

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

## Graduate Participation in Livestock Enterprises: A Study of Selected Local Government Areas in Benue State, Nigeria

**Dr. Uduma, Mecha Kalu**

Deputy Provost, Department of F.C.E. Obudu, Cross River State, Nigeria

### **Abstract:**

The twin problems of poverty and unemployment have been blamed on the didactic pedagogical methodology used in our educational institutions that is devoid of appropriate entrepreneurship skills. Entrepreneurship development is considered the foundation of leading developed economies of Japan, China, America, etc. hence the clamour for entrepreneurship competencies in Nigeria even in the livestock sub-sector of agriculture. The study determined graduate participation in livestock agriculture in Benue State. 23 graduate farmers from 3 Local Government Areas of Benue State were purposively selected. Descriptive statistics and probit regression technique were used in data analysis. Result show that of the 23 graduate farmers, 14 (60.86%) were in crop enterprise; 7 (30.43%) in mixed farming (crop/livestock) while 2 (8.69%) were in livestock farming. It was also found that capital outlay, access to labour, appropriate entrepreneurship skill acquisition, number of veterinary services, demand for livestock products and return on investment positively and significantly influenced choice for livestock farming. On the basis of the findings, the researcher has recommended the re-orientation of the Nigerian education system towards appropriate entrepreneurship skill development; special financial incentives (subsidy) to be given to graduates in livestock business; provision of adequate veterinary and extension services targeted at graduate livestock farmers, reviewing agricultural pricing policy to make livestock farmers get fair revenue from their products because high returns to investment will facilitate livestock business for increased participation by youth.

**Keyword:** Unemployment, entrepreneurship.

### **1. Background**

The rate of poverty in Nigeria has continued to increase annually in spite of the various poverty eradication strategies of the government.

Year	Projected Total Population	Projected Absolute Poverty (in millions)	Projected Poverty rate (%)
2005	124.3	101.0	81.2
2006	126.9	106.3	83.7
2007	129.6	111.9	86.0
2008	132.3	117.6	88.8
2009	135.1	123.5	91.4
2010	137.8	129.6	94.0

Table 1: Projected total population and projected absolute poverty rate in Nigeria (2005 – 2010, in millions).

Source: Author's Computation

Table 1 above shows steady increases in the rate of poverty; from 81.2% in 2005 to 83.7% in 2006. In 2007, the rate rose to 86.0% and further to 88.8% in 2008; 91.4% in 2009 to 94.0% in 2010.

The increasing rate of poverty has been blamed in part on the unemployment situation which has equally persisted over the years as seen on Table 2 below.

YEAR	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Unemployment Rate	11.9	12.3	12.7	14.9	19.7

Table 2: National Unemployment rate in Nigeria 2005 – 2009

Source: National Bureau of Statistics: Labour Force Survey 2009

From the table, unemployment rate in 2005 stood at 11.9. It increased to 12.3 in 2006 and further to 12.7 in 2007. It rose to 14.9 in 2008 and 19.7 in 2009.

Lall (2002) and Agbulu (2007) have blamed the twin problems of poverty and unemployment on the dearth of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria's educational institutions. To Agbulu (2007), the didactic pedagogy used in our educational institutions is devoid of appropriate entrepreneurial skills.

About one-third (1/3) of Nigerian youths roam the street unproductively engaged. Many of these army of idle youths are graduates of our tertiary institutions including those that graduated in fields/course related to agriculture who are expected to be self-reliant upon graduation but lack the skills for self-reliance.

A crucial factor in sustainable development is the active participation of youths. This is because the youths are supposed to constitute a large section of the active labour force in a developing economy like Nigeria. It is in recognition of the above that government of Ondo State introduced the Youth-in-Agriculture-Programme (YIAP) in 2004 with the aim of encouraging self-reliance as well as boosting food production. Sodique (2006) noted that youths have desirable qualities that can promote agriculture. He however regretted that most youths have strong apathy towards farming activities.

The uncertainties surrounding the nations' economy requires that all, including our youths (who constitute 70% of the nation's population) should be adequately prepared to grapple with the problems of unemployment and poverty. The institution good enough to prepare the youths for the task of productive living is the educational sector. The sector is expected to inculcate in the youths' appropriate skills for self-employment, hence the clamour for entrepreneurship education.

To Farstad (2002), entrepreneurship education is the teaching of knowledge and skills that will enable students to plan; start and run their own business. This type of education is considered the foundation of leading developed economies of Japan, China, America, etc. Providing entrepreneurship education is therefore posited as a lasting solution to the problem of large scale unemployment in Nigeria.

Entrepreneurship education is expected to turn out graduates who among other objectives can create and manage their own enterprises. The achievement of this objective however, depends in part on the quality of entrepreneur skill development at training. Uduma (2009) found that of the 24 entrepreneur competencies rated important for entrepreneurship development, teachers in Colleges of Education in the South-South geopolitical zone possessed five (5) and lacked nineteen (19). The above findings collaborated earlier position of Agbulu (2007) that most graduates of our tertiary institutions lack skills for creating and sustaining business enterprises; as no educational system can develop beyond the limit imposed by the competencies of the teachers.

In a study on the assessment of agricultural and non-agricultural livelihood activities of youths in Kaboji District of Niger State, Umar (2008) found that youths are engaged in both agricultural and non-agricultural enterprises. The major agricultural livelihood activity in the area was crop farming with very little livestock farming. He noted that the number of livestock owned was very few; ranging from 1 – 5 cattle, few stocks of poultry and goats.

Man's need for quality animal protein has become both national and international issue requiring urgent attention. The traditional system of agriculture has not been able to meet the protein needs of Nigerians (Onyimonyi, 2002). According to BBC report in 2006, livestock growth rate in Nigeria is between 1.5 – 2.0%, while annual population growth rate is 3.0%; creating an avenue for protein malnutrition to persist. To avert the negative consequences of the above situation, there is need for massive production of animals with short reproductive cycle (rabbit, pig, and poultry) as well as inculcating entrepreneurship education for youths' active participation in the livestock sub-sector of agriculture.

### 1.1. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine graduate participation in livestock enterprises. The specific objectives include to:

- i. identify graduate entrepreneurs in agriculture
- ii. determine number of graduates entrepreneurs in crop and livestock enterprises,
- iii. determine factors that influences the choice of livestock enterprises,
- iv. proffer policy recommendations based on the findings.

### 1.2. Significance of the Study

The study will influence policy on education by emphasizing and encouraging entrepreneurship education even in the livestock sub-sector. Data generated will provide baseline and current information upon which subsequent study may be based.

## 2. Research Methodology

The work was conducted in Benue State. Benue is purposively chosen as an agricultural state, well-known for crop and livestock farming and the high involvement of the youths in agriculture. Survey design was adopted as the work focused on people and their perceptions. The population consist entrepreneurs who are graduates of agriculture. Sampling was restricted to only 23 entrepreneurs who are graduates of agriculture (NCE, B.Ed, B.Sc, M.Ed, and M.Sc). A structured questionnaire validated by 3 experts (in agronomy, agricultural economics, and animal husbandry) was the instrument for data collection.

Descriptive statistics and probit regression techniques were used to analyze the data and report findings. The probit model to determine the choice of livestock enterprise is given below:

The probability of choice (Pr) =  $F(b_1x_1)$  ----- (I)

Where Pr = probability of choice of livestock enterprise

F = Standard normal distribution function

The expression bx is defined as:

$bx = b_0 + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2$  -----  $b_nx_n$  ----- (II)

$b_0$  = the constant term

$b_1, b_2, \dots, b_n$  = the estimated coefficient

$x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n$  = values of the independent variables that may influence choice of livestock enterprises

Where  $x_1$  = Capital outlay (₦)

$X_2$  = Access to labour (Man day)

$X_3$  = Size of available land (ha)

$X_4$  = Skill acquisition (dummy)

$X_5$  = Number of extension services (freq)

$X_6$  = Number of veterinary services (freq)

$X_7$  = Demand for product (dummy)

$X_8$  = Return of investment (₦)

$E_1$  = Error term

### 3. Results and Discussion

The number of graduate entrepreneurs by educational status is presented in table 3 below.

Educational Status (Graduates)	Frequency	Frequency
NCE	3	13.04
B.Sc/M.Sc	15	65.22
B.Ed/Med	5	21.74
Total	23	100

Table 3: Frequency distribution of agricultural entrepreneurs by educational status in Benue State  
Source: Field Data, 2011

The result on table 3 above shows that 15 (62.22%) out of the 23 graduates of agriculture who are entrepreneurs, hold B.Sc/M.Sc degrees. 5 (21.74%) hold B.Ed/M.Ed degrees while 3 (13.04%) were NCE graduates.

The number of agricultural graduate entrepreneurs by choice of enterprise is shown in table 4 below.

Educational (Graduates)	Crop		Livestock		Mixed	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
NCE	2	8.69	-	-	1	4.34
B.SC/M.Sc	9	39.13	2	8.69	4	17.39
B.Ed/M.Ed	3	13.04	-	-	2	8.69
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>60.86</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8.691</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>30.43</b>

Table 4: Frequency distribution of graduates by choice of enterprise in Benue State  
Source: Field Data, 2011

The result on table 4 shows that of the 23 agricultural graduate entrepreneurs, the majority 14 (60.86%) were found in crop enterprise, 7 (30.43%) were in mixed farming (crop/livestock) while only 2 (8.69%) were in livestock enterprise. The above result collaborate the findings of Umar (2008) who reported that the major agricultural livelihood activity of the youths in Kaboji District of Niger State was crop farming with very little in livestock farming.

A number of socio-economic factors are expected to influence the choice of enterprise including livestock enterprise. Table 4 shows the expectations.

Variables	Coefficient	t-values	Elasticity of mean
Capital outlay	0.736***	10.23	0.0719
Access to labour	0.208*	1.75	0.118
Size of available land	0.017	0.19	0.089
Skill acquisition	0.295*	0.65	0.178
Number of extension services	0.052	0.90	0.057
Number of veterinary	0.051**	2.29	0.023
Demand for products	0.153*	2.40	0.063
Return on investment	0.081***	6.13	0.111
Constant	87.701***	9.20	

Table 5: Probit result of factors influencing choice of livestock enterprise in Benue State

The values with asterisk indicate the level of significance

\*\*\*=significant at  $P=0.01$ ; \*\*=significant at  $P=0.05$ ; \*=significant at  $P=0.05$ ;

The probit model shows that a number of variables have influence on the choice of enterprise. The result further shows that seven (7) variables significantly and positively influence the choice of livestock enterprise.

The seven (7) variables fit into apriori expectations. Two factors entered the regression but did not have influence on choice of livestock enterprise. Given the overwhelming importance of grazing land to cattle and goat production and the important roles of extension, the factors were expected to significantly influence livestock production.

#### 4. Summary and Recommendations for Policy

The finding shows that graduates of agriculture were found in both crop and livestock business. However, majority of these entrepreneurs were in crop rather than in livestock. Access to initial capital, availability of labour, acquisition of entrepreneurship skills, increases in veterinary services, high demand for livestock product and high profit were significant factors that influenced the choice of livestock enterprise.

Based on the findings of the study, the following policy recommendations for increased participation of graduates of agriculture in livestock business include:

- i. re-orientation of the Nigerian education system towards appropriate entrepreneurship skills for competence, quality and employability generally,
- ii. financial incentives (subsidy) be given to graduates of agriculture engaged in livestock business.
- iii. Adequate veterinary and extension arrangements targeted at graduates of agriculture who are livestock farmers,
- iv. Agricultural pricing policy should be reviewed to make livestock farmers get reasonable revenue from their products as high return to investment will facilitate livestock business and hence graduate participation.

In conclusion, there is need for the re-orientation of the Nigerian education system to promote the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills; this will reduce unemployment with the associated poverty problems.

#### 5. References

- i. Agbulu, O. N. (2007) Entrepreneurship Education for National Development. Lead Paper presented at the 1<sup>st</sup> National Conference organized by Association for Promoting educational Innovations (APEI) in Nigeria. 27<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> August, Federal College of Education, Obudu, Cross River State.
- ii. BBC News (2006) Population in Nigeria tops 140m. Friday 29 December, 17:42GMT retrieved 12/11/2011 from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6217719.stm>
- iii. FARstall, H. (2002). Integrated Entrepreneurship Education in Botswana, Uganda and Kenya. Final Report of a review commissioned by the World Bank. Retrieved on 8/6/2007 from <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLM/214578integratedEntrepreneurship.PDF>.
- iv. Lall, V. S. (2002). Vocational Training in Agriculture for Rural Youths in Togo in Training for Agriculture and Rural Development. Rome: FAO. Economic and Social Development Series No. 24.
- v. National Bureau of Statistics (2009). Unemployment rate in Nigeria [www.nigerianstat.gov.ng](http://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng).
- vi. Onyimonyi, A. E. National Evaluation of cassava peel and Bambara waste in pig diets. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Department of Animal Science, UNN
- vii. Sodigue, F. R. (2006) "Bee-honey Production. A strategy for poverty alleviation among youths in Nigeria" *Annals of Child and Youth* (1/: 113 – 124.
- viii. Uduma, M. K. and Ayang, F. A. (2009). Quality Entrepreneurship Vocational/Technical Education: Key to Sustainable Development in Nigeria. Paper presented at 1<sup>st</sup> National Conference of the School of Education on quality education for sustainable development in Nigeria. Isa-Kaite College of Education, Dutsinma, Katsina State. 27<sup>th</sup> April – 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2009.
- ix. Umar, S. I. (2008). "An Association of Agricultural and non-agricultural livelihood activities of youths in Kaboji District in Niger State. Proceedings of 10<sup>th</sup> Annual National Conference on Agricultural Technology and Nigeria's Economic Development, University of Abuja, Abuja.
- x. Wikipedia – the free Encyclopaedia Entrepreneurship. Retrieved on 10/11/2011 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/entrepreneurship>.