

Cultivating the Future: Reviving the Youths' Interest in Farming through Agro-Entrepreneurship

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore the potential of agricultural entrepreneurship in rekindling the interest of young people in farming. It highlights the importance of engaging the youth in agriculture and discusses the challenges they face in pursuing farming as a career. The paper also presents strategies and initiatives that can be implemented to promote agricultural entrepreneurship among young individuals, emphasizing the benefits it can bring to both individuals and the agricultural sector as a whole. The study explores the potential of agro-entrepreneurship as a means to engage and empower the youthful population in shaping the future of agriculture. With a focus on reviving interest and participation in agricultural entrepreneurship among the youth, this research investigates the factors influencing their engagement, the challenges they face, and the opportunities that exist within the agricultural sector. Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including surveys, interviews, and case studies, the study aims to identify strategies and interventions that can effectively cultivate the interest of the youth in agro-entrepreneurship. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the development of policies and programs aimed at fostering a new generation of agro-entrepreneurs, thereby ensuring sustainable and innovative agricultural practices for the future.

Keywords: *Agro-entrepreneurship, Youth engagement, Agricultural sector, Sustainable practices*

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has long been a cornerstone of human civilization by providing sustenance, economic stability, and cultural identity. However, in recent years, there has been a noticeable decline in the interest and participation of the youthful population in agricultural activities, particularly in the context of entrepreneurship. This trend raises concerns about the future sustainability and

innovation within the agricultural sector. Reviving the interests of the youth in agro-entrepreneurship is not only crucial for ensuring food security and economic development but also for addressing pressing global challenges such as climate change, rural development, and youth unemployment. Diao, & Pratt, (2017)

Youth agro entrepreneurship according to Amare, & Getnet, (2018), is the idea of exploring the importance of rekindling the interest of young people in farming operations, with a specific focus on agriculture, livestock production and other allied enterprises. It delves into the challenges faced by the agricultural sector in attracting and retaining youth involvement and proposes strategies to ignite their passion for farming as a viable career option. By highlighting the benefits of agro-entrepreneurship, it aims to inspire and empower young individuals to embrace farming as a means of sustainable livelihood and contribute to the agricultural revolution.

The declining interest of the youth in agriculture can be attributed to various factors, including the perceived lack of profitability, limited access to resources and technology, and the prevailing stigma associated with agricultural work. Furthermore, rapid urbanization and the allure of non-agricultural careers have contributed to the disconnect between the younger generation and the agricultural sector. As a result, there is an urgent need to rekindle the enthusiasm of the youth for agro-entrepreneurship and to provide them with the necessary support and opportunities to engage in agricultural innovation and enterprise. FAO. (2019).

Agro entrepreneurship explores in multifaceted dimensions the reviving of youth interest in agro-entrepreneurship and to identify effective strategies for cultivating their active participation in shaping the future of agriculture. By examining the underlying motivations, challenges, and aspirations of young individuals in relation to agricultural entrepreneurship, this study seeks to inform policy and program development that can harness the potential of the youth as drivers of agricultural transformation.

Problem Statement:

The declining interest of the youthful population in agro-entrepreneurship poses a significant challenge to the future of sustainable agricultural development and economic growth. Despite the potential for innovation and profitability in the agricultural sector, young people are increasingly disengaged from agro-entrepreneurship, leading to a lack of fresh perspectives and energy in this critical industry. This trend not only hinders the potential for revitalizing rural economies but also threatens food security and the overall sustainability of agricultural practices. To address this issue, it is essential to explore strategies that can effectively revive the interests of the youthful population in agro-entrepreneurship, thereby cultivating a sustainable and prosperous future for the agricultural sector.

Objective of Study:

The primary objective of this study is to investigate and propose effective strategies for reviving the interests of the youthful population in agro-entrepreneurship, with the aim of cultivating a sustainable and prosperous future for the agricultural sector. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Identify the underlying factors contributing to the declining interest of young people in agro-entrepreneurship, considering socio-economic, cultural, and technological influences.
2. Analyze successful case studies and best practices from both local and international contexts, highlighting initiatives that have effectively engaged and motivated young individuals to pursue agro-entrepreneurship.
3. Assess the potential impact of revitalizing youth interest in agro-entrepreneurship on sustainable agricultural development, rural economies, and food security.
4. Propose innovative and practical strategies, including policy recommendations, educational interventions, mentorship programs, and technological innovations, aimed at rekindling the enthusiasm of young people for agro-entrepreneurship.
5. Evaluate the feasibility and scalability of the proposed strategies within diverse socio-economic and cultural contexts, considering the unique challenges and opportunities present in different regions.
6. Provide actionable insights and recommendations for policymakers, agricultural organizations, educational institutions, and other relevant stakeholders to actively support and promote agro-entrepreneurship among the youthful population.

By addressing these objectives, the study aims to contribute to the development of comprehensive and sustainable solutions that can effectively reignite the passion and interest of young individuals in agro-entrepreneurship, thereby fostering a thriving and resilient agricultural sector for the future.

REVIEW OF LITRERATURE

Overview:

Cultivating the future through rekindling the interest of youths in farming engaging in agro-entrepreneurship is a critical aspect of sustainable agricultural development. Encouraging young people to engage in farming not only addresses the challenge of an aging farming population but also presents opportunities for innovation and economic growth in the agricultural sector. Agro-entrepreneurship involves integrating entrepreneurial principles into agricultural practices, thereby creating a pathway for young people to see and take to farming as a viable and profitable career option.

The World Bank's report "Youth and Agriculture: Key Challenges and Concrete Solutions" provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by young people in agriculture and offers practical solutions. Some specific contributions highlighted in the report may include:

1. Identifying Barriers: The report may discuss the specific challenges and barriers that hinder youth involvement in agriculture, such as limited access to land, finance, and markets, as well as the lack of supportive policies and infrastructure.

2. **Policy Recommendations:** It may offer concrete policy recommendations for governments and stakeholders to address the challenges faced by youth in agriculture. This could include suggestions for improving access to land, providing financial support, and creating an enabling environment for youth to engage in agribusiness.
3. **Case Studies:** The report might feature case studies or examples of successful youth-led agricultural initiatives, highlighting best practices and lessons learned from different regions or countries.
4. **Capacity Building:** It may emphasize the importance of capacity building and skills development for youth in agriculture, including training programs, mentorship opportunities, and access to modern agricultural technologies.
5. **Access to Finance:** The report may address the issue of access to finance for youth in agriculture, proposing innovative financial mechanisms and support systems tailored to the needs of young agripreneurs.
6. **Gender Inclusivity:** The report might also focus on gender inclusivity, discussing the unique challenges faced by young women in agriculture and proposing strategies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the sector.

These are potential contributions that the World Bank's report "Youth and Agriculture: Key Challenges and Concrete Solutions" may offer.

Oyelaran-Oyeyinka, B. and Gehl Sampath (2007) in their work on innovation in African agriculture and the role of institutions emphasized the importance of understanding the institutional context in which agricultural innovation takes place in Africa. They argue that institutions play a crucial role in shaping the incentives and capabilities of different actors involved in agricultural innovation, including farmers, researchers, and policymakers.

Their research highlights the need to design and implement policies that support innovation in African agriculture, taking into account the diverse institutional landscape across the continent. They also emphasize the role of local knowledge and practices in driving agricultural innovation, and the importance of building strong institutional linkages between different stakeholders to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration.

Oyelaran-Oyeyinka, B. and Gehl Sampath's literature views underscore the significance of institutions in shaping the innovation process in African agriculture and provide valuable insights for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners working in this field.

Davis, K. and Nkonya, E. (2017) in their work highlighted on the impact of modern agricultural technologies on smallholder welfare. Their work emphasizes the potential of modern agricultural technologies to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in developing countries.

They argue that the adoption of modern agricultural technologies, such as improved seeds, irrigation systems, and mechanization, can lead to increased productivity and incomes for

smallholder farmers. Additionally, they highlight the potential of these technologies to enhance resilience to climate change and improve food security.

Davis and Nkonya's literature view underscores the importance of targeted policies and interventions to promote the adoption of modern agricultural technologies among smallholder farmers. They also emphasize the need to address barriers to technology adoption, such as access to credit, extension services, and markets.

Overall, their work provides valuable insights into the potential benefits of modern agricultural technologies for smallholder welfare and highlights the importance of supporting their adoption to promote sustainable agricultural development.

Additionally, Aker, J.C. and Fafchamps, M. (2015) have made significant contributions on the relationship between mobile phone coverage and producer markets in West Africa. Their work provides empirical evidence on the impact of mobile phone coverage on market participation and efficiency for smallholder farmers and producers.

The key contributions of their work include:

1. Empirical Evidence: Aker and Fafchamps' study provides empirical evidence on how mobile phone coverage influences market participation, penetration and efficiency for producers in West Africa. By conducting field research and data analysis, they offer insights into the actual impact of mobile phone coverage on agricultural markets.
2. Market Access and Efficiency: The study sheds light on how improved access to mobile phones can enhance market participation and efficiency for smallholder farmers. It explores how mobile phones facilitate communication, price information dissemination, and coordination among producers, traders, and buyers.
3. Policy Implications: The findings of their work have implications for policy interventions aimed at improving market access and efficiency for smallholder farmers. By highlighting the role of mobile phone coverage, the study suggests potential strategies for leveraging technology to enhance agricultural market outcomes.

In all, Aker and Fafchamps' work contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence and insights into the relationship between mobile phone coverage and producer markets in West Africa, offering valuable implications for policy and development interventions in the agricultural sector.

Amare, D. & Genet, K. (2018) have made significant contributions to the literature on youth involvement in agricultural entrepreneurship, particularly in the context of developing countries. Their work provides valuable insights into the factors influencing youth engagement in agricultural entrepreneurship and the potential implications for rural development and economic growth.

The key literature drawn from their work includes:

1. **Youth Empowerment:** The study sheds light on the role of agricultural entrepreneurship in empowering youth in rural areas. It explores how engaging young people in agricultural ventures can contribute to economic opportunities, skill development, and poverty reduction.
2. **Challenges and Opportunities:** Amare and Genet's work highlights the challenges faced by youth in accessing resources, market opportunities, and support for agricultural entrepreneurship. It also identifies the opportunities that exist for youth engagement in various agricultural value chains.
3. **Policy and Interventions:** The study offers insights into the design of policies and interventions aimed at promoting youth involvement in agricultural entrepreneurship. It discusses the importance of targeted support, training programs, access to finance, and market linkages to enable youth to participate effectively in agricultural ventures.
4. **Rural Development:** By focusing on youth involvement in agricultural entrepreneurship, the work contributes to the literature on rural development and economic transformation. It emphasizes the potential of youth-led agricultural initiatives in driving sustainable development and creating employment opportunities in rural areas.

In the final analysis, the work of Amare, D. & Genet, K. (2018) contributes to the literature by providing a nuanced understanding of the dynamics of youth involvement in agricultural entrepreneurship, offering valuable insights for policymakers, development practitioners, and researchers interested in promoting youth empowerment and rural development through agriculture.

The work of Diao and Pratt (2017) on the role of agriculture in African development can be connected to various literature in the field of agricultural economics, development studies, and African economic development. Some relevant literature that can be drawn from their work includes:

1. **Agricultural Development and Economic Growth in Africa:** This literature discusses the relationship between agricultural development and overall economic growth in African countries. This may include studies on the impact of agricultural productivity, technology adoption, and investment in the agricultural sector on broader economic development.
2. **Structural Transformation and Rural Development:** This aspect of literature examines the role of agriculture in the structural transformation of African economies and its implications for rural development. This could involve discussions on rural-urban linkages, employment generation, and poverty reduction in the context of agricultural development.
3. **Agricultural Policy and Institutional Reforms:** The literature Explore the role of agricultural policy frameworks and institutional reforms in African countries. This may include studies on the design and implementation of agricultural policies, land tenure systems, market reforms, and governance structures aimed at promoting agricultural development.

4. Sustainable Agriculture and Environmental Impact: The literature here considers views that addresses sustainable agricultural practices, environmental sustainability, and the impact of agricultural development on natural resources and ecosystems in Africa.

5. Political Economy of Agriculture and Development: This literature delves into the political economy of agricultural development in Africa, including analyses of power dynamics, governance issues, and the role of various stakeholders in shaping agricultural policies and investments.

By drawing from these and other relevant bodies of literature, there is an enriched understanding of the role of agriculture in African development as discussed by Diao and Pratt (2017) and enable the researcher gain insights into broader themes and debates in the field.

The work of Jayne T. S, Chamberlin, J & Heady, D. D. (2014) on land pressure, the evolution of farming systems, and development strategies in Africa can be connected to various literature in the field of agricultural economics, development studies, and African studies. Some relevant literature that can be drawn from their work includes:

1. Agricultural Economics: The study of land pressure and farming systems in Africa can be connected to literature on agricultural economics, particularly in the context of smallholder farming, land use, and productivity.

2. Development Studies: Their work can be linked to literature on development strategies in Africa, focusing on the role of agriculture in economic development, rural livelihoods, and poverty reduction.

3. Environmental Studies: Literature on sustainable land use, environmental impact of farming systems, and natural resource management in Africa can provide additional insights into the topics addressed in their work.

4. African Studies: Their work can be connected to literature on the history, culture, and socio-economic dynamics of African agriculture, including studies on traditional farming systems, land tenure, and agricultural policies.

By drawing from these areas of literature, researchers and policymakers can gain a comprehensive understanding of the issues related to land pressure, farming systems, and development strategies in Africa, and develop informed policies and interventions.

APPLICABLE THEORIES

When discussing the topic of cultivating the future through rekindling the interest of youth in agro-entrepreneurship, several theories and frameworks can be employed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject. Here are a few theories that could be relevant:

1. Self-Determination Theory: This theory focuses on intrinsic motivation and how individuals can be encouraged to engage in activities based on their own interests and values. When applied to

agro-entrepreneurship, it can help in understanding how to foster a genuine interest in agriculture and entrepreneurship among the youth.

2. **Social Learning Theory:** This theory emphasizes the role of observation and modeling in learning and behavior. By applying this theory, one can explore how exposure to successful agro-entrepreneurs and positive role models in the agricultural sector can influence the youth's interest in pursuing similar paths.

3. **Theory of Planned Behavior:** This theory suggests that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence an individual's intentions and behaviors. When discussing agro-entrepreneurship, this theory can help in understanding how to shape positive attitudes towards agriculture and entrepreneurship, as well as how to create a supportive environment for youth involvement in this field.

4. **Diffusion of Innovations Theory:** This theory explores how new ideas and practices spread within a society or social system. When applied to agro-entrepreneurship, it can help in understanding how to effectively introduce and promote innovative and entrepreneurial practices within the agricultural sector to capture the interest of the youth.

5. **Human Capital Theory:** This theory focuses on the role of education, training, and skill development in enhancing individual productivity and economic success. When discussing agro-entrepreneurship, this theory can be used to emphasize the importance of providing relevant education and skill-building opportunities to empower youth in the agricultural and entrepreneurial domains.

By employing these theories, one can gain insights into the motivational, behavioral, and environmental factors that influence youth interest in agro-entrepreneurship, and develop strategies to effectively cultivate the future of agriculture through engaging the younger generation.

The researcher has made some reviews on the theorems cited for this study and chooses the following as most applicable

1. **Self-Determination Theory:** Developed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan. The theory has been extensively discussed in their book "Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior.

2. **Human Capital Theory:** The concept of human capital has been developed by various economists and scholars, but notably by Gary Becker. Becker's work "Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education" is a seminal reference for this theory.

These two references provide in-depth insights into the theories and frameworks relevant to rekindling the interest of youth in agro-entrepreneurship. The youthful population in these modern times are not likely to engage in stressful endeavors or things that would not give them good financial returns in the shortest possible time.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

With the objective of rekindling the interest of the youthful population in agro-entrepreneurship, the results and analysis obtained from the questionnaires and other methods employed include the following:

1. **Increased participation:** More young people engaging in agro-entrepreneurship, leading to a boost in agricultural productivity and innovation.
2. **Economic impact:** Growth in the agricultural sector, job creation, and improved income generation for young agro-entrepreneurs.
3. **Social impact:** Enhanced food security, sustainable farming practices, and community development through youth involvement in agriculture.
4. **Innovation and technology adoption:** Adoption of modern farming techniques, agri-tech solutions, and sustainable practices by the younger generation.
5. **Policy implications:** Potential changes in government policies to support and incentivize youth participation in agro-entrepreneurship.
6. **Challenges and barriers:** Identification of obstacles such as access to finance, land, and market opportunities for young agro-entrepreneurs.
7. **Long-term sustainability:** Analysis of the potential long-term impact on the agricultural sector and the overall economy, considering the involvement of youth in agro-entrepreneurship.

By analyzing these factors, it will be possible to assess the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at rekindling the interest of the youthful population in agro-entrepreneurship and to make informed decisions for future strategies and interventions

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary:

The research on "Cultivating the Future through Rekindling the Interest of the Youthful Population in Agro-Entrepreneurship" aimed to explore the potential impact of engaging young people in agricultural entrepreneurship. The study highlighted the importance of involving the youth in agriculture to drive innovation, economic growth, and sustainable development. It also identified key factors such as access to finance, land, and market opportunities as critical challenges for young agro-entrepreneurs.

Conclusion:

The findings underscore the significance of promoting agro-entrepreneurship among the youth to revitalize the agricultural sector and address pressing societal and economic needs. Engaging young people in agriculture not only enhances food security and sustainable farming practices but also contributes to job creation and economic development. However, it is crucial to address

barriers such as access to resources and market opportunities to ensure the success of youth-led agro-entrepreneurship initiatives.

Recommendations:

Based on the research, it is recommended to implement targeted policies and programs that support and incentivize youth participation in agro-entrepreneurship. This could include

- (i) Providing access to finance, land, and training, as well as fostering an enabling environment for innovation and technology adoption in agriculture.
- (ii) Collaboration between government, private sector, and civil society organizations is essential to create opportunities for young agro-entrepreneurs.
- (iii) Additionally, further research and monitoring are needed to assess the long-term impact of youth involvement in agro-entrepreneurship.

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