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ATTITUDE TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES AMONG YAM FARMERS IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

To understand the attitude of farmers towards yam entrepreneurial activities in Ekiti State, Nigeria, data were collected on respondents' personal characteristics, attitude of farmers and factors influencing farmers' attitude towards yam entrepreneurial activities. Data were analysed with frequency, percentage, mean and multiple regression analysis. Findings shows that respondents were married (81%), aware of agri-entrepreneurship skills (42%), experienced (30 years), inherited land (62%) and rarely visited major towns (41.2%). Majority (98.8%) of the respondents had positive attitude toward entrepreneurial activities. Marital status (p=0.023), years of experience (p=0.015) and land tenure (t= p=0.023) were determinants factors for positive attitude towards yam entrepreneurial activities among respondents. The study concluded that yam entrepreneur farmers in Ekiti State had positive attitude towards yam entrepreneurial activities. It was therefore recommend the need for intensive motivation programmes for yam farmers in Ekiti State by agricultural extension organisation with special focus on areas where respondents were found to have negative attitude.

Keywords: *attitude, influencing factors, yam, agri-entrepreneurship*

SIKAP PETANI YAM TERHADAP KEGIATAN WIRAUSAHA DI NEGARA EKITI, NIGERIA

Abstrak

Untuk memahami sikap petani terhadap kegiatan wirausaha ubi di Ekiti State, Nigeria, data dikumpulkan mengenai karakteristik pribadi responden, sikap petani dan faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi sikap petani terhadap kegiatan wirausaha ubi. Data dianalisis dengan analisis frekuensi, persentase, mean dan regresi berganda. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa responden sudah menikah (81%), memiliki keterampilan berwirausaha agribisnis (42%), berpengalaman (30 tahun), tanah warisan (62%) dan jarang mengunjungi kota-kota besar (41,2%). Mayoritas (98,8%) responden memiliki sikap positif terhadap kegiatan kewirausahaan. Status perkawinan (p=0,023), pengalaman kerja (p=0,015) dan kepemilikan lahan (t= p=0,023) merupakan faktor penentu sikap positif responden terhadap kegiatan wirausaha ubi. Hasil penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa petani pengusaha ubi di Negara Bagian Ekiti memiliki sikap positif terhadap kegiatan wirausaha ubi. Oleh karena itu direkomendasikan perlunya program motivasi intensif bagi petani ubi di Negara Bagian Ekiti oleh organisasi penyuluh pertanian dengan fokus khusus pada daerah di mana responden ditemukan memiliki sikap negatif.

Kata Kunci: *sikap, faktor yang mempengaruhi, gadung, agribisnis*

INTRODUCTION

Several authors have stated their view of the definition attitude. According to Hogg and Vaughan (2005), attitude is the relationship of components consisting of beliefs, feelings, and behavioural tendencies towards socially significant issues. Ahnstrom et al. (2008) described attitudes as the state of preparedness of mind to do something. Siebert et al. (2006) understood the attitude of farmers to be a combined set of factors that collectively can explain willingness to undertake farming activities and inform their self-perception towards the adoption of agricultural innovation. Ajzen (2002) defined entrepreneurial attitude as self-perception towards advantageous entrepreneurship that strongly influence entrepreneur's willingness to undertake a new business enterprise.

Literature had classified entrepreneurial attitudes in two ways. First, when it comes to management of the farm, Ahnstrom et al. (2008) noted that a farmer has a known attitude and that nature is too simplistic. Thus, farmer has his own view on what is 'good farming', his own set of convictions and opinions that function as an self-contained supporting structure of information sources and this influences his/her perception of outside factors of preferences (Schoon and Grotenhuis, 2000).

Attitude is needed to help farmers in the process of developing, involving and learning of entrepreneurship skills. Ahnstrom et al. (2008) note that a farmer has a known set of attitude to farm management, self-opinion and some firmly held belief of what is good farming practices that serves as useful practical application as self-structure of process of mentioning which influence his/her opinion of outside influences and his/her own choice of action (Schoon and Grotenhuis, 2000). An analysis of rural development programmes by Getz (2003) suggested that sustainable farming entrepreneurship and attitudinal change is possible through agricultural extension services by creating awareness education and developing entrepreneurial skills of rural dwellers.

Change in attitude of farmers towards entrepreneurship rest upon the exposure and extension training received. The role of agricultural extension agents involves the dissemination of information for change of attitude; building capacity of farmers through training with the use of specific type of communication and help farmers decided based on accurate information. Since economic growth is needed to reduce poverty, Mitra and Abubakar (2011) had noted that educating entrepreneurship is a way of reducing poverty. This attitude of as viewed by Rudmann (2008) is taken to determine the way the farmer will operate the enterprise and the progressive process of change in entrepreneurial skills. Falconer (2000) further stated that the understanding attitude and perception of farmers in deciding important matters of farming activities would be of great importance for agricultural policy development. This study, therefore offers a switch in thinking by examining the attitude of yam farmers in Ekiti State.

The main aim of this study was to examine the attitude of yam farmers towards yam entrepreneurial activities in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Specifically the study aimed to;

(i) categorize the attitude of farmers towards yam entrepreneurial activities

(ii) assess factors influencing farmers attitude towards yam entrepreneurial activities

Theoretical Framework

This study employed the theory of planned behavior (TPB) as propounded by Ajzen (1991), whereby entrepreneurial intention is influenced by three factors, viz: attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral controls as shown in Figure 1.

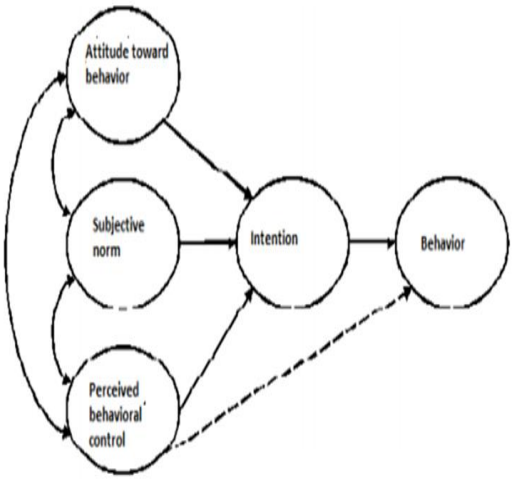


Figure 1: Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991)

The TPB framework in Figure 1 is based on the person's intention, which is determined by three elements: First, the degree of favorableness of the behavior whether it has favorable or non-favorable perceived evaluation (attitude). In general, the more favorable of an attitude toward a behavior, the greater the individual´s intention to perform it. The second is the perceived social norms to perform the given behavior or not (subjective norm). Suppose an individual perceives that his or her loved ones likes (or dislikes) the behavior, he or she is more (or less) likely to want to do it. Therefore, subjective norms measure the effect of perceived social pressure from family, friends and/or relatives. In the context of subjective norms in TPB, Linan (2008) asserts that the role of the community in encouraging entrepreneurial behaviour allows the individuals to be more motivated towards entrepreneurship in communities that accepts their choice. Lastly, perceived behavioral control (PBC) or self-efficacy refers to the degree of difficulty of performing a behavior, which is how easy or difficult to perform certain action (Ajzen, 1991). According to Wilson et al. (2007), "self-efficacy, or self-confidence, is based on individuals' perceptions of their skills and abilities". It was identified by Gist (1987) as an individual's view of him or her capability to perform a specific task.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Ekiti State is located in the tropics of the country between longitudes 40°51′ and 50°451′ East of the Greenwich meridian and latitudes 70°151′ and 80°51′ north of the Equator. The main occupation of people of in the state is Farming. Agriculture is the means livelihood for majority in the state. Agricultural produce in Ekiti state are: Arable/Food (Yam, cowpea, Rice, Cassava and Maize), Cash crops (Cocoa, Oil Palm, Kolanut, Plantain, Bananas, Timber, Cashew and Citrus).

The population of this study consists of all contact yam farmers of the Ekiti State Agricultural Development Project (EKSADP). Hence, the study adopted the existing EKSADP structure and list of yam farmers in selecting respondents for the study. The list may exclude some others yam farmers and farmers cultivating other crops who are not registered with the extension organisation of EKSADP.

Respondents were selected by two-stage random sampling procedure. Firstly, thirty two (32) farming communities were randomly selected. The second stage was a random selection of twenty (20) yam farmers from the list of EKSADP contact yam farmers in each of the farming communities selected. A total of 640 respondents were sampled.

A questionnaire was designed to collect data. The questionnaire was tested reliable

among 30 yam farmers. The overall cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was computed and a value of 0.84 was obtained. This value was greater than 0.7, the generally acceptable lower limit for alpha coefficient (Tarja, 2015; Rajaei, Yaghoubi and Donyaei 2011). The tested and reliable questionnaire was administered to the 640 sampled respondents. Only 580 questionnaires were analysed while others were rejected. The criterion for rejection of a questionnaire was based on its incompleteness.

To understand the attitude of farmers towards yam entrepreneurial activities in the study area, A five point Likert rating scale technique for measurement of attitudes as proposed by Likert (1932) was used to elicit information on respondents' opinion of respondents on their attitude towards yam entrepreneurial activities. The respondents were required to respond to 18 carefully constructed attitudinal statements that when taken together, revealed the level of attitude towards yam entrepreneurial activities. Attitudinal statements were in two forms. Firstly, directs statements of attitude which were measured as strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree and score of 2, 1, 0, -1 and -2 were assigned respectively. Secondly, the scoring pattern was reversed for indirect statements. This scale is selected due to its strength, simplicity and ease of administration (Neuman, 2000). The attitude of respondents was described as 'positive, neutral or negative' based on the scale devised from the maximum possible score of 36 (18 items x 2) and the minimum possible score of - 36 (18 items x -2). The three categories of the extent of attitude arbitrarily determined in this study for the purpose of describing the attitude of respondents were: Positive attitude (1 to 36 points), neutral (0 point), and negative attitude (-1 to -36 points).

Frequency, percentage, mean, bar charts and binary logistic regression were used to analyse data collected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic characteristics of yam farmers

As shown in Table 1, majority (81.2%) of the respondents were married. This is an indication that majority of the yam farmers in Ekiti State are likely to have responsibilities to cater for in their respective homes. This study suggest that this factor would positively influence the adoption and favourable attitude toward yam entrepreneurial skills for profit maximization sufficient to cater for the responsibilities. Respondents (42.1%) were aware of agricultural entrepreneurship skills while majority (57.9%) were not aware of the agricultural entrepreneurship skills.

As revealed in Table 1, the average year of experience among respondents in their chosen yam enterprises was 30years. This finding implies that yam farmers have acquired appreciable amount of experience in their chosen enterprises. Okoli, Okereke, Onubuogu and Esiobu (2014) had earlier noted that farmers who have experience in agribusiness would be able to function well in allocating resources to maximum profit. Also, majority (61.9%) of the respondents acquired their farm land by inheritance, 8.3% were through purchase, 19.5% were through gift and 10.3% were acquired by rent. This finding implies that majority of the respondents owned their land. Ownership of land among respondents is expected to enhance profit of yam farmers in the study area. About 41.2% rarely visit or go out of their location, 14.5% visited

other places once a year, 25.0% once in six months, 3.8% in once in three months, 7.2% in once a week and 8.3% frequently go out of the residential area to major towns.

Attitude of respondents towards yam entrepreneurial activities

This section presents the results respondents' attitude towards yam entrepreneurial activities. Studies had suggested that to grasp better knowledge of farmers as entrepreneurs, farmers need to be questioned how they understand themselves (i.e., do farmers view farming as enterprise?) (Vesala & Peura, 2002; Peura et al., 2002). Table 2 and 3 gives a summary of the results.

Generally, the grand mean value of 0.50 found in table 2 and 98.8% of the respondents having attitudinal scores between 36.0 – 1.0 points as illustrated in table 3 indicated that yam farmers in the study area have positive attitude towards yam entrepreneurial activities. This finding implies that yam famers in the study area possess favourable behavioural tendencies for yam entrepreneurial activities. This finding corroborates FAO (2012) report that many small-scale farmers although may still focus on maintaining their traditional way of life but they possess many of the qualities of an entrepreneur.

Specifically on individual attitudinal statement illustrated in Table 3, the opinion of respondents that agri-entrepreneurship extension education is able to empower yam farmers' ability (mean=1.18) was considered positive attitude. This finding implies that yam farmers in the study area had favourable attitude for extension education. This finding is against Ronning and Ljunggren (2007) who found that Norway farmers had negative attitude towards extension education. As regards the opinion of yam entrepreneurial business as means of livelihood to escape poverty (mean=1.03) was considered positive attitude. This finding affirms the report by Osayande and Osabuohien (2016) that yam-based farming improved standard of living of farmers.

Respondents' opinion for positive mind to become successful in yam entrepreneurial business (mean=1.01) and ability to try improved practices as needed to become a successful agro-entrepreneur (mean=0.73) were found to be positive attitude. This finding is an indication that yam farmers in the study area find their farming enterprise interesting and fascinating. The positive of attitude of farmers to be successful in this study is in line with Apata (2015) finding that most of farmers in Southwest Nigeria had that likely to succeed attitude towards themselves. Similar finding was reported by Mujuru (2014) who found that most of farmer-entrepreneurs showed good prospects of their farming businesses.

The opinion of respondents if adopting innovative practices cannot multiply yam entrepreneurial activities' income (mean=0.98) was found to be positive. These findings showed that yam farmers were innovators, and are likely to adopt alternative technology to increase productivity. This remarkable innovative attributes possessed by these farmers was stated by FAO (2012) as an important quality for a farmer-entrepreneur, especially when the farming venture faces strong competition or operates in a rapidly changing environment.

Attitude of respondents' preference to own yam entrepreneurial business rather than earning a higher salary when working

for someone else (mean=0.71) and opinion on fulltime commitment and continuous extension training to yam enterprise as key to success (mean=0.48) were found to be positive. The indication that respondents have positive attitude to working for themselves on fulltime shows that yam farmers in the study area were passionate about yam entrepreneurial activities. Nieman *et al.* (2004) have however noted that one of the important influences for success in entrepreneurship passion.

The feelings for no belief in yam farming business and encouragement of others to start it (mean=0.77) was positive. This means that respondents disagreed to the opinion of the attitudinal statement and alternative statement holds here. This shows that yam farmers in the study area are likely to include family members most especially their children being their first contact persons. Similar finding was reported by Mujuru (2014) who found that farmers in Zimbabwe make succession plan by training their children on farming activities as family business.

The opinion of respondents to add value to agricultural products/services to increase sales and income (mean=0.56) and opinion if an agro-entrepreneur should have commercial characteristics in determining success (mean=0.75), opinion of learning from setbacks and move (mean= 0.79), ability to make timely decision does not determine success in agri-entrepreneurship (mean=0.72) and readiness pay for extension services on improved practices for their yam entrepreneurial business (mean=0.14) were therefore considered positive attitude. This finding implies that yam farmers are ready to pay for services rendered by extension agents to improve their chosen yam entrepreneurial activities.

The preparedness to take risks and bear all uncertainty (mean=0.03) was considered neutral attitude. This finding implies that yam farmers were risk neutral. Risk neutral farmers according to Ajijola *et al.* (2011) are neither risk averters or avoiders nor risk preferring individuals. They further noted that risk neutral person would select the alternative with the highest expected outcome, regardless of the probabilities associated with potential gains or losses.

Opinion to often find new opportunities to explore in order to increase income (mean= -0.01), planning what to do according to the schedule (mean= -0.16), having ambition for running yam entrepreneurial activities (mean= -0.26) and time to be thinking of creativity for yam entrepreneurial activities (mean= -0.45) were found to be negative. This negative attitude of respondents is against the necessary characteristics expected of an entrepreneur. As noted by Kodithuwakku and Rosa (2002), finding new opportunities to explore is fundamental to the success of any entrepreneur. Similarly, FAO (2012) had stated that farmer-entrepreneur should always seek for opportunities to improve and expand his farming venture.

Factors influencing farmers' attitude towards yam entrepreneurial activities

To understand the influencing factors, this study postulated a null hypothesis which stated thus; there is no significant relationship between selected socioeconomic characteristics of respondents and attitude towards yam entrepreneurial activities

The result of the binary regression analysis to identify socioeconomic characteristics determinants of attitude

towards yam entrepreneurial activities among respondents in Table 4 showed that socioeconomic characteristics of respondents such as marital status (p=0.023), years of experience (p= 0.015) and land tenure (t= 1.660; p=0.023) were determinants factors for positive attitude towards yam entrepreneurial activities among respondents. The finding shows a rejection of the null hypothesis stated and hence accepts the alternative statement. The implication is that yam farmers' marital status, higher years of experience and increase access to land would encourage favourable interests and self-perception towards yam entrepreneurial activities in the study area. Similar finding of farmers experience having positive relationship with entrepreneurial attitude of farmers has been reported (Rohitha-Rosairo and Potts, 2016).

CONCLUSION

Yam entrepreneur farmers in Ekiti State had positive attitude towards yam entrepreneurial activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

i. With more than half of the respondents not aware of the agricultural entrepreneurship skills among respondents. This study recommends that efforts should be intensified by extension organisations and other relevant bodies to create awareness of agricultural entrepreneurship skills, encourage farmers to see themselves as entrepreneurs.

ii. There is need for intensive motivation programmes for yam entrepreneur farmers in Ekiti State by agricultural extension organisation with special focus on areas where respondents were found to have negative attitude such as: finding new opportunities to explore in order to increase my income, planning what to do according to the schedule, having time to be thinking of creativity for my yam entrepreneurial activities and having no ambition for running their yam entrepreneurial activities.

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