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Entrepreneurial Skills Acquired by Agribusiness Graduates in the Management of Small-Scale Agribusiness Ventures in Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the entrepreneurial skills acquired by agribusiness graduates in managing small-scale agribusiness ventures in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Three research questions and three null hypotheses were developed to guide the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population for the study consisted of 150 respondents, which included 100 agribusiness graduates and 50 experienced farmers in Bayelsa State. The instrument for data collection was a structured 64-item close ended questionnaire. The instrument was face-validated by three experts and the internal consistency determined using Cronbach Alpha method which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.74. The data collected were analysed using mean scores while t-test statistics was used for testing the null hypotheses at $P<0.05$ level of significance. The study found 14 entrepreneurial skills acquired by the agribusiness graduates, 26 entrepreneurial skills the graduates have not possessed 12 challenges in managing small-scale agribusiness and 12 measures for enhancing profit from agribusiness. Experienced farmers and agribusiness graduates did not differ significantly in their mean responses on the acquired entrepreneurial skills, challenges and profitability enhancement measures. Based on these findings, the study among others, recommended that agribusiness graduates should periodically update their entrepreneurial skills through refreshment programmes.

Keywords: Agribusiness; Acquired; Entrepreneur; Graduates; Management; Skill; Small scale; Venture.

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is presently considered as one of the best sustainable economic development strategies that foster a nation's competiveness in facing the increasing trends of globalization. It has also been known to foster a robust entrepreneurial culture that maximizes individual and collective economic and social success on a local, national and global scale. The twenty-first century has, therefore, been tagged as the entrepreneurial age (Stanley, 2017a). As a follow-up, nations are being shaped globally by entrepreneurs who have taken their destinies in their own hands by risking their resources in the form of money, time and energy in establishing and running their own businesses. Furthermore, an exponential interest in entrepreneurship studies has increased amongst academia globally over the past decade. This is because paid employment is no longer a guarantee in both public and private sectors for university graduates globally (Sporleder, 2015). In a bid to solve the problems of unemployment in Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1982 introduced Vocational Education at the post-primary and post-secondary levels; in order to equip the graduates at both levels with the requisite skills for self-employment (Holland and King, 2014). However, in the course of implementation of the vocational education programme, it was realized that the vocational courses were not enough to enable the graduates secure self-employment. This necessitated the inclusion of skill acquisition in innovativeness, business orientation, identification of opportunities, resource management, basic accounting and risk taking, in order to equip the graduates fully with the skills required to become self-employed as entrepreneurs. Thus, entrepreneurship education was introduced as a programme required to run alongside vocational education to make a Nigerian graduates complete and prepare for self-employment. It was in the same spirit of employment generation that entrepreneurship education was also introduced into tertiary institutions in Nigeria in the mid-1990' (Nweze, 2022).

Entrepreneurship Education according to Stanley (2017b) is tha type of education tailored towards producing a self-employed or self-reliant individual by instilling into the person such traits like innovativeness, ingenuity, resourcefulness, risk-taking and endurance. Sexton (2014), perceived it as a specialized training given to students, especially of vocational and technical education to acquire the skills, ideas or managerial abilities and capabilities adequate to enable them exploit same using their creative and innovative ideas to succeed in business venture.

Entrepreneurship is an intelligent economic response to the environment in any area of human endeavour as in business, education, services of all types and the formation of business units within the informal sector for wealth creation and service to humanity as well as involving risk taking (Akridge and Gunderson, 2022).

Entrepreneurial opportunities abound in Nigeria and for any entrepreneur to make appreciable success in any business enterprise, skill is imperative. Skill is the ability to perform a muscular task creditably. It is the ease, rapidity and precision to accomplish a given muscular task (Casavant and Infanger, 2016). An entrepreneur is a person with entrepreneurial spirit that is likely to have the knowledge and skill requirement unique and different from other people involved in business venture. Business can be defined as an economic activity in which resources are committed which yields dividend. Unamka and Ewurum (2022), viewed business as all profit directed economic and commercial activities that provide goods and services necessary to a nation's standard of living. To Umebali (2022), business is an institution organized and operated to provide goods and services for maximizing profit. It is pertinent to note that agriculture today, is being perceived as a business venture aimed at maximizing profit hence the concept agribusiness.

Agribusiness is the sum totality of all operations involved in the production and distribution of farm products in raw or processed forms or both. Davis and Goldberg (2021), opined that agribusiness is the sum total of all the operations (economic activities) involved in the manufacture and distribution of farm supplies, production operations on the farms; and the storage, processing and distribution of farm commodity items made from them. It could best be described as all the activities concerned with agriculture which entails all business enterprises that buy from or sell to farmers. The transaction may involve a product, a commodity or a service and encompasses items such as productive resources, agricultural commodities, facilitative services and above all, the effective management of productive resources to achieve set target (Sporleder, 2015).

Good management is a pre-requisite factor in the success of any business and agribusiness is no exception. To be successful, managers of agribusiness need to spend more time making management decisions and developing management skills than their predecessors because society is dynamic which create new management problems. Management involves taking decision on how land, labour and capital resources should be utilized and the process of carrying out these decisions. The farmer is aimed primarily at maximizing profit but farming is a complicated business whose success, to a large extent, hinges on the vagaries of nature. It becomes imperative thus, that the farmer pays serious attention to all aspects of his work which he can control; and this is management part of the production (Arene, 2002).

Agribusiness management, therefore, is the active process of making sound decision so that the use of available human and material resources of the farm, is planned and controlled to achieve predetermined objectives most efficiently (Ronald *et al.*, 2012). It is a practical aspect of the applied science of agricultural economics which entails the application of physical and biological sciences in keeping with the economics of profitable resource use for maximizing farmers' income. According to Ijiomah (2022), decision making process in agribusiness involves six (6) steps viz: problem identification, observation and data collection, data analysis, decision making, implementation and accepting responsibility of any outcome.

The manager of agribusiness is basically a decision maker and the function of decision making is crucial to the success of any business because a wrong decision can throw a would-be successful farmer out of business. Hence, Hind (2016) advised managers of agribusiness to be proactive in handling the eleven (11) components of management such as planning, organizing, implementation, coordination, directing, monitoring, control and evaluation, diagnosis, prescription and rescheduling.

Agribusiness graduates of Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State, are engaged in small-scale agribusiness ventures, occasioned by paucity of white-collar jobs in the State. The graduates have been managing these agribusinesses for some time now. The turn-over from the graduates however, is very low, such that they seldom make profit. Consequently, the despondent scenario had culminated into untold hardship, abject poverty, youth restiveness, abduction and other vices in the State. It becomes imperative therefore, to investigate the causes of such abysmal business failure, experienced by the agribusiness graduates with a view to proffer possible solution.

Specifically, the study sought to:

- identify the entrepreneurial skills acquired by agribusiness graduates in managing small-scale agribusiness;
- ascertain the challenges of agribusiness graduates in managing small-scale agribusiness ventures; and
- Determine the measures for enhancing profit from small-scale agribusiness embarked by agribusiness graduates.

1.1. Research Questions

- The following research questions guided the study:
- What are the entrepreneurial skills acquired by agribusiness graduates in managing small-scale agribusiness ventures?
- What are the challenges of agribusiness graduates in managing small-scale agribusiness ventures?
- What are the measures for enhancing profit from small-scale agribusiness embarked by agribusiness graduates?

1.2. Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at $P<0.05$ level of significance:

$H0_1$: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of experienced farmers and agribusiness graduates on the acquired entrepreneurial skills in managing small-scale agribusiness ventures.

$H0_2$: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of experienced farmers and agribusiness graduates on the challenges in managing small-scale agribusiness.

$H0_3$: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of experienced farmers and agribusiness graduates on the measures for enhancing profit from small-scale agribusiness embarked by agribusiness graduates.

2. Methodology

The study was conducted in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Three specific objectives and three research questions guided the study. The target population for the study comprised all the members of Experienced Farmers Association of Bayelsa State and four (4) sets (2018/2019, 2019/2020, 2020/2021 and 2021/2022) agribusiness graduates of the Department of Vocational and Technology Education, Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State.

In each of the aforementioned sessions, the department had graduated 18, 26, 20 and 36 students in 2018/2019, 2019/2020, 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 academic sessions respectively. There are 50 members of the Experienced Farmers Association of Bayelsa State and a sum total of 100 agribusiness graduates for the four (4) sets in the study area; totaling 150 respondents. These 150 respondents constituted the target population and the entire population was used for the study because of the manageable size hence, census sample was used.

The instrument for data collection was a 64-item questionnaire, structured on a 4-point response option of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, with corresponding numerical values of 4,3,2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was face-validated by three experts. For purpose of determining the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha procedure was used, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.74.

To ensure quality data collection, two (2) trained research assistants joined the researcher, totaling three (3) enumerators to obtain data from the respondents in each of the three agricultural zones viz: Eastern, Central and Western senatorial zone. The 150 copies of the questionnaire administered to the respondents, were all completely filled and retrieved, which were used for the analysis, representing 100% rate of return. The collated data were analyzed, using weighted mean while the t-test statistic was used for testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

A cut-off value of 2.50 on the 4-point rating scale was used to interpret the result as agreed or disagree. This implied that any entrepreneurial item with a mean value of 2.50 to 4.00 was regarded as Agree while any item with a value of 0.1 to 2.49 was regarded as Disagree. Also, any item with a standard deviation between 0.00 and $\pm$1.96indicated that the respondents were not far from the mean and the opinion of one another, in which case, the item was adjudged valid.

3. Results

The results of the study were presented in tables below.

3.1. Research Question 1

What are the entrepreneurial skills acquired by agribusiness graduates in managing small-scale agribusiness ventures?

Table-1. Mean ratings and t-test analysis of the responses of experienced farmers and agribusiness graduates on the acquired entrepreneurial skills in the management of small-scale agribusiness ventures.

Item No.	Entrepreneurial Skills	Farmers		Graduates		t-cal	Remarks
		$\overline{X_1}$	SD_1	$\overline{X_2}$	SD_2		
	A: Planning Skills. Ability to:						
1.	Set appropriate agribusiness management goals.	2.67	1.22	2.70	1.30	0.16	NS
2.	Draw up rational farm plan/calendar.	1.98	1.29	1.62	1.17	1.69	NS
3.	Choose appropriate technologies/techniques.	1.60	1.08	1.32	.75	1.87	NS
4.	Budget for the agribusiness management.	2.74	.37	2.63	.82	1.91	NS
5.	Determine the best place to market the farm produce.	1.68	1.07	1.61	1.07	0.41	NS
6.	Determine a more lucrative/profitable agribusiness.	2.48	1.23	2.32	1.35	0.74	NS
7.	Revise business objectives periodically.	2.45	1.23	2.50	1.34	.23	NS
	B: Organising Skills. Ability to:						
8.	Locate the best place to procure quality but cheap inputs.	1.10	0.44	1.17	0.64	0.70	NS
9.	Arrange the available farm inputs.	3.63	.71	3.57	.69	.57	NS
10.	Manage and maintain farm inputs viability to farm.	3.83	0.39	3.82	0.65	0.11	NS
11.	Form groups to execute specific farm activity.	3.32	0.73	3.20	0.95	0.81	NS
12.	Assign specific task to each farm attendant.	3.1	.94	3.38	.69	1.68	NS
	C: Implementing Skills. Ability to:						
13.	Carry out farm layout.	3.00	1.03	3.29	.82	1.91	NS

14.	Adhere strictly to farm plan as contained in the farm calendar.	1.10	0.44	1.17	0.60	0.73	NS
15.	Adopt current economically viable and technically feasible technologies.	2.08	1.21	2.28	1.18	0.98	NS
16.	Identify, analyse and solve problems timely.	1.93	0.69	1.86	0.65	0.61	NS
17.	Adopt safety precautionary measures.	2.34	0.36	2.36	0.32	0.42	NS
18.	Keep accurate farm records.	2.13	1.16	2.12	1.15	0.06	NS
19.	Attend to emergency situations.	3.18	0.87	3.40	0.69	1.68	NS
20.	Make adjustments timely to address uncertainties.	1.20	0.68	1.24	0.71	0.86	NS
21.	Adopt good marketing strategies.	1.15	.58	1.24	0.71	0.86	NS
22.	mitigate effects of risk and uncertainty	1.65	1.15	1.63	1.11	0.09	NS
	D: Coordinating Skills. Ability to:						
23.	Assemble and analyse farm records to identify areas of profit or losses.	2.54	0.14	2.53	0.12	0.37	NS
24.	Direct subordinate (farm attendants) on specific task.	2.78	1.12	2.92	1.11	0.75	NS
25.	Supervise employees effectively.	2.98	1.09	2.08	1.08	.52	NS
26.	Synchronize security arrangements.	1.38	.94	1.30	0.80	0.50	NS
27.	harmonise the use of farm inputs.	2.05	1.33	1.76	1.20	1.41	NS
28.	Unify efforts of individual workers in the agribusiness.	1.38	0.94	1.30	0.80	0.50	NS
	E: Evaluating Skills. Ability to:						
29.	Monitor the implementation process continuously and/or periodically.	3.10	0.94	3.38	0.69	1.68	NS
30.	Timely check excesses or inadequacies of the business activities or processes.	1.77	1.11	1.62	1.07	.80	NS
31.	Develop an appropriate evaluation format.	1.30	0.77	1.24	0.75	0.44	NS
32.	Determine the break-even period of agribusiness.	1.93	0.69	1.86	0.65	0.61	NS
33.	analyse agribusiness profit or loss values.	2.54	0.14	2.53	0.12	.37	NS
34.	Diagnose the reason(s) for successes or failure.	2.27	1.27	2.42	1.35	0.71	NS
35.	Diagnose the challenges of agribusiness.	1.22	0.67	1.28	0.77	0.50	NS
36.	Accept responsibility for business success or failure.	2.63	1.20	2.69	1.33	0.30	NS
37.	Re-schedule management plans in case of business failure.	1.53	1.07	1.49	1.01	0.26	NS
38.	Determine measures for employees' personal growth.	1.65	1.15	1.63	1.11	0.09	NS
39.	Proffer suggestions and recommendations to enhance employees' productivity.	1.30	0.77	1.24	0.75	0.44	NS
40.	Adopt strategies for enhancing profit in agribusiness management.	2.08	1.21	2.28	1.18	0.98	NS
	Grand Score	2.17	.75	2.15	.79	.15	NS

Key: $\bar{X}$ = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; t-cal = Calculated t-value; t-tab = Tabulated t-value (±1.96); DF = Degrees of Freedom (148); NS = Not Significant; S= Significant.

Data presented in Table 1 revealed that all the eleven (11) items had their mean ($\bar{X}$) values for item numbers 1,4, 9-13, 19, 23-25, 29, 33 and 36 ranged from 2.54 to 3.83 and were all above the cut-off point of 2.50. Thus, they are therefore, interpreted as agree. This implied that all the respondents agree that the 14 Statements were entrepreneurial skills acquired by agribusiness graduates in managing small-scale agribusiness ventures. The standard deviation values ranged between 0.14 and 0.39 which were below 1.96, indicating that the respondents were not too far from one another in their responses; meaning that the Statements were valid.

In contrast, the mean ($\bar{X}$) scores for item numbers 2,3, 5-8, 14-18, 20-22, 26-28, 30-32, 35 and 37-40 ranged between 1.10 and 2.48 and were all above the cut-off point of 2.50. Therefore, they are interpreted as disagree. This implied that the respondents disagree that the 26 Statements were entrepreneurial skills possessed by agribusiness graduates in managing small-scale agribusiness ventures. The standard deviation values ranged from 0.44 to 1.23 which were above 1.96; indicating that the respondents were far from one another in their responses.

Table 1 shows further that all the 40 entrepreneurial skills in agribusiness management, had their calculated t-values ranged from 0.11 to 1.91 which were less than the tabulated t-value of 1.96 with 148 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. This implied that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of experienced farmers and agribusiness graduates on the acquired entrepreneurial skills in managing small-scale agribusiness ventures. Thus, the postulated null hypothesis of no significant difference, was upheld for all 40 items.

3.2. Research Question 2

What are the challenges of agribusiness graduates in managing small-scale agribusiness ventures?

Table-2. Mean ratings and t-test analysis of the responses of experienced farmers and agribusiness graduates on the challenges of managing small-scale agribusiness ventures

Item No.	Challenges	Farmers		Graduates		t-cal	Remarks
		$\overline{X_1}$	SD_1	$\overline{X_2}$	SD_2		
1.	Incompetent and inexperienced graduates.	3.85	0.48	3.86	0.44	0.07	NS
2.	Paucity of agribusiness mentorship.	3.37	.61	3.48	.65	.49	NS
3.	Lack of fund to establish and manage agri-business venture.	3.57	0.81	3.27	1.04	1.89	NS
4.	Graduates vested interest in white-collar jobs against entrepreneurship.	3.78	0.76	3.52	1.09	1.61	NS
5.	Graduates' laziness and over dependent on relations and politicians.	2.74	0.37	2.63	0.48	1.43	NS
6.	Low patronage from buyers occasioned by recessed economy.	3.60	0.81	3.53	0.89	0.47	NS
7.	Poor infrastructural facilities.	3.20	.76	3.19	.62	.09	NS
8.	Negative societal value system and quick rich syndrome by youths.	2.98	0.93	2.97	0.85	0.11	NS
9.	Lack of agribusiness communication skills.	2.52	1.24	2.59	1.29	0.34	NS
10.	Poor marketing strategies.	3.02	1.20	3.13	1.12	.61	NS
11.	Irregular supply of electricity.	2.67	1.22	2.70	1.20	.16	NS
12.	Incessant cases of robbery and abduction.	3.10	0.94	3.38	0.69	1.68	NS
	Grand Score	3.20	0.44	3.19	0.40	0.14	NS

Key: $\overline{X}$ = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; t-cal = Calculated t-value; t-tab = Tabulated t-value ($\pm$1.96); DF = Degrees of Freedom (148); NS = Not Significant; S= Significant.

Data presented in Table 2 revealed that all the twelve (12) item numbers had their mean ($\overline{X}$) scores ranged from 2.52 to 3.85 and were all above the criterion level of 2.50. Therefore, they are interpreted as agree. This implied that all the respondents agreed that the 12 Statements were challenges confronting agribusiness graduates in managing small-scale agribusiness ventures. The standard deviation values ranged between 0.44 and 1.29 which were below 1.96, showing that the respondents were close to one another in their responses; meaning that the statements were valid.

Table 2 further revealed that all the twelve item numbers had their calculated t-values ranged between 0.07 and 1.89, which were less than the tabulated t-value of $\pm$1.96 with 148 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. This implied that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of experienced farmers and agribusiness graduates on the challenges in managing small-scale agribusiness ventures. Thus, the stated null hypothesis of no significant difference was upheld.

3.3. Research Question 3

What are the measures for enhancing profit from small-scale agribusiness ventures embarked by graduates?

Table-3. Mean ratings and t-test analysis of the responses of experienced farmers and agri-business graduates on the measures for enhancing profit from small-scale agribusiness

Item No.	Productivity/ Profitability Measures	Farmers		Graduates		t-cal	Remarks
		$\overline{X_1}$	SD_1	$\overline{X_2}$	SD_2		
1.	Making rational/informed investment decision.	2.78	1.12	2.92	1.11	0.75	NS
2.	Improving graduates' technical and managerial skills through workshops, seminars and conferences.	3.75	0.44	3.78	0.76	1.38	NS
3.	Self-discipline, hard work and dedication to agribusiness management.	3.79	0.42	3.76	0.59	0.32	NS
4.	Engaging in apprenticeship training programmes.	3.68	0.47	3.68	0.47	0.07	NS
5.	Engaging in entrepreneurial training and counselling programmes.	3.87	0.84	3.72	0.54	1.73	NS
6.	Increasing graduate's problem-solving skills through workshops.	3.93	0.25	3.81	0.39	0.06	NS
7.	Possession of skills to manage risk and	3.08	0.87	3.11	0.93	0.18	NS

	uncertainty in agribusiness.						
8.	Provision of soft loan and starter packs to graduate investors.	3.38	9	3.29	0.71	0.90	NS
9.	Engaging in marketing competencies improvements training programmes.	3.32	0.73	3.20	0.95	0.81	NS
10.	Imitation of business tycoon's foot step.	2.62	1.19	2.68	1.33	0.29	NS
11.	Adequate funding of training and research programmes in universities.	3.00	1.03	3.29	0.82	1.91	NS
12.	Intensification of Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) in tertiary institutions.	3.10	0.94	3.38	0.69	1.68	NS
	Grand Score	3.36	0.45	3.39	0.37	-0.40	NS

Key: $\bar{X}$ = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; t-cal = Calculated t-value; t-tab = Tabulated t-value (±1.96); DF = Degrees of Freedom (148); NS = Not Significant; S= Significant.

Data presented in Table 3 revealed that all the twelve (12) item numbers had their mean ($\bar{X}$) scores ranged from 2.62 to 3.93 and were all above the benchmark of 2.50. Therefore, they are interpreted as agreed. This implied that all the respondents agreed that the 12 Statements were measures for enhancing profit from small-scale agribusiness ventures. The standard deviation values ranged between 0.25 and 1.33 which were below 1.96 indicating that the respondents were not far from one another in their responses; meaning that the statements were valid.

Table 3 further showed that all the twelve (12) statements had their calculated t-values ranged between 0.06 to 1.91, which were less than the tabulated t-value of ±1.96 with 148 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. This implied that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of experienced farmers and agribusiness graduates on the measures for enhancing profit from small-scale agribusiness. Thus, the postulated null hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted.

4. Discussion of the Results

The findings of the study in table 1 revealed that fourteen (14) statements (1,4, 9-13, 19, 23-25, 29, 33 and 36) were the entrepreneurial skills possessed by agribusiness graduates in the management of small-scale agribusiness ventures in the study area. The findings of this study corroborate the evidence given by Umebali (2022), Ijiomah (2022) and Sexton (2014) who in their respective works reported that successes were recorded in: setting business goals, budgeting, arranging farm productive inputs, implementing farm layout, arresting emergencies, co-ordination, analysing profit/loss values and accepting responsibility for success or failure; in small-scale ventures organised by agribusiness graduates from University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The high level of success could be attributed to the graduate's ability to positively transfer and adopt such possessed entrepreneurial competencies to manage their agribusiness.

The findings of the study however, indicated that 26 entrepreneurial skills (2, 3, 5-8, 14-18, 20-22, 26-28, 30-32, 35 and 37-40) were not acquired by the agribusiness graduates in managing their small-scale agribusiness ventures. The findings of this study however, are contrary to the report given by Ebirim (2022) and Fulton (2021) who accounted that agribusiness graduates from University of Nigeria, Nsukka realized appreciable profits in their agribusiness ventures; occasioned by good planning, motivation, supervision and periodic evaluation. It was on this premise Hind (2016) advocated that entrepreneurial education should go hand-in-hand with vocational education and the two be made compulsory for vocational students in all the tertiary institutions running vocational education programmes in Nigeria.

It was also evident from the t-test analysis in table 1 that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of experienced farmers and agribusiness graduates on the acquired entrepreneurial skills in managing small-scale agri-business ventures. Thess findings are however, at variance with the investigation of Helmberger and Hoos (2015) who reported that there was high level of adoption of entrepreneurial skills in managing small-scale agribusiness by experienced farmers than agribusiness graduates, due to their (farmers) high level of experience in agribusiness management.

The findings of the study in Table 2 revealed that all the twelve (12) statements were the challenges of agribusiness graduates, in managing small-scale agribusiness enterprise. The findings of this study are *in tandem* with the view of Hind (2016) who lamented that agribusiness ventures suffered serious setback in the hands of incompetent and inexperienced youths, whose main interest is to become wealthy tycoons overnight through sharp practices. In line with the above lamentation, Arene (2002) averred despondently that agribusiness management is relatively a new field in agriculture and consequently, has inherent teething challenges. It beholds on agribusiness scholars and resource persons thus to proffer solution to remedy these problems, so that agribusiness can occupy its rightful position in this contemporary society.

It was also found from the t-test analysis in Table 2 that there was no significant difference in the mean scores of the responses of experienced farmers and agribusiness graduates on the challenges facing the management of small-scale agribusiness ventures.

It was in furtherance of the above that this study found twelve (12) proactive measures for enhancing the productivity and profitability of small-scale agribusiness in Table 3. The findings of the study in Table 3, are in line

with the submission of Fulton (2021), Boehlje (2015) and Hind (2016) who advised agribusiness graduates to remedy their deficiencies through entrepreneurship/competency improvement training programmes.

It was also evident from the t-test analysis in Table 3 that experienced farmers and agribusiness graduates did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the measures for enhancing graduate's profitability. This finding are in harmony with the view of Kor and Mahoney (2014) who succinctly opined that the profitability enhancement measures as perceived by experienced farmers were also considered as same solutions to challenges of agribusiness management by agribusiness graduates, and vice versa. The findings of the authors cited above helped to add validity to the result of this study.

5. Conclusion

Agribusiness graduates of Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State are managing their small-scale agribusiness ventures but the turn-over is very low such that they seldom make profit. The study thus identified 14 entrepreneurial skills possessed by the graduates, 26 agribusiness skills the graduates have not acquired, 12 challenges in managing their agribusiness and 12 measures that could be adopted by the graduates in enhancing the productivity and profitability of agribusiness management. If the findings of this study are developed into training manual and packaged for students, agribusiness graduates and business tycoons, it will enhance their profitability and ultimately improve their socio-economic status.

Recommendations

Based on its findings and conclusion, the study recommends that:

- There should be change in examination system in schools where practical agribusiness activity and theory should attract 60% and 40% respectively.
- Agribusiness graduates should periodically update their entrepreneurial skills through refreshment programmes.
- Financial houses should provide soft loans to graduate investors.
- Agribusiness organisations should provide starter parks to graduates investors at the end of a training programme.
- Since business can thrive only in a secured environment, the Bayelsa State government should work in synergy with various bodies to beef-up security network.

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