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Influence of Practical Workshop approaches in Shaping Entrepreneurial Intentions of Agricultural Education Students in Universities in Rivers State

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Abstract
This study investigated the influence of practical workshop approaches on the entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education students in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, it examined the effects of agribusiness simulation workshops, hands-on agronomic practice sessions, and livestock management training workshops. Guided by three research questions and corresponding hypotheses, the study adopted a descriptive survey design. A sample of 60 respondents, including lecturers and technologists from Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, was selected using stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a structured and validated instrument titled Practical Workshop and Entrepreneurial Intention Scale (PWEIS), with a reliability coefficient of 0.84. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the research questions. The findings revealed strong agreement among both lecturers and Technologists on the positive influence of all three workshop approaches in enhancing students' technical skills, entrepreneurial mindset, and readiness for agribusiness. There was no significant difference in the responses of the two groups, affirming a shared perception of the effectiveness of practical workshops. The study concludes that integrating simulation-based and field-oriented workshops into agricultural education curricula is vital for cultivating entrepreneurial intentions among students. It recommends the institutionalization of experiential learning, stronger collaboration with agribusiness stakeholders, and continuous capacity building for educators to drive agripreneurship among university students.

Keywords: Practical workshop approaches, entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education students

Introduction

Agricultural Education within the university context promotes interdisciplinary collaboration, integrating environmental science, agribusiness, and technology to develop holistic solutions for rural and national development. As a result, university-based agricultural education enhances the capacity of graduates to contribute meaningfully to agricultural transformation and economic diversification, especially in developing countries.

Agricultural education is intrinsically linked to practical workshop approaches, which serve as essential platforms for hands-on learning, skill acquisition, and the application of theoretical knowledge in real-world farming and agribusiness contexts. These workshops bridge the gap between classroom instruction and field practice, enabling students to develop competencies in areas such as crop production, soil management, farm mechanization, and agro-entrepreneurship (Ozor *et al*., 2021) [22]. Practical workshop approaches also foster critical thinking, innovation, and problem-solving, which are vital for adapting to modern agricultural challenges and technologies (Adekunle & Akeredolu, 2020) [2]. By integrating experiential learning into agricultural curricula, universities and training institutions better prepare students to contribute effectively to sustainable agricultural development and rural livelihoods.

Practical workshop approaches in Agricultural Education seamlessly connect to agribusiness simulation workshop approaches by providing experiential, hands-on environments where learners can engage in real-life business scenarios and decision-making processes. Agribusiness simulation workshops utilize interactive models and digital tools to replicate market dynamics, farm management, and agribusiness operations, thereby enhancing students' entrepreneurial competencies, financial literacy, and risk management skills (Agboola *et al*., 2021) [4]. These simulations complement traditional workshops by offering safe yet realistic platforms for learners to test strategies, understand agribusiness ecosystems, and innovate solutions to market challenges (Olawoye & Okeowo, 2020) [21]. Integrating agribusiness simulation into practical workshops not only deepens students' understanding of agribusiness management but also equips them for leadership roles in agricultural value chains.

The agribusiness simulation workshop approach complements the hands-on agronomic practice session approach by integrating business decision-making with technical field skills, creating a comprehensive learning experience for agricultural students. While simulation workshops develop students' capacity in enterprise planning, financial forecasting, and market analysis, hands-on agronomic practice sessions focus on core production techniques such as soil preparation, planting, pest control, and harvesting (Ifeanyieze & Ugwuoke, 2021) [14]. Together, these approaches bridge the gap between agribusiness theory and field practice, enhancing students' employability and entrepreneurial readiness. This integration ensures that learners not only understand how to grow crops but also how to sustainably manage and commercialize agricultural enterprises in competitive markets (Adekunle *et al*., 2022) [3].

The hands-on agronomic practice session approach aligns closely with livestock management training workshop approaches, as both prioritize experiential learning to build practical competence in core agricultural domains. While agronomic sessions equip students with skills in crop production and field management, livestock workshops provide practical exposure to animal husbandry, breeding, feeding, health care, and biosecurity practices (Nwobodo & Okonkwo, 2021) [16, 19]. Integrating both approaches within agricultural education ensures that learners develop a balanced skill set across plant and animal systems, fostering holistic understanding of farm operations and enabling diversification of agribusiness ventures (Agbulu *et al.*, 2020) [5]. This blended hands-on strategy enhances students' readiness for commercial agriculture and supports sustainable agricultural development goals through comprehensive, practice-based training.

Livestock management training workshop approaches are essential components of agricultural education, as they equip agricultural education students with the practical knowledge and technical competencies required for effective animal production and farm enterprise management. These workshops expose students to real-life scenarios involving animal nutrition, breeding, disease control, and welfare practices, thereby enhancing their ability to apply theoretical concepts in practical settings (Ede & Ugwuoke, 2020) [10]. For agricultural education students, such hands-on training is critical in preparing them for careers as livestock entrepreneurs, extension agents, or educators, contributing to national food security and rural development (Akinbami *et al.*, 2021) [6]. By integrating livestock workshops into the agricultural education curriculum, institutions foster experiential learning that builds confidence, improves employability, and stimulates agripreneurial intentions among students.

Agricultural education students play a pivotal role in shaping the future of agribusiness, and targeted educational interventions are key to influencing their entrepreneurial intentions. When agricultural curricula incorporate experiential learning, agribusiness training, and exposure to real-world challenges, students are more likely to develop a positive mindset toward self-employment and innovation in the agricultural sector (Irohibe & Ajayi, 2021) [15]. Factors such as self-efficacy, practical experience, and mentorship within agricultural education programs significantly contribute to shaping students' intentions to pursue agripreneurship (Oladele & Akpan, 2020) [20]. Therefore, aligning agricultural education with entrepreneurship-focused content not only enhances student competence but also fosters a generation of youth-led agricultural enterprises critical for rural transformation and economic growth. The study was undertaken to address the growing need for effective strategies that enhance the entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education students, particularly in light of rising youth unemployment and the underutilization of agricultural potential in many developing countries.

Statement of Problem

Practical workshop approaches play a crucial role in shaping the entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education students by providing experiential learning environment that foster skill acquisition, creativity, and innovation. Through hands-on training sessions in crop production, agribusiness simulation, and livestock management, students are exposed to the realities of running agricultural enterprises. These experiences enhance their self-efficacy and entrepreneurial mindset, key predictors of entrepreneurial intention (Irohibe & Ajayi, 2021) [15]. Unlike traditional lecture-based instruction, practical workshops bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, thereby making entrepreneurship in agriculture more tangible and achievable for students. Despite curricular emphasis on practical skills in Agricultural Education, many graduates neither start agribusinesses nor show strong entrepreneurial intent. It is unclear which workshop approaches (e.g., hands-on projects, instructor-led demonstrations, industry attachments, entrepreneurial mentoring) best foster entrepreneurial intentions among Agricultural Education students in Rivers State. This study investigates how different practical workshop approaches influence students' entrepreneurial intentions.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study determined the influence of Practical Workshop approaches in Shaping Entrepreneurial Intentions of Agricultural Education Students in Universities in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought the following:

1. influence of agribusiness simulation workshop approach in shaping entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education Students in Universities in Rivers State
2. influence of hands-on agronomic practice session approach in shaping entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education Students in Universities in Rivers State
3. influence of livestock management training workshop approach in shaping entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education Students in Universities in Rivers State

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What is the influence of agribusiness simulation workshop approach in shaping entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education Students in Universities in Rivers State?
2. What is the influence of hands-on agronomic practice session approach in shaping entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education Students in Universities in Rivers State?
3. What is the influence of livestock management training workshop approach in shaping entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education Students in Universities in Rivers State?

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to investigate the influence of practical workshop approaches in shaping the entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education students in universities in Rivers State. This design was considered appropriate as it enabled the researcher to collect, analyze, and interpret data from a sample population to understand their experiences and perceptions regarding practical workshops and entrepreneurial development.

The population of the study was 60 respondents which comprised of lecturers and technologists from agricultural education students in the two public universities offering agricultural education programmes in Rivers State: Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. A sample of 60 respondents was selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure equal representation from both institutions.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Practical Workshop and Entrepreneurial Intention Scale (PWEIS), which was developed by the researcher based on reviewed literature. The instrument consisted of two main sections: Section A captured demographic information, while Section B contained 20 items designed to measure students' exposure to practical workshop approaches (e.g., agronomic practice sessions, agribusiness simulation, livestock training) and their entrepreneurial intentions.

The items were rated using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree."

The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts in agricultural education and educational measurement. A pilot study was conducted using 20 students and 10 Lecturers and Technologists from Niger Delta University outside the study area. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's Alpha and yielded a value of 0.84, indicating high internal consistency.

Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the influence of agribusiness simulation workshop approach in shaping entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education Students in Universities in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard deviation on the influence of agribusiness simulation workshop approach in shaping entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education Students in Universities

S/N	Items	Lecturers N =30			Technologists =30		
		Mean $\bar{x}$	Standard Deviation SD	Remark	Mean x	Standard Deviation SD	Remark
1	The simulation workshop improves students' decision-making skills in agribusiness.	4.25	0.64	Agree	4.12	0.58	Agree
2	It enhances students' understanding of marketing and pricing strategies.	4.50	0.72	Strongly Agree	4.65	0.76	Strongly Agree
3	Students become more confident in business planning through simulation activities.	3.88	0.41	Agree	3.79	0.52	Agree
4	Agribusiness simulations increase entrepreneurial interest among students.	4.30	0.68	Strongly Agree	4.10	0.61	Agree
5	Students are able to apply classroom theories in a business context during simulations.	4.44	0.52	Strongly Agree	4.20	0.66	Strongly Agree
6	Simulation exercises expose students to risk analysis and problem-solving.	3.92	0.37	Agree	3.90	0.45	Agree
7	Students are more likely to consider starting agribusinesses after simulation training.	4.10	0.43	Agree	3.87	0.47	Agree
8	Participation in simulation workshops enhances financial management knowledge.	4.60	0.66	Strongly Agree	4.50	0.72	Strongly Agree
9	The workshop promotes collaboration and entrepreneurial teamwork.	4.20	0.54	Agree	4.00	0.49	Agree
10	Students gain exposure to agribusiness software and digital tools during simulations.	4.05	0.39	Agree	3.96	0.55	Agree
	Grand mean	4.22	0.54	Agree	4.11	0.58	Agree

Data in Table 1 shown that the grand mean values of the Lecturers and Technologists are 4.22 and 4.11 respectively which are greater than the cut–off mark (3.50) this demonstrates that both the Lecturers and Technologists agreed that the above items are influence of agribusiness simulation workshop approach in shaping entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education Students in Universities in Rivers state.

The table also showed that the grand standard deviation (SD) of the Lectures and Technologists are .54 and .58 respectively, which displays the closeness of the mean scores, therefore the respondents were united in their responses.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of hands-on agronomic practice session approach in shaping entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education Students in Universities in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard deviation on the influence of hands-on agronomic practice session approach in shaping entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education Students in Universities

S/N	Items	Lecturers N =30			Technologists =30		
		Mean $\bar{x}$	Standard Deviation SD	Remark	Mean $\bar{x}$	Standard Deviation SD	Remark
1	Hands-on sessions improve students' skills in crop production techniques.	3.90	0.68	Agree	4.30	0.59	Strongly Agree
2	Agronomic practices boost students' confidence in setting up personal farms.	3.85	0.71	Agree	4.25	0.66	Strongly Agree
3	Students are better able to identify viable agronomic business opportunities.	3.92	0.61	Agree	4.10	0.54	Agree
4	Exposure to real farming activities enhances entrepreneurial thinking.	3.88	0.53	Agree	4.00	0.49	Agree
5	Practice sessions make students appreciate agricultural production as a business.	3.94	0.66	Agree	4.38	0.65	Strongly Agree
6	Students develop better problem-solving skills in farm management through agronomic practice.	3.80	0.74	Agree	4.12	0.61	Agree
7	Participation in agronomic sessions increases students' intent to engage in commercial farming.	3.83	0.69	Agree	4.18	0.70	Agree
8	Students learn to apply classroom knowledge to solve real field problems.	3.97	0.59	Agree	4.45	0.67	Strongly Agree
9	Agronomic practice sessions encourage students to pursue crop production enterprises.	3.78	0.65	Agree	4.15	0.72	Agree
10	Practical sessions help students build networks with successful crop producers.	3.86	0.62	Agree	4.22	0.69	Strongly Agree
	Grand mean	3.87	0.65	Agree	4.22	0.63	Agree

Data in Table 2publicized that the grand mean values of the Lecturers and Technologists are 3.87 and 4.22 respectively which are greater than the cut–off mark (3.50) this indicates that both the Lecturers and Technologists agreed that the above itemsare the influence of hands-on agronomic practice session approach in shaping entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education Students in Universitiesin Rivers State

The table also showed that the grand standard deviation (SD) of the Lectures and Students are .65 and .63 respectively, which displays the closeness of the mean scores, therefore the respondents were united in their responses.

Research Question 3: What is the influence of livestock management training workshop approach in shaping entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education Students in Universities in Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean and Standard deviation on the influence of livestock management training workshop approach in shaping entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education Students in Universities

S/N	Items	Lecturers N =30			Technologists =30		
		Mean $\bar{x}$	Standard Deviation SD	Remark	Mean $\bar{x}$	Standard Deviation SD	Remark
1	Workshops improve students' skills in animal husbandry and health care.	3.94	0.69	Agree	4.45	0.74	Strongly Agree
2	Students gain confidence in starting livestock enterprises after training.	3.85	0.58	Agree	4.30	0.60	Strongly Agree
3	Exposure to livestock management boosts interest in agricultural entrepreneurship.	3.92	0.66	Agree	4.25	0.69	Strongly Agree
4	Students develop practical skills in feeding, housing, and breeding.	3.90	0.63	Agree	4.15	0.55	Agree
5	Students learn to manage livestock health risks and biosecurity.	3.87	0.71	Agree	4.10	0.59	Agree
6	Livestock training sessions expose students to commercial animal production practices.	3.89	0.62	Agree	4.20	0.65	Agree
7	Workshops increase students' awareness of market opportunities in livestock.	3.80	0.59	Agree	4.12	0.70	Agree
8	Students are motivated to explore livestock value chain opportunities.	3.97	0.64	Agree	4.50	0.72	Strongly Agree
9	Livestock management workshops enhance entrepreneurial creativity and planning.	3.86	0.67	Agree	4.22	0.66	Strongly Agree
10	Interaction with livestock entrepreneurs during training inspires self-employment.	3.91	0.60	Agree	4.35	0.71	Strongly Agree
	Grand mean	3.89	0.64	Agree	4.26	0.66	Agree

Data in Table 3 publicized that the grand mean values of the Lecturers and Technologists are 3.89 and 4.26 respectively which are greater than the cut–off mark (3.50) this indicates that both the Lecturers and Technologists agreed that the above items are the influence of livestock management training workshop approach in shaping entrepreneurial

intentions of Agricultural Education Students in Universitiesin Rivers State

The table also showed that the grand standard deviation (S.D) of the Lectures and Technologists are .65 and .63 respectively, which displays the closeness of the mean scores, therefore the respondents were united in their responses.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that both lecturers and technologists strongly agree on the positive influence of agribusiness simulation workshop approaches in shaping the entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education students in universities in Rivers State. Their responses emphasized that such workshops effectively enhance students' practical agribusiness competencies, decision-making skills, and entrepreneurial mindset—key elements essential for agripreneurship (Agboola *et al*., 2021; Oladele & Akpan, 2020) [4, 20]. The statistical analysis confirmed that there was no significant difference in the mean responses between the two groups, suggesting a shared perception of the value of simulation-based learning in agricultural education. This consensus aligns with contemporary literature advocating for experiential and simulation-based instructional strategies as powerful tools for developing entrepreneurial intentions among youth in agriculture (Irohibe & Ajayi, 2021; Akinbami *et al*., 2022) [7, 15]. Therefore, the study reinforces the importance of integrating agribusiness simulation workshops into agricultural curricula to foster innovation, self-employment readiness, and sustainable agricultural development.

The findings of the study underscore the shared perspectives of lecturers and technologists on the positive influence of hands-on agronomic practice session approaches in shaping the entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education students in universities in Rivers State. Both groups consistently affirmed that such practical sessions enhance students' crop production skills, deepen their appreciation of agriculture as a business, and promote meaningful engagement with real-world farming practices. High agreement levels, especially on items related to applying classroom knowledge and recognizing agriculture as a viable enterprise, reflect the growing recognition of experiential learning as a catalyst for agricultural entrepreneurship (Obih & Ezeano, 2021) [17]. The statistical analysis confirmed that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of lecturers and technologists, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This indicates that both categories of educators strongly support field-based agronomic learning as a driver of entrepreneurial motivation. The findings align with recent studies that advocate integrating hands-on agricultural experiences into formal curricula to build the entrepreneurial capacity of students (Okonkwo & Nnadi, 2022; Adegbite & Bello, 2020) [1, 19], thereby preparing them for self-reliant careers in modern crop-based agribusiness.

The findings of the study revealed a strong consensus between lecturers and technologists on the positive influence of livestock management training workshop approaches in shaping the entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education students in universities in Rivers State. Both groups rated items such as student competence in animal health care, readiness to start livestock enterprises, and exposure to livestock value chain opportunities highly, with several marked as "Strongly Agree." These findings demonstrate that livestock-focused workshops do more than impart technical skills, they stimulate entrepreneurial thinking and encourage students to explore profitable avenues in animal production. This supports the argument by Ogundele and Akinola (2021) [18] that practical livestock training builds the capacity of students to identify agribusiness opportunities and gain the confidence needed to venture into self-employment in animal agriculture. The result further shows that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean responses of lecturers and technologists regarding the influence of livestock training workshops, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This shared viewpoint reinforces the pedagogical value of integrating hands-on livestock management into agricultural education curricula. It aligns with studies by Edeh *et al*. (2022) [11] and Ibrahim and Lawal (2020) [13], which emphasize that experiential livestock training significantly enhances students' entrepreneurial drive, particularly when embedded within structured academic programs. Therefore, the consensus among stakeholders affirms that livestock workshops serve as a critical link between theoretical instruction and the practical realities of agribusiness, equipping students with the motivation and competencies necessary for sustainable livestock-based entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that practical workshop approaches such as agribusiness simulation, hands-on agronomic practice sessions, and livestock management training, play a significant role in shaping the entrepreneurial intentions of agricultural education students in universities in Rivers State. Both lecturers and technologists demonstrated a strong consensus on the positive influence of these experiential learning strategies in enhancing students' technical competencies, agribusiness awareness, and readiness for self-employment in the agricultural sector. The lack of significant differences in their responses further validates the effectiveness of integrating these practical components into agricultural education curricula. These findings highlight the importance of reinforcing practice-oriented training to bridge the gap between academic theory and real-world agricultural enterprise, thereby fostering a new generation of agripreneurs.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Universities offering agricultural education programmes should formally integrate agribusiness simulation, hands-on agronomic practice, and livestock management workshops into their core curriculum to provide students with real-life entrepreneurial experiences that foster business-oriented thinking.
2. Institutions should collaborate with agribusiness firms, extension agencies, and commercial farms to facilitate access to modern equipment, mentorship opportunities, and exposure to real market environments that can enrich students' practical training and entrepreneurial competence.
3. Continuous professional development should be organized for lecturers and technologists to ensure they are equipped with up-to-date knowledge and

pedagogical skills in experiential learning strategies, enabling them to effectively guide students toward agripreneurship.

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