



The Influence of Agricultural Education on Job Creation Among Youths in Aninri Local Government Area, Enugu State

Abstract

This study examined the influence of agricultural education on job creation among youths in Aninri Local Government Area (LGA), Enugu State, with particular attention to innovative agricultural training and agricultural entrepreneurship programmes. A descriptive survey design was adopted with the target population comprising 1,363 youths who participated in the Enugu State Agricultural Development Programme (ENADEP) in Aninri during the 2024–2025 programme cycle. From it, 299 respondents were selected using the Freund and Williams sample-size procedure. Data were collected with a structured questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation at the 0.05 significance level. The results showed a positive and significant relationship between innovative agricultural training and youth participation in agricultural activities ($r = .671$, $p = .003$, $n = 299$). Agricultural entrepreneurship programme participation also had a positive relationship with youth engagement in agribusiness ($r = .761$, $p = .024$, $n = 299$). Descriptively, innovative training recorded a grand mean of 3.30 ($SD = 1.08$), while agricultural entrepreneurship programmes recorded a grand mean of 3.82 ($SD = 0.98$). The findings suggested that practical, technology-oriented agricultural education and entrepreneurship support can strengthen youth participation, self-employment and agribusiness engagement. The study recommended stronger integration of modern production technologies, business-management skills, finance, market linkages and digital tools into youth agricultural programmes.

Keywords: Agricultural education, innovative agricultural training, agricultural entrepreneurship, youth, agribusiness, job creation, Aninri.

Chime, Martin Ekene Phd

234-8036716476

Department Of Agribusiness
Federal College Of Agriculture,
Ishiagu

Orcid 0009-0005-9785-3337

Ene Obiageli Jennifer

234-8063471871

Department Of Agribusiness
Federal College Of Agriculture,
Ishiagu

Orcid 0009-0003-9146-8660

Obyene100@gmail.com

Corresponding Authors Email:

Chime.martin@fcaishiagu.edu.ng

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Introduction

Youth unemployment remains a major development concern because inadequate access to productive work can weaken household welfare, deepen poverty and encourage rural–urban migration. Agriculture and the wider agrifood system offer a particularly important

employment pathway because opportunities extend beyond primary production to input supply, mechanisation, processing, logistics, marketing, retail and digital services. FAO's recent evidence shows that agrifood systems remain a major source of employment for young people globally

and argues that youth need better access to skills, productive resources, finance, markets and technology.

The relevance of youth participation is especially strong in Africa, where demographic growth is occurring alongside changing agricultural labour requirements. FAO (2025) reports that 44% of working youth globally rely on agrifood systems for employment and emphasises that young people can become producers, processors, service providers and innovators. The implication is that agricultural education should not be restricted to conventional production skills; it should also develop entrepreneurial, technological, financial and market competencies.

In Nigeria, the employment potential of agriculture has been recognised through several youth-oriented interventions. Evidence from the Fadama Graduate Unemployed Youth and Women Support programme indicates that agricultural training can improve agripreneurship performance, while participation in youth-in-agribusiness programmes can reduce poverty and vulnerability. These findings reinforce the argument that education becomes more economically valuable when training is connected to productive assets, markets, finance and enterprise development.

The present study focuses on Aninri LGA of Enugu State, an area with substantial agricultural activity and participation in ENADEP programmes. The study responds to the need for context-specific evidence on whether innovative agricultural training and

entrepreneurship education are associated with youth participation in agriculture and agribusiness. The study discovered that youths in Enugu State have shown interest in agricultural information, but that some campaigns have not been sufficiently practical or convincing to translate information into sustained participation. This distinction between receiving information and developing employable capability is central to the present investigation.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the employment potential of agriculture, many young people remain insufficiently engaged in productive agricultural and agribusiness activities. The problem is not simply a lack of agricultural resources; it also concerns whether young people possess the practical competencies, confidence, entrepreneurial skills, finance and market knowledge needed to convert agricultural opportunities into viable livelihoods. Where agricultural education remains theoretical or disconnected from technology and enterprise development, its contribution to job creation may be limited.

The problem is particularly relevant in rural communities where young people face constraints such as inadequate capital, weak market access, limited mechanisation and perceptions of agriculture as labour-intensive. The original study therefore identifies a local evidence gap: limited empirical work directly examining the relationship between innovative agricultural training,

agricultural entrepreneurship programmes and youth employment-related participation in Aninri LGA.

Aims and Objective

The main objective was to examine the influence of agricultural education on job creation among youths in Aninri Local Government Area, Enugu State. Other specific objectives were to;

- i. Assess the influence of innovative agricultural training on youth participation in agricultural activities in Aninri LGA.
- ii. Evaluate the influence of agricultural entrepreneurship programmes on youth engagement in agribusiness in Aninri LGA.

Research Questions

- What influence does innovative agricultural training have on youth participation in agricultural activities in Aninri LGA?
- What influence does agricultural entrepreneurship programming have on youth engagement in agribusiness in Aninri LGA?

Hypotheses

H01: Innovative agricultural training has no significant relationship with youth participation in agricultural activities in Aninri LGA.

H02: Agricultural entrepreneurship programmes have no significant relationship with youth engagement in agribusiness in Aninri LGA.

Conceptual Clarifications

Agricultural Education

Agricultural education refers to formal and informal learning processes through which individuals acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to agricultural production, agribusiness and the wider food system. In the context of this study, it includes practical training, technology-oriented instruction, entrepreneurship education and other learning activities intended to equip youths to participate productively in agriculture.

Contemporary evidence suggests that agricultural education is more likely to influence career and enterprise choices when learners perceive the learning environment, teaching quality and course content as relevant to actual agribusiness opportunities. In Nigeria, research on agricultural degree programmes found that perceptions of learning and teaching significantly influenced students' choice of agribusiness as a career. This supports a broader view of agricultural education as a pathway that shapes both competence and occupational orientation.

Innovative Agricultural Training

Innovative agricultural training involves the use of improved production techniques, appropriate mechanisation, digital tools, demonstrations, practical learning and problem-solving approaches. The concept responds to the perception that conventional agricultural work is physically demanding and

technologically outdated. Innovative training can make agricultural careers more attractive by demonstrating productivity-enhancing technologies and by giving learners practical competencies that are directly transferable to farm and non-farm value-chain activities.

Agricultural Entrepreneurship Programme

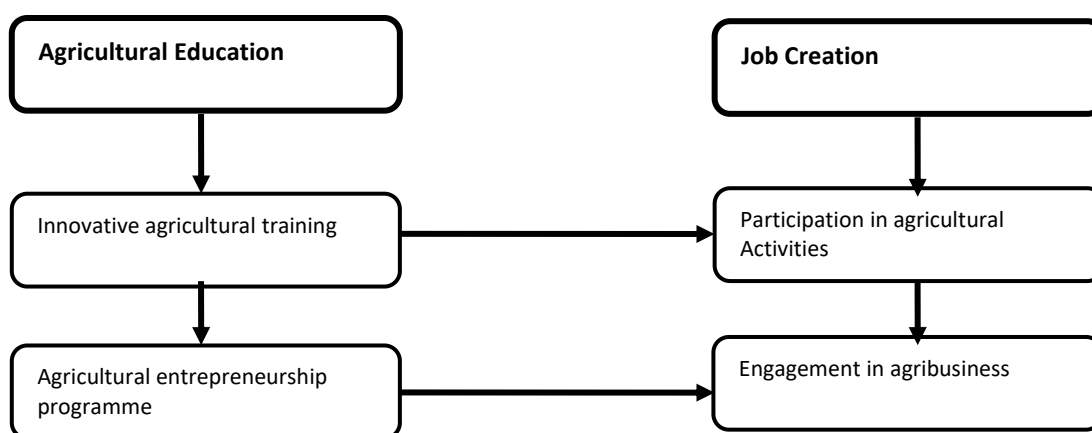
Agricultural entrepreneurship programmes are structured interventions designed to help participants identify agricultural business opportunities, develop business plans, manage enterprises, access finance and markets, and operate profitably. Such programmes are particularly important because participation in agriculture does not

automatically translate into employment or income. Entrepreneurship education helps youths move from being potential producers to becoming owners or managers of viable agribusiness ventures.

Job Creation and Youth Participation

In this study, job creation is operationalised broadly to include self-employment, entrepreneurial engagement and employment-related participation in agricultural value chains. Youth participation in agricultural activities includes production, livestock, processing and related activities, while agribusiness engagement includes input supply, production, processing, marketing, distribution and other commercial services.

Conceptual Framework



Source: (Nade, & Malamsha, 2021; Addo, 2024; Okoli, & Onugha, 2025; Uzochukwu, *et. al.*, 2015)

Fig. 1: Diagram of Conceptual Framework

The study hypothesized that agricultural education will have a significant

influence on job creation among youths in Aninri Local Government Area, Enugu State. It further proposed a significant relationship between innovative

agricultural training and youth participation in agricultural activities; And a significant relationship between agricultural entrepreneurship programme and youth engagement in agribusiness.

Theoretical Framework

Human Development Theory

The study is anchored on the Human Development perspective associated with Haq (1995) and Sen (1999). Human development focuses on expanding people's capabilities and substantive opportunities to lead productive and meaningful lives. Education is important within this framework because it expands the knowledge, skills and choices available to individuals.

Applied to agricultural education, the theory suggests that training can expand youths' capability to identify opportunities, adopt improved practices, manage enterprises and participate in markets. Agricultural education therefore represents more than the transfer of technical information; it is a capability-building mechanism. When young people gain practical skills and entrepreneurial competencies, they may have greater freedom to choose productive livelihoods and create income-generating activities.

The theory is particularly appropriate to the Aninri context because agricultural employment can be understood as an avenue for expanding economic capability in a rural setting. Innovative training may improve technical capability, while entrepreneurship programmes may

strengthen business and market capability. Together, these forms of education can widen the range of livelihood opportunities available to young people.

Empirical Review

Innovative Training and Youth Participation

Addo *et al.* (2024) reported evidence that agricultural education can support community development and employment, indicating the importance of structured education in building productive capabilities. Although their context differs from Aninri, the study provides support for examining agricultural education as an employment-oriented intervention.

Research on youth participation in agricultural training programmes in Nigeria also indicates that participation is shaped by demographic, educational and attitudinal factors. Adeyanju *et al.* (2020), using data from 977 respondents in a Fadama-related programme, found that programme participation was associated with factors including age, formal education, perceptions of agricultural programmes and employment status. Importantly, participation in the programme increased the likelihood of youth engagement in agribusiness.

Similarly, a 2021 study of agricultural training and youth agribusiness performance in Nigeria found that programme participation improved agribusiness performance after controlling for selection effects. The

outcome was measured using average income from agripreneurship activities, providing evidence that training may have economic effects beyond attitudes or intentions.

Evidence from ENABLE-TAAT programmes across Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda further indicates that participation in agripreneurship empowerment programmes can improve young agripreneurs' skills. The study of 1,435 young agripreneurs found that participants had higher agripreneurship skill scores than non-participants and that programme participation had a positive causal effect on skills.

These findings are consistent with the argument that innovative agricultural education should be practical and linked to real economic opportunities. Training can influence participation by increasing technical competence, confidence, awareness of opportunities and perceived attractiveness of agriculture.

Entrepreneurship Programmes and Agribusiness Engagement

Adeyanju *et al.* (2020) found that participation in agricultural programmes positively influenced youths' likelihood of engaging in agribusiness. Their evidence is particularly relevant because the programme combined training and empowerment support and involved Nigerian youths.

Bello *et al.* (2022) examined the Youth-in-Agribusiness Programme in Nigeria using data from 668 youths and found that participation had a significant positive effect on poverty reduction and

reduced vulnerability to future poverty. The authors argued for strengthening skills acquisition and youth empowerment programmes. This supports the proposition that agricultural entrepreneurship can generate welfare benefits when training is connected to enterprise opportunities.

A 2022 study of youths' willingness to exploit agribusiness opportunities in Nigeria also showed that entrepreneurial characteristics and contextual factors matter for youths' willingness to pursue agribusiness. Such evidence indicates that enterprise development is partly a matter of building entrepreneurial orientation and opportunity-recognition capability.

Recent evidence continues to strengthen this argument. Aruleba (2024) examined stimulation of youth interest in agribusiness for employability in rural communities in southwest Nigeria, focusing on motivations, employability skills and mechanisms for addressing barriers. The study reinforces the importance of making agribusiness attractive and developing skills that correspond with labour-market requirements.

The international evidence is also instructive. FAO's 2025 assessment emphasises that youth engagement in agrifood systems requires access to skills, productive resources, finance, markets and technology. Consequently, entrepreneurship programmes should not be limited to classroom instruction; they should create pathways into viable value chains. The literature demonstrates the value of training and

entrepreneurship interventions, but relatively fewer studies combine innovative agricultural training and entrepreneurship programming within a single local-government context. The present study addresses this contextual gap by examining both pathways among ENADEP-trained youths in Aninri LGA.

Methodology

Research Design and Area

A descriptive survey design was used. The design was considered suitable because the study sought to examine respondents' experiences and perceptions of agricultural education programmes without manipulating the study variables. The research was conducted in Aninri Local Government Area of Enugu State, an agrarian area where crop production, livestock and agro-based activities are important livelihood activities.

Population and Sample

The target population comprised 1,363 male and female youths who participated in ENADEP agricultural and entrepreneurial programmes in Aninri during the 2024–2025 programme cycle. Using the Freund and Williams formula at a 95% confidence level and 5% tolerable error, a sample size of 299 was obtained.

Sampling and Instrument

The study reports the use of simple random sampling to select respondents.

Data were collected with a structured questionnaire covering demographic information, exposure to innovative agricultural education, participation in entrepreneurship programmes and employment-related agricultural engagement. Items were measured on a five-point Likert scale.

Validity and Reliability

Content and face validity were established through expert review involving specialists in agricultural education, research methodology, measurement and evaluation. A pilot study involving 30 ENADEP-trained youths in Awgu LGA produced a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.87, indicating satisfactory internal consistency for the instrument.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics included frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the relationships corresponding to the two hypotheses at the 0.05 significance level. The analysis was conducted using SPSS version 23.0.

Decision Rule

For the descriptive items, a mean score of 3.00 or above was interpreted as agreement. For hypothesis testing, statistical significance was determined at $p < .05$.

Results

OBJECTIVE 1: The influence of innovative agricultural training on youth participation in agricultural activities in Aninri Local Government Area, in Enugu State, Nigeria

Table 4.1.1: innovative agricultural training on youth participation in agricultural activities

		5 SA	4 A	3 N	2 DA	1 SD	Σ FX	- X	SD	Decision
1	Innovative agricultural training programmes have increased my interest in participating in farming and related activities.	78 (25.7%)	74 (24.4%)	53 (17.5%)	57 (18.8%)	37 (12.4%)	818	3.4	1.1	Agree
2	The agricultural training, I received exposed me to modern farming techniques that improved my productivity.	58 (19.4%)	78 (26.1%)	68 (22.7%)	58 (19.4%)	37 (12.4%)	855	3.3	1.0	Agree
3	Training in innovative agricultural practices has motivated me to view agriculture as a profitable career choice.	62 (20.7%)	77 (25.8%)	74 (24.7%)	58 (19.4%)	28 (9.4%)	830	3.1	1.2	Agree
4	Participation in agricultural training programmes has enhanced my practical skills and confidence in agricultural ventures.	68 (22.7%)	78 (26.1%)	66 (22.1%)	47 (15.7%)	40 (13.4%)	830	3.5	1.1	Agree
5	Innovative agricultural training has led to greater youth involvement in community-based agricultural projects within Aninri.	53 (17.7%)	77 (25.8%)	60 (20.1%)	62 (20.7%)	47 (15.7%)	890	3.2	1.0	Agree
Grand Mean and Standard deviation					3.3	1.08				

The results show general agreement that innovative agricultural training improved youth participation. The highest mean (3.5) was recorded for enhanced practical skills and confidence, suggesting that hands-on learning may be especially important. Interest in farming also

recorded a positive mean of 3.4, while exposure to modern farming techniques recorded 3.3.

The findings indicate that the training experience was not restricted to knowledge acquisition; respondents

perceived changes in confidence, interest and participation. The overall mean of 3.30 indicates a moderately positive assessment. The result supports the argument that agricultural training becomes more influential when it addresses practical barriers and introduces modern methods. This is

consistent with evidence from Nigeria showing that agricultural training programmes can improve youth agripreneurship performance and with wider evidence that skills, technology and opportunity access are central to youth engagement in agrifood systems.

OBJECTIVE 2: The influence of agricultural entrepreneurship programme on youth engagement in agribusiness in Aninri Local Government Area, in Enugu State, Nigeria

Table 4.1.2: Agricultural entrepreneurship programme on youth engagement in agribusiness

		5 SA	4 A	3 N	2 DA	1 SD	Σ FX	- X	SD	Decision
1	The agricultural entrepreneurship programmes have equipped me with business management skills for running agribusiness ventures.	77 (25.8 %)	96 (32.1 %)	62 (20.7%)	41 (13.7 %)	23 (7.7 %)	749	3.8	1.0	Agree
2	Participation in entrepreneurship training has enabled me to start or plan to start my own agribusiness enterprise.	88 (29.4 %)	90 (30.1 %)	40 (13.4%)	49 (16.4 %)	32 (10.7 %)	762	3.9	0.9	Agree
3	The entrepreneurship programmes provided adequate financial and advisory support for youth agribusiness initiatives.	64 (21.4 %)	78 (26.1 %)	65 (21.7%)	54 (18.1 %)	38 (12.7 %)	839	3.7	1.1	Agree
4	Agricultural entrepreneurship education has improved my ability to identify and exploit agribusiness opportunities.	80 (26.8 %)	80 (26.8 %)	59 (19.7%)	46 (15.4 %)	34 (11.4 %)	789	3.8	1.0	Agree
5	The entrepreneurship programmes have significantly increased youth employment and self-reliance in agribusiness within Aninri.	80 (26.8 %)	78 (26.1 %)	54 (18.1%)	55 (18.4 %)	32 (10.7 %)	796	3.9	0.9	Agree
Grand mean and standard deviation					3.82	0.98				

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The results reveal stronger agreement for agricultural entrepreneurship programmes than for innovative training. The highest means (3.9) were obtained for starting or planning an agribusiness and increased employment/self-reliance. The mean of 3.7 for financial and advisory support was the lowest among the five indicators, suggesting that support services may require further strengthening.

Overall, the grand mean of 3.82 indicates a high level of agreement that entrepreneurship programmes

contributed to youth engagement in agribusiness. The pattern suggests that respondents perceived enterprise-oriented education as particularly relevant to self-employment. Entrepreneurship education may be most effective when it combines business skills with practical production knowledge, finance, mentoring and market access. The finding is consistent with Nigerian evidence that youth agribusiness programmes can improve economic outcomes when participants receive structured training and support.

Hypothesis Testing

HYPOTHESIS ONE: Innovative agricultural training has a significant influence on youth participation in agricultural activities in Aninri Local Government Area, in Enugu State, Nigeria

Correlations

		Innovative agricultural training	participation in agricultural activities
Pearson Correlation	Innovative agricultural training	1.000	.671
	participation in agricultural activities	.671	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Innovative agricultural training	.	.003
	participation in agricultural activities	.003	.
N	Innovative agricultural training	299	299
	participation in agricultural activities	299	299

The correlation between innovative agricultural training and youth participation in agricultural activities was positive and statistically significant ($r = .671$, $p = .003$). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. The result indicates that higher levels of innovative training exposure were associated with higher levels of youth participation in agricultural activities.

HYPOTHESES TWO: Agricultural entrepreneurship programme has a significant influence on youth engagement in agribusiness in Aninri Local Government Area, in Enugu State, Nigeria**Correlations**

		Agricultural entrepreneurship programme	engagement in agribusiness
Pearson Correlation	Agricultural entrepreneurship programme	1.000	.761
	engagement in agribusiness	.761	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Agricultural entrepreneurship programme	.	.024
	engagement in agribusiness	.024	.
N	Agricultural entrepreneurship programme	299	299
	engagement in agribusiness	299	299

The relationship between agricultural entrepreneurship programme participation and youth engagement in agribusiness was positive and statistically significant ($r = .761$, $p = .024$). The null hypothesis is rejected. The result indicates a strong positive association between entrepreneurship programming and youth engagement in agribusiness.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding demonstrates a moderately strong positive association between innovative agricultural training and youth participation in agricultural activities. This finding is consistent with the Human Development perspective because training expands the capabilities required to participate productively. It also aligns with Nigerian studies showing that participation in agricultural training programmes can improve agribusiness performance.

The descriptive results provide additional context. Respondents reported improvements in interest, exposure to modern techniques, practical skills and confidence. This suggests that innovation is relevant not only because of technology itself but because it can change how

young people perceive agricultural work. When agriculture is presented as a field involving mechanisation, improved production methods, digital information and enterprise opportunities, it may become more attractive as a career.

The second finding, indicates a strong positive association between entrepreneurship programming and agribusiness engagement. This is consistent with evidence from Fadama-related programmes and Youth-in-Agribusiness interventions in Nigeria. The findings suggest that enterprise education can help bridge the gap between knowing about agriculture and operating an agricultural business.

The stronger correlation for entrepreneurship programming may reflect the direct connection between

business-management competencies and commercial engagement. Training that covers opportunity identification, planning, finance, marketing and enterprise management is more directly aligned with self-employment than general agricultural knowledge alone. The findings also correspond with FAO's recent emphasis on skills, productive resources, finance, markets and digital access as components of youth-inclusive agrifood systems. The implication is that agricultural education should be designed as an integrated employment pathway rather than as isolated technical instruction.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of Findings

- i. Innovative agricultural training had a positive and significant relationship with youth participation in agricultural activities ($r = .671$, $p = .003$).
- ii. Agricultural entrepreneurship programmes had a positive and significant relationship with youth engagement in agribusiness ($r = .761$, $p = .024$).

Conclusion

The study concludes that agricultural education is an important component of youth employment development in Aninri LGA. Innovative agricultural training is associated with stronger participation in agricultural activities, while entrepreneurship-oriented programming is strongly associated with

engagement in agribusiness. The findings reinforce the view that agricultural education can contribute to employment when it develops practical capabilities and connects young people to enterprise opportunities.

Recommendations

- i. Government and agricultural development agencies should expand practical, technology-oriented training that includes mechanisation, improved production methods, digital agriculture and problem-solving.
- ii. Agricultural entrepreneurship programmes should combine business-management education with mentoring, financial literacy, access to credit and market linkages. ENADEP and similar programmes should strengthen value-chain training so youths can participate in input supply, production, processing, logistics, marketing and digital agricultural services.

Contribution to Knowledge

The study contributes local empirical evidence on the relationship between two dimensions of agricultural education – innovative training and agricultural entrepreneurship programming – and youth employment-related participation in Aninri LGA. It extends the discussion beyond general claims about agriculture and employment by examining specific educational pathways and their association with participation in agriculture and agribusiness.

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