



## Entrepreneurial Skills Improvement Needs of Secondary School Leavers in Floriculture Production in South-South, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *The study investigated entrepreneurial skills improvement needs of secondary school leavers in floriculture production in South-South, Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design. Two research questions, two objectives and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population of the study was ten thousand three hundred (10,300) made up one hundred and three (103) extension agents across the two states and ten thousand one hundred and ninety seven (10,197) secondary school leavers in Cross River and Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The sample size for the study is three hundred and eighty five (385). The sample was drawn using the Taro Yamen's approach to determine the sample size. The sample comprises of one hundred and three (103) extension agents, Ninety four (94) secondary school leavers from Cross River State and one hundred and eighty eight (188) secondary school leavers from Akwa Ibom State. Proportionate Stratified random sampling technique in the ratio of 1:2 (Cross River and Akwa Ibom) was used to arrive at ninety four (94) respondents from Cross River State and one hundred and eighty eight (188) respondents from Akwa Ibom State. There was no sampling for extension agents because the population was enough to be manage by the researcher. The researcher also used simple random sampling techniques to select the required number from each group out of the two states through simple balloting to ensure equal chance of being selected. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire titled: Entrepreneurial Skills Improvement Needs by Secondary School Leavers in Floriculture Questionnaire (ESINBSSIFQ) was developed from literature reviewed. The instruments were face and content validated by three experts from Joseph Sarwaun Tarka University, Makurdi. To ensure the reliability of the instruments, a trial testing was conducted on 20 respondents in (Abia State) South-East Nigeria. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument which gave a reliability coefficient of 0.78 and 0.77 for need and performance respectively. 385 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents (secondary school leavers) and extension agents in Cross River and Akwa Ibom States and were retrieved for data analysis. Need gap analysis (NGA) was used to answer research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at .05 level of significance. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that Secondary School Leavers in South-South Nigeria need entrepreneurial skills improvement needs in planning, nursery preparation planting among others. Based on the findings of the study it was recommended among others that Secondary School Leavers should undergo training in planning for better improvement and quality production of floriculture.*

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurial Skills, Improvement needs Secondary school leavers & Floriculture.*

The rate of unemployment in Nigeria in this 21<sup>st</sup> century is becoming worrisome as the numbers keep on rising day by day without any successful effort to cushion the effects. Therefore, the only option of Nigeria as a nation to come out of this unemployment challenge is to embrace entrepreneurial skills education and practices from every sector of the economy. Entrepreneurial skills are skills possessed by person that makes one to become self-employed and self-dependent. Entrepreneurial skills are forces towards wealth creation and innovations (Gautam, 2015). These entrepreneurial skills are expected to improve from time to time, it on this note that Robert and Hush in Mudu'utal (2014), described improvement needs as the act of improving, advancement or growth promotion in desirable qualities and progress toward what is better. It is the need to raise a more desirable or more excellent quality or condition. It also means putting to good use or to use something profitably and to make beneficial additions or changes. Improving on entrepreneurial skills in floriculture requires that the secondary school leavers relate theoretical content to real business challenges, understand specific contents with caution on areas that will develop their business initiatives; involve professionals in areas needed and encourage field trips to small medium enterprise (SMES). Entrepreneurial skills knowledge can play an important role among young people to achieve a bright professional perspective (Abdul, 2018). Nevertheless, the identification of a set of characterized skills as entrepreneurial skills is distinguishes from one individual from another. In this context entrepreneurial skills are those steps taken by secondary school leavers in floriculture to function in a world of entrepreneurship.

The contribution of secondary school leavers cannot be over emphasized as they form the bases for other layers of education. Alawa and Dijeh (2014) viewed Secondary schools leavers as individuals who have completed senior secondary education but are not admitted into higher institution or sufficiently engaged in activities as it concerns floriculture for profit maximization which include planning, implementation and marketing of the product. Secondary school leavers are also seen as those who have successfully accomplished their upper Basic Education and are either enrolled into higher education or not. Secondary school leavers are those individuals that have completed six year of secondary education but could not secure admission into any higher institution or get employed in any job. Secondary school leavers according to Owodunni, Owodunni and Raji (2015) are expected to secure employment; set up their own business invariably becomes self-employed. In this process, with requisite skills, they can employ others in business like floriculture. In this case, refers to those secondary leavers trained under National Directorate of Employment in floriculture.

Floriculture as explained by Ekele and Etop (2017) is a branch of ornamental horticulture that deals with the growing and marketing of flowers and ornamental plants as well as flower arrangement. The grower must ensure that the environment is controlled for a success. Floriculture is an important branch of horticulture, which deals with cut or loose flowers, ornamental plants, such as foliage plants, trees, shrubs, climbers, palms, bamboo, cacti and succulents, dried flowers, essential oils and landscape gardening (Assefa and Gosa,2017). Floriculture involves grower, who produces flower in large quantity for the wholesale markets and the retail who eventually market it to the general public. Floriculture farming in the opinion of Yoshihiro and Shigeru (2017) is the growing, maintenance and design including growing plants for

landscape also refers to as the nursery business. The values obtained from flowers also enhance the quality of life by providing beauty and comfort in and around the environment.

Industrially, the oil produced by compressing flowers is a valuable ingredient of fine perfumes and are also used to flavor scent ointments and toiletries. Some fresh flowers are edible and are used to garnish on salads and fruit trays. Flowers are also used in vinegar, honeys, syrups and jellies. Medically, some flowers help to cool circulating blood and are useful for treating depression (Runkle, 2017). Growing of these flowers as integral part of floriculture could also assist in bringing the youth (secondary school leavers out of the street thereby reducing the rate of unemployment, crime and criminalities within the society and at the same time making the environment a better place for all.

Floriculture farming practices had been in the hand of unskilled farmers who venture into the business without pre-determining objectives. The researcher's personal observation revealed that the demand for flowers such as hibiscus, marigold, sunflower and rose within the major towns in Cross River and Akwa Ibom States had been on an increase without enough supply to meet the demand. The few farmers who go into floriculture business are not adequately equipped in floriculture farming, production and marketing of flowers. The researcher also observed that scarcity of flowers within the area is as a result of lack of knowledge, techniques and skills among the youths in floriculture farming. Further investigation by the researcher from the youths most especially secondary schools leavers revealed that floriculture farming is not pronounced as a mean of providing employment, preventing the youth from criminal activities and adding beauty to the environment. Also a preliminary investigation by the researcher in the study area revealed that floricultural skills needs by secondary school leavers in preventing unemployment and crime within the area have not been fully put into used as majority of those youths still depend on government paid job which is not readily available. Hence this study.

### **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to determine the entrepreneurial skills improvement need of secondary school leavers in floriculture production in South-South, Nigeria. Specifically, the study identifies;

- i. Skills improvement Needs in planning by Secondary School Leavers in Floriculture Production in South- South, Nigeria.
- ii. Skills improvement Needs in Nursery Preparation by Secondary School Leavers in Floriculture production in South-South, Nigeria.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised and answered by the study.

1. What are the Skills improvement Needs in planning by Secondary School Leavers in Floriculture Production in South- South, Nigeria?
2. What are the Skills improvement Needs in Nursery Preparation by Secondary School Leavers in Floriculture Production in South-South, Nigeria?

### **1.4 Statement of Hypothesis**

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between the mean response of secondary school leavers and Agricultural Extension Agents on the entrepreneurial skills improvement needs of secondary school leavers in planning floriculture production in South-South Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean response of secondary school leavers and Agricultural Extension Agents on the entrepreneurial skills improvement needs of secondary school leavers in nursery Preparation for floriculture production in South-South Nigeria.

## **2.0**

### **METHODS**

Questionnaire survey research design was adopted for this study. This design was suitable for this study because the study collect data from a representative sample of (secondary school leavers) involved in floriculture farming and extension agents using questionnaire and which the findings would be generalized on the entire floriculture farmers in Cross River and Akwa Ibom State, South- South, Nigeria. Two research questions were answered and two null hypotheses were tested for the study. The study is limited to Cross River and Akwa Ibom South-South Nigeria. The population of the study was 10,300 made up 103 extension agents across the two states and 10,197 secondary school leavers out of which 366 are from Cross river state and 9,779 are from Akwa Ibom State. The sample size for the study is 385. The sample was drawn using the Taro Yamen's approach to determine the sample size. After which proportionate Stratified random sampling technique in a ratio of 1:2 was used. The sample comprises of 103 extension agents, 94 secondary school leavers from Cross River State and one 188 secondary school leavers from Akwa Ibom State. The process was carried out by cutting and labeling sheets of paper numbered from 01 to 94 in Cross River and 01 to 188 in Akwa Ibom States; it was shaken together within a container and a number was picked at random. Meanwhile there was no sampling for the extension agents as the researcher is able to manage the population.

The instruments titled: Entrepreneurial Skills Improvement Needs by Secondary School Leavers in Floriculture Questionnaire (ESINBSSIIFQ). was developed and structured from the literature reviewed and use for data collection The items ESINBSSIIFQ had a four point rating scale of Very High (VH), High (H), Low (L) and Very Low (VL) for need rating as well as Very High (VH), High (H), Low (L) and Very Low (VL) for performance rating with a corresponding value of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Was face and content validated by five experts, two from the Department of Agricultural Education, two from the Department of Educational Foundation and General Studies and one from the Department of Agronomy, all from the Joseph Tarkaa University, Makurdi, Benue State. Appropriate modifications were effected on the instrument based on the corrections and comments of the validators. To ensure the reliability of the instrument it was trial tested on 15 secondary school leavers and 5 agricultural extension agents in Abia State. The instrument was retrieved after two days. Cronbach Alpha method was used to analyze the data and a coefficient

of 0.78 and 0.77 was obtained for need and performance respectively. Six (6) trained research assistants who are familiar with the study area assisted the researcher in the distribution and collection of the instrument from the respondents. 385 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents while 376 was retrieved and analyzed. The data were analyzed using need gap analysis to answer research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

The needs performance were determined by calculating the mean ( $X_n$ ) of the needed category for each item. The performance Gap (PG) was therefore determined by finding the difference between  $X_n$  and  $X_p$  for each item ( $PG=X_n-X_p$ ). In a situation where the value of PG is positive (+ve), it means improvement is needed because the level at which secondary school leavers in floriculture are performing is lower than what is expected. On the other hand where PG is

negative (-ve), it means improvement is not needed because secondary school leavers in floriculture are performing more than what is required. And when PG is Zero (0), it mean improvement is not needed because the level at which the secondary school leavers in floriculture is equal to the level needed. In testing the null hypotheses, if the P-value calculated is less than .05 level of significance, the null hypotheses will be rejected otherwise accepted.

**3.0 RESULTS**

**Research question 1:** What are the entrepreneurial skills improvement needs of Secondary School Leavers in planning Floriculture Production in South- South, Nigeria?

**Table 1: Entrepreneurial skills improvement needs of school leavers in planning floriculture production in South-South Nigeria (N= 100; 276)**

S/ N	ITEM STATEMENT	$\bar{X}_n$	$\bar{X}_p$	PG  ( $\bar{X}_n - \bar{X}_p$ )	Remark
1	Ability to choose a site	2.12	2.45	-0.33	INN
2	Ability to identify the source of fund	3.45	2.87	0.58	IN
3	Ability to source for fund	3.36	2.81	0.55	IN
4	Ability to rent or purchase a land	3.34	2.5	0.85	IN
5	Ability to purchase material such as polytene bags	3.5	2.53	0.97	IN
6	Ability to identify the required fertilizer to be used	3.49	2.71	0.78	IN
7	Ability identify source water or make water available	3.18	2.69	0.49	IN
8	Ability to clear the land using hoe, cutlass	2.26	2.51	-0.25	INN
9	Ability to carry out raking or burn the bush	2.29	2.59	-0.3	INN
10	Ability to plough the land	3.53	2.78	0.75	IN

11	Ability to harrow with find tith	3.51	2.64	0.87	IN
12	Ability to plough using mould board for tillage	3.23	2.68	0.55	IN
13	Ability to uproot shrubs using tractor	3.67	2.48	1.19	IN
14	Ability to spray field with glyphate, adopt Zero tillage	3.48	2.54	0.94	IN
	<b>Pooled PG</b>	<b>3.17</b>	<b>2.63</b>	<b>0.54</b>	<b>IN</b>

Keys: Xn- mean of need category, Xp-mean of performance category, PG- performance gap, IN- improvement needed, INN- improvement not needed

The result of the data presented in Table 1 shows that all the items except items 1,8and 9 had their performance gap (PG) ranging from 0.49 to 1.19 and are all positive. This means that the level at which the school leavers perform in the items are lower than the level at which they are needed, implying that improvement is needed in the items. However, items 1, 8 and 9 had their performance gap (PG) ranging from -0.25 to -0.33 and are negative. This means that the items are performing higher than they are needed, implying that school leavers does not need improvement in those planning items. The pooled PG of 0.54 indicates that in all, school leavers need improvement in planning of floriculture production.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference between the mean response of secondary school leavers and Agricultural Extension Agents on the entrepreneurial skills improvement needs of secondary school leavers in planning of floriculture production in South-South Nigeria.

**Table 2: t-Test Result of Respondents on the Entrepreneurial Skills Improvement Needs of School Leavers in Planning Floriculture Production in South-South Nigeria ( N= 100;276)**

Occupation	N	Mean	Std	Std. Error Mean	Df	Sig	t-cal	Alpha value	Remark
Ext. agents	100	3.172143	.518509	.27491	374	.000	23.448	.05	S
Sch. leavers	276	2.630957	.747536	.16706					

Keys: N= Number of respondents, Std = Standard deviation, df = degree of freedom, Sig. = P-value; t-cal = t-calculated value; S = Significant.

Source: *Field survey, 2023*

Table 2 presents the t-test result of the respondents on the entrepreneurial skills improvement needs of secondary school leavers in planning of floriculture. The result shows that the p-value (sig) is .000 (at 374 degree of freedom) which is lower than the alpha value of .05, indicating that the test is statistically significant. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This means that there is a significant difference between the mean response of agricultural extension agents and secondary school leavers on the entrepreneurial skills improvement needs of secondary school leavers in planning of floriculture.

**Research question 2:** What are the entrepreneurial skills improvement needs of Secondary School Leavers in nursery preparation of Floriculture Production in South- South, Nigeria?

**Table 3: Entrepreneurial skills Improvement Needs of Schools Leavers in Nursery Preparation of Floriculture Production in South-South Nigeria (N= 100;276)**

S/ N	ITEM STATEMENT	$\bar{X}_n$	$\bar{X}_p$	PG  ( $\bar{X}_n - \bar{X}_p$ )	Remark
1	Ability to practice wet nursery	3.53	2.73	0.8	IN
2	Ability to practice Dapog Nursery	3.45	2.87	0.58	IN
3	Ability to raise nursery within the field of planting	3.36	2.81	0.55	IN
4	Ability to plough the area required for nursery	3.34	2.5	0.84	IN
5	Ability to harrow the area after ploughing	3.5	2.53	0.97	IN
6	Ability to divide the field into beds	3.49	2.71	0.78	IN
7	Ability to provide irrigation and drainage channels between beds	3.18	2.69	0.49	IN
8	Ability to flood the beds, puddle and the beds	3.49	2.52	0.97	IN
9	Ability to Puddle the plot and incorporate all the organic manures	3.61	2.6	1.01	IN
10	Ability to weigh out the amount of seeds required	3.53	2.78	0.75	IN
11	Ability to purchase certified seeds from registered seed store	3.51	2.64	0.87	IN
12	Ability carry out seed treatment mean for sowing	3.23	2.68	0.55	IN
13	Ability to soak seed in fresh water for 24 hour	3.67	2.48	1.19	IN
14	Ability to incorporate chemical fertilizer into beds	3.48	2.54	0.94	IN
15	Ability to sow germinated seeds uniformly into the beds	3.34	2.5	0.84	IN
16	Ability to keep soil at saturation level always	3.5	2.53	0.97	IN
17	Ability to Remove weeds	3.49	2.71	0.78	IN
18	Ability to spray insecticides and fungicides to protect seedlings	3.18	2.69	0.49	IN
19	Ability to reduce the level of water occasionally	3.49	2.52	0.97	IN
	<b>Pooled PG</b>	<b>3.44</b>	<b>2.63</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>IN</b>

Keys: Xn- mean of need category, Xp-mean of performance category, PG- performance gap, IN- improvement needed, INN- improvement not needed

The result of the data presented in Table 3 shows that all the items had their performance gap (PG) ranging from 0.49 to 1.19 and are all positive. This means that the level at which the secondary school leavers perform in the nursery preparation items are lower than the level at which they are needed, implying that improvement is needed in the items. The pooled PG of 0.81 shows that school leavers need improvement in nursery preparation of floriculture.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference between the mean response of secondary school leavers and Agricultural Extension Agents on the entrepreneurial skills improvement needs of secondary school leavers in nursery Preparation for floriculture production in South-South Nigeria.

**Table 4: t-Test Result of Respondents on the Entrepreneurial Skills Improvement Needs of School Leavers in Nursery Preparation for Floriculture Production in South-South Nigeria (N=100;276)**

Occupation	N	Mean	Std	Std. Error Mean	df	Sig	t-cal	Alpha value	Remark
Ext. agents	100	3.440526	.529165	.40717	374	.000	29.979	.05	S
Sch. leavers	276	2.637684	.759913	.26836					

Keys: N= Number of respondents, Std = Standard deviation, df = degree of freedom, Sig. = P-value; t-cal = t-calculated value; S = Significant.

**Source:** *Field survey, 2023*

Table 4 presents the t-test result of the respondents on the entrepreneurial skills improvement needs of secondary school leavers in nursery preparation for floriculture production. The result shows that the p-value (sig) is .000 (at 374 degree of freedom) which is lower than the alpha value of .05, showing that the test is statistically significant. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This means that there is a significant difference between the mean response of agricultural extension agents and secondary school leavers on the entrepreneurial skills improvement needs of secondary school leavers in nursery preparation for floriculture production.

#### **4.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The findings of the study in research question 1 (Table 1) shows that secondary school leavers needs improvement in 11 skills in planning of Floriculture Production in South- South, Nigeria. The result from the corresponding hypothesis in Table 2 indicated that there is a significant difference between the mean response of agricultural extension agents and secondary school leavers on the entrepreneurial skills improvement needs of secondary school leavers in planning of floriculture in South- South, Nigeria. The significant difference in the mean rating of responses is due to the fact that secondary school leavers rated skills items higher than the Agricultural Extension Agents. The finding of the study on skills improvement needs of secondary school leavers in planning of floriculture was in line with Abribe and Eze (2016) who opine that careful

planning is one of the most vital parts of any successful floriculture business. Because planning is so crucial to floriculture operation, it's important for floriculture entrepreneur to go through the process undergo training for further improvement in the business. The author also added that in planning for floriculture production sources of fund, rent or purchase of land as well as identifying sources of water to enhance water availability is necessary for better production. Also the study is in conformity with the views of Ukonze (2013) who said that for any business to succeed an entrepreneur must always embrace training for further improvement. The author identified some of the training required as fertilizer to be used, plough the land, uproot shrubs using tractor among others while Ekele and Etop (2017) ascertained the fact that planning does not replace entrepreneurial skills but it can help avoid failures. It also helps a floriculture farmer discover the problems and pitfalls you might run into before they happen, so you would be able to make the right move to avoid them.

The findings from the study in Table 2 revealed that Secondary School Leavers needs improvement in 19 skills in nursery preparation of Floriculture Production in South- South, Nigeria. The result from the hypothesis in Table 4 shows that there is a significant difference between the mean response of agricultural extension agents and secondary school leavers on the entrepreneurial skills improvement needs of secondary school leavers in nursery preparation of floriculture in South- South, Nigeria. The findings of the study on entrepreneurial skills improvement needs of secondary school leavers in nursery preparation of floriculture is in line with the findings of Asogwa, Abu and Okafor (2015) who found out that raise nursery within the field of planting, harrow the area after ploughing, provide irrigation and drainage channels between beds, puddle the plot and incorporate all the organic manures, weigh out the amount of seeds require are the essential items that needs improvement and such would always required further training to enhanced productivity while Sungh, Aswal, Aswani and Shivehare (2014), added that secondary school leavers needs improvement in following areas: purchase certified seeds from registered seed store, seed treatment before sowing, soak seed in fresh water for 24 hour, incorporate chemical fertilizer into beds, to spray insecticides and fungicides to protect seedlings and many more. In addition Aanchal, Deepa, Rajeev, Kumar, and Neha, (2021) opine that all these are necessary but it should be carefully done to ensure that the right procedure is carry out to maintain uniformity in the nursery hence needs for improvement.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that Secondary School Leavers in South-South Nigeria Need entrepreneurial skills improvement needs in planning, nursery preparation planting among others. Therefore the skills that need improvement should be used for re-training for efficient and quality production of floriculture in the area. The inadequate knowledge and skills by secondary school leaves to take floriculture farming as a vocation is an issues that needs urgent attention. It on this note the study was conducted to identify entrepreneurial skills improvement needs of secondary school leavers in planning, nursery preparation and planting of floriculture in South-South, Nigeria.

6.0

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendation were made

- i. Secondary School Leavers should undergo training in planning for better improvement and quality production of floriculture.
- ii. Skills identified in nursery preparation should be included into the programme of National Directorate of employment for retraining of Secondary School Leavers for self-reliance.
- iii. Planting skills identified should be used by supervisors for updating the skills of their students/ trainee before graduation.

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