

Job Entry Level Skills in Marketing of Poultry Products for Self-Reliance among Agricultural Education Graduates in South-Eastern States of Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was conducted to examine entry level skills required in marketing of poultry products for self reliance among University graduates of Agricultural Education in South-Eastern States of Nigeria. Three research questions and three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Structured questionnaire was developed and used. The questionnaire was made up of 30 items. The instrument was face validated by 5 experts from the Department of Agricultural/Home Economics Education, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike and the three areas of marketing tested for reliability with the correlation coefficient (r) of 0.91. Survey design was used in the investigation of 249 agricultural education lecturers and 61 commercial poultry farmers operating in the South-Eastern States of Nigeria with the population of 310 respondents. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, and t-test statistics for testing null hypotheses. The findings of this study revealed entry level skills needed in marketing of poultry products. They include risk management ability to search for available market, grading and standardization of the products, processing and distribution of the products to customers among others. It was recommended that graduates should be exposed to the level skills identified in the study when fully integrated and the National University Commission should ensure that entry level skills identified by the study are fully integrated into agricultural education curriculum and facilities provided for their implementation.

Keywords: *Poultry products, Marketing, Entry level skills and Graduates of Agricultural Education.*

Introduction

The business of marketing in agriculture means different things to different people. To the farmer (producer), it is the sale of his product at farm gate prices. The middleman views marketing as the loading of farm products for a trip to the market where consumers buy them for consumption. The retailer considers agricultural marketing as being the process of gaining competitive advantage over market rivals in providing sales, making profit and

satisfying consumers. More so, to the consumers, marketing may mean the weekly food shopping in the local retail markets and supermarkets.

According to Dixis (1999), marketing is the series of services involved in moving a product (commodity) from the point of production to the point of consumption. Marketing is the integrative force that matches production to consumers need and satisfaction. It is not an activity to which one turns its attention at the end of the production phase of operation. Rather, marketing needs to be directing production in accordance with clear signals from the market place as what is needed by the customers and maximizing profit by the producers.

For an individual to break even or succeed in poultry marketing, certain skills are required. Skills are human capabilities to perform technical work very well with dexterity and competence. The marketing of poultry products demands specialized skills and proper organization not only for reason of profit making but also for the perishable nature of the products. Poultry marketing demands a mastery of manipulatory skills from an individual serving in the area to succeed in the enterprise. These basic skills will help them justify their performances in the poultry business. Entry level skills considered in this study are generally rudimentary skills to be acquired through the art of learning by doing in the field of marketing. In their contributions, Olayemi and Roberts (2007) highlighted that market distribution channels are well established in the developed economies with stabilized prices of poultry products through interactions between demand and supply.

Essang and Olajide (2004) explained demand as quantity of commodity which is actually bought at a given price within a specific point in time, while supply is the quantity of the commodity available in the market at a particular price within a specific point in time. This concept therefore reveals price as a powerful economic tool which determines the demand and supply of poultry products in the free market system.

Adiene (2008) maintained that price has been identified as a powerful determinant of demand and supply of agricultural products including poultry products in a free market situation, and that more of the products are demanded as its price falls with other variables remaining constant. With this fall in price, smaller quantities of the products will be supplied in the market, but if the price should rise then larger quantity of the products will be supplied

in the market. The author further stated that there are several basic skills necessary for an individual to succeed in the marketing of poultry products. These basic skills include:

1. Finding buyers or searching for market
2. Grading and standardization of products
3. Storage of the product
4. Distribution and transportation of the product
5. Processing of the products
6. Risk management
7. Recording of financial transactions
8. Selling of the products
9. Pricing power and so on

Uko (2013) in his opinion stated that skills in marketing of poultry products embrace market surveying, processing of products, assembling, grading, transportation of products to market etc. University graduates of Agricultural Education in the south-eastern states of Nigeria do not have a history of viable marketing competences (Adam-Smith, 2006). Rather, these graduates form a pool of job seekers who search for employment opportunities in the region. Hence to guarantee the continuous availability of poultry products where households and consumers can buy to supplement their own farm production, there is need for efficient training of the graduates for profitable marketing of poultry products. With skill training, the graduates could create effective distribution channel to form an aspect of marketing. Other aspects include record keeping, storage, good public relations and good bargaining skills.

Olayemi and Roberts (2007) observed that agricultural marketing is a very important but rather neglected aspect of agricultural development. More emphasis is usually placed by government on policies to increase agricultural production with little or no consideration on how to distribute the products produced efficiently and in a manner that will enhance increase productivity among farmers and in the general economy.

FAO (2007) submitted that if available product could be evenly distributed, each individual would be assured 27000 calories a day, which is the recommended daily calorie intake. However, since available products are not evenly distributed due to marketing

inefficiencies and other problems, there are shortage of products in some places with excesses in some other places.

Subsequently, Ledele and Ayoola (2007) in their study on marketing and its role in food security to Nigeria concluded that an efficient agricultural products marketing system would be enhancing the level of products distribution. A fundamental technique used in public relations in agricultural marketing is to identify the target audience and to tailor every message to appeal to the audience. Marketers often refer to economy driven demographics, but in public relations, an audience is more fluid being whoever someone wants to reach.

A close study of marketing activities among poultry farmers in the south eastern states of Nigeria reveals that most of the registered entrepreneurs do not acquire the needed skills for marketing efficiency and the capacity for export of their poultry products. Reasons being that there is no policy guidelines by legislation and no market channels established for effective products forwarding, distribution and control (Obioha, 2002). Besides, new entrants find it difficult to sell out their products within a specified period of time due to the perishable nature of the products and their inexperience in marketing. In the area of the study, the researchers observed that there are neither efficient storage facilities nor cottage industries that could process these products into storable forms; hence, marketers and business entrants in the area are faced with serious challenge of product handling and therefore calls for development of skills for quick marketing of their products to enable them stay productive in the business.

It is upon this premise that the researchers embarked into this study to determine job entry level skills needed by agricultural education graduates in poultry product marketing. Specifically, the study intends to;

1. Determine the entry level skills needed by Agricultural Education graduates for marketing poultry eggs.
2. Determine the entry level skills needed by Agricultural Education graduates for marketing of life birds.
3. Determine the entry level skills required by Agricultural Education graduates for marketing of poultry meat.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the entry level skills needed by agricultural education graduates for marketing of poultry eggs in south-eastern states?
2. What entry level skills are needed by agricultural education graduates for marketing life birds in south-eastern states?
3. What entry level skills are needed for entry into marketing of poultry meat in south-eastern states?

Null Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There was no significant difference between the mean ratings of responses of agricultural education lecturers and poultry farmers on the job entry level skills needed by agricultural education graduates for marketing of eggs.
2. There was no significant difference between the mean ratings of responses of agricultural education lecturers and poultry farmers on the job entry level skills needed by farmers for marketing of life birds.
3. There was no significant difference between the mean ratings of responses of agricultural education lecturers and poultry farmers on the job entry level skills needed by agricultural education graduates for marketing of poultry meat.

Research methodology

Survey design was used in the investigation of 249 agricultural education lecturers and 61 commercial poultry farmers in the south-eastern states of Nigeria with the population of 310 respondents. 310 respondents were purposively used for sample of the study. This was used because of the small size. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire made up of 30 items. The instrument titled poultry product marketing skill questionnaire (PPMSQ) was face validated and had a reliability index of 0.88 – 0.91. Three hundred and ten (310) copies of the instrument were duly administered and retrieved with 91% return rate.

Data analysis

Data collected were analyzed using weighted mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while T-test was used in testing the 3 null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance at respective degrees of freedom.

Table 1: Mean rating of responses of agricultural education lecturers and poultry farmers on the entry level skills needed by agricultural education graduates for job in Egg marketing business in the South-eastern states of Nigeria (N = 282)

S/N	Entry level skills in egg marketing business	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Advertise eggs to enhance patronage	4.59	0.86	Needed
2.	Survey available market and determine the average quantity eggs demanded by the public at various times of the year	3.88	0.72	Needed
3.	Determine when to supply (sell) eggs for maximum profits	3.62	1.00	Needed
4.	Remove spoilt eggs for market	3.77	0.96	Needed
5.	Grade eggs according to sizes	3.75	0.97	Needed
6.	Fix prices for different sizes of eggs	3.59	0.98	Needed
7.	Arrange eggs in appropriate containers (crates) for market	3.51	0.80	Needed
8.	Acquire storage facilities for storing eggs awaiting market	3.72	0.99	Needed
9.	Distribute eggs to customers at their base	3.54	0.78	Needed
10.	Keep accurate financial records for marketing eggs	4.29	0.76	Needed

The data presented in Table 1 above revealed that 10 entry level skill items had a mean range of 3.51 to 4.59. This indicated that all the 10 entry level skills were needed by Agricultural Education graduates for beginning in marketing of eggs, because their mean were above the cut-off points of 3.50. The standard deviations ranged from 0.78 to 1.00. This showed that the respondents were close to one another in their responses and that they were not very far from the mean.

Null Hypothesis 1: There was no significant difference between the mean ratings of the responses of the lecturers and poultry farmers on the skills needed by agricultural education graduates for marketing eggs.

Table 2: The t-test analysis of mean ratings of respondents on the entry level skills in egg marketing business in the south-eastern states of Nigeria

S/N	Entry level skills in egg marketing business	Agricultural lecturers N ₁ = 221		Poultry farmers N ₂ = 61				Remarks
1.	Advertise eggs to enhance patronage	3.18	1.05	3.27	1.16	0.91	1.96	N.S
2.	Survey available market and determine the average quantity of eggs demanded by the public at various times of the year	3.40	1.01	3.42	1.02	0.41	1.96	N.S
3.	Determine when to supply (sell) eggs for maximum profits	3.80	1.22	3.46	1.15	0.85	1.96	N.S
4.	Remove spoilt eggs for market	3.81	1.20	3.52	1.30	0.80	1.96	N.S
5.	Grade eggs according to sizes	3.62	1.23	3.72	1.24	1.10	1.96	N.S
6.	Fix prices for different sizes of eggs	3.74	1.08	3.88	1.23	0.36	1.96	N.S
7.	Arrange eggs in appropriate containers (crates) for market	3.11	1.12	3.44	1.03	0.70	1.96	N.S
8.	Acquire storage facilities for storing eggs awaiting market	3.30	1.05	3.37	1.54	0.96	1.96	N.S
9.	Distribute eggs to customers at their base	4.20	1.03	4.35	1.08	1.12	1.96	N.S
10.	Keep accurate financial records for marketing eggs	4.31	1.07	4.26	1.06	1.14	1.96	N.S

Key: n₁ = 221, n₂ = 61, df = 280, p = 0.05, N.S = Non Significant, S² = Variance

Data presented in table 2 above revealed that each of the 10 entry level skills items had a calculated t value less than t value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance, and 280 degree of freedom.

This indicated that there was no significant difference between the mean rating of responses of the two groups of respondent (agricultural education lecturers and poultry farmers) on the entry level skills in marketing of eggs needed by agricultural education

graduates in the south-eastern states of Nigeria. With this result, the null hypothesis (H_0) of significant difference was upheld.

Research Question 2: *What entry level skills are needed by agricultural education graduates for marketing life birds in south-eastern states?*

Table 3: Mean rating of responses of agricultural education lecturers and poultry farmers on the entry level skills needed agricultural education graduates for job in marketing life birds

S/N	Entry level skills in life bird marketing business	Mean	S.D	Remarks
1.	Advertise the poultry products to enhance patronage	3.59	0.98	Needed
2.	Survey available market and determine the average quantity of birds demanded by the public at various times of the year	4.29	0.76	Needed
3.	Determine when to supply (sell) life birds for maximum profits	3.72	0.99	Needed
4.	Fix prices for different sizes of life birds	3.88	0.72	Needed
5.	Cull out mature birds for market	3.75	0.97	Needed
6.	Employ marketing attendant	3.77	0.96	Needed
7.	Arrange birds in appropriate containers (boxes) for market	3.62	1.00	Needed
8.	Acquire storage facilities for storing birds awaiting market	3.62	1.00	Needed
9.	Distribute birds to customers at their base	3.77	0.96	Needed
10.	Keep accurate financial records for marketing life birds	3.54	0.78	Needed

The data presented in table 3 above revealed that 10 entry level skill items had a mean range of 3.54 to 4.29. This indicated that all the 10 entry level skills were needed by agricultural education graduates for beginning in marketing of life birds, because their mean were above the cut-off points of 3.50. Their standard deviation ranged from 0.76 to 0.78. This showed that the respondents were close to one another in their responses and that they were not very far from the mean.

Null Hypothesis 2: *There is no significant difference between mean ratings of responses of agricultural education lecturers and poultry farmers on the job entry skills needed by agricultural education graduates for a start in marketing of life birds in south-eastern states of Nigeria..*

Table 4: Mean rating of responses of agricultural education lecturers and poultry farmers on the entry level skills in life bird marketing needed by agricultural education graduates

S/N	Entry level skills in life bird marketing	Agricultural lecturers N ₁ = 221		Poultry farmers N ₂ = 61			Remarks	
1.	Advertise the poultry products to enhance patronage	4.31	1.07	4.26	1.06	1.14	1.96	N.S
2.	Survey available market and determine the average quantity of birds demanded by the public at various times of the year	3.81	1.20	3.52	1.30	0.80	1.96	N.S
3.	Determine when to supply (sell) birds for maximum profits	4.18	0.85	4.42	0.67	-0.28	1.96	N.S
4.	Fix prices for different sizes of life birds	4.22	0.96	4.49	0.50	0.34	1.96	N.S
5.	Cull out mature birds for market	4.53	0.91	4.63	0.49	-0.32	1.96	N.S
6.	Employ marketing attendant	3.93	0.82	3.98	0.75	-0.24	1.96	N.S
7.	Arrange birds in appropriate containers (boxes) for market	4.71	0.63	4.92	0.65	0.44	1.96	N.S
8.	Acquire storage facilities for storing birds awaiting market	4.91	0.71	4.82	0.38	-0.37	1.96	N.S
9.	Distribute birds to customers at their base	4.53	0.91	4.63	0.49	-0.32	1.96	N.S
10.	Keep accurate financial records for marketing life birds	4.36	0.63	4.63	0.47	-0.19	1.96	N.S

Data presented in Table 4 above revealed that each of the 10 entry level skill items had a calculated t-value less than table t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 280 degree of freedom.

This indicated that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of responses of the two groups of respondents (agricultural education graduates and poultry farmers) on the entry level skills in marketing of life birds needed by agricultural education

graduates in South-eastern states of Nigeria. With this result, the null hypothesis (H_0) of no significant difference was retained.

Research Question 3: *What entry level skills are needed for entry into marketing of poultry meat in south-eastern states?*

Table 5: *Mean rating of responses of agricultural education lecturers and poultry farmers on the entry level skills of agricultural education graduates for job in poultry meat marketing (N = 282)*

S/N	Entry level skills in marketing poultry meat	<small>for job</small> \bar{x} S.	S.D	Remarks
1.	Advertise poultry meat to enhance patronage	3.88	0.72	Needed
2.	Survey available market and determine the average quantity of poultry meat demanded by the public at various times of the year	3.75	0.97	Needed
3.	Determine when to supply (sell) poultry meat for maximum profits	3.62	1.00	Needed
4.	Fix prices for different types of meat (broilers, old layers)	3.59	0.98	Needed
5.	Cull out mature birds for slaughter (market)	3.72	0.99	Needed
6.	Dress poultry meat properly to attract market	3.88	0.72	Needed
7.	Arrange poultry meat in appropriate containers (cartons) for market	3.59	0.97	Needed
8.	Acquire storage facilities for storing poultry meat awaiting market	4.59	0.86	Needed
9.	Distribute poultry meat to customers at their base	4.29	0.76	Needed
10.	Keep accurate financial records for marketing poultry meat	3.77	0.96	Needed

The data presented in table 5 revealed that the 10 entry level skill items had a mean range of 3.59 to 4.59. This showed that all the 10 entry level skills were needed by Agricultural Education graduates for a beginning in marketing of poultry meat because their means were above the cut-off points of 3.50. The standard deviations ranged from 0.72 to 1.00. This showed that the respondents were close to one another in their responses and that they were not too far from the mean.

Null Hypothesis 3: *There was no significant difference between the mean ratings of responses of agricultural education lecturers and poultry farmers on the job entry level skills needed by agricultural education graduates for a start in marketing of poultry meat in south-eastern states of Nigeria.*

Table 6: The t-test analysis of mean ratings of respondents on the entry level skills in marketing of poultry meat needed by agricultural education graduates in the south-eastern states of Nigeria

S/N	Entry level skills in marketing of poultry meat	Agricultural lecturers N ₁ = 221		Poultry farmers N ₂ = 61			Rmks	
1.	Advertise the poultry meat to enhance patronage	4.31	1.07	4.26	1.06	1.14	1.96	
2.	Survey available market and determine the average quantity of poultry meat demanded by the public at various times of the year	3.18	1.05	3.27	1.16	0.91	1.96	N.S
3.	Determine when to supply (sell) poultry meat for maximum profit	4.20	1.03	4.35	1.08	1.12	1.96	N.S
4.	Fix prices for different types of poultry meat (broiler, old layers)	3.62	1.23	3.72	1.24	1.10	1.96	N.S
5.	Cull out mature birds for slaughter (market)	3.11	1.12	3.44	1.03	0.70	1.96	N.S
6.	Dress poultry meat properly to attract market	3.30	1.05	3.37	1.54	0.96	1.96	N.S
7.	Arrange poultry meat in appropriate containers (cartons) for market	3.81	1.20	3.52	1.30	0.80	1.96	N.S
8.	Acquire storage facilities for storing poultry meat awaiting market	3.80	1.22	3.46	1.15	0.85	1.96	N.S
9.	Distribute poultry meat to customers at their base	3.74	1.08	3.88	1.23	0.36	1.96	N.S
10.	Keep accurate financial records for marketing poultry meat	3.40	1.01	3.42	1.02	0.41	1.96	N.S

The analysis in Table 6 showed that each of the 10 entry level skill items had a calculated t-value less than tabulated t-value of 1.96 two tailed test at 0.05 level of significance and 180 degree of freedom. This indicated that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of responses of the two groups of respondents (agricultural education lecturers and poultry farmers) on the skills in marketing of poultry meat needed by agricultural education graduates in the south-eastern states of Nigeria. With this result, the null hypothesis (H₀) of no significant difference was upheld.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that some entry level skills in marketing of poultry products were needed by Agricultural Education graduates. The respondents identified these entry level skills to include risk management ability to search for available market, grading and standardization of products processing and distribution of the products to customers among other things. These findings were in agreement with the views of Adiene (2007) who remarked that anyone who embarks on the marketing of poultry products must have a fair knowledge of finding buyers or searching for available market, grading and standardization of the products, proper storage system while the products await market distribution of finished products to customers and skill in risk management. In affirmation to this statement, Uko (2013) stated that skills in marketing of poultry products embrace market surveying, processing of products, assembling, grading, transportation of products to market etc.

The findings of the null hypotheses treated revealed that, there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of the two groups of respondents on the entry level skills needed by Agricultural Education graduates in marketing of poultry products in South-Eastern states of Nigeria. The implication of these findings is that it helps to validate and strengthen the findings made in the research questions raised for this study. To make marketing of poultry products a profitable venture, therefore, Agricultural Education graduates ought to possess these entry level skills in order to succeed in the marketing of poultry products in future.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, all the entry level skills identified met the cut-off points of 3.50 and above and were regarded needed in this study under each unit of marketing namely; Marketing of eggs, meat and life birds.

The findings of this study have been critically aligned with the comments, ideas and inputs of experts and authors in the field of poultry production and product marketing and found justified. Furthermore, the findings of the study were closely related with the major purpose of the study. Therefore, the findings could serve as additional prop to poultry industry in the study area when fully utilized for training the graduates and other unemployed youths.

For Agricultural Education graduates to have some entry level skills in marketing poultry products, the information provided by this study should help the curriculum planners to improve the learning activities in poultry options of the curriculum for Agricultural Education students. The information could also help the state government in the region to intensify her efforts in providing facilities for the study of poultry production (marketing) in tertiary institutions.

Recommendations

In the light of the above findings, this paper recommends among others that:

1. Entry level skills identified in this study should be integrated into the poultry options of Agricultural Education curriculum in tertiary institutions by curriculum planners.
2. Students should be exposed to the entry level skills identified in the study when fully integrated into the curriculum.
3. The curriculum planners should ensure that entry level skills identified by the study were fully integrated into the curriculum and facilities provided for their implementation.
4. Skill acquisition instructors should be allowed access to skills identified in this study for training graduates and other unemployed persons in marketing of poultry products.

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