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# The Role of Agricultural Entrepreneurship Education in Employment Generation and Community Empowerment

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## **Abstract**

*Agricultural entrepreneurship in addition to profit making prepares one for self-employment in agricultural occupation thus making agricultural occupations fit into the framework of entrepreneurship. As one of the specialized areas in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), entrepreneurial skills in agriculture can be learnt for those subjected to it to increasingly engage in agribusiness and be self-employed. As productivity increases and placing one in successful agribusiness, the people are empowered economically and socially. It was therefore recommended that agricultural entrepreneurship education be embraced for employment generation and community empowerment.*

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**Keywords:** Agricultural Entrepreneurship, Vocational Agriculture Education, Employment Generation, Community Empowerment

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## **Introduction**

Entrepreneurship has its root from the French word “entreprenra” which according to Hossain (2015) means to undertake, to pursue opportunities, to fulfill needs and wants through innovation to undertake business. Capitalism itself relies on entrepreneurship as a conner stone. Although huge number of people around the world engage in entrepreneurial activity, according to Shane (2007), academia has no coherent conceptual framework for entrepreneurship and has offered virtually no systematic efforts to assemble the fragmentary pieces of knowledge about this phenomenon in one place.

Shane therefore presented a holistic view of entrepreneurship as an activity that involves the discovery, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities to introduce new goods and services, ways of organizing, markets, processes, and raw materials through organizing efforts that previously had not existed. This definition explains only, when and how entrepreneurial opportunities exist; the sources of those opportunities and the forms they take; the processes of opportunity discovery and evaluation; the acquisition of resources for the exploitation of these opportunities; the act of opportunity exploitation; why? when? and how? Some individuals discover, evaluate, gather resources for and exploit opportunities; the strategies used to pursue opportunities; and the organizing efforts to exploit them (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

By incorporating empirical research, Shane (2007) introduced operational definitions of “New firm formation” and “self-employment”. According to Shane, new firm formation is the forming of a business venture for profit that previously was not in existence and “self-employment” is the performance of work for personal profit rather than for wages paid by others. Be it new firm formation or self-employment, the common ground here as defined by Shane is profit. Profit is the expectation of every business formation.

The relevant questions arising therefore are: Can agricultural occupations fit into the framework of entrepreneurship? Can entrepreneurial skills in agriculture be learnt? Can agricultural entrepreneurship education enhance employment generation and community empowerment? This paper was therefore planned to provide answers to these questions.

### **Entrepreneurship and Agriculture**

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

The European Commission Sixth Framework Research Report therefore highlighted technical and production skills, business management skills, business opportunity skills, business strategy skills, and networking skills as five (5) categories of skills farmers need today in order to succeed in business. Technical and production skills identified here is paramount as no farm business can succeed without production of the product.

Farm produce as product must be in place for a successful farm business. This underscores the importance of production skills in farm occupations be it early season Okro production, vegetable production, permanent crop production, cereal crops production, tuber crops production, cowpea production, oil palm processing, cocoa production, cassava processing, poultry production, snail rearing, Bees keeping (Apiculture), fish pond, fisheries capture, Goat and Sheep rearing, swine production or farm produce marketing. Farm produce marketing needs production skills of packaging and distribution based on the economic principle that, no production process is complete until the products are handed over to the final consumer. In this regard, Pieter de Wolf and Schoorlemmer (2008) concluded that production skills is a basic requirement for farmers to succeed in the farming business. That in addition farmers have to become businessmen because of various input combinations and the growing complexity of the farming business. This combination of farm production skills and business management is agricultural entrepreneurship. But can this agricultural entrepreneurship be learnt?

### **Agricultural Entrepreneurship Education**

Policy provisions of Nigeria agriculture as an important subject area of training for vocational and entrepreneurship development. Consequently, the Federal Government of Nigeria in its National Policy on Education (2013) prescribed agriculture as a pre-vocational subject at the Basic education level, as a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) subject at the post-basic education, as a Technology course at the tertiary education level and as an entrepreneurial vocational enterprise.

Agricultural entrepreneurship education therefore prepares one to own a farm business and increasingly progress in it. This preparation can take the form of vocational education, extension education, adult education, non-formal education or out-of-school vocational training. The vocational education dimension emphasizes vocational offerings in formal schools and skill acquisition centres. The extension dimension aims at improving the capacity of farmers who are adults to become better actors where they live and farm, and the out-of-school vocational skills training is targeted at the youth to own their own farm businesses.

The vocational education dimension here teaches farm entrepreneurship by using the traditional theories of vocational education as reported by Bode-Cooker (2014) that:

1. Vocational Education will be efficient in proportion as the environment in which the learner is trained is a replica of the environment in which he must subsequently work;
2. Effective vocational training can only be given where the training jobs are carried on in the same way with the same operations, the same tools and the same machines as in the occupation itself;
3. Vocational education will be effective in proportion as it trains the individual directly and specifically in the thinking habits and the manipulative habits required in the occupation itself;
4. Vocational education will be effective in proportion as it enables each individual to capitalize his interests, aptitudes and intrinsic intelligence to the highest possible degree;
5. Effective vocational education for any profession, calling, trade, occupation or job can only be given to the selected group of individuals who need it and are able to profit by it;
6. Vocational training will be effective in proportion as the specific training experiences for forming right habits of doing are repeated to the point that these habits become fixed to the degree necessary for gainful employment;
7. Vocational education will be effective in proportion as the instructor has had successful experience in the application of skills and knowledge to the operations and processes he undertakes to teach;
8. For every occupation, there is a minimum of productive ability which an individual must possess in order to secure or retain employment in that occupation. If vocational education is not carried to that point with that individual, it is neither personally nor socially effective;
9. Vocational education must recognize conditions as they are and must train individuals to meet the demands of the market;
10. Effective establishment of process habits in any learner is secured in proportion as the training is given on actual job and not exercise or pseudo jobs;
11. For every occupation, there is a body of content which is peculiar to that occupation and which practically has no functioning value in any other occupation;
12. Vocational education will render efficient social service in proportion as it meets the specific training needs of a group at the time that they need it and in such a way that they can most effectively profit by the instruction;
13. Vocational education will be socially efficient in proportion as in its methods of instruction and in personal relations with learners, takes into consideration particular characteristics of the group which it serves;
14. The administration of vocational education will be efficient in proportion as it is elastic and flexible rather than rigid and standardized; and
15. While every reasonable effort should be made to reduce per capita cost, there is a minimum below which effective vocational education cannot be given and if the course does not permit of this minimum of per capita cost, vocational education should not be attempted.

By this educative device of adopting the vocational education principles, agricultural entrepreneurship can be taught and managed making trainees able to own their farm business and become self-employed.

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

Agriculture has a wide variety of occupational areas ranging from on-farm, to off-farm agricultural service occupations. The on-farm covers the farm occupational areas of crop production, animal production and fisheries culture and capture while the off-farm refers to those agricultural inputs and equipment manufacturing, processing, and service occupations.

When people are trained to own their farm business as an enterprise using the principles of vocational education, the sky will be the limit in employment generation and opportunities. For example, it was observed by Ekele, Abdullahi and Anjor (2016) that in Benue State of Nigeria, citrus production is a lucrative business and that capacity building of the youth in citrus production will help create job and at the same time improve production output that was below the market demand. Adetunji, Olaniyi and Raufu (2007) reported that of employment opportunities created by the cocoa production industry in Oyo State, Nigeria. Occupations in fisheries are not left out. Amechi (2016) studied entrepreneurial skills required for the training of youths in fish breeding enterprise for self-employment in Anambra State, Nigeria and concluded that if the skills in fish breeding identified are packaged and used in the skill acquisition centres, jobs will be created. All these point to the fact that agricultural entrepreneurship education generates employment.

### **Agricultural Entrepreneurship Education and Community Empowerment**

It is popular among vocational agriculture educators and agricultural extension experts that youth and farmers training, bring about increase in productivity and success in farming as a business when productivity increase, economic power also increases. When economic power increases, social status also increases which leads to participation in community development activities. When productivity of farmers is improved in this way, the community as a whole is empowered to carry out other social activities. They can send their children to school. They can now seek medical attention and pay for hospital bills; they can improve on the quality of shelter and accommodation; they can then get involved in leisure pursuit and certainly better health care and longevity.

Adetunji, Olaniyi and Raufu (2007) reported the contributions of cocoa production in revenue generation among cocoa farmers and government of Oyo State, Nigeria. Deekor (2017) studied non-formal education needs of rural farmers for enhanced productivity and participation in community development and results indicated high level of impact of training on productivity of farmers which also led to high participation in community development. This collaborates Tomina (2011) who studied determinants of community participation in Oradea and found out that people participate in community activities more as their social status increase.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Based on the foregoing, it is therefore concluded that agricultural entrepreneurship education if packaged according to the principles and delivery of vocational agriculture education, has the capacity to generate employment and empower the communities. It is therefore recommended that agricultural entrepreneurship education be embraced for employment generation and empowerment in communities.

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