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DETERMINANTS OF AGRIPRENEURSHIP AMONG FARMING HOUSEHOLDS IN IZZI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EBONYI STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

The determinants of agriprenurship among farming household was carried out at Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, Multi-stage random sampling techniques were used to select communities, Village and respondents. The specific objectives were; describe the socio-economic characteristics of agripreneurs, categorize the various agripreneurial opportunities available and ventured by the farming households, determine the effect of the socioeconomic characteristics of the farming households in becoming agripreneurs, and analyze the constraints to agriprenurship among the farming households in the study area. Objectives i, and ii were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, percentage frequency table, while objective iii and iv were analyzed using inferential statistics; binomial logit regression and factor analysis respectively. The result indicates that, majority of the agripreneurs 66.67% were male, whose age bracket is 31-40. Majority (45.83%) of the agripreneurs attended tertiary education, married agripreneurs were the majority 33.33% with household size of 6-9 persons. Majority of the respondents (50%) had 1-5 years' experience. The result also showed that the agripreneurs invariably ventured on the three major agripreneurial investment areas - input supply 58.33%, production 77.7% and processing /distribution 41.67%. The significant determinants of Agriprenueriship in the stusdy area were the Age, education level, household size, years of experience and marital status. The major constraints to Agreprenueriship in the study area were institutional, Economic and infrastructure factors.

Key words : Determinants, Agriprenurship, Farming Households

Introduction

The Problems of unemployment, underemployment and disguised unemployment have swamped the rural areas of Nigeria thereby creating a wide gap between citizens (Narendran and Ranganathan, 2015, Shoji, *et al*, 2014). In a bid to bridge the gap and ensure increased economic opportunities and food security for the rural households, has necessitated the adoption of agriprenurship (Uneze, 2013). Agriprenurship which simply means entrepreneurship in agriculture can be seen as a process whereby farmers become determined, creative, innovative, willing to take calculated risk and always looking for opportunity to improve and expand their farm input (Sancho, 2010). Agriprenurship is profitable fusion of agriculture and entrepreneurship as it turns farm into an agribusiness (Ndirangu and Bwisa, 2016). It is synonym with entrepreneurship in agriculture and referred to agribusiness establishment in agriculture and allied sector (Ndirangu and Bwisa, 2016).

Agriprenurship is the concept specific to agriculture and drawn from wider entrepreneurship. The concept is used to describe dynamic process of creating incremental wealth from agricultural sector (Shailesh, *et al.*, 2013). The wealth is created by individuals who take the major risk in terms of equity,

time, and carrier's commitment of providing value to some products or services. The products or service itself may or may not be new or unique but value most somehow be infused by an agriprenur who secures and allocate the necessary skill and resources (Olatomide and Omowumi, 2015). Agripreneurs are innovators who drive change in the economy by initiating new idea and creating new ways of carrying out different activities in input supply, production and marketing in agriculture. Agriprenurship entails the process of making agriculture more attractive and profitable venture. This ensures that agriculture land requires the development of entrepreneurial and organizational competency in farmers. A lot of opportunities abound in agricultural land, which according to Sudarshan (2013), include: production of agricultural produce by making best use of the technology, resources and demand in the market; procurement and distribution, hiring of implements and equipment like tractors, seeds drills sprayers, harvesters, threshers, dryers and technical services such as installation of irrigation facilities, weed control, plant protection, harvesting, threshing, transportation, storage etc.

At input production level, there are many potential agripreneurial opportunities; bio-fertilizers, Soil amendments, plants of different species of fruits,

vegetables, ornamentals, root media for raising plants in pots, agricultural tools, and irrigation accessories, production of cattle feed concentrate, mineral mixture and complete feed.

In fact, agripreneurs should be proactive, curious, determined, persistent, visionary, and hardworking. Honest, integrity with strong managerial and organizational skill in order to identify and exploit available opportunities in agriculture (Olatomide and Omowumi, 2015). Considerably, the peculiarities of Nigeria's agricultural sectors have provided further insight on the need for agripreneurship to ensure efficient utilization of available resources and optimum exploitation of opportunities that abound in the agribusiness value chain. (Sudarshan, 2013). Narendran and Ranganathan (2015) Opined that electronic marketing, cold supply chain, advisory and consultancy services provide immense scope and opportunities for youths to function as agripreneurs for agricultural development and prosperity. Electronic marketing directly connects farmers with the customers and minimizes the role of middlemen in the supply chain. Cold supply chain integrates the whole supply chains for perishable products and minimizes the wastage at the production center, logistics and storage. Consultation and advisory services are very much necessary for implementing contract and corporate farming at the field level. Therefore, for our agriculture to remain competitive in the global economy there is needed to inject new ideals and creative processes for value creation in a sustainable manner (Uneze, 2013).

With the dominance of petroleum as the major revenue resources in Nigeria, agriculture still constitutes a very significant sector of the nation's economy. However, agriculture alone cannot reduce the high level of poverty and unemployment among Nigerians. Agro-entrepreneurship is a vehicle for increasing self-employment, boosting of small and medium scale enterprise and poverty reduction. This is achieved by improving the personnel quality of life, family, communities, and to maintain a sound health economy that leads to national growth and development. An agro-entrepreneur can assist the economy by creating new job opportunities through innovation and research development.

Innovations can enhance the economy because they can provide enhanced ways of handling responsibilities, and can also lead to new enterprises that contribute to the growth of economy. Therefore, agro-entrepreneurs assist in creating wealth for different entrepreneurs seeking agro- enterprises opportunities. Thus, it is a major reason why some persons are pursuing agro-entrepreneurial opportunities as it plays an important role in every country's economy.

Agro- entrepreneurship is considered to be a major sector that would assist to absorb a greater number of youths in the labour market and poverty alleviation in Nigeria (Mbam and Nwibo, 2015).

Nigerians have begun to recognize the relevance of the unlimited opportunities it provides to young peoples. Empirical evidences emerging from few studies on entrepreneurship development in agriculture have yielded mixed results that are inconclusive and contradictory (Shailesh *et al.*, 2013; Nwibo and Okorie, 2013).

Despite the participation of rural households in agripreneurial activities, its development has not been fully embraced. Employing entrepreneurship skill in farming leads to reduction in poverty among the rural households, but the extents of poverty reduction is still very insignificant, which is an indication that farmers have not fully taken advantage of some of the Agripreneurial activities or have participated to a less extent, hence, if the current transformation agenda of the Federal Government on poverty reduction through farming activities must be actualized, there is urgent need to provide adequate entrepreneurship program for farmers in order to address factors that hinder the growth and development of farmer entrepreneurs (Mbam and Nwibo, 2013). A lot of studies have been done on entrepreneurship. Determinants and investment behavior (Nwibo and Alimba, 2013).

However, it seems that there is no existing empirical knowledge on the determinants of agripreneurship among farming households in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Thus, creating a dearth in research knowledge and literatures. To fill this gap, the study specifically described the socio-economic characteristics of agripreneurs, categorized the various agripreneurial opportunities available and ventured by the farming households, determined the effect of the socioeconomic characteristics of the farming households in becoming agripreneurs and analyzed the constraints to agripreneurship among the farming households in the study area.

Agripreneurship is considered by policy makers as one of the most visible hope for farmer's wellbeing and the entire development process. The challenge in the study area lies in assessing the level of agripreneurial drives and key factors that would constitute a framework which can be used as a basis for building platform in which agripreneurial initiatives can thrive. This study shall expose the major determinants of agripreneurship among farming households. The knowledge is needed for policy adjustment on matters relating to farmers' welfare. This can be achieved by identifying those factors that constitutes barriers to agripreneurship and proffering solution to them. Furthermore, the findings would add to the existed literature on agripreneurship in for the scholars and students. The Findings would also expand the agribusiness environment available in the society

Materials and Methods

The study was carried out in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, Nigeria. located between Longitudes 80,20¹E and Latitude 60,30¹N. The land is bounded by Ukele and Osopong of Cross Rive State in the East, Tiv and Idoma of Benue State in North, bounded by Ohaukwu Local Government Area in the South; the Izzi shares a common boundary with Ikwo and Ezza people. The Izzi clan covers a land mass of about 1,988 square Kilometer with a population of about 900,000 (NPC, 1996). The main crops cultivated are groundnut, rice, maize, cocoyam, yam and cassava. They also engaged in livestock rearing. Include sheep, goat, pig and poultry. The people also engage in other non-agricultural activities such as hunting, tailoring, barbing, petty trading, mechanics, Saloon and Civil services.

Multi-stage random sampling techniques were used to select communities, Village and respondents. First, four (4) communities out of eight (8) were randomly selected. Secondly, five (5) villages were randomly selected from each of the selected communities, given a total of twenty (20) villages, and finally, six (6) farming household heads were selected from each of the selected villages, given a total of one hundred and twenty (120) respondents for detailed study.

The data to be used for this study were derived from primary source by the use of structured questionnaire and oral interview. The objectives i, and ii were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, percentage frequency table, while objective iii was analyzed using binomial logit regression and that of objective iv was analyzed using factor analysis.

Binomial Logit Regression

The socio-economic characteristics of rural households will be regressed against the decision to become agripreneurs. The model will be expressed implicitly as :

$$Y = F(X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5, X_6, X_7, X_8, U_1)$$

Where

Y= Decision to become agripreneur (Yes = 1 No =0)

X₁= Age of the farmer (year)

X₂= Gender (Dummy: 1 = Male, 2 = Female)

X₃ = Household size (number)

X₄= Educational Status (Years in formal school)

X₅= Annual income (Naira)

X₆= Head of the household (Male = 1, Female =2)

X₇= Agripreneurship experiences (years)

X₈= Marital status(dummy)

U₁=stochastic error term.

Factor Analysis

Principal component factor will be employed to analyze objective ii and v factor analysis based on factor considered, the principal component analysis (PCA) or factor loading will be adopted for the study and by the implication of (kaiser's rule of thumb; Kaiser developed a rule of thumb of 0.4 as a minimum loading weight which factor can have before it can be

islated as being positive to the attribute in questions). The factor analysis can be express mathematically as $Y_i = \beta_{i0} + \beta_{i1} f_1 + \beta_{i2} F_2 + \beta_{i3} F_3 + \dots + \beta_{in} F_n + e_i$ Where

Y_i = dependent variable

β_i = parameters or loadings

β_i - β₀ = the load of y_i on facyors

F₁ - F_n = intending variables

Result and Discussion

Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Respondents

The respondent's socioeconomics characteristics such as gender, age, marital status, educational level, household size, Annual income, and Agripreneurship experience were described and presented on table 1. Result indicates that majority of the agripreneurs (66.67%) were male while female had 33. 33%. The high proportion of male agripreneurs in the study area can be attributed to the fact that in Africa, males are regarded as stronger vessels that have the ability to get engaged in tedious jobs like agricultural activities whereas the females are regarded as the weaker gender whose major role is to take care of children and keep domestic chores alive. This finding is also consistent with Mbam and Nwibo (2013) who opined that male gender is more involved in agricultural activities than the female gender.

From the result on the table 1, it indicates that, the majority of the farmers (41.67%) fall within the age bracket 31-40 years, whereas the least (4.17%) were above 50 years. The age of farmer is an important factor that affects the effectiveness and productivities of farms and farm families. From the analysis, it was observed that the highest age of the agripreneurs was 31-40 years which implied that they were still within the active productive age. The study is consistent with FAO (2018) report which posited that the active age of agricultural work force is between 31 – 40 years but was slightly fall short with Nwibo and Okorie (2013) who reported that the mean age of active entrepreneurs in southeast Nigeria was 43 years.

Table1 Shows that 45.83% of the agripreneurs attended tertiary education, 25.00% attended secondary, 12.50% attended primary while 16.67% had non-formal education Data also shows that majority of the farming household agripreneurs 45.83% were university graduates, many out of which may have undertaken agriculture or food related studies. This may very well indicate the possibility of agripreneurs of different educational backgrounds being able to actively participate in agripreneurship and how accommodating and engaging the sub-sector is or can be. This study is in line with the finding of Bastar, (2011) who stated that, level of education might have steered the farmers to be exposed to more sources and channels of information. Also, educational status of the farmers as stated by Asogwa and Daonngo, (2017) could aid his/her to gain more

information about the recourses to enable them participate in any business activities.

Table1 shows that married agripreneurs had the highest value 33.33% followed by single agripreneurs 29.17% and widow 12.50% while divorce agripreneur recorded the lowest figure 10.83% compared to widower 14.17 . It also indicates that majority of the agripreneurs are married.

From the data obtained and presented on the table1, it shows that above 6-9 had the highest value of 37.50% followed by 6-9 with 33.33% while less than 2 recorded the lowest figure 4.17% as compared to 2-5 having 25.00% respectively. It also shows that, in the study area household size has impact on agripreneurship decision making. Family house size in traditional society of Africa according to Lawal *et al.*, (2015) plays great role in contributing labor to agricultural production and they further stress that any household that has higher family size in number gives a room to eagerly seek labor intensive agricultural technology or innovative.

Table 1 shows that agripreneurs that had 1-5 years of experience recorded 50.00%, those with 6-10 years of experience recorded 25.00% and 16-20 had 10.83% while 21 and above recorded the lowest figure 5.83% respectively. This is not in line with the result of Dustar (2013) who pointed out that farmers with many years of farming experience are always conversant with sources of information on resources use efficiency to deter possible abuses and misuse of resources.

The data on the table 1 shows that 37.50 % of the respondents earns ₦50,000, followed by 25.00% and those with annual income of ₦101,000-₦150,000 with 20.83% while those that earn 201,000 and above recorded the lowest as compared to 151,000-200, 000 having 12.50% respectively. Again, it was observed that the agripreneurs earned an average annual income of N50,000 which was far below the annual income of general entrepreneurs in southeast, Nigeria which was found to be Five hundred and seventy-three thousand, seven hundred and seventy-nine naira (N573, 779) (Nwibo and Okorie, 2013). The low annual income can be attributed to the small scale agripreneurial activities in farm implement supply – cutlass and hoe; arable crop production; and small scale processing and distribution of cereals and root crops.

Categories of Agripreneurial Activities Ventured by the Farming Household.

Categories of Agripreneurial Activities Ventured by the Farming Household were ascertained and presented on table 2. Agripreneur environment is diverse, complex, and full of opportunities. Effort to thoroughly exploit the opportunities that abound in the tri-aggregates of agripreneur will amount to growth in agricultural sector. Opportunities in agripreneur constitute what is known as agripreneur tri-aggregates; Agro- produce processing, Agro produce manufacturing, and the Agro- inputs supplying. On

this note, Table 2 present the analysis of agripreneurial opportunities available and that which are ventured by the agripreneurs. The result showed that the agripreneurs invariably ventured on the three major agripreneurial investment areas - input supply 58.33%, production 77.7% and processing /distribution 41.67%. This implied that majority of the respondents were into production component of agripreneurship. This concurs with the finding of Girei, Saingbe, Ohen, and Gimba (2016), who inferred that young people in agricultural production are more involved in crop production of annual status for quick income generation. Nwibo and Okorie (2013) revealed that most of entrepreneurs in South-East, Nigeria are into arable crop production. This disagreed with the finding of Johnson (2016) who deduced that agro-enterprises in Latin America and U.S were marketers of apples, grapes, pears and other fruits as well as vegetables. Amegnanglo *et al.*, (2015) reported that 47% of youth agripreneurs are into crop farming as their career choice in Benin.

Logistics Regression on the Determinants of Agripreneurship among farming household in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

Logistic regression was used to assess the Determinants of Agripreneurship among farming household in Izzi LGA. The result was presented on table 3. The variables considered in the model were age, gender, Household size, education level, Annual income, household head, agripreneurship experience marital status. The result of the tobit regression analysis on the table shows that the likelihood ratio test has a significant value of -17.901538 and the R²-value of 0.6689 indicates that 56.90% of the variations in are into agripreneurship in the study area which were accounted for by the independent variables included in the model while the remaining 43.10% were due to the error term. More so, chi² value of 72.33 was statistically significant at 1% which indicated goodness of fit of the model.

Table3 shows that the coefficient of age was negative and statistically significant at 1% level of probability. This is in line with a priori expectation. It implied that as farming household agripreneurs get older, the lower the tendency to decide for agripreneurship choice. This contradicts with the finding of Emerole, Dorcas and Kelechi (2014) who inferred that older farmer is considered economically and emotionally matured to be involved in agripreneurship business ventures. The result further shows that the coefficient of gender was negatively signed and statistically significant at 1% level of probability. This indicates that males make more agripreneurial choice than female on agripreneurial choice of farming household. This finding is not in tandem with that of Emerole *et al.*, (2014) that women generally make highest responsibilities for agricultural productivity and increase economic supports to family needs as the male discard farming work and other associated non-agricultural activities

in agribusiness to seek for white collar jobs in the cities.

The coefficient of marital status of the farming household agripreneurs was positive and statistically significant at 1% level of probability. This implies that married people make more choice to invest in agripreneurship sector than the single. This agrees with the finding of Olatomide and Omowumi (2015) that marital status would lead to an increased entrepreneurship and their career choice. It further revealed that married couples help in active participation in agripreneurship development, thus making a better decision on venturing in agribusiness. Similarly, the coefficient of household size was positive and statistically significant at 1% probability level. The a priori expectation was met as increase in household size of an agripreneur, increases his/her desire to invest in agripreneurship sector so as to generate enhanced resources sufficient to feed the entire household. The findings corroborate the assertion of Onoja and Emodi (2014) that household size of investors to be positively correlated with the choice to invest in agricultural business in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Education has been identified as one of the key elements in increasing agricultural production, income level, and agripreneurship preference. The coefficient of educational qualification of the farming household agripreneurs was positive and significant. The finding concurs with the a priori expectation as educated agripreneur has good potential to make informed choice of investment. This is in line with the findings of Daudu, Oladipo, Olatinwo, Kareem, Dolapo, (2019) that level of education was positive and significant for both male and female smallholder farmers at 1% and 5% respectively. Similarly, analysis on the annual income of the farming household agripreneurs shows a negative and significant effect at 1% level of probability. This however, implied that annual income had significant influence on farming household agripreneur's choice of area of investment.

The coefficient of Agripreneurs experience had a positive sign and statistically significant at 1%. This implied that experience plays a significant impact in adoption of agripreneurship in the study area.

Constraints to Agripreneurship among the Farming Households

The constraints to Agripreneurship among the farming households in the study area were determined and the result presented on table 4. Despite the abundance of agripreneurial opportunities in rural communities of Izzi L.G.A. of Ebonyi State, it was observed that some factors still hinder some farming households in becoming agripreneurs. These constraints were categorised into institutional, Economic and infrastructure factors. Employing the Kaisers rule of thumb (0.4), the identified socio-cultural factors include high rate of insurance premium, high interest rate, high cost of inputs. This finding is arguably justified because one of the greatest challenges to effective agricultural development in the southeast, Nigeria is the high cost of inputs which in turn impedes large scale investment in farm production. Lack of investment infrastructures such as electricity, motorable and portable water has been noted to have inverse effect on agripreneurship development; as they impede processing and distribution of agricultural products. This corroborated the report of Kahan (2013) who posited that what blocks starting and growing profitable farm businesses is basic infrastructure. These infrastructures include poor roads leading to markets, inadequate storage and market facilities, and even irregular supplies of electricity create very real and practical barriers to developing farm businesses. Further analysis shows that the identified knowledge-based factors are Lack of information alternative markets, has been observed as one of the banes to agripreneurship.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents According to their Socioeconomic Characteristics

Socioeconomic Characteristics	Frequency	percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	80	66.67
Female	40	33.33
Total	120	100.00
Age		
Less than 21	20	16.67
21-30	29	24.17
31-40	50	41.67
41-50	16	13.3
Above 50	5	4.17
Total	120	100
Educational Qualification		
Non formal	20	16.67
Primary	15	12.50
Secondary	30	25.00
Tertiary	55	45.83
Total	120	100.00
Marital Status		
Single	35	29.17
Married	40	33.33
Widow	15	12.50
Widower	17	14.17
Divorce	13	10.83
Total	120	100.00
Household size		
Less than 2	5	4.17
2-5	30	25.00
6-9	40	33.33
Above 9	45	37.50
Total	120	100
Years of experience		
1-5	60	50.00
6-10	30	25.0
11-15	13	10.83
16-20	10	8.33
21 and above	7	5.83
Total	120	100.00
Annual income		
Less than ₦50, 000	45	37.50
₦50, 000 - ₦ 100,000	30	25.00
₦101, 000 - ₦ 150,000	25	20.83
₦151, 200,000	15	12.50
₦201, 000 and above	5	4.17
Total	120	100

Source: Field survey, 2023.

Table 2: Distribution According to the Choice of Agripreneurial Activities Ventured by the Farming Household.

Agripreneurial categories	frequency	percentage (%)
Agro Produce Processing	70	58.33
Agro Produce Manufacturing	93	77.77
Agro Inputs supplying	50	41.67
Total	*213	*177.77

Multiple responses

Sources: Field survey 2023

Table 3 : Logistic Regression Result

Variables	Coefficient	z- value
Constant	5.992043	1.11
Age	-1.764987	-2.09**
Gender	-0.4095872	-1.51
Household size	0.8470822	-1.10
Education level	1.139448	1.87*
Annual income	-0.5827722	-1.15
Household head	1.640782	3.03***
Agriprenuer experience	0.7979657	2.60***
Marital status	-0.028002	-3.05***

Pseudo R² = 0.6689 LR chi (8) =72.33* log likelihood = -17.901538***,** and * shows significant at 1%,5%and10% level of probability respectively.**

Table 4: Factor Analysis on constraints to agribpreneurship among the farming households

	Components		
	Factors 1 Institution	Factor 2 Economics	Factor 3 Infrastructure
High rate of insurance premium	0.511	0.335	0.405
High interest rate	0.743	-0.031	0.045
Poor road network	0.701	-0.118	0.051
Poor government policy	0.201	0.724	-0.287
High cost of inputs	0.221	0.389	-0.625
Lack of government subsidy	-0.329	0.323	0.661
Lack of information alternative markets	0.142	0.702	0.156

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

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