

**Assessment of Agricultural Entrepreneurial Interest Among Undergraduates In Tasued and Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun State, Nigeria.**

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**Abstract**

Inability of educated individual to achieve in life continues to generate much concern. Several factors have been adduced to be responsible for these trends. Therefore, the study assessed the agricultural entrepreneurial interest among undergraduates in TASUED and Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun state, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select 120 respondents for the study. Data was collected through questionnaires administration. Collected data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Result shows that majority of the respondents were young with mean age of  $22\pm 3$ , male (64.2%), studying agricultural science (51.7%), influence by mentors for their choice of course (55.8%), had no previous experience in entrepreneurial experience (62.5%), planned to work before getting self-employed (47.5%). Fish farming (93.3%) was the agribusiness areas that most respondents had interest. Inconsistent government policy towards agribusiness (1.98) was the most severe constraints faced by the respondents. Respondents' constraints ( $r=-0.843$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) significantly influenced the respondents' level of interest in agricultural entrepreneurial activities and no significant difference in the level of agricultural entrepreneurial interest among respondents in TASUED and Olabisi Onabanjo University ( $F=3.171$ ,  $p=0.078$ ). The study concluded that agricultural entrepreneurial interest was high. Therefore, entrepreneurship education must be well designed to sustain students' interest in entrepreneurship education.

**Keywords:** Assessment, Agriculture, Entrepreneurial interest, Undergraduates, University interest.

**Introduction**

Agriculture is a main livelihood of most Nigerians with over 70% of her population depending on it directly or indirectly for sustainability. It provides the quantum of employment, income and food for the rapidly increasing population as well as supplying raw materials for agro-based industries across the nation. World recent agricultural production has an average growth rate of 1.8% as compared to the 3% in the 1960s and therefore at a lesser pace than the demographic growth. The World Bank has shown that in Sub-Saharan Africa (to which Nigeria belongs) the annual food growth needs to reach 4% that is more than double the current figure

in order to attain food security. It is further suggested that this can be reached through a significant progress in plant and animal breeding that plays a key role in the expansion of the agricultural sector as well as a significant impact using appropriate farm mechanization (Pawlak, Pellizzi and Fiala, 2002).

Agriculture is introduced into the syllabus content of secondary schools because of its educational worth and importance to the needs of the individual learner and society as a whole (Ogunleye, 2002). Agriculture as one of the science subjects at the secondary school level is an imperative subject and an instrument per excellence for self-reliance, it is also needed as a pre requisite to study disciplines such as veterinary medicine, agricultural engineering, fishery, animal/livestock production, forestry among others.

Agriculture is an essential contributor to the Nigerian economy and its influence to the nation and humanity cannot be over emphasized.

However, it has been detected that the attitude of students towards studying it is not encouraging at all. Student performances in external examinations as well as their enrolment in Agricultural Science have been very reduced and discouraging in recent past. (West Africa Examination Council Chief Examiner Report 2018). Approximately 4000 employment opportunities go vacant because of few graduates with expertise in agriculture, natural resources, veterinary medicine, and closely associated fields (Akinbile, 2007).

It has been largely perceived that unemployment of graduates of Nigerian tertiary institutions has become a major general problem. Thousands of university graduates join the labour market in search of gainful engagement on a yearly basis. It is also observed that people register in educational programmes in higher institutions (such as university, polytechnic, colleges, institutions, etc.) with the anticipation of gaining knowledge and a view of being gainfully engaged at the end of the programme. This hope has not been realized for so many graduates. It is generally believed that many graduates were unemployed based on the fact that the training they received was not adequate and enough to prepare them with necessary skills and competencies required for job creation and self-employment (Ekundayo and Babatunde, 2014; Akpochafo and Alika, 2018). It was due to this that entrepreneurship education was introduced into schools' curriculum. Entrepreneurs are persons who have the capability to see and appraise business opportunities; to gather the necessary resources to the benefit of them; and to initiate appropriate action to ensure successes in what they engaged in. Similarly, Ojeifo (2013) and Umunadi (2014) stated that entrepreneurs are persons who constantly discover new markets, try to figure out how to supply those markets satisfactorily and make profit.

Entrepreneurs are with inventive minds that have the capability to see and evaluate business opportunities. Effective education is expected to arouse the entrepreneurial spirit and interest in individuals, initiating the use of their innovative intelligence and capabilities to bring about solutions to problems. Entrepreneurship education is the education that prepares people to be responsible and enterprising individual. It helps people develop the skills, knowledge, and

attitudes needed to achieve the goals they set out for themselves. Effective entrepreneurship education is expected to help agricultural students develop positive mindset towards their career in agriculture as well as develop their entrepreneurial minds. Many graduates of agriculture do not aspire to build a career in agriculture not just because of the non-mechanized nature of agriculture in the country but mainly due to wrong teaching, orientation and lack of entrepreneurial skill and initiative needed to excel in the agricultural sector, hence the drift of agriculture graduates to other sectors of the economy (Olatunji, Oporum and Ifeanyi-obi, 2012).

In Nigeria, like most countries all over the world, the phenomenon of economic decline is fast gaining momentum in recent times, with unemployment as a major indicator. This development has however become intractable over the years, and has continued to worsen, thereby posing serious challenges to the social wellbeing and economic steadiness of most countries in the world, both developing and developed. Nigeria, as a country, has been coping with the problem of economic instability since the early 1980s when the key indicators of the previous economic flexibility of the country, traceable to the 1970s, were tingly noticed to be on the precipice. In recent time, there has been growing global concern over the continuously expanded rates of unemployment around the world, particularly in most developing countries, where the youth have been identified as the most affected groups.

Recently, the Federal government of Nigeria established another means to inculcate self-employment (entrepreneurship) culture in students of tertiary institutions. This mandate was given to the National Universities Commission (NUC, 2004) to include entrepreneurial studies in the curriculum of Nigerian Universities with the hope of reducing unemployment among fresh graduates (Aja-Okorie and Adali, 2013).

The alarming statistics of youth unemployment in Africa reflects the degree of the problem across the continent. It is the most challenging socioeconomic problem confronting Nigeria as ascertained by Kakwagh and Ikwuba (2010). The high rate of unemployment experienced amongst graduates has become a national concern as the increase in enrolment at the public and private higher educational institutions produce more graduates into the labour market each year without corresponding increase in job establishment. Indications from existing data reveal that the rate of youth unemployment is quite higher than that of adult particularly in developing countries (Education Development Centre, 2002). It is evident that the overwhelming youth population cannot be absorbed into the formal employment sector in urban areas (Bakare, 2011). Since persistent unemployment issues among graduates would pose a threat to the social structure and safety of the nation, serious concern has been raised by policymakers and academia, thus a refocus on agriculture is considered a significant panacea (Naamwintome and Bagson, 2013). Entrepreneurship is a key tool that drives the economy of any country (Gree and Thurnik, 2003).

With the outrageous rate of unemployment in Nigeria, self-employment and small enterprise initiatives are presently high on the country`s national agenda, with the hope that they will

provide alternative channels of employment in the country. Annually, tertiary institutions in the country produce middle/high level manpower that join the labour market in search of almost non-existing jobs. The challenge is not only tackling the already sizeable unemployed graduates, but also absorbing the new entrants into the labour market. Underlying this situation is the fact that the training which tertiary students received has not been fully successful in equipping them with the desirable skills and competencies needed for job creation and self-employment (Nwangwu, 2007).

The main objective of this study was to assess the agricultural entrepreneurial interest among undergraduates in TASUED and Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun state. Specifically, the study; identified the personal characteristics of the respondents, ascertain the respondents' level of entrepreneurial interest in agribusiness and identify constraints militating against respondents' entrepreneurial interest in agribusiness activities in the study area.

The study hypothesized no significant relationship between respondents' constraints and their level of agricultural entrepreneurial interest and no significant difference in the level of agricultural entrepreneurial interest among students in TASUED and Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun State, Nigeria.

#### **MATERIAL AND METHODS/METHODOLOGY**

The study was carried out in Tai Solarin University of Education and Olabisi Onabanjo University Ogun State, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted for this study. Alade (2011) submitted that survey approach is appropriate for a research endeavor that its variables are not subjected to manipulation. Variables in the study have already occurred in the field before the research started, thus choice of survey design justified. The target population consisted of final year students of both institutions. Multi-stage sampling was used to select Departments and 120 respondents were involved in the study. Data were collected by face to face interview schedule using validated interview schedule from September, 2019 to March, 2020. The face and content validity of the instrument were ascertained by the experts in survey research. Test-re test approach was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire and co-efficient of .84 was obtained. Respondents were asked to indicate constraints militating against their entrepreneurial interest in agribusiness activities like inconsistent government policies towards agribusiness, inadequate infrastructural and processing/storage facilities, inadequate funds or start-up capital for agribusiness, inadequate entrepreneurial skills, the low rate of profit maximization in agribusiness, low demand for agribusiness product and fear or risk of failure among others. This was measured on a scale of severe, mild and not a constraint. Score of 2, 1 and 0 was assigned to them respectively. Individual mean of the factors was found and use to rank them based on severity. The dependent variable was measured as respondents were asked to indicate their level of entrepreneurial interest in agribusiness activities like arable crop farming, agroforestry activities, tree crop production, agro-processing, livestock production, marketing of agric. products among others. This was measured on a 3-point scale of very interested, moderately interested and not interested. Score of 2, 1 and 0 was assigned to them respectively. Pooled mean was found and used to categorize the respondents as having high or low level of entrepreneurial interest in agribusiness activities. Both descriptive

(frequencies, percentages, mean) and inferential (Pearson Product Moment Correlation and t-test) statistical tools were used to analyze the data and test formulated hypotheses of the study. The information collected on personal characteristics of the respondents includes: age, sex, course of study, reasons for course of study, previous entrepreneurial experience, parent entrepreneurial background and employment plan after graduation. Others include level of respondents' agricultural entrepreneurial interest and constraints.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Personal characteristics of the respondents

Result of analysis in Table 1 shows that nearly half (48.3%) of the respondents were between the ages of 22 and 25 years. Also, 41.7% were between 18 and 21 years while 10.0% of them were above 25 years. The mean age of  $22\pm 3$  implies that most of the respondents were young and are in their productive phase and this may impact them to have interest in agricultural entrepreneurial activities. With this result, it is assumed that they should be efficiently motivated towards engaging in agribusiness as a career. This finding is similar to Ayanda, *et al*, (2012) which recognized that agricultural students of Kwara State University, Nigeria were adolescent with mean age of 19.6 years. Majority (64.2%) of the respondents were male while 35.8% of them were female. The result shows a dominance of males having more interest in agricultural entrepreneurial agribusiness than females. This result is in consonant with that of Ewebiyi, Akinsulu and Aderinto (2019) that carried out similar study in the same study area and reported more males than females having interest in Agricultural Science and study it as course of study. Majority (51.7%) of the respondents were studying agricultural science while 49.3% were studying other courses. The result further revealed that most respondents (55.8%) of were studying their courses due to influence of mentors. Also, 25.0% were due to parental influence, 15.0% were due to personal interest in agriculture while 4.2% were due to peer group influence. This result implies that most respondents do not have inherent interest in agriculture and this may negatively impact their interest in agricultural entrepreneurship. Result on previous respondents' entrepreneurial experience in Table 1 also shows that majority (62.5%) had no previous experience. This shows that most of the respondents do not have agric. background and this may affect their agricultural entrepreneurial interest. Furthermore, the result of respondents' parent entrepreneurial background revealed that most (65.8%) of the respondents' parents engaged in salary jobs while 34.2% of them self-employed in non-agricultural entrepreneurial activities. Nearly half (47.5%) of the respondents responded to work before getting self-employed while (19.2%) and (10.8%) preferred engagement in public and private sectors respectively. This implies that most respondents have not developed keen interest in agricultural entrepreneurial businesses.

**Table 1: Personal characteristics of the respondents**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Age</b>			22	3
18-21	50	41.7		
22-25	58	48.3		
26-29	7	5.8		
30-35	5	4.2		
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	77	64.2		
Female	43	35.8		
<b>Course of study</b>				
Mathematics	7	5.8		
Economics	8	6.7		
Agric. Science	62	51.7		
Geograp hy	3	2.5		
Biology	8	6.7		
Social study	8	6.7		
History	7	5.8		
Chemistry	8	6.7		
Fine art	6	5.0		
Physics	3	2.5		
<b>Reasons for course of study</b>				
Parental influence	30	25.0		
Personal interest in agriculture	18	15.0		

Peer group influence	5	4.2		
Influence of mentors	67	55.8		
<b>Previous entrepreneurial experience</b>				
No experience	75	62.5		
Had previous experience	45	37.5		
<b>Parent entrepreneurial background</b>				
Self-employed in entrepreneurial activities	41	34.2		
Salary job	79	65.8		
<b>Employment plan after graduation</b>				
Private sector employment	13	10.8		
Public sector employment	23	19.2		
Self-employment in agribusiness	27	22.5		
Work before getting self-employed	57	47.5		

**Level of entrepreneurial interest in agribusiness activities**

Respondents' level of agricultural entrepreneurial interest in Table 2a shows that most respondents (93.3%) interested in fish farming. This is followed by interest in arable crop farming (76.7%) and livestock production (47.5%) while few respondents (5.0%) and (4.2%) showed low interest in agricultural extension and snail production respectively. This result is in agreement with the submission of Nwaogwugwu and Obele (2017) that crop farming, livestock farming and fish farming were the agricultural-based livelihood activities among youths in Nigeria. Further result in Table 2b shows that majority (53.3%) of the respondents showed high level of interest in agricultural entrepreneurship while 46.7% shows low level of interest. This implies that with supporting environment most of the respondents may be enthusiastic to engage in agricultural entrepreneurial activities. This is consistent with findings of Sultan (2017) who established in a similar study that undergraduates Agricultural Science students possessed high intention to become agric. entrepreneurs.

**Table 2a: Level of entrepreneurial interest in agribusiness activities**

Areas of interest	Very interested	Moderately interested	Not interested	Mean
Arable crop farming	92 (76.7)	28 (23.3)	0 (0.0)	1.76
Agroforestry activities	63 (52.5)	2 (1.7)	55 (45.8)	1.06
Tree crop production	57 (47.5)	8 (6.7)	55 (45.8)	1.01
Agro-processing	26 (21.7)	63 (52.5)	31 (25.8)	0.95
Livestock production	57 (47.5)	61 (50.8)	2 (1.7)	1.45
Marketing of agric. product	58 (48.3)	61 (50.8)	1 (0.8)	1.47
Value addition	92 (76.7)	2 (1.7)	26 (21.7)	1.55
Bee keeping	64 (53.3)	1 (0.8)	55 (45.8)	1.07
Snail production	6 (5.0)	60 (50.0)	54 (45.0)	0.60
Agricultural extension agent	5 (4.2)	59 (49.2)	56 (46.7)	0.57
Fish farming	112 (93.3)	6 (5.0)	2 (1.7)	1.91

**Source:** Field survey, 2020

**Table 2b: Categorisation of level of entrepreneurial interest in agribusiness activities**

Interest level	Frequency	Percentage	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Low (9-13.3)	56	46.7	9	18	13.4	3.7
High (13.4-18)	64	53.3				
Total	120	100.0				

**Source:** Field survey, 2020

### **Constraints to students' entrepreneurial interest in agribusiness activities**

Result of constraints in Table 3 shows that inconsistent government policies towards agribusiness with highest mean of 1.98 and inadequate infrastructural and processing/storage facilities were the most severe constraints faced by the respondents. This is followed by inadequate infrastructural and processing/storage facilities (1.95). However, fear of risk or failure (0.83) and high rate of interest (1.06) were the least constraints faced by the respondents in the study area.

**Table 3: Constraints to students' entrepreneurial interest in agribusiness activities**

<b>Constraints</b>	<b>Severe</b>	<b>Mild</b>	<b>Not</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Rank</b>
			<b>constraints</b>			
Inconsistent government policies towards agribusiness	119 (99.2)	1 (0.8)	0 (0.0)		1.98	1 <sup>st</sup>
Inadequate infrastructural and processing/storage facilities	119 (99.2)	1 (0.8)	0 (0.0)		1.98	1 <sup>st</sup>
Inadequate funds or start-up capital for agribusiness	66 (55.0)	2 (1.7)	52 (43.3)		1.11	7 <sup>th</sup>
Inadequate entrepreneurial skills	110 (91.7)	9 (7.5)	1 (0.8)		1.90	4 <sup>th</sup>
The low rate of profit maximization in agribusiness	57 (47.5)	62 (51.7)	24 (20.0)		1.46	5 <sup>th</sup>
Low demand for agribusiness product	38 (31.7)	58 (48.3)	24 (20.0)		1.11	7 <sup>th</sup>
Fear or risk of failure	38 (31.7)	24 (20.0)	58 (48.3)		0.83	9 <sup>th</sup>
Requirement of collaterals	39 (32.5)	78 (65.0)	3 (2.5)		1.30	6 <sup>th</sup>
High rate of interest	59 (49.2)	10 (8.3)	51 (42.5)		1.06	10 <sup>th</sup>
Lack of loan from financial institutions	116 (96.7)	3 (2.5)	1 (0.8)		1.95	3 <sup>rd</sup>

**Source:** Field survey, 2020

### **Hypotheses of the study**

#### **1 Pearson correlation result between constraints of respondents and their level of agricultural entrepreneurial interest**

Table 4 shows that there was a significant relationship between constraints of respondents ( $r=-0.843$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) and their level of agricultural entrepreneurial interest. This implies that constraints faced by the respondents had an influence on their level of agricultural entrepreneurial interest. This means that the lesser the constraints faced by the respondents, the more they tend to have interest in agricultural entrepreneurial activities.

**Table 4 Pearson correlation result between constraints of respondents and their level of entrepreneurial interest**

Variables	r value	p value	Decision
Constraints	-0.843	0.000	S

Source: Field survey, 2020

**2 Test of difference result in the level of agricultural entrepreneurial interest among respondents in TASUED and Olabisi Onabanjo University**

Result of analysis in Table in Table 5 shows that there was no significant difference ( $F=3.171$ ,  $p=0.078$ ) in the level of agricultural entrepreneurial interest among respondents in TASUED and Olabisi Onabanjo University. This implies that respondents from both institutions had same level of interest in agricultural entrepreneurial activities. This may be because most of the respondents had favourable perception to agriculture. This might have influenced their interest in agriculture

**Table 5 Result of test of difference result in the level of entrepreneurial interest among TASUED and Olabisi Onabanjo University**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean difference	F	P
TASUED	11.8667	3.55331	-3.18333	3.171	0.078
Olabisi Onabanjo University	15.0500	3.24390			

Source: Field survey, 2020

**Conclusion**

Respondents were predominantly males; they were in their productive active years. Most studying Agricultural Science were influenced by their mentors to choose it as course of study. Majority had no previous entrepreneurial experience and planned to work first after graduation before getting self- employed. Inconsistent government policy on agricultural business, inadequate infrastructural facilities, processing and storage facilities as well as lack of loans or credit facilities were severe constraints faced by the respondents. Constraints faced by the respondents are determinants of their interest in agricultural entrepreneurial activities. Respondents of both institutions had same level of interest in agricultural entrepreneurial activities. The study concluded that in spite of challenges of entrepreneurial agricultural business, agricultural entrepreneurial interest was high among respondents in the study area.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are put forward to increase respondents' entrepreneurial interest in agriculture.

1) University environment must be made favourable for learning by the concerned authority and entrepreneurial education curricula must be well designed or packaged and effectively implemented towards sustaining respondents' interest in entrepreneurship education.

2) Government and other agricultural agencies should support students that are interested in agriculture with grants and other needed credit facilities to venture into commercial agriculture meaningfully and profitably.

3) Authority of higher institutions should make provision for adequate infrastructural facilities and create enabling environment that will make students pro-actively involved in practical classes, excursions to farms of high repute, in order to add or update their knowledge on agricultural practices.

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