

Family Background as Correlate of University Students' Agripreneurship Intentions in Niger Delta

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Abstract

The study investigated the influence of family background on university students' agripreneurship intentions in Niger Delta, Nigeria. The correlational survey research design was used to collect data from a sample of 377, selected using multi-staged stratified random sampling procedure. The sample size was selected from a population of 18,474 undergraduate students studying Agriculture courses in federal and state universities in Niger-Delta. A questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was face validated by 5 experts. Split-half reliability method was used, and a Spearman-Brown coefficient of 0.883 was obtained, demonstrating the reliability of the instrument. The data collected from respondents were analyzed using pie-charts, Mean (\bar{x}), Standard Deviation, and correlation (γ). The findings revealed that a very weak positive relationship existed between parents' occupation, educational background, income and students' agripreneurship intentions, and a very weak negative relationship existed between family size and students' agripreneurship intentions. Based on these findings, it was concluded that family background has very little influence on students' agripreneurship intentions. Recommendations included that: parents should be sensitized on the entrepreneurial opportunities embedded in the Agricultural sector in light of the increasing rate of unemployment of graduates from various disciplines.

Keywords: Family background, University Students, Agripreneurship Intentions, Niger-Delta

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Introduction

Acquiring agripreneurial skills is the key to the actualization of food security and job creation in any nation, but with the continuous decline in the agricultural sector of Nigeria, there is every possibility that the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals of "zero hunger" may not be achieved. Olomola (2013) stated that in the last one and half decades, Agriculture contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) declined marginally "from 42.66 percent in 2000 to 40.84 percent in 2010". It further declined to 28.44 percent in the third quarter of 2017, although there was an increment to the contribution from 2010 to 2014 estimated at 21.9 percent. Agricultural growth on the other hand, declined by 1.47% when compared with the 2016 growth estimate at 4.50 percent in the third quarter of 2017 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2018).

Nigeria has 34 million hectares of arable land, of which 6.5 million hectares are for permanent crops and 30.3 million hectares are for meadows and pastures, however only 40% of this land is now exploited for agriculture (Varrella, 2020). This indicates that almost 60% of the total cultivable land area has not been used, even with the abundance of maritime resources, great fish-producing rivers, lakes, and creeks, favourable climatic conditions, and a sizable labour force (Ojebiyi, *et al.*, 2015). According to Eneji, *et al.* (2013), more than two thirds of Nigeria's population are young people who can take advantage of the agripreneurship opportunities that are available.

Ikeoji (2018) refers to entrepreneurship in agriculture as the willingness and ability of individuals to manipulate material and human resources in agriculture for anticipated outcome. Agripreneurship, also referred to as entrepreneurship in agriculture, is the process of converting an idea or vision into a new agricultural business or venture, or an expansion of an existing agricultural business or venture by individuals, a group of individuals, or an established company (Olabisi, 2023). Olabisi (2023) further stated that tremendous opportunities are present in the agricultural sector which has allowed the promotion of agripreneurship, and such

opportunities are available in the area of mushroom cultivation, beekeeping, sericulture, dairy farming, fisheries, and horticulture encompassing olericulture, pomology and floriculture. Even with the numerous agripreneurship opportunities, Nigeria is still plagued with an increasing level of youth unemployment. Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO, 2021) reported that more than 42 percent of youths are unemployed, and nearly two-thirds of them live in poverty. If the different agripreneurial opportunities are exploited by the youths, the desired change will become a reality. But reports given by Amadi and Lazarus (2017), has revealed that the percentage of undergraduates offering Agricultural Science courses in higher institutions has continued to dwindle.

According to Akinsola (2012), many undergraduates studying agripreneurship disciplines did not choose them during their Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME), but found themselves there when their cut off marks could not earn them their first choice of discipline. Most of them that find themselves in Agriculture-related disciplines tend to deviate to non-Agriculture related courses even after being admitted into the department and made to forfeit a year as penalty.

The reason for their action is that most parents do not encourage or motivate their wards towards taking a career in Agriculture, because their preference lies on other socially friendly courses such as oil and gas engineering, medical sciences, law, among others. They tend to control the career choices of their wards based on their level of education, occupation, level of income, norms and values, among other family related factors.

Aslam, *et al.* (2012) believe that a child could have a positive attitude toward entrepreneurship if his or her parents have their own businesses or are otherwise self-employed, but parents who experienced depressing circumstances with their own businesses may force their children not to become entrepreneurs. Similarly, Duffy and Dik (2009) opined that the power and influence of a family on initial career decisions and subsequent job choices is critical in helping children with career concerns. Parents provide not only a source of identification for their children's career development but also guide them to formulate feelings about occupations (Fisher & Padmawidjaja, 1999).

Mokoro, *et al.* (2014); Obiyo and Eze (2015); Abiola (2014), stated that many of the settings in which children and youth participate are dependent on the choices of their parents. Thus, parents' decisions, choices of where to live, what to provide materially and relationally in the home and how to structure out-of-school time for children, impact on children's development in ways that are meaningful for later success in the world of work. Also, Eccles (2007); Uka (2015) revealed that parental education has influence on children's career choices. Dustman (2004) supported this statement by revealing that parental education is a determining factor in the selection of careers by British students. In Nigeria, Abiola (2014) opined that highly educated parents have more resources, both financially and in terms of academic advice, to support their children than poorer parents.

Parents occupation may also have an influence on children's career choices. Bakshi, *et al.* (2012) revealed that in India, parents' careers were found to be influential on students' choice of careers. This is due to the fact that students tend to observe and model their parents as they relate with the outside world. Most times, where the parents are in other fields different from Agriculture, the children tend to follow the trend of their parents. Also, their parents' income and financial background is another factor that determines students' interest and career intentions. Most students from poor and average homes often choose courses they know their parents can afford, as school fees in most universities in recent times vary according to the course of study (Kanyip, 2013).

These factors, viz parents' educational background, occupation, income, family size, among others have a way of making many African parents discourage their children from taking up the farming business because they see it as a venture for the poor; so they try as much as possible to encourage their children to go to school and learn hard to become doctors, accountants, engineers, teachers, nurses, politicians, bankers, journalist and other well-paying and professional services (Iddrisu, 2018). As disturbing as the declining state of Agriculture in the African society is, Iddrisu (2018) stated that no African parent wants to encourage their children to become farmers or agriculturalists. This study, therefore, was undertaken to investigate the influence of family background on the agripreneurship intentions of university students in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to find out the influence of family background on university students' agripreneurship intentions in Niger Delta, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does parents' occupation influence the agripreneurship intentions of university undergraduates in the Niger Delta?
2. To what extent does parents' educational background influence the agripreneurship intentions of undergraduate students in the Niger Delta?
3. To what extent does parents' income influence the agripreneurship intentions of undergraduate students?
4. To what extent does undergraduates' family size influence their agripreneurship intentions?

Methodology

The Niger Delta, which consists of nine (9) states including Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, Rivers, and Cross-River States, was the area of the study. The correlational survey research design was used to collect data from a sample of 377, selected using multi-staged stratified random sampling procedure. The sample size was selected from a population of 18,474 undergraduate students studying Agriculture courses in federal and state universities in Niger-Delta. A questionnaire titled “Family Background and Students’ Agripreneurship Intentions Questionnaire (FBSAIQ) was used for data collection. The questionnaire was face validated by 5 experts in both Department of Vocational Education and Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, Delta State University, Abraka.

Split-half reliability method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Ten (10) Agriculture undergraduates enrolled in Degree Affiliation Programmes at College of Education, Agbor were given ten copies of the questionnaire to fill. A Spearman-Brown coefficient of 0.883 was obtained after the data were entered into SPSS Version 23, demonstrating the effectiveness of the instrument. The researcher, with the assistance of five (5) research assistants who had been briefed on questionnaire administration, distributed a total of three hundred and seventy-seven (377) copies of the questionnaire to undergraduates in four federal and five state universities in the sampled states in the Niger-Delta. A total of 320 of the 377 questionnaires that were issued to participants were successfully completed, recovered, and used for the study, resulting in a return rate of 84.88%.

The data collected from respondents was inputted into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 23, and analyzed using pie-charts, Mean (\bar{x}), Standard Deviation, and correlation (γ). Evans’ (1996) rule for the absolute value of γ was used to explain the strength of the association. It states that from: 0.00 - 0.19 = very weak correlation; 0.20 - 0.39 = weak correlation; 0.40 - 0.59 = moderate correlation; 0.60 - 0.79 = strong correlation; and .80 and above = very strong correlation.

Results

The results are presented as follo

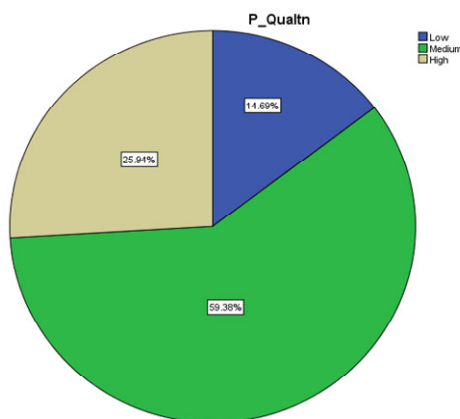


Fig 1a

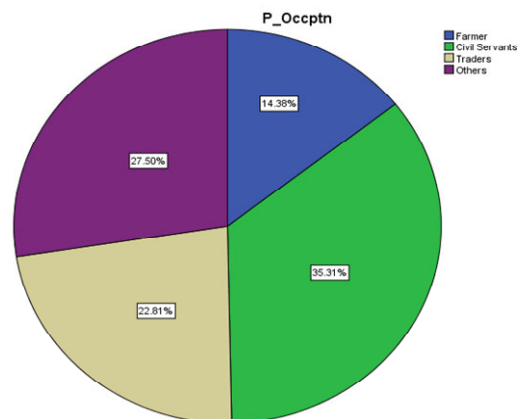


Fig 1b

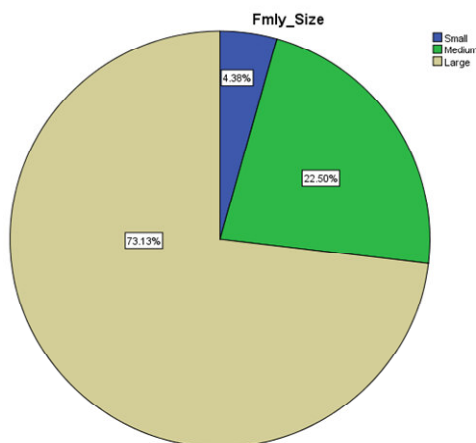


Fig 1c

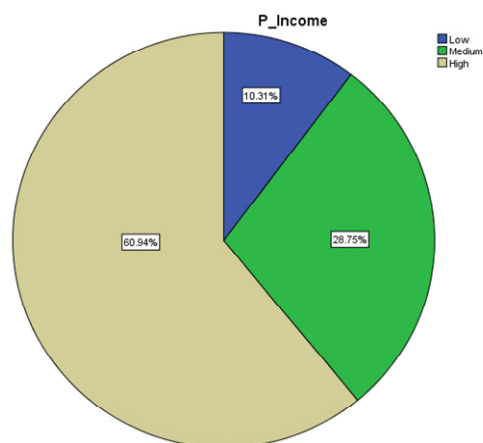


Fig 1d

Fig 1a-d: Pie-Charts Showing the Family Background of Students in Niger Delta

Figure 1 shows the family background of university students in Niger-Delta. Regarding their family size, 73.1% are from large families, 22.5% are from medium families, and only 4.4% are from small families. Responses on their parents' occupation shows that 35.3% of undergraduates' parents are civil servants, followed by 27.5% that are into other areas, 22.8% are traders, and 14.4% are farmers. With regards to undergraduates' parents educational background, 59.4% have medium educational qualifications, followed by 25.9% with low educational qualifications, and 14.7% with high educational qualifications. Responses on their parents' estimated income per annum shows that 60.9% have high income, followed by 28.8% with medium income, and 10.3% with low income.

Table 1: Relationship Between Parents' Occupation and Students' Agripreneurship Intentions

Variables	Mean (\bar{x})	SD	γ
Parents' Occupation	2.63	1.04	0.03
Agripreneurship Intention	2.89	1.10	

Source: Field Work (2021)

Table 1 revealed that the relationship between parents' occupation and students' agripreneurship intentions. The result shows that a very weak positive relationship existed between parents' occupation and students' agripreneurship intentions. This implies that parents' occupation has very little influence on students' agripreneurship intentions.

Table 2: Relationship Between Parents' Educational Background and Students' Agripreneurship Intentions

Variables	Mean (\bar{x})	SD	γ
Parents' Educational Background	2.11	0.63	0.07
Agripreneurship Intention	2.89	1.10	

Source: Field Work (2021)

The result from Table 2 revealed that a very weak positive relationship between parents' educational background and students' agripreneurship intentions. This signifies that parents' educational background does not have much influence on students' agripreneurship intentions in Niger-Delta.

Table 3: Relationship Between Parents' Income and Students' Agripreneurship Intentions

Variables	Mean (\bar{x})	SD	γ
Parents' Income	2.51	0.68	0.13
Agripreneurship Intention	2.89	1.10	

Source: Field Work (2021)

Table 3 revealed the relationship between parents' income and undergraduates' agripreneurship intentions. From the result, it was revealed that a very weak positive relationship existed between parents' income and students' agripreneurship intentions. This indicated that parents' income does not have much influence on students' agripreneurship intentions in Niger-Delta.

Table 4: Relationship Between Students' Family Size and their Agripreneurship Intentions

Variables	Mean (\bar{x})	SD	γ
Family Size	2.69	0.55	-0.04
Agripreneurship Intention	2.89	1.10	

Source: Field Work (2021)

Table 4 presents the relationship between students' family size and their agripreneurship intentions. The result revealed a very weak negative relationship between students' family size and their agripreneurship intentions. This shows that students' family size has no influence on their agripreneurship intentions.

Discussion of Findings

Table 1 shows that a very weak positive relationship existed between parents' occupation and students' agripreneurship intentions. This finding was supported by Papadaki, *et al.* (2002), McElwee and Al-Riyami (2003) who stated that children who grew up with entrepreneur parents had a greater tendency to choose a self-employed career. Also, empirical studies carried out by Fairlie and Robb (2007); Laspita, *et al.* (2012); Eesley and Wang (2016); Ozaralli and Rivenburgh (2016); Sieger, *et al.* (2018) showed that children from families with entrepreneurial backgrounds are more likely to start their own businesses or to join the family business. Sørensen (2007), Fairlie and Robb (2007), Carr and Sequeira (2007), also supported the finding by stating that children with self-employed parents are twice as likely to become self-employed, because they are privileged to have access to the financial or social capital of their parents.

Table 2 revealed that a very weak positive relationship existed between parents' educational background and students' agripreneurship intentions. This finding agreed with Kaki, *et al.* (2019) who revealed that most Agricultural Science students come from well-educated elite parents who understand the value of education and professional careers. The finding is also in agreement with Keng (2004) who opined that parents with high level

of education tend to sponsor their children to universities.

Table 3 shows that a very weak positive relationship existed between parents' income and students' agriprenurship intentions. The finding is in line with Zody, *et al.* (2006) who reported that students whose parents own and operate small businesses may want or feel obligated to follow in their parents' footsteps. Similarly, White, *et al.* (2007) stated that students from family rich are entrepreneurial role models, supportive of new venture creation, and are more likely to identify and initiate new ventures. Table 4 shows that a very weak negative relationship existed between students' family size and their agriprenurship intentions. Iwu, *et al.* (2016) revealed in their study that there were no statistically significant relationships between students' entrepreneurial intention and socio-economic variables like age, gender, cultural background, family size, among others.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings revealed that a very weak positive relationship existed between parents' occupation, educational background, income and students' agriprenurship intentions, and a very weak negative relationship existed between family size and students' agriprenurship intentions. Based on these findings, it was concluded that family background has very little influence on students' agriprenurship intentions. Recommendations included that:

1. parents should be sensitized on the entrepreneurial opportunities embedded in the Agricultural sector in light of the increasing rate of unemployment of graduates from other disciplines. This can serve as a booster for them to encourage their wards to develop interest in Agriculture;
2. other factors responsible for students' negative agriprenurship intentions should be sought for, and curbed to bring about growth and development of agriculture in Niger Delta.

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