Table 5: significant relationship between communication skills relate to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria

Variables		Agro Business Development			
		Item5	Item6	Item7	Item8
Communication Skill	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.048	.613**	.805**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001	.000	.000
	N	280	280	280	280
	Correlation Coefficient	.048	1.000	.576**	.113**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.	.000	.000
	N	280	280	280	280
	Correlation Coefficient	.613**	.576**	1.000	.540**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
	N	280	280	280	280
	Correlation Coefficient	.805**	.113**	.540**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
	N	280	280	280	280

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 above showed N-value of 280, coefficient value of .805, p-value of $.001 < .05$ which showed that there is a significant relationship between communication skills relate to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between marketing skill and to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 6: Test of significant relationship between marketing skills and to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Variables	Agro Business Development			
Marketing Skill	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.561**	.195**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
	N	280	280	280
	Correlation Coefficient	.561**	1.000	-.103**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
	N	280	280	280
	Correlation Coefficient	.195**	-.103**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
	N	280	280	280

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 13 showed in n-value of 280, coefficient value of .195, p-value of .000<.05 which showed that there is significant relationship between marketing skill and to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Summary of Findings

The findings of the study are hereunder itemized:

1. There is high extent that conceptualization skill relates development of agro Business development in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. There is a significant relationship between conceptualization skill and agro business development in Rivers State, Nigeria.
3. There high extent that communication relate to development of agro business in Rivers State, Nigeria
4. There is a significant relationship between communication skill and development of agro business in Rivers State, Nigeria.
5. There is high extent that marketing skills relate to development of agro business in Rivers State, Nigeria
6. There is a significant relationship between marketing skills and development of agro business in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- 7.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study are hereunder discussed:

Conceptualization skill and Development of Agro business in Rivers State

The findings of the revealed that significant relationship between conceptualization skill and development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria. The finding showed that conceptualization skill relates to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria. Northouse (2010) and Yukl (2012) citing Katz (1955), stated that conceptual also referred to as cognitive skills involve good judgment, foresight, intuition, creativity, and the ability to find meaning and order in ambiguous or certain events, ability to convey meaning by

developing models and the ability to develop creative solutions as well as new insight into problems, ability to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information, detect deviations from plans, analyze situations and perceive trends, anticipate changes, recognize opportunities and potential threats to any business including agro based. Conceptual skills are central to the entrepreneurs's ability in creating strategic plan of the business. This means that conceptual skills has to do with the mental aspect of shaping the meaning of organizational policy issues by understanding what the organization stands for, where it is and where it should be going.

Communication skill and Development of Agro Based Business

The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between conceptualization skill and employability of Business Education graduates in Rivers State. In support of the findings of the present study, Aliu (2007), cited in Nweke (2015) stated that setting up an business at all, the first thing to consider is the life span of the business. Yemi (2010), computer technologist advises beginners to ask the following questions before starting business: "It is a business that can last for a very long time or that can be handed over to the children?" Will the patronage continue to increase or will it decrease by the day? Patronage is a very vital factor because when a business that is set up with huge capital eventually attracts low returns for the owner as a result of low patronage, then one becomes frustrated which may lead to total business collapse. The question should therefore come to mind of any prospective technologist/technician who wants to go into self-employable business continued Yemi is: "will people require the services or products of the company on a daily basis? The most rewarding of business is that it affords the people the opportunity of having what they cannot provide for themselves but cannot do without".

It is on this regard that the Rivers State Government over the years has supported the Federal Government of Nigeria in recognizing business education as forming the basis for Nigeria's technological development, and the need for adequate provisions to develop the necessary business/vocational skills (Nweke, 2015).

However, the success for any educational programme hinges on the availability of adequate number of professionally trained, committed, motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers, as no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers. In spite of government's numerous efforts like establishment of more business teachers colleges, encouragement of universities to mount business teacher education programmes and even training of business teachers abroad through bi-lateral co-operation agreements with countries like Italy, U.S.A. and Canada (Osokoya, 2009), the problem of lack of adequate business teachers still persists.

This is important because it is through the improvement of business or vocational trainers that the role of business education as a tool for self-employment in Rivers State can be actualized. In this era of massive un-employment business education has come to play a more conspicuous role. As people who are trained can now practice on their own respective fields of specialization. There are opportunities for training in business education institutions in Rivers State. The basic courses considered as business/vocational courses in this study are Agric and allied studies, Business, Home Economics, Engineering Sciences, Office Technology and Management, etc. Out of one of the Federal Government Business, the state university, federal university in the state (UniPort), Ken Saro Wiwa Polytechnic, Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic Rumuola, Federal Polytechnic of Oil and Gas, Bonny Island offer various business courses in the areas mentioned; (Wokocha 2014).

Marketing skills and Development of Agro Based Industries

Findings of the study revealed that there is a significant significant relationship between marketing skill and to development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria. In

support of the present findings, Aliu, (2015) stated that agro business marketing is less about a single marketing strategy and more about a marketing spirit that differentiates itself from traditional marketing practices. It eschews many of the fundamental principles of marketing because they are typically designed for large, well established firms. agro business marketing utilizes a toolkit of new and unorthodox marketing practices to help emerging firms gain a foothold in crowded markets.

In competitive markets, it can be easy to get lost in the crowd. One of the biggest challenges for entrepreneurs, as revealed by Ellis (2014) is standing out from their competitors. Marketing in new, unusual, or aggressive ways is the best way to illustrate what makes a business unique. Below are some marketing strategies that entrepreneurs have used successfully in the past. A company can direct all of its marketing efforts towards one strategy, or use several of them at once.

- **Relationship Marketing** – Focuses on creating a strong link between the brand and the customer.
- **Expeditionary Marketing** – Involves creating markets and developing innovative products. Companies act as leaders rather than followers.
- **One to One Marketing** – Customers are marketed to as individuals. All marketing efforts are personalized.
- **Real Time Marketing** – Uses the power of technology to interact with a customer in a real time.
- **Viral Marketing** – Places marketing messages on the Internet so they can be shared and expanded on by customers.
- **Digital Marketing** – Leverages the power of Internet tools like email and social networking to support marketing efforts

Many agro business marketing strategies are born out of necessity. New businesses might have 10, five, or just one person working on their marketing efforts. They work within limited budgets and have access to a fraction of the resources that their major competitors have. Luxuries like graphic design teams and advertising consultants are often outside the means of start-ups, requiring them to find ways to make the maximum impact with limited resources.

The most common features of agro business marketing include innovation, risk taking, and being proactive. agro business marketing campaigns try to highlight the company's greatest strengths while emphasizing their value to the customer. Focusing on innovative products or exemplary customer service is a way to stand out from competitors. They make this pitch using cheap and accessible tools including viral videos, Tweets, Facebook pages, and email marketing. Any and all marketing strategies can be considered as long as they produce results (Nweke, 2015).

Conclusion

The study investigated industrial skills and development of agro based industries in Rivers State, Nigeria. The findings of the study revealed that industrial skills are required for the development of agro based industries in Rivers State. The findings indicated that respondents agreed that the variables of conceptualization skill, communication skill and marketing skills significantly relate to development of agro business industries in Rivers State. Contrastly, the

study found that agro business operators in Rivers State have displayed very minimal skills in the examined variables of conceptualization, communication and marketing.

Recommendations.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made:

1. Agro based business owners should incorporate conceptual skill strategies in implementing the business development.
2. Communication skill should be encouraged by by management by engaging in intermittent training and re-trianing of staff.
3. Modern marketing skills should be encouraged by agro business units to develop their businesses for greater profitability.

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