

# Entrepreneurial Skill Needs of Agricultural Education Students for Sustainable Occupation in Agricultural Industry: A Recipe for Poverty Reduction in Ebonyi State

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## Abstract

The study examined entrepreneurial skill needs of agricultural education student for sustainable occupation in agriculture with emphasis on production, management and marketing aspects. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 15 lecturers in department of vocational and technical education of Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo. The study was guided by three research question and three null Hypotheses. The researcher developed a 33 item statement, validated and its reliability 0.86 determined using Cronbach alpha method. The data generated was analyzed using mean with standard deviation to answer research questions, where as T-test statistics was employed in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study found that the identified 33 skills are basic entrepreneurial skills for securing employment in agricultural industry; it was therefore recommended among others that lecturer (teachers) should incorporate the identified skill into their teaching plan in schools.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial skill, sustainable occupation, agriculture, poverty reduction.

## 1. Introduction

The rate of unemployment among graduates of technical and vocational education institutions in Nigerian today is a clear indication of lack of requisite skills needed to be employed and self reliance. In view of Olaitan in Shaibu and Nwazue (2025) the graduate unemployment in Nigeria is an evidence that most of the graduates do not possess the technical ability or Entrepreneurial competence that is commensurate with their certificate. This implies that the technical and vocational system in Nigeria today apparently do not equip the graduates to meet the challenges of the present labour market. Hence, the development of vices such as restiveness, gangrism, kidnapping, boko

haram surgenancy armed rubberiy and other threatening behaviours. But if graduates were properly harnessed through Entrepreneurial skills the society would have been transformed technologically, economically, industrially and socio-politically with less threatening behaviour (Okoli, 2013)

Entrepreneurial skills are business skills in which learners acquire in order to function effectively and efficiently in business environment as self-employed person. There are competencies that learners are expected to possess to be able to start, manager, and progress sustainably in business venture. An Entrepreneur is a person who takes business risk, financial responsibility, dictate the pace of the business,

earn the interest alone and also bear the loss alone including his assets. Entrepreneurs therefore, possess the charisma which gives them fortitude to continue, despite obstacles and ability to cope effectively in ever changing situation.

However, whatever legal business one does for a living is considered as self-employment or Entrepreneurship, be it mining and agriculture occupation, constructions, provided one earns living through the occupation.

It is therefore imperative for students in technical and vocation education institution to possess those pre-requisite abilities that would enable them sustain living on graduation and transform them from employee to employer of labour. Hence, contributing to poverty reduction and economic development of Nigeria and Ebony state in particular. Acquiring entrepreneurial skills promotes entrepreneurial activities thereby providing income for economic growth and development in a sustainable manner. Agriculture is known to be the most viable and accessible poverty-reduction strategy for curbing food insecurity in Nigeria and Ebony State in Particular. This is because the inhabitants of Ebonyi state are predominantly farmers, though at subsistence level. This scenario has motivated World Bank and other international donor agencies, government at all levels and individuals to be aware that it is important to alleviate poverty and suffering of less privileged people (nation) residing in the rural areas utilizing agriculture as an immediate intervention strategy. Therefore, the need to lay emphasis on equipping our vocational technical students with necessary entrepreneurial skill by exposing them to real life situation while in school. Therefore technical and vocation education institution have the mandate to equip recipients with desirable skills that would enable them sustain living through agricultural occupation (crop or animal production).

Skill development is sine quanon for achieving sustainable development in any nation hence, Nigeria educational system must at all time geared toward equipping future generation with necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes for coping with the ever-demanding world of work (Adularia and Amina, 2016). It is known that when students are exposed to the right condition (practical condition) during training program, will assist them in acquiring the relevant skills needed for employment especially in agriculture occupation. To achieve this teachers should plan their lessons adopting demonstration technique of teaching utilizing school

demonstration farm where trials are carried out (Akamobi, 2022). Unfortunately, most Nigeria schools lack demonstration farming for practical/trials necessary for skills acquisition or implementation. Supporting this view, Chioma (2025) stated that school farms has drastically disappeared in most Nigeria schools and that the school environment is totally different in terms of equipment and facilities from what is obtained in real work environment. Obi and Okafor (2025) averred that competency acquisition requires adequate facilities and equipment or training materials and competent teachers (instructor) to be able to demonstrate the skills of emphasis. It is on this basis that school farms are imperative in quipping students with necessary farm skills to enable them cope with demands of farm operation on graduation.

Skill therefore, is the ability to do something well, especially because one have learned and practiced it. Olaitan, Alaribe and Omeh in Idenyi (2015) maintain that skill is he ability to do something well, measured against a standard, especial ability acquired through experience or training. It is an acceptable or standard demonstration of production practices. These are formed through individuals and organization or enterprises knowledge, abilities and provide a frame work for distinguishing between poor performance and exceptional performance. It is not "fixed" but can usual by developed with effort and support the process of developing competency is a lifelong series of doing and reflecting. Hence the need to engage students in practical in agricultural lesson at all time for successful skill acquisition for self-employment and reliance in agriculture. Therefore, the need to investigate the entrepreneurial skills needs of students for self employment.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

It has been observed that graduates of technical and vocational education institutions in Nigeria are unemployable evidenced from the roaming about of graduates in the urban street seeking for non-existence of white cola job. The scenario has given rise to complaint among parents and industries that graduate of tertiary institution are in adequately equipped with requisite employable skills, hence not employable. In support this Obi and Dara (2020) maintained that Nigeria labour market is currently reporting that Nigeria graduates do not possess the required skills due to non-exposure of student to right condition during training programme, hence no practical experience (on

job training) was gained before graduation. This is an aspect of wrong implementation of the vocational and technical education curriculum. This non possession of employable skills has made employer of labour to question the effectiveness of “industrial training programme (IT) a part of technical and vocational education curriculum. The worry then is despite the laudable objectives of IT there is still poor possession or complete lack of practical skills among graduates of Nigeria tertiary institutions, thereby exposing the youths to unemployment saga this justified the need for this study.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The central purpose of this study is to determine the entrepreneurial skill needs of students for sustainable occupation in agriculture. Specifically the study sought to;

1. Determine entrepreneurial skill needs of students for production activities in achieving sustainable occupation in agriculture.
2. Determine entrepreneurial skill needs of students for management activities in achieving sustainable occupation in agriculture.
3. Determine entrepreneurial skill needs of students for marketing activities in achieving sustainable occupation in agriculture.

### **Research Questions**

The following three research questions guided the study.

1. What are the entrepreneurial skills needs of students for production activities in achieving sustainable occupation in agriculture?
2. What are the entrepreneurial skills needs of students for management activities in achieving sustainable occupation in agriculture?
3. What are the entrepreneurial skills needs of students for marketing activities in achieving occupation in agriculture?

### **Null Hypotheses**

Three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

H<sub>01</sub>: there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female lectures in department of Vocational and Technical Education of Alex-Ekwene federal university Ndufu Acike IKwo on entrepreneurial

skills needs of student for production activities in achieving sustainable occupation in agriculture.

H<sub>02</sub>: there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female lectures in department of Vocational and Technical Education of Alex-Ekwene federal university Ndufu Acike IKwo on entrepreneurial skills needs of students for management activities in achieving sustainable occupation in agriculture.

H<sub>03</sub>: there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female lectures in department of Vocational and Technical Education of Alex-Ekwene federal university Ndufu Acike IKwo on entrepreneurial skills needs of students for marketing activities in achieving sustainable occupation in agriculture.

### **2. Methodology**

The study focused on entrepreneurial on production management and marketing skill needs of students for self-reliance. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in the department of vocational and technical education of Alex-Ekweme federal university Ndufu Alike Ikwo, Ebonyi state. The population of the study consisted of all the 15 lectures in the department of Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) Alex-Ekweme federal university Ndufu Alike Ikwo.

The entire lecturers was involved in the study due to its manageable size. The researcher developed a-33, item statements validated by three experts drawn from the faculty of education Alex-Ekweme federal university Ndufu Alike Ikwo. The reliability of the instrument was tested by sending 20 copies of the questionnaire to lectures in the department of technology and vocation education of Enugu state university of science and technology, Enugu and data collected was analyses using Cranach Alpha method. The coefficient index of 0.86 was obtained which was high enough to permit the conclusion that the instrument was reliable. Hence, it was utilized in collecting data for the study. The items was structured on a four –point rating scale of strongly agree (SA)=4, Agree (A)=3, Disagree (SD)=2 and strongly disagree (SD)=1. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondent with the help of one research assistant trained for the purposed. The completed questionnaires was received back on the spot, thereby achieving 100% return rate. Mean with standard deviation was used to answer the research questions, whereas, t-test statistic. A was adopted to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 confidence level. To arrive at

decision a bench mark of 2.50 was set. Then any item with mean value of 2.50 and above was regarded as agree while any item below 2.50 was indicated as disagree but null hypotheses was rejected when the calculated value of t (t-cal) is equal or greater than the t- table (t- critical) otherwise do not reject.

**3. Results**

Data collected for the study was statistically analyzed and presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses, as shown below:

**Table1:** Entrepreneurial skill needs of students in production activities.

ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS		MALE LECT		FEMALE LECT		OVERALL		DEC
		X <sub>1</sub>	SD <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>2</sub>	SD <sub>2</sub>	X <sub>3</sub>	SD <sub>3</sub>	
1	Ability to identify most productive breed/variety	2.86	1.09	2.85	0.91	2.86	1.00	A
2	Ability to determine maturity period of crops/ animal	3.14	0.73	3.09	0.75	3.12	0.74	A
3	Ability to identify diseases resistant crop/animal breed	2.87	0.95	2.82	0.83	2.85	0.88	A
4	Ability to identify climate friendly crops/ animals	2.95	0.86	0.90	0.87	2.93	0.87	A
5	Ability to organize factors of production.	2.89	0.90	2.70	0.81	2.80	0.86	A
6	Ability determine seasonal: variation in crops/ animal	2.69	1.03	2.72	0.95	2.71	0.99	A
7	Ability to develop viable production plan	2.54	1.04	2.91	0.89	2.73	0.97	A
8	Ability to conduct feasibility study of specific enterprise	2.70	1.07	2.68	1.05	2.67	1.06	A
9	Ability to determine establishment period of specific farm enterprise.	2.62	0.98	2.71	1.03	2.67	1.01	A
10	Ability to determine most profitable enterprise.	2.93	1.09	2.61	0.92	2.77	1.00	A
<b>Cluster mean (x)</b>		2.81	0.93	2.79	0.90	2.80	0.94	A

The result in table 1 revealed that the ten entrepreneurial skills identified with regards to production activities were all viable manipulative skills in agricultural production for success in agricultural occupation for sustainable self-reliance. This was indicated in the mean which ranged between 2.54 to

3.14 for the two groups of the respondents with overall cluster mean of 2.80. The standard deviation were close to each other indicating homogeneity in their responses. Hence, all the item statements was accepted as viable manipulative activities in agricultural production.

**Table2:** Entrepreneurial skill needs of students in management activities.

ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS		MALE		FEMALE		OVERALL		DEC
		X <sub>1</sub>	SD <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>2</sub>	SD <sub>2</sub>	X <sub>3</sub>	SD <sub>3</sub>	
1	Ability to accept responsibility	2.56	0.97	2.76	0.70	2.66	0.74	A
2	Ability to work in team	3.01	0.79	3.03	0.85	3.02	0.82	A
3	Ability to co-ordinate various farm enterprises within the farm	2.86	0.84	2.72	0.78	2.79	0.81	A
4	Ability to forecast wealth trends	2.79	0.73	2.83	0.82	2.81	0.78	A
5	Ability to identify problems for solution	2.74	0.95	2.98	0.71	2.86	0.83	A

ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS		MALE		FEMALE		OVERALL		DEC
		X <sub>1</sub>	SD <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>2</sub>	SD <sub>2</sub>	X <sub>3</sub>	SD <sub>3</sub>	SD <sub>4</sub>
6	Ability to monitor farm operation for prompt adjustment	2.69	0.93	2.95	0.90	2.82	0.92	A
7	Ability to assess and make progress report from time to time	3.03	0.81	3.04	0.73	3.04	0.77	A
8	Ability to establish good relationship with farm workers	2.89	0.72	2.89	0.84	2.89	0.78	A
9	Ability to establish and maintain good working conditions for farm workers	2.74	0.86	2.78	0.74	2.76	0.80	A
10	Ability carryout hybridization for optimum productivity	2.68	0.84	2.74	0.69	2.71	0.77	A
	Cluster mean (x)	2.80	0.77	2.85	0.78	2.83	0.76	A

The result in table 2 showed that all the items had their mean scores above 2.50, which mean that the skills identified with respect to management activities were all required skills in management of agriculture

enterprises for sustainable occupation in agriculture in Ebonyi State. The closeness of the standard deviation indicated uniformity in their responses.

**Table 3:** Entrepreneurial skills needs of students in marketing activities.

ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS		MALE		FEMALE		OVERALL		DEC
		X <sub>1</sub>	SD <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>2</sub>	SD <sub>2</sub>	X <sub>3</sub>	SD <sub>3</sub>	SD <sub>4</sub>
1	Ability to advertise farm products	3.52	1.02	2.65	0.70	3.09	0.86	A
2	Ability to package products for distribution/sales	3.14	1.11	2.87	0.98	3.01	0.90	A
3	Ability to establish strong relationship with event organizers	3.20	1.02	2.70	0.82	2.95	0.92	A
4	Ability to collaborate with public office holder	2.96	1.00	2.96	0.70	2.96	0.85	A
5	Ability to build connections with established farmers	2.97	1.07	3.36	0.75	3.17	0.91	A
6	Ability to partner with restaurants owners	2.95	1.12	2.74	0.78	2.85	0.95	A
7	Ability to locate viable open market	3.30	0.96	2.82	0.82	3.06	0.89	A
8	Ability liase with consumers co-operative organization	3.35	1.02	3.06	0.76	3.21	0.86	A
9	Ability to utilize social media	3.23	1.06	2.79	0.75	3.01	0.91	A
10	Ability to locate supermarkets, grocery stores and specialty stores.	3.03	1.01	3.20	0.73	3.12	0.87	
11	Ability to organize and conduct export marketing	2.86	0.89	2.86	0.84	2.86	0.87	
12	Ability to conduct direct consumers delivery services.	2.84	0.86	2.84	0.89	2.84	0.88	
	Cluster mean (x)	3.08	0.49	3.49	0.86	3.28	0.81	

The result in table 3 showed that all the 12 items had their mean scores above 2.50, which means that the marketing activities identified were all accepted as viable entrepreneurial skills for effective marketing

operation in achieving sustainable occupation in agriculture. The standard deviation ranged between 0.98 to 1.11 indicating uniformity in their responses as they are close to each other.

**Table 4:** Summary of t-test of the mean scores of male and female lecturers on the production skill needs of students for sustainable occupation in agriculture.

S/N	ITEMS	N <sub>1</sub>	N <sub>2</sub>	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	T-CAL	T-CRITAL	
1	Ability to identify most productivity breed/variety	8	7	2.86	1.02	13	1.32	1.75	NS
2	Ability to determine maturity period of crops/animal	8	7	3.12	0.74	13	0.21	1.75	NS
3	Ability to identify diseases resistant crop/animal	8	7	2.85	0.88	13	1.42	1.75	NS
4	Ability to identify climate friendly crops/animals	8	7	2.93	0.87	13	1.45	1.75	NS
5	Ability to organize factors of production	8	7	2.80	0.86	13	1.34	1.75	NS
6	Ability to determine seasonal variation in crops/animals	8	7	2.71	0.99	13	0.60	1.75	NS
7	Ability to develop viable production plan.	8	7	2.73	0.97	13	0.33	1.75	NS
8	Ability to conduct feasibility study of specific enterprise	8	7	2.69	1.06	13	0.56	1.75	NS
9	Ability to determine establishment period of specific farm enterprise	8	7	2.67	1.01	13	0.26	1.75	NS
10	Ability to determine most profitable enterprise	8	7	2.77	1.00	13	1.41	1.75	NS

**Key:** N1 = Male Lecturer N2 = Female Lecturers, NS. Not significant, SD = Standard deviation

The result in table 4 showed that all the items had their t-cal value less than the table value of 1.75. This indicated that the null hypothesis was not rejected. Therefore, there was no significant difference between

the mean scores of the male and female lectures on the entrepreneurial production needs of students for sustainable occupation in agricultural in Ebonyi State.

**Table 5:** Summary of t-test of the mean scores of male and female lecturers on the management skill needs of students for sustainable occupation in agriculture.

S/N	ITEMS	N <sub>1</sub>	N <sub>2</sub>	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	T-CAL	T-CRITAL	DC
1	Ability to accept responsibility	8	7	2.66	0.74	13	1.45	1.75	NS
2	Ability to work in team	8	7	3.02	0.82	13	1.37	1.75	NS
3	Ability to identify problem for solution	8	7	2.79	0.81	13	0.63	1.75	NS
4	Ability to coordinate various farm enterprises within the farm	8	7	2.81	0.78	13	1.25	1.75	NS
5	Ability to forecast wealth trends.	8	7	2.86	0.83	13	1.32	1.75	NS
6	Ability to monitor farm operations for prompt adjustment	8	7	2.82	0.92	13	1.40	1.75	NS
7	Ability to access and make progress report from time to time	8	7	3.04	0.77	13	1.38	1.75	NS

S/N	ITEMS	N <sub>1</sub>	N <sub>2</sub>	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	T-CAL	T-CRITAL	DC
8	Ability establish and maintain good working conditions for farm workers.	8	7	2.89	0.78	13	0.36	1.75	NS
9	Ability to establish good relationship with farm workers	88	7	2.76	0.80	13	1.41	1.75	NS
10	Ability to conduct hybridizatinos for optimum productivity	8	7	2.71	0.77	13	1.39	1.75	NS

The result in table 5 showed that all the items in this cluster had their t-cal value less than the table value (t-crit) of 1.75 indicating non-significant. Hence, there was no significant difference between the mean scores of

the male and female lecturers on the management skill needs of students for sustainable occupation in agriculture.

**Table 6:** Summary of t-test of the mean scores of male and female lecturers on the marketing skill needs of students for sustainable occupation in agriculture.

S/N	ITEMS	N <sub>1</sub>	N <sub>2</sub>	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	TXAL	T-CRITAL	DC
1	Ability to advert farm products.	8	7	3.99	0.82	13	1.47	1.75	NS
2	Ability to package produce for distribution/sales	8	7	3.01	0.90	13	1.32	1.75	NS
3	Ability to establish strong relationship event organizers	8	7	2.95	0.92	13	1.37	1.75	NS
4	Ability to collaborate with public officer holder	8	7	2.96	0.85	13	1.43	1.75	NS
5	Ability to building connection with established farm.	8	7	3.17	0.91	13	0.74	1.75	NS
6	Ability to partner with restaurants owners.	8	7	2.85	0.95	13	1.44	1.75	NS
7	Ability to locate viable open markets	8	7	3.06	0.89	13	0.61	1.75	NS
8	Ability to liaise with consumers co-operations organization.	8	7	3.01	0.86	13	0.49	1.75	NS
9	Ability to utilize social media	8	7	3.01	0.91	13	0.34	1.75	NS
10	Ability to locate supermarkets, grocery stores, and specialty stores	8	7	3.12	0.87	13	1.26	1.75	NS
11	Ability to organize and conduct export marketing	8	7	2.86	0.87	13	0.73	1.75	NS
12	Ability to conduct direct consumers delivery services	8	7	2.84	0.88	13	0.65	1.75	NS

The result in table 6 showed that all the skill items had their t-cal values less than the table value of 1.75. This indicated that the null hypothesis was not rejected. Therefore, there was no significant difference between their mean scores of the male and female lectures on the marketing skill needs of students for sustainable occupation in agriculture in Ebonyi State. Hence, the

market skill examined was all accepted as viable entrepreneurial skills needed for employment.

#### 4. Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study are discussed as follows;

One of the findings was that entrepreneurial production skill needs including ability to identify most productive breed of animals/crops, determine diseases

resistant crops/animals, organize factors of production, develop viable production plan, conduct feasibility study of specific crop/animals, determine most profitable enterprise and others were identified to be viable enough in equipping learners for sustainable occupation in agriculture with particular refer to production skills for optimum productivity in agriculture. This finding is consistent with Elom (2024) who identified basic production skills for enhancing poultry production to include, ability to identify sign poultry diseases, fast growing and maturing breeds, most efficient feed converter, source of feed and stock among others. The author further emphasized that these skills are business skills which learners must acquire to enable them progress successfully in poultry enterprise. In the same vein, Okoli (2013) reported that these entrepreneurial skills if properly harnessed would transform graduates technologically, economically and industrially for self-reliance.

The study also identified ten entrepreneurial skill in management of agricultural enterprises to include; ability to accept responsibility, work with team, coordinate farm enterprise, identify problem for solution, monitor farm operation, establish good working relationship with workers, organize factors of production and others. This finding is in line with findings of Alabi, Ibrahim and Musa (2019) who reported that management skills such as ability to prevent diseases provide biosecurity measures, monitor farm operations, provide good working condition and ability to provide appropriate feeds are viable entrepreneurial skills which learners have to acquire for self-reliance in agricultural occupation. Ogunwale and Ogudiron (2017) also reported that ability of farmers to improve production. Methods and practices are essential skills and unavoidable technological skill necessary for success in agricultural occupation for optimum productivity in the industry.

Finally, the study identified twelve entrepreneurial skills in marketing agricultural produce including; ability to advertise products, package produce, establish strong relationship with events organizer, build connections with established farmers, utilize social media, identify viable open markets, conduct direct consumers delivery services among others.

This is consistent with finding of Musa Ali (2020) who reported that locating viable open market for poultry product is essential entrepreneurial skill in achieving sustainable products distribution and sales. The

authors further stressed that farmers should focus on positioning their products, high-traffic market for easy acknowledgement and accessibility. In similar manner Adebayo and Ogunleye (2019) identified strategies for enhancing market access as essential entrepreneurial skills for products distribution and sale in achieving enhanced profitability. The authors further highlights the importance of co-operative strategies for market access in achieving improved produce distributions. This strategic competency is very crucial in sustaining an agricultural industry.

## **5. Conclusion**

Agricultural industry utilizes broad range of general and specific manual skill with high order conceptual skills and theoretical knowledge all geared toward achieving optimum in the industry. These skills are all entrepreneurial nature in sustaining an occupation. The study highlighted and identified 32 entrepreneurial skills in three basic areas via production, management and marketing. These entrepreneurial skill identified are basic skills which determines the quality of an individual in the agricultural occupation and its sustainability in this era of rapid economic and technological development.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are put forward;

1. Teachers should integrate finding of the study into class room instruction.
2. Technical and vocational education curriculum should be reviewed to incorporate these needed skills.

Educational institutions offering vocational and technical education should be made to possess demonstration farm and workshops for field trials.

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