



## Unemployment Through Agricultural Entrepreneurship Programmes in Cross River State.

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### ABSTRACT

Recent development in Nigeria showed that, about 80% of graduates from Nigerian Colleges of Education find it difficult to get employment every year (Uwaifo, 2009). The unemployment problem has therefore injected negative impact on the Nigeria colleges of education graduates and has make them to be used for different unethical vices like area boys, armed militants, thugs, armed robbery, petty thieves and others. The study sought to investigate what will mitigate graduates of colleges of education unemployment through agricultural entrepreneurship programmes. Two research questions and two null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population comprised of 343 respondents consisting of unemployed graduates of colleges of education who applied for employment into Cocoa Development Agency, Commercial Agriculture and Rice Seedlings Production Factory. A structured questionnaire containing 40 items was used to elicit information from the respondents. The questionnaire was validated by three experts from the Department of Agricultural and Bioresources Education, University of Calabar, Calabar in Cross River State. Cronbach Alpha formula was used to determine the reliability of the instrument which yielded 0.76 coefficients. The data collected were analysed using mean to answer the research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses. The paper identified thirty skills that should be acquired through agricultural entrepreneurship programme in Colleges of Education. Factors inhibiting development of skills were also identified and measures for mitigating graduates of colleges of education unemployment were also stated. Recommendations were made on the basis of the findings.

**Keywords:** Graduates, Unemployment, Agricultural Entrepreneurship, Colleges of Education.

### Introduction

The quality of graduates from Nigerian Institutions of learning has been a subject of concern to many industries, manufacturing servicing, business, commerce, trade, engineering and production industries. Little or no trust is exercised on the quality of graduates, perhaps this may be due to inadequate skill acquisition by the graduates can be ameliorated through Agricultural Entrepreneurship (Agripreneurship) programmes. Agricultural Entrepreneurship is meant to prepare the learners with the right skills and values needed to be employable or be self-employed (FRN, 2013). According to Egbiri and Chukwuedo (2013), this aspect of education stands closest to the cross road of classroom and the real world, and hence is able to combine technical knowledge and business acumen, creativity and innovations for effective job performance. This is necessary because there is a gap between what is obtainable in the classroom and what is needed in the world of work. Due to the global importance of Agripreneurship, it is now implemented in school as a programme that will inhibit graduate's unemployment.

One of the major social issues ravaging Nigerian society today is unemployment. Unemployment is the state of someone having the necessary skill, knowledge and desire to fit into a job to earn a livelihood. The international Labour Organization (ILO, 2015) defines unemployment as the proportion of people in the labour force, aged fifteen (15) to sixty four (64) years, who are actively looking for work, but could not find work at least twenty (20) hours during the reference period to the total currently active (labour force) population, while underemployment occurs if a person work less than full-time hours or works full-time but is engaged in an activity that under-utilize his/her skills, time and educational qualifications (NBS, 2016). Thus, unemployment is measured as the percentage of the labour force that is either unemployed or underemployed. Underemployment rate has been on the increase in Nigeria over the years, it was 13.1% in 2000, rose to 14.8% in 2003 and 19.7% in 2009 (NBS, 2009).

According to Ijaiya (2007), with the proliferation of schools, colleges and universities, Nigeria has produced an army of unemployable and unemployed graduates, resulting in the agitation for entrepreneurship education, as one of the ways of solving the problem of graduates' unemployment. Unemployment breeds poverty and the rising unemployment rates in the country prove that most government programmes, including educational programmes are not helping to address the challenges of unemployment. Also, a lot of our graduates are unemployed because of the emphasis on theory



in our colleges of education at the expense of skills (Agbaegbu, 2011). Agbaegbu further opined that the issue of unemployment has led to a lot of graduates roaming the street looking for what to do. Having recognized the futility of previous approaches to the problem of graduates' unemployment, and its dire social consequences, government have introduced the Agricultural Entrepreneurship (Agripreneurship) Programmes, in order to reduce unemployment.

Agricultural Entrepreneurship (Agripreneurship) programmes are designed to equip graduates with agricultural and other occupational skills and entrepreneurship for them to cease to be employment seekers, become self-reliant and future employers of labour. Since this programme was designed to engage the graduates, and considering how graduates have not fully embraced previous programmes of job creation, by colleges of education, it become necessary that while the success of the programme cannot be assessed now, because they are still in their infancy, there is need to determine the focus on mitigating colleges of education graduate's unemployment. As stated by Eboh (2015), the agricultural entrepreneurship programmes are on a mission to harness the production potential of graduates of colleges of education through an era of rapid and sustainable socio-economic development drive that would transform the graduates of colleges of education.

The origin of colleges of education in Nigeria is traceable to the Ashby Report of 1960 called, 'Investment in Education'. The Commission recommended the establishment of Teachers' Grade One Colleges, which would offer a two-year teacher programme based on a school certificate. Until the establishment of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) in Nigeria in 1989, all the Advance teacher's Colleges and Colleges of Education in Nigeria were affiliates of Institutes/Faculties of Education in Nigeria Universities. Today colleges of education in Nigeria have uniform minimum standards as provided by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). The setting up of the uniform minimum standards by the commission was necessitated among other things, by the discriminatory admission policies of the universities in favour of the candidates from ATTCs/Colleges of Education that were affiliated to them. Colleges of Education in Nigeria have played a vital role in our national development, especially in the education sector. The teaching function of colleges of education in Nigeria for instance, has contributed immensely to national development particularly in the development of middle-level manpower for the nation's primary and junior secondary schools. Another area of their contribution on national development is in the area of research. Their research results enable the educational planners to formulate appropriate education policies for the nation's development. Finally, they have assisted in national development by providing compulsory and agricultural extension services boost the economic activities of the communities around them, while the agricultural extension services enhance the improvement of agriculture and thus, mitigating unemployment.

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### Statement of the Problem

Agriculture as an enterprise is going through transition globally. It is assuming new shape and scope and no more a mere cultivation of crops and rearing of animals or an enterprise for the rural population. Other aspects like value addition, high-tech agriculture, global marketing, organic farming etc. have redefined agriculture (Palanivelu and Madhupriya, 2013). These have led to improved performance of the sector and enhanced human resource development initiative.

Agriculture today in Nigeria is facing challenges that are yet to be addressed such as embracing it as a tool for job creation. Although agricultural programmes are being taught in various tertiary institutions including Colleges of Education, unemployment is still a major problem in Nigeria. The forgoing therefore underscores sufficient justification for this research on mitigating graduates of Colleges of Education unemployment through agricultural entrepreneurship programmes.

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### Purpose of the Study

The general objective of the study is on mitigating graduates of colleges of education unemployment through agricultural entrepreneurship programmes. Specifically, the research seeks to:

1. Find out the skills colleges of education graduates can acquire through agricultural entrepreneurship programme in Cross River State.
2. Examine factors that can inhibit employment of Colleges of Education graduates through agricultural entrepreneurship programme in Cross River State.

### Research Questions

1. What are the skills colleges of education graduates can acquire through agricultural entrepreneurship programme in Cross River State?
2. What are the factors that can inhibit employment of Colleges of Education graduates through agricultural entrepreneurship programme in Cross River State?

### Hypotheses

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Significant difference does not exist in the mean responses of unemployed graduates on the skills colleges of education graduates can acquire through agricultural entrepreneurship programme in Cross River State.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean responses of unemployed graduates on the factors that can inhibit employment of Colleges of Education graduates through agricultural entrepreneurship programme in Cross River State.

## Methodology

Two research questions were developed and answered by the research while two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the research, Nworgu (2015) described a descriptive survey research as “those studies which aim at collecting data and describing in a systematic manner the characteristics, features or facts about a given population”. The design was adopted because the research involves the use of structured questionnaire to elicit responses. It was conducted in Cross River State, Nigeria. The population for the study 343 comprising of unemployed graduates of colleges of education who applied for employment in government agencies in the study area. The government agencies include: Cocoa Development Agency, Commercial Agriculture and Rice Seedlings Production Factory. Proportionate sampling techniques was used to sample 40 percentage of unemployed graduates which yielded 137. 40 questionnaire items developed from literature reviewed was use to obtain data for the research. The scale for the questionnaire was Strongly Agreed (SA=4), Agreed (A=3), Disagreed (D=2) and Strongly Disagreed (SD=1).

The questionnaire was face validated by three experts from the Department of Agricultural and Bio-Resources Education, University of Calabar, Calabar. Cronbach Alpha formula was used to determine internal consistency of the questionnaire which yielded 0.76 coefficient. The questionnaire was administered on 137 respondents by hand by the researcher and ten assistant researchers and there was 90% return rate which equate to 124 respondents. Mean statistics was used to answer the research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of probability. Table of real limit of numbers was applied in decision making for the research questions thus; 0.50-1.49 – Strongly Disagreed, 1.50-2.49 – Disagreed, 2.50-3.49 – Agreed and 3.50-4.00 – Strongly Agreed. For the null hypotheses, they were upheld if the calculated level of significance is greater than 0.05 and rejected if otherwise.

## Results

Research Question 1: What are the skills colleges of education graduates can acquire through agricultural entrepreneurship programme in Cross River State?

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Significant difference does not exist in the mean responses of unemployed graduates on the skills colleges of education graduates can acquire through agricultural entrepreneurship programme in Cross River State.

**Table 1:** Mean ratings and t-test analysis of unemployed graduates of colleges of education on skills that can be acquired through agricultural entrepreneurship programmes in Cross River State.

S/N	ITEMS	UNEMPLOYED GRADUATES		t-cal	Sig.	Decision
		$\bar{X}$	SD			
<b>Crop Production Skills in:</b>						
1.	Floriculture production	3.59	0.52	-2.072	0.041	S *
2.	Bambara bean production	3.22	0.62	-2.538	0.013	S *
3.	Commercial bitter leaf production	3.18	0.70	-0.538	0.592	NS *
4.	Cultivation of cucumber	3.43	0.72	-0.327	0.744	NS *
5.	Hybrid tomato production	3.54	0.60	-0.679	0.499	NS *
<b>Animal Production Skills in:</b>						
6.	Bee production	3.32	0.67	-0.690	0.492	NS *
7.	Snail production	3.16	0.53	-0.886	0.378	NS *
8.	Seafood production (Shrimps, crabs, periwinkle)	3.26	0.66	-1.697	0.093	NS *
9.	Alligator production	2.28	0.93	-3.760	0.000	S *
10.	Grass cutter production	2.97	0.84	-1.525	0.131	NS *
<b>Agric Extension Programmes Skills in:</b>						
11.	Providing agricultural consultancy services	3.57	0.57	-0.034	0.973	NS *
12.	Planning and executing agriculture programmes	3.60	0.40	-3.393	0.010	S *
13.	Organizing and supervising farmers groups	3.63	0.48	-1.902	0.610	NS *
14.	Conducting and organizing training for farmers	3.91	2.01	-0.182	0.856	NS *
15.	Evaluating extension programmes	3.26	0.60	-1.216	0.227	NS *
<b>Agricultural Mechanization Skills in:</b>						
16.	Using tractor coupled implements	3.59	0.61	0.590	0.953	NS *
17.	Using shellers	3.45	0.56	0.228	0.820	NS *

18.	Using milking machine	3.45	0.61	2.353	0.210	NS *
19.	Using tree pullers	3.27	0.67	0.008	0.993	NS *
20.	Using harvesters	3.55	0.60	-0.594	0.554	NS *
Agricultural Marketing Skills in:						
21.	Farm level processing	3.44	0.58	-1.126	0.263	NS *
22.	Grading/sorting	3.33	0.54	0.590	0.557	NS *
23.	Packaging	3.49	0.52	-2.150	0.034	S *
24.	Storage and warehousing	3.55	0.59	0.200	0.842	NS *
25.	Advertisement	3.29	0.64	-1.630	0.107	NS *
Agricultural Mechanics Skills in:						
26.	Agricultural electrification	3.41	0.67	-0.782	0.436	NS *
27.	Agricultural mechanics shop operations	3.37	0.65	-0.005	0.996	NS *
28.	Soil and water management	3.60	0.81	-0.413	0.681	NS *
29.	Locating and diagnosing machinery problems	3.32	0.63	-1.060	0.292	NS *
30.	Welding cracked pipe fittings in machines	3.23	0.51	-1.882	0.630	NS *

Note:  $\bar{X}$  = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, no. of Unemployed Graduates = 124, S = Significant, NS = Not Significant, \* = Strongly Agree/Agree.

Table 1 showed that 30 items had their mean values ranging from 2.28 to 3.60. Items 1,5,11,12,13,14,16,20,24 and 28 falls in the category of Strongly Agree while items 2,3,4,6,7,8,9,10,15,17,18,19,21,22,23,25,26,27,29 and 30 falls in the category of Agree. This shows that all the 29 items are skills that needs to be acquired through agricultural entrepreneurship programmes in Cross River State. However, one of the items (no. 9) had a mean value of 2.28 which indicates disagreement by the respondents. Also, the result from the hypothesis showed that no significant differences exist between the mean ratings of 25 of the items. However, significant differences exist in items 1,2,9,12 and 23. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significance was accepted for the 25 items but rejected for 5 items.

**Research Question 2:** What are the factors that can inhibit employment of Colleges of Education graduates through agricultural entrepreneurship programme in Cross River State?

**Ho:** There is no significant difference in the mean responses of unemployed graduates on the factors that can inhibit employment of Colleges of Education graduates through agricultural entrepreneurship programme in Cross River State.

**Table 2:** Mean ratings and t-test analysis of the respondents on the factors that can inhibit employment of graduates of colleges of education through agricultural entrepreneurship programme in Cross River State.

S/N	ITEMS	UNEMPLOYED GRADUATES		t-cal	Sig.	Decision
		$\bar{X}$	SD			
1.	More emphasis on theory rather than practical Agriculture.	3.26	0.71	-3.179	0.002	S *
2.	Inadequate finance to carry out practical Agriculture	3.29	0.64	-3.213	0.002	S *
3.	Poor attitude of students towards practical Agriculture	3.24	0.69	-2.908	0.005	S *
4.	Insufficient personnel to guide the students in practical Agriculture	3.26	0.68	-2.795	0.006	S *
5.	Practical Agriculture is not usually evaluated by teachers	3.10	0.82	-1.525	0.131	NS *
6.	Practical Agriculture is time consuming	2.80	0.91	-2.322	0.023	S *
7.	Gender bias in practical Agriculture	2.73	0.85	-2.063	0.042	S *
8.	Inadequate incentive measures to encourage students that perform well in practical Agriculture	3.03	0.70	-1.088	0.280	NS *
9.	Lukewarm attitude of Government towards Agriculture	3.32	0.75	-1.517	0.133	NS *
10.	School farms are far from where students attend lectures and live.	2.87	0.85	-2.430	0.017	S *

$\bar{X}$  = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, S = Significant, NS = Not Significant, \* = Strongly Agree/Agree.

In table 2, the mean ratings of the respondent range between 2.73 – 3.32 which is in the category of Disagree and Agree. Items 1,2,3,4,5,8 and 9 are in the category of agree while 6,7 and 10 are in the category of disagree. It shows that the respondents agree that 7 items are factors that can inhibit employment of graduates of colleges of education. However, the respondents disagree that 3 items are factors that can inhibit employment of graduates of colleges of education in Cross River State. Also, the result from the hypothesis showed that significant differences exist between the mean ratings of 7 of the items. However, no significant differences exist in items 5, 8 and 9. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significance was rejected for the 7 items but accepted for 3 items.

## Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study on skills that can be acquired through agricultural entrepreneurship programmes showed that various skills in crop production, animal production, agricultural mechanization, agricultural mechanics, agricultural marketing as well as agricultural extension programmes can be acquired through agricultural entrepreneurship programmes. The findings are in line with Oluwayi (2014) in a study titled "Agriculture as a means of job

creation” found out that agricultural programmes should also include skills in agricultural mechanization and extension programmes. The findings are also supported by Akaeze (2011) when he found out that agricultural marketing is a skilled area that emphasis should be laid on in tertiary institutions.

The findings on factors that can inhibit employment of graduates of colleges of education through agricultural entrepreneurship programmes in Cross River State shows that placing more emphasis on theory rather than practical Agriculture, inadequate finance to carry out practical Agriculture, poor attitude of students towards practical Agriculture, insufficient personnel to guide the students in practical Agriculture, practical agriculture is not usually evaluated by teachers, poor image of agriculture factors that can inhibit employment of graduates of colleges of education through agricultural entrepreneurship in Cross River State. This is backed up by Adeyemo (2014) when he stated that individuals do not acquire skills in agriculture because practical agriculture is not usually evaluated by teachers. The findings are also in cognizance with that of Baruah (2013) thus, inadequate personnel to guide the students in practical agriculture is a major factor that inhibit skill development.

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## Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that agricultural entrepreneurship programmes can create employments thereby leading to national development. However, Agricultural Entrepreneurship programmes has to be revitalized by emphasizing skills development. The skills to be acquired are very many but some are more essential. Some factors that the research identified however inhibit skills employment of graduates of colleges of education in Cross River State.

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## Recommendations

1. More emphasis should be laid on practical skills development in Agricultural entrepreneurship rather than theory in colleges of education.
2. Government must encourage practical agriculture by financing it.
3. Public awareness should be created on the agricultural entrepreneurship programme to ensure that the image of graduates of colleges of education is improved.

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