

EXPLORING YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN YAM PROCESSING INDUSTRIES, MINNA, NIGER STATE

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Abstract— Agriculture is the biggest single industry in many less developed countries of the world. It plays a significant role as it contributes to the national food security, national social and economic stability and also to the environmental protection of the nation. Most youth are engaged in some sort of agricultural activity. For the most part, however, youth do not see the attractiveness of agriculture as a primary income generating activity. The study explore the opportunity available for youth in yam processing industries sector of the economy and also identify business opportunities in yam processing for youth. Descriptive survey approach was adopted to obtain information concerning opportunity availability for the youth in agricultural / food sector of the economy in Minna, Niger State. Data collected was coded using a predetermined coding scheme and analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The researcher make use of Statistical Package for Social Scientist (SPSS). Quantitative analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics. The findings shows low capital outlay, youth in agriculture sector not given respect, and inadequate land. These rank first (66.6 percent respectively). Other problems were poor infrastructure (53.33 percent), energy sapping (33.3 percent), non lucrative nature of agriculture in the study area (37.5), and no agricultural insurance (50 percent). It was therefore, recommended among others that government and other non-governmental organizations should assist the young people in the area who have the interest to get fully involved in yam processing. Market outlets and systems should also be put in place for easy purchase as well as the sale of farm produce respectively.

Keywords— Youth, Entrepreneurship, Yam processing

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria faces a number of challenges that can only be met if she has innovative, well-educated, and entrepreneurial citizens who, whatever their walks of life, have the spirit and inquisitiveness to think in

new ways, and the courage to meet and adapt to the challenges facing them. At same time, given the current socio-economic and political stance of the country, a thriving economy would require a greater number of young people who are willing and able to become entrepreneurs; who can launch and successfully develop their own commercial or social ventures, and who will become innovators in the wider organisations in which they work.

Yams have had the second highest production level of any food crop in Nigeria in the past 50 years after cassava. Evans school policy analysis and research shows that production and area harvested have grown steadily until 2006 and 2007 respectively, after which production and area harvested have shown a decline. In 2010, the gross agricultural production value for yams was \$15,041 million USD and accounted for the largest proportion of any crop in the country. Yams are agronomically, annual rain fed crops which grow for 6-12 months depending on the cultivar, ecology and soil

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properties in the production area (NRCR, 1998). They serve as staple food in many tropical and even sub-tropical countries. World yam production is about 30 million tons annually with 90% grown in the yam production belts of West Africa (FAO 2002).

In Niger State, yam is eaten in various forms such as cooked, roasted or steamed. In cooked form, the fresh seeds are boiled specifically with yam while the dry seeds are prepared with dried cocoyam, maize or yam and eaten as main dish. In roasting, the dry seeds are heated in hot container until they split open with the help of pestle or any other appropriate object; allowed to cool and eaten as buffers with either palm kernel or coconut. Roasting is usually carried out in small quantity at a time. In steaming, the dry seeds are initially processed into flour and then prepared by mixing the flour with water and some ingredients like oil, salt, fish or meat to taste. The mixture is wrapped in either fresh broad leaves or small cellophane bags to size and steamed on fire until it is done.

Entrepreneurial in the view of Meredith, Nelson and Neck (1990), means the act of combining personal characteristics, financial means and resources

within ones environment; while Jaja (2004) said that it is the act of having quality business vision, opportunity, mission strategies and resources. As applied to this study, entrepreneurial means the ability to find an opportunity to gather necessary resources to invest in a business in which one is interested and skilled.

Exploring entrepreneurship in youth is one of the most complicated issues of the small enterprise growth. It has been observed that in spite of the increasing participation of Non- Governmental organizations and other small enterprise in youth development, their training programs have had little or no impact on the change of attitude and acquisition of entrepreneurial skills to target beneficiaries. The aim of the study is to explore the opportunity available in Yam processing industries sector of the economy in Minna, Niger State.

Description of Study Area

Minna is the capital of Niger State. It lies between Latitude 9° 33' and 9° 40' North, and Longitude 6° 29' and 6° 35' East on a geological base of undifferentiated basement complex of mainly gneiss and magnetite. At the North –east corridor of the town lies a continuous steep outcrop of granite,

Target population was the micro and small enterprises owned by youth within Minna in Niger State. 250 youths will be sampled in the area. Completed questionnaires was edited for completeness and consistency. Data collected was coded using a predetermined coding scheme and analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Frequency counts, percentages, tables and graphs to describe distributions, per-charts to show differences in frequencies and bar charts to display nominal or ordinal data, ANOVA was used to answer the research questions.

RESULTS OF FINDINGS

Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents based on their level of output. A high proportion of them (33.30%) indicated that they had yields between the ranges of 200-400 tubers of yam. Those of them that fell within the yield range of 401-700 constituted 22.20%, while 6.66% had more than 1000 tubers in a year. The likely reasons why most of the respondents had low yield could be attributed to their inability to adopt the innovative farming practices associated with yam production. Another possible reason might be the economic constraints that made them unable to acquire the

required implements for yam cultivation as well as the failure to apply recommended inputs which could have raised their levels of output.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents Based on Level of output (number of tubers)

No. of Tubers	Frequency	Percentage
< 200	20	22.20
200 – 400	30	33.30
401 – 700	20	22.20
701 – 1000	14	15.54
>1000	06	06.66
Total	90	100.0

Source: Authors Field Survey, 2015

Youth Involvement in Yam Processing

Results of the study presented on Table 2 revealed that a high proportion (51.11%) of the respondents involved in the yam production is using ordinary man-power to prepare their land areas for the cultivation. Others, constituting 31.11% use ox-drawn plough means for land preparation, 17.78% use farm machinery for the purpose of land preparation.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondent Based on Involvement in yam processing

Land Prep Means	Frequency	Percentage (%0
Use of man-power	46	51.11
Use of farm machinery	16	17.78
Use of ox-drawn plough	28	31.11
Total	90	100

Source: Authors Field Survey, 2015

Table 3 also presents the distribution of the respondents on the basis of type of labour used. It indicated that 27.78% are engaged in self-labour, 26.67% use hired labour, 24.44% use family labour and those that use cooperative labour constituted 21.09%. The results revealed that the youth involved in yam cultivation as individuals had the highest (27.78%) percentage. This might be because, as young people, they have some ambitions set to be achieved in future and hence requires their active participation in order to actualize their expectations.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents Based on their Reason for Involvement in yam Processing
Source: Field Survey, 2015

Types of Labour	Frequency	Percentage
Self	25	27.78
Hired labour	24	26.67
Family labour	22	24.44
Cooperative labour	19	21.09
Total	90	100

Source: Authors Field Survey, 2015

Business opportunities in yam processing

Table 4 presents the distribution of the respondents based on the various reasons for involvement in yam production. The results showed that 26.67% of the respondents got involved in yam process because they were influenced by their parents to do

so. These might not have known that there is benefit in yam cultivation until when told by their parents. It is expected that when they enjoy the income from yam production they will continue to practice it henceforth. The results also revealed that 34.44% of the respondents decide to engage in yam production because they perceived it to be a good source of income and livelihood for them. This group could therefore, be said to be involved in order to make better their living standards. The lack of other preferable jobs to do was the reason why 23.33% of went into yam production. This means that they are not doing it as a matter of choice but circumstances made them to. However, it is expected that they will later continue to cultivate yam because of the money realized from it. Self-employment was the reason why 15.56% were involved in yam cultivation. This implies that they too know that agricultural production is an employment in itself from where they can earn their living so as to be self-reliant.

Constraints Faced by Youth in Yam Processing

Results on Table 5 show that majority (22.22%, with a rank value of 1) of the respondents have limited access to credit facilities. This has been a

major problem that hinders the yam farmers from transportation of yam produce due to high cost as attaining high productivity. Another constraint well as low prices for the commodity which also causes a great problem to the respondents is the market situation. They indicated that they have problems in the aspects of

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents Based on Constraint in Yam processing

Constraints	Frequency	Percentage(%)	Rank 1
Limited access to credit	20	22.22	1
Market accessibility problem	19	21.11	2
Lack of storage facilities	13	14.44	3
Problems of pest and diseases	10	11.11	4
Poor transportation system	08	08.11	5
Inadequate extension services	06	06.89	6

Source: Authors Field Survey, 2015

R² value was 0.956. This implies that 95.6% of the variations in the dependent variable (i.e. output level) were explained by the independent variables (i.e. the socio-economic characteristics).

Regression Analysis of the Relationship between business opportunities in yam processing and youth empowerment.

The results of multiple regressions are presented on

Table 6: Regression Analysis

Table 4.6. The double-log model results show the

Variable	coefficient	Std. Error	T-Value	Significance
Level of education	0.047	0.317	2.037	0.035 NS
Farm size	0.023	0.068	0.967	0.347 NS
Household size	-0.830	0.047	-3.543	0.002 S
Farming experience	0.990	0.021	42.309	0.000 S
Annual farm income	-0.040	0.010	-1.758	0.081 NS
Constant		0.260	-2.275	

R² = 0.956

R² (Adjusted)= 0.955

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Key: NS = Not Significant

S = Significant at 1% level

Out of the variables considered for the regression, educational level, farm size and monthly income of the respondents were found not to be significant.

This implies that changes in these independent variables do not reflect any change in the output levels of the respondents. In the case of education and monthly income, the reason for this could be that when the youths become more educated with

the possibility of earning more income, they may tend to prefer other income-earning activities other than farming. For the farm size, it might be that a very large farm is not being managed well as well as being undersupplied with processing inputs.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Majority of the youths involved in yam processing were within the agriculturally productive age range (31-40 years). The major occupation of majority of the respondents is farming although they operate on small farm sizes that range from 2-4 hectares. Major findings revealed that most of them carry out most farming operations using manual means. The major problems being encountered, among others, are limited access to financial credit, poor marketing systems and lack of good storage facilities. It was therefore, recommended among others that government and other non-governmental organizations should assist the young people in the area who have the interest to get fully involved in yam cultivation. Market outlets and systems should also be put in place for easy purchase as well as the sale of farm produce respectively.

Based on the result of this study, the following suggestions were made:

1. Financial institutions should provide assistance to the youths to increase their capital base and enhance their economic empowerment.
2. Youth should be encouraged to engage in both agricultural and non-agricultural enterprises to generate incomes to facilitate the growth of their enterprises.
3. There is need to create agricultural programs through more clubs or associations to ginger tremendous involvement of youths in agricultural activities, as a driving force for community development.
4. Policies that will give easy access to land for the youths should be encouraged.

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