

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS AGRIBUSINESS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*The main objective of this work is to assess students' attitude towards Agribusiness in Colleges of Education, in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to: - assess students' attitude on technical skills need for Agribusiness in Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State. the study has two objectives, two research question and two hypotheses. The study population was 851 N. C. E students offering Agribusiness in Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State. While a sample of 265 Agribusiness N. C. E students were used in the process of data collection. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire adapted titled: Students' Attitude towards Agribusiness Questionnaire (SATAQ). The instrument was validated by three experts for content and face validity. The instrument was subjected to Cronbach alpha reliability test. The data were collected by the researcher with the help of 3 trained research assistants. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research question and the hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance. With the help of statistical package of social science (IBM/SPSS) version 23. The result of the study revealed that, agribusiness technical skills, management skills, adaptability skills, accounting skills and marketing skills has positively changed students' attitude in Colleges of Education. The study further recommended that, although, students have positive attitude towards agribusiness, extension workers can be still used in secondary schools as subject matter specialist (SMS) to speak about mechanized farming that can improved students' attitude and study agriculture in higher institutions and as their future career.*

**Keywords: Students' attitude, Agribusiness, Technical skills and Management skills**

**Introduction**

In the early stages of economic development in Nigeria, agriculture plays a dominant role in the employment of resource and the generation of income. This means that, Agriculture was the base through which most developed nations achieved their industrialization. In line with this assertion, Prince, Khan and Halasa-Rappel (2018) asserted that, a steady decline in the revenue accruable from agriculture was however noticed with the emergence of the oil boom era in the 1970s. Even though, Nigeria was then a predominantly agrarian nation and for this reason, that over 75% of the country's population depends directly or indirectly on agriculture for their livelihood. However, processing, marketing and distribution of crops and livestock products and so on are all acknowledged as the part of the current agriculture (Raouf *et al*, 2015).

In Nigeria, today agriculture remained a major sector of the economy despite the emphasis on the oil sector, because it plays a role of providing food for her teeming population, provision of foreign exchange earnings, income for smallholder and commercial farmers and employment opportunities for about 70 percent of the population (Otekunrin, Oni & Oluwaseun, 2017). This means that, Agricultural sector has started regaining its lost glory in recent time through a viable economic plan referred to as Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) in which Agriculture is one of the major sectors of the economy considered in the ERGP to help solve ravaging incidence of food insecurity, reduce unemployment, improve foreign exchange earnings and resuscitate industrialization (Otekunrin *et al*, 2017; Inusa *et al*, 2018).

Despite the importance of crude oil on nations economic development, the researcher observed that, there is need to bring agriculture back to its lost position. Poor attitude of students in Agribusiness has been a major source of concern for decision makers on the Nigerian economy and stakeholders in the Agricultural education sector. This is because, the agricultural sector which was the major sources of employment and income generation for self-reliant in Nigeria has been in shamble since the discovery of the oil sector. This has led to the society looking down upon he who wants to read further on agriculture as a course as something that will make you poorer and living below standard in the society. Thus, demoralizing students' attitude who are intending to

further their studies on the agriculture most especially Agribusiness course in Colleges of Educations and beyond.

Other researchers such as Peparhet and Clifford (2015); Dorosh and Thurlow (2018) have attributed poor attitude to several factors that includes: societal perception on agribusiness course, lack of innovative teaching techniques, inadequate funding and inadequate farmlands to practice Agribusiness education as designed in the curriculum and other related problems. As observed by the researcher, these situations have led a huge percentage of those that studied Agricultural Science in Colleges of Education either unemployed or not practicing what they learnt in schools most especially in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. And this has thrown Nigeria into a devastating situation. However, upon all the related literature reviewed regarding students' attitude towards agribusiness, no study was found on Assessing students Attitude in Agribusiness in Colleges of Education. It is based on this gap that, the presents study will want to fill and determining the assessment of students' attitude towards Agribusiness in Colleges of Education in Nasarawa state, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study was to assess students' attitude towards Agribusiness in Colleges of Education, in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to: -

1. Assess students' attitude on technical skills for Agribusiness in Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.
2. Determine students' attitude on management skills of Agribusiness in Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the conduct of the study.

1. What is the attitude of students on technical skills for Agribusiness in Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria?
2. What is the attitude of students on management skills for Agribusiness in Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses will be formulated to guide the study:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Agribusiness technical skills has no significant difference on students' attitude in Colleges of Education.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Agribusiness management skills has no significant difference on students' attitude in Colleges of Education.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Concept of Agribusiness**

Agribusiness refer to agriculturally related businesses including warehouses, wholesalers, processors, retailers and more (Chait, 2014). This led to another definition with a broader set of activities that focused on markets and included natural resources: Agribusiness is a dynamic and systemic endeavor that serves consumers globally and locally through innovation and management of multiple value chains that deliver valued goods and services derived from the sustainable orchestration of food, fiber, and natural resources (Edwards & Schultz as cited in Fleet, 2016). On the other hand, Agribusiness is an aspect of entrepreneurship which deals with agribusiness of agricultural production (Gitta & South, 2019). To Gitta *et al* (2019), Agribusiness engulfs all spheres of Agricultural entrepreneur including crop production, animal production, agrochemicals, farming as well as apiary just to mention but a few. Gitta *et al* further observe that, agribusiness in agricultural production has been connoted to such professions such as agrichemicals, breeding, crop production (farming and contract farming), distribution, farm machinery, processing and seed supply, as well as marketing and retail sales.

Agribusiness actually includes all enterprises derived from and around agricultural production. According to Fleet (2016), Agribusiness emphasizes agriculture as a big business rather than as the work of small family farms. In the same vein, Maji, Mundi and Kaine (2018) see Agribusiness as the sum total of all the operations involved in the manufacture and distribution of farm supply, production operation of the farm and the storage, processing and distribution of farm commodities and items made from them. That is to say, it is a coordinating science of supplying agricultural product, inputs and subsequent production. Furthermore, Maji *et al* (2018) describe Agribusiness as all economic activities that involve the distribution and transformation of the raw materials that are from agricultural sector and nonagricultural sectors whose final product are used for agricultural purposes and agro allied enterprises.

Consequently, the federal, state and Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs) direct their human and material resources toward the development of entrepreneurship centres for the training of undergraduate students in

various sectors of the economy in technical and vocational areas of their choice and interest (Pepraheth & Clifford, 2015). The problem associated with Pepraheth and Clifford (2015) statement as observed by the researcher is that, historically, education in Nigeria has lately introduced agribusiness education courses into the Nigerian tertiary institutions and this was the architect of the colonial master of that era.

### **Concept of Attitude**

Scholars have viewed attitude in a number of ways. For instance, Makanda (2015) defined attitude as a way of thinking or feeling about something or somebody usually reflected in an individual's behaviour when he/she reacts towards or against some situation, person or object in a particular manner. Oymak and Bekiroglu (2017), noted that when technology or laboratory approach was embedded in the instruction, the students became better learners and their attitudes increased. In the same vein, Iwuanyunwu (2016) sees attitude as a disposition, way of feeling, mental state or behaving towards someone or something. In India, Kattayat, Josey and Asha (2016) found out that there was a statistically significant relationship that existed between learner's academic achievement in Agribusiness, through the use of appropriate teaching method and attitude towards becoming self-reliant in the world of work.

According to Deeksha (2016), Attitude denotes a functional state of readiness which determines the organism to react in a characteristic's way to certain stimuli or stimulus situations. In line with this definition, Murphy and Murphy as cited in Deeksha (2016), sees attitude is primarily a way of being set towards or against certain things. In the same vein, Baldwin cited in Deeksha (2016), also views that, attitude is a readiness for attention or action of a definite pattern. In the opinion of Deeksha, the specific mental disposition toward an incoming experience whereby the experience is modified or condition of readiness for a certain type of activity is referred to as attitude. That is why Cantril in Deeksha (2016), holds that an attitude is a more or less permanently enduring state of readiness of mental organization which predisposes an individual to react in a characteristic way to any object or situation with which it is related. And thus, Cantril defines attitude as a mental or neutral state of readiness organized through experience influencing dynamically or directly the individuals' response to all objects and situations with which it is related. Attitudes determine the organism's orientation towards his social and physical environment including himself (Deeksha, 2016). To Deeksha, a particular attitude towards a specific stimulus motives are aroused and action is mobilized to approach or avoid the stimulus.

In addition, Kretch and Crutchfield and Ballachey as cited in Boze (2020) holds that, attitudes have an adoptive significance in that they represent a fundamental psychological link between a person's ability to perceive, feel and learn while giving order and meaning to his continuing experience in a complex social environment. Rosnow and Robinson in Deeksha (2016) view that, the term attitude denotes the organisation in an individual of his feelings, beliefs and predispositions to behave as he does. Deeksha (2016) defined attitudes on the basis of its components or structures of which he said, such components include cognitive component of a social attitude which consists of a person's system of beliefs, perceptions and stereotypes about the attitudinal object, the affective component of social attitude. To Deeksha (2016) all the aforementioned refers to the emotional aspect of the attitude is often deep-rooted component and resists most to change and the behavioural component of social attitudes indicates the tendency to react towards the object of attitude in certain specific ways. In other words, it is a predisposition to act in a certain manner towards the attitude object.

In further a more simple term, Deeksha (2016) stress that, attitude involves a kind of emotion experienced towards the object of attitude say love or hatred, like or dislike, palatable or unpalatable feelings. This is known by observing the behaviour of the individual that is, what he says he will do or actually how he behaves, does or reacts (Boze, 2020). Boze further explained that, a person who shows strong unpalatable attitude towards dowry by not accepting any dowry during his marriage or a person who fights against corruption by remaining honest and upright throughout his life and by not allowing and tolerating injustice to occur with his knowledge is an example demonstrating the behavioural component of attitude. Attitude affects the way people perceive and act toward people, object or event that they encounter. Besides that attitudes can also have an effect on one's social interaction (Dorosh & Thurlow, 2018).

### **Agribusiness Technical Skills**

This doesn't mean you have to buy every new gadget that hits the market, but knowledge of where technology is going, particularly in terms of agriculture practices, is incredibly important (Justin, 2015). To Justin, this includes a focus on things such as irrigation, pesticide-use, and improving methods and techniques of cultivation, harvest, storage and transport. In a study conducted by Alison (2023) reported that, technical skills are the abilities and knowledge needed to perform specific tasks that is to say, technical skills are needed for successful enterprise because these skills are necessary for securing and holding employment in recognize occupations. Alison continued that, technical skills are practical, and often relate to mechanical, information

technology, mathematical, or scientific tasks which include, knowledge of programming languages, design programs, mechanical equipment or tools.

This is in line with Kotler and Keller as cited in Abdel-maqoud (2014) who maintained that, technical skills are required in all business in order to enable the proprietor meet the consumers' need. This also means agriculture professionals need to embrace technological development. More often than not, the "early birds" who embrace new technological advances often benefit the most (Justin, 2015). Justin, further added that, this doesn't mean you must jump on every bandwagon that you hear of but professionals, particularly farm owners and operators, should always be aware of what new technologies may offer and determine whether adopting new techniques, instruments and advancements are beneficial to their specific venture.

Agribusiness programmes are based around realistic and practical contexts and provide students with the opportunity to develop skills and concepts to explore agribusiness issues and to communicate their ideas to others (The New Zealand Curriculum, 2017). The Curriculum, further explained that, Agribusiness students develop the skills of planning, investigating, designing, drawing, model-making and capabilities in using digital tools and processes. They use creativity, logic, knowledge and problem solving to find innovative solutions to real-life problems, necessary for New Zealand to remain competitive in local, regional and international markets. On his own part, Daniel (2014) postulated that, technical skills, accounting, management and entrepreneurial skills are very vital for business take up and management. While technical skills are often most important for jobs related to information technology (IT) and other fields in the sciences, many other industries also want employees with at least some technical skills (Alison, 2023).

### **Agribusiness Managerial Skills**

There are a number of skills in which Agribusiness students should possess in order to best serve them during practical skills after been graduated (Apostolopoulos, 2019). The following skills are the most important to know before leading a team: communication (verbal and written), Flexibility, Time management, allowing others to find solutions, active listening, developing (and sticking to) a culture, training and onboarding, negotiation and collaboration, Looking to the future. According to Apostolopoulos (2019) an employee can be the best professional in their field or even a key expert in their industry. But working is all about people coming together (Apostolopoulos, 2019). So, it should be unsurprising that communication skills top the list of most-sought leadership qualities. Whether it's for a managerial, a supervisory, or an entry-level position, your candidates need to know how to interact with people no matter the message they're trying to communicate.

Apostolopoulos (2019) further stated that, what makes this skill even more significant is that communication is changing. On the other hand, MITSDE (2018) said that, the essential managerial skills to become a successful entrepreneur are stated below: Time Management, Business Planning, Employee Management, Customer Management, Sales Management, Financial Management, Business Management. In line with these skills, Akinsola, as cited in Apostolopoulos, (2019) in his own view, stated clearly that, management skills needed for successful Agribusiness also include the ability to have knowledge of :making long and short term planning, purchase goods, tools and equipment, factors involve in overhead control, inventory control and turnover acquisition of management and supervisory skills, manage time and meet jibs schedules, need for employees growth and development, identify opportunities and generate ideas suitable to the opportunities and confidence to make a decision and act upon it.

The most valuable asset for young entrepreneurs is their time which will lead every entrepreneur needs to develop a business plan or a blueprint of how will he develop his new business (MITSDE, 2018). He added that, a good business plan consists of a single document divided into several sections including the description of the organization, market research, sales strategies, competitive analysis and financial data. Successful entrepreneurs should know how to motivate the employees in order to work effectively and contribute to garner customer experience. entrepreneur must know how to manage his relationship with existing customers with a focus on creating loyalty towards his business. By this, Apostolopoulos (2019) stated that, entrepreneurs must have problem-solving skills, communication skills, attentiveness and patience to manage customers effectively. Apostolopoulos reiterated that, understand the sale activities will help the entrepreneurs to tackle the challenges that they may face in their sale management journey and that, with a good financial management system, one can make decisions to improve the business operations. Being a successful entrepreneur involves more than enthusiasm and a good eye for new opportunities. Management must have the complete know-how of general management, finance, marketing, operations management, purchasing, supply chain, human resources and public relations.

### Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey research design to determine the assessment of students' attitude towards agribusiness in Colleges of Education, in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The area of the study was Nasarawa State, Nigeria which covers an area of 28,735 sq kilometres and with a population density of 65 people/sq km. Nasarawa State has a population that makes up 1.3% of Nigeria's total population. According to the 2006 population censuses, Nasarawa State has a total population of 1,869,377 (Male 943,801 and Female 925,576) out of which 953,382 are youths (0-17years). The population of the study comprised of all the 851 N. C. E students offering Agribusiness in Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State. While a sample of two hundred and sixty-five (265) N. C. E students offering Agribusiness was used in the process of data collection.

The instrument for data collection in this research work was an adapted structured questionnaire adapted titled: Students' Attitude towards Agribusiness Questionnaire (SATAQ) structured on a five-point likert scale. The data were collected by the researcher with the help of 3 trained research assistants. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools of mean and standard deviation to answer all the research questions and that the hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

### Results

The chapter presents the results and discussion of the study. Specifically, the chapter was discussed under the following sub-headings: Results of Research Questions; Results of Research Hypotheses; Summary of the Findings and Discussion of the Results.

#### Results of Research Questions

##### Research Question One

What is the attitude of students on technical skills for Agribusiness in Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria?

The analysis of the 7 items used to address research question one in Table 3 revealed the mean scores ranged from 3.02 to 3.95 with standard deviations of 1.02 and 1.95 respectively. The weighted mean scores obtained were under the index score of agreed. The grand mean of 3.05 also indicated that respondents agreed with the items on the attitude of students on technical skills for Agribusiness in Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on attitude of students on technical skills for Agribusiness in Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria**

QI.	Statement	Mean	Std. dev.	Remark
1.	Technical skills are the abilities and knowledge required of me to perform specific tasks in agribusiness for sustainability.	3.02	1.02	Agree
2.	Technical skills are needed for successful enterprise agribusiness.	3.25	1.25	Agree
3.	Technical skills are practical skills and often related to mechanical, information technology and mathematical to perform a scientific task.	3.05	1.05	Agree
4.	Technical skills are what will make me to improving on agribusiness globally.	3.86	1.86	Agree
5.	Technical skills will help me to have knowledge of where technology on agribusiness is going.	3.13	0.78	Agree
6.	Technical skills will enable me in the identification of new trends in the agribusiness.	3.62	1.62	Agree
7.	Technical skills will enable me to know seasonal fluctuation in agribusiness segmentation process.	3.95	1.95	Agree
<b>Grand mean</b>		<b>3.05</b>		<b>Agree</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

##### Research Question Two

What is the attitude of students on management skills for Agribusiness in Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria?

The descriptive statistics used to answer research question two in Table 2 revealed the weighted mean ranged from 3.02 to 3.44 which were classified under the benchmark of agreed. The grand mean score of 3.88 obtained indicated that the respondents agreed that there is a positive attitude of students on management skills for Agribusiness in Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State. The outcome of the result suggested that the respondents agreed that there is significant attitude of students on management skills for Agribusiness in Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State.

**Table 2: Descriptive statistics on attitude of students on management skills for Agribusiness in Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria**

Ql.	Statement	Mean	Std. dev.	Remark
8.	Management in Agribusiness will help me to have knowledge of making long- and short-term planning.	3.44	0.91	Agree
9.	As an agribusiness entrepreneur, I must know how to manage people towards achieving the objectives of the agribusiness market.	3.12	0.78	Agree
10.	Patience is a good technique to manage customers in agribusiness more effectively thereby boosting my market share.	3.02	0.76	Agree
11.	Being a successful entrepreneur in agribusiness, I do not need to be involve more than enthusiasm and a good eye for new opportunities.	3.32	1.21	Agree
12.	I need to have a complete know-how on general management on both human resources and public relations in my career as an agribusiness student.	3.11	0.95	Agree
<b>Grand mean</b>		<b>3.88</b>		<b>Agree</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

### Test of Null Hypotheses

#### Null hypothesis 1

Agribusiness technical skills has no significant difference on students' attitude in Colleges of Education.

**Table 3: Analyses of Agribusiness technical skills mean and standard deviation scores of significant differences on students' attitude in Colleges of Education**

#### Tests of Between- Agribusiness technical skills

Dependent Variable: posttest

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	17153.424 <sup>a</sup>	2	8576.712	157.545	.000
Intercept	226659.014	1	226659.014	4163.476	.000
Pretest	3.441	1	3.441	.063	.802
Method	17153.278	1	17153.278	315.087	.000
Error	15460.917	284	54.440		
Total	800675.000	287			
Corrected Total	32614.341	286			

a. R Squared = .526 (Adjusted R Squared = .523)

As shown in Table 3 above, the calculated value of F method (315.087) with associated probability value (P= 0.000). The associated probability value was less than 0.05 level of significance (P<0.05) set by the researcher; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis that states that agribusiness technical skills have a significant difference on students' attitude in Colleges of Education

#### Null hypothesis 2

Agribusiness management skills has no significant difference on students' attitude in Colleges of Education

**Table 4: Analyses of Agribusiness management skills significant difference on students' attitude in Colleges of Education**

#### Tests of Between-Agribusiness management

Dependent Variable: Agribusiness management

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	48454.669 <sup>a</sup>	2	24227.335	231.586	.000
Intercept	275344.809	1	275344.809	2631.983	.000
Pretest	20.859	1	20.859	.199	.656
Method	48385.327	1	48385.327	462.509	.000
Error	29710.648	284	104.615		
Total	1009033.000	287			
Corrected Total	78165.317	286			

a. R Squared = .620 (Adjusted R Squared = .617)

As shown in Table 4, the calculated value of  $F_{\text{method}}$  (462.509) with associated probability value ( $P=0.000$ ). The associated probability value was less than 0.05 level of significance ( $P<0.05$ ) set by the researcher; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. This means that there is a significant difference between agribusiness management skills on students' attitude in Colleges of Education.

### Discussion

The findings of research question one which is supported by test of its corresponding null hypothesis revealed that agribusiness technical skills have influenced students' attitude in Colleges of Education. This study is in consistent with a study of Kotler and Keller as cited in Abdelmaqsoud (2014) who maintained that, technical skills are required in all business in order to enable the proprietor meet the consumers' need. Also, Alison (2023) reported in his study that, technical skills are needed for successful enterprise because these skills are necessary for securing and holding employment in recognize occupations. Alison continued that, technical skills are practical, and often relate to mechanical, information technology, mathematical, or scientific tasks which include, knowledge of programming languages, design programs, mechanical equipment or tools.

The findings of research question two and test of corresponding null hypothesis two revealed that agribusiness management skills has influence students' attitude in Colleges of Education. This result is in line with a study of Akinsola as cited in Apostolopoulos (2019) in his own view, stated clearly that, management skills are needed for successful Agribusiness also include the ability to have knowledge of: making long and short term planning, purchase goods, tools and equipment, factors involve in overhead control, inventory control and turnover acquisition of management and supervisory skills.

### Conclusion

Agriculture provides food and shelter for man. Agricultural businesses can also be done to increase economic condition of farmers. The current study empirically assessed students, attitude towards Agribusiness in Colleges of Education, in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The study established that, that majority of the students had favorable attitude (3.43) towards entrepreneurship and 97.6% were willing to be entrepreneur. Agribusiness is an aspect of entrepreneurship which deals with agribusiness of agricultural production. Agribusiness emphasizes agriculture as a big business rather than as the work of small family farms. Therefore, if youth embrace agribusiness activities, Food and fibre may be in abundance, but where they are not moved to where they are not produced, it is the same as no food. Thus, the need to reduce unemployment rate through agribusiness activities in Nasarawa State, Nigeria because, Agricultural activities comprise of many lucrative enterprises such as crop production, poultry production, rabbit rearing, sheep and goat production, and other viable enterprise which could yield profit in a short run.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion drawn, the following recommendations are made:

1. Though, students have positive attitude towards agriculture as a subject or as a discipline, teachers of agriculture should enhance students' positive perception and attitude towards agriculture in their teaching methods.
2. Positive attitude to learn new skills and interest in agricultural works or businesses will maximize agricultural production. Extension workers can be used in secondary schools as subject matter specialist (SMS) to speak about mechanized farming; this may encourage them to study agriculture in higher institutions and as their future career.
3. Teachers should let the students know that today's agricultural work is different from that of the past. Mechanize implements and equipment have replaced crude and uncivilized tools like hoes and cutlasses which make farming activities tedious.

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